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Gilbert Murray and International Relations: Hellenism, liberalism, and international intellectual cooperation as a path to peace

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Abstract. Gilbert Murray was one of the towering figures of 20th century cultural and intellectual life, and the foremost Hellenist of his generation. He was also a tireless campaigner for peace and international reconciliation, and a pioneer in the development of international intellectual cooperation, not least in the field of International Relations (IR). Yet in IR today he is largely forgotten. This article seeks to put Murray back on the historiographical map. It argues that while in many ways consistent with the image of the inter-war 'utopian', Murray's thinking in certain significant ways defies this image. It examines the twin foundations of his international thought – liberalism and Hellenism – and their manifestation in a version of international intellectual cooperation that while aristocratic and outmoded in some respects, nonetheless contains certain enduring insights.

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Gilbert Murray dedicated much of his long life to the cause of international cooperation and peace. Unlike many who became involved in international affairs as a consequence of the 1914 War, he had been politically conscious and active for some time. He was a member of the Liberal Party, an advocate of Irish home rule, and a suffragist. However, apart from the odd essay on imperial matters,[1] it was the shock and calamity of the Great War that propelled him into the international realm. A brief interlude aside, Murray was a professor of Greek for almost half a century. The bulk of his work consists of classical scholarship. Yet he also wrote half a dozen books, delivered many lectures, made frequent broadcasts, and published numerous articles on British foreign policy, the League, and international cooperation. In the discipline of IR today his name is vaguely associated with the inter-war peace movement, and also the educational trust which annually

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[1] See, for example, Gilbert Murray, 'The Exploitation of Inferior Races in Ancient and Modern Times', in F. W. Hirst, Gilbert Murray and J. L. Hammond (eds), *Liberalism and the Empire: Three Essays* (London: Brimley Johnson, 1900).

awards a number of research grants to students in the fields of Classics and IR.[2] But until recently there has been little precise knowledge of the nature of his involvement in international affairs.

The object of this article is to add to recent work on Murray[3] by highlighting the connections between his liberalism, Hellenism, and dedication to international intellectual cooperation. It seeks to identify aspects of Murray's thought on international relations that have enduring value. It also contributes to the revisionist history of IR by identifying the nuances in Murray's approach which defy the stereotype of the 'inter-war idealist/utopian'. It is not an exercise in the history of ideas as much as an examination of the content, consistency and validity of certain ideas within the context of a particular discourse – the disciplinary discourse of IR. I concentrate, therefore, on Murray's published writings, and on IR works that have a special bearing on how his ideas have been received and understood within the field of IR. What is central for the pure intellectual historian – the provenance and development of ideas as revealed in private correspondence and papers – is for the purposes of this article secondary.

Why Murray today?

There are two respects in which revisiting the life and work of Murray is timely. First, there has been a renaissance of interest in classical Greek international relations in recent years. This has taken a number of forms. There has been renewed interest in classical international systems from an English School perspective. For example, Buzan and Little have built on the foundations laid down by Wight and Watson to develop the most rigorous account to date of the nature of the international relations of the classical world in the wider context of the structural evolution of international society.[4] There has been renewed debate on the nature of Thucydides' realism, particularly in the light of debates about the nature of social reality, and the merits and demerits of the neo-realist challenge to mainstream liberal and realist approaches.[5] In addition, there has been a growth in interest in the international politics of the ancient world generally, especially

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[2] The Gilbert Murray Trust.

[3] Christopher Stray (ed.), *Gilbert Murray Reassessed: Hellenism, Theatre and International Politics* (Oxford: Oxford University Press); Jeanne Morefield, *Covenants Without Swords: Idealist Liberalism and the Spirit of Empire* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005).

[4] See Martin Wight, *Systems of States*, ed. H. Bull (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1977), chs. 2–3; Adam Watson, *The Evolution of International Society: A Comparative Historical Analysis* (London: Routledge, 1992), ch. 5; Barry Buzan and Richard Little, *International Systems in World History: Remaking the Study of International Relations* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), Part III.

[5] See, for example, Daniel Garst, 'Thucydides and Neorealism', *International Studies Quarterly*, 33:1 (1989); Steven Forde, 'International Realism and the Science of Politics: Thucydides, Machiavelli and Neorealism', *International Studies Quarterly*, 39:2 (1995); Richard Ned Lebow, 'Play it Again Pericles: A Non-Realist Reading of Thucydides', *European Journal of International Relations*, 2:2 (1996); David Bedford and Thom Workman, 'The Tragic Reading of the Thucydidean Tragedy', *Review of International Studies*, 21:1 (2001); Richard Ned Lebow, 'Thucydides the Constructivist', *American Political Science Review*, 95:3 (2001); Nancy Kokaz, 'Moderating Power: A Thucydidean Perspective', *Review of International Studies*, 27:1 (2001); David A. Welch, 'Why International Relations Theorists Should Stop Reading Thucydides', *Review of International Studies*, 29:3 (2003).

with regard to the ethics of statecraft, the nature and limits of power, the relationship between identity and the construction of interests, and the lessons that might be drawn from the great minds of the classical period on the politics of kinship and estrangement.[6] Yet one struggles to find a single reference to Gilbert Murray in these works. This is a remarkable fact given the breadth of Murray's contribution to classical scholarship, his desire to extract social and political lessons from the classical world, and the extent to which his understanding of this world went hand in hand with his understanding of international relations.

Secondly, as the need grows for international scientific and intellectual cooperation to combat epidemic diseases, foster sustainable development, and contain a range of security and environmental threats, Murray's efforts in the field of international intellectual cooperation look increasingly impressive. In the 1990s the Harvard historian Akira Iriye highlighted Murray's role as a pioneer of intellectual cooperation and cultural internationalism.[7] Iriye's book received scant attention in IR, yet the trend towards deeper inter-cultural exchange and dialogue analysed in this work is one of the most significant international developments of the last 150 years. A reassessment of Murray's work in this increasingly important field is long overdue.

The last of the Victorians[8]

George Gilbert Aimé Murray was born into a Catholic Irish family in Australia in 1866. Following the premature death of his father – a prominent New South Wales land owner and parliamentarian – he was taken by his mother to England. In 1878 he won a scholarship to Merchant Taylor's school in London, the same school E. H. Carr was to attend 20 years later. Here he excelled in Latin and Greek. In 1884 he won a scholarship to St John's College, Oxford, graduating in 1888 with a double First in Classical Moderations and Greats. Richard Jebb, whom he was to succeed in the Greek chair at Glasgow, hailed him as 'the most accomplished Greek scholar of the day'. At Oxford Murray became a disciple of J. S. Mill and an advocate Irish home rule. This was the first political issue he became involved in, motivated by a sense of national and family loyalty, but also outrage at the trammelling of liberal principles. In Gladstone he saw a modern Pericles in manner, morals and statesmanship.

Shortly after his election to a Fellowship at New College, Oxford, in 1888, he married Lady Mary Howard, daughter of the 9th Earl and the Countess of Carlisle. He thus married into one of the great Whig aristocratic families of

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[6] See, for example, S. Sara Monoson and Michael Loriaux, 'The Illusion of Power and the Disruption of Moral Norms: Thucydides' Critique of Periclean Policy', *American Political Science Review*, 92:2 (1998); Nancy Kokaz, 'Between Anarchy and Tyranny: Excellence and the Pursuit of Power and Peace in Ancient Greece', *Review of International Studies*, 27, Special Issue (2001); Richard Ned Lebow and Robert E. Kelly, 'Thucydides and Hegemony: Athens and the US', *Review of International Studies*, 27:4 (2001); Richard Ned Lebow, *The Tragic Vision of Politics: Ethics, Interests and Orders* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003).

[7] Akira Iriye, *Cultural Internationalism and World Order* (Baltimore and London: John Hopkins University Press, 1997).

[8] Murray's self-description in a BBC broadcast of 1947. See Francis West, *Gilbert Murray: A Life* (London: Croom Helm, 1984), pp. 234–5.

England – and one of the richest.[9] He formed a special relationship with the Countess, a woman of uncompromising progressive principles who wielded considerable influence in the Liberal party. In seeking a suitable match for her daughter Lady Rosalind was struck by Murray's high ideals, his teetotalism, his support for women's emancipation, and his Spartan lifestyle. The latter continued to be a self-conscious feature of the Murray household, which was soon to embrace four children. It did not, however, extend to doing away with the Victorian upper class trappings of cook, maids, a governess, gardeners, a substantial annual allowance, frequent gifts of money, and large houses in Surrey, Oxford, and Norfolk. When Gilbert took up motoring late in life for therapeutic reasons, he learned to drive in his brother-in-law's Silver Ghost.

In 1889 he was elected, at the age of 23, to the Chair of Greek at Glasgow University. Here he established his reputation as the leading interpreter of the Greek world to his generation. But the heavy workload took its toll and he resigned on health grounds in 1899. He dedicated the next six years of his life to the theatre, in particular to reviving Greek drama on the London stage. New versions and productions of *Trojan Women*, *Hecuba*, *Hippolytus, Medea, Electra* and other plays of Euripides, brought Murray's Greek message to a new and broader audience.[10] Returning to academia in 1905, he was appointed to the Regius Chair of Greek in 1908. Over the next few decades he published a number of significant works including *Four Stages of Greek Religion* (1912) and *Aristophanes: A Study* (1933). His reputation grew overseas, especially in America. In 1907 he gave the Gardiner Lane Lectures at Harvard, which became *The Rise of the Greek Epic* (1907), returning twenty years later to give the Charles Eliot Norton Lectures, which became *The Classical Tradition in Poetry* (1927).

An achievement of which he was especially proud was the Home University Library, which he co-edited for over 30 years. A landmark in British publishing, this brought the range of modern scholarship from the Classics to science and economics within the reach of the ordinary person. His purpose was not only social-philanthropic – raising the educational standard of the 'average vulgar man' – but also philanthropic-political – raising this standard would help bind together the disparate peoples of the Empire.[11] The series contained his *Euripides and his Age* (1913), a classic study still in print today.

The 'Age' is important. Murray believed that the Hellenic world of the 5th Century BC had achieved something unique in the history of civilisation. Its achievements in the fields of geometry, poetry, drama, ethics, politics, and philosophy were without parallel. Europe at the turn of the 20th Century had the

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[9] The three were models for three of Bernard Shaw's characters in his 1905 play *Major Barbara:* Lady Britomart (Lady Rosalind), Barbara Undershaft (Lady Mary), and Adolphus Cusins (Murray). *Major Barbara* was revived at the National Theatre, London, in 2008.

[10] Murray's impact on the London stage reverberates today in the work of Tony Harrison, and the frequent production of many Greek plays particularly at the National Theatre. A measure of Murray's influence on Harrison is the latter's inclusion of the ghost of Murray in his 2008 play about Fridtjof Nansen, *Fram*. Murray was one of the most prominent campaigners, with George Bernard Shaw, for a national theatre. The idea did not fully materialise until 1976 with the opening of the South Bank complex. There is some poetic justice (and perhaps a trace of Murray's influence) in the fact that its principal auditorium, the Olivier, is modelled on the ancient Greek theatre at Epidaurus.

[11] See Julia Stapleton, 'The Classicist as Liberal Intellectual: Gilbert Murray and Alfred Eckhard Zimmern', in Stray (ed.), *Murray Reassessed*, pp. 265, 268–75.

opportunity to create something similar. Murray saw it as his mission to spread the gospel of Hellenism to ever wider circles of humanity.

His hope for a new Hellenistic age was shattered by the Great War. Murray took the view, from Euripides more than from any other source, that war in general was anathema to civilisation. But he grimly concluded that this war was justified. He defended the British government's position in his first major political work *The Foreign Policy of Sir Edward Grey*.[12] Sir Edward, he argued, was a humane and far-sighted statesman who had done everything in his power to avoid war.[13] In contrast, his counterparts in Berlin met every offer of compromise with contempt. Many radicals attacked him as a traitor to the cause, among them his wife's cousin Bertrand Russell, his former Glasgow pupil, Henry Noel Brailsford, and his good friend George Bernard Shaw.[14] Murray retorted that they made the great mistake of confusing radicalism with pacifism.[15]

At the end of the War he played a prominent role in campaigning for a League of Nations. He sat on the Phillimore Committee, set up in 1919 to scrutinise various schemes for a League. He played a leading part in bringing together the League of Free Nations Association and the more radical League of Nations Society into a single cross-party League of Nations Union (LNU). In the early years he served on its management committee, becoming Chairman in 1923, and co-President, with Robert Cecil, in 1938. He was selected by Jan Christian Smuts to represent South Africa at the second League of Nations Assembly in 1921 and was appointed to the League's commissions on Amendments and Humanitarian-ism. He also represented South Africa at the third Assembly, this time working on the Disarmament and Humanitarianism commissions. His most important League work, however, was for the International Committee of Intellectual Cooperation (ICIC). He was appointed deputy chairman, to Henri Bergson, at the Committee's inception in 1922, acceding to the chairmanship in 1929. He chaired the committee until its demise in 1939. In many ways the Committee embodied all Murray's high-minded hopes for a better, more civilised, and Platonic world. A distracted world needed the guidance of philosopher kings, and in Murray, Bergson, Curie, Einstein, and other members of this committee, it – or rather Bergson and Murray – had found them.[16]

Well into old age Murray continued to agitate for peace and the righting of international wrongs. He served on the Executive Committee of the UN Association, which succeeded the LNU in 1945, from its inception until his death. He was a founding member of the Oxford Committee for Famine Relief (later Oxfam) in 1942. In 1940 Murray was awarded the Order of Merit for services to

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[12] Gilbert Murray, *The Foreign Policy of Sir Edward Grey* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1915).

[13] The same judgment was reached recently by Ned Lebow, who draws a parallel much in the spirit of Murray between Sir Edward Grey's statesmanship in 1914 and that of the Spartan King, Archidamus, in 431. Lebow, *Tragic Vision*, p. 94.

[14] See George Bernard Shaw, 'Professor Gilbert Murray's Defence of Sir Edward Grey', *The New Statesman* (17 July 1915), pp. 349–51.

[15] For details of Murray's involvement in radical and Liberal politics during the war see Martin Ceadel, 'Murray and International Politics', in Stray (ed.), *Murray Reassessed*, pp. 223–30.

[16] The seminal study of this fascinating body remains F. S. Northedge, 'International Intellectual Cooperation within the League of Nations: Its Conceptual Basis and Lessons for the Present', University of London PhD thesis, 1953.

literature. He died in 1957. His ashes are laid in Poet's Corner in Westminster Abbey.[17]

Murray, Carr, and utopianism

The purpose of this section is to assess Murray's international thought in the light of E. H. Carr's critique of 'utopianism' in *The Twenty Years' Crisis*. It has been recently commented that this book 'may eventually rank with *The Prince* and *The Leviathan* as a great political classic revealing to the world the world as it really is'.[18] Leaving aside the thorny issue of the world as it really is, there is no doubt that *The Twenty Years' Crisis* is one of the towering IR works of the first half of the twentieth century. Its depiction of a whole generation of thinkers as 'utopian', and its assertion of the need for more 'realistic' analysis and policy, based on a quasi-Marxist understanding of the pervasiveness of power in international politics, had a huge impact on the fledgling field of IR. Until recently it coloured virtually everything said about IR thinking of the period.[19]

There is no proof that Carr regarded Murray as one of his utopian figures. But the circumstantial evidence is extensive. First, Murray's involvement with the League in various capacities, and especially his chairmanship of the LNU, meant he was a prominent player in the very institutions that Carr derided as utopian. Second, while he was not one of Carr's chief villains (that role being reserved for Woodrow Wilson, Norman Angell, Arnold Toynbee, and Alfred Zimmern), Murray is criticised in *The Twenty Years' Crisis* for upholding the fallacy that certain issues are *ipso facto* legal and certain issues *ipso facto* political.[20] Third, Carr, as First Secretary on the League of Nations Section of the British Foreign Office for three years before his appointment to the Woodrow Wilson Chair at Aberystwyth in 1936, would certainly have been familiar with Murray's extensive writing in support of the League cause. In addition, Murray sat on the selection board, as LNU representative, that appointed Carr to the chair, and conspired

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[17] For further biographical information see: West, *Gilbert Murray*; Duncan Wilson, *Gilbert Murray OM, 1866–1957* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987); Christopher Stray, 'Murray, (George) Gilbert Aimé', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006); Peter Wilson, 'Gilbert Murray, 1866–1957', in D. Brack and E. Randall (eds), *Dictionary of Liberal Thought* (London: Politico's, 2007), pp. 291–4.

[18] Brian Porter, 'Lord Davies, E. H. Carr and the Spirit Ironic', *International Relations*, 16:1 (2002), p. 94.

[19] The revisionist history of inter-war IR is now extensive. See, for example, David Long, 'J. A. Hobson and Idealism in International Relations', *Review of International Studies*, 17:3 (1991); David Long and Peter Wilson (eds), *Thinkers of the Twenty Years' Crisis: Inter-War Idealism Reassessed* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995); Peter Wilson, 'The Myth of the First Great Debate', *Review of International Studies*, 24:5 (1998); Brian Schmidt, 'Lessons from the Past: Reassessing Interwar Disciplinary History of International Relations', *International Studies Quarterly*, 42:3 (1998); Andreas Osiander, 'Rereading early Twentieth Century IR Theory: Idealism Revisited', *International Studies Quarterly*, 42:3 (1998); Cameron G. Thies, 'Progress, History and Identity in International Relations Theory: The Case of the Idealist-Realist Debate', *European Journal of International Relations*, 8:2 (2002); Casper Sylvest, 'Interwar Internationalism, the British Labour Party, and the Historiography of International Relations', *International Studies Quarterly*, 48:2 (2004); Joel Quirk and Darshan Vigneswaran, 'The Construction of an Edifice: The Story of a First Great Debate', *Review of International Studies*, 31:1 (2005); and Lucian Ashworth, 'Where are the Idealists in Interwar IR?', *Review of International Studies*, 32:2 (2006).

[20] E. H. Carr, *The Twenty Years' Crisis, 1919–1939: An Introduction to the Study of International Relations*, 1st edition (London: Macmillan, 1939), p. 252.

with the chair's principal benefactor and President of the college, Lord David Davies, to block his appointment.[21] Towards the end of the War Murray again conspired with Davies to get Carr removed. The extent to which Carr was aware of Murray's skulduggery cannot be gauged with certainty, but he was certainly aware that their League partisanship ill-disposed Murray and Davies toward him – even at the cost of academic freedom if their cherished ideals of the League and peace were at stake.[22] Finally, while Murray and Carr were not regular correspondents, they did exchange views on the issue of League sanctions in 1936. This exchange provided some of the substance that was soon to be treated theoretically and abstractly in *The Twenty Years' Crisis*. It was prompted by Carr's inaugural lecture on 'Public Opinion as a Safeguard of Peace' which Murray attended and found 'shocking'. In effect Murray accuses Carr of pessimism, defeatism, and uncritically accepting official explanations and justifications of foreign policy. In response, Carr accuses Murray of misplaced optimism, legalism, underestimating the constraints of domestic public opinion, and ignoring long-term strategic and political interests as understood by statesmen – in effect of ignoring the balance of power.[23] With the politically motivated shenanigans of Murray and Davies perhaps in mind, he could not resist the following put-down, anticipating his infamous utopian-realist dichotomy: 'If I may say so, your position is bound to be different from mine, because you are the head of an organisation whose mission it is to preach a particular doctrine; and you will therefore continue to preach that doctrine even if you don't expect to see it realised for years or centuries. I am a student concerned primarily with diagnosis and scientific analysis – I don't feel we have got nearly enough yet to prescribe any infallible remedy'.[24]

Anyone looking to confirm Carr's thesis regarding the character of inter-war IR theorising could do worse than revisit the works of Murray. As I have argued elsewhere, there is perhaps no other thinker to whom Carr's more severe criticisms more apply.[25] Firstly, he was a staunch defender of the international rule of law. Yet unlike some of his more radical LNU colleagues,[26] he did not enquire into the quality of the international order defended by the prevailing system of law. He did not appreciate the extent to which international law is a conservative force and, according to many, a bulwark in the inter-war period of an unjust political and territorial *status quo*. Murray spent much time defending the '*status quo*' articles in

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[21] Their preferred candidate was the artist and disarmament campaigner, W. Arnold Foster.

[22] See, Brian Porter, 'David Davies and the Enforcement of Peace', in Long and Wilson (ed.), *Thinkers*, pp. 67–70; and Porter, 'Davies, Carr and the Spirit Ironic', pp. 79–84, 86–93. While Murray does not come out of it as badly as Davies, who is revealed as conceited and dictatorial, his involvement does dent his reputation for irreproachable personal conduct (and reveals perhaps more poignantly that the desire for peace at the time in Britain was so great that even individuals of the utmost integrity, such as Murray, could find themselves embroiled in unholy alliances engaging in far from holy acts). See also Jones, *E. H. Carr and International Relations: A Duty to Lie* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), pp. 22–45; Haslam, *The Vices of Integrity: E. H. Carr 1892–1982* (London: Verso, 1999), pp. 57–8, 81–4, 100–1.

[23] Murray to Carr, 5 December 1936; Carr to Murray 8 December 1936. Gilbert Murray MSS, Box 227, Bodleian Library, Oxford.

[24] E. H. Carr to Gilbert Murray, 8 December 1936, MSS Gilbert Murray, Box 227, Bodleian Library, Oxford.

[25] Peter Wilson, 'Retrieving Cosmos: Gilbert Murray's Thought on International Relations', in Stray (ed.), *Murray Reassessed*, p. 242.

[26] For example, Leonard Woolf. See, Peter Wilson, *International Theory of Leonard Woolf: A Study in Twentieth-Century Idealism* (New York: Palgrave, 2003), pp. 75–6.

the League Covenant, those such as Articles 10, 11, and 16 that sought to solidify the Versailles order. He spent much less time exploring Article 19 and the concept of peaceful change. He left himself open, therefore, to the charge that his staunch defence of the rule of law was the ideological expression of his satisfaction with the current global distribution of power, territory and resources.[27]

Secondly, he uncritically accepted the concept of aggression so central to the system of security enshrined in both the Covenant and the UN Charter. With a huge leap of faith which went well beyond any reasonable interpretation of recent facts he declared in 1938 that 'there has never yet been the slightest difficulty in determining the aggressor'.[28] As well as being empirically dubious, such an assertion glossed over the fact that the Great Powers would never permit the determination of the aggressor to be anything but a political process, with the law and judicial bodies playing a minor, if any, role. Carr understood this well and was scathing towards those who clung to a 'legalistic' concept of aggression.[29]

Thirdly, in response to aggression, Murray placed much faith in the pressure of 'world public opinion' and economic sanctions. With regard to the former, he sanguinely associated it with reason and common sense and assumed its judgments would be broad and fair. While he noted the potency of modern nationalism and the power of the modern state and the mass media to manipulate the truth,[30] he nowhere enquired into the implications of these facts for the efficacy and reasonableness of the 'sanction' of world public opinion. With regard to economic sanctions, he noted the importance of solidarity in their imposition,[31] but failed to appreciate the tremendous difficulty in achieving this in a politically fragmented and economically insecure world.

Fourthly, Murray was a staunch advocate of what Bull was later to term 'general and comprehensive disarmament'.[32] He argued vigorously for adherence to Article 8 of the Covenant which obliged states to reduce national armaments to 'the lowest point consistent with national safety, and the enforcement by common action of international obligations'. But Murray nowhere examined the indeterminacy of this obligation. Who was to decide what level of armaments was the lowest level consistent with national safety? Likewise, who was to decide the level required to effectively perform collective security obligations? Such levels might not be low. They might, indeed, be high. It might be responded that Murray left these questions to the planned League disarmament conference, which eventually convened in 1932; or to more specialist colleagues such as Philip Noel-Baker.[33]

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[27] See Murray, *The Ordeal of this Generation: The War, the League and the Future* (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1929), pp. 81, 115–19; Carr, *Twenty Years' Crisis*, pp. 264–84. See also C. A. W. Manning (ed.), *Peaceful Change: An International Problem* (London: Macmillan, 1937).

[28] Murray (ed.), *Liberality and Civilization* (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1938), p. 64.

[29] For a comprehensive study of the problematic nature of 'aggression' in international relations from the League period to the present see Page Wilson, *Aggression, Crime and International Security* (London: Routledge, 2009).

[30] For example, Murray, *From the League to the UN* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1948), pp. 54–5.

[31] Murray, *Ordeal*, pp. 92–3.

[32] Hedley Bull, *The Control of the Arms Race: Disarmament and Arms Control in the Missile Age* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1961), ch. 8.

[33] See, Noel-Baker, *Disarmament* (London: Hogarth Press, 1926); *The First World Disarmament Conference 1932–33 and Why it Failed* (Oxford: Pergamon Press, 1979); Lorna Lloyd, 'Philip Noel-Baker and Peace Through Law', in Long and Wilson (eds), *Thinkers*, pp. 25–57.

This is true, but there is nonetheless a degree of sophistry, or creative ambiguity, in these terms of the Covenant that one would expect a man of Murray's classical learning and wisdom to have highlighted. But he chose not to, or perhaps was beguiled by their irenic charms. Similarly, Murray's assertion that arms should only be employed by and for the community as a whole,[34] concealed the fact that the international community had no capability to possess arms, and that their use for the interest of the community remained an abstract formulation – as did the notion, with which the World Disarmament Conference (which Murray attended) wrestled, that some armaments were inherently defensive and others offensive.[35]

In sum, Murray was dedicated to the League and all the nostrums associated with it: collective security, the rule of international law, disarmament, the indivisibility of peace, peaceful settlement of disputes, the power of public opinion, and the efficacy of economic sanctions. For Carr these nostrums were vague and platitudinous. But more than that, they were the slogans of privileged groups and privileged nations. Although Murray presented them as such, law, order, collective security, and peace were not abstract and universal principles 'but the unconscious reflexions of national policy based on a particular interpretation of national interest at a particular time.'[36] Murray's high moral tone in defence of law, order and peace concealed the defence of baser interests.[37]

Yet it would be a disservice to Murray and our understanding of the period to leave the matter here. A number of recent studies have challenged aspects of Carr's interpretation and have demonstrated that inter-war internationalists were much more complex and nuanced than the utopian stereotype suggests.[38] Murray is no exception, as the following examples illustrate. It is generally held that inter-war 'utopians' underestimated the conflictual aspects of international life, and conceived it as essentially, or latently, cooperative. Hence the space Carr gives to explicating and criticising the doctrine of a natural harmony of interests.[39] But this view was not shared by Murray. He repeatedly asserted that struggle and strife in

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[34] Murray, *Ordeal*, pp. 90–1; *From League to UN*, pp. 37–8, 79–80, 159–60.

[35] Carr, *Twenty Years' Crisis*, p. 95.

[36] Carr, *Twenty Years' Crisis*, p. 111. An anonymous reviewer in the (New York) *Nation* spotted the problem as early as 1921: 'Like Maynard Keynes, Professor Murray views everything from the standpoint of the British Empire, and does it so naturally and sincerely that in perfect good faith he identifies not only the good of the world but the laws of right and justice with the interests of his own nation.' 'Books in Brief', *The Nation*, 63:2931 (1921), pp. 269–70.

[37] That Murray was something of a conservative in radical clothing has been highlighted by Morefield. Murray, she says, conceived himself as an 'apostle of a radically transformative approach to world politics' but one which 'required little or no change in the global status quo' (*Covenants Without Swords*, pp. 2–4). None of this should be taken to imply, however, that Carr's position, and the policy prescriptions he drew from it, are unproblematic. See my 'Carr and his Early Critics: Responses to *The Twenty Years' Crisis*, 1939–46', in M. Cox (ed.), *E. H. Carr: A Critical Appraisal* (London: Palgrave, 2000), pp. 183–97; and Lucian Ashworth, *International Relations and the Labour Party: Intellectuals and Policy Making from 1918–1945* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2007), pp. 142–58.

[38] See, for example, David Long, *Towards a New Liberal Internationalism: The International Theory of J. A. Hobson* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996); Lucian Ashworth, *Creating International Studies: Angell, Mitrany and the Liberal Tradition* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 1999); Wilson, *International Theory of Leonard Woolf*; Peter Lamb, *Harold Laski: Problems of Democracy, the Sovereign State, and International Society* (New York: Palgrave, 2004); Brian C. Schmidt, 'Paul S. Reinsch and the Study of Imperialism and Internationalism', in D. Long and B. Schmidt (eds), *Imperialism and Internationalism in the Discipline of International Relations* (New York: SUNY, 2005); Ashworth, *International Relations and the Labour Party*; and Alan Chong, 'Lessons in International Communication: Carr, Angell, Lippmann', *Review of International Studies*, 33:4 (2007).

[39] Carr, *Twenty Years' Crisis*, ch. 4. See also Wilson, 'Myth', pp. 8–13.

social life were unavoidable. He was fond of Aristotle's observation: 'We toil for the sake of leisure, we make war for the sake of peace.'[40] 'Strife', Murray insisted, 'is integral to life. You cannot fully have life without it.'[41] Peace he felt was undesirable if this meant the absence of challenge, effort, and striving. So, contrary to Carr's claim about the 'utopians', Murray did not subscribe to the Cobdenite belief in a natural harmony of interests. Cosmos – a rational, settled, intelligible order – did not arise spontaneously. Its achievement required effort and involved conflict.[42] This did not mean, however, that force and violence were inevitable. Conflict might be a 'permanent necessity in life',[43] but as a society advanced and became more civilised the quality of strife improved. Peaceful striving replaced violent striving. This process was well established in the West. The challenge now was to spread it to the non-Western world and, crucially, to the society of nations – crucial because the world was now comprised of heavily armed, nationalistic industrialised states. Yet the point Murray was eager to stress was that the achievement of Cosmos was never easy. It always involved the sacrifice of some immediate interests. Moreover, acceptance of a degree of injustice was unavoidable, even rational. '[I]n the management of any human society', Murray contended, 'there is a mixture of right and might, and [. . .] often it is practically necessary to acquiesce in injustice so as not to turn the burning house into a burning street. We cannot go straight for righteousness as the crow flies. So much we may allow to Machiavelli.'[44] It is worth emphasising here that Murray did not reject the possibility of *building* a harmony of interests. As with the neo-Hegelians said to have influenced Murray at Oxford (on which more below), and Carr himself, Murray's point was that harmony was possible, even probable, but it required manufacture.[45]

Secondly, Murray provided a subtle and prescient account of the relationship between democracy and world order. He shared the general liberal belief that democracy was intrinsically good and that democracies were more pacific in their international relations than authoritarian states. But he also (unlike many members of the Union of Democratic Control, and perhaps in reaction to them) spotted a tension. Democracy can impede international agreement. It can even get in the way of observance of international law. Statesmen in democratic countries have to keep an eye on domestic public opinion. Not to do so can have damaging political consequences. Sometimes they act to bolster their popularity. Sometimes they act to please or placate special interest groups. They sometimes act, therefore, not out of right but out of political convenience. Such pressures make the consistent

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[40] Murray, *Ordeal*, p. 14.

[41] Ibid., p. 18. See also Peter Wilson, 'Liberalism and the World circa 1930: Gilbert Murray's *The Ordeal of this Generation*', *Politik*, 4:12 (2009), pp. 15–20.

[42] On this point Carr quotes Murray approvingly: 'War does not always arise from mere wickedness or folly. It sometimes arises from mere growth and movement. Humanity will not stand still.' From Murray, *The League of Nations and the Democratic Idea*, quoted in Carr, *Twenty Years' Crisis*, p. 264. Murray's blend of faith and stoicism is captured in a letter to Sir Montague Burton (14 February 1934): 'This is a time full of danger and discouragement and we believers in peace and international justice have just to set our teeth and carry on. I think in the long run we cannot fail – unless there is some complete collapse of civilization'. MSS Gilbert Murray, Box 415, Bodleian Library, Oxford.

[43] Murray, *Ordeal*, p. 24.

[44] Murray, *Liberality and Civilization* (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1938), p. 38.

[45] See further Wilson, 'Myth', p. 13.

honouring of international agreements difficult, and paradoxically the problem is compounded by that other vital ingredient of democracy – a free press. The press fed the public with patriotism and jingoism. They gave it what they wanted, or what was cheap and easily provided. This made it difficult for statesmen to be generous and far-seeing in international negotiations. The fear of being accused of selling out to foreigners was constant.[46]

Thus democracy, for Murray, could and often did get in the way of true statesmanship. This he defined in terms of transcending narrow nationalism, taking a long-term view, acting for the general good, and being prepared to make short-term sacrifices. Murray's solution was leadership and education, which he regarded as symbiotic. This is a third example of nuanced analysis in Murray. Psychologically the world was in a wretched state in 1918–1919. The peoples of war-torn Europe were baying for blood. They had suffered terrible hardship, endured terrible losses, had become habituated to cruelty, and had terrible wrongs to avenge. A statesman of greatness – of principle, courage and far-sightedness – was needed to save them from themselves, from their meanest instincts.[47] The world had such a leader in Woodrow Wilson, but ill health and the failure of the US Senate to ratify the Versailles Treaty, effectively removed him from the world scene in September 1919. The British Prime Minister, David Lloyd George, had the intelligence and vision to step into the breach. But ultimately he squandered his gifts, exploiting the psychology of fear and hatred for selfish political ends.[48] Leadership had little chance of working, however, without greater education on peace, the League, and internationalism. In true Athenian fashion, Murray believed that responsible citizenship and education went hand in hand. And by education Murray did not mean technical education, but the training of the mind to think abstractly, independently, and critically. Without some ability to think in this way, the citizen was unfitted to carry out his social duties – including taking an active interest in the life of the polis.[49] The same logic applied internationally. The good life internationally could not be attained unless people around the world had a tolerable knowledge of world affairs. Statesmen could take the lead, but their message would fall on deaf ears unless people were given the educational wherewithal to comprehend it. Progress inevitably entailed compromise and sacrifice, but how could the necessary compromises be accepted if people did not understand why they were necessary? One of the greatest impediments to the retrieval of Cosmos, Murray contended, was the lack of general appreciation of the

[46] Murray, *Ordeal*, pp. 59–62, 125–6, 190–1. See also Murray, *From League to UN*, pp. 38–9, 68–9.

[47] Murray, *Ordeal*, pp. 133–4; Murray, *The Problem of Foreign Policy: A Consideration of Present Dangers and the Best Methods for Meeting Them* (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1921), pp. 10–16, 30–59.

[48] 'I did not realise that any one could be, I will not say wicked, but so curiously destitute of generous ambition, so incapable of thinking greatly'. Lloyd George's aim was to 'get a very large majority in the House of Commons and to crush his old colleagues, and conceivable rivals, entirely out of existence'. A retributive peace with Germany was his means to this end. See Murray, *Problem of Foreign Policy*, pp. 10–14; Andrew Williams, *Liberalism and War: The Victors and the Vanquished* (London: Routledge, 2006), pp. 160–1.

[49] Murray, 'What Liberalism Stands For', *Contemporary Review*, 128:720, pp. 691–4. Around the same time, Charles Webster, no utopian dreamer, was making much the same point: 'it is not much use teaching History to statesmen if the people they represent are left in ignorance'. Quoted in Ian Hall, 'The Art and Practice of a Diplomatic Historian: Sir Charles Webster, 1886–1961', *International Politics*, 42 (2005), p. 482.

complex relationship between the good of the parts and the good of the whole. Hence Murray's indefatigable work for the ICIC, and the Council for Education in World Citizenship; his promotion of student exchange schemes and 'non-nationalist' education; and his promotion of regular meetings of the 'Higher Schools of International Politics',[50] an idea that evolved into the International Studies Conference, which was held in various European cities 1928–1939, with three meetings after the War.[51]

Fourthly, for someone reputedly so remote from the realities of international life and superficial in analysing them, Murray provided deep and penetrating accounts of particular episodes and was remarkably prescient in a number of instances. He correctly predicted, for example, that the Soviet Union would ultimately collapse because of its inability to compete with the liberal West in providing the good life for its citizens. East and West confronted each other not merely physically. They were locked in a struggle between two social, economic, political and ideological systems. The victor would not be the one most successful at repression and deception, but the one most able to provide for its people. Murray was adamant that communism in Russia would not survive. As long as the West could solve its economic problems, and avoid self-destruction through war, it was bound to win.[52]

Murray displayed equal perspicacity in his account of the Kellogg-Briand Pact of 1928. This agreement has often been represented as the high watermark of post-war optimism and idealism. Yet Murray provides a cool and sceptical analysis of it that would not have been out of place in Carr's pages. Britain accepted the pact, but only on the condition that her freedom of action in 'certain regions of the world' which were of 'special and vital interest for [her] peace and safety' was not impeded. Similarly, the US accepted the pact, but only on the condition that her rights and privileges under the Monroe Doctrine were not curtailed. Mr Kellogg himself declared that the pact renounced war without qualification; but he added that no treaty could ever abolish the sacred and inalienable right of self-defence. He then proceeded, by an ingenious act of subterfuge, to define self-defence far more broadly than anything contained within the Covenant – in effect reserving the right of each state to determine when it was or was not acting in self-defence. These declarations, according to Murray, drove a coach and horses through the agreement. They allowed signatories to look good in the eyes of the world while not restricting their right to use force by a single jot.[53]

Finally, in common with other 'thinkers of the twenty years' crisis', Murray desired to put international relationships on a more moral footing. But he rarely talked down to states from the pulpit. His concern was, rather, the role of justice in the maintenance of international order. He backed the idea, for example, of an international court as a kind of 'final court of appeal' for individuals and non-state groups. Such a body would be difficult to set up but psychologically, he contended, it made 'an enormous difference to people whether they feel they are getting fair or unfair treatment'. If they had no possibility of stating their case to an impartial

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[50] Murray, *Ordeal*, pp. 193–7.
[51] See David Long, 'Who Killed the International Studies Conference?', *Review of International Studies*, 32:4 (2006).
[52] Murray, *Ordeal*, pp. 54–7.
[53] Ibid., pp. 140–4.

body they would get 'wild with rage' and become 'positively murderous'.[54] What Murray displays here is no mere English, public school, upper class sense of fair play, but a deep sense of the power of justice and perceived injustice as a motivating force in human affairs. This sense also accounts for his strenuous opposition to Neville Chamberlain's policy of appeasement. It simply was not morally and psychologically sustainable in Murray's view to maintain cordial relationships with international outlaws.[55] Yet what was morally desirable had to be feasible. He was highly critical, for example, of much official rhetoric on the eve of the 1945 peace. 'I am really rather alarmed', he said, 'at the way people go on talking about earthly paradise which we are to achieve at the end of the war. Even Roosevelt's Four Freedoms, which are all right as aims to work for, become dangerous if they are treated as promises.' A year later he was even more forthright: 'all this talk about "freedom from want" etc. is not only unrealistic but dangerous. We are telling masses of people that, after the war, they are going to be rich and happy. When they find out they are really poor and miserable, they will turn against somebody.'[56] I provide these examples not to show that Murray was a realist. Far from it – he regarded realism as unpalatable, defeatist, and historically wrong. Rather I provide them to show that Murray's progressivism was often tempered by sober judgments about world affairs and a strong sense of the danger of raising public expectations before doing the necessary groundwork – which for Murray was educational rather than (as with Carr) economic.

Murray's liberalism

For these reasons the application of the utopian label to Murray's international thought must be rejected. It is a label of abuse that conceals as much as it reveals. Murray was, more neutrally, a liberal – one among many liberals preoccupied with international matters during the inter-war period. In this section I examine the roots and nature of Murray's liberalism.

One is tempted to describe Murray's liberal beliefs as homespun: a matter of sensibility, as Martin Ceadel has suggested, as much as philosophical doctrine.[57] Murray himself traced them to the example and attitudes of his father – not a deep or consistent thinker, but someone with an instinctive sympathy for the underdog. He also traced them to his experiences as a schoolboy in the Australian bush, where he encountered, and was appalled by, gratuitous acts of cruelty against animals.[58] These sentiments were strengthened during his time at Merchant

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[54] Murray to Hugh Cecil, quoted in Salvador de Madariaga, 'Gilbert Murray and the League', in J. Smith and A. Toynbee (eds), *Gilbert Murray: An Unfinished Autobiography* (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1960), pp. 180–82.

[55] Murray to Lord Lyttleton, quoted in Madariaga, 'Gilbert Murray and the League', p. 183.

[56] This and previous quote, Murray to Lord Robert Cecil, quoted in Madariaga, 'Gilbert Murray and the League', p. 182.

[57] Ceadel, 'Murray and International Politics', p. 221.

[58] West, *Gilbert Murray*, pp. 8–13. Several political philosophers have highlighted hatred of cruelty as a defining attribute of liberalism, for example, Kenneth Minogue, *The Liberal Mind* (London: Methuen, 1963), pp. 6–13; and Richard Rorty, *Contingency, Irony, and Solidarity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), Part III.

Taylor's, where his love of Hellenism was kindled.[59] But it was at Oxford that Murray's liberalism became self-conscious. He became, as mentioned, an avid reader of Mill and an admirer of Gladstone. He also imbibed some of the 'Oxford Idealism' or 'neo-Hegelianism' that was at its height during his undergraduate days. Oxford Idealism or neo-Hegelianism was a broad social-philosophical movement which sought to use the insights of Hegel to forge a more collectivist and socially responsible form of liberalism. Its leading lights – T. H. Green, David Ritchie, Bernard Bosanquet, Henry Jones and John Muirhead – sought to reconcile the traditional liberal emphasis on individual autonomy with concern for the common good. Reliance on the principle of unrestrained individual egotism, rationalised by the doctrine of the harmony of interests, had brought great riches, but at a terrible cost in terms of inequality, poverty, and inhumane working conditions. The task now was to moralise the liberal economy (and indeed international relations) by fostering, in the words of Jeanne Morefield, 'a deeper appreciation among citizens of the spiritual bonds that connected them to the social whole'.[60] A new 'constructive' liberalism (to use Green's term) would combine an 'appreciation for individualism and laissez-faire economics with a theory of moral responsibility. It would stretch liberal political theory to encompass both a notion of freedom and a commitment to the common good. Ultimately, it would explain why individuals in liberal society should care about one another and their community.'[61]

Oxford Idealism left its mark on Murray in a variety of ways. It heightened his fascination with the spirituality of Greek culture and the success of the Athenians in reconciling individual freedom with duty to the polis. It impressed on him the possibility of building a new Athens in which individual freedom would be conditioned by a strong sense of duty generated and mediated by a growing sense of liberal spirituality. It taught him that individualism and patriotism were not antagonistic and, possibly, that in the 'true' state patriotism and internationalism were mutually supportive.[62] It also reinforced his conviction that freedom means much more than the pursuit of self-interest. Human beings could only acquire true freedom when working for the good of others and the polis – when immersed, in other words, in the spiritual life of the community. Liberalism properly conceived was more a doctrine of self-sacrifice than self-assertion.[63]

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[59] West, *Gilbert Murray*, pp. 14–15.

[60] Morefield, *Covenants Without Swords*, p. 15.

[61] Ibid., p. 25. See also J. L. Richardson, 'Contending Liberalisms: Past and Present', *European Journal of International Relations*, 3:1 (1997), pp. 10–11.

[62] Bernard Bosanquet's thesis in 'Patriotism in the Perfect State', in E. Sidgwick (ed.), *The International Crisis in its Ethical and Psychological Aspects* (London: H. Milford and Oxford University Press, 1915), pp. 132–54. In the view of the neo-Hegelians, the 'True' state (cf. one that merely 'exists') was one that endeavoured to harmonise social relations and provide increasing opportunities for individual and group moral realisation. Contrary to the view attributed to Hegel that war was inherent in the nature of the state, the neo-Hegelians claimed that the true state was a satisfied state and inherently pacific. Only untrue states, those that failed to provide the conditions for the 'organised good life' of their inhabitants, were war-like. Hence Bossanquet's remark: 'War belongs to a state, then, ultimately, not insofar it is a state, but insofar as it is not a state' ('Patriotism', p. 145). And Muirhead's: 'War is a feature of states not as such but insofar as they fail to be states' (quoted in David Boucher, 'British Idealism, the State, and International Relations', *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 55:4 (1994), p. 686).

[63] Morefield, *Covenants Without Swords*, p. 19, p. 56, pp. 65–6, 74, 77–8.

Morefield sees Murray and Zimmern as the 'intellectual legatees' of the neo-Hegelians.[64] But as far as Murray is concerned the influence is more in form than of substance.[65] While replete with references to the 'spirit of the community' and the 'liberal spirit', one does not get the impression from Murray's writings that beneath the respectable Victorian, liberal, exterior lies a closet Hegelian. The nearest one gets to a recognisably Hegelian assertion is that 'the better order which a reformer wishes to substitute for the present order must be a fuller realization of the spirit of the existing order'.[66] Murray had no thesis about the evolution of a 'universal will' or a 'single general will' that for neo-Hegelians was a prerequisite for the success of 'leagues of peace' and the creation of a 'genuine international moral world'.[67] He talks little about the nature or role of the state, and makes no attempt to distinguish between an 'institutional' or 'instrumental' state (which true to his radical liberal convictions he distrusted), and the broader Hegelian conception (the total social environment, embracing culture, law, customs, and practices) that the neo-Hegelians held to be perfectible.[68] Nor does one find any indication in Murray that morality is relative, being deeply imbedded in social circumstances, and always in a process of 'becoming'.[69] Morefield states: 'In Murray's vision, the truth of the world [. . .] was inscribed on a cosmic tablet, locked behind an obfuscating wall of material greed and amoral politics. People of good will could access the Logos by simply approaching it in the "right spirit"'.[70] This strikes me as deeply un-Hegelian. For Hegel, truth and value was immanent in the actual, not a timeless, absolute standard.

Yet there is no question that Murray's liberalism is open to interpretation, and the reason for this is a certain lack of discipline in his approach. The basic problem is that Murray associated liberalism with such a wide range of moral and political goods, that in effect it becomes good by definition. Examples include progress, democracy, civilisation, peace, justice, freedom, opportunity, enlightenment, hatred of cruelty, relief of suffering, and self-mastery. With such a broad set of associations as these, statements such as 'Liberalism is what the world needs both at home and abroad'[71] and '[c]ivilized thinking means liberal thinking'[72] become almost self-evidently true.

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[64] Ibid., p. 26.
[65] Interestingly, the same has been said of one of Murray's closest friends at Oxford, Leonard Hobhouse. According to (Casper Sylvest 'Continuity and Change in British Liberal Internationalism, c. 1900–1930', *Review of International Studies*, 31:2 (2005), p. 271), Hobhouse sought to 'exploit the popularity of these [evolutionary and neo-Hegelian] vocabularies by phrasing his own project in their terms.'
[66] Murray, *Satanism and the World Order* (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1919), p. 28. In this fascinating lecture, Murray conceives Satanism as 'The spirit of unmixed hatred towards the existing World Order, the spirit which rejoices in any widespread disaster which is also a disaster for the world's rulers'. It was, he felt, 'more rife to-day than it has been for over a thousand years' (p. 33). Its 'great seed-ground' (p. 31) was the breakdown of relations between imperial rulers and ruled, particularly in areas where cultural and religious differences were great.
[67] See Bosanquet, 'Patriotism', pp. 136–7, 150; C. Brown (ed.), T. Nardin, and N. Rengger (eds), *International Relations in Political Thought: Texts from the Ancient Greeks to the First World War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), p. 468.
[68] See Boucher, 'British Idealism', p. 674; Bosanquet, 'Patriotism', pp. 152–4.
[69] See Boucher, 'British Idealism', p. 678; Kimberly Hutchings, *International Political Theory: Rethinking Ethics in a Global Era* (London: Sage, 1999), pp. 91–120.
[70] Morefield, *Covenants Without Swords*, p. 19.
[71] Murray, 'What Liberalism Stands For', p. 697.
[72] Murray, *Liberality and Civilization*, p. 57.

It is significant that Murray preferred to talk not of liberalism but liberality.[73] The term liberalism was too closely associated with the British Liberal Party, and whilst a lifelong member of that party, standing (unsuccessfully) as one of its candidates for Parliament on six occasions, Murray was by instinct bi-partisan. He detested extreme partisanship in any form. He detested the two-party system in Britain and the misrepresentation, tribalism, and political negativity it encouraged. The term liberalism also suggested a definite doctrine or set of principles. But for Murray liberalism was not a doctrine or set of principles, but 'a temper, a spirit, a method of approach'.[74] When Gladstone wanted to get the measure of a man he would ask 'Is he a man of real Liberality?'[75] This both appealed and contributed to Murray's political ecumenicalism for it implied that decent men, men of real liberality, could be found in all the major political parties.[76] The notion of liberality also enabled Murray to downplay the traditional liberal emphasis on individual liberty. Following Mill, Murray was insistent that liberty did not mean license. For the mass of men liberty could be a destructive principle. Only the noblest men in society, those possessed of considerable powers of self-discipline and self-denial, could enjoy it unfettered – though perhaps illogically he did not go as far as Mill in calling for extensions of the franchise to be subject to an educational qualification.[77]

Liberalism valued civilisation and social order, but unlike conservatism it also valued criticism of them in the interest of progress. Progress and democracy were the 'two main elements in its gospel'.[78] Liberals feared being blinded by prejudice, self-interest, and class or national passion, and thereby prevented from seeing the potential for progressive change. Indeed an essential feature of Murray's liberalism was its stress on the welfare not of this or that group or class but the whole community. The Liberal Party was not a class party. It acted less in the direct interest of an oppressed class, and more in the interest of the whole community, which was poisoned by the existence of such oppression. When progress conflicted with class interest, even of the majority labouring class, the liberal always put progress first.[79]

It is important to note two further features of Murray's brand of liberalism. First, he believed that 'war is the extreme denial of liberality'.[80] War, especially modern war, with its deadly application of modern science and technology, and the ability of the modern state to harness the might of the whole nation,[81] had a pernicious effect on civilisation. It killed generosity, established force and fraud as

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[73] Liberality is an archaic term to modern ears. Murray in all probability acquired it from Thucydides. It appears, for example, in translations of Pericles' funeral oration. See, for example, Brown et al., *International Relations in Political Thought*, p. 39.

[74] Murray, 'What Liberalism Stands For', p. 682.

[75] Murray, *Liberality and Civilization*, p. 16.

[76] And in principle in all countries. Francis West makes the interesting point that whereas liberalism, for Murray, was primarily a British affair, liberality was international. West, *Gilbert Murray*, pp. 198–9.

[77] See Beate Jahn, 'Classical Smoke, Classical Mirror: Kant and Mill in Liberal International Relations Theory', in B. Jahn (ed.), *Classical Theory in International Relations* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), pp. 199–200; and Richardson, 'Contending Liberalisms', pp. 10–1.

[78] Murray, 'What Liberalism Stands For', p. 683.

[79] Murray did not explain how this could be squared with liberalism's commitment to democracy. Supposing the demos did not want 'progress'? Murray, 'What Liberalism Stands For', p. 683.

[80] Murray, *Liberality and Civilization*, p. 28.

[81] Ibid., pp. 59–60.

social norms, and stripped away patience and rationality. It injured the very qualities needed for the slow but sure reconstruction of a shattered society.[82] The same was true of revolution. Murray noted the appeal of revolutionary rhetoric to the ignorant, the poor, and the oppressed. But the passions and values of revolution stood in the face of what was needed to build a complex, humane and efficient society. Revolution, like war, produced 'infinite evils' as force and fraud were substituted for the reign of law.[83]

The second feature is the importance of sacrifice. The liberal spirit involved doing what is best for the whole community irrespective of private or class interest. But this inevitably involved self-sacrifice on the part of many. Without this willingness to make private and sectional sacrifices there was little chance of making progress towards liberalism's goals.[84] This was true internationally as much as domestically. The general good of international society depended on the willingness to make sacrifices on the part of its members. In particular, collective security, as encapsulated in Article 16 of the Covenant, had little chance of working unless peace-loving nations were willing to make the sacrifices necessary to isolate and resist aggressors.[85] Already it is possible to see in Murray's liberalism elements of individualism and communitarianism; a desire for maximum individual liberty, but always restrained (ideally self-restrained) by the needs and welfare of the whole community. Despite his dislike of conservatism as a doctrine there is also a conservative element in Murray's liberalism. As well as being vulnerable to Carr's accusation that his pacific principles were an ideological disguise for the pursuit of particular state and class interests, it might also be said that his notion of progress was a conservative one (as we shall see below).

Hellenism and International Relations

Murray's liberalism, however, cannot be understood in isolation from his Hellenism. In a *festschrift* published shortly after his death, his son-in-law and fellow internationalist, Arnold Toynbee, perceptively observed that Murray

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[82] Murray, 'What Liberalism Stands For', pp. 685.
[83] Ibid., pp. 688–9.
[84] Ibid., pp. 689, 696.
[85] Murray, *Liberality and Civilization*, pp. 63–5. In this respect Murray inverts the thinking of contemporary 'rational choice' liberals who assume that states are utility-maximising entities and observe that institutions can change states' calculations about how to maximise their gains. 'Specifically, rules can get states to make short-term sacrifices needed to resolve the prisoners' dilemma and thus to realise long-term gains' (John L. Mearsheimer, 'The False Promise of International Institutions', *International Security*, 19:3 (1994–1995), p. 18). Not all states in Murray's view were utility maximising, only less-civilised states. More-civilised states possessed and encouraged a spirit of self-sacrifice. This was not an effect of institutions but a precondition of their successful operation – which in turn was necessary for maximising the common good and establishing 'cosmos'. Murray's thinking fits well into Reus-Smit's category of 'classical liberal international political theory' in that his liberalism was both explanatory and normative, containing an account of the nature of international politics and a normative philosophy (in contrast to neo-liberal theory which, with its sparring partner neo-realism, effectively abandons political argument by relegating normative reflection from the realm of legitimate social scientific enquiry and embracing 'a rationalist conception of agency that reduces all political action to strategic interaction' Christian Reus-Smit, 'The Strange Death of Liberal International Theory', *European Journal of International Law*, 12:3 (2001), pp. 573–85).

'identified both the Hellenic genius and the modern Western genius with the liberal spirit, and so identified them with each other. This was the master idea that gave unity to all his pursuits and inspiration to each of them.'[86] That Murray himself was aware that these and other elements infused each other is revealed in a letter he wrote at the height of World War One: 'I feel as if Greek and Peace and Liberalism and idealism in general were all one, and all being threatened by the same enemy.'[87] In a BBC broadcast on his 90th birthday, 'Unfinished Battle', Murray confessed that 'there has never been a day, I suppose, when I have failed to give thought to the work for peace and for Hellenism'.[88] Throughout his life Murray's Hellenism supplied him with the moral tone that others received from religious devotion.[89]

The most explicit Hellenistic element in his understanding of liberalism is the individual's duty to the community. There is no evidence in his writings that he ever seriously entertained the classical liberal notion of a spontaneous order arising from unbridled pursuit of individual self-interest, with the state merely 'holding the ring' between competing interests. This immediately distances him from the 'nineteenth century liberalism' that bore the brunt of Carr's criticism. Public spirit, service to the polis, and the necessity of building and rebuilding the polis in order for people to live and live well, are constant themes in Murray's writing.[90] His ideal was cosmopolitan. Human society, rightly conceived, was 'not a chaos of warring interests, but a Cosmos, an ordered whole, in which every individual had his due share of both privilege and service.' The goal was 'one Great City of which all men are free citizens'; or even more far-reaching, and as an antidote to moral complacency and materialism, 'one great city of men and Gods.'[91] An ancillary Hellenistic and, for Murray, liberal virtue was insistence on the highest standards of conduct in public life.[92]

It would be impossible to sum up in a few pages or paragraphs what Murray took from the Greek world. Its influence on him was profound and far-reaching, extending to philology, philosophy, ethics and aesthetics, as well as politics. But the following Greek notions feature prominently in Murray political thought: sophia or wisdom; saphênia or clarity; rhetorikê or clear, direct, exact expression; logos or talk, speech, persuasion;[93] sôphrosynê or the 'tempering of dominant emotions by gentler thought';[94] themis or the honouring of laws and customs;[95] and most importantly arête or virtue, the pursuit of excellence. And there can be little doubt that the following qualities and values championed by Murray were derived largely

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[86] Arnold Toynbee, 'The Unity of Gilbert Murray's Life and Work', in Smith and Toynbee, *Unfinished Autobiography*, p. 212.

[87] Quoted in West, *Gilbert Murray*, p. 156.

[88] Quoted in Wilson, *Gilbert Murray*, p. 399.

[89] Ceadel, 'Murray and International Politics', p. 220.

[90] For example, Murray, *Ordeal*, p. 39, pp. 196–7; *Liberality and Civilization*, p. 91; *From League to UN*, p. 62 ('The very essence of good life is service').

[91] 'To make a true Cosmos, a true moral and spiritual order, there must be something higher in the world than men as we now know them; there must be those ideals and inspirations, that "something not ourselves making for righteousness," for which the ancients used their inadequate word θέοι, or "Gods".' Murray, *Liberality and Civilization*, pp. 43–4.

[92] See, for example, Murray, 'What Liberalism Stands For', p. 695.

[93] '[T]he great instrument of persuasion, the great substitute for violence, is the Logos'. Murray, *Hellenism and the Modern World* (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1953), p. 27.

[94] Murray cited in Stapleton, 'Classicist as Liberal Intellectual', p. 266.

[95] Murray, *Aristophanes: A Study* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1933), p. 107.

from his reading of the classical Greek world: moderation; simplicity; preference for the spiritual over the material; freedom of thought, conscience and speech; service to the polis; respect for the laws of the polis; self-discipline, self-sacrifice; love of knowledge and the life of the mind (and preference for quality of mind over its technical achievements); the ideals of truth and justice as ends in themselves; and reason – involving control of the passions and a critical stance toward tradition and custom, qualities symbolised above all by his hero, Euripides.[96] To these Murray might have added manliness, meaning physical courage and readiness to use force if necessary in pursuit of justice.[97] It was this element that his pacifist friends overlooked when trying to square Murray's belief in conciliation and peace with his support for the British decision to go to war in 1914.

What about the relationship between Murray's Hellenism and his views on international relations? Carr says in his brief autobiography that, at Cambridge, 'a rather undistinguished Classics don', who specialised in the Persian Wars, taught him that '"Herodutus" account of them not only contained a lot of pure mythology, but was shaped and moulded by his attitude to the Peloponnesian War, which was going on at the time he wrote'. This, he says, came as a revelation to him and gave him his first taste of what history was really about.[98] With Murray the influence was almost entirely the other way around. Rather than current affairs shaping his view of history, his view of history, meaning primarily ancient Greece, shaped his understanding of current affairs. One reason for this is chronological: by the time the event came along that propelled Murray into the international realm, Murray was well into middle age and his Hellenism was fully formed.

Evidence for the deep influence of Hellenism on Murray's international thought is plentiful. His first substantial work on international politics has as its frontispiece a quote (in Greek and English) from Thucydides: 'The cause of the whole catastrophe was Empire pursued for covetousness and ambition.'[99] And this basically sums up Murray's attitude to the British Empire: it was good to the extent that it was selfless and progressive, and bad to the extent that it was selfish and exploitative – as with fifth century Athens. This is the area in which Murray's thought mirrors most closely the neo-Hegelians. They were opposed to a model of empire based on exploitation for economic gain, and maintained that imperial states had extensive obligations to prevent exploitation and educate native peoples for self government. In Boucher's words, they were 'ethical imperialists' or 'maternalists' – they believed that the mother country had the duty to bring up her colonial children, untying the apron strings only once they had reached maturity.[100]

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[96] Murray, 'The Value of Greece to the Future of the World', in R. W. Livingston (ed.), *The Legacy of Greece* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1921).

[97] Murray was fond of Pericles' statement: 'The Athenians love beauty, but have not luxurious tastes; they cultivate the mind without any loss of manliness.' Quoted in Murray, *Hellenism and the Modern World*, p. 38.

[98] E. H. Carr, 'An Autobiography', in M. Cox (ed.), *E. H. Carr*, p. xiv.

[99] Hirst, Murray and Hammond, *Liberalism and the Empire*.

[100] Boucher, 'British Idealism', pp. 681–4. Yet here as in other areas the influence of Mill and Gladstone should not be discounted. In the mid-nineteenth century they championed the virtues of the Greek cf. Roman models of empire, seeing a progressive, liberal spirit in the former not present in the (authoritarian) latter. Murray was a major voice in the return to Greece as an inspiration for a new conception of British imperial unity following the decline of ideas for a US-inspired 'Greater Britain' in the late nineteenth century. See Duncan Bell, 'From Ancient to Modern in Victorian Imperial

One finds repeatedly in Murray's writings on international matters discussion of the corrupting and degrading effects of war on society and the individual. He notes *inter alia:* the inability of post-conflict societies to revert back to daily tasks without the 'habit of outrageous stimulation';[101] the decline of civility, self-discipline and reasonableness; the rise of escapism and retreat from plainer but more edifying preoccupations.[102] Society becomes cruder, its people more aggressive, suspicious and cynical. Violent and less educated men come to the top.[103] The terrible moral and psychological damage that war can do to society was one of Murray's worst fears. But from where did he get his evidence? He conducted no detailed study of the effects of war on British society. Indeed, Murray never engaged in empirical research of any kind. He got his information on current affairs from his Oxford undergraduates, from the New College senior common room, from conversations with eminent scholars and scientists at Oxford, in London or Geneva, and from the Manchester *Guardian* and the London *Times*. But his understanding of the impact of war on society comes not form these sources but primarily from the accounts of Thucydides, Aristophanes, and Euripides of the effects of the Peloponnesian War on Greek, and especially Athenian, society.

Another example of Murray's interpretation of international politics being heavily influenced by his immersion in the Greek world is his interpretation of virtually all conflicts – whether the world wars, or the Cold War, or Nasser's 'seizure' of Suez – as a struggle between civilisation and barbarism, democracy or oligarchy, or the forces of Cosmos and those of Chaos.[104] Curiously for the greatest scholar of Euripides of the twentieth century, there are few grey tones in Murray's portrayal of major conflicts – nor, it might be added, a sense of tragedy. There is no sense that categories such as Cosmos and Chaos might be highly elastic and contingent, indeed subjective. No sense that both sides to a conflict may be seeking to advance their own sense of good, their own sense of international right, and that the ensuing clash may bring consequences that neither desire, even the very evils that they seek to avoid. No sense, too, that the motives of all parties may consist of a complex mixture of right and wrong, concern for the common good and narrow selfishness.[105]

Thought', *The Historical Journal*, 49:3 (2006), pp. 743–4, 758–9; and more generally his magisterial *The Idea of Greater Britain: Empire and the Future of World Order, 1860–1900* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2007). See also Beate Jahn, 'Barbarian Thoughts: Imperialism in the Philosophy of John Stuart Mill', *Review of International Studies*, 31:3 (2005), pp. 601–7.

[101] Murray, *Ordeal*, p. 31. The difficulty for individuals habituated to violence to return to normality, and the ease with which it is possible to become a 'war junky', has recently been highlighted by Canon Andrew White (the 'vicar of Baghdad'). Hear his fascinating account at: {www.bbc.co.uk/radio4/thechoice} (first broadcast 9 September 2008).

[102] Note in this context Mill's assertion, perhaps typical for a long-serving administrator, that all civilised life depends on 'continuous labour of an unexciting kind'. Quoted in Jahn, 'Barabarian Thoughts', p. 601.

[103] Murray, *Ordeal*, pp. 31–3, 36–7, 177–81; *From League to UN*, pp. 34–7, 45–6, 95–6, pp. 124–5; *Aristophanes*, p. 15, pp. 22–3, pp. 69–70, p. 165.

[104] For example, Murray, *Foreign Policy of Sir Edward Grey*, pp. 55, 58–9, 82; *Ordeal*, pp. 149–50; *From League to UN*, pp. 17–41; *Hellenism and the Modern World*, pp. 52–60. Murray publicly supported Eden's intervention in Suez regarding Nasser as an anti-Western conspirator. See Ceadel, 'Murray and International Politics', p. 237.

[105] See, further, Wilson, 'Retrieving Cosmos', p. 251.

Without doubt Murray's Hellenism was an idealised vision of a society, fifth century Athens, that had already been idealised by the sands of time –baser ideas, motives, and practices being to an unknowable extent filtered out.[106] Murray was aware of this and saw no problem with it. All societies needed a model to emulate, a standard by which to measure current achievement. This was precisely the function of Plato's *Republic*. Yet it is an important fact that contrary to, and sometimes in opposition to, the position of his classicist colleague Jane Harrison, who laboured hard to unearth the 'primitivist' and irrational elements in Hellenic society, Murray hardly had a bad word to say about it.[107] It is also curious that while Murray decried the modern institution of sovereignty and the system of independent states,[108] he extolled the classical institution of the city state and the system of independent city states. The latter made for a 'confused unity' and there was 'much isolation, faction, and general weakness, to the detriment of the Greeks themselves'. But it also led 'in thought and literature to immense variety and vitality'.[109] Murray does not explicitly identify inter-state competition as the main agent of this 'immense variety and vitality', but this is the strong implication. If so, the question arises: why was he so eager to jettison – certainly radically modify and regulate – the modern system of independent states? The importance of inter-state competition in the rapid development – economically, technologically, culturally, politically – of the West is well established in the historical-sociological literature.[110] Murray, however, despite his exaltation of the pursuit of arête, and his recognition of the constant restlessness of free humanity, seems to have overlooked the possibility of the functionality, not least in cultural terms, of a system of independent sovereignties. The reason is fairly clear. Murray's sensibility had been so wounded by the carnage and inhumanity of 1914–1918, and he was so convinced that the anarchy of independent states was responsible, that he shut his eyes to other possibilities. Yet he also correctly read that the rapid development of military technology and the rise of modern nationalism had transformed international rivalry into an altogether more deadly game. One conclusion to be drawn from this is that, despite the many insights, Murray's approach to comparing the classical with the modern political world was highly selective and unsystematic. Its literary merit was high, but the work in this area of recent IR scholars from Wight to Buzan and Little is in a different league in terms of intellectual rigour.

Cultural internationalism

Murray's brand of liberalism and Hellenism led almost inexorably to a certain kind of internationalism, and it is only when the three are put together that one gets a

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[106] The same could be said of Alfred Zimmern, a protégé of Murray and fellow internationalist and ICIC member, whose *The Greek Commonwealth: Politics and Economics in Fifth-Century Athens*, five editions (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1911–31) remained the most comprehensive and popular introduction to the Hellenic world until the publication of H. D. F. Kitto, *The Greeks* (London: Pelican, 1951).

[107] See West, *Gilbert Murray*, pp. 132–8; Wilson, *Gilbert Murray*, pp. 153–6; Murray, 'Value of Greece', pp. 13–6. Murray's criticisms did not extend far even when, late in life, he recognised that the Hellenistic ideal was 'a good deal different from the reality on which it is based' (Murray, *Hellenism and the Modern World*, p. 20).

[108] For example, Murray, *Liberality and Civilization*, p. 62.

[109] Murray, 'Value of Greece', pp. 18–9.

[110] See, for example, John Hall, *Powers and Liberties* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1986).

true measure of his politico-philosophical outlook. If internationalism is the doctrine of international bonding,[111] cultural internationalism is the doctrine of bonding nations together by cultural exchange and interaction. Iriye defines it as 'the fostering of international cooperation through cultural activities across national boundaries.'[112] These activities are varied and numerous, but foremost among them are those involving scholars, scientists, teachers, writers, artists, musicians, curators, librarians, broadcasters, and many other persons dedicated to the transmission and advancement of knowledge and understanding. Intellectual internationalism can be conceived as one of the main branches of cultural internationalism, and Iriye identifies Murray as a pioneering figure in the development of this branch.

It is important to note, however, that Murray was a far from enthusiastic participant in the early work of the League on intellectual cooperation. Hoping for a more exciting challenge, he resented being earmarked by his superiors for this kind of work in the Second League Assembly of 1921. In a letter to General Smuts he described the 'International Organisation of Intellectual Work' as a 'somewhat hazy and obscure subject, on which nobody but a few cranks [...] have any clear views'.[113] The subject 'bores me stiff', he confided in a letter to his wife, 'but I am one of the few people who know anything about it'.[114] In a matter of weeks, however, Murray found himself 'getting interested in the wretched business, from having to explain and defend it'.[115] In the following year the Committee for Intellectual Cooperation was established with Murray as vice-President, and the die was cast for his involvement in the field for the next 30 years.

Murray's stance on international intellectual cooperation was integrationist and anti-nationalist. His starting point was the interdependence of nations. 'The experience of mankind has proved that nations in the modern world are not independent units but members of one society [...] Nations can destroy one another or help one another; but one cannot destroy the rest and prosper in their ruin'.[116] In the modern world national success depended on international co-operation. The main impediment to international cooperation was nationalism. In the sphere of the intellect, of art, science, learning and literature, one had, believed Murray, an invaluable counter-force to nationalism. Cooperation in this sphere had the capacity to make 'a powerful though unseen influence for good'.[117] Murray was convinced of the emotional bonding power of the great works of science, art, learning and literature:

When a man of science studies or discusses with colleagues some new discovery in physics or mathematics; when a lover of painting studies a picture of Rembrandt, or Velasquez, or Michelangelo; when a lover of literature reads *Faust* or *Hamlet* or the *Divina Commedia*, differences in nationality fade into nothingness; all that remains is the interest and the

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[111] Carsten Holbraad, *Internationalism and Nationalism in European Political Thought* (New York: Palgrave, 2003), p. 1.
[112] Iriye, *Cultural Internationalism*, p. 3.
[113] 8 Oct 1921. Quoted in Madariaga, 'Murray and the League', p. 189.
[114] 8 Sept 1921. Quoted in Madariaga, 'Murray and the League', p. 189.
[115] Murray to Lady Mary, 22 Sept 1921. Quoted in Madariaga, 'Murray and the League', p. 190.
[116] Murray, *From League to UN*, p. 199.
[117] Ibid., p. 200.

delight of man in the highest works of man, and the intimate sympathy which results therefrom between artists or thinkers of different nations.[118]

Great works of science or art were appreciated as such regardless of the nationality of their creator. Therein lay the kernel of human unity. Murray gave the example of a concert he heard on the BBC on the eve of the Second World War. Toscanini was conducting a symphony of Beethoven by means of an English orchestra. At the time, animosity toward Italy and Germany in Britain was intense. But the London audience gave the performance a rapturous response. They were 'absorbed in a great torrent of emotion' in effect called forth by international intellectual and artistic cooperation.[119]

The ICIC was set up to increase links between nations in this broad area. But why was such a body needed? Would not the necessary cooperation spring up spontaneously? This might be the case, Murray contended, in subjects such as music, the fine arts, and pure science, which did not depend in any significant degree on language or differences in national tradition. But beyond these safe confines, obstacles to international cooperation were considerable. Many educated persons were conversant in one or more foreign languages, but few were sufficiently conversant in them to express themselves naturally without fear of misunderstanding. The problem went beyond the question of translation. This was because every language was itself a national tradition; and every national tradition was full of unexpressed assumptions and attitudes of mind, taken for granted among sharers of that tradition, but difficult to penetrate by outsiders. 'The unexpressed assumptions in the human mind are like the submerged parts of an iceberg, which are eight times as great as the part that shows above the water.'[120] These unexpressed assumptions were a great impediment to international understanding. The first task of international intellectual cooperation, therefore, was to get them understood. 'When the mentality of other nations was understood', declared Henri Bergson, 'the world would be much more ready to agree' on matters of war and peace.[121]

The ICIC, and the Paris-based Institute for International Intellectual Cooperation established in 1925 to carry out its work, set about doing this by promoting meetings between leading scientists and savants, holding international conferences, encouraging greater cooperation between the world's universities, facilitating student exchanges, and generally promoting the 'mutual intimacy' that would lead to mutual understanding and self-knowledge.[122] It was Murray's hope that cooperation in this area would lead to the promotion of the 'League spirit' or what the ICIC's Comité des Arts et des Lettres member Paul Valéry termed 'Une Société

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[118] Ibid., p. 200.
[119] Ibid., p. 200.
[120] Ibid., p. 201.
[121] Quoted in Iriye, *Cultural Internationalism*, p. 57. The early cultural internationalists, Iriye argues, 'believed that theirs was not a naïve vision of a utopian community but a realistic proposal for avoiding nationalist excesses' (p. 10). Ultimately they believed peace and order rested on the development of a cooperative habit of mind among individuals in all countries – what Leonard Woolf called 'communal internationalist psychology' (see, Wilson, *International Theory of Leonard Woolf*, pp. 44–8).
[122] Murray provides a useful overview of the work of these two bodies in Appendix III to *From League to UN*, pp. 202–14. See also Rachel Gowdy, 'Humanitarian Activities of the League of Nations', *International Affairs*, 6:3 (1927), pp. 153–69; F. S. Northedge, *The League of Nations: Its Life and Times 1920–1946* (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1988), pp. 186–9.

des Espirit'.[123] This was the habit of putting the good of the whole consistently, perhaps unthinkingly, above 'the forces of uncontrolled and irresponsible covetousness' at work in the world.[124] The extensive work of the ICIC in reducing nationalism in the teaching of history[125] was particularly important, as was research into how the new media of the cinema and radio could be used to generate good will between nations, regulated in order to avoid the generation of bad will, and harnessed for the 'elevation of the public taste'.[126]

There is no doubt that Murray was a pioneering figure in institutionalisation of cultural internationalism. International conferences, festivals, exhibitions, seminars, exchanges, and the like, involving scientists, artists, academics, writers, musicians, and many other groups engaged in the production and dissemination of knowledge and culture are now a regular part of the international landscape. We take them for granted. The occurrence of such activities on an international scale began in the mid-nineteenth century, and grew in frequency, scale, and level of institutionalisation as the century progressed.[127] The First World War, however, brought this procession to a halt, and Murray and his fellow ICIC intellectuals saw themselves at the vanguard of getting it reinstated. 'I look to Intellectual Cooperation among men of good will', he declared in 1929, 'for the restoring of our lost Cosmos and the ultimate wise guidance of the world.'[128] His hope was fortified by the success of the League in the 1920s in dealing with a string of financial and currency crises as well as humanitarian disasters and epidemics.[129] In all of these cases the role of disinterested experts, rigorously studying the problem before arriving at conclusions and making recommendations 'free from the clamour of national and party jealousies',[130] had been vital. The study of any problem by an international team of experts not only provided a better factual basis for policymaking, but also a way out of the systemic short-termism and selfishness that resulted from nationalism. Governments could seldom afford to be generous or far-seeing in negotiations. They were too vulnerable to the accusation of 'selling-out'. But if all the leading experts on a particular issue were of one mind it was much easier for governments to adopt their recommendations and sell them back home. For this reason intellectual collaboration was well on the way to becoming the characteristic method by which the League did most of its work.

Yet Murray's pioneering importance should not disguise the fact that his approach to cultural cooperation was already out of step with some of major socio-cultural trends of the age. Iriye traces the development of cultural internationalism through a series of phases. The first phase from the 1850s to 1914 saw

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[123] Murray, *From League to UN*, p. 211.
[124] Murray cited in Morefield, *Covenants Without Swords*, p. 149.
[125] Including an international survey conducted by the Institute, a series of conferences organised by the Royal Historical Society, an international conference of French and German historians held in 1930, and annual conferences of teachers in subjects such as History, Geography, Modern Languages and Civics. See Murray, *From League to UN*, pp. 204–5; Iriye, *Cultural Internationalism*, pp. 72–6.
[126] Murray, *From League to UN*, p. 208. See also Iriye, *Cultural Internationalism*, pp. 70–2.
[127] The classic early account was provided by Leonard Woolf in *International Government* (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1916), esp. Part II, pp. 89–230. See also Paul Reinsch, *Public International Unions, Their Work and Organisation* (Boston: Ginn and Co., 1911); and Schmidt, 'Paul S. Reinsch', pp. 43–70.
[128] Murray, *Ordeal*, p. 197.
[129] See Northedge, *League of Nations*, pp. 169–74.
[130] Murray, Ordeal, p. 191.

the spontaneous growth of international and transnational cooperation in the cultural sphere characterised by the great exhibitions and expositions from London and Paris to Chicago and St. Louis; and international congresses of *inter alia* scientists, anthropologists, archaeologists, historians, trade unionists, religious and women's groups. The second phase from 1918 to the early 1930s witnessed the attempt to harness it more explicitly to the cause of international understanding and peace through the League and its Committee of International Cooperation, and to bring non-Western elites into the international cultural fold. During a third phase from the early 1930s to 1945 governments of various kinds, though most explicitly the totalitarian regimes, attempted to separate culture from internationalism, and to exploit it for exclusively national purposes via new means of mass communication. A fourth phase after 1945 witnessed the rekindling of cultural internationalism but in a new inclusive and democratised form. The UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the successor organisation to the ICIC, shifted the focus of cultural internationalism from cooperation between elites, and the meeting of 'great minds', towards functional cooperation to rebuild education systems and reduce vast inequalities, within and between nations, of educational and cultural opportunities. UNESCO acknowledged, much in the spirit of the ICIC, that 'since wars begin in the minds of men, it is in the minds of men that the defences of peace must be constructed'.[131] But the 'men' it had in mind now was the mass of men – and women. This new social (and increasingly gender) inclusiveness accompanied the ethnic inclusiveness that had been tentatively begun under the ICIC.

By placing Murray in the context of this evolution of cultural internationalism we are better able to estimate the strengths of his approach, but also its limitations. With regard to the latter, there can be no doubt that some of the chief assumptions underlying Murray's conception of international cultural cooperation were time-bound, and that he failed to appreciate the mass-democratic and egalitarian forces that were already gathering pace. Firstly, while he relentlessly championed inter-cultural 'logos' and exchange, this was always from the vantage point of a cast-iron faith in the superiority of Western civilisation and the Western canon. His conception of cultural cooperation was Eurocentric and displayed all the hallmarks of the Victorian imperial mindset.[132] What Murray desired was a transmission belt of superior Western culture and values to backward and disadvantaged parts of the world. As late as 1953, when much relativist water had flowed under the bridge, Murray retained the belief that the 'Christian' or 'Hellenic' civilisation to which Europe and the English-world historically belonged would 'continue to set the

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[131] Preamble to UNESCO constitution, cited in Iriye, *Cultural Internationalism*, p. 147.

[132] Murray regarded Victorian civilisation as 'very splendid' and he found unpalatable the tendency of modern liberals to mock it. He took it for granted – here again no doubt influenced by Mill – that some cultures/nations/civilisations were superior to others, that it was natural to think of them in terms of their relative superiority/inferiority, and that the advanced nations had a duty to assist the development of the backward. By the 1930s these characteristically Victorian, hierarchical, and paternalist beliefs were beginning to look antiquated. 'My Dear Monument', began one letter from his Fabian friend, Margaret Cole (quoted in West, *Murray*, pp. 234–7). For Murray's hierarchical view of the world, with a benign Britain at the top, see, for example, Murray, *Satanism*, pp. 33–46. For Murray's idealisation of the Victorian era see, for example, Murray, *Hellenism*, pp. 53–4. For Mill's paternalism, based on similarly hierarchical view of the world, see Jahn, 'Classical Smoke', pp. 191–201.

whole world an example of what is meant be civilization'.[133] There is no suggestion that the 'backward', disadvantaged or 'barbarian' parts of the world may have something major to offer, culturally or intellectually, to the West.[134] Indeed, in places he implicitly conceives them as a threat.[135] He certainly applauded the translation of classics of Japanese or Latin American literature into English and French. One gets no sense, however, that these works could ever be considered on a par with Tolstoy or Goethe, Shakespeare or Dante – let alone Euripides and Aeschylus. The main function of making such works more accessible was to facilitate greater understanding of the assumptions of the non-Western mind.

Secondly, his pronouncements on intellectual cooperation betray an essentially aristocratic conception of progress, again largely derived from his classical scholarship, but also from Mill.[136] Murray conceived progress in terms of privileged groups gradually extending their privileges to ever-wider circles – in order to build an ever-stronger polis. Progress was top-down. Superior civilisations and social classes were the engines of progress, and to the extent that these classes controlled progress, extending their privileges only when they deemed lower orders capable of responsibly enjoying them, Murray's conception is conservative.[137] It does not seem to have occurred to him that the battle for progress is partly a battle to establish what is to count as progress, with certain conceptions of progress acquiring socially hegemonic status at the expense of others. The relativism at the heart of such a view was anathema to Murray. Similarly, Murray does not seem to have fully appreciated that the main challenges to the established social order in the name of progress were, in the twentieth century, conducted by oppressed and marginalised groups (labour, women, gays, racial and ethnic minorities – and sometimes majorities) organising and agitating for freedom and equality. In one of his last pronouncements on intellectual cooperation he conceded that the body to replace the ICIC will need to be 'wider in scope' and more 'popular' in its educational focus.[138] But that is as near as one gets in Murray to an acknowledgment that 'popular' might not be always mean 'bad', and that agitation from below had overtaken concessions from above as the main motor of 'progress'. Murray's aristocratic assumptions were of course fed by, if not strictly speaking an aristocratic, then certainly an elitist age. It should also be noted that Murray enjoyed very considerable prestige and influence as the Regius professor. The 'access' he enjoyed within a largely Oxbridge and classically educated political class was remarkable. Some measure of this is the three hundred or so letters Murray co-signed or wrote to *The Times*, during an epistolary career spanning six decades. Many of these letters were of a length permitted only to the most esteemed correspondents.[139] Murray was on last name terms, so to speak, with Nobel and

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[133] Murray, *Hellenism*, p. 5, pp. 52–60.

[134] This is one area in which Murray parts company with Mill, whose outlook is more genuinely cosmopolitan. See Jahn, 'Barbarian Thoughts', pp. 614–5.

[135] See, for example, Murray, *Hellenism*, p. 5.

[136] See Jahn, 'Barabarian Thoughts', pp. 603–7; Jahn, 'Classical Smoke', pp. 193–7.

[137] And typical of nineteenth century political liberalism – dedicated to the promotion of equal opportunity but not at the cost of radically disturbing the established order. See Richardson, 'Contending Liberalisms', pp. 14–5.

[138] Murray, *From League to UN*, pp. 211, 214.

[139] See, William Bruneau and Russell Wodell, 'Yours Obediently, Gilbert Murray: Letters to *The Times*', in Stray (ed.), *Murray Reassessed*, pp. 319–48.

Poet laureates, permanent secretaries, newspaper editors, prime ministers and foreign secretaries. The volume of his correspondence to such figures is a measure of his elitist strategy as a political campaigner. In his archive one finds little evidence of a desire to excite the demos. 'I feel again the great importance of getting at the man at the top, especially if he is a man of reasonable intelligence', he said in one letter to Sir Frank Heath.[140]

Thirdly, and allied to this, Murray's elitist 'brains trust' conception of cultural internationalism placed too much faith in reason, and was insufficiently cognisant (in the age of Marx, Freud, Mannheim and Carr) of the complex ways in which reason is influenced by 'the passions and the interests'. He recognised that such developments as relativity in science and psychoanalysis had shaken belief in reason, truth and morality. But he saw this as a reason for rejecting these doctrines rather than questioning his own rationalistic assumptions. He held an Olympian conception of the role of the scientist and the savant. He genuinely believed, in tune with the zeitgeist of scientific rationalism, that the expert had a vital role to play in bringing about a new society. They not only possessed the unique expertise to address increasingly complex social questions; they also had the vital capacity, as outlined above, to think independently and disinterestedly, free of the pressures of a nationalist and aggressively commercial press which so distorted modern politics.

Despite the time-bound bound nature of some of the assumptions underlying Murray's conception of international cultural cooperation, however, the validity of some of the specific programmes he championed remains intact. (i) His encouragement of regular meetings of the 'Higher Schools of International Politics' is now a staple feature of academic life. While they serve functions more diffuse than his elitist objective of gathering the best minds to influence policy, they continue to be a major forum for inter-cultural debate and understanding. (ii) His encouragement of student exchange schemes has in part been overtaken by the growth of an international market in education. But this in part was a product of the success of such schemes in the 1960s and 1970s. The impact on international relations of the increasing flow of students across borders is not measurable, but there is no doubt that the student experience today is far more cosmopolitan and students far more internationalist in their outlook. (iii) Murray's enthusiasm for non-nationalist education, especially in the teaching of history, is as relevant now as it was in the 1930s – as recently highlighted by the dispute between China and Japan on the content of history textbooks used in Japanese schools. (iv) Murray maintained that an interest in and understanding of foreign affairs was part of the 'natural equipment of an intelligent democracy'.[141] The importance of this aspect of Murray's thought has increased in an age of mass communication and a globalised media. While some states have made notable strides most continue to give a low priority to the 'international education' necessary for their citizens to make informed judgments on the mass of information on world issues they daily receive. They thus fall far short of the Athenian ideal that constituted the kernel of Murray's international political thought: the creation of a responsible citizenry

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[140] 1 November 1938. MSS Gilbert Murray, Box 365, Bodleian Library, Oxford. Sir Frank Heath was Honorary Secretary of the British National Committee on Intellectual Cooperation.
[141] Murray, *Foreign Policy of Sir Edward Grey*, p. 124.

able to understand the complexity and contribute to the well-being of the polis and the emerging international society of poleis.

Conclusion

It would not be inaccurate to portray Murray's outlook on the world as that of the relatively safe and secure, prosperous, white, middle-class Victorian gentleman. It is not far-fetched to assert an ideological purpose, however unconscious, behind Murray's forays into the international realm: to sustain an international order beneficial to Britain and its political, social, economic and cultural elite, long after the material conditions for its existence had broken down. This much we may allow Carr. Despite all Murray's insistence on disinterestedness, he and many of his fellow internationalists are revealed as a deeply interested class. One of the most astute observers of Murray's involvement in the League, Salvador de Madariaga, described him as a 'civic monk': disciplined, public-spirited, and ostensibly disinterested in the service of the League and peace. Yet underneath an exterior of calm and confident beneficence lay certain 'insular prejudices', 'aristocratic assumptions', and 'all too vague and yet limited notions of what a permanent peace required.'[142]

Yet to leave things there would be an over-simplification of a more complex ideational reality. In this article I have pointed out some of the positive features of Murray's approach to international relations. Particularly valuable is his observation that while conflict and strife are inevitable features of human life, at least among those societies that strive for arête, social violence was not inevitable. Peaceful striving and the reconciliation of differences were the hallmarks of modern civilised existence. The significance of this is that, in Murray, reason does not wish away conflict. In fact, Murray adopts a broadly Kantian conception of reason. Man desires a quiet life but Nature has other plans. Nature constantly places obstacles in the way of humanity's path and Man reaches ever higher plateaux of reason in the process of surmounting them.[143]

Another valuable feature of Murray's work is that it reminds us, in beautiful, clear, simple prose, of the virtues of the classical Greek world, and how they can still serve as an inspiration in our modern, frenetic, materialistic civilisation. An argument can be made that the example of Greece will become more not less relevant in the twenty-first century, particularly the value it placed on modest living, service to the polis, and a conception of civilisation not based on acquisitiveness but having sufficient wealth, security, education, and leisure to be able to effectively contribute to the well-being of the polis. In a sense Murray worked to put the 'civil' back into 'civilisation'. In international as well as domestic life, concern for the common good is a constant refrain in Murray's writing. Its need is as great now as it was in Murray's day. Yet in fairness Murray did not shed much light on how to arrive at it in a highly complex, heterogeneous, and politically fragmented world – largely because he underestimated these features.

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[142] Madariaga, 'Gilbert Murray and the League', p. 184.
[143] See F. H. Hinsley, *Power and the Pursuit of Peace: Theory and Practice in the History of Relations between States* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1963), pp. 62–91.

Finally, Murray's conception of cultural internationalism was elitist, Eurocentric, and paternalistic. It ran in the face of the egalitarian, multicultural, and democratic forces then gathering pace. The resulting forms of cultural internationalism after World War Two were very different to those envisaged by Murray – as exhibited by the stark contrast between UNESCO and the ICIC. Yet Murray is not only an important figure historically for the pioneering role he played in the institutionalisation of international cooperation in the cultural and educational fields. He also championed a series of practical policies in the area of educational cooperation and exchange the value of which should not be overlooked in thinking about international peace and fraternity today.