

Full Length Paper

Political Approach to Leisure: The “stop WWI coalition”, 1908 - 1914

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Written by six young people from Liverpool, a 1912 account of backpacking in France was the introduction of this study to Arthur Leonard and his political approach to leisure. Celebrating peace, a year after the Morocco crisis brought Europe to the brink of war, the backpackers end their adventures with a toast to friendship, long life and happy days. Determined to speak and understand French, their friendships are already international. They had learned how to explore a new country as guests rather than tourists through the Co-operative Holidays Association, founded in 1894 by Arthur Leonard with its first head office in Rhu, on the Clyde, in 1897. From the international household of his Hackney childhood, Leonard progressed to secondary school in Heidelberg. After preparing for the Congregational ministry with Dr. John Paton of Nottingham, he arrived in Barrow in 1887. Recession had forced many out of work. Barrow celebrated Victoria's Jubilee with soup kitchens. Industrialists and wealthy landowners had made little provision for the wellbeing of workers. Hostility between migrant communities was rife. Contemporary reports describe a wilderness of unfinished streets, unlicensed alcohol and obscene graffiti. Drainage and water supplies were poor. The Registrar General identified “a startling level of zygotic disease.” Leonard's unorthodox approach to ministry included rambles on the Furness fells for young people, and one of the first academics whose support he enlisted was Dr Alex Hill, Master of Downing and a pioneer of environmental medicine. Leonard's political and religious difficulties in Barrow prompted a move to the notoriously radical town of Colne. Accusations of Socialism continued. Linking the hill walking, music and ventures such as open-air services for cyclists to the National Home Reading Union, it was Leonard's mentor, Dr Paton who recognised the national and indeed international potential of Leonard's initiative. Challenging barriers of class, gender, faith and nationality, the Co-operative Holidays Association was intensely and deliberately educational, recruiting leading academics and other key professionals as lecturers and field guides. In 1906, centres opened in Germany and France. School exchange pupils in Britain and Germany stayed with host families and at outdoor centres. As international tension mounted, reciprocal visits developed into a formal peace movement. Studying photos in the 1912 account, it was reasonable to see that the young man whose walking clothes and footwear had been identified as German could be a friend met through these links with Germany. A mistake, but it led to the efforts of Arthur Leonard and countless others to prevent the ‘Great War’ by bringing young people together.

Keywords: Arthur Leonard; Co-operative Holidays Association; National Home Reading Union; Congregational Ministry; Ferienheimgesellschaft.

INTRODUCTION

On a June morning in 1909, a party of British holidaymakers arrived at Frankfurt station. All were members of the Co-operative Holidays Association (CHA). Their leader was the CHA founder Arthur Leonard, a former Congregationalist minister. They hadn't travelled far that day, only the twenty kilometres from Kelkheim, where the CHA and the National Home Reading Union (NHRU) had leased the Hotel Taunusblick from May until late August. The British party's arrival in Kelkheim hadn't gone unnoticed. Greeted by the Bürgermeister, Herr Phillipp Kremer, they were expected and welcome guests. In Frankfurt, the welcoming party included two linguists, Dr. Max Walter, Direktor of the Musterschule and Dr. August Lorey, also of the

Musterschule, and the city architect, Dr. Julius Hulsén. Hosts and guests knew this was no ordinary holiday. Dr. Walter was an internationally renowned expert in language teaching.

August Lorey had taught at Manchester Grammar School, where Leonard's friend Lewis Paton was High Master. Introducing school exchanges with the Musterschule, Lewis Paton asked Leonard if Frankfurt boys could stay at CHA centres. In the joint CHA and National Home Reading Union journal, *Comradeship* and at the association's meetings, members were reminded that they would be ambassadors for their country.¹ Travelling at Whitsun, when school pupils and undergraduates would be taking or preparing for exams, Leonard's party included many young people in their twenties.² At the Rathaus, OberBürgermeister Franz Adickes, one of the founders of Frankfurt's university, welcomed them. (Sheehan. 1971: 116-137).

The timing of this visit to Frankfurt was no accident. Tension between the "cousin nations" was mounting, inflamed, according to Ramsay Macdonald, by powerful press barons with their own agenda. Critics in Germany made the same complaints about their own press.³ Asquith's government, which had initially halted the building of warships, was planning eight more Dreadnoughts for Britain's already powerful navy. Germany was, inevitably, expanding her own fleet.⁴ In June 1891, challenging prejudice and hostility towards any perceived outsiders; the twenty-six year old Leonard had introduced a group of Lancashire mill workers to the English Lake District. In literary Lakeland, mill workers from Lancashire were about as welcome as an outbreak of Foot and Mouth. The language used by Lakeland's elite is overtly racist. Together with their neighbours in Yorkshire, Lancastrians were identified as the least desirable of visitors, whose very presence would devalue property, making Ambleside no better than an inland Blackpool.⁵ The fears of the ageing Ruskin and long dead Wordsworth were groundless, or at least, grossly unfair to the party from Colne. Guided by the NHRU, the mill workers were equipped with eyes to perceive and hearts to enjoy. They climbed Helvellyn. To quote one of the young men, "it were champion". Helvellyn doesn't need odes.⁶ The following summer, they stayed in Caernarfon and climbed Snowdon. In 1894 the Co-operative Holidays Association was founded. 1895 saw the first centre in Ireland, and in 1897, the CHA had its first headquarters at Rhu, near Helensburgh.

INTERNATIONAL FRIENDSHIP INVASION

Confidently elitist, Leonard believed the CHA was offering opportunities, which should be accessible to all – "regions of loveliness, to seek out and preserve for the highest uses of the human spirit" (Leonard, 1934: p. 10). Leonard's attitude to hostility between nations was equally direct. If people could meet face-to-face and share experiences, they would discover how much

¹ Leonard, 1909, *Comradeship*. Autumn, pp 3 - 5, Details the preparations before the first Kelkheimholiday. B/CHA/5/2, GMCRO

² Photographs, 1910 - 1911, B/CHA/PHT/3/15. GMCRO

³ Beaumont, Hubert, (1911) 'International Friendship through Holidays' *Comradeship*, Autumn 1911, pp. 37-38 GMCRO

⁴ Massie, Robert, 1991, *Dreadnought*, Ballantine Massive expenditure in Britain encouraged Germany to increase her own spending on armaments. See also De Groot, Gerard, 2001, 'The First World War', 2001, Palgrave, Ch 4, 'The War at Sea

⁵ Ruskin, John, 1885 - 1887, letters published in the Westmorland Gazette, The Times & elsewhere, objecting to working class visitors to the Lake District, Ruskin being one of many such correspondents.

⁶ Nelson & Colne Times, July 1891

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they had in common. As their governments poured money into armaments, Leonard and his friends in Frankfurt were refining their plans for holidays for young people, seeing this as the surest route to international friendship. In his early career, including his eight turbulent years of Congregationalist ministry, Leonard had attempted, admittedly with only limited success, to overcome British class barriers. His response to the mounting suspicion and fear of Germany was determinedly optimistic. Militarism in Britain and Germany threatened the whole of Europe. Britain's former relationship with Germany had been unsettled by German unification and by the shifting ententes and alliances of the early twentieth century. Leonard's 1909 initiative cannot be regarded as eccentric. The CHA project, including school exchanges and holidays for young workers, was contemporary with Beveridge's research visits studying the structured German approach to unemployment. (Beveridge, 1908).

In Frankfurt, the CHA's hosts continued to celebrate the British "invasion". Both German and British photos of this holiday identify "invaders", a reference, surely, to William le Queaux's bestseller, *The German Invasion of 1910*. Welcoming their guests, the Deutsche Englishchen Verstandigungs Komitee of Frankfurt declared their commitment to peace:

We know of no possible ground of a serious quarrel between the two countries. On the contrary, we find in their history, their common faith and long friendship, their mutual interest in literature, science and art the strongest reasons for the maintenance of cordial and friendly relations.⁷

Perhaps some of the British party enjoyed the lecture on the use of local taxation to fund municipal improvement? Perhaps the finer points were lost in translation? The merits of local taxation might be a minority interest. International friendship was the real goal, encouraging young people to share holidays in the British and German countryside. Enabling those with little money to take part was important. Arthur Leonard would surely listen attentively. In 1900 his own passion for living well in a life-enhancing environment inspired his approach to Patrick Geddes, who enabled the CHA to use Edinburgh university residences during the summer vacation. Officially a botanist, biologist and town planner, Patrick Geddes' career defies narrow definition, but the twenty first century is catching up with his vision of life on earth and mankind's place as one part of that whole. Long before the Apollo programme, Professor Geddes created images at the Outlook Tower (now the Camera Obscura) showing the city of Edinburgh and the whole planet in relation to the universe.⁸

DREADNOUGHT RACE, AND SHARED ACTIVITIES

The visitors spent the rest of their day in Frankfurt exploring the city, visiting the Stadel Art Gallery, the museum and the Fest Halle, the city's new concert hall. Invited to sing for their hosts, the rucksack diplomats obliged, having with them the CHA's songbook, *le petit livre vert*.⁹ Their repertoire was already international, including Tannenbaum, Gruss den Walde, Die Lorelei and many traditional songs from other European countries. British and German press reports

⁷ Leonard, 1909, *Comradeship*, autumn, pp 3 - 5, B/CHA/PUB/5/1, GMCRO

⁸ *Edinburgh Globe*, 1901 'An Educational Experiment', B/CHA/HIS/16/1, GMCRO

⁹ *Songs of Fellowship*, B/CHA/PUB/6/1/1 In 1919, during the post-war occupation of Germany, British soldiers heard children in the Eifel singing 'Do you ken John Peel?' They, or their parents, had learned the Cumbrian ballad from C.H.A. visitors.

are enthusiastic.¹⁰ In Frankfurt, the Ferienheimgesellschaft was founded later that year. Berlin quickly followed suit, forming the Vereinigung der CHA Freunde. (Friends of the CHA) Leonard's enthusiastic account of the first Kelkheim summer suggests unusual fluency in the British party, German hosts and British guests apparently speaking both languages. Many of the British academics were professional linguists. Perhaps younger CHA members welcomed the opportunity to practice their German? In Manchester, classes in French and German were available in the city centre and at the CHA head office. Intending travellers to centres in France and Germany were encouraged to prepare for their holiday by attending such classes. *Comradeship* published some articles in German, offering no translation.¹¹

At the Palmgarten, the British consul, Sir Francis Oppenheimer and Baron von Siebold, president of the Anglo-German friendship association, welcomed the visitors. Advertised as Summer Holidays in the Taunus, the Anglo-German adventures demanded total commitment and boundless energy. The Taunus experience offered miles of high-level mountain walking. For British walkers, used to the tradition of getting lost and confrontations with angry gamekeepers, coloured way marked routes were a novelty. So were family friendly beer gardens. There were visits to archaeological sites, including the reconstructed Roman camp at Saalburg, to Heidelberg, Epstein, Homburg and every other destination recommended by Drs Walter and Lorey. Evenings could be devoted to lectures and music. The high profile welcome and strong local support for the British visit followed months of preparation. In September 1908, after the CHA's third successful summer in the Eifel, Leonard travelled to Frankfurt to visit Dr. Walter and Dr. Lorey.¹² Well aware of the political situation, dominated by the Dreadnought race, he wanted to explain what the CHA hoped to achieve, how the project had begun among the mill workers of Lancashire and how he hoped it might develop internationally. Writing to news editors in Frankfurt and Cologne Leonard expressed his hopes that local people would spend time with the British visitors, taking part in CHA activities. Press reports and many photos confirm that the invitation was accepted. Later that summer, the first Musterschule boys stayed at CHA centres in the Lakes and in Derbyshire. In September 1909, the boys gave a presentation to parents and fellow pupils, reporting on their five weeks in England. Surnames suggest that half the first group were Jewish.¹³ Terms such as conflict resolution weren't yet current, but the focus on shared activities is clear, favouring hill walking, music and heritage, rather than competitive sport. Before WWI, the experiences offered to young people by the CHA and by like-minded organisations in Germany are similar in concept to current conflict resolution projects, such as Charter Northern Ireland. In the Antrim hills, young people from Belfast don't need to be Catholic or Protestant.¹⁴

Leonard's radical policies and identification in CHA records as a former minister prompted many questions. Had he quarrelled with God? Had he been unfrocked? Young men who've studied and prepared for a life in church ministry don't, as a rule, leave to found a holiday company, let alone one targeting the eighteen to thirty sets. In the late nineteenth century, young working people from the mill towns and industrial cities were arranging their own holidays. Like cheap flights now, cut-price excursion trains carried them to resorts where alcohol flowed freely. Only the venues have changed. (Pimlott, 1947: Ch. II). Introduced to the fells and moors by Leonard,

¹⁰ Frankfurter Allgemeine, Stadtische Nachrichten, and other reports. July 1909. B/CHA/PUB/16/1GMCRO

¹¹ Lorey, August, 1911, 'Ferienheimgesellschaft, Frankfurt' *Comradeship*, spring, pp 73-74 B/CHA/5/1, GMCRO

¹² Leonard, 1909 At least three accounts of the September, 1908 visit were published, varying in length, differing only slightly from 'In the Taunus' p 3 - 5, *Comradeship*, B/CHA/PUB/5/2 GMCRO

¹³ Stadtische Nachrichten, September 14th, 1909 B/CHA/HIS/16/1

¹⁴ www.Chaterni.com Charter Northern Ireland promotes sustainable peace and reconciliation

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some of the young people in Barrow and Colne began to discover alternatives to binge drinking. In 1893, Leonard and the National Home Reading Union introduced a new kind of holiday experience, physically and intellectually rewarding. The first Ambleside holiday timetable exemplifies their joint objectives. So do the points of departure, none of which suggests privilege. Travel details are given for two railway companies, the Lancashire and Yorkshire and the Midland, quoting discounted fares from Nelson, Accrington, Blackburn, Oldham, Bury, Derby, Burton, Sheffield and Leicester. Climbing Helvellyn, the Langdale Pikes and Skiddaw, the pioneers studied Wordsworth, Coleridge, de Quincey – and the new Manchester waterworks site at Thirlmere.¹⁵

By 1909, there were CHA centres all over the British Isles. Some open all year, like Newlands near Keswick, the Abbey House, Whitby and Park Hall, Hayfield, were owned outright or rented on a long lease. Others, including the Kelkheim hotel and Galway grammar school were leased for the summer only. In Kelkheim, the first staff included Clement Ord, Professor of German at Bristol and the linguist, physicist and theologian, Professor Archibald Duff. Some younger personnel were also linguists.¹⁶ The presence of so many linguists reflects the CHA's increasingly political role and its commitment to promoting peace – a commitment shared by members of the Modern Languages Society. The Liverpool backpackers whose adventures introduced me to Arthur Leonard demonstrate this radically different approach to a holiday abroad. France was their own adventure, backed by the young men's experiences in the CHA. Using public transport and staying at village inns, their determination to speak French, understand the reply and respect French etiquette at all times is impressive. In France, they reflected on a shared history dominated by centuries of conflict. Protestants, including Presbyterian Scots, from a divided city, their respect for a different faith developed and instinctive prejudice diminished as they met local people.¹⁷

SOCIAL REFORM: OUTDOORS EDUCATION

The inspiration for the backpackers' entente cordiale journey and the carefully planned diplomacy in Frankfurt can be traced to the troubled Victorian boomtown where Arthur Leonard's career began. Arriving in Barrow in 1887 to begin his first period of ministry, the Reverend Arthur Leonard encountered squalor, sickness, savage conflict between migrant communities, together with intellectual and spiritual poverty. (Trescaheric, 1985). The "Reverend" title could be misleading. Leonard was twenty-three; the disaffected young people of Barrow were his contemporaries. His unorthodox approach to ministry focused on education and life-enhancing experiences, like his own move from a Hackney childhood to secondary education in Heidelberg. (Leonard, 1934). Deposited by Leonard's son in law, papers in the GMCRO identify Heidelberg, but no details have been traced. Aged seven, (1871 census) Leonard was in Hackney with his widowed mother and younger sister. Dr. Thomas Weber has suggested that secondary schooling in Heidelberg could have been achieved via a German philanthropic programme of this period. No case histories are available, but many of the boys

¹⁵ Pringle, F.N, 1893, 'A Week among the Lakes', The Independent and Nonconformist, p 164, B/CHA/HIS/16/GMCRO

¹⁶ Summer Holidays in the Taunus, 1909. Dr Duff and Clement Ord of Bristol University were the strongest academics present. No German teachers joined CHA staff for this season. B/CHA/PUB/5/2 GMCRO

¹⁷ Six Nomads in Normandy, bound typescript, 1912, backpacking adventures in France, written by members of the CHA

came from the industrial North.¹⁸ Hill walking on the Furness fells, young people discovered - literally - wider horizons. From the hills above the “rough, tough, insanitary “streets of Barrow, they could see the Lakeland fells, the Isle of Man, Scotland and even Snowdonia. Young people welcomed Leonard’s leadership. Older and far more powerful members of the community distrusted both his politics and his increasingly unorthodox faith. A move to notoriously radical Colne seemed appropriate, but church deacons there soon complained that the young minister was using his position to promote Socialism, a doctrine they entirely rejected.¹⁹

Linking the hill walking and music enjoyed by young people in Colne to the educational programme of the National Home Reading Union, Dr. John Brown Paton - Lewis Paton’s father - recognised the potential of such a concept. His suggestion - “Why not do this for thousands?” - Transformed a young man’s career crisis into creative change of direction. In 1897, Leonard resigned from active ministry to concentrate on social reform through outdoor education.

Recruiting teachers and field guides for CHA centres, he was able to enlist leading academics from almost every university in Britain and many other distinguished professionals. CHA holidaymakers climbed Snowdon, Scafell and Ben Nevis with Fellows of the Geological Society, studied plants with Fellows of the Linnaean Society; history with the young R.H.Tawney and astro-physics with an Isaac Newton fellow of Harvard. Peter MacNair, curator of Natural History at Kelvingrove, Glasgow and A.B.Rendle, Curator of the Science Museum in Kensington both lectured at CHA centres. So did Fred Marquis of Lewis’s, Liverpool, better known as Lord Woolton. Suggesting twenty-first century parallels is tempting, but listing staff in any order of precedence would be invidious. Some were already professors of education, geology, modern languages and zoology. At least two became vice-chancellors. Others were just beginning their academic careers. Many CHA lecturers and guides were also Nonconformist ministers.²⁰

In the first years of the twentieth century, Leonard came to believe that the work of the Co-operative Holidays Association could and should become international. The movement offered young people of both sexes, opportunities to form friendships with others from markedly different backgrounds; including those with a history of conflict. Among Leonard’s personal papers is a copy of Franz Cramer’s 1903 review of *Ein Studienaufenthalt in England*. (Reusch, 1902). This engaging account of a CHA holiday in Whitby, circa 1901, begins by challenging Iago’s “Put money in thy purse”. German readers were, of course, expected to recognise the quotation from Othello and make the obvious connection with affordable holidays.²¹ Reusch explains that Leonard’s Co-operative holiday movement took a different approach. Philanthropists in banking and industry supported the leasing and purchase of suitable properties, considerably subsidising the price paid by holidaymakers. All guests who could afford to were invited to contribute to “Goodwill Holidays” for the poor, a practice dating from the 1893 NHRU holiday in Ambleside. Moving swiftly from Shakespeare to Caedmon and Whitby’s 199 steps, Reusch celebrates an exhilarating and for its time, highly unusual holiday. In the Spartan Abbey House, bedrooms were shared. So were household chores. Young women joined in all the adventures. On the North Yorkshire coast, sandcastles were built. Studying geology, botany, peat bog plants and the Newcastle coal industry was just as important as energetic walks and music. According to Reusch, a CHA holiday offered a superb environment

¹⁸ Dr T.Weber, University of Aberdeen, personal communication

¹⁹ Deacons, Independent Church, Colne, letter to Leonard, 1894, delivering a rebuke for his perceived Socialism - Leonard family papers.

²⁰ CHA centre programmes list participating guides, lecturers and other staff. B/CHA/PUB/5/2, GMCRO.

²¹ Othello, Act I Scene III

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in which to learn a language, enjoy outdoor adventures and make new friends. Leonard hoped to bring young people of all incomes and backgrounds together. At Whitby, it sounds as if he succeeded. Reusch reports accents ranging from Cockney to Scottish. Mixed-sex hostelling scandalised many townspeople. Leonard wondered if they'd forgotten that Abbess Hild had ruled a monastery for men and women.

At the end of his review, Dr Cramer supplied Leonard's address, advising readers to send for a brochure.²² Cramer would later attend CHA annual meetings. The first German groups joined CHA holidays in 1904 and the Eifel holidays followed in 1906. (Leonard, 1934: 43-45). Reusch and Cramer were writing before the CHA's links with Germany became openly diplomatic. At the beginning of the twentieth century, linguists throughout Europe were urging that young people should be studying modern languages and visiting each other's countries. In 1905 Dr. Max Walter lectured on language teaching in London and Oxford. With a Frankfurt colleague, Dr. Walter also visited Karl Breul in Cambridge.²³ Already, following the modern curriculum, rather than the Greek and Latin favoured by British public schools, German students could move between the ancient universities of Europe.²⁴ Dr. Breul, who became the university's first professor of German in 1910, was urging that languages shouldn't be studied in isolation. Understanding another culture was equally important. In the Peak District, Joseph Findlay, Professor of Education at Manchester, held January study weeks on German culture. In the comparatively new discipline of education, many British academics and teachers at leading schools had studied at universities in Germany.²⁵ The idea of creating a holiday centre near Frankfurt developed in tandem with the school exchanges and Eifel holidays. (Leonard, 1934: 44-45). In Berlin, Cologne, Dresden, Frankfurt and in the cities of Northern England, teachers, youth leaders and church groups recognised the value of working together. Advertisements in *Comradeship* and the need for host families, and AGM minutes record exchanges of gifts and support for local church groups.²⁶ From Manchester Grammar School, the idea had spread to other schools in the North of England and in the Midlands, including the Quaker-founded Adult Schools.²⁷ Evidence in the CHA archives and in Colne, the Lancashire mill town to which Leonard often returned, indicates that many German boys spent time with families in Northern England, visiting the Yorkshire moors, the Peak District and the Lakes. In Germany, British boys stayed with host families and at summer camps.²⁸ Reports in *Comradeship*, *the Manchester Guardian*, *the Yorkshire Observer*, *the Frankfurter Allgemeine* and many other papers continued to claim widespread support for the Anglo-German project. British and German parents insisting that the friendship created between their sons would surely be lifelong. Some of Leonard's first Frankfurt group published their own account of the experience, including Bessie Richards of Aberdare, who identified Leonard's party as English and Welsh.²⁹

²² Cramer, Franz, 1860 - 1923, historian, taught in Munster, many publications, including works on the Roman occupation of the Rhineland.

²³ Karl Breul to Oscar Browning, June 1905, OB/1/208/C, King's College Cambridge

²⁴ Karl Breul to Oscar Browning, Nov 1908, OB/1/208/C, King's College Cambridge

²⁵ C.H.A. summer programmes

²⁶ On January 4th, 1910, a gift of £5 was voted to the funds of the Taunus church, and £5 to the local branch of the Taunus club in Kelkheim. Gifts became reciprocal. B/CHA/ADM/1/3, GMCRO

²⁷ Warwickshire Meeting, 772, re Adult Schools peace visit, 1911 www.birmingham.gov.uk/archives&heritage

²⁸ *Comradeship*, 1909-1913, CHA/PUB/5/1, GMCRO see also reports in the *Manchester Guardian*, *Yorkshire Observer*

²⁹ Richards, Bessie, 1909, 'From a Welsh Girl's Diary' and similar reports by the same writer,

B/CHA/HIS/16/GMCRO

The programme of student exchange visits and shared holidays was now established. Published in Manchester, *Comradeship* constantly promotes the value of language skills. Mastering or even struggling with a new language was an essential skill in forming real friendships. The publishing of articles in German indicates that sufficient members were able to read these contributions. Advertisements for British summer staff at centres in Europe and for hosts accompanying parties from Germany specify that candidates should speak at least one modern language. In Manchester, the German consul, Captain Theodor Schlagintweit, reported that he was having difficulty in meeting the demand for language classes.³⁰ On July 2nd, 1910, reciprocating the 1909 CHA visit, four parties from Frankfurt's Ferienheimgesellschaft (FGS) arrived in London.

GARDEN CITY MOVEMENT

According to which tour they chose, the visitors could explore the UK from Beachy Head to the Scottish glens. In Scotland, the hill-walking programme included ascents of Ben Ime and Ben Lomond, led by Ernest Breul.³¹

In London, the architect, Phillips Figgis, accompanied the visitors. At Oxford, their host was the professor of German, Hermann Fiedler. In Stratford, Frank Benson, Director of the Shakespeare Memorial Theatre, welcomed them. Based in the Peak District for their second week, they spent a whole day at Port Sunlight. Why not stay longer in Oxford or Stratford? Like the CHA, the FGS intended holidays to be educational. Students might not remember the ravages of cholera and other diseases caused by poor sanitation. Their parents certainly would. Tuberculosis (TB) was still widely prevalent, associated with damp and overcrowded accommodation. In Britain, in Germany and throughout the developed world, the Garden City Movement was important. In its infancy, western industrialisation had spawned vile living conditions, first in Britain, then throughout Northern Europe. The slums of Manchester became a byword for disease and misery. Industrialists learned, slowly, that a sick and strife-ridden workforce isn't cost effective. In 1887, Lever Brothers established the highest possible standard of living for their workforce. In strictly financial terms, Port Sunlight made no economic sense. As an investment in their employees, the return was incalculable.³² In 1909 alone, there were over fifty thousand visitors, including hundreds of German members of the Garden City Movement. On the eve of the first global war, they were studying the art of living well, creating good environments for work and leisure.³³

GRASSROOTS DIPLOMACY AND THE UNDEFINED EAST

The CHA headquarters were now in Brunswick St, Manchester, in the heart of the university area. Throughout the intensifying difficulties of 1911, the CHA peace project was pursued with even greater determination. Blaming Germany for increasing her own expenditure, the Admiralty now wanted thirty Dreadnoughts. At every level of society, from working people in the industrial North to the Duke of Argyll (one of Queen Victoria's sons in law), the banker Lord Avebury and the diplomat Sir Frank Lascelles, pragmatists warned of the likely outcome. The ruinous expenditure on armaments would mean lower wages, higher prices and harder work for both

³⁰ Schlagintweit, Theodor, *Yorkshire Observer*, 1911

³¹ Ferienheimgesellschaft, 1910. Distinctive FGS graphics identify the CHA as English and Scottish. B/CHA/4/1, GMCRO

³² Abercrombie, Patrick, *Progress* Vol. 10, p16-18, archives@unilever.com

³³ Lever, Sir William *Progress*, Vol. 11, p 150 - 153, archives@unilever.com

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England and Germany.³⁴ In June, 1911, with France, Germany and Spain at loggerheads in Morocco, claiming the port of Agadir, Arthur Leonard and his assistant Ernest Breul undertook the arrangements for an academic mission from Germany to Westminster. Over seventy professors and teachers visited the House of Commons, ostensibly to study British parliamentary democracy. Their host was Ramsay Macdonald.³⁵ On July 7th, over a hundred young working men from Germany arrived at Westminster, where Arnold Rowntree and many other members of parliament welcomed them. No record of this visit has survived in the parliamentary archives, but according to many press reports, the young men had breakfast at the Commons. Reciprocating peace visits to Germany in 1910, arranged by the Adult Schools Union, they sought to promote international friendship. At the Mansion House, the Lord Mayor received them.³⁶ From London they travelled on to civic welcomes in Birmingham, Manchester, Leeds, York and Leicester. In Britain and in Germany, families in the towns and cities visited provided all accommodation.³⁷

Speaking in his Leicester constituency on July 15th, 1911, Macdonald identified the key role of this grassroots diplomacy in promoting international friendship. In *Comradeship*, he urged that “friendly and intelligent democracy” could overcome problems generated by the press.

Friendly and intelligent democracy was failing rapidly now. Deploring xenophobic press reports, Macdonald underestimated the effect of syndicated serials and best-selling thrillers. Under Leonard's leadership, the CHA continued to welcome visits from Germany, claiming that this was in the cause of international peace. From the beginning the bid for friendship with Germany had been challenged. In 1911, the gifts to Frankfurt and Kelkheim were questioned.

Visiting German boys were unsuitable. The objections recorded in CHA minutes express the views of adults, not the young people themselves. It was agreed, reluctantly, that in future no more than two boys from the East would be allowed to stay in each hostel. Like the boys' supposed unsuitability, the East is never defined. A hundred years ago, prescient commentators were warning that the real challenge to the West certainly came from the East, not from Germany but from Japan and China.³⁸

Throughout the long hot Coronation summer of 1911, anyone expressing objections to visitors from the ‘East’ had to steer well clear of lese-majesty. After George V's coronation, many royal relatives remained in Britain for weeks. Prinz Heinrich of Hesse competed in a friendly Anglo-German car rally.³⁹ Throughout the Morocco crisis which brought Britain and Europe within hours of war, British and German staff at the Kelkheim, Newlands and Whitby centres continued to work together, some of them at more than one centre. The status of those committed to the project is impressive. In Kelkheim, CHA teaching staff included Dr. Walter, the philologist,

³⁴ Lascelles, May 1911, chairing a meeting of the Anglo-German Friendship Society, reports of his address published in several national and local newspapers.

³⁵ Macdonald's letter on this subject is published in full in *Comradeship*, autumn issue, 1911 B/CHA/5/2 GMCRO.

³⁶ Detailed and extensive press reports, national and local, July 1911 No records can be traced in the parliamentary archives. At the Guildhall, no records of the Mansion House reception have survived. Sir Benjamin Stone, official photographer for the coronation of George V, photographed the young men but no photos have been traced.

³⁷ Yorkshire Evening Press, July 14th 1911

³⁸ Compton Rickett, Joseph, MP (Scarborough, Lib) ‘The Threatened Wars of the Twentieth Century. Can they be avoided and how? Report, Yorkshire Observer, Jan 11th, 1911

³⁹ Reports, Westmorland Gazette, July 1911. In Windermere, Prinz Heinrich stayed with the British director of Daimler.

Direktor Dorr, Landrat Ernst von Marx of Homburg, Oberlehrer Max Meinig, Dr. August Lorey and Dr. Julius Hulsen, together with educationists and linguists teaching at British and German universities. One Kelkheim lecturer identified simply as “Mrs. Lindley” was the wife of the soon to be knighted Anglo-German civil engineer, William Heerlein Lindley.⁴⁰

On January 6th, 1912, at the Bradford AGM, only months after the hairsbreadth escape from war, Rektor Könzack of Frankfurt urged once more that British people should have greater access to the countryside. The motion was supported. Over two decades before the legendary invasion of Kinder Scout and almost a century before the “Right to Roam” Countryside Act of 2004, funds were raised for the access campaign, including a donation from Frankfurt. There was a strong German presence at this meeting, including members of Bradford’s commercial centre, still known as Little Germany.⁴¹ With Könzack in 1912 was Franz Cramer, the Dresden historian who had so enthusiastically promoted CHA holidays.⁴² At their conference in Birmingham, held over the same weekend, modern linguists offered their own interpretation of the last-minute reprieve. Nation had spoken peace unto nation... The language teachers of France and Germany, who had equipped their pupils for the informal behind the scenes *pourparlers*, which prepared the ground for successful diplomacy, had won peace.⁴³ Reports in *Comradeship* remain positive. Teachers, students and working people of all ages had played a part in promoting peace. The Mayor and council of Brighouse made an independent declaration of peace. CHA visitors to Kelkheim reported that their hosts had been welcoming, seeking not war but friendship. Hopes had been raised, but even the most resolute optimists knew the international situation remained serious. In December 1911, one important and influential teacher had withdrawn from the CHA. Losing Lewis Paton and the Manchester Grammar School exchanges with Frankfurt, which had promised so much was a serious blow. Before long, Paton would be recruiting members for the Public Schools Battalion. In November 1911 and in January 1912, Leonard returned to Colne, where he delivered intensely political speeches, advocating united strike action by the coal, steel and transport industries in Britain and Germany, to prevent war. In July 1952, the European Coal and Steel Community linked the six founding nations of the EU.⁴⁴

Despite the increasing tension, visits by school groups from Germany continued and more were planned. Even in April 1914, *Comradeship* published an advertisement for host families, especially for the week of July 18th - 25th. In the Manchester record office, surviving CHA programmes for 1912 have been mutilated. Names have been cut from the text either with a small knife or with scissors. Other records confirm that Anglo-German friendship between young people continued, especially at the Newlands centre near Keswick. Photographs taken at Newlands and on the fells show young people aged around sixteen to twenty, boys and girls, British and German. Throughout that unusually cold and wet summer, when the Met Office recorded July snow in England, Newlands youngsters enjoyed classic Lakeland adventures. On August 29th, one party became hopelessly lost in torrential rain, returning to the hostel at last around 10.45 p.m. Next day, they produced the eight-page handwritten and later duplicated *Newlands Echo*.⁴⁵ Parodying Gilbert and Sullivan, Sir Walter Scott and others, they describe

⁴⁰ Kelkheim in Taunus, 1911 B/CHA/PUB/5/2 GMCRO In 1935, Landrat Ernst von Marx’s Goldsmith relatives helped him to move to England. The London Gazette for 1924 lists a stateless Max Meinig in Bangor, who might be the Meinig of Kelkheim.

⁴¹ Yorkshire Observer, Jan 1912

⁴² Bradford, Jan 1912, press reports, Yorkshire Observer, and CHA minutes B/CHA/ADM/1/3, GMCRO

⁴³ Modern Languages Association conference, Birmingham, Jan 5th -6th, 1912, reports, Yorkshire Observer

⁴⁴ Nelson and Colne Times, Nov 1911, Jan 1912

their ascent of Great Gable and Green Gable and the identical view from both summits. (Dense mist in all directions.) Occasional capitals for nouns suggest that the author of at least one contribution is German. Working at Newlands, was Bernhard Seib then in his late teens, who had taken part in a 1909 Musterschule/Manchester Grammar School exchange. Following this first visit, Bernhard spent three summers at Newlands as a member of staff. In the last week of July 1912, eighteen-year-old Wilfred Owen was camping on the opposite shore, attending the Keswick Convention. Almost every speaker gave thanks that, despite the Morocco crisis, war had been averted.⁴⁶

CONCLUSION

Throughout 1912, the holiday association Arthur Leonard had founded was in turmoil. Internal conflict and distrust mirrored the international situation. Leonard submitted his resignation on November 28th, 1912.⁴⁷ Like almost every divorce, the separation from the CHA was bitter, though the hostility appears to be markedly one-sided. By May 1913, the Holiday Fellowship's existence had been formalised and its new headquarters established. Later accounts of this regime change are tactful, including the version given on the current Ramblers website, Ramblers having evolved from the CHA. Committed to peace, Leonard had become a Quaker. His determination to see "that of God in everyone" enforces very careful reading of what he says and what he fails to say. He begins his chapter on the origins of the HF by indicating that Fellowship hostels chose to reflect the Movement's democratic and internationalist origins. Middle-class preference for their own sort, for higher standards of comfort, and objections to the presence of "artisans" were only minor aspects of the real story. All of these issues could have been resolved within the existing foundation. Decades later, the CHA operated basic, standard and superior hostels and charged accordingly. In 1913, the true situation was infinitely more painful. In his own summary, Leonard indicates that the new holiday centres would not be in competition with the CHA, but acknowledges that there were other reasons:

And we had other thoughts. We were not making the progress in International work we had hoped for and to develop this seemed to need a new organisation consisting of young, forward looking people strongly influenced by the International outlook. (Leonard, 1934: 51-55).

In his foreword to the book published eventually by the Holiday Fellowship, Leonard refers to the inclusion of "material that had not at first appeared suitable". The nature of this material would become clear in his personal papers, including typescripts of the first draft of his book and the paper battle between Leonard and the CHA committee over employing Ernest Breul, which had begun in February 1910. There are gaps in the typescript. Names have been omitted, names he knew perfectly well. In 1929, he knew who were prime minister, and chancellor, and the various secretaries of state. Many of them had been his friends for years. During WWI, most of them would meet at Bryn Corach, the Holiday Fellowship centre in Conwy, holding a de facto Labour Party conference there. Military police arrived to investigate. Suspecting German spies, they found the Labour party. (Leonard, 1934: 113). Leonard's pacifism and the company he kept were well known. Perhaps his local MP knew something about that military police raid on Bryn Corach? Lloyd George was the Member for the Caernarfon Boroughs. Documents in

⁴⁵ Newlands Echo, August 30th, 1912. B/CHA/PUB/13/15

⁴⁶ Keswick Convention, 1912, vol. 38, Cumbria Record Office, Carlisle.

⁴⁷ Leonard to Drummond Fraser, 1912, B/CHA/ADM/1/4, GMCRO

Manchester reveal an intensely political agenda, driven by a cohort of CHA members who objected forcefully to Leonard's desire for a continuing relationship with Germany, to the German school groups, to the employment of Ernest Breul, and to his close association with Independent Labour Party politicians, including Philip Snowden, Charles Trevelyan and the rascally, unpatriotic, pro-German scoundrel, Ramsay Macdonald. Charles Trevelyan would become President of the Holiday Fellowship.

Even in 1929, the CHA committee sought to suppress publication by Leonard of any history of the CHA. He was denied all access to CHA records, which explains occasional dating inaccuracies. Members sought advice from the CHA committee. Should they or shouldn't they speak to Arthur Leonard? The CHA's lawyers advised that if Leonard were to publish, "a great deal of damage might be done to the association". The nature of that damage is not defined.⁴⁸ Leonard's rigorously positive version of events in 1912 - 1914 is in marked contrast to the vehemence with which those who had been his friends and colleagues for years attacked him. Just before the coup, which deposed him, the CHA had over 16,000 members. In 1913, only 150 people elected to join the new organisation. Leonard's choice of words is precise:

The utmost goodwill and confidence were shown to us by the old friends of the CHA. (Leonard, 1934: 51).

One of these friends was Arnold Rowntree. If the Holiday Fellowship was to survive, financial support from the Rowntrees and others would be essential, but finance was only one aspect of Leonard's relationship with the Rowntrees and other supporters. In 1912, Arnold Rowntree had been travelling through Germany with a group of parliamentary colleagues, promoting peace. Over the same period, Macdonald and several members of the Independent Labour Party were also in Germany. Reciprocal peace visits made by young people continued.⁴⁹

On January 2nd, 1914, Leonard was accused of deliberate and continuous dishonesty. CHA Treasurer Drummond Fraser issued the following statement:

Rumours constituting a specific charge of deliberate and continuous dishonesty on his part and may do injury to the new Holiday Fellowship, with which he is now identified. We desire to publicly state that Mr Leonard's retirement was due to his own initiative and his reasons were in the highest degree honourable.⁵⁰

The charge was proved to be completely groundless, but only two committee members resigned in sympathy with Leonard. In many quarters, it was no longer safe to court friendship with Germany. Leonard fought to remain responsible for the Kelkheim holiday centre, but the new CHA board would not allow this. Even in his book, Leonard claims that the HF was given the Newlands centre at a very low value. The gift was actually a loan. Leonard doesn't add that on the outbreak of war, this loan was immediately recalled. His real offence was, like that of his unpatriotic political friends, his determination to continue seeking a good understanding with Germany.

⁴⁸Ibberson, Herbert, Solr, to Weston, Henry, December 1929, advises on means of obstructing Leonard's proposed book on a history of the holiday movement. B/CHA/HIS/16/1, GMCRO

⁴⁹ Quaker supported Adult Schools made many peace journeys to Germany. L78 1 CAD, [birmingham.gov.uk/archives & heritage](http://birmingham.gov.uk/archives%20&%20heritage)

⁵⁰ Fraser, (Sir) Drummond, 1912 B/CHA/ADM/1/4 GMCRO

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Assessing the impact of this unofficial diplomacy through holidays and educational exchanges is difficult. Records are fragmentary. The mutilation of some records in Manchester might indicate that not all losses have been accidental. Several pre-WWI CHA lecturers would advocate conscientious objection. Some of the best-known peace campaigners were already distinguished, academically, politically, socially - and safely past military age. Younger conscientious objectors faced the loss of their careers. At Christ's Hospital School, Liverpool backpacker Frank Bourne had been the top maths student of his year and a sound linguist too, excelling in every subject of the modern curriculum.⁵¹ Frank Bourne's correspondence with visitors from Frankfurt confirms that he worked as a host for German parties staying at Park Hall, Hayfield in 1910 and at Ashburton House, Surrey in 1913.⁵² Frank appears in a group photo taken at Hayfield in July 1910. In the same photo there are more than twenty boys and young men, the young people who visited Port Sunlight. In 1916, rather than deny his conscience, Frank chose disgrace, compromising his whole career. Frank's close friend and fellow CHA member Alec Westmore served as a stretcher-bearer. In his 1919 articles for the *Liverpool Courier* and 1928 Field Ambulance history, Alec never refers to the Germans as Huns.⁵³

Conscripted, Bernhard Seib refused to shoot his English friends. Germany had made no formal provision for conscientious objection but Bernhard was allowed to transfer to the eastern front, dying there. A last letter from him reached England via neutral Denmark.

Vergessen werde ich nie was ich wahrend langer Jahre von ihnen all an treuer Freundschaft und Liebe erfahren habe, aber mehr kann ich nicht tun. Sie seien nicht am Krieg und all dem eldend Schukd, so sagen sie auf ihrer Insel. Und unsere tapferem Männer, Söhne und Brüder, deren lieben nun trauern, haben sie den Krieg gewollt? Trotz allem, grüsse Sie bitte, von mir, und wenn dies mein letztet Gruss an dich sein sollte...

I shall never forget all the true friendship and love I experienced during the years I have been with you. I cannot say more. You in your island say you are not responsible for this war and all the sorrow it has brought. What of the brave men, sons and brothers, whom we loved and now mourn? Did they wish for the war? Despite all, however, I send you all my greetings, and if this should be my last greeting... (Leonard, 1934: 95-96).

Arthur Leonard never held political office. The statesmen, scholars and social reformers who were among his closest friends valued his radical vision and practical policies. In old age, honoured for his work in outdoor education, he was awarded the OBE. His role as an unofficial diplomat, peace campaigner and pioneer of conflict resolution had been largely forgotten.

⁵¹ archives@christshospital.org, school records of F.R.Bourne

⁵² Hayfield, July 9th, 1910, B/CHA/PHT/3/16, GMCRO

⁵³ Westmore, A W and others, 1928, The History of the 63rd Field Ambulance, based on AWW's articles for the *Liverpool Courier*.

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