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Citation for final published version:

Morgan, W John 2022. Peace Profile: David Davies, of Llandinam. Peace Review  
10.1080/10402659.2022.2153587

Publishers page: <https://doi.org/10.1080/10402659.2022.2153587>

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## **Peace Profile: David Davies, of Llandinam.**

**W. John Morgan.**

### **Abstract**

David Davies, of Llandinam (1880-1944) was undoubtedly the most influential person in the peace movement in Wales during the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The grandson of a prominent Welsh industrialist and businessman, also David Davies, he inherited great wealth, from a family of preeminent social standing in Montgomeryshire, his county of birth. This permitted Davies a philanthropy stimulated by idealist beliefs about how international relations should be conducted, given the terrible experience of the First World War. The article provides a profile of the man, his philanthropy, and his idealist philosophy of peace as expressed in his own words, with an assessment of Davies' influence on the peace movement in Wales, and beyond.

### **Key Words**

David Davies, Philanthropy, Idealism, Peace Campaigning, Wales.

### **Introduction**

David Davies was born on 11 May 1880 and thus was a late Victorian in upbringing. He was educated at Merchiston Castle, a minor public school in Edinburgh, and as an undergraduate at King's College, Cambridge where he read History. In 1906, when Davies was 26 years old, he was elected unopposed as the Liberal Member of Parliament for Montgomeryshire, which reflected his family's social dominance in the county. The article profiles David Davies as a peace campaigner and philanthropic public figure in Wales, rather than the private man. However, he was twice married. His first wife, who died in 1918, was Amy, with whom he had a son and a daughter. In 1922 he married Henrietta Margaret, known as Rita, with whom he had two sons and two daughters. She died in 1948.

At the outbreak of the First World War, although without military experience, he raised and commanded the 14<sup>th</sup> Battalion, the Royal Welsh Fusiliers, with the rank of Lieutenant Colonel, in Wales and France until 1916. However, he continued as a Member of Parliament and in that year returned to Westminster as Parliamentary Private Secretary, to the Prime Minister, his fellow Welshman David Lloyd George, a post he held for a year. However, he was obliged to resign after personal differences with Lloyd George. It was to be his only political office and a minor one. Such arrangements reflected the class nature of British politics and military establishment at this time.

Davies was very critical subsequently of Lloyd George's leadership of the Liberal Party. He resigned his seat before the General Election in 1929 but engaged in a controversy about the nomination of a successor as a Liberal candidate. Davies' nominee, W. Alford Jehu, who was seen as his mouthpiece, was rejected by the local Liberal Association in favor of another candidate, Clement Davies, who was subsequently elected as the Member of Parliament for the county. This indicates a certain willfulness in Davies to exert authority, aggravated by his wealth

and social standing. In 1933, he was created the 1<sup>st</sup> Baron Davies of Llandinam. He died on 16 June 1944. In September of the same year, his heir, Major David Davies (1915-1944), a member of his father's old regiment, the Royal Welch Fusiliers, was killed fighting in France.

### **David Davies as a Philanthropist**

David Davies, and his sisters, Gwendoline, and Margaret, were prominent Welsh philanthropists of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. Their joint endeavor was in the campaign to overcome tuberculosis in Wales. This was organized through the King Edward VII Welsh National Memorial Association which they founded in 1911. Under David Davies' leadership, this became a nationwide program of sanatoria and hospitals, together with a Chair of Tubercular Medicine, at the Welsh National School of Medicine, Cardiff. Many other philanthropic contributions enhanced Welsh public life and social identities, such as Davies' founding of *Y Clybiau Bechgyn a Merched Cymru* (the Boys and Girls Clubs of Wales) in 1922, his support of the Royal Welsh Agricultural Society, and others too numerous to list here. These were important aspects of David Davies' contribution to improving the conditions of Welsh society.

### **David Davies as a Peace Campaigner**

David Davies was the most cogent advocate of liberal idealist internationalism in Wales and his philanthropy included building support in Wales for the League of Nations. In a speech to Wales's preeminent cultural festival, the National *Eisteddfod*, at Neath, in August 1918, he called for a Welsh National League of Nations Union. In the weary, yet hopeful days after the war, it grew rapidly with over six hundred branches by 1926. Davies continued to be tireless in speaking and writing in support of the League and international cooperation in achieving peace. He supported financially, the current affairs magazine *The Welsh Outlook* to promote the ideals of liberal internationalism. It was edited by Dr Thomas Jones, Deputy Cabinet Secretary under David Lloyd George. Jones was a close associate of Davies in Welsh public affairs, Secretary of the King Edward VII Welsh National Memorial Association, and a key figure in the founding of *Coleg Harlech*, a pioneering residential adult education college in north Wales.

### **The Wilson Chair of International Politics.**

David Davies was ubiquitous in Welsh public affairs during the inter-war years. Importantly, he was president of the National Library of Wales, at Aberystwyth, and, for many years, president of University College, Aberystwyth (now Aberystwyth University). In 1918, Davies endowed the Wilson Chair of International Politics at the University College, with the inaugural Chairholder, Alfred Zimmern, taking up his post in April 1919. This Chair was named after Woodrow Wilson, the American President who had personally supported the establishment of a League of Nations after the First World War, despite the decisive opposition of the United States Congress. Zimmern was a prominent exponent of idealism in the conduct and study of international relations which reflected David Davies' original vision. Alfred Zimmern was succeeded by the English historian and diplomat Charles Webster (1922-1932), followed by the American

businessman Jerome Davis Greene (1932-1936), both again in accord with Davies' idealist philosophy. However, its fourth occupant, the English historian Edward Hallett Carr was an exponent of 'realism' and in his influential book *The Twenty Years' Crisis, 1919-1939: An introduction to the study of international relations* (1939) criticized Davies' approach as "liberal utopianism." Consequently, there was serious tension between Carr and Davies throughout the former's tenure as the Wilson Chair (1936-1950).

### ***The Problem of the Twentieth Century (1930).***

Most notable of David Davies' publications are his book *The Problem of the Twentieth Century* (1932) and, posthumously, *The Seven Pillars of Peace* (1945). He also published articles, pamphlets, and short books on topics such as *Anarchy or Peace* (1936), *The church and the League of Nations* (1918), *Suicide or Sanity: An examination of the proposals before the Geneva Disarmament Conference*, (1932), *Nearing the Abyss: the lesson of Ethiopia* (1936), *Foundations of Victory* (1941), and *Facing the Future: letters to John Citizen* (1942). Interestingly, among his many themes was a call for *A Federated Europe*, published by Gollancz in the dark year of 1940. Davies' writing and speeches were characterized by his persistent optimism based on a belief that peace could only be assured through the common interest of an international community in building intellectual and practical cooperation.

In *The Problem of the Twentieth Century*, the most extensive statement of his philosophy of international politics, Davies considers moral questions on the use of force and argues the need to sanction transgressors against international law, arguing that "'International Law' will never become law until it has been supplied with a definite sanction." (4). This leads him to argue for an International Police Force under the authority of the League of Nations, and the benefits of federalism. There are several appendices, including the plans for an International Police Force by President Theodore Roosevelt (1858-1919), of the USA, and by General Augustin Gerard (1857-1926), of France. Davies asked: "How are the affairs of nations to be regulated in such a way as to remove the causes of wars and to effect the just settlement of disputes? If our goal is justice, it cannot be reached without solving the threefold problem of disarmament, security, and sanctions." (3). "This," he argued, "involves a change of mental attitude and outlook on the part of national communities which can never be fully realized until the international authority has been endowed with the power of organizing its sanctions." (6-7).

### ***The New Commonwealth Society (1932).***

David Davies was also an important sponsor and chairman of *The New Commonwealth Society* founded in London in October 1932. This had international aspirations with branches in France, Germany, and the United States. Ernst Jäckh (1875-1959), a prominent German journalist, diplomat, and founder and head of the *Deutsche Hochschule für Politik* (German Academy of Politics), a private institution in Berlin, from 1920-1933, was its international director. It argued that the League of Nations should have its military capacity. Interestingly, Winston Churchill

was elected as president of what was optimistically called the British Section of the Society. He claimed in 1937 that it was one of the few peace societies that advocated the use of force in support of international law.

The Society's primary activity was education and propaganda through its publications, the monthly *The New Commonwealth* (1932-1950), the quarterly *New Commonwealth Quarterly*, and later the *London Quarterly of World Affairs* (1935-1943). As with other similar organizations, its public influence was limited, and its international organizational aspirations were necessarily challenged by the emergence of totalitarianism and militarism. However, some of its basic ideas did influence the *Charter of the United Nations* (1945). David, Lord Davies was a regular contributor to its debates, especially on the use of force. Davies was also a key figure in Wales's response to the League of Nations' Peace Ballot in 1935. The Society ceased activity in 1950.

### **The Temple of Peace and Health (1934)**

In 1934, David Davies' philanthropy contributed significantly to the founding of the Temple of Peace and Health, a neo-classical building in Cathay's Park, Cardiff. It provided a focus for Davies' two great humanitarian concerns: public health and international peace. It had its origins in the Davies family's support for a Welsh National Book of Remembrance to commemorate the 35,000 men and women recognized by the Welsh National War Memorial, unveiled by Edward, Prince of Wales, on 28 June 1928. David Davies' vision was a Temple of Peace and Health as a crypt for the Book of Remembrance and to be a focal point for later generations to come together in support of international peace, health, and justice. In the constrained economic circumstances of the 1930s, it was Davies' financial support and personal commitment that saw the project to completion, opening in 1938. In a Souvenir Supplement of *The Western Mail* newspaper, on 24 November 1937, recalling pioneers of the Welsh peace movement, Richard Price, Tregelles Price, and Henry Richard, Lord Davies said: "Peace can only become a reality if it is enshrined in the hearts of the people. Governments come and go, but the people go on forever. Moreover, voluntary movements are the precursors of great and far-reaching reforms."

### ***The Seven Pillars of Peace* (1945).**

This short book was published posthumously as the world faced the problems of post-war reconstruction. It should be noted as a summary of David Davies' philosophy of international politics, in which he attempted to match his idealist aspirations with pragmatic policy. He said that "...we helped to sabotage those institutions, in particular the League of Nations, which had been created at the conclusion of the last war to promote international justice and resist aggression. We attempted to appease the dictators and aggressors at the expense of other nations, and we refused either to co-operate with our neighbours in constituting a combined force for our national security or to keep our own national defences from falling into disrepair.... We gambled with our freedom and democratic way of life... That was the great betrayal." (1-2).

The question Davies asks is how we can avoid making the same mistakes after the Second World War. He identifies seven pillars of peace as fundamental to international reconstruction. These are morality; justice; force; freedom; democracy; federalism; and education. He rejects an

eighth pillar of economics, arguing: 'The economic stimulus is not the primary motive which impels nations to attack their neighbours and plunge the world into war. On the contrary, the paramount urge is a desire for mastery over others, for domination over other peoples.' (7-8). He says: "The majority of the United Nations are democracies. At the conclusion of this war, they will have established the conditions which will enable them to construct a lasting peace, provided they seize the opportunity which will then be afforded them." (6).

This, however, failed to anticipate fresh political struggles, with ideological Cold War, post-colonialism, non-alignment, and a Security Council system with its debilitating power of veto. Yet, an unsigned preface to *The Seven Pillars of Peace* observed: "Lord Davies' critics, and even many of his friends, frequently maintained that his ideas and proposals in the sphere of world affairs were idealistic and utopian.... [Yet] All social and political history shows that what was dismissed as utopian idealism yesterday may be recognized as the essence of political realism today." (v). There is, for instance, much in Davies' short book that gives cause for reflection on Vladimir Putin and Russia's brutal aggression against Ukraine since 2014.

### **Conclusion.**

David Davies' influence was felt not only in Wales but internationally, through his consistent advocacy of liberal internationalism and cooperation in the cause of peace. Brian Porter has described Davies as "...a hunter after peace," saying: "There were many who harboured similar ideas and ideals, but few had the energy, time and money to do what he did in attempting to translate thoughts and hopes into schemes of positive action." (27). Another commentator, J, Graham Jones, described him similarly as 'The Peacemonger,' However, Jones also said: "David, Lord Davies, was undoubtedly *the* public-spirited Welshman of his age, blessed with an exceptionally retentive memory and an ability to take a distant view of events. But he did tend to rely on his wealth to achieve results, and he was reluctant to concede that shortcuts were not always available to achieve his cherished goals." (23)

Davies was criticized, even by friends and associates such as Sir Wynn Wheldon and Dr Thomas Jones, for his autocratic methods that relied on his patronage. Like other wealthy public figures, he was accustomed to having his way. Personal vanity and his belief that he should play a part on an international stage influenced him. Again, the tuberculosis campaign was important, but much more may have been done to improve the primitive working and living conditions, the root cause of their general ill-health, of Lord Davies' Welsh employees and their families who were the source of his wealth.

That said, David Davies continues to influence the understanding of international politics today. In 1963, the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) broadcast a radio program, 'One Man and His Monument' on the 25th anniversary of the Temple of Peace and Health. Produced by John Griffiths, it comprises interviews with those who knew and worked with David Davies. A copy of the script is in the Temple of Peace and Health archives. The building is today home to an educational charity, the Welsh Centre for International Affairs, known for its important work with Welsh schools and colleges, and as a seminar and conference venue.

David Davies himself attracts occasional scholarly interest as the **Recommended Readings** show. The Wilson Chair of International Politics is still active, together with an associated David Davies Memorial Institute of International Studies, (DDMI). The latter, a ‘think tank,’ has a guest lecture program and publishes books and a journal. It founded the influential journal *International Relations* (now published by SAGE). There is also the David Davies of Llandinam (Dinam) Research Fellowship at the International Relations Department, London School of Economics, an endowment provided at the closure of the Dinam Charity (1926-2006). It supports Davies’ vision by enhancing the understanding of international relations among academics and practitioners.

Surprisingly, given Davies’ many contributions to Welsh society, and his standing as a campaigner for international cooperation and peace, there is as yet no published biography. In 1953, Sir Charles Tennyson, civil servant, and grandson of the English poet Alfred Lord Tennyson, prepared a draft of a biography that is now in the archives of the National Library of Wales, Aberystwyth, together with Davies’ papers and other related material.

This work was supported by Leverhulme Emeritus Fellowship: EM 2017-020\7.

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