

Civil Society Diplomacy? W. T. Stead, World Peace, and Transgressive Journalism

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RESÜMEE

Anhand des britischen Journalisten William T. Stead analysiert der Artikel grenzübergreifende Strategien der Einflussnahme auf diplomatische Praktiken vor dem Ersten Weltkrieg. Stead ist heute vor allem wegen seiner Enthüllungen sozialer und politischer Skandale im viktorianischen England bekannt. Er selbst stellte aber seit den 1890er Jahren zunehmend die Lobbyarbeit für Friedensthemen und Internationalismus ins Zentrum seiner Aktivitäten. Mit lautstarken öffentlichen Aktionen versuchte der überzeugte Imperialist und Pazifist, weltweite Aufmerksamkeit auf das Problem der Friedenssicherung und Völkerverständigung zu lenken. Der Artikel schlägt vor, Steads Friedensaktivitäten im Rahmen seiner „transgressiven“ Arbeitsweise zu interpretieren. Auf diese Weise wird der Blick auf Steads kontinuierliche und öffentliche Übertretung sozialer Normen gerichtet. Seine verschiedenartigen Grenzüberschreitungen werden als Strategie interpretiert, um möglichst große internationale Aufmerksamkeit auf transnationale Einflussphären zu lenken und die staatenzentrierten, öffentlichkeitsfernen Verfahrensweisen der internationalen Beziehungen zu delegitimieren. Der Artikel rückt insbesondere Steads publizistische Aktivitäten anlässlich der beiden Haager Friedenskonferenzen 1899 und 1907 in den Mittelpunkt. Die Analyse der inoffiziellen Konferenzzeitung *Courier de la Conférence de la Paix* wirft hierbei ein Schlaglicht nicht nur auf Versuche zivilgesellschaftlicher Einflussnahmen auf internationale Verhandlungen, sondern auch auf die Transformation einer Diplomatie, die zunehmend unter dem Druck technischer Neuerungen und öffentlicher Interessen stand.

The British journalist, editor, publisher, and author William Thomas Stead (1849–1912) was a controversial public figure in the English-speaking world throughout his career. Stead's investigative press campaigns against what he saw as moral and social evils made him a well-known British personality of his time, though not at all a generally well-re-

spected one. His reputation for creating dramatic newspaper headlines was confirmed even in his death, which attracted more attention worldwide than most of his activities during his lifetime. In April 1912, Stead was scheduled to deliver a speech on world peace at Carnegie Hall in New York; he died in the Titanic tragedy.¹ In spite of the celebrity status that he had enjoyed in his own lifetime, Stead was not a prominent figure in scholarship through much of the twentieth century.² In the last decade, however, researchers have rediscovered W. T. Stead, primarily emphasizing two strands of enquiry: First, they have highlighted Stead's influence on the British press as a "newspaper revolutionary," analysing his efforts as a modernizer of mass media, an arduous editor, and a social campaigner; second, researchers have used Stead's work as a lens through which to uncover multiple aspects of the social, political, and cultural history of Victorian Britain.³ Recently, a third strand of inquiries has begun to investigate his impact on numerous societal and political discourses in both a national and a transnational way and

- 1 About Stead's voyage to New York in April 1912: James A. Macdonald, *William T. Stead and his Peace Message*, World Peace Foundation, Pamphlet Series (Boston: World Peace Foundation, 1912); "The Sinking of the Titanic. Some Notable Victims: Mr. W. T. Stead's Career," *The Times*, April 18, 1912, 12. Stead's own edited journal published a collection of encomia: Review of Reviews Office, "The World Pays Its Tribute," *Review of Reviews* 45 (May 1912): 473–94.
- 2 Earlier publications on Stead include a biography of Stead by his long-time assistant: Frederic Whyte, *The Life of W. T. Stead* (London; New York; Boston: J. Cape; Houghton Mifflin, 1925). In the 1920s and 1930s, short biographical sketches of Stead were included in a number of essay works about the Victorian period and the influence of certain persons on their contemporaries, see: Ernest T. Raymond, *Portraits of the Nineties* (London: T. F. Unwin, 1921), 174–82; Hugh Kingsmill, *After Puritanism* (London: Duckworth, 1929), 171–222. An overview of the first part of Stead's career is given in Raymond L. Schultz, *Crusader in Babylon: W. T. Stead and the Pall Mall Gazette* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1972). Numerous articles dealing with Stead's different projects as well as with his large number of influences and contacts have been published since the 1960s by Joseph O. Baylen; they will be cited in the respective sections of this article. Since 2001 Owen Mulpetre's website *Attacking the Devil* has provided profound information on as well as some digitized excerpts from Stead's works: "W. T. Stead Resource Site," <http://www.attackingthediabol.co.uk> (accessed August 1, 2013).
- 3 For a summarizing overview of newer research approaches see the conference *Stead2012* held at the British Library on occasion of the centenary of his death: "Stead 2012 – W. T. Stead. Centenary Conference for a Newspaper Revolutionary," <https://sites.google.com/site/stead2012> (accessed August 1, 2013). The conference volume demonstrates the multiple facets of Stead's activities in the context of the history of British journalism and Victorian societal debates: Laurel Brake et al. eds., *W. T. Stead: Newspaper Revolutionary* (London: British Library Board / The University of Chicago Press, 2012). See in addition, with a focus on Stead's role in British journalism: Kate Campbell, "W. E. Gladstone, W. T. Stead, Matthew Arnold and a New Journalism: Cultural Politics in the 1880s," *Victorian Periodicals Review* 36/1 (2003): 20–40; Frank Bösch, "Volkstribune und Intellektuelle. W. T. Stead, Maximilian Harden und die Transformation des politischen Journalismus in Deutschland und Großbritannien," in *Politischer Journalismus, Öffentlichkeiten und Medien im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert*, ed. Clemens Zimmermann (Ostfildern: Thorbecke, 2006), 99–120; Laurel Brake, "Journalism and Modernism, Continued: The Case of W. T. Stead," in *Transatlantic Print Culture, 1880–1940. Emerging Media, Emerging Modernisms*, ed. Ann L. Ardis and Patrick Collier (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2008), 149–66; Frank Bösch, *Öffentliche Geheimnisse: Skandale, Politik und Medien in Deutschland und Grossbritannien 1880–1914* (München: Oldenbourg, 2009). About Stead's peace work see, Madeleine Herren and Cornelia Knab, "Die Zweite Haager Friedenskonferenz und die Liberalisierung des politischen Informationsmarktes," *Die Friedens-Warte* 82/4 (2007): 51–64. Recently, two biographies for a broader readership have appeared: Grace Eckley, *Maiden Tribute: A Life of W. T. Stead* (Philadelphia: Xlibris, 2007); W. Sydney Robinson, *Muckraker: The Scandalous Life and Times of W. T. Stead, Britain's First Investigative Journalist* (London: Robson Press, 2012).

has characterized Stead's work and personality as a "mass of contradictions" made up by a curious blend of commercialization and missionary campaigning.⁴

Taking its cue from this latter assessment, this article will highlight W. T. Stead as a historical actor who deliberately used these contradictions and challenged established categories and borders as a professional technique. I argue that Stead provides an empirical example of what can be called a transgressive biography, which indicates that Stead actively and self-consciously overstepped a multiplicity of borderlines – societal, national, and political – in order to focus attention on his own agenda and aims. While I will place special emphasis on Stead's activities for world peace, this article does not aim at producing a linear biographical account. Rather, I intend to reflect on the dilemma of grasping the impact of a person who attempted to operate within and beyond the criteria of both nationally oriented and socially acceptable categories of action. Building on Madeleine Herren's work, I will draw on the concept of the transgressive biography ("transgressive Biographie") to outline the opportunities that a globalized environment provided for Stead's scope of action.⁵ The concept discloses that border-crossing ways of life are often marginalized in historical memory precisely because of their tendency to defy clear-cut categories of order. Hence, the perspective of transgression helps us to outline neglected forms of subjectivity or of transboundary action. The approach therefore underscores the ways in which an individual tried to create a transnational space of action, focusing on techniques of public and professional representation, expansion of personal networks, and aspects of transboundary visibility. More than most concepts of transnational activism – which as a conceptually broad term includes a whole variety of transboundary elements and directions⁶ – the idea points to individual transgressions of different borders that define a person's lifestyle or career.⁷ The tensions and contestations between individualized transgression and the impact of underlying social frameworks are thereby disclosed in their manifold complexities. In turn, this provides an alternative to the structural perspectives of transnationalism (with its focus on organizations, institutions, or networks). Linguistically, the approach of describing a transgressive profile includes the idea of overstepping norms, resulting in a conglomerate of simultaneous and hybrid national, territorial, social, political, and cultural border-crossing activities.⁸ This is not to deny, in Stead's case, the British imperial, national, and Christian-civilizational

4 Laurel Brake and James Mussell, "Introduction," 19: *Interdisciplinary Studies in the Long Nineteenth Century* 16 (2013), <http://19.bbk.ac.uk>, citation: 1.

5 Madeleine Herren, "Inszenierung des globalen Subjekts. Vorschläge zur Typologie einer transgressiven Biographie," *Historische Anthropologie* 13/3 (2005): 1–18.

6 For the usages of transnational concepts and their differentiation see Ian Tyrrell, "Reflections on the Transnational Turn in United States History: Theory and Practice," *Journal of Global History* 4/3 (2009): 453–74. For empirical examples on the variety and dynamics of transnational civil society movements see Karin Fischer and Susan Zimmermann eds., *Internationalismen: Transformation weltweiter Ungleichheit im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert* (Wien: Promedia, 2008).

7 Herren, "Inszenierung des globalen Subjekts," 1–2, 17.

8 For a closer look into the etymological and conceptual dimensions of the term see Herren, "Inszenierung des globalen Subjekts," 2.

spaces through which he legitimated his work, but rather to highlight the conversations, tensions, and limitations of imperial-transnational endeavours. Imperial societies, the British Empire in particular, seemed to offer frameworks and infrastructures that suggested the establishment of multiple spaces of activities, zones of contacts, and regular exchange of influences.⁹ For a transgressive profile of a career, these intersections of national, imperial, international, and local frameworks and their global contexts are important structural conditions. Stead made it a professional tactic to provoke the established standards of his environment in order to attract as much attention as possible. These included: his intrepid challenging of societal barriers and his questioning of claims of exclusivity in diplomacy, his efforts at liberalizing the transfer of information¹⁰, his realized, planned, or utopian projects and movements around the world, his efforts at influencing others by demanding that they publicly join him in his cause, as well as his bold schemes of worldwide civil society activism and projects intended for a globalized public sphere. His aim, eventually, was to influence political and societal circles in order to initiate the reforms that he regarded as essential for the “progress of the world” (the title of Stead’s regular editorial in his monthly magazine *Review of Reviews*).

Recent research has elaborated on a variety of facets of border-crossing flows, and biographical aspects have in this context come increasingly into focus as a means of capturing some specific characteristics of transboundary activities beyond structural approaches. Reflections on transnational or “global ways of life” (“globale Lebensläufe”) underline a rather flexible space of individual activity and the significance of the biographical subject’s global awareness.¹¹ “Transnational lives” are interpreted as being marked by the modern contexts of increasing mobility, commerce, exchange, and the new opportunities that emerged as a result.¹² On a more abstract level, ideas of cosmopolitanism and trans-cultural hybridity have recently been used analytically to describe the dynamic varieties of border-crossings in a global context. The notion of cosmopolitanism, in this sense, has developed from a normative Westernized-universal attitude of world citizenship to include a plurality of analytical levels where the global and local dynamics and affinities of various social actors interact.¹³ All these approaches struggle with the problem of how to grasp the elements of individual biographical profiles that do not fit into conventional clear-cut categories of national, social, or cultural identities but acquire their individual

9 Kevin Grant, Frank Trentmann, and Philippa Levine eds., *Beyond Sovereignty: Britain, Empire, and Transnationalism, C. 1880–1950* (Basingstoke, New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007); Gary B. Magee and Andrew S. Thompson, *Empire and Globalisation: Networks of People, Goods and Capital in the British World, C. 1850–1914* (Cambridge, New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010).

10 Herren and Knab, “Liberalisierung des politischen Informationsmarktes”, especially 58–61.

11 Bernd Hausberger, “Globalgeschichte als Lebensgeschichte(n)”, in *Globale Lebensläufe. Menschen als Akteure im weltgeschichtlichen Geschehen*, ed. Bernd Hausberger (Wien: Mandelbaum-Verlag, 2006), 9–27.

12 Desley Deacon, Penny Russell, and Angela Woollacott eds., *Transnational Lives: Biographies of Global Modernity, 1700–Present* (Basingstoke, New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010).

13 For the new diversity of discussion about the concept of cosmopolitanism within and beyond Western normative usages see: Gerard Delanty, ed., *Routledge Handbook of Cosmopolitanism Studies* (Abingdon, New York: Routledge, 2012).

frames of action and identification through the characteristic of challenging established categories and criss-crossing between several identities.

For the analytical focus on an individual's work and life, such as in the case of W. T. Stead, these recent efforts have contributed a number of perspectives that methodologically move beyond the traditional focuses of historiographies: their scepticism towards clear-cut and dominating categorizations of identities and spaces of activity, their openness towards alternative discursive zones and plurality of affinities, their sensitivity towards globalized phenomena of societal change, as well as their illustration of complex hybrid formations of international activities. Therefore, when interpreting the projects and writings of a person like Stead the decisive question is not the (often rather limited) amount of direct influence of his projects on governmental international negotiations. As this article will show, Stead tried to communicate his agenda of reforming the world with his own schemes by constantly overstepping borders and thereby striving for attention; however, he did not (as other transgressive subjects did) focus on mimicry or adaptation in his border-crossing lifestyle.¹⁴ On the contrary, Stead's active use of transgression as a professional tool contrasted from other individual strategies that used transgression as a means to conceal identity (or multiple identities) through a globalized lifestyle, which in times of national categories of order was sometimes difficult.¹⁵ Stead formed a very different type of transgressive figure. He concentrated instead on being noticeable on several societal and professional levels and on both national and international platforms. His border-crossing activities, however individualized in focus, had a broader societal impact and potential for transformative power. I argue that Stead demonstrated strategies of acquiring forms of globalized influence, of conquering and controlling public space, of challenging the legitimation of state-centric diplomatic negotiations, and of installing transnational structures of civil society activism that would have long-term relevance. Eventually, this focus of action proved to be relevant for shaping differentiated elements of global governance in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries; the formation of an individual transnational sphere of activity was thus complicit with broader changes in the formation of public arenas of globalized power.¹⁶

To approach Stead's "life beyond borders," I suggest using an analytical grid made up of two entwined features in order to capture the complexity of his transgressive methods: First, I suggest that Stead's 'software' was his engagement with public campaigning, a key method used to attract and include a public sphere that could dynamically change in globalized contexts but could also maintain certain characteristics. These campaigns were

14 For an empirical example of this type of transgressive lifestyle, using mimicry and border-crossings in order to produce a transnational and non-traceable subjectivity, see Madeleine Herren and Franziska Rogger's research about the impostor Leander Tomarkin: Herren, "Inszenierung des globalen Subjekts"; Franziska Rogger and Madeleine Herren, *Inszeniertes Leben. Die entzauberte Biografie des Selbstdarstellers Dr. Tomarkin* (Wien: Böhlau, 2012).

15 About similar strategies see Herren, "Inszenierung des globalen Subjekts", especially 15–7.

16 Bob Reinalda, *Routledge History of International Organizations: From 1815 to the Present Day* (Abingdon, New York: Routledge, 2009), 67, 78–9.

substantiated by his efforts at personal networking, by which he aimed to create a culture of interaction that hybridized agendas of civil society, public sphere, and diplomacy. This was, second, combined with Stead's 'hardware,' his methods of liberalizing the transfer of information and his use of new technological opportunities, which as a media man he mastered brilliantly.¹⁷ To follow up on Stead's use of professional transboundary methods, I will focus on Stead's activities with a particular emphasis on his peace work, which reflected his aim of a systematic and substantial inclusion of transnational civil society activism into world politics. Thereby the article will delineate the tensions as well as dialogues that existed between bordered state diplomacy as well as transborder civil society formations, even as these formations and borders were integrated into, and transgressed by, Stead's activism. The first part of this article introduces the major border-crossing events of Stead's journalistic biography chronologically in order to empirically explain the genealogy of his transgressive method of breaking established taboos. The second part analyses his peace work and internationalist activism, focusing on autobiographical accounts as well as on his journalistic projects in the context of the two Hague Peace conferences, in particular the newspaper *Courrier de la Conférence de la Paix* of 1907. Through such projects he presented himself as a new and singular type of media manager who held a unique position between civil society, journalistic, and diplomatic circles. Studying Stead's globally oriented activism by way of analysing his border-crossing methods helps us critique the state-oriented hegemonic assumptions that underlie the work of diplomats. Stead offered a counter-pole of non-official communication about 'diplomacy' which challenged the exclusionary parameters of official diplomatic internationalism. Stead's work, I argue, offered additional as well as alternative forms of transnational diplomacy and tried to provoke the official minds to reflect on their construction of diplomatic exclusivity. However, Stead's own mind and projects were, in their own way, as limited by exclusionary paradigms as was the work of diplomats; shared assumptions of cultural imperialism and elite attitudes linked his worldview with those of the official diplomatic world. The analysis of Stead's peace work, therefore, offers an example of the complex intersections between dynamic civil society calls for new forms of integrative and transparent international relations on the one hand and the entrenched inequalities and power hierarchies produced by internationalist endeavours on the other. Even as peace projects (such as Stead's) helped to challenge some of the exclusionary frontiers of official diplomacy, these endeavours reproduced asymmetries of power and reinforced other or similar types of borders. An analysis of Stead thus challenges teleological narratives of progression from bordered diplomacy to border-less and democratic 'global' civil society activism; instead it provokes us to think about the shifting nature of borders and exclusions that create divergences as well as ambiguous connections between official diplomatic work and civil society internationalism.

17 For the heuristic image of "software and hardware," here in relation to assessing interconnections within the British Empire, see Magee and Thompson, *Empire and Globalisation*, 16–7.

W. T. Stead's Proselytizing Career as Professional Taboo Breaker

In Stead's case, what actually constituted the transgression of borderlines? During the first three decades of his journalistic work until the 1890s, Stead became known as one of the most influential journalists of Britain. Above all, he advanced his prominent position in journalism through his involvement in a series of political-public scandals. Stead contributed to a form of exponentiated scandalization: He publicly exposed what he thought to be major moral or political taboos such as adultery of politicians or child prostitution. However, in the eyes of many of his contemporaries it was Stead's way of reporting and the propagation of his purposes that produced the actual scandal and contributed to moral decay.¹⁸ This paper uses this interplay with scandalization as a starting point from which to interpret Stead's actions as those of an entrepreneur figure who undertook different versions of border-crossing ventures. As a journalist and editor-in-chief, he sought to increase the circulation of his media products, which he needed to expand his personal impact and promote his ideas about political and societal change. But he did not always act in accordance with economic foresight, nor were his projects always very popular ones. Stead was a sort of professional missionary activist who advertised and sold self-designed schemes, political advice, moral ideas, and the offer of participation in his projects, all with the aim of reforming not only Britain but preferably improving the whole world according to his own convictions. Stead's transgressive working method, in the sense that it overturned societal expectations of the journalistic vocation, combined innovative investigative journalistic work (which kept a controlling eye on society) with societal networking, public activism, and reporting frequently on the brink of public scandal. Certain features were characteristic of most of his enterprises. Stead canvassed for the attention of the public and of prominent celebrities by initiating both new agendas and new public platforms for himself. His interplay with societal or political taboos served as a constant appetizer and provocation in order to raise and keep public attention. For most of his projects, his transgressive journalistic taboo-breaking materialized as a combination of sensational exposures through his own journalistic investigations and dramatic press campaigns to mobilize public outrage. Sometimes this was followed by a 'crusade' in the form of a public campaign, where Stead rallied his vast networks of civil society associations, church institutions, and influential people of all shades and ranks to help raise attention and financial support. Conveniently, these campaigns and their networks often provided the headlines for his papers; the journalist was himself in the role of producing the breaking news. Stead's early transgressive work, therefore, consisted of his professionalization of breaking taboos, both in the issues he approached as well as in his working method. He trespassed the societal position of journalists in order

18 About Stead's method of public and political exponentiated scandalization in British journalism see, with several examples: Bösch, *Öffentliche Geheimnisse*, 167–69, 178–90, 201–02, 330–31, 391–92. About definitions and usages of the term 'scandal' in Victorian Britain see: Bösch, *Öffentliche Geheimnisse*, 7–11.

to create new platforms of visibility, publicity hype around his person and his topics, and interpretational power for himself.

Stead's motivation for his projects was rooted in both his British political-societal context as well as in his personal background. Two major concerns ran as a common thread through most of his projects: He demanded radical social reforms in Britain (and if possible abroad) and was famous as a fervent supporter of British imperial claims around the world. Both issues came together in his long-term advocacy for 'Anglo-Saxon' expansion in the world. In his book *The Americanisation of the World* of 1902, Stead presented not only a vision of the American political, ideological, and economic superpower as "the trend of the twentieth century"¹⁹ but also his scheme for a reunion of predominantly English-speaking societies and states, which would act as the future global spearhead of moral and material progress.²⁰ Stead's transnational schemes for world peace and international understanding, which he had been advancing since the 1890s, clearly promoted the idea of British-American civilizational supremacy in the world. Stead combined this idea of a benevolent and peacekeeping transatlantic-imperial force with the fantasy of his own quasi-religious sense of personal mission. It was this personal moral force that his early biographer, the British writer and journalist Hugh Kingsmill, described as a form of Puritanism under pressure of modernity: "His impressionable nature responded to every aspect of the multifarious modern world, while at the same time his inherited Puritanism sought incessantly for some formula which should unify the age without impairing its heterogeneity."²¹ The proselytizing motivation for Stead's performance – to fight for his own evangelical vision of a world shaped by his ideas of social virtue and moral purity – was already regarded by his contemporaries as the central incentive for his activities.²² Kingsmill, who searched for explanations in Stead's nonconformist family background, described Stead's intentions as wanting "to simplify the outward world"²³ through his visions and projects in order to construct a close emotional bond and support between himself, his readers, and his personal networks of contacts.²⁴ Combining his constructed ideas of national-racial supremacy with his proselytizing Puritan inspiration, Stead became a resourceful missionary entrepreneur who forced his environment into confrontations with his reformist agenda. With this form of evangelical crusading, Stead's civil society activism was part of the contemporaneous surge of Victorian reformist networks and associations, which in the field of peace work he expanded to a

19 W. T. Stead, *The Americanization of the World. The Trend of the Twentieth Century* (New York, London: Horace Markey, 1902).

20 For schemes of reunion between Britain and her former American colonies see Stead, *Americanization of the World*, especially 13–26, 418–38.

21 Kingsmill, *After Puritanism*, 172; about Kingsmill's essay see also: Roger Luckhurst, *The Invention of Telepathy, 1870–1901* (Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), 128–29.

22 The missionary elements of Stead's character and his struggle with his personal visions of moral integrity were emphasized in almost all of the obituaries collected by the *Review of Reviews*. See Review of Reviews Office, "The World Pays Its Tribute," *Review of Reviews* (May 1912): 45 473–94.

23 Kingsmill, *After Puritanism*, 206.

24 Ibid., 178–82.

transnational level.²⁵ Stead's idea of campaigning is therefore an example of civil society activism at work within a specific historical setting. Civil society is here understood not as a normative ideal but as a form of public reality, as civil society in action, describing movements of individuals and groups with procedural visions of improving society with a set of distinct moral objectives.²⁶ As the closer look into his publications will reveal, Stead's own concept of civil society activism included different and sometimes contradictory imageries in the tension between ideals and practice. Claims of global plurality or of universal egalitarianism clashed with demands of adaptation to Stead's expansionist imperial-evangelical viewpoints.²⁷ Stead did not imagine anti-authoritarian or anti-state positions for his activities; his religiously motivated activism in contrast tended to integrate both the political-imperial as well as the economic sphere as essential players on the public stage for his reformist agenda.²⁸ For Stead, his civil society work meant above all initiating discourses and dialogues, with himself situated in a central position as a moral watchdog and organizing mediator between the state system, the public, and other associations and interest groups.

Above all, Stead is today remembered for his role in transforming nineteenth-century Victorian journalism, both in his investigative-scandalous working methods as well as his innovative newspaper style.²⁹ Stead was one of the main proponents of a modernist surge in journalism, which emphasized a form of personal style where the activities of the journalist were part of the news. The so-called 'new journalism' included interviews, gossip and society columns, expert opinions, illustrations, graphics and maps, and of course his own sensational findings.³⁰ Stead canvassed for attention in a populist manner by using modern advertising strategies including subscription models, campaign leaflets, and layouts with bold headlines, all of which became important elements of the nascent tabloid press. His aim was to broaden his readership beyond elite circles by appealing for a broader circulation among the literate middle-classes. But Stead's own objectives were never merely commercial ones. Kingsmill noted that "his stunts were never designed in order to make money," and he never became a media tycoon.³¹ In her recent assessment of

25 About the problems of defining the meanings civil society for historical work, with a particular emphasis on Britain and Germany, see Frank Trentmann, "Introduction: Paradoxes of Civil Society," in *Paradoxes of Civil Society. New Perspectives on Modern German and British History*, ed. Frank Trentmann, 2nd ed. (New York, Oxford: Berghahn, 2003), 3–46.

26 Trentmann, "Introduction: Paradoxes of Civil Society," 3–4, 7.

27 About the tensions between plurality and conformity in civil society movements: Trentmann, "Introduction: Paradoxes of Civil Society," 23.

28 About religion as a central motivation in civil society history: Trentmann, "Introduction: Paradoxes of Civil Society," 34.

29 For example: Bösch, "Volkstribüne und Intellektuelle"; Brake, "Journalism and Modernism, Continued"; Brake et al., *W. T. Stead: Newspaper Revolutionary*.

30 Brake, "Journalism and Modernism, Continued," 152.

31 Kingsmill, *After Puritanism*, 182. Stead closely followed and in parts admired the work of media businessmen like William Randolph Hearst and their influence in shaping American politics through mass papers, see: W. T. Stead, "Character Sketch: W. Randolph Hearst," *Review of Reviews* 38 (October 1908): 327–38. For a comparative overview of the transatlantic developments in nineteenth-century press history see Ross F. Collins and E. M. Palmegiano eds., *The Rise of Western Journalism, 1815–1914: Essays on the Press in Australia, Canada, France, Ger-*

the relations between journalism and Victorian modernisms, Laurel Brake points out the ambiguities and shifts within Stead's understanding of journalism and highlights Stead's gradually developing conception of an alternative press environment. During the 1880s, the zenith of his populist and sensational journalism, Stead emphasized the role of the press in ongoing processes of democratization by appealing to new circles of readers and potential future electorates.³² In two essays from the mid-1880s, written under considerable societal pressure in a period of scandal-instigated marginalization, Stead substantiated his ideas about the present and future tasks of the press.³³ His idea of "government by journalism," the title of the first essay, substantiated the role of the press in democracy as a formalized counter-parliament, the famous fourth estate "which is becoming more powerful than all the other estates of the realm."³⁴ In his concept, Stead insisted on the legitimate role of the journalist as a champion of the oppressed and an indispensable mediator of politics in a tribune of the people: Technical and societal modernization generated new forms and structures of democratic power, which gave the journalist a daily mandate to correct social evils by establishing new discourses. This utopian scheme also served, theoretically, as a proper legitimization of his press campaigns and therefore of his constant method of transgressing borders. However, as Brake outlines, Stead's view of his market position in journalism shifted, especially during the 1890s.³⁵ Stead now mainly addressed an active circle of readership ideally from all classes, including women, who were interested in societal responsibility as well as in comprehensive non-mainstream information rather than in mere entertaining commonplace consumption.³⁶ This shifting position in the market, as will be seen in the example of his peace projects, did not limit Stead's ambition for transgressive and transnational public enterprises, and it also provided him with a readership that seemed ideal for his activist purposes. Stead had been practising his form of active-transgressive journalistic interference from the very beginnings of his career. He was a self-made man, the son of a Congregationalist minister from rural Northumberland of modest social standing, who was shaped by traditions of evangelical austerity. Though he was without a university education, in a short time he promoted an enormous rise in the journalism sector. Working as a young editor

many, *Great Britain and the United States* (Jefferson: McFarland, 2007).

32 Brake, "Journalism and Modernism, Continued", especially 153–54.

33 W. T. Stead, "Government by Journalism," *The Contemporary Review* 49 (1886): 653–74. See also W. T. Stead, "The Future of Journalism," *The Contemporary Review* 50 (1886): 663–79. About the two essays and their particular context in Stead's journalistic career and his production of scandals see James Mussell, "Characters of Blood and Flame: Stead and the Tabloid Campaign," in *W. T. Stead: Newspaper Revolutionary*, ed. Laurel Brake et al. (London: British Library Board / The University of Chicago Press, 2012), 22–36; Graham Law and Matthew Sterenberg, "Old v. New Journalism and the Public Sphere, or: Habermas Encounters Dallas and Stead," *19: Interdisciplinary Studies in the Long Nineteenth Century* 16 (2013): 7–9, <http://19.bbk.ac.uk>; particularly in context of the "Maiden Tribute" scandal: Gretchen Soderlund, *Sex Trafficking, Scandal, and the Transformation of Journalism, 1885–1917* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2013), especially 60–2; Bösch, "Volkstribune und Intellektuelle," 111–13.

34 Stead, "Government by Journalism," 657. About the earlier history of the term 'fourth estate' and its use by Stead see Bösch, "Volkstribune und Intellektuelle," 100–02.

35 Brake, "Journalism and Modernism, Continued," 154–55, 163–64.

36 Ibid., 154–55.

of the daily *Northern Echo* of Darlington, Stead catapulted the provincial paper to public attention as an energetic voice of liberal support for then-opposition leader Gladstone against the Near Eastern policy of the Disraeli government. The “Bulgarian Horrors Agitation,”³⁷ which Stead promoted in 1876, was the test case for his intention to incite the public to action against the social and political evils of his time. Organizing a public campaign of protest against Turkish atrocities in the Balkans, Stead appealed to Christian-civilian conscience by playing with a number of imperial-religious-racial arguments that would become the central elements of most of his later ‘agitations.’ He highlighted the duty of the civilized British nation – and of journalists like himself – to take up God’s call within and beyond the United Kingdom, in this case to fight for Christian Slavs in the Balkans rather than in opposition to the Russians. As a self-appointed agitator in the name of Christian humanity, Stead argued that the grip of oriental Turkish rule not only abused Bulgarian virgins but also the honour of British democracy.³⁸ The episode introduced what would become Stead’s ongoing attention to Ottoman questions as well as his lifelong public advocacy for Russia; in the mid-1890s, when he took up a similar agitation against Ottoman harassments against minorities in his pamphlet *The Haunting Horrors in Armenia*, he amplified his argument with an outline of the destructive Ottoman policies against the remnants of the Christian past in the region.³⁹

The campaign against the “Bulgarian horrors” significantly contributed to foster Stead’s career and confirmed him in his transgressive working method. In 1881, with the support of liberal politicians, he became editor-in-chief of the influential London daily *Pall Mall Gazette*. This was an even greater realization of his “opportunity for attacking the devil,”⁴⁰ as he had already commented was his motivation for pursuing a journalistic career. Stead underlined the position of the *Pall Mall Gazette* as one of the dominant press organs of Britain through a number of sensationalist campaigns that interfered in interior and exterior governmental policies. In 1884 he contributed to a haunting episode in British imperial policy with his press campaign to send ‘Chinese Gordon’ to the Sudan against the Mahdi uprisings. The actual impact of Stead’s public pressure remains disputed,⁴¹ but his involvement in the Gordon drama certainly contributed to his reputation as

37 The term originated in the title of a pamphlet by William E. Gladstone, which made the question a matter of British discussion: William E. Gladstone, *Bulgarian Horrors and the Question of the East* (London: J. Murray, 1876). About Stead and the British Eastern policies in the late 1870s and beyond see: Stéphanie Prévost, “W. T. Stead and the Eastern Question (1875–1911), or, How to Rouse England and Why?,” *19: Interdisciplinary Studies in the Long Nineteenth Century* 16 (2013), <http://www.19.bbk.ac.uk/index.php/19/article/view/654> (accessed November 18, 2013); Simon Goldsworthy, “English Nonconformity and the Pioneering of the Modern Newspaper Campaign,” *Journalism Studies* 7/3 (2006): 387–402. More generally about Stead’s relations to liberal politics and politicians in the 1870s and 1880s see, Campbell, “W. E. Gladstone, W. T. Stead, Matthew Arnold and a New Journalism.”

38 Prévost, “W. T. Stead and the Eastern Question,” 10 and note 51.

39 W. T. Stead, ed., *The Haunting Horrors in Armenia*, Political Papers for the People 1 (London: Review of Reviews Office, 1896); Prévost, “W. T. Stead and the Eastern Question,” 3–5.

40 Citation in: W. T. Stead to Rev. Henry Kendall, April 11, 1871, <http://www.attackingthediabol.co.uk/letters/kendall.php> (accessed November 18, 2013). See also Prévost, “W. T. Stead and the Eastern Question,” 1.

41 The role of the press campaign in the British anti-Mahdist expedition, and Stead’s part in particular, were much debated after Gordon’s disastrous death at Khartoum but remain contested. For an overview on the affair see esp. Schults, *Crusader in Babylon*, 66–87. Lytton Strachey’s popular and influential 1918 essay on the drama of

an iron-fisted promoter of Britishness and of imperial work. The same year he confirmed this status with the article series entitled “The Truth about the Navy,” which lobbied for an increase of British spending on sea power, playing with anxieties about a decline of naval supremacy because of unwillingness to follow the increasing tendencies of technical-military modernization.⁴² These initial activities were already shaped by a potentially global vision oriented along what Stead interpreted to be British imperial needs.

Stead’s biggest transgressive coup, which finally established his contemporary reputation as a martyr-hero for some and a vulgar villain for others, was his campaign against child prostitution in 1885 with the affair of the “Maiden Tribute of Modern Babylon” (Stead’s headline in the *Pall Mall Gazette*).⁴³ In a series of sensationalist-emotional lead stories, Stead used the *Pall Mall Gazette* to expose negligent legislation and sexual exploitation in the slums of London. This method of overstepping the borders of bourgeois morality by confronting society directly and emotionally with the scandalous taboo of child prostitution and the narrative of ‘white slave trade’ resulted in a public outrage and in several months of prison for Stead. During the 1880s he continued in this self-proclaimed position as a watchdog of societal purity by publicly indicting important public and political figures for what he regarded as sexual-moral failures in their private life.⁴⁴ In 1889, after an eventful decade of impassionate intervening into British society and politics, Stead left the *Pall Mall Gazette* and founded his own periodical, the *Review of Reviews*. He was now in a singularly independent position as proprietor, editor, and publisher, as well as author of most leading articles in this new monthly.⁴⁵

In the following two decades, the *Review of Reviews* was Stead’s mouthpiece for numerous projects, missions, guidelines, and visions that sought to improve the world and educate his readership.⁴⁶ In his first editorial, Stead highlighted the combined imperial-international framework of the new journal and its potentially broad transnational readership by dedicating it “to all English-speaking folk” and outlining its aim to be a tool “for the

Gordon’s death attributed a significant role to Stead and his campaigning in the *Pall Mall Gazette*, while Lytton Strachey regarded Gordon, and not Stead, as an exemplary “eminent Victorian.” Lytton Strachey, “The End of General Gordon,” in *Eminent Victorians* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1918), 250–61.

42 Harvey Blumenthal, “W. T. Stead’s Role in Shaping Official Policy: The Navy Campaign of 1884” (PhD Thesis, George Washington University, 1984).

43 The ‘Maiden Tribute’ affair, which initiated a legal reform about the age of consent, has produced by far the most attention to Stead’s missions and personality. See especially: Judith R. Walkowitz, *City of Dreadful Delight: Narratives of Sexual Danger in Late-Victorian London* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992), especially 81–120; Soderlund, *Sex Trafficking, Scandal, and the Transformation of Journalism, 1885–1917*, 24–66.

44 Most famous were Stead’s contributions to the downfall of the politicians Sir Charles Dilke and Charles Stewart Parnell because of their extra-marital scandals; see Bösch, *Öffentliche Geheimnisse*, 177–209.

45 About Stead and the *Review of Reviews*: Joseph O. Baylen, “W. T. Stead as Publisher and Editor of the ‘Review of Reviews,’” *Victorian Periodicals Review* 12/2 (1979): 70–84; Gowan Dawson, “The Review of Reviews and the New Journalism in Late-Victorian Britain,” in *Science in the Nineteenth Century Periodical. Reading the Magazine of Nature*, ed. Geoffrey Cantor et al. (Cambridge, New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 172–95; Laurel Brake, “Stead Alone: Journalist, Proprietor and Publisher, 1890–1903,” in *Newspaper Revolutionary*, ed. Laurel Brake et al. (London: The British Library, 2012), 77–97.

46 Brake, “Stead Alone: Journalist, Proprietor and Publisher, 1890–1903,” 80.

Empire.”⁴⁷ The globe on the front cover symbolized the *Review of Reviews*’ international ambition and reach, a focus that was not yet commonplace. Stead developed the journal as a sort of international information organ about a conglomeration of different but connected topics. The *Review of Reviews* imported articles from numerous international periodicals and presented them in a condensed form as abstracts, often supplied with the editor’s comments, in order to enable “busy men and also women” to receive “the best thoughts of our time,” together with original articles written by Stead or his collaborators.⁴⁸ This method of abstraction – building on the models of mass commercial magazines – selected and prepared an enormous quantity of information into digestible pieces and occasionally imbued it with a distinctly ‘Steadist’ flavour. As usual, Stead’s work did not remain uncontested; the abstraction and translation into a particular contextual setting raised fears in the original authors that their original arguments might be obscured.⁴⁹ For Stead, the *Review of Reviews* and occasionally also its branch journals (the Australasian and American editions⁵⁰) were now the most important platforms for advancing his projects of social democracy, Christian liability, and stabilization of imperial expansion as well as of pacific international relations. Stead demanded the active commitment of the readers of the *Review of Reviews* for numerous movements, associations, or pleas, and it was not always easy to keep track of the manifold overlapping crusades and the shifting personal networks involved. For several years, the *Review of Reviews* was quite a successful enterprise, but Stead’s increasing fascination with telepathy and psychic issues during the 1890s seems to have alienated an increasing section of the readership. Nevertheless, Stead enhanced this special form of transgressive work by founding his new journal *Borderland* (1893–1897), a documentation platform for spiritualists to investigate the world beyond death. Indeed, for the rest of his life, the preoccupation with ‘border-crossing’ spiritualist questions formed a significant factor within his work and his efforts of interaction with the public.⁵¹

In the early 1890s, Stead began to enlarge his horizon of activities towards transnational frameworks. A first opportunity came in 1893 with the Chicago World’s Fair. Stead considered the worldwide spotlight on the city to be ideal for focusing attention on

47 W.T. Stead, “To all English-speaking Folk,” *Review of Reviews* 1 (January 1890): 15–20. About Stead’s imperialism in the *Review of Reviews*’s programme see also Luckhurst, *The Invention of Telepathy, 1870–1901*, 124–25.

48 Advertisement for the *Review of Reviews*, printed in: Dawson, “The Review of Reviews and the New Journalism,” 186. For Stead’s principles of text abstraction see: W. T. Stead, “Programme,” *Review of Reviews* 1 (January 1890): 14; Brake, “Stead Alone: Journalist, Proprietor and Publisher, 1890–1903,” 83–5.

49 For an example see the controversy about Stead’s abstraction of Thomas H. Huxley’s scientific articles: Dawson, “The Review of Reviews and the New Journalism,” 175–81.

50 The editor of the *American Review of Reviews*, Albert Shaw (1857–1947), soon followed his own journalistic policies; about Stead’s relation to the American edition see: Robert Frankel, *Observing America: The Commentary of British Visitors to the United States, 1890–1950* (University of Wisconsin Press, 2007), especially 21–2; about Shaw: Lloyd J. Graybar, *Albert Shaw of the Review of Reviews: An Intellectual Biography* (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1974).

51 Detailed about Stead’s occupation with spiritualist themes: Luckhurst, *The Invention of Telepathy, 1870–1901*, 117–147; Justin Sausman, “The Democratisation of the Spook: W. T. Stead and the Invention of Public Occultism,” in *Newspaper Revolutionary*, ed. Laurel Brake et al. (London: The British Library, 2012), 149–165.

social misery or political abuses in the United States and on his own reformist projects. Just after the closure of the Fair in winter 1893/94, Stead came to Chicago to investigate how the city's inhabitants coped with tidying up after the event.⁵² The resulting book, with the quite presumptuous title *If Christ came to Chicago* (1894), was a typical Steadist product, an emotional accusation designed to outrage its readers and in particular to scandalize the city's bourgeoisie and its administration with an impassioned account of the city's scandalous social conditions. It included detailed descriptions of the city's underworld and its connections with all circles of society, including prostitution, drunkenness, unemployment, and corruption. The book contained conversations with prostitutes as well as detailed maps and name lists of the city's brothel-keeping business.⁵³ In a way, the Chicago project encapsulated the main strands of Stead's reformist agenda: first, the searching for transatlantic public attention by overstepping societal norms and producing public scandal; and second, the suggestion of a suitable remedy for these scandals according to Stead's taste. In the Chicago case, Stead suggested a revival of conscious civic religious responsibility and, his usual solution, to create a journalistic organ that would document and evaluate all efforts of progress against social misery (he included a concrete project draft).⁵⁴ The Chicago case also revealed an additional advantage of Stead's transgressive working style: scandal reporting about the relations between bourgeois society and the underworld and combining moral campaigning with the breaking societal taboos had the potential not only to gain public attention but also to reap best-selling financial reward.⁵⁵ Stead made it his professional mission to break taboos, juggling with different levels of professional and societal performances as investigative journalist, editor, women's rights activist, traveller, businessman, imperial propagandist, and moralist sermonizer, showing off with his vast networks of personal contacts from

52 Not surprisingly, Stead's Chicago activities – investigating brothels and gambling houses and trying to motivate polite society to join his street-cleaning projects – caused a public scandal, which the London satire journal *Judy* mocked in a poem satirizing his evangelical zeal for cleansing as well as his inclination for producing scandals out of the gutter:

"[...] I have told Chicago's dames / They are cheats; / I have told them other names, / Which are treats; / But to magnify my laurels, / I'll refrain from further quarrels, / And no more will cleanse their morals, / But their streets. In the Pall Mall's halcyon days / (Which are o'er), / I brought scandals to the gaze / By the score. / So, no longer will I utter / Either blasphemies or butter / And I'll go to scour the gutter – as before." in: "Stead, the Scavenger," *Judy* (February 7, 1894): 63.

53 W. T. Stead, *If Christ Came to Chicago: A Plea for the Union of All Who Love in the Service of All Who Suffer* (London: Review of Reviews Office, 1894). Stead's activities in Chicago have attracted much attention from researchers of social and urban history, see for instance: Joseph O. Baylen, "A Victorian's 'Crusade' in Chicago, 1893–1894: William Thomas Stead," *Journal of American History* 51 (1964): 418–34; Gary Scott Smith, "When Stead Came to Chicago: The 'Social Gospel Novel' and the Chicago Civic Federation," *American Presbyterians* 68/3 (1990): 197–205; Thekla Ellen Joiner, *Sin in the City: Chicago and Revivalism, 1880–1920* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 2007), 112–14; Frankel, *Observing America*, 32–8.

54 Stead, *If Christ Came to Chicago: A Plea for the Union of All Who Love in the Service of All Who Suffer*, draft journal: 325–27; also part V: What would Christ do in Chicago?, 328–434.

55 In 1897 Stead published a similar book as consequence of a trip to New York; the book focused on municipal government, police corruption, organized crime, and current control efforts. W. T. Stead, *Satan's Invisible World Displayed; Or, Despairing Democracy. A Study of Greater New York* (London: Review of Reviews Office, 1897). See about the book: Frankel, *Observing America*, especially 38–42.

politics and society in the pages of his *Review of Reviews*. Critical contemporary commentators warned of the dangers of “Steadism,”⁵⁶ and presented him as an eccentric and overly puritanical missionary, a sensation-hunting busybody whose need to break rules, borders, tastes, and taboos was rooted in his lack of a proper education and absence of historical knowledge.

“War against War!”: W. T. Stead’s Border-Crossing Work for World Peace

In the mid- and late 1890s, Stead’s impact on British politics and society as a scandal-producing star journalist gradually began to decrease. His engagement in spiritualism as well as his vehement agitation against the Second Boer War discredited him in the eyes of many readers and brought the *Review of Reviews* close to economic ruin. Parallel to these professional setbacks, Stead began to form his reputation as an “internationalist” and “peace advocate.”⁵⁷ The promoters of pacifist internationalism with whom Stead began to affiliate were a heterogeneous cluster of different groups, individuals, or international organisations that had flourished since the mid-nineteenth century. Since 1891 the International Peace Bureau in Berne provided a platform of transnational coordination, but the burgeoning groups and organisations concerned with world peace differed in their strategies for how to actually pursue world peace. Many of the concepts, originating in European-American contexts, integrated and translated common narratives of nationalism, racism, and imperialism into peace activism.⁵⁸ Stead’s engagement in peace work during the following years up to his death demonstrated again the significance of transgressive strategies for building his pacifist-transnational scope of activity – sometimes also at a distance from other pacifist activists. Above all, he activated the role of the committed campaigner and networking lobbyist between different agendas and societal circles on national and transnational levels in order to launch his own discourses. Stead’s roadmap towards world peace sought to combine the conglomerate of different official and non-official approaches related to peace work and to offer his medial platforms for those he wished to integrate: for supporters of expanding international law, advocates of arbitration and international courts, women’s rights activists and other civil society movements, proponents of world federalism and a universal language, imperialist agents and reformist associations, several (mostly non-British) anti-colonial movements, as well as for transnationally organized pacifists and Christian groups propagating peace and

56 Cyril Waters, “Steadism in Politics: A National Danger,” *Westminster Review* 137 (1892): 618–26, especially 619–21.

57 About the origins and different usages of the term ‘internationalism’ and ‘internationalist’ before World War I and the various agendas of ‘internationalists’ see Madeleine Herren, *Hintertüren zur Macht: Internationalismus und Modernisierungsorientierte Aussenpolitik in Belgien, der Schweiz und den USA 1865–1914* (München: Oldenbourg, 2000), 34–9; Glenda Sluga, *Internationalism in the Age of Nationalism* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2013), 4–7.

58 About the pacifist movements and their influence on great power diplomacy before World War I: Sandi E. Cooper, *Patriotic Pacifism: Waging War on War in Europe, 1815–1914* (Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 1991); Sluga, *Internationalism in the Age of Nationalism*, 17–32, esp. 17–8.

brotherhood. Stead's peace work rigidly questioned the exclusive monopoly of foreign politics and diplomatic secrecy through his conception of a participating public sphere, his idea of the actively interfering role of the press, the establishment of a modern policy of liberalizing information, and the idea of his civilian duty to permeate diplomatic as well as societal circles with peace propaganda. As his work in the context of the two Hague Peace Conferences demonstrated, Stead continuously tested the permeability of segregated and segmented diplomatic spheres. In the long run, this opened up new opportunities and presented new instruments for the influence of non-diplomatic groups on diplomatic questions and at the same time highlighted the urgency of focusing more attention on the topic of transparency and access to information in international relations.

Stead's engagement on behalf of internationalist and peace questions culminated in his activities about the two Hague Peace Conferences of 1899 and 1907. The *Review of Reviews* was from its very beginnings a platform that included and commented on important events and developments in pacifism and internationalism.⁵⁹ Since the mid-1890s, Stead had approached the arbitration movement and had published a pamphlet *Always Arbitrate Before You Fight*, in order to lobby for arbitration as the key to prevent armed conflicts between states; further to this, the *Review of Reviews* regularly reported about the progress of the global debate on arbitration.⁶⁰ Stead explained the conceptual development of his internationalist peace projects and his motivation for the cause in an "autobiographical character sketch" entitled *The Great Pacifist*, written in 1901 and published with additions after his death.⁶¹ The title of this biographical essay – a regular section in the *Review of Reviews* – disclosed how much Stead in his later years tried to present the struggle for world peace as one of the principal tasks of his life. The "character sketch" presented a summarized version of Stead's internationalist and pacifist work, but was also a defence against his opponents and contained a synopsis of Stead's elements of self-promotion. Eventually, the text aimed to reconcile his imperial agenda with his pacifist vision for the public; this had become important because Stead was since 1901 repeatedly nominated as a candidate for the Nobel Peace Prize, despite the confusion of many pacifists about his ongoing fervent statements about imperial expansion.⁶² The "character sketch" presented Stead's imperialist and peace missions as complementary and united agendas, but, not unsurprisingly, seems to have been written above all for a British readership that had incorporated the principles of imperial-cultural superiority as self-evident doctrines of life. The essay built on the prevalent contemporary discourse

59 A. J. A. Morris, "The English Radicals' Campaign for Disarmament and the Hague Conference of 1907," *The Journal of Modern History* 43/3 (1971), for Stead see especially 382–84.

60 W. T. Stead, *Always Arbitrate before You Fight. An Appeal to All English-Speaking Folk*, Political Papers for the People 3 (London: Review of Reviews Office, 1896).

61 [W. T. Stead], "The Great Pacifist. An Autobiographical Character Sketch," *Review of Reviews* 45 (June 1912): 609–20.

62 Nobelprize.org, Nomination Database, <http://www.nobelprize.org/nomination/peace/database.html> (accessed November 18, 2013).

of *Pax Britannica* when emphasizing the benevolent global impact of British imperialism and unchallenged naval supremacy. Stead argued that conflicts, not just armed ones, were globalized, and therefore an “imperialism of responsibility” was necessary in order to win the worldwide fight against exploitation, the “war against jingoism.” It was Britain’s duty “to use her imperial power for maintaining peace, and putting down piracy and the slave-trade among the weaker dark-skinned races of the world.”⁶³ Of course, even his best-known pro-imperial and pro-military activities – his support for the Gordon mission, for the modern armament of the Royal Navy, and his enthusiasm for Rhodes’ activities in Africa – were by this logic an intrinsic part of pacifist actions.⁶⁴ In his scheme for a future world federation, Stead underlined a teleological understanding of internationalism as a movement towards closer entanglements of the world in the wake of modern technical innovations. This, again, necessitated an increase of governance through international law.⁶⁵ Stead believed that the need for armaments would gradually decrease since international law and arbitration courts would settle conflicts between member states.⁶⁶ He declared that all of his activities could be summarized as “working always towards the World-State.” Such a claim is grounded in faith in imagined societies and utopian worlds, something which Glenda Sluga emphasizes as a significant part of the worldviews of many internationalists.⁶⁷ The best way to ensure global stability and to protect “weaker races” from barbarous internal conflicts and jingoist adventurers, Stead argued, was to extend the power of imperial nations. Britain and the United States needed to continue their civilizing mission towards the world, preferably in the context of the joined efforts of an Anglo-American union, but as a convinced Russophile, Stead also favourably mentioned the expansion of Russia with its “gain of civilization and progress for humanity” in Central Asia.⁶⁸

Stead was not very original in his view of a worldwide civilizing project made up of the great imperial powers with a beneficent British Empire as the main peace-keeping force; after all, this was a legitimating narrative with cultural-national underpinnings and a vision of moral supremacy that he shared with most of his colonizing contemporaries. But although the British nation and the stability of its empire formed the unwavering basis of his missions, it was characteristic that he also began to work actively to realize these civilizing aims in more facets than merely advancing British imperial domination. In *The Great Pacifist*, using his customary immodest language, Stead declared himself to be the originator in advancing a global vision of world peace through international peace conferences fostering arbitration and international law. He argued that in 1892 he had already organized a “Standstill of Armaments” agitation with a memorandum for

63 All citations: [W. T. Stead], “The Great Pacifist,” 610.

64 Ibid., 611.

65 For this thinking of “objective internationalism” see: Sluga, *Internationalism in the Age of Nationalism*, 12–24, about Stead: 21.

66 [W. T. Stead], “The Great Pacifist,” 619–20.

67 [W. T. Stead], “The Great Pacifist,” 619; Sluga, *Internationalism in the Age of Nationalism*, 9.

68 [W. T. Stead], “The Great Pacifist,” 610.

Tsar Alexander III and the British Government; thereby he had introduced the issue of peace conference internationalism to governmental authorities.⁶⁹ Whatever their origins, the Hague Conferences were a welcome opportunity for Stead and other 'friends of peace' to practically advance their idea of world peace beyond his idealized concepts on paper. When in August 1898, Tsar Nicholas II launched an imperial rescript to call for a diplomatic conference about disarmament and arbitration (later the First Hague Peace Conference), the respective foreign offices started nervous speculations about the Tsar's real motives behind the idea.⁷⁰ However, pacifist and internationalist circles enthusiastically appreciated what seemed to be sudden official support for their cause and created new unforeseen opportunities of transnational public debate. Stead at once took up the idea of a conference and burst into action. His activities had a twofold aim: to raise public attention for the issue of disarmament, peace, and arbitration, and to establish an influential position for himself within the expected procedure of installing world peace. Both could be best achieved if he was able to turn the official peace talks into his own campaign. The London satire newspaper *Fun* published a nursery rhyme entitled "War? or Peace in Stead?", which expressed ironic empathy with the Tsar whose suggestion, now taken over by Stead, had created an unforeseen commotion and had placed the Tsar in the role of a monarchic champion of world peace:

*Twinkle, twinkle mighty Czar,
What a peaceful man you are –
You all war and turmoil dread,
So likewise does Mr. Stead.
When, oh! Czar you made your scheme,
Ah! how little did you dream,
That success might crown your head,
If you'd first consulted Stead.
But he'll do the best he can
To mature your splendid plan –
Nothing fails if it be led
By the Great Reviewing Stead.*⁷¹

Indeed, Stead's subsequent work in the context of the Hague Conferences of 1899 and 1907 was a test of the possibilities of influencing the exclusive circles of international foreign politics and diplomacy. His aim, which derived from his old idea of "government by journalism," was the unity of civil society, public sphere, and governmental diplomacy bound together by the idealized image of a simplified, peaceful world with national and

69 Ibid., 612.

70 About the Hague Peace Conferences: Jost Dülffer, ed., *Regeln gegen den Krieg? Die Haager Friedenskonferenzen von 1899 und 1907 in der internationalen Politik* (Frankfurt/Main, Berlin, Wien: Ullstein, 1981); Jost Dülffer, ed., "100 Jahre Zweite Haager Friedenskonferenz von 1907," *Die Friedens-Warte* 82/4 (2007).

71 "War? or Peace In Stead?," *Fun* 69/1756 (January 3, 1899), 3; see also a cartoon on role of Stead: "Stead-y," *Fun* 69/1759 (January 24, 1899), 28.

imperial signatures remaining the legitimating frameworks.⁷² In his personal mission for world peace, which culminated in the context of the two Hague Conferences, Stead's methods again evolved along techniques of transgressive border-crossing. He combined three levels of his former practices: Firstly, as usual, he began with preliminary public campaigns in order to attract attention to the conference event, this time in a particular transnational setting. Secondly, once at The Hague, both in 1899 and in 1907, he started his activities of social networking with the aim of influencing and interacting with official delegations on an equal footing, which was blatantly against the common societal limitations and habits of diplomacy. He tried to construct a hybridized interacting community made up of both official and non-official peace-workers at The Hague, which certainly was not in accordance with what the diplomats had expected.⁷³ Thirdly, Stead used his journalistic resources to distribute these visions of dissolved diplomatic and societal boundaries as publicity for the peace and civil society activists at The Hague. At the same time, he strengthened his position as a media entrepreneur, regulating processes of information flows between the conferences and the public: Stead installed himself as the manager of diplomatic flows of information, indeed as a form of public relations department for the Conference and the non-official peace-workers at The Hague, which reflected in practice his old concept of the active, interfering, mediating and democratizing power of the journalist.

Stead began his Hague work several months before the start of the conference with a tour of Europe, which he documented along with his programmatic outline in the yearbook of the *Review of Reviews*, entitled *The United States of Europe on the Eve of the Parliament of Peace*.⁷⁴ Stead proclaimed that he had advocated for a European federation of nation states for cooperative action in the world since the 1880s.⁷⁵ He showed himself to be open to various schemes of unification; in fact, the main aim of the book was to drive the statesmen, journalists, and people of Europe towards his "International Crusade of Peace" in order to facilitate world peace. Stead toured the European capitals, extending his activities to a broader transnational and trans-societal level by involving as many civil society activists, high officials, heads of states, and common people as possible. He interviewed prominent diplomats and state representatives and planned a "pilgrimage" of volunteers through Europe as the Western democracies' answer to the Tsarist suggestion.⁷⁶ The usual lethargy of diplomatic negotiations, he thought, should be motivated by courageous peace activities from all over the world.⁷⁷ When the scheme more or less

72 [W. T. Stead], "The Great Pacifist", especially 614–16.

73 For Stead as an empirical example of crossing borders between society and diplomacy and his efforts at creating a hybrid community at The Hague against the common rules of diplomacy see, Madeleine Herren, Martin Rüesch, and Christiane Sibille, *Transcultural History: Theories, Methods, Sources* (Berlin and New York: Springer, 2012), 108–09.

74 W. T. Stead, *The United States of Europe on the Eve of the Parliament of Peace* (London: Review of Reviews Office, 1899).

75 *Ibid.*, 60–1.

76 Stead, *United States of Europe*, for the outline of the "pilgrimage": 202–08.

77 *Ibid.*, 208.

failed, Stead argued that the agitation would remain limited to England.⁷⁸ Nevertheless, he created a new weekly newspaper entitled *War against War!* to accompany the process.⁷⁹ The twelve issues of the paper introduced the different elements involved in propagating his peace mission, which he would later, in context of the second Hague Peace Conference in 1907, take up in an advanced and elaborated form. Its content was a blend of entertaining and educating peace news aimed at everyone, and it included appeals for a peaceful world from different societal and political circles, comments on international relations, music for the “crusade,” gossip about diverse celebrities of the international world, and contributions by Stead’s supporters in churches, politics, and society (regular sections included “the crusader’s picture gallery,” “the crusader’s library,” the crusader’s pulpit”). Stead tried to directly involve his readers by appealing to their emotions and sense of personal responsibility, making them familiar with the prominent faces of transnational peace and civil society activism, and providing them with a set of practical tools with which to get involved.⁸⁰ His anti-war propaganda included a section on the economic burdens of war (“what might be done with the money”), which suggested alternative projects of imperialist infrastructure, including the Cape-Cairo railway project of Stead’s old friend Rhodes; further suggestions were to solve the housing question and build up pension funds.⁸¹ For his readers, it was not always easy to identify which famous personality actually supported Stead’s crusade or was just cited: At first glance, supporters of Stead’s agenda seemed to include Nicholas II (the “Emperor of Peace”⁸²), the Polish banker and writer Jean Bloch⁸³, the president of the Berne Peace Bureau Élie Ducommun⁸⁴, and the former British prime minister Lord Rosebery.⁸⁵ In April 1899, Stead appeared at The Hague to continue his work on site; not surprisingly, his concept of the peace conference as a democratic public event soon collided with the plans of the organizers and diplomats. The delegations at The Hague, consisting of diplomats as well as legal and military experts, unexpectedly found themselves con-

78 “The Modified Pilgrimage,” *War against War!* 8 (March 3, 1899): 113.

79 *War against War! A Chronicle of the International Crusade of Peace*, 1–12 (January – March 1899).

80 Advertisement: “To Those Who Wish to Help in the Crusade of Peace. General Directions to Volunteers,” *War against War!* 1 (Jan. 13, 1899): 14.

81 “What Might Be Done with the Money, I: Build the Cape to Cairo Railway!,” *War against War!* 2 (January 20, 1899): 17; “What Might Be Done with the Money, II: Old Age Pensions,” *War against War!* 3 (January 27, 1899): 33; “What Might Be Done with the Money, III: Replace Slums by Homes,” *War against War!* 4 (February 3, 1899): 49.

82 *War against War!* 1 (January 13, 1899): 4.

83 “The Crusader’s Library – VII: The War of the Future,” *War against War!* 8 (March 3, 1899): 116. The Polish banker and railway industrialist Jean (or Jan, or Ivan) Bloch (1826–1902) was famous for his book *The Future of War* about the dangers of modern industrialized warfare; Stead contributed significantly to distribute Bloch’s work in English by producing a summarizing pamphlet about the book as well as assisting in an abridged translation: W. T. Stead, *Has War Become Impossible? A Conversation with M. Bloch* (London: Review of Reviews Office, 1899); Ivan S. Bloch, *Is War Now Impossible? Being an Abridgment of “The War of the Future in Its Technical, Economic and Political Relations”* (London: Grant Richards, 1899).

84 “The Crusader’s Picture Gallery, IV: Elie Ducommun,” *War against War!* 4 (February 3, 1899): 50. The Swiss Élie Ducommun (1833–1906) was one of the pioneers of the peace movements and awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1902.

85 “By Lord Rosebery: Two Pleas for Peace,” *War against War!* 3 (January 27, 1899): 19.

fronted with peace activists like Bertha von Suttner, Alfred H. Fried, or the feminist Margarethe L. Selenka, who had likewise organized an international campaign for peace and arrived at The Hague with volumes of petitions and anti-war signatures.⁸⁶ Stead began to build up his network of information policy and, in cooperation with local newspapers, published reports about the proceedings of the conference by acquiring his information through his network of personal contacts and diverse leaks in the processes of communication.⁸⁷ For the moment, diplomatic secrecy seemed to be at stake. Delegates found their pictures in Stead's photo-book on the conference, *The Parliament of Peace and its Members*, which already in its title attributed to them a quasi-democratic vocation and responsibility for the future of the world.⁸⁸ At first glance, it was difficult to determine whether Stead's publication had any official grounding; in addition, Stead's policy of publication provided the diplomats with the idea for an ongoing systematic transfer of information to the public. However, Stead's overstepping of the borders of diplomatic secrecy and construction of an unofficial context of publication to the negotiations provided an interesting contrast to the actual main issues of discussion and the outcomes of the First Hague Conference. The negotiations turned out to be rather remote from the ideas about establishing world peace, but focused mainly on elaborating the international law of war. The question of the quantitative and qualitative limitation of armaments, central for the pacifists, was rejected, even though several agreements about the limitation of specific modern weapons were integrated into the final convention.⁸⁹ But the conference of 1899 realized one of Stead's primordial aims: An international administration for arbitration was founded, the first international institution of systematic prevention of wars, the so-called Permanent Court of Arbitration, though national participation was voluntary and its substantial power limited.⁹⁰ When Stead summed up the results of

86 The Austrian Bertha von Suttner (1843–1814), one of the celebrities of the international peace movement, won the Nobel Prize for Peace in 1905; for a short biography see the pages of the Nobel Prize: "Bertha von Suttner – Biographical," http://www.nobelprize.org/nobel_prizes/peace/laureates/1905/suttner-bio.html (accessed November 18, 2013). Alfred H. Fried (1864–1921) worked as author, publisher, and editor within the peace and internationalist movement and was in 1911 awarded the Nobel Prize for Peace, see: "Alfred Hermann Fried – Biographical," http://www.nobelprize.org/nobel_prizes/peace/laureates/1911/fried-bio.html (accessed November 18, 2013). Margarethe Lenore Selenka (1860–1922) was a German zoologist and active in questions of women's rights and pacifism; for her activities in context of The Hague in 1899 see: Margarethe L. Selenka, *Die internationale Kundgebung der Frauen zur Friedenskonferenz* (München: Schupp, 1900); about Selenka's initiative: Cooper, *Patriotic Pacifism*, 68–9.

87 Several passages of these newspaper reports were reprinted in Stead's later summary about the First Hague Conference: W. T. Stead, *La chronique de la Conférence de la Haye 1899, accompagné du texte des conventions* (The Hague: Hoekstra & Co, 1901). For a self-description of Stead's work at The Hague 1899 see his reports: W. T. Stead, "Some Pages of a Busy Life. In the Month of May 1899," *Review of Reviews* (June 19, 1899): 537–43; "At The Hague: A Month's Doings and Sayings. More Pages from a Busy Life," *Review of Reviews* (July 20, 1899): 37–44.

88 W. T. Stead, ed., *The Parliament of Peace and Its Members* (London: Review of Reviews Office, 1899).

89 These agreements concerned warfare with chemical weapons, air warfare with balloons, and special forms of expanding bullets. James Brown Scott, ed., *The Hague Conventions and Declarations of 1899 and 1907: Accompanied by Tables of Signatures, Ratifications and Adhesions of the Various Powers, and Texts of Reservations* (Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 1915).

90 About the debate on arbitration at The Hague: Margaret Robinson, "Arbitration and The Hague Peace Conferences, 1899 and 1907" (PhD Thesis, University of Pennsylvania, 1936). For the text of the two Hague Conventions: Scott, *The Hague Conventions and Declarations of 1899 and 1907*.

the Conference in his *Chronique de la Conférence de La Haye* of 1901, he maintained an optimistic voice and considered the event a useful first step. However, he also criticized the diplomatic world for their old-fashioned information transfer and ivory tower lack of communication with the outside world, which slowed down all enthusiasm of the diplomats themselves.⁹¹

Stead's ongoing peace mission soon received a decisive blow when just after the closing of the Hague Conference, in October 1899, the Second Boer War started. Stead was personally in contact with several of the British men on the spot (especially Rhodes and Milner, who had during the 1880s been his deputy editor at the *Pall Mall Gazette*)⁹², but ultimately turned, despite all imperialist attitudes, into one of the most fervent opponents of the war in South Africa. With his pro-Boer "Stop-the-War-Committee," the new journal *War against War in South Africa* and the pamphlet *Hell let loose in South Africa* (1901), Stead took an extremely unpopular stance that resulted in a serious financial setback for the *Review of Reviews*.⁹³ At the same time that his national influence was on the decline (also because of the failed project of a new daily newspaper) he managed to enlarge his international networking. Stead formed new contacts with members of the Interparliamentary Union (IPU), a semi-official international association of parliamentarians⁹⁴, and contacted the American businessman and philanthropist Andrew Carnegie, who would during the next years provide important funding for peace work, especially for the new Peace Palace at The Hague, the seat of the Permanent Court of Arbitration.⁹⁵

The Second Hague Conference in 1907 was a further opportunity for presenting Stead's peace publicity on an international platform; it would be his largest internationalist peace project. Stead's preliminary plans for national and international activities were again manifold, but they did not attract the response that he had wished for. Neither did his "Peace Budget Plan"⁹⁶ – that every country should spend one British Pound on peace promotion for every 1000 Pounds spent for military purposes – attract much interest in Britain, the United States, or in continental Europe. Likewise, his calls for a new "Peace Pilgrimage," this time also promoted by a tour in the United States, fell on deaf ears. George Bernard Shaw, whom Stead approached as a potential supporter, found

91 Stead, *Chronique de la Conférence de La Haye*, 33–4.

92 Stead had even in 1896 written a semi-fictional account about the Jameson Raid. See: Joseph O. Baylen, "W. T. Stead's History of the Mystery and the Jameson Raid," *The Journal of British Studies* 4/1 (1964): 104–32.

93 About Stead's work against the Boer War: Simon Potter, "W. T. Stead, Imperial Federation, and the South African War," in *Newspaper Revolutionary*, ed. Laurel Brake et al. (London: The British Library, 2012), 115–32; Deborah Mutch, "Are We Christians?: W. T. Stead, Keir Hardie, and the Boer War," in *Newspaper Revolutionary*, ed. Laurel Brake et al. (London: The British Library, 2012), 133–48.

94 [W. T. Stead], "The Topic of the Month: A Plea for International Picnics," *Review of Reviews* 21 (September 1899): 257–69.

95 The industrialist Andrew Carnegie (1835–1919) began after 1900 with extensive activities of philanthropy, especially with projects in world peace and in building up education and library institutions. Stead tried to advise Carnegie about possible philanthropic projects: W. T. Stead, *Mr. Carnegie's Conundrum: £ 40,000,000. What Shall I Do with It?* (London: Review of Reviews Office, 1900).

96 [W. T. Stead], "The Great Pacifist," 617–18.

the whole proposal utterly absurd.⁹⁷ Stead used all the subsequent critical comments about his alleged eccentricity in his peace voyages to market his peace propaganda in the form of witty travel reports.⁹⁸ Arriving again at The Hague in spring 1907, Stead aimed to transform the diplomatic conference into a mega-pacifist event for the international public. The Second Hague Conference lasted four months, from June to October 1907, and was more ‘international’ in composition than the previous one: It now included representatives from forty-four states, among them many non-European ones, in total almost all states which were recognized as independent, though African countries, for instance, were again not represented.⁹⁹ Most states had also increased their number of diplomatic, legal, and military staff at The Hague; peace and civil society activists as well as journalists arrived in huge numbers, which heightened Stead’s opportunities to build contacts.

But Stead intended to go further than in 1899. He not only tried once again to challenge the information policy of the conference, he also wanted to demonstrate the principle of democratic participation in diplomacy and to interpret international meetings as a hybrid international contact zone that merged diplomatic and public spheres on equal terms.¹⁰⁰ In order to build up his networking and media infrastructure, Stead co-operated with local internationalists, notably with the Fondation pour l’Internationalisme, a short-lived private association aimed at fostering internationalism and making The Hague an intellectual-scientific capital of the world.¹⁰¹ Together with other internationalists, Stead organized a non-official counter-conference, the “cercle international,” which met regularly to debate the proceedings of the Conference, to organize lectures, cultivate contacts with other non-official or official visitors at The Hague, and discuss what activities should be organized subsequent to the Conference. The “cercle international” was intended as a bridge to the ‘official’ meeting; in the first place, however, it became a meeting place for those who were not in a position of official participation – peace activists, feminists, in-

97 Shaw to Stead, undated letter, published in: Patrick G. Hogan and Joseph O. Baylen, “G. Bernard Shaw and W. T. Stead: An Unexplored Relationship,” *Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900* 1/4 (1961): 123–47, here 141–42; about H. G. Wells’ reaction: Joseph O. Baylen, “W. T. Stead and the Early Career of H. G. Wells, 1895–1911,” *Huntington Library Quarterly* 38/1 (1974): 53–79, here 70–1.

98 W. T. Stead, “Notes on my American Tour,” *Review of Reviews* 35 (May 1907): 210–15; “Preparing for the Hague Conference II – The Peace Congress in New York,” *Review of Reviews* 35 (May 1907): 486–89. See also about the Peace Pilgrimage: “An International Demonstration for Internationalism. Why not a World’s Pilgrimage of Peace?” *Review of Reviews* 35 (March 1907): 259–67; “A Handy Catechism for Crusaders,” *Review of Reviews* 35 (April 1907): 350–53; “The International Pilgrimage of Peace,” *Review of Reviews* 35 (April 1907): 374–77; “Preparing for the Hague Conference I – The International Peace Pilgrimage,” *Review of Reviews* 35 (May 1907): 484–86.

99 Details about the composition and the negotiations of the Second Hague Peace Conference: Dülffer, *Regeln gegen den Krieg?*, 300–27. About the debates on arbitration and legal intervention: Martha Finnemore, *The Purpose of Intervention: Changing Beliefs about the Use of Force* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2013), 24–46.

100 Herren, Rüesch, and Sibille, *Transcultural History*, 108–09.

101 “La Fondation pour l’Internationalisme,” *Courrier de la Conférence* 6 (June 21, 1907): 3; Geert Somsen, “Holland’s Calling: Dutch Scientists’ Self-Fashioning as International Mediators,” in *Neutrality in Twentieth-Century Europe: Intersections of Science, Culture, and Politics After the First World War*, eds. Rebecka Lettevall, Geert Somsen, and Sven Widmalm (New York: Routledge, 2012), 45–64, about the “Fondation” and its connections to Stead: 49.

ternationalists, journalists, and representatives of minorities or colonized peoples.¹⁰² The “cercle international” provided a public forum for debates on all issues not considered by the Conference, and was thus an early forerunner of the twentieth-century shadow conferences that would regularly accompany intergovernmental meetings.¹⁰³ Indeed, the participation of journalistic and civil society as well as resonances in a globalized public sphere would in future form a constituent part of international diplomatic meetings.

Similar to the first Conference of 1899, the expectations of the pacifist circles did not align with the actual proceedings of the meeting. Not only did most official delegations largely ignore the presence and agendas of the peace advocates. Also, the structural organisation of the Conference with its huge number of participants presented many difficulties, and there was little disposition for compromise in the negotiations since many questions seemed to infringe on national sovereignties. The issue of a limitation of armaments was already buried before the start of the meeting; disappointed by the great powers’ attitudes, Stead nevertheless published a death notice about the matter in August 1907.¹⁰⁴ Besides, there was the central political dilemma in the background of how to actually organize a way of international control around such delicate questions.¹⁰⁵ The new institution of arbitration at The Hague was confirmed by the second conference, but it consisted above all of a list of possible arbitrators administered by an international bureau; arbitration in case of conflict was still not obligatory, nor was the court a permanent one.¹⁰⁶ Instead, the conference of 1907 again put an emphasis on refining and revising the international rules for war. Partly as a reaction to the Russian-Japanese war, partly because of the increasing naval military build-up, regulations on naval warfare, the opening of hostilities, and the position of neutral powers entered the convention texts of the Second Hague Conference.¹⁰⁷

Although the developments of official discussions seemed disappointing for peace activists, Stead again began, without being asked, to manage the public relations work of the Conference according to his own ideas. With the support of the Fondation pour l’Internationalisme he published an illustrated volume containing biographical as well as practical information about the delegations, *Le Parlement de l’Humanité*, similar to his photo-album project of 1899.¹⁰⁸ The diplomats and experts were listed in their function as national representatives, but Stead again indicated their primordial role as part of new federated world organisation. Stead’s main publication project at the Second Hague Conference, together with the *Review of Reviews*, was his daily conference newspaper, the *Courrier de la Conférence de la Paix*. The paper, about four to eight-pages long, docu-

102 “Le Cercle International. La dépendance de la Conférence,” *Courrier de la Conférence* 1 (June 15, 1907): 5.

103 Reinalda, *Routledge History of International Organizations*, 79.

104 “Hic Jacet la question de la limitation des armements,” *Courrier de la Conférence* 56 (August 18, 1907): 1.

105 Dülffer, *Regeln gegen den Krieg?*, 333.

106 Ibid., 314–16.

107 Scott, *The Hague Conventions and Declarations of 1899 and 1907*.

108 W. T. Stead, ed., *Le Parlement de l’Humanité (La Conférence de la Paix à La Haye 1907). Les Délégués – Biographies et Photographies* (Amsterdam, Leipzig: Mass & van Suchtelen, 1907): Preface, 7.

mented in detail Stead's methods in organizing a transnational public space that merged diplomatic and pacifist activities in order to link the conference events to the activities of civil society and the public.¹⁰⁹ He listed the several well-known pacifists of the time as his co-workers, among them Bertha von Suttner, Alfred H. Fried, Felix Moscheles, and the first Nobel peace laureate Frédéric Passy.¹¹⁰ To his readers, this symbolized a close companionship with the leading figures of the peace movement, but it seems that Stead and his small staff carried the most of the financial burden and the workload for the project.¹¹¹ The *Courrier* aimed at being more than a newsheet commenting on the proceedings of the conference from a pacifist perspective. It established and performed a public sphere beyond all official lines by combining a number of transgressive elements: In detail, it accompanied and commented on the proceedings of the conference in the diverse committees as a guideline of orientation; it served as a discussion forum for insiders and outsiders at The Hague; as an information sheet for pacifist propaganda; as a guide for all foreigners and tourists in The Hague; and as distributor of transnational gossip.¹¹² Next to integrating summary reports about the conference proceedings, which were distributed by the conference organizers, and other official papers that Stead gained via informal ways,¹¹³ the paper featured articles on all issues that Stead was interested in, for instance the plans for a world capital, the transnational suffragette movement, diverse international conferences, and the establishment of Esperanto as a world language. In addition, in its function as a fused platform for both diplomacy and the public sphere the paper was again a welcome forum for the statements of diplomatic outsiders. It also offered a testing ground for official conference attendants who experimented with the influence of their position. Those delegates who were themselves active in internationalist circles (such as the French d'Estournelles de Constant)¹¹⁴ or who were newcomers on the scene of international diplomacy (such as the Latin American delegates) were in closer contact with Stead's projects. When delegations complained about diplomatic functions being impaired, Stead legitimated his *Courrier* project with his political neutrality and his dedication to their common cause: "Ensuite [...] aucun member de la Conférence, sans excepter les Présidents eux-mêmes, n'a donné plus de preuves d'une passion sincere et désintéressé pour le succès de la Conférence que le Rédacteur du *Courrier*."¹¹⁵ With the journalistic realization of the *Courrier*, Stead remarkably stretched the exclusivity of the actual proceedings of the diplomatic meeting into the desired directions

109 W.T. Stead, ed., *Courrier de la Conférence de la Paix* 1–109 (Amsterdam: Maas & Van Suchtelen, 1907).

110 The British painter and Esperanto-activist Felix Moscheles (1833–1917) was president of the International Arbitration and Peace Association. The French Frédéric Passy (1822–1912), one of the founders of the Interparliamentary Union, was awarded the first Nobel Peace Prize in 1901 together with Henri Dunant.

111 *Courrier de la Conférence* 1 (June 15, 1907): 1–4; 109 (October 20, 1907): 6.

112 For Stead's program of the *Courrier* see especially its first issue, *Courrier de la Conférence* 1 (June 14, 1907).

113 "La Conférence et le 'Courrier'," *Courrier de la Conférence* 11 (June 27, 1907): 1.

114 The French parliamentarian Paul Henri d'Estournelles de Constant (1852–1924), who was awarded the Nobel Prize of Peace in 1909, was active in the question of arbitration and international conciliation; for Stead's description see: "Personnalités de la Conférence," *Courrier de la Conférence* 30 (July 19, 1907), 1.

115 "La Conférence et le 'Courrier'," *Courrier de la Conférence* 11 (June 27, 1907): 1.

of a transparent diplomacy and an enlarged circle of participants in questions of world peace. As usual, it was at first glance not easy to ascertain whether the *Courrier* (written in French as the language of diplomacy) actually had any official character or not, even though Stead had emphasized the *Courrier's* non-official and impartial position in the first issue.¹¹⁶ In the design of the paper itself, which was complemented by photographs, caricatures, and graphics, Stead did not hierarchically distinguish between the presentation of official documents and his own comments. Transnational social and civil society movements appeared in this presentation as an accepted and completely self-evident part of conference life at The Hague. The borders between officials and non-officials seemed marginal but Stead also tried to win over the diplomats and experts as well as the surrounding participants for his cause by writing “character sketches” highlighting the efforts of individual attendants. For the reader, there was in presentation no hierarchical difference between prominent pacifists, philanthropists such as Andrew Carnegie, or participants of official delegations.¹¹⁷ Likewise, in Stead’s presentation women were equal members of the Hague debate, and he especially highlighted the presence of the prominent Bertha von Suttner and gave space to the German-American Anna B. Eckstein’s petition campaign for arbitration.¹¹⁸ In its presentation, the *Courrier* at the same time exposed the problem of inclusion and exclusion at a major international diplomatic meeting. Once again, Stead unsettled the borders of diplomatic tact by publicly addressing those issues that the conference tried carefully to avoid: Which areas, nations, or peoples of the world were seen as entitled to take part in a ‘civilized’ international conference? Who should be admitted in future to events of international law – or world peace – like the Hague Conferences? Why did the idea of world peace seem to be intrinsically subordinate to other questions? What was the future relation of diplomacy to the public, especially with regard to principles of diplomatic secrecy? What of the role of women, suppressed minorities, or advocates of anti-colonial movements in future diplomatic international meetings?

However, as his contemporaries would learn again at The Hague, Stead’s own views on the problems of power hierarchies as well as on cultural-racial (in)equality on the international stage were not at all without contradictions. The presence of more non-European delegations than in 1899 provided an opportunity to test the ‘globality’ of Stead’s endeavours. The emphasis of Stead’s papers and books was frequently on European or US-American issues because of his personal networks, but he did not disguise that his peace campaign had worldwide intentions. In the early months of the conference, Stead’s reports about official proceedings focused primarily on the delegations of great powers, but he gradually began to turn his attention to international newcomers like the Latin

116 “Avis,” *Courrier de la Conférence* 1 (June 15, 1907): 1.

117 Stead, however, indicated the difference to official attendants by calling the section of non-official participants “personnalités hors de la Conférence.”

118 “Le Conseil International des Femmes,” *Courrier de la Conférence* 4 (June 19, 1907): 1. Anna B. Eckstein (1868–1947) was a German-American teacher and vice president of the American Peace Society. About Anna Eckstein at The Hague: *Courrier de la Conférence* 26 (July 14, 1907): 3.

American delegates. Stead was especially impressed by the work of the Brazilian head of delegation, Ruy Barboza¹¹⁹, who opposed legalizing the hierarchical position of states and argued instead for legal equality and a numerical equivalence of national judges at the arbitration court.¹²⁰ Disappointed by the proceedings of the great powers, Stead interpreted the work of Latin American delegates as the progressive and active forces at The Hague and devoted more and more attention to their personalities and agendas. In particular, Stead underlined the significance of Latin American countries as pioneers of arbitration and saw Latin America, especially in questions of peace, “à la tête du monde.”¹²¹ Stead’s hopes that Latin American politicians would join his idea of a post-Hague “pilgrimage” to spread pacifist ideas, however, would not become a reality, despite the fact that he optimistically presented the delegates as “peace pilgrims.”¹²²

While Stead was positively impressed by the new international confidence of Latin American delegates, in a peculiar combination of actual assistance and condescension the *Courrier* also became a platform for the silenced participants on the international stage. Stead was particularly occupied with the problems of Armenians¹²³ as well as with the problematic case of the Koreans. Officially still sovereign despite the colonial encroachments of Japan, which had tightened after the Russian-Japanese war, the Korean government sent a delegation to The Hague. Although for Western powers the Korean problem seemed to constitute an internal affair of Japan, the sudden appearance of the Korean delegates was the cause of much embarrassment. While the Conference participants blocked any discussion about Korea, the delegation effectively lobbied for worldwide attention by using the internationality of The Hague event for their purposes. Stead became interested, and the Korean delegation printed their petition on independence in the *Courrier*.¹²⁴ Stead published a detailed interview with Prince Yi Wi-jong¹²⁵ and continued to use the Korean example to denounce moral deficiencies, injustices, and exclusions of the state system. But he also underlined his own interpretation of colonial relations in an evolutionary-Westernized sense by advising the Koreans to surrender to

119 “Personnalités de la Conférence: M. Ruy Barbosa,” *Courrier de la Conférence* 36 (July 26, 1907): 1. The Brazilian politician, jurist and writer Ruy (or Rui) Barboza (1849–1923) was one of the important political and cultural figures of his country and became internationally famous for his endeavours at The Hague in 1907.

120 For international discussions on legal equality and sovereignty see, Gerry Simpson, *Great Powers and Outlaw States: Unequal Sovereigns in the International Legal Order* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2004), here 141–42.

121 Especially: “Réunion des Délégués de l’Amérique du Sud,” *Courrier de la Conférence* 38 (July 28, 1907): 1; “Ave Bolivar! Pourquoi l’Amérique latine est à la tête du monde,” *Courrier de la Conférence* 100 (October 10, 1907): 1.

122 “Le Pèlerinage de la Paix autour du monde. La Réponse de l’Amérique latine,” *Courrier de la Conférence* 101 (October 11, 1907): 1.

123 “D’autres squelettes de la fête,” *Courrier de la Conférence* 47 (August 8, 1907): 2; “L’appel des Arméniens,” *Courrier de la Conférence* 50 (August 11, 1907): 3; “La protestation des Arméniens,” *Courrier de la Conférence* 51 (August 13, 1907): 3.

124 “Pourquoi exclure la Corée?,” *Courrier de la Conférence* 14 (June 30, 1907): 2; “Le défi des Coréens,” *Courrier de la Conférence* 21 (July 9, 1907): 1.

125 “Le squelette de la fête,” *Courrier de la Conférence* 18 (July 5, 1907): 1. Yi Wi-jong (1887–1917) worked as diplomat and died in World War I as a military officer in Russian service.

the superior power for the sake of peace until their national abilities and vitalities were equally developed.¹²⁶

The *Courrier* gave a platform to all the voices who wanted to have a say on the matter of the conference or on related issues and indeed served as a platform for petitions and agendas from numerous different sides. But minorities and anti-colonial delegations, which Stead called “the skeletons of the celebration,” obviously had to face similar power relations and patronizing comments from the peace activists. Stead campaigned for assembling the whole world for his cause, but his ‘globality’ remained clearly shaped according to his own steadfast concepts of civilizational leadership, which were rarely questioned by his multiple transgressive works. After the Conference, the Austrian pacifist Alfred H. Fried called the *Courrier* a mouthpiece for the world’s opinions¹²⁷, but it was only a selective version of the world, and one that was embedded in Stead’s own interpretational context. However, seen in the light of having created new transboundary paths against established standards, the *Courrier*, with its presentation of the conglomeration of topics assembled around the Hague Conference event, is not only a lens onto a particularly internationalized episode together with its social interactions, it is also a documentation of the impending challenge to diplomacy to open itself up both geographically and towards the self-assertion of marginalized groups. These concepts and vocabularies of blurred borders in the diplomatic sphere would gain a new significance after World War I, when the League of Nations initiated handling international relations through a more transparent ‘new diplomacy’ with a more distinct inclusion of the public. For Stead, the Second Hague Conference was not the end of anti-war campaigning; he continued his peace campaigns with a special focus on promoting international arbitration. His last peace mission was, like the very first one in 1876, concerned with the Ottoman Empire. In the context of the Italo-Turkish war of 1911, Stead travelled to Constantinople not only to investigate possible war massacres but also to convince the new sultan, Mehmed V, of the tool of arbitration; however, Stead’s lobbying for peaceful solutions did not prevent the gradual dismemberment of the Ottoman Empire.¹²⁸

Conclusion

Looking back at the late Victorian era, the journalist E. T. Raymond described Stead in 1921 as a “most singular combination of the businessman and the mystic”.¹²⁹ Both elements can be observed in Stead’s civil society work on world peace. Stead searched for

126 “Le système politique future des Coréens,” *Courrier de la Conférence* 40 (September 4, 1907): 3. One of the Korean delegates, the judge Yi Jun (1859–1907), died in July 1907 at The Hague, which caused an additional burst of international rumors about the Korean case.

127 Alfred H. Fried, *Handbuch der Friedensbewegung*, 2nd ed., 2 vols. (Berlin, Leipzig: Friedenswarte Verlag, 1911–13), here vol. 2: 191.

128 W. T. Stead, *Tripoli and the Treaties; Or, Britain’s Duty in This War* (London: Stead’s Publishing House, 1911); Prévost, “W. T. Stead and the Eastern Question,” 20.

129 Raymond, *Portraits of the Nineties*, 178.

ways to distribute his ideas and to control public opinion, and he combined the promotion of his own person, his calls for disseminating his interpretation of Christian morals, and his investigative-intrusive journalism in order to gain a dominant and significant public position. But why is Stead's peace work actually a relevant topic of investigation? This article discusses the ways in which his transgressive working method constitutes a key element to understanding Stead's biography and his position in internationalist activism during the two decades before World War I. Stead strategically worked to play with and destabilize borders, whether national, societal, or diplomatic; but he also practically reinforced contemporaneous ideas of civilizational, racist, or moral supremacy. In this context, Stead's peace work gives us insight into the historical efforts to question and reconsider established hierarchic and impermeable structures of diplomatic work. It displays the complexities and contradictions inherent in individual and civil society scopes of action demanding diplomatic transparency and democratic equivalences or actively creating alternative spaces of international activity, for instance by using journalistic technologies of information transfer. The focus on a person active within the international community in this period of acute inter-state tensions, rather than on an organisation, epistemic group, or governmental institution, displays transnationally relevant complex mentalities as well as non-linear tensions between imperial militancy and transnational civil society activism. However, looking beyond the dimension of an individual, Stead's transgressive methods mirrored larger transformations of communication and information transfer at the beginning of the twentieth century as well as their consequences for diplomacy, foreign policy, and movements of civil society. The increasing influence of diplomatic outsiders on topics of foreign policy could no longer be ignored; after Stead's death in 1912, further civil society activists lobbied for a continuation and enlargement of the Hague project. Stead's work prefigured a far greater shattering of diplomatic habits in the decade after his death. In 1917 the Bolshevik government broke with the traditions of the secretive diplomatic elite by publishing tsarist and allied documents of war agreements. In the same year, the British diplomat Sir Ernest Satow produced his book *A Guide to Diplomatic Practice*, which intended to confirm the established rules of diplomatic work and exclusivity for the future.¹³⁰ After 1919 the League of Nations discussed the relations between diplomacy and the public in order to be seen to react to the problems of diplomatic transparency of the past decades but also to define its own international contact zone at Geneva. Stead's transgression of diplomatic borders and interference with the traditions of information transfer foreshadowed several long-term consequences of a destabilized diplomacy, which in turn produced two impacts: the questioning of traditional borderlines and diplomatic exclusivity and simultaneously the re-tightening and affirmation of rules. Ultimately, an assessment of Stead's work towards peace and diplomatic transparency demonstrates that projects of challenging borderlines and creating new international contact zones do not necessarily imply any teleology of

130 Ernest M. Satow, *A Guide to Diplomatic Practice* (London, New York: Longmans, Green, 1917); see also: Herren, Rüesch, and Sibille, *Transcultural History*, 110.

increasing hybridity and permeability of borders. Rather, such efforts can paradoxically result in a reconfirmation of existing borders, or even the creation of new ones by interest groups which want to maintain their hegemonic control over the institutional and interpretative apparatuses of controlling power.