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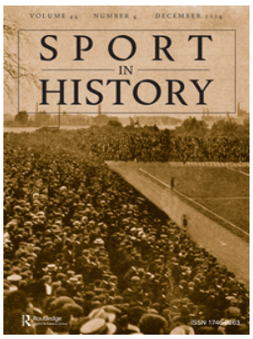

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'Playing fields not battlefields': pacifism, non-violence and sport in inter-war Britain

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ABSTRACT

Whilst scholars have tended to focus on hegemonic internationalist sporting practices and their promotion of peace, this study illustrates that peace activists promoted sport as a means to create a community of anti-war individuals, on both the domestic and international levels. This study looks at two organisations to ascertain the role of physical activity in pacifist organisations: the League of Nations' Union and the Peace Pledge Union. The paper demonstrates that in the 1920s sport was used to foster international kinship as peace activists believed it to be an effective antidote to war and militarism. When international conflict and fascism was gaining ground across Europe, this belief was questioned. As pacifism became more absolute, physical activities were increasingly used to test an individual's commitment to non-violence.

KEYWORDS Sport history; pacifism; inter-war Britain; League of Nations Union; Peace Pledge Union

'Playing fields not battlefields'[1]

This quote from *Peace News* was taken from a banner made by the Carlisle Peace Council in 1936. It is significant that 'play', denoting physical activity and leisure, was positioned as an alternative to militarism and warfare. Indeed, pacifists used sport in their attempt to create a new world that was free from war. Physical activity played an important role in pacifist organisations, however, until now, it has not been fully explored by scholars.

The historiography of sport has firmly established that sport is Janus-faced as it can be used to foster peace as well as war.[2] Scholars, such as Mangan and Burstyn, have demonstrated how martial masculinity and nationalism are promoted by physical activity.[3] On the other hand, Huggins and Williams have pointed out that sport was also used to promote social harmony on a national and international scale.[4] The

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Olympics have been a central focal point in scholars' attempts to address sport as a method to build international harmony. As Hurcombe and Dine have illustrated, the original peace-keeping impulse behind the Ancient Olympics was distorted in its nineteenth-century iteration which, under Baron Pierre de Coubertin, favoured a muscular Christianity and promoted sport as physical training for nationalistic ventures.[5] Moreover, as Keys has noted, the Olympics were used to shape international and national agendas simultaneously.[6]

Scholars have, thus, tended to concentrate on international hegemonic sporting power structures. But it is important to recognise that physical activity was also used at a grass-roots level to foster internationalism. Moreover, the work of individual internationalists and the peace movement in the promotion of sport remains underexplored. Where historians have recognised the role of physical fitness in international peace movements, it has largely been in the post-Cold War climate.[7] However, sport was associated with peace long before then, by the inter-war pacifist movement.

As Bourke has highlighted, in the inter-war period, sport and the male body encapsulated fierce debates surrounding gender and the nation's rehabilitation post-war.[8] Scholars have been keen to associate physical culture movements with nationalism, for instance Zweiniger-Bargielowska has stressed the role of the national physical culture movement in attempting to build a British 'superman'.[9] Collins has shown the importance of the sporting spirit in British upper-class communities to the formulation of the 'English gentleman' aesthetic.[10] However, it is important to acknowledge that sporting cultures and games were also used by internationalists and pacifists. Indeed, the overtly patriotic and militaristic uses of physical activity prompted pacifists to adapt sporting cultures and practices. The author and pacifist Aldous Huxley noted that 'like every other instrument that man has invented, sport can be used for either good or for evil purposes'.[11] This study seeks to understand the following: why and how did peace activists instrumentalise physical activities? Did the relationship between sport and peace change as conflict escalated? What role did sport play in the peaceful world order that pacifists sought to create?

This study will explore two anti-war groups: the League of Nations Union and the Peace Pledge Union. The organisations' newspapers (*Headway* and *Peace News*) will be covered as they most effectively encapsulate and reflect the main activities, ideas, and ideals of both movements.[12] The readership of *Headway* is estimated to have been 100,000 in 1930, whereas *Peace News* peaked at 22,000 in 1938.[13] However, members were encouraged to share the newspapers and the actual circulation could have been much higher. The newspapers' content will be further contextualised by non-fiction writings of prominent members and ideologues, such as Bertrand Russell and George Lansbury. Furthermore, notable pacifists'

autobiographical works will be used to ascertain the role of sport within individual members' lives (for example, the sculptor Eric Gill and the writer John Middleton Murry).

This study will build on the influential works of Martin Ceadel, who argued that pacifism in inter-war Britain functioned more as a moral faith than a political idea.[14] Anti-war movements, especially the Peace Pledge Union, felt that their members should live and breathe pacifism. As such, anti-war organisations used physical fitness to embed pacifism in the everyday lives of activists. It is imperative to note a key distinction between these movements, as identified by Ceadel. The LNU (formed in 1918) was a pacificist association, meaning that they opposed war on many grounds, such as humanitarian or religious, but were not wholly resolute against conflict in all circumstances.[15] In contrast, the PPU (formed in 1936) was an absolute pacifist organisation.

Both groups were able to secure relatively large memberships, the LNU peaked in 1931 with 400,000 and the PPU in 1940 with 160,000.[16] Moreover, both organisations achieved cultural relevance through national ballots. The LNU's 1935 'Peace Ballot' received almost 12 million responses and Reverend Dick Sheppard (founder of the PPU) gained 50,000 replies to his call for men to take a 'Peace Pledge' in 1934.[17] The groups represented a similar cross-section of middle-class and liberal opinion, and as Davis has stressed, members frequently shifted their allegiances between different peace groups.[18] The class-based nature of the movement is significant, as Gorman has noted, the early 1920s represented an evolution in middle-class thought and political consciousness in support of internationalism.[19]

Both organisations were androcentric and at times actively sought to exclude women. The LNU focused upon accessing male opinion, often by promoting masculine leisure pursuits, such as football and cricket.[20] Similarly, the PPU's genesis rested on a pledge taken by men, who promised they would not fight in (or support) another war. The PPU was more than two-thirds male and the opening of the pledge to women in July 1936 received a minimal response.[21] As Jones has pointed out, many sports in inter-war Britain were associated with a hegemonic middle-class and bourgeois ideal of masculinity.[22] The LNU and PPU used sport because it was the traditional apparatus used to target middle-class male opinion but, in doing so, peace activists aimed to deviate from nationalism and militarism.

This study, whilst aware of the nuances that divide sport from leisure, takes a broad view of sport as a means of physical activity which, through casual or organised participation, aims at improving physical fitness or mental wellbeing.[23] In avoiding definitions of sport that necessitate competition, the changing nature and expectations of physical culture for peace activists can be accurately portrayed. This is vital as many pacifists felt that physical activity should promote cohesion rather than competition and

used non-traditional 'sports', such as rambling and folk-dancing, to do so. Firstly, this study will look at the LNU's use of sport to promote internationalism and peace through the Olympics, international tours, and local branch activities. Secondly, it will look at the PPU's use of physical activity to foster local and individual pacifism, through folk-dancing, rambling and a rejection of blood sports. When international conflict and European fascism began to escalate in the 1930s this belief was questioned. As pacifism became more absolute, physical activities were increasingly used to test an individual's commitment to non-violence.

The League of Nations' Union

Following the First World War, peace societies took advantage of a general anti-war sentiment, and the movement expanded from a few small elitist groups into a mass phenomenon. The League of Nations and LNU appealed to this popular mood with their advocacy for demilitarisation and economic sanctions. The LNU received the sympathy of the major political parties, especially the Labour Party under the leadership of the pacifist George Lansbury (from 1932 to 1935).

The LNU focussed on creating an international liberal community, through the symbol of the 'world citizen'.[24] The movement's commitment to peace was based almost entirely on its internationalist premise. Those within the League of Nations would be responsible to, and the beneficiaries of, loyalties beyond national borders. As McCarthy has illustrated, the LNU was influenced by Wilsonian thought, in encouraging ties between nations as the 'natural' unit of human organisation (at least for 'civilised' people).[25] The LNU epitomised increasing appeals to a universal humanity as a method of minimising conflict. It propagated a discourse of 'enlightened patriotism' where man was encouraged to feel loyalty to a wider international community as well as the imperial nation state.[26]

The LNU was a large organisation with a peak number of branches at 3040 local, 295 junior, and 1452 corporate, in 1931.[27] Although the LNU remained active until after the Second World War, it declined by more than 50% in popularity following the Manchurian and Abyssinian crises as people lost faith in the efficacy of the League.[28] From 1936, the LNU began to support rearmament as the illusion of non-military sanctions collapsed and it rescinded any claim to pacifism.[29]

Sport was at the centre of the LNU's internationalist ethos as it provided the opportunity to heal the wounds of war, to repatriate, and to humanise the inhabitants of other countries to prevent further conflict. J.C. Squire (the editor of the *London Mercury*) wrote in *Headway* in October 1921 that 'granted the right meeting-ground and a common purpose, national differences' will 'often disappear or remain merely as a pleasant spice to the

encounter'.[30] Squire claimed that 'economic and financial relations are not enough' because 'this sort of relation is largely non-human' and 'it does not bring the ordinary citizen of one country into personal contact with the ordinary citizen of another'.[31] The solution, according to Squire, was to use sports. Squire was an avid sportsman and fan, who captained a famous literary cricket team called 'The Invalids' (originally made up of men who had been wounded in the First World War) and provided radio commentary for Wimbledon in July 1927.[32] Squire posited that the value of sports lay in the fact that 'sporting competitions are watched, physically or through print, by whole nations; and that they also canalise into quiet channels the desires to compete and to beat'.[33]

Squire went as far as to claim that a series of Anglo-German cricket test matches could have altered international relations in July 1914. He hypothesised that

> possibly it wouldn't have staved off the war, but it would certainly have given the agencies for peace a better atmosphere to work in; and the newspaper readers of both countries, to put it no higher, might have refused to contemplate an interruption of the Rubber.[34]

Internationalists, like Squire, felt that sport could foster a universal humanity. Physical competitions had the potential to capture the attention of entire nations, not just a select few individuals, and were interesting to the average 'ordinary' citizen.

In the 1920s, the internationalist spirit that associated sport with peace was epitomised by the modern iteration of the Olympic Games. Baron Pierre de Coubertin established the International Olympic Committee in 1894, with the aim of starting an internationally rotating games every four years.[35] The first games were held in Athens in 1896, but the movement was awarded with newfound significance after the hiatus taken due to World War One. Harris has maintained that the 1920 Olympics mobilised fierce debates surrounding British international responsibility and isolationism that culminated in a hesitancy on the part of Britons.[36] However, many British commentators felt that the Olympics could be instrumental to the preservation of peace. As Hurcombe and Dine have illustrated, the Olympic Games were consistently celebrated as a method to promote friendship and goodwill between nations.[37] In May 1927, the chair of the British Olympic Association, Lord Rochdale, claimed that 'sport in its best form is one of the most effective antidotes to militarism'.[38]

Many individual Olympic athletes were keen promoters of the internationalist ethos. For example, Eric Liddell (memorialised in *Chariots of Fire*) broke the 400 metres record in 1924 and became a Christian missionary in China.[39] Perhaps the most notable Olympian and inter-war peace activist, Noel Baker, was instrumental within the LNU. Baker participated in the

Paris Peace Conference as the principal assistant to Lord Robert Cecil, from 1920 to 1922 was a member of the Secretariat of the League, and from 1929 to 1931 was a member of the British delegation to the Assembly of the League.[40] Baker was also an Olympic competitor in 1912, won a silver medal in 1920, and captained the British track team at the 1920 and 1924 Olympics.[41] Baker's consistent faith in the sportsman as a peacemaker shaped him for life and he became the only person to have won an Olympic medal and the Nobel Peace Prize (in 1959).[42] Baker recalled in 1956 that he had 'left the sunlit Swedish capital with a deep conviction that international sport and the Olympic movement could become a mighty instrument for making all the nations understand that they belong to one Society with common interests, common hopes and common aims'.[43] He had a huge influence within the LNU and there were frequent references to his belief that sport could reduce international conflict.[44]

The commitment of athletes to the LNU can be witnessed in their contributions to *Headway*. For instance, D.G. Lowe (champion of the 800 metres in 1924) stressed the value of the Olympic Games in engendering internationalist spirit.[45] In December 1927 Lowe wrote that 'the general good-fellowship prevailing at the 1924 Olympic games may be traced, in part at least, to the previously gained intimacy among the competitors' who were 'keen to win on all occasions, but ever ready generously to applaud the success of their friends'.[46] Lowe implied that, despite national differences, athletes were able to build individual relationships with their competitors. It could be argued that these individual friendships were of little significance to the inter-war peace movement, but they helped to demonstrate that national feuds were constructed and not natural aversions. Lowe noted that sport was of particular importance to the re-construction of Anglo-German relationships. Lowe believed that British athletes could act as ambassadors and led a trip of the Achilles Athletic Club (co-founded by Noel Baker) to Germany in 1927.[47] He asserted that the tour helped 'to form a foundation for the appreciation and cultivation of the higher ideals of sport in its relation to peace and friendship'.[48] To Lowe, athletes and sportsmen were at the forefront of the reconciliation effort after war and to the maintenance of peace.

To inculcate the internationalist ethos beyond international sporting events, the LNU encouraged individual branches to organise sporting events that aimed to gather members and offer opportunities to inculcate the anti-war spirit. For instance, open-air meetings and festivals were held with cycling and dancing.[49] At these events, folk-dancing held a special role in engendering a sense of international kinship. Folk-dancing was said to combine 'the possibilities of fostering the necessary spirit of reverence for both national and international traditions'.[50] As such, folk-dancing corroborated with the LNU's ambition to develop citizens who were patriotic

and internationalist. Events that featured physical activities were often used to raise the profile of local branches. In October 1924 an LNU branch in Shoreditch held a swimming gala, in which the 'races were keenly contested' and 'prizes were given away by the Mayor who outlined in a brief speech the objects of the League'.[51] In this instance, sport provided the backdrop and opportunity for the ideology of the LNU to spread beyond its membership.

Alongside local sporting contests, the LNU often used professional athletes and sporting fixtures to expand their membership. McCarthy has argued that this was an attempt to capture working-class men's attention and take advantage of the popularity of commercialised sport.[52] Indeed, this was the result in 1932 as the Walthamstow branch got members of the Arsenal football team to attend a public meeting and 'thousands of men who had never before heard of the League of Nations, and who would never have attended an ordinary meeting, flocked to the hall'.[53] Moreover, the LNU's ballot organisers addressed 8000 spectators during a Bury v Port Vale football match.[54] However, the use of athletes by the LNU was not an insincere marketing gesture but rested on a belief in the power of sport. This can be demonstrated by a report in *Headway* in September 1925, in which Holmes and Sutcliffe, 'Yorkshire's famous pair of batsmen', were noted to have signed a petition for the LNU.[55] It was argued that these two cricketers, in supporting peace, were upholding 'the ancient tradition of arbitration and sportsmanship'.[56] Furthermore, it was asserted that sport 'does more to abolish the root causes of international distrusts and suspicion than a hundred conferences'.[57] Sport was not only used as a marketing tool, as the LNU felt that sportsmen and physical activities had the ability to produce peaceful sentiment.

The ability of sport to reach and transform untouched pockets of public attention was evident to the LNU, especially as their support began to diminish from 1932.[58] In May 1934 the LNU attempted to attract people to an annual dinner by making the subject 'the world of sport and world peace'.[59] They noted that 'this should be a good opportunity to interest some of those outside the LNU who are attracted to some form of sports'.[60] The LNU were keen to employ sport as a method to garner publicity and increase membership. Nevertheless, the LNU could not stave off its decline and the rise of absolute pacifism prompted deeper discussions about the ideological imperatives behind the uses of sport.

The Peace Pledge Union

In the early 1930s, the League of Nation's inadequacies in responding to the international crisis in Manchuria led people to doubt its efficacy.[61] The advent of Hitler to the Chancellorship in Germany in 1933 and rise of totalitarianism across Europe resulted in an intense interrogation of the anti-war

stance. Many well-known pacifists, such as George Orwell, questioned the faith as Britain was pitted against a morally compromised enemy.[62] The anti-war movement split between pacifism and pacificism.[63] Pacificism was most aptly represented by the LNU whose Peace Ballot in 1935 gained almost 12 million responses but only 20% of these were against military measures in all circumstances.[64]

The year 1936 acted as a watershed for the peace movement and this split became more pronounced. The Abyssinian crisis, the remilitarisation of the Rhineland, and the Spanish Civil War proved that the League's collective security had failed to minimise international conflict. While some pacifists began to question the totality of their belief, absolute pacifists became more resolute.[65] The PPU, formed in May 1936, represented a faith-like vision in the power and potential of absolute pacifism. The PPU organised itself around Reverend 'Dick' Sheppard until his death in 1937 and combined Christianity with non-violence. The PPU supported the policy of Appeasement and celebrated the resolution of the Sudetenland crisis in 1938, and the highly controversial Munich Agreement.[66] The PPU grew from 300 local branches in 1936 to 1150 by 1939.[67]

The PPU was founded just months before the Berlin Olympic Games in 1936. Nazism gave new significance to the Olympics, due to its scale, presentation of Nazi symbolism, and controversiality. Philip Gibbs (British journalist and author) noted that the Nazis had 'gone sport-mad, spending vast sums of money on their stadiums, and pressing youth too hard, possibly, in physical exercises'.[68] George Orwell, and other critics, attacked the Olympics by claiming that 'at the international level sport is frankly mimic warfare'.[69] In addition, the games took advantage of new technologies such as radio, television and newsreels, which made the audience larger than ever.[70] In *Peace News* in August 1936 it was noted that 'sport seems the one place of internationalism that manages to survive a totalitarian regime' but that 'the task is getting too big for it'.[71] The tension arising in international politics undermined the previous consensus that the Olympics had the power and potential to stave-off war.

Prominent pacifists localised their approaches and began to question commercialised sport as a passive and, therefore, corrupted pastime. Modernity, industry, and commercialised sport were deemed to be the antithesis to nature and peace. The author W.S. Shears, in *This England* (1936), spoke of rural areas as 'a land of legend and custom, far removed from cynical industrialism, and likely to be forever a place of peace, of sport and natural life'.[72] Pacifists idealised rural areas and placed urban environments as the opposite of peace. Bertrand Russell noted that modern and urban amusements, such as watching football and listening to the radio, were very passive.[73] This passive spectatorship was consistently associated with the urban working class by middle-class pacifists. Frances Wrigley Hirst condemned the

working-classes as being 'ignorant of world-affairs' and 'reading little but racing and football news'.[74] Pacifists connected the passive spectatorship of working classes to a passive attitude towards war and international relations. In turn, physical activity was aligned with an active pacifism.

Russell implied that working-class passivity could be reversed, by physical activity, which provided the scope for individual agency to be exercised. Russell maintained that 'peasant dances have died out except in remote rural areas, but the impulses which caused them to be cultivated must still exist in human nature'.[75] Russell insinuated that an automated modernity had removed a natural impulse towards physical action. In doing so, Russell was depicting an idealised rural past that constituted an unadulterated time of communal values. It is noteworthy that 'peasant dances' were emphasised by Russell. As Snape has demonstrated, inter-war folk-dancing embodied an English identity that was rooted in an imagined idealised collective, and simple, rural past.[76] To Russell, folk-dancing provided an opportunity to be active, to foster communal values, and to hark back to an idealised rural past.

Many left-wing pacifists connected physical passivity (inactivity) with the excesses of capitalism. In *My England* Lansbury promised that, should he lead the country, sport would not be commercialised and instead 'all able-bodied people, will enjoy cricket, football, racing and all sports as to preserve their health, strength, and bodily fitness'.[77] As such, pacifists tied sport to human agency in resisting an automated and capitalistic modernity. The prominent author and journalist, Margaret Storm Jameson maintained that leisure could be used to revive regionalism and stop the working-class' serfdom to the industrialised state.[78] Socialist pacifists associated capitalism with the reduction of individual agency but felt that physical activity could act as an antidote. Moreover, Aldous Huxley in *Ends and Means* (1937) argued that sport was needed to stop people living 'unconnected, atomised lives, passively obeying'.[79] Huxley suggested that sport and leisure had the power to connect individuals and that physically active people would be less inclined towards oppressive and dictatorial systems of government. Sport, in this regard, was a paradox in that it was associated with the creation of communal values as well as the maintenance of individual agency.

This ideological backdrop was influential within the creation of the PPU as it sought to build an active community of non-violent individuals. The movement attempted to train members 'for a non-violent life'.[80] In 1936 the American pacifist, Richard Gregg, who was famous for bringing the Ghandian ethos to the West, fixated the PPU and its members.[81] Gregg's *The Power of Non-Violence* (1934) argued that pacifism needed to be removed from the 'vague mysticism' and given tangibility in everyday life.[82] To do this, Gregg advocated 'group singing, folk-dancing, eating meals together, and going on walks in groups' to 'create a strong sense of

unity'.[83] Gregg claimed that to train for a non-violent life one 'must have motion, and if we can, have motion and rhythm and joy'.[84] He argued that folk-dancing 'sublimates and gives desirable channels for the energy of resentments whether conscious or forgotten'.[85] In line with Sigmund Freud, Gregg maintained that people could transform their behaviour into socially acceptable actions.[86] The PPU did attempt to distance itself from 'Greggism' as some argued that it made the movement's members appear as 'cranks' or 'faddists'.[87] In 1937 the PPU made clear that 'Greggism' was not an official policy, but that its members were still free to explore.[88] Nonetheless, pacifists associated folk-dancing and physical movement with the sublimation of aggression and non-violent principles.

Similarly, PPU campaigners used rambles to foster community and mobilise anti-war opinion. Taylor has demonstrated that, in relation to the nineteenth century, many political groups used rambling to foster a collective identity.[89] Like folk-dancing, rambling was associated with an imagined and glorified simple rural past. Indeed, often the PPU rambles revered the English countryside and its 'beauty spots'.[90] The notable anti-war campaigner Rolf Gardiner tied his love of rural England and naturism with internationalist sentiment.[91] Gardiner was sympathetic to Nazism and fascism and not necessarily an absolute pacifist. Nevertheless, English rural revivalism held huge cultural capital within the inter-war period and was often combined with anti-war sentiment. For instance, the pacifist Cecil Joad campaigned to preserve the English countryside against industrial exploitation and was a keen advocate of naturism.[92] PPU rambles offered an opportunity to connect members to each other and to the countryside. Often rambles were used to distribute literature to the public.[93]

Rambling was quite a controversial form of physical activity for some, as noted by Gilbert Powell, as it was said that a 'rambling club is a company of people who go out in their 20s and come back in their twos'.[94] However, Powell stressed that the 'purpose of these rambles has been peace, peace between man and God, peace between man and man, peace between nation and nation'.[95] Powell, and other PPU members, felt that rambling could further the pacifist cause. Rambles provided an opportunity to assemble members and to campaign, as the walks often finished in village greens where a crowd could accumulate to hear PPU speakers.[96]

Furthermore, rambles were seen to connect members to God and often used the philosophical ideal of Muscular Christianity. The symbolism of suffering was important to Dick Sheppard, who wrote to fellow pacifist and writer Laurence Housman, 'I like pain … it brings me nearer to my Master'.[97] *Peace News* connected Christian suffering to rambling in 1939, by making references to a group of three men named the 'Tramp Preachers' who toured the country for the PPU.[98] *Peace News* invoked the Christian symbolism of masculine sacrifice for a higher-good as it was noted that

the preachers were 'abused, laughed at, and even hustled'.[99] The act of walking itself evokes connections to the Biblical pilgrimages of Moses and Paul the Apostle, amongst others. The 'Tramp Preachers', according to *Peace News*, encouraged many new recruits and even 'attracted a crowd of about 200 people'.[100] The fact that such a plethora of responses met the preachers could be due to the international situation in 1939, as pacifism became at once more relevant than ever and more rebuked.[101] Nonetheless, it is noted that the preachers reached 'a section of public opinion which is practically untouched by other forms of PPU propaganda'.[102] Pacifists connected rambling to rural idealism, Christianity, and peace.

The PPU also aimed to engender cultural mixing on a more individual level through rambles. For instance in November 1936 the PPU held an event with the International Friendship League (founded in 1931).[103] Within this event 'by means of rambles, cycle runs, dances, and other social gatherings members of the International Friendship League make people from abroad forget that this is a foreign country and so justify the name of the organisation'.[104] The PPU and IFL attempted to enable friendships between the people of Britain and other countries. These individual friendships were important to the preservation of peace as pacifists aimed at humanising the inhabitants of other countries to engender empathy and diminish the likelihood of war. This was epitomised in the 'Holiday Embassies of Youth' established in 1938 by Granville Hawkes.[105] Hawkes had become 'dissatisfied with the kind of holidays which English people commonly take' and 'with some friends, among whom he discussed it, he set out for a tramp down the Rhine'.[106] Hawkes wanted to 'enable people like himself to go into lands other than their own and thereby make intimate contacts with the individuals who constitute the peoples of the world'.[107] He felt that 'international understanding would be helped by the insight that such holidays would bring'.[108] Pacifists favoured these methods as international conflict escalated to a stage that sport could not heal. As such, they began to use sport to test and maintain the non-violence of individual members.

The PPU's creation of a pacifist milieu required a firm ideological basis due to the totality of its anti-militarism. PPU members were encouraged to reject combative sports to fully embrace a non-violent lifestyle. This was heavily influenced by the middle-class nature of the movement as blood sports were associated with the working-classes (dogfighting, boxing) and the upper-classes (hunting).[109] By negating violent physical activities, the PPU provided opportunities for pacifism to be practiced in everyday life and outside of wartime.

The PPU's rejection of inherently violent sports was most aptly represented by their condemnation of 'blood sports'. The Humanitarian League set up by Henry Salt in 1891, for those who opposed hunting any wild animals, coined the term 'blood sports'.[110] Many pacifists were also

keen proponents of vegetarianism, which suggests that the dietary culture of the movement corresponded with their ideological rejection of violence. In *Peace News*, the PPU's rejection of blood sports was mentioned consistently.[111] For instance in June 1937, Henry Salt was quoted as stating 'the temper which makes war still possible is kept alive and fostered, among other practices, by that of doing to death thousands of helpless animals for purposes of mere recreation'.[112] Pacifists equated blood sports with war and excessive aggression. In addition, *Peace News* printed (the Victorian novelist and sportswriter) R.S. Surtees' claim that 'hunting is the image of war without its guilt'.[113] Pacifists maintained that blood sports were an opportunity for war-like activities to thrive during peacetime.

Many historians have emphasised the value of 'blood sports' in the creation of the English gentleman aesthetic and archetypal inter-war masculinity. Tichelar has argued that, irrespective of class, hunting was defined as an important element of British manhood.[114] Moreover, Collins has outlined that the English gentleman archetype was conflated with national character in the inter-war period.[115] It is, therefore, significant that the PPU rejected blood sports. They were not only refusing to hunt animals but contrasting expected gender performance and refuting nationalised masculine values. The famous poet and writer Siegfried Sassoon, who later became a member of the PPU, caricatured this archetype in *Memoirs of a Fox-Hunting Man* in 1928.[116] Within this semi-autobiographical novel, foxhunting was used to represent the young man's naivety about militarism and violence before the war broke out. Pacifists, like Sassoon, challenged the English gentleman model.

As such, pacifists were very conscious of the sports that they elected to play. Many pacifists' expectations of male communities were heavily influenced by their public-school education. Indeed, the use of sport within public schools moulded middle-class pacifists' dispositions. For instance, many pacifists expressed a deep admiration of cricket. John Middleton Murry highlighted the satisfaction he felt 'winning the House cricket cup'.[117] Cricket was mentioned in many of the autobiographical works of PPU members, such as the author A.A. Milne and the political theorist Leonard Woolf.[118] Eric Gill noted that in 'games we are more free to consider action in itself and are less concerned with its effect—the particular quality of a "stroke" at cricket, the intricate perfection of the combination of the exactly right power with the exactly right angle'.[119] The importance of cricket to many of the men involved in the movement led to its inclusion in local PPU branch activities. For example, in August 1939 the Scarborough group held 'its annual outing' where 'full advantage was taken to the ideal weather conditions to enjoy bathing and cricket'.[120] Despite the tremors of war, the union's members still valued communal events such as these. Local branches of the PPU recognised that physical recreation engendered

collective values and used it alongside (and sometimes instead of) regular meetings.[121]

Reflections on the relationship between sport and peace

The unique potential for sport to reach large audiences, to distil complex notions into recognisable tropes, and to subtly instil ideals was recognised by peace activists. The LNU and PPU used physical activities to create anti-war communities that united in favour of internationalism and stood against violence and militarism. Where sport had been used to create an international kinship, the PPU and its ideologues harked back to a very localised and rural past. This was firmly rooted in middle-class idealism. Pacifists and pacificists used sport within their visions of a peaceful world order. International events, like the Olympics, were seen as the perfect method to foster friendships and sublimate hostilities. In this vein, sport was used as a vehicle of rehabilitation after war. Moreover, pacifists mobilised against a mechanised modernity that was conflated with militarism. In turn, pacifists sought to create a world order that associated physical activity with peace, nature, and communal sensibilities.

To the LNU, sport was valuable in engendering an international kinship and fostering the 'world citizen' ethos. Activists within the LNU felt that sport should be used to humanise opponents, to facilitate friendships on an international scale, and, thus, limit hostilities. They aligned sport with the values of peace, such as humility in defeat and cordiality (the notion of sportsmanship and fair play). This altered as pacifism, as represented by the PPU, became more absolute. To the PPU, sport was used as a means of permeating everyday life with pacifist principles and practices. Pacifism, as Caedel has stated, resembled a faith, and sport provided a microcosm of peace. The PPU used sport to test the pacifist faith by requiring members to reject combative sports and embrace a non-violent lifestyle. This offered a way to live a pacifist life against the backdrop of resurgent militarism and international crises. In turn, this prompted an alternative vision of manhood that privileged peace over violence.

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