Retreat from the Global?
European Unity and British Progressive Intellectuals, 1930-1945

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Introduction[1]

As soon as the idea of sovereignty emerged as the organising principle of the European political order during the 16th and 17th century, several political and legal theorists started grappling with its wider implications. For all its strengths, they realised that a system based on fully independent units could hardly provide a remedy to international anarchy. In the words of Thomas Hobbes, a "constant Peace" between two or more nations was out of question: "mutual fear may keep them quiet for a time, but upon every visible advantage they will invade one another."[2]

British thinkers offered a distinct contribution to this debate by envisaging a variety of arrangements aimed at restraining the power of individual states. Charting the evolving attitudes towards supranationalism held by the British peace movement, historian Martin Ceadel claimed that five different positions can be identified: the belief in international society, internationalism, confederalism, federalism and advocacy of a super-state. Proponents of the first two approaches maintained that states must act in accordance with certain norms, either due to social obligations or to a supposedly natural harmony of interests between them. Limitations of sovereignty, however, are meant to be minor, reversible and self-imposed. On the contrary, confederalists, federalists and advocates of a super-state alike made a case for constraints being placed by some external authority, even though they disagreed on which and how many state prerogatives are to be surrendered. According to Ceadel, it was not until 1914 that the British peace movement converted to confederalism, rallying behind the League of Nations after the First World War. Federalism gained currency between the late 1930s and the mid-1950 but the peace movement's commitment to supranationalism vanished

in the following decade as the unfolding of the Cold War dashed hopes for a structural reform of the international order.[3]

Largely following Caedel's periodisation, this article sets out to explore how four left-wing intellectuals – Henry Noel Brailsford, G.D.H. Cole, Kingsley Martin and Leonard Woolf – came to embrace European federalism during the Thirties. Their tenets can be broadly defined as socialist. Their understanding of international affairs, though, was largely informed by the British progressive tradition, and therefore 'progressive' may be a more accurate term to categorise their views.[4]

Even within the British context, these four figures were far from alone in applying the language of federalism to international politics. Ideas of federation can be traced back to nineteenth-century discourses about the future of the Empire and, perhaps more straightforwardly, to the Round Table movement, whose members advocated the establishment of an imperial federation in place of traditional colonial rule.[5] Nor were Brailsford, Cole, Martin and Woolf the only progressives to argue for a radical rethink of the dominant approaches to international relations: from David Mitrany's 'functionalism' to E. H. Carr's alleged 'realism', a variety of competing paradigms developed during the interwar years, and fuelled an ongoing debate about the nature of the international system that, for its breadth and depth, cannot be adequately summarised here.[6]

These four authors, however, provided a distinct and substantive contribution to this larger conversation. To begin with, from a theoretical perspective, they broadened the notion of federalism by incorporating the idea of a reorganisation of the international economic system into it. Drawing on Hobson's theory of imperialism as well as on the more recent Marxist works of John Strachey and Harold J. Laski, these

intellectuals contended that, in the age of monopoly capitalism, big business had a firm grip on the political class and used state power to pursue a relentless quest for new markets which exacerbated international tensions.[7] By the same token, they thought that any covenant leaving untrammelled laissez-faire in place within the economic sphere would fail to ensure a lasting peace. Unlike other non-socialist defenders of the League of Nations, such as Robert Cecil, they insisted that legal guarantees would not suffice to ensure a workable international system under capitalism, for these would sooner or later be jettisoned by the ruling class to serve the interests of industrialists and financers.[8] In fact, a strong call for a transformation of both the domestic and the international environment permeates their writings: they believed – as another distinguished progressive, Bertrand Russell, put it in 1934 – that "complete anarchy is even more dangerous as between highly organised nations than as between individuals within a nation."[9] Planning – to be carried out at national as well as at supranational level, building on the Soviet experience – was the alternative method of running the economy that they envisaged, and almost uncritically endorsed.[10]

Secondly, unlike other federalists like Lionel Curtis, these authors did not see the British Empire as a potential vehicle for a future federal order based on egalitarian and democratic principles.[11] Rather, their work has a sharply anti-imperialist streak, which sometimes drew strength from first-hand experiences abroad: it is no accident, for instance, that Woolf became hostile to colonial rule while being employed as a civil servant in Ceylon, between and 1904 and 1911, and that Brailsford's commitment to Indian independence was bolstered by a seven-week visit of the country in 1930.[12] Dislike for Empire had serious implications for the type of federation that these authors advocated. If it was unreasonable to expect that the British Empire would evolve into a

federal union of self-governing states, due to the inherently exploitative character of imperial control, then Britain's best hope − so the argument runs − was to create a federation in Europe and join it. By and large, Brailsford, Cole, Martin and Woolf agreed that Western European countries, with their long-standing democratic traditions and fully developed industrial economies, provided fertile ground for a political and economic integration with Britain. Between 1930 and 1939, these authors outlined different federal schemes which, in their view, would ensure economic prosperity and consolidate peace, provided that socialist parties could resist the mounting tide of fascism and gain power to implement them. After 1939, they recast European unity as a key war aim to dispel fears of British decline and of a new Treaty of Versailles imposed upon the vanquished, although their benevolent attitude towards Soviet foreign policy and their ambiguous view of the role of small nations within a federated Europe led them to miscalculate about the chances of success of their vision.

Obviously, in order to properly assess the significance of these ideas, it is essential to consider the circumstances under which they originated. British international thinkers who lived between 1930 and 1945 were forced to question the conventional wisdom of their times. Going through a period that has been fairly compared to a "dark valley"[13], they faced two major, overriding historical developments: first, the decay of nineteenth-century free market capitalism whose golden age came to an end in 1914 and whose foundations were further eroded by the Great Slump; second, the breakdown of the League of Nations, as its members' failure to cope with the Japanese invasion of Manchuria, Italy's aggression against Abyssinia and, above all, Hitler's reckless *Machtpolitik* destroyed the credibility of collective security.[14] It is under these circumstances that British progressives looked for a single

solution to what E. H. Carr would famously call "the two scourges": mass unemployment and war.[15] The fact that laissez-faire capitalism and the League plunged into crisis almost at the same time played a major role in making European unity so appealing to them. It is perhaps ironic that, during years marked by the early emergence of globalism as a new strand of international thinking[16], these intellectuals discovered the virtues of regionalism: compared to far-reaching visions of a world Commonwealth, such as those sketched out by Lord Lothian and Curtis[17], their schemes of international governance were less grandiose in size but more ambitious in purpose, as they assumed that, under British leadership, new political and economic institutions for Europe as a whole would be set up. In this sense, their position may be described as a tactical retreat from the utopia of a global order – which they saw as premature, albeit certainly desirable in the long run – in favour of a geographically circumscribed but deeper (and supranational) form of integration that could lay down more robust foundations for the former.

It is finally worth stressing that the path through which Brailsford, Cole, Martin and Woolf espoused the cause of European unity is very similar. This, arguably, reflects the influence that they exerted on each other. The extent to which their lives were interwoven is indeed revealing. Martin, a journalist and former teaching assistant at the London School of Economics, co-founded *The Political Quarterly* with Woolf in 1930, and was appointed editor of *The New Statesman* one year later. In his memoirs, he recalled that Woolf had also "a powerful influence on the policy and character" of the latter journal and became "a Father Figure" for him while Henry Noel Brailsford turned out to be his "closest journalistic companion."[18] The relationship the three had with Cole was perhaps more lukewarm but Cole's ascendancy over them should not be

underestimated.[19] Furthermore, they all came from the Labour Left's interwar milieu: they were regular contributors to the New Fabian Research Bureau (NFRB), joined or had friendly contacts with the revived Socialist League at least in its early days (1932-1933) and had direct access to the Left Book Club, whose nearly 60,000 members provided a remarkable audience.[20] Martin's friendship with Laski, who was his mentor at the LSE and set up the Club along with Victor Gollancz and Strachey, proved a valuable asset for the group: Gollancz's was the publishing house which Brailsford, Cole, Martin and Woolf worked with more frequently.[21] The fact that such a closely knit group of intellectuals managed to reach a high level of consensus on several issues, including the desirability of a European federation, is therefore neither accidental nor entirely surprising. Their approach, however, stands out as more consistently articulated than other progressives' interested in international politics in the same period, which explains the decision to focus on them instead of covering a wider spectrum of figures from the same milieu.

Reinventing the League, 1930-1938 ca

Initially, plans for promoting European unity generated little enthusiasm among most left-wing intellectuals and a quick look at the views expressed on *The New Statesman* during the late 1920s and early 1930s confirm this. In fact, suspicion and scepticism surrounded federal schemes as well as regional cooperation in general. Most notably, Sisley Huddleston – a prominent commentator on foreign affairs based in Paris – warned against "the bargainings and groupings which are contrary to the spirit of the League"[22], including the formation of a "European *bloc*" which may provoke "the

creation of other Continental *blocs*" and of Asiatic, American and British ones.[23] Furthermore, as he dismissed the "United States of Europe" as a "an excellent phrase which can be twisted to mean anything", Huddleston urged the second Labour Government not to "put the cart before the horse, and imagine that a general proclamation will produce a condition of affairs which is belied by a hundred specific national rivalries, jealousies, ambitions, fears, and animosities."[24] In his view, a "diminished League, without juridic authority, without adequate powers, were it independent from the League" would be of no avail: at best, a "European section of the League" would enable "regional groups […] to deal with their own social problems" provided the latter would remain firmly under the authority of the Geneva organisation.[25] Despite this concession, Huddleston repeatedly dismissed federal proposals as "dangerous" forms of "rhetorical diplomacy"[26] and "fashionable babble."[27] One of his favourite targets was the Briand Plan, which the editor of the *New Statesman* Charles Mostyn Lloyd poked fun at for not committing "anybody to anything, except, of course, to belief in moral unity" and for reaffirming "the everlasting principles of 1919."[28] The same vein of cynicism surfaced in other pieces of commentary: for example, the French former Prime Minister Édouard Herriot's plea for a European federation was denounced as "a stab in the back for the League which as universal organism in embryo is the only hope for humanity", and brushed off as "old mental furniture" which had been "re-upholstered so as to give the illusion that it is up to date and expresses the spirit of the age."[29] Latent Francophobia, however, was not the only source of opposition to enhanced European cooperation. Scratching beneath the surface, deeper concerns about Britain's standing as a world power can be detected. Tellingly, Huddleston laughed at the idea that the globe could be arranged "neatly and

diagrammatically in continents" as if Britain had "closer spiritual affinities with (say) Bulgaria than with Canada", hence showing his attachment to the Commonwealth.[30] Lloyd spelt out the dilemma posed by French diplomacy in unambiguous terms: by endorsing Briand's initiative, the British would find themselves with their hands "tied and one eye cocked outside in a way that would embarrass ourselves and others, and make us a perpetual solvent of the cohesion of Europe"; yet, by staying out, European unity "would be patently and seriously weakened."[31] To sum up, establishing a European federation would endanger not only the League's framework but also Britain's imperial commitments, a move that some *New Statesman* contributors saw as unnecessary – and even unwelcome.[32]

Under Martin's editorship the mood began to change as the shortcomings of the existing League became more evident and the ascendancy of nineteenth-century economic liberalism started to fade. To be sure, neither Woolf nor Brailsford – both of whom had drawn up blueprints for an international authority in 1917-1918, and had probably exerted a limited but not insignificant influence over the Paris Peace Conference of 1919– waited until the Thirties to express strong reservations about the post-war settlement.[33] Woolf lamented that the League, far from engaging with self-determination outside Europe, tolerated "national possession, ownership, or exploitation" in the Third World.[34] In addition to this, Brailsford – anticipating one of his favourite themes during the following decade – criticised the formalistic and legalistic character of the League, "its ignoring of the economic factor and its acceptance of the myth of the sovereign national state."[35] Even though he subsequently came to appreciate some of the initiatives taken in Geneva, he insisted that arbitration

and disarmament would not "solve the problem of war until we grapple with economic imperialism."[36]

The growing perception that the League was conservative in purpose weakened the rationale for the Labour's pro-League policy pursued in the 1920s.[37] At first, however, British progressives longed for its reform, rather than for its dissolution and replacement. In 1930 Woolf still argued that the League, despite its flaws, was "a visible rallying point and focus of internationalism and international organisation" with good chances of success, as long as an adequate "communal political psychology" took root: Woolf's thesis rested upon the assumption that individual states were to blame for the lack of progress in establishing a workable international government.[38] Three years later, however, he had to admit that the "whole system of international co-operation and pacific settlement" was "in the utmost jeopardy."[39] In his view, the rise of Hitler, the invasion of Manchuria and Britain's disengagement with continental affairs originated mainly from the lack of a general disarmament policy.[40] The ultimate responsibility for the decline of the League, therefore, lay with "the governments of the Great Powers and to the peoples who send nationalist governments to Geneva."[41] Nevertheless, Woolf also stressed that the League had been undermined by economic turmoil, and held that the problem of peace required a twofold solution: "(1) an ordered transition from the individualist capitalist economic system to some form of communal or socialist economic system; (2) the evolution of an ordered international system regulating the relations between States and preventing war."[42] Moreover, a future Labour government could not neglect the fact that fascist states were sabotaging the League from within, by disregarding its provisions: a "more militant policy" was therefore necessary to "use the League itself as an instrument against Fascist militarism."[43] Woolf suggested that

Germany might be pressured by a Labour government "to comply with its obligations under the Covenant or openly to repudiate them", being forced to leave the organisation.[44] In Woolf's view, this would not necessarily be a negative outcome since "a League, purged of militarist and Fascist states, composed of democratic and socialist governments, determined by every means in their power to prevent war, would be a much stronger instrument for peace and civilisation than the half-sham League which we have today."[45] Woolf's argument is especially interesting because, for the first time, he hinted at the possibility of a League with a reduced membership.[46]

According to Brailsford, however, expelling fascist powers from the League was not enough for the machinery of the latter was fundamentally inadequate. In a sombre picture painted in 1933, he proclaimed that "the League may, if it cares to exert its power, prevent war or stop it, but it cannot cure the political or economic maladjustment that drives nations to war."[47] In fact, "the existence of the League may be a positive mischief if it blinds the mass of mankind to the fact that the real work for the banishment of war has yet to be done. And that may be our case to-day."[48] Here an important difference can be spotted. While Woolf understood war as a complex and multifaceted process, whose key cause was social psychology, Brailsford saw it as a direct consequence of capitalism, and therefore dismissed the idea that federal unions between non-socialist states could bring about peace. By the same token, he held that a domestic transition to socialism was a necessary precondition for a successful reform of the international system.[49] On these premises, Brailsford criticised the Labour Party for failing to acknowledge that "in the world of to-day peace can be assured and disarmament effected without any changes in its social and economic structure."[50] Brailsford's unmitigated hostility to state sovereignty as a capitalist deceit lies at the

core of his pamphlet *If We Want Peace* (1932) as well as of his lengthier book *Property or Peace?* (1934). Despite being originally conceived as "the international analogue of the obsolete police state of the eighteenth century", Brailsford conceded that the League had gradually undertaken new tasks, becoming the embryo of "an organised International Society" and developing "organs of the social consciousness to which the Sovereign State must bow."[51] Nonetheless, he added that a full transition to a co-operative international order was impossible until the notion of sovereignty was fully transcended. In the long run, only a world federation based on "the abandonment of sovereignty in all matters of common concern" and centralised control over armaments as well as production would be compatible with that "vision."[52]

Among British progressives, Brailsford was arguably the most consistent in using the language and the concepts of federalism to highlight the inadequacy of the League. It was not, however, the only one. Although Cole wrote mostly on international economics in this period, several of his writings pointed to the danger that unrestrained national planning could be used to curtail international trade and promote economic nationalism.[53] In turn, these concerns led Cole to underscore the potentially destructive role of unfettered sovereignty during the Depression. "The fundamental weakness of the League of Nations, as it exists at present" he wrote in 1933, in a book co-authored with his wife Margaret "is that it is based upon a full recognition of the absolute independence and sovereignty of the States composing it, or at any rate of the Great Powers which in practice dominate its activities."[54] Cole was adamant about the necessity of lying down different foundations for an effective international governance: "There is in the last resort no halfway house between absolute sovereignty and the recognition of a supra-national authority with the right to issue decisions upon which

individual nations are under an obligation to act […]. As long as States continue to insist upon State sovereignty they cannot agree to the creation of a super-State."[55] In the meantime, he urged socialists to campaign for pacifism and internationalism, in the hope that an ever-increasing number of countries would refuse to use force to settle their disputes. Cole also believed that conditions were ripe for a "a European federation powerful enough to take over from the separate States the administration of many vital services, while leaving to each individual country a degree of autonomy amply sufficient to safeguard its special national needs."[56] He criticised the Briand Plan for prioritising political over economic cooperation but, like Brailsford, he maintained that a shift in domestic public opinion was essential: "if Socialism is able peaceably to conquer power in each of the great States of Europe, it will be possible for Socialist Governments to turn the League of Nations from what it is now into an effective organ of collaboration, or to create within it a real European union having this object."[57] The relationship between a future European federation and the League was not clearly spelt out but the fact that Cole's book was highly praised by Martin as "authoritative, lucid, and objective" suggests that, within the progressive intelligentsia, a more positive attitude towards European unity was emerging.[58]

Italy's invasion of Ethiopia, in late 1935, further discredited the League as Britain's and France's lack of resolve in deterring Mussolini demonstrated that sanctions could easily fall flat. Moreover, the leaking of the Hoare-Laval Pact, by which the two countries acquiesced to Italy's demands, proved that the Conservative-led National Government was only formally committed to collective security.[59] The outcome of the crisis outraged progressives who felt themselves "spectators and participants in a long drawn-out struggle between two different methods of organizing

relations between states, the method of violence and war and the method of settlement and agreement."[60] Their judgment was drastic: even the usually prudent Woolf concluded that the League had been "killed" by the great powers' refusal to carry out their obligation under the Covenant.[61] The only option left to socialists, therefore, was to promote sub-groupings which could successfully halt fascist aggression. According to Wolf, "an alliance of France, Britain, and Russia against Germany, Japan, and probably Italy" was the only viable alternative to capitulation.[62] This policy, in order to succeed, had to be "prepared to satisfy all legitimate grievances by fascist states, but also to oppose them in any attack": it therefore needed to be backed up with rearmament if necessary.[63] Then, in the medium term, this anti-fascist "peace front" could evolve into "the nucleus of a resurrected League", as long as the great powers managed to regain the trust of the small states: "the time may come again in which the wider security system of the League can be re-established. But for the moment, if we wish to prolong the breathing space and lay the foundations of peace, we must begin by basing peace and security upon guarantees of those Powers which alone can be expected to make them effective."[64]

Martin insisted on the importance of organising the new grouping as a federation from the outset, for the League had to be "revived not only as a genuine instrument for peace, but also as an organ for removing the causes of war."[65] Writing on recent developments in airpower, he expressed his wish to see national forces abolished, civil aviation turned into "a world public service", and peace kept "by an international authority."[66] Nonetheless, similarly to Brailsford, he thought that "no super-national authority to control and international police force" could be created "without a revolution in thought and social structure in every capitalist country."[67] By 1936, Martin

was convinced that a narrower League was inevitable: "If there ever is peace in the world it will be achieved by a closer union of States whose Governments believe in their own profession", overcoming the framework of a "a loose confederation of Sovereign States, each pursuing its own interests, without any close ties of economic or political co-operation."[68] Establishing "an honest League of like-minded States, within the present League of quarrelling sovereignties" was a desirable aim for Labour in power, although the long-term objective that he set was for more ambitious: "Just as the federated Sovereign States of America were forced by threat to their existence to become the United States of America, so some day, sooner or later, probably not until their economic basis is changed, the sovereign States of Europe, if they are not to go down together in universal ruin, will have to become the United States of Europe."[69]

The idea of a new League within the League was articulated in greater detail by Brailsford, whose retrospective assessment of the chances of success of the Geneva organisation had become increasingly severe, especially after the Spanish civil war exposed the hypocrisy of non-intervention as practiced by the British National Government.[70] Having become convinced that "the League was lamed in its cradle by the character of the peace settlement which drove America into isolation, by the exclusion of Germany and by the several alliances which the French contracted", Brailsford claimed that disentangling it from powerful vested interests had been impossible, and under a right-wing Franco-British leadership it was bound to remain "an alliance to maintain the balance of power and the present situation of economic opportunity."[71] Pushing Woolf's and Martin's arguments a bit further, he even recommended the Labour Party to pursue a policy of "vigilant detachment" from the existing League until in opposition and then build a "Federation of Socialist and like-

minded States" with the USSR as chief partner when in power.[72] Brailsford further developed his thesis in *Towards a New League* (1936), where he liquated the existing League as a "functionless fifth wheel on the chariot of history that spun ineffective in the air" and restated his previous arguments in favour of a federal solution.[73] He clarified that any upcoming grouping could not "be upon a universal scale. It will have to start modestly, among like-minded States and it must content itself with a limited geographical area" but be equipped with wide economic powers.[74] This "Inner League", like to the one envisaged by Woolf, would "enter the field of reality from the moment that a victory of the Left in our own country made it possible to group Britain with France and the Soviet Union."[75] Brailsford's confidence in France as a reliable ally was presumably bolstered by the success of the Popular Front in 1936, which many progressive intellectuals saw as a breakthrough for socialism.[76] In the following two years, Cole, Brailsford and Martin all toyed with the project of a British People's Front capable of defeating the National Government at the polls, achieving power and strengthening ties with the Soviet Union.[77]

Turning Europe Upside Down, 1939-1945 ca

Since the early 1930s, progressives had been wishing that the peace movement could 'defeat fascism without war', to use Martin's recurring formula.[78] In 1938-39, however, the issue of rearmament came close to driving a wedge between those, like Woolf, who never gave much credit to a policy of disarmament and unilateral withdrawal from world affairs and those, like Martin, who feared that militarisation could pave the way for an authoritarian government in Britain and therefore did not

write off alternative courses of action, such as a seeking a diplomatic settlement with Germany which would also cover colonial matters.[79] It is no accident that the *New Statesman and Nation*'s reaction to the Munich agreement was a mixture of "immense relief" for the disaster averted and "anxiety" for the fate of the crippled Czech state, left to the mercy of German troops.[80]

Non-military options were soon to be superseded by events. In an article published about four months before the invasion of Poland, Martin suggested that a new general war was only a matter of time as society had already "fallen into the clutches of people who believe in war as an instrument of policy and can only think of progress in terms of conquest."[81] To his mind, the roots of the disaster dated back to 1918-1919 when Britain, France and Germany had not emulated Russia in abandoning capitalism: "The task was to build an international society, and that meant to achieve Socialism within the great States, to develop the League, since that was the only instrument to hand, and to educate the public into international habits of thought and inoculate it against national propaganda. All these things had to be done together."[82] For the future, he stressed once again that "the only hope does rest in international Socialist federation", and that sticking to a "rational goal" would help people to "keep their eyes fixed on the practical means for its realisation" while going through the ordeal of war.[83] As the conflict finally broke out, Martin insisted that *The New Statesman and Nation*, whom he still edited, would aim at reaching out to "people who want to go on thinking during the war and in particular will want to think of the future."[84] This involved a careful examination of war aims, which could not entail the restoration of the *status quo ante*: "There is, as we have seen in recent years, no possible solution of the problems of Europe on the basis of strategic frontiers, economic self-sufficiency, customs barriers

and national armaments; the only hope lies in a federal solution. We must not talk of national disarmament, but of a central police force. We must not talk of a League of sovereign nations, but of economic institutions devised for the public service of Europe; we must talk not of self-determination, but of a federal government and cultural freedom for the various people."[85] Whatever compromises a new peace settlement would require, the creation of an International Authority which, "groping, pioneering, experimenting" would "have the power to lead us all in the direction of a planned international economy" was indispensable.[86] Arguably, Martin's wholehearted espousal of federalism was also driven by the conviction that most ordinary Germans would not fight to the last ditch, and a British endorsement of a post-war Federal Europe could undermine domestic support for the Nazis.[87] The message certainly resonated with the leader of the Labour Party, Clement Attlee, who, in November 1939, famously declared that "Europe must federate or perish", within a speech whose language and key arguments were clearly informed by the progressives' interpretation of the world crisis.[88]

Progressives seemed to agree that war, for all its sheer destruction and violence, could at least severe ties with the old order, both in domestic and international affairs. Brailsford was the most fervent supporter of this approach as he warned that, without a commitment to the establishment of a European federation "including the German people liberated by revolution in the hour of defeat", Britain would be involved "in yet another struggle for imperial power, and another effort to fetter and dismember the German nation." [89] In his view, "creating at least the nucleus of a Federal Union in Europe" outstripped "self-preservation" as the paramount war aim for the United Kingdom. [90] In a pamphlet written in 1939, he even sketched out the basic institutional

framework for the future federation, whose main features would be monopoly over defence, a dedicated international civil service to administer former colonies and extensive powers to regulate and manage all sectors of the economy, including the one to "to legislate by a majority vote than can over-ride the egoism of sectional and anti-social interests."[91] Brailsford envisaged "a council devoted to planning" with the power of submitting legislation to a Congress composed of two chambers, a Senate whose members were to be appointed by national governments and a "popular House" democratically and directly elected.[92] A Federal Court would also be set up, although Brailsford, influenced by the American experience, warned against the dangers of a "too rigid Constitution and an omnipotent Supreme court."[93] Resuming Woolf's original idea, he claimed that "the Federation must reserve the right to suspend or to expel a Member-State for any grave or repeated offence against the Constitution."[94] Externally, a European Federation would "cultivate close and cordial co-operation both with the U.S.A. and the U.S.S.R."[95] Interestingly, by late 1939, Brailsford no longer held that a domestic transition to socialism was a necessary step to achieve this type of federation: in retrospect, he found his previous position "too pessimistic" and noted that some federalist proposals had already "made progress, even among conservatives."[96] Besides that, he was more positive about London maintaining a close partnership with Washington: although he doubted that the United States would ever join the war, due to a non-interventionist public opinion and opposition from Congress, he speculated that, through American financial aid, Britain could still "take the offensive" and liberate Europe from Nazi occupation.[97] Nevertheless, in his view, special relationships were no substitute for federal commitments. As a matter of fact, he regarded any loose Anglo-American union or, even worse, a reformed Commonwealth as grossly inadequate

frameworks for the post-war order: "The New Community cannot dispense with some central representative organ which deliberates and decides."[98]

Woolf's and Cole's approach to European unity was less systematic than Brailsford's, albeit no less emotional and occasionally spirited. On the one hand, Woolf was busy defending the legacy of the League from its detractors, including E. H. Carr, who too easily dismissed it as "the casual failure of an academic dream brought up with a jolt against the hard facts of life."[99] On the other hand, he continued to stress that "international social-democracy", namely the "equitable control and distribution of wealth between the communities or states just as between individuals, and a real international control of the potentially devastating power now in the hands of national states and their governments" was still "the corollary of national social-democracy".[100] Under these premises, he concluded that "while it might be possible to develop the federal system for parts of Europe, it might at the same time be necessary to combine it with some kind of League system for the whole."[101] The key obstacle, however, was neither economic nor political: federalists could not "walk round an overwhelming crux by ignoring the psychology of nationalism which is the outward and visible sign of state sovereignty."[102] Compared to other progressives – with the notable exception of Mitrany –, Woolf was quite pessimistic about the chances of making a "colossal leap forward" in the immediate post-war period due to the resilience of nationalist feelings, and predicted that "federal unions" would remain "small and limited."[103] In the long-run, however, economics would pull "towards international organisation, to world planning of production and distribution"[104], and his attitude towards regional groupings in Europe under a renewed League system remained generally favourable until the end of the war.[105]

Cole's federalism was perhaps more enthusiastic but also more erratic throughout this period. In 1939-40, his views closely resembled those of Brailsford, Martin and Woolf. Like them, he was concerned that the British would be perceived as "the champions of decaying capitalism against the new forces of the twentieth century", had they stood for the established social order and for the Empire.[106] Yet he was also confident that, by fighting for a "federal solution" rather than for restoring "the 'balance of power' in Europe", Britain would regain prestige.[107] Unlike the League of Nations, which was too extensive" and not "intensive" enough, Cole predicted that the future "New League" would be equipped with a central authority having the power to "override State law" and be open to all states from "Western and Central Europe."[108] A European bloc would then be able to reach an "agreement" with the United States, the Soviet Union and Japan.[109] He was also adamant in linking successful national planning to world peace, and on this point his opinions continued to fit the progressive mainstream.[110]

Nevertheless, following the Nazi invasion of the USSR in August 1941, Cole began to display – to put it mildly – a "sympathetic tolerance" for Soviet territorial claims over Eastern Europe.[111] Having become convinced that, by joining the Grand Alliance, the USSR would play a major role in reshaping in the international order and enhance the European socialists' chances of success, he went so far to say that he would "much sooner see the Soviet Union, even with its policy unchanged, dominant over *all* Europe, including Great Britain, than see an attempt to restore the pre-war States to their futile and uncreative independence and their petty economic nationalism under capitalist domination. Much better to be ruled by Stalin than by the restrictive and monopolistic cliques which dominate Western capitalism."[112]

At one level, Cole's remarks demonstrated little knowledge of and strong prejudices against Eastern Europeans and were met with criticism from a few other socialist authors.[113] Yet they also highlighted two major weaknesses in the progressives' understanding of international politics and conception of European unity – weaknesses that had been latent before 1939 but which the war fatally exposed. The first was the naïve view of the Soviet Union as an advocate and practitioner of multilateralism in international affairs – an attitude that had been certainly strengthened by Stalin's acceptance of collective security and the Comintern's endorsement of Popular Fronts in the crucial period 1934-38. By welcoming the Soviet occupation of Eastern Europe, Cole thought this would not entail the imposition of Soviet institutions on those territories but would instead pave the ground for supranational governance, since the creation of one or more European federations would fulfil Soviet security needs in the region.[114] Even Woolf, who was far from blind to the deeply authoritarian character of the Soviet regime, genuinely believed that the USSR would agree to submit itself to an "International Economic Commission with very extensive powers" entrusted with the task of carrying out the reconstruction of Continental Europe.[115] Not even after the Potsdam conference would this benevolent interpretation of Soviet foreign policy be entirely abandoned.[116] The second weakness was a lingering ambiguity about the role of small powers, and minorities more generally, in the post-war settlement. Woolf and Brailsford, for all their criticism of absolute sovereignty, were not insensitive to claims of self-determination and feared that a world order dominated by great powers, other than setting the stage for a new war, would fail to safeguard the legitimate rights of small nations and minorities.[117] On the other hand, Cole regarded national self-determination in the political realm as obsolete and therefore opposed the restoration of

state structures that the Nazi occupation had swept away.[118] At a deeper level, one could argue that, whereas Woolf, Brailsford and probably even Martin expected the European federation to be established on a voluntary basis, Cole saw it almost as historically inevitable, and speculated that the birth of a European bloc would put Britain in an ideal position to mediate between the United States and the Soviet Union.[119] If anything, this conceptual confusion alone reveals how supple and easy to bend the notion of 'federation' had become.

These differences, however, were made practically irrelevant by wartime developments. In April 1944, Martin still expressed confidence that "a new type of federalism", combining the Western "tradition of freedom" with the "modern efficiency of Soviet socialism", could thrive in Europe after Britain and the USSR had found "common ground."[120] But in mid-1945 much of his optimism about the maintenance of a smooth and constructive relationship between the USSR and the West had vanished.[121] In fact, one of the worst nightmares of the progressives – a Europe "divided sharply into two spheres of interest, one dependent on Moscow, the other on Washington and London"[122] – began to unfold. Under this scenario, not only the "bisection" of the Continent would nip the European federation in the bud but Britain ran the danger of becoming a satellite of the United States as Anglo-American cooperation could degenerate into a "new form of imperialism."[123] Interestingly, during the last two years of the war, 'European federation' came to symbolise a supranational system of Continental governance which would *not* involve the permanent occupation or the dismemberment of Germany. Thus, the only viable solution to the German problem – Brailsford held – lay in a supranational arrangement, in conjunction with the socialisation and internationalisation of Germany's heavy industries.[124] Cole, fearing a

punitive peace treaty, also recommended the internationalisation of the Ruhr as this would prevent Germany from "re-arming for a new world war", although he remained silent about the broader framework under which this could happen.[125] Woolf similarly pointed out the need not to exclude the vanquished from the future security system, highlighting the danger that the United Nations could become a self-appointed "exclusive club of peace-loving states or 'good boys' with all the incorrigibly 'bad boys' outside the pale" – a conception that could foster further divisions and hostility.[126] However, as the Cold War loomed, European unity gradually lost impetus among most progressives, despite their enduring refusal to support a peace settlement similar to Versailles'. This presumably reflected a wider disenchantment with an international setting which, due to the mounting tensions between East and West, left little room for the far-fetched schemes of international governance that these thinkers had contributed to draft during the previous years.[127]

Conclusion

Peter Wilson convincingly argued that a 'New Europe' debate took place in Britain between 1941 and 1944 as a wide-ranging group of thinkers discussed the repercussions of the war on the Continent, the role of the United Kingdom in the forthcoming reconstruction, the position of Germany and the most desirable institutional framework for a fair and sustainable European order.[128] Although the outbreak of the conflict certainly made some of these issues more compelling, this article has pointed out that the progressives' fascination with European unity dated back to the early 1930s, when the dual crisis of laissez-faire capitalism and of the League of Nations shook the

foundations of their worldview. Brailsford, Cole, Martin and Woolf found, or hoped to find, an antidote to chaos, decaying capitalism, resurgent nationalism, fascism, imperialism, and war in regional integration, and projected their ideals onto an imagined community called European federation. A heavily emotional charge is present in their writings, sometimes at expense of analytical clarity. Mark Gilbert is certainly right, therefore, in contending that most left-wing intellectuals "did not so much to articulate a sophisticated understanding of how Europe might be organized as express a passionate conviction that unity in a federal and socialist state was *the only way to stave off disaster*."[129]

Nor was this the only limitation in their contributions. As this article has pointed out, progressives severely misunderstood Soviet foreign policy and were remarkably ambiguous about the fate of once-independent states in Eastern Europe under the new federal system, wavering between respect for the principle of national self-determination and ruthless *Realpolitik*. Furthermore, one can argue, in retrospect, that their penchant for sweeping solutions led them to set out their proposals in a way that could hardly win over sceptics from the moderate Left. In 1945, the kind of European unity cheered by the progressives required a swift rehabilitation of Germany as a unitary state, a departure from the great power politics underpinning the Grand Alliance and a shift in priorities from the Commonwealth to Continental affairs. None of these developments – as Michael Newman convincingly argued – were seen by the Labour Party leadership as particularly desirable, casting pro-European voices into wilderness.[130] By presenting European unity as a radical break with the past rather a sober and pragmatic undertaking in line with British national interest, progressives probably did more harm than good to the cause they were championing.

The value of their work, however, lies elsewhere. Theoretically, Brailsford, Cole, Martin, and Woolf challenged the heavily legalistic approach to international security of early IR theorists and practitioners such as the members of the Bryce Group as well as the moralistic idealism *à la* Alfred Zimmern.[131] Although their understanding of economics was often rudimentary and based on a second-hand knowledge of Marxism, the efforts made by the progressives to grasp how economic relations affected the functioning of the international system were genuine – and pioneering. By rejecting a formal conception of sovereignty and delving into the interplay between economic and political factors in international politics, they increased the range of issues and phenomena which international relations theory is supposed to engage with and explain.[132] The fact that the debate on the nexus between capitalism and war is now regarded as "the major split on the left in the English-speaking world" during the interwar period is revealing about the impact of their thinking.[133]

Furthermore, historically, their reflections marked a significant shift in the focus of discourses about Britain as an international actor, as these had been previously monopolised by advocates of a more or less reformed British Empire and unflinching defenders of the League. Progressives still felt strongly about the need for some degree of global governance, and by and large did not see global and regional cooperation as mutually exclusive.[134] However, by embracing a nuanced form of regionalism and tentatively drawing a path towards a commitment to Europe by their country, they boldly addressed some of the awkward dilemmas that British policy-makers and public intellectuals faced after the end of the Second World War, including the status of Britain within a bi-polar world.[135] Their answer was overoptimistic, as progressives seriously underestimated the resilience of pre-war state structures after 1945, and, at times,

surprisingly neglectful of the constraints under which politicians – socialist included – operated. Yet these authors deserve some credit for not succumbing to pessimism and for articulating an original, dynamic, and not entirely unrealistic set of responses to the collapse of the global order that they witnessed. Last but not least, one could certainly praise, in retrospect, their steadfast allegiance to peace and internationalism. Their retreat from the global was, after all, inspired by the will to safeguard those very values that the League of Nations, albeit imperfectly, had sought to affirm.

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[1] The author is deeply grateful to two anonymous reviewers for their excellent feedback.

[2] Thomas Hobbes, 'A Dialogue between a Philosopher and a Student, of the Common-Laws of England' (1st ed. 1681), in Alain Cromartie and Quentin Skinner (eds.), *Thomas Hobbes, Writings on Common Law and Hereditary Right* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2005), 12.

[3] See Martin Ceadel, 'Supranationalism in the British Peace Movement during the Early Twentieth Century', in Andrea Bosco (ed.), *The Federal Idea: The History of Federalism from Enlightenment to 1945,* vol. I, (London-New York: Lothian Foundation Press, 1991), 169-192.

[4] So believes Mark F. Gilbert: see Mark F. Gilbert, 'The Sovereign Remedy of European Unity: The Progressive Left and Supranational Government 1935-1945', *International Politics*, 46 (2009), 28-47. For an extensive discussion on British progressivism, see at least David Blaazer, *The Popular Front and the Progressive Tradition: Socialists, Liberals, and the Quest for Unity, 1884-1939* (Cambridge-New York: Cambridge University Press, 1992) and the ground-breaking article by P.F. Clarke, 'The Progressive Movement in England', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 24 (1974), 159-181. Contributions on progressivism in international thought are quite limited, yet Caspar Sylvest, *British Liberal Internationalism, 1880-1930: Making Progress?* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2009) contains many insightful observations.

[5] See Duncan Bell, *The Idea of Greater Britain: Empire and the Future of World Order, 1860-1900* (Princeton-Oxford: Princeton University Press 2007), 93-98: John Kendle, *The Round Table Movement and Imperial Union* (Toronto-Buffalo: University of Toronto Press 1975).

[6] For an overview, see *Thinkers of the Twenty Years' Crisis: Inter-War Idealism Reassessed*, David Long and Peter Wilson (eds.) (Oxford: Clarendon Press 1995); Lucian M. Ashworth, *Creating International Studies: Angell, Mitrany and the Liberal Tradition* (Aldershot: Ashgate 1999).

[7] On Hobson's theory of imperialism and its reception, see David Long, *Towards a New Liberal Internationalism: The International Theory of J. A. Hobson* (Cambridge-New York: Cambridge University Press 1996). On Strachey, see Noel Thompson, *John Strachey: An Intellectual Biography* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan 1993). On Laski, see Michael Newman, *Harold Laski: A Political Biography* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan 1993).

[8] On Cecil, see Gaynor Johnson, *Lord Robert Cecil: Politician and Internationalist* (London-New York: Routledge 2016).

[9] Bertrand Russell, *Freedom and Organization, 1814-1914* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1934), 509.

[10] On the British socialists' fascination for planning during the 1930s, see Bill Jones, *The Russia Complex: The British Labour Party and the Soviet Union* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1977), 11-32; Daniel Ritschel, *The Politics of Planning: The Debate on Economic Planning in Britain in the 1930s* (Oxford-New York: Clarendon Press, 1997), 97-143; Richard Toye, *The Labour Party and the Planned Economy, 1931-1951* (London: The Boydell Press, 2003), 34-86; Paul Flewers, 'The Lure of the Plan: The Impact of the Five-Year Plans in Britain', *Critique: Journal of Socialist Theory*, 36:3 (2008), 343-361.

[11] On the decline of imperial federalism in Britain during the 1930s, see Or Rosenboim, *The Emergence of Globalism: Visions of World Order in Britain and the United States, 1939-1950* (Princeton, Princeton University Press, 2017), esp. 100-103. On the enduring legacy of the imperial paradigm among liberal thinkers, see J. Morefield, *Covenants without Swords: Idealist Liberalism and the Spirit of Empire* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005), esp. 205-230. On Curtis, see Deborah Levin, *From Empire to International Commonwealth: A Biography of Lionel Curtis* (Oxford: Clarendon Press 1996).

[12] See Leonard Woolf, *Growing: An Autobiography of the Years 1904-1911* (London: Hogarth, 1961); Henry Noel Brailsford, *Rebel India* (London: Leonard Stein, 1931).

[13] See Piers Brendon, *The Dark Valley: A Panorama of the 1930s* (London: Jonathan Cape, 2000).

[14] On Britain in the Thirties, see also Julian Symons, *The Thirties: A Dream Revolved* (London: Cresset Press, 1960); Jon Clark, Margot Heinemann, David Margolies, and Carole Snee (eds.), *Culture and Crisis in Britain in the Thirties* (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1979); Allen Thorpe, *Britain in the 1930s: The Deceptive Decade* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1992); Allen Pugh, *'We Danced All Night': A Social History of Britain between the Wars* (London: Bodley Head, 2008); Richard Overy, *The Morbid Age: Britain between the Wars* (London-New York: Allen Lane, 2009). Specifically on British intellectuals during the interwar period, see Noel Gilroy Annan, *Our Age: Portrait of a Generation* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicholson, 1990); Julia Stapleton, *Political Intellectuals and Public Identities in Britain since 1850* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2001), esp. part. 2 and 3.

[15] E. H. Carr, 'The Two Scourges', *Times* (5 December 1940).

[16] On this, see again Rosenboim, *The Emergence of Globalism*, esp. 1-23.

[17] See Philip Henry Kerr*, Pacifism is Not Enough, nor Patriotism Either: Being the Burge Memorial Lecture for the year 1935* (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1935); Lionel Curtis, *Civitas Dei: The Commonwealth of God* (London: Macmillan, 1938).

[18] Kingsley Martin, *Editor: A Volume of Autobiography, 1931-1945* (London: Hutchinson, 1968), 8, 131. See also Kingsley Martin, *Father Figures: A First Volume of Autobiography, 1897-1931* (London: Hutchinson 1966), 159, 188-211; Leonard Woolf, *An Autobiography. Vol. II: 1911-1961* (Oxford: Oxford University Press 1980), 138, 253-254, 340-341, 465-466; C. H. Rolph, *Kingsley: The Life, Letters and Diaries of Kingsley Martin* (London: Gollancz, 1973), 199-201; F. M. Leventhal, 'Leonard Woolf and Kingsley Martin: Creative Tension on the Left', *Albion: A Quarterly Journal Concerned with British Studies*, 24:2, (1992), 279-294.

[19] See Edward Hyams, *The New Statesman: The History of the First Fifty Years, 1913-1963* (London: Longmans, 1963), 112-113; Adrian Smith, *The New Statesman: Portrait of a Political Weekly, 1913-31* (London: Frank Cass, 1996), 7-8. The personal correspondence between Martin and Cole ended only with Cole's death, in 1959, and Martin continued to exchange letters with Cole's wife, Margaret, until 1966 (see Kingsley Martin Archive, University of Sussex, SxMs 11/3/1/45 and SxMs 11/3/1/46).

[20] See Ben Pimlott, *Labour and the Left in the 1930s* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977), 36-37, 41-58, 155-161.

[21] See Kingsley Martin, *Harold Laski (1893-1950): A Biographical Memoir* (London: Gollancz, 1953), esp. 47-75; Isaac Kramnick and Barry Sheerman, *Harold Laski: A Life on the Left* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1993), 253-254, 266-267.

[22] Sisley Huddleston, 'France and Germany', *New Statesman*, 33:852, 24 August 1929, 594.

[23] Sisley Huddleston, 'United States of Europe and the Entente', *New Statesman*, 33:856, 21 September 1929, 701.

[24] Sisley Huddleston, 'U.S.E. and U.S.A.', *The New Statesman*, 33:848, 27 July 1929, 489.

[25] Sisley Huddleston, 'A European Section of the League', *New Statesman*, 35:900, July 26 1930, 494.

[26] Sisley Huddleston, 'European Federation', *New Statesman*, 35:888, 3 May 1930, 109.

[27] Sisley Huddleston, 'The Rhine Regions', *New Statesman*, 35:892, May 31 1930, 238. See also S. Huddleston, *War Unless –* (London: Gollancz, 1933), 146-163 and S. Huddleston, *In My Time: An Observer's Record of War and Peace* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1938), 261-283.

[28] Charles Mostyn Lloyd, 'Mr. Briand Hatches His Egg', *The New Statesman*, 35:891, 24 May 1930, 204.

[29] Unsigned, 'Old Wine and New Bottles', *New Statesman*, 36:924, 10 January 1931, 414-415.

[30] Sisley Huddleston, 'Mr. MacDonald in America', *New Statesman*, 34:861, 26 October 1929, 78.

[31] Lloyd, 'Mr. Briand Hatches His Egg', 204.

[32] Very similar considerations informed the civil service's and the government's negative response to Briand's initiative: see Robert Boyce, 'Britain's First "No" to Europe: Britain and the Briand Plan, 1929-30', *European Studies Review*, 10:1 (1980), 17-45; A. Bosco, 'The British Foreign Office and the Briand Plan' in Antoine Fleury (ed.), *Le Plan Briand d'Union fédérale européenne : Perspectives nationales et*

transnationales, avec documents, (Frankfurt-New York-Paris-Wien: Peter Lang, 1998), 347-358. An interesting comparison can be made with Mitrany's critique of the movement *Paneuropa*, which he dismissed as "a Holy Alliance in defence of the divine rights not of kings, but of the bourgeoisie." [David Mitrany, 'Pan-Europa – A Hope or a Danger?', *The Political Quarterly*, 1:4, October 1930, 471]

[33] See Leonard Woolf, *International Government: Two Reports* (Westminster: Fabian Society, 1916); Henry Noel Brailsford, *A League of Nations* (London: Headley Bros., 1917). For a tentative assessment of Woolf's impact on the Peace conference, see Peter Wilson, *The International Theory of Leonard Woolf: A Study in Twentieth-Century Idealism* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), 55 and Victoria Glendinning, *Leonard Woolf: A Biography* (New York: Free Press, 2009), 209-212.

[34] Leonard Woolf, *Empire and Commerce in Africa: A Study of Economic Imperialism* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1920), 358. On Woolf's anti-imperialism and early criticism of the League, see also Duncan Wilson, *Leonard Woolf: A Political Biography* (London: The Hogarth Press, 1978), 112-118, 134-143; Selma S. Meyerowitz, *Leonard Woolf* (Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1982), 62-81.

[35] Henry Noel Brailsford, *Olives of Endless Age: Being a Study of This Distracted World and Its Need of Unity* (New York-London: Harper & Brothers, 1928), 48. See also F. M. Leventhal, *The Last Dissenter: H. N. Brailsford and His World* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1985), 152-153, 208-210.

[36] H. N. Brailsford, 'Arbitrate or Disarm: A New View of Security', *New Leader*, 12 September 1924, 4.

[37] See Lucian M. Ashworth, 'Democratic Socialism and International Thought in Ian Hall (ed.), *Interwar Britain' in Radicals and Reactionaries in Twentieth-Century International Thought* (Basingstoke-New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), 75-100.

[38] Leonard Woolf, 'From Sarajevo to Geneva', *The Political Quarterly*, 1:2, April 1930, 191, 205.

[39] Leonard Woolf, 'From Geneva to the Next War', *The Political Quarterly*, 4:1, January 1933, 33.

[40] On this point, Woolf's opinion echoed that of his colleague and friend Philip Noel-Baker, who had played a pivotal role in persuading the Labour Party to follow a pro-League policy during the 1920s: see Henry R. Winkler, *Paths Not Taken: British Labour and International Policy in the 1920s* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina, 1994), 7-25; Lucian M. Ashworth, *International Relations and the Labour Party: Intellectuals and Policy Making from 1918-1945* (London-New York: Tauris, 2007), 77-121.

[41] Woolf, 'From Geneva to the Next War', 42. In 1932, reviewing a new book by Norman Angell, Woolf mourned that 'except for a few people in the various countries and in a little corner by the Lake of Geneva, the world acts as though *The Great Illusion* had never been written and the Great War had never been fought. The patriots and the Generals and the Admirals are still all saying everywhere that the only guarantee of national security is that everyone should be stronger than everyone else.' [Leonard Woolf, 'An Angel of Peace', *New Statesman and Nation*, 3:46, 9 January 1932, 43]

[42] Leonard Woolf, 'Labour's Foreign Policy', *The New Political Quarterly*, 4:4, October 1933, 514.

[43] Ibid., 523.

[44] Ibidem.

[45] Ibid., 523-524. Woolf's idea were subsequently discussed within the international section of the NFRB and served as a basis for discussion for two conferences held in February 1934. Some of his ideas informed the pamphlet *Labour's Foreign Policy*, issued in July 1934. See Unsigned, *Labour's Foreign Policy* (London: New Fabian Research Bureau 1934), esp. 6-11.

[46] The traditional argument in favour of extensive membership was articulated by Cecil in a book edited by Woolf in the same year: see Viscount Cecil, 'The League as a Road to Peace' in Leonard Woolf (ed.), *The Intelligent Man's Way to Prevent War* (London: Gollancz 1933), 256-313.

[47] Henry Noel Brailsford, "A socialist foreign policy", in VV. AA., *Problems of a Socialist Government* (London: Gollancz, 1933), 278.

[48] Brailsford, "A socialist foreign policy", 280.

[49] On this issue, compare Woolf's and Brailsford's opinions and exchange in Henry Brinton (ed.), *Does Capitalism Cause War?*, (London: H. & E. R. Brinton and Maidstone 1935), 13-23. See also Kingsley Martin, *Editor*, 23.

[50] Henry Noel Brailsford, 'The Approach of the Socialist League', *The New Statesman and Nation*, 8:188, 29 September 1934, 417.

[51] Henry Noel Brailsford, *If We Want Peace* (London: The Hogarth Press and the New Fabian Research Bureau, 1932), 52, 63.

[52] Henry Noel Brailsford, *Property or Peace?* (London: Gollancz, 1934), 188, 186.

[53] See e.g. G.D.H. Cole, 'Free Trade, Tariffs, and the Alternative', in *Economic Tracts for the Times* (London: Macmillan, 1932), 66-88; G.D.H. Cole, 'The Planning of International Trade', in *Studies in World Economics* (London: Macmillan & Co., 1934), 170-185. This point was echoed by Mitrany: see

David Mitrany, 'The Political Consequences of Economic Planning', *The Sociological Review*, 26:4 (1934), 321-345.

[54] G.D.H. and Margaret Cole, *The Intelligent Man's Review of Europe To-Day* (London: Gollancz, 1933), 759.

[55] Ibid., 770-771.

[56] Ibid., 776. Elsewhere, Cole described European integration as an "intermediate stage" between the era of state sovereignty and a unified world community: see G.D.H. Cole, *The Intelligent Man's Guide Through World Chaos* (London: Gollancz, 1932), 657.

[57] Ibid., 783.

[58] Kingsley Martin, 'A Sketch-Map of Europe', *The New Statesman and Nation*, 6:136, 30 September 1933, 394. This was not true for every single progressive, however, as shown, for instance, by Mitrany's parallel call for a "functional integration of material activities on an international scale" combined with "cultural devolution on a regional basis." [David Mitrany, *The Progress of International Government* (London: George Allen & Unwin 1933), 137]

[59] On the evolving attitudes of the British peace movement during the Ethiopian crisis, see Michael Pugh, *Liberal Internationalism: The Interwar Movement for Peace in Britain* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), 110-130. For some contemporary analyses from a socialist standpoint, see Vigilantes [Konni Zilliacus], *Inquest on Peace: An Analysis of the National Government's Foreign Policy* (London: Gollancz, 1935), 151-283 and VV.AA., *The Road to War: Being an Analysis of the National Government's Foreign Policy* (London: Gollancz for the New Fabian Research Bureau, 1937), 30-65.

[60] Leonard Woolf, 'Meditation on Abyssinia', *The Political Quarterly*, 7:1, January 1936, 32. According to Woolf, Fascism and Nazism amounted to a "revolt against political reason, the symptom of the destruction of civilization and the resurgence of the primitive barbarian." [Leonard Woolf, *Quack! Quack!* (London: The Hogarth Press, 1935), 43] See also Leonard Woolf, *The League and Abyssinia* (London: Leonard and Virginia Woolf at the Hogarth Press, 1936).

[61] Leonard Woolf, 'The Ideal of the League Remains', *The Political Quarterly*, 7:3, July 1936, 337.

[62] Ibid., 340.

[63] Leonard Woolf, 'Arms and Peace', *The Political Quarterly*, 8:1, January 1937, 32.

[64] Leonard Woolf, 'The Resurrection of the League', *The Political Quarterly*, 8:3, July 1937, 346, 347-348.

[65] Unsigned,'Socialists and Sanctions', *The New Statesman and Nation*, 10:239, 21 September 1935, 364.

[66] Kingsley Martin, 'Death from the Air', *The New Statesman and Nation*, 10:228, 6 July 1935, 6.

[67] Ibidem.

[68] Unsigned, 'The End of Collective Security', *The New Statesman and Nation*, 12:281, 11 July 1936, 40. At this point, Martin's views closely resembled those of the leader of the Socialist League, the Labour MP Stafford Cripps: see Stafford Cripps, *The Struggle for Peace* (London: Gollancz 1935), 117-135.

[69] Unsigned, 'Not our Concern', *The New Statesman and Nation*, 12:288, 29 August 1936, 276; Unsigned, '"Abyssinia Belongs to Italy"', *The New Statesman and Nation*, 11:272, 9 May 1936, 692-693.

[70] See Henry Noel Brailsford, *Spain's Challenge to Labour* (London: The Socialist League, n.d.), 8-9.

[71] Henry Noel Brailsford, 'Towards a Re-Orientation', *The New Statesman and Nation*, 11:272, 9 May 1936, 698-699.

[72] Ibid., 699.

[73] Henry Noel Brailsford, *Towards a New League* (London: The New Statesman and Nation, 1936) 49.

[74] Ibid. 60.

[75] Ibid., 62.

[76] See e.g. Unsigned, 'The French New Deal', *The New Statesman and Nation*, 11:277, 13 June 1936, 920-921. The Left Book Club even published a laudatory biography of the French socialist leader Léon Blum: see Geoffrey Fraser and Thadée Natason, *Léon Blum, Man and Statesman* (London: Gollancz, 1937).

[77] See e.g. G.D.H. Cole, 'A British People's Front: Why, and How?', *The Political Quarterly*, 7:4, October 1936, 490-498; G.D.H. Cole, *The People's Front* (London: Gollancz, 1937); Henry Noel Brailsford, 'The Tory Policy of Peace', *The Political Quarterly*, 9:3, July 1938, 325-328; Henry Noel Brailsford, 'Correspondence – Labour Policy', *The New Statesman and Nation*, 16:405, 26 November 1938, 868; Kingsley Martin, 'What Ought We To Do?', *The New Statesman and Nation*, 15:370, 26 March 1938, 508-509; Kingsley Martin, 'For King and Portugal?', *The New Statesman and Nation*, 15:371, 2 April 1938, 552-553.

[78] See e.g. K. Martin, 'The Peace Movement', *The New Statesman and Nation,* 15:380, 4 June 1938, 947.

[79] See Leonard Woolf, 'Arms and Peace', pp. 21-35; Kinglsey Martin, 'The Pacifist's Dilemma Today', *The Political Quarterly*, 9:2, April 1938, 155-172; Kingsley Martin, 'What Ought We To Do?', *The New Statesman and Nation*, 15:370, 26 March 1938, 508-509; Kingsley Martin, 'Peace Aims or War Aims?', *The New Statesman and Nation*, 17:431, 27 May 1939, 828.

[80] Unsigned, 'Hopes and Fears', The New Statesman and Nation, 16:397, 1 October 1938, 479.

[81] Kingsley Martin, 'Retrospect', *The New Statesman and Nation*, 17:427, 29 April 1939, 640.

[82] Ibidem.

[83] Ibid., 642. See also unsigned, 'What the Alliance Would Mean', *The New Statesman and Nation*, 17:432, 3 June 1939, 848-849.

[84] Kingsley Martin, 'The War and the "N.S. & N."', *The New Statement and Nation*, 18:446, 9 September 1939, 366.

[85] Ibidem.

[86] Unsigned, 'Partnership and Federation', *The New Statesman and Nation*, 18:457, 25 November 1939, 748-749.

[87] This was the purpose of a pamphlet that Martin co-authored with his assistant and later Labour MP R.H.S. Crossman: see Scipio [Kingsley Martin and R.H.S. Crossman], *100,000,000 Allies – If We Choose* (London: Gollancz, 1940), esp. 30-37, 109-118. See also R.H.S. Crossman, 'What Can We Offer to Germany?', *The New Statesman and Nation*, 19:469, 17 February 1940, 197-198. Subsequently, many German exiles and anti-Nazi activists stressed the importance of mobilising Europeans through federalism: see e.g. Heinrich Fraenkel, *Help Us Germans to Beat the Nazis!* (London: Gollancz 1941); Mary Saran, *European Revolution: How To Win the Peace* (London: International Publishing Company, 1941); Oscar Paul, *Underground Europe Calling* (London: Gollancz, 1942); Hilda Monte, *The Unity of Europe* (London: Gollancz, 1943).

[88] Clement Attlee, *Labour's Peace Aims* (London: The Labour Party, 1939), 13. Some scholars have suggested that Attlee gave his speech under the influence of the growing popularity of the federalist pressure group Federal Union [see e.g. R. M. Douglas, *The Labour Party, Nationalism and Internationalism, 1939-1951* (London-New York: Routledge 2004, 222]. This may be true but it is worth stressing that Brailsford, Martin and Woolf were already close or affiliated to Federal Union in late 1939. There is therefore room to argue that Federal Union drew from the Labour's and progressives' ideas, not vice versa, and that Attlee was familiar with them *before* Federal Union arose.

[89] Henry Noel Brailsford, Letter in 'Peace and War Aims, 1939', The New Statesman and Nation, 18:443, 19 August 1939, 278.

[90] Henry Noel Brailsford, 'Our Way with Neutrals', *The New Statesman and Nation*, 18:447, 16 September 1939, 394. In turn, Brailsford wished a relatively quick dismantling of the empire, on the ground that "to retain our rights of ownership over the lives of coloured men is ethically indecent." [Henry Noel Brailsford, 'The Empire: To-Day and To-Morrow', *The New Statesman and Nation*, 17:424, 8 April 1939, 550].

[91] Brailsford, *The Federal Idea* (London: Federal Union, 1939), 7.

[92] Ibid., 13, 14.

[93] Ibid. 15.

[94] Ibidem.

[95] Ibid., 10.

[96] Henry Noel Brailsford, *America Our Ally* (London: Gollancz, 1940), 113. Still in 1938, Brailsford stated that the creation of "the nucleus of an International Federation" hinged upon the affirmation of socialism in "two Great Powers" [Henry Noel Brailsford, *Capitalism Means War* (London: Gollancz, 1938, 92]

[97] Ibid., 94. As late as September 1941, Brailsford held that he could "imagine no set in circumstances, even in the distant future, that would extort" America's "consent for a European expedition." [Henry Noel Brailsford, 'Transatlantic', *The New Statesman and Nation*, 22:550, 6 September 1941, 223]

[98] Henry Noel Brailsford, 'War Aims for Pilgrims', *The New Statesman and Nation*, 21:528, 5 April 1941, 358.

[99] Leonard Woolf, 'Utopia and Reality', *The Political Quarterly*, 11:2, April 1940, 172. See also Leonard Woolf, *The War for Peace* (London: Gollancz, 1940), esp. 83-183; Leonard Woolf, 'Inquest on Geneva', 21:521, 15 February 1941, 162-164. On the Woolf-Carr controversy, see Peter Wilson, 'The Myth of the "First Great Debate"', *Review of International Studies*, 24 (1998), 1-15; Wilson, *The International Theory of Leonard Woolf*, 177-208.

[100] Leonard Woolf, 'The Profundis', *The Political Quarterly*, 10:4, October 1939, 467.

[101] Ibid., p. 476. This would be essential to prevent conflicts between competing federations: see Leonard Woolf, *The Future of International Government* (London: The Labour Party, 1940), esp. 8-9.

[102] Leonard Woolf, 'Democracies, Unite!', *The New Statesman and Nation*, 17:421, 18 March 1939, 435.

[103] Woolf, *The War for Peace*, 211. Mitrany's book *A Working Peace System*, published in 1943, was criticised by Martin for missing the point that without 'the establishment of an international authority […] all functional economic organisation, whether national or international will go up in smoke – the smoke of our bombed cities.' [K. Martin, 'The Road to Cosmopolis', *The New Statesman and Nation*, 26:650, 7 August 1943, 85]

[104] Leonard Woolf, 'The Future of Imperialism', *The New Statesman and Nation*, 21:518, 25 January 1941, 77.

[105] See e.g. Leonard Woolf, *The International Post-War Settlement* (London: Fabian Publications Research Series, 1944), in which he hinted at the importance of reintegrating Germany within a "European" system (ibid., 15).

[106] G.D.H. Cole, *War Aims* (London: The New Statesman and Nation, 1939), 14. See also Leonard Woolf, Letter in 'Peace and War Aims, 1939', *The New Statesman and Nation*, 18:442, 12 August 1939, 246.

[107] Cole, *War Aims*, 38.

[108] Ibid., 44-45.

[109] Ibid., p. 52. Elsewhere, Cole argued that a general League was necessary to link up the future "federated States to the rest of the world." [G.D.H. Cole, 'The Economic Basis of Peace', in VV.AA., *What Kind of Peace?* (London: National Peace Council, 1940), 37]

[110] See e.g. G.D.H. Cole, *Plan for a Democratic Britain* (Long Acre: Odhams Press, 1939), 249-251; G.D.H Cole, *The War on the Home Front* (London: Fabian Society, 1939); G.D.H. Cole, 'The Economics of Peace', *The New Statesman and Nation*, 19:477, 13 April 1940, 506-507; G.D.H. Cole, 'A Socialist Civilization' , in VV. AA., *Programme for Victory: Collections of Essays Prepared for the Fabian Society* (London: George Routledge & Sons, 1941), 145-187.

[111] A.W. Wright, *G.D.H. Cole and Socialist Democracy* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1979), 251.

[112] G.D.H. Cole, *Europe, Russia, and the Future* (London: Gollancz, 1941), 16.

[113] For instance, the German-born Mary Saran called them "patently unjust" and "particularly regrettable" as they came "from a socialist who otherwise shows a real appreciation of the values of freedom, self-reliance and cultural autonomy." [Mary Saran, *The Future of Europe: Peace or Power Politics* (London: International Publishing Co., 1942), 18-19]

[114] See G.D.H. Cole, *Europe, Russia, and the Future*, 181-182; G.D.H. Cole, *Great Britain in the Post-War World* (London: Gollancz, 1942), 161-162.

[115] Leonard Woolf, 'How to Make Peace', *The Political Quarterly*, 12:4, October 1941, 374. Woolf's *Barbarians at the Gate*, written in 1939 before the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact, contains a powerful indictment of Stalinism [see Leonard Woolf, *Barbarians at the Gate* (London: Gollancz, 1939), esp. 172-219].

[116] As late as January 1946, Martin confidently held that Stalin would acquiesce to European unity as long as the Western powers had "the fullest and most frank discussion with Russia" before launching any initiative in public. [Kingsley Martin, 'Britain and Russia', *The Political Quarterly*, 17:1, January 1946, 47] See also G.D.H. Cole, 'Address', in Sir John Boyd Orr and G.D.H. Cole, *Welfare and Peace* (London: National Peace Council, 1946), 10-20.

[117] See e.g. Leonard Woolf, 'The Future of the Small State', *The Political Quarterly*, 14:3, July 1943, 209-224; Leonard Woolf. 'Nationalism and Self-Determination', *The New Statesman and Nation,* 29:738, 14 April 1945, 243-244; Henry Noel Brailsford, ""Mystery, Peril and Splendour"', *The New Statesman and Nation*, 25:632, 3 April 1943, 219-220.

[118] Cole was particularly hostile to the prospect of bringing governments in exile back into power: see G.D.H. Cole, *Europe, Russia, and the Future*, 141-142.

[119] See G.D.H. Cole, *Europe, Russia, and the Future*, 143; G.D.H. Cole, *Great Britain in the Post-War World*, 163-164. On this issue, Cole's position is closer to that of E.H. Carr: see Edward Hallett Carr, *Conditions of Peace* (London: Macmillan, 1943), esp. 187-209; Edward Hallett Carr, *Nationalism and after* (London: Macmillan, 1945), 71-74.

[120] Kingsley Martin, 'The Re-Education of Germany', *Political Quarterly*, 15:2, April 1944, 147.

[121] See Kingsley Martin, 'Shadows at San Francisco', *The New Statesman and Nation*, 29:742, 12 May 1945, 300; Kingsley Martin, 'Russia and Poland', *The New Statesman and Nation*, 29:744, 26 May 1945, 331-332.

[122] Henry Noel Brailsford, 'Reflections on Frontiers', *The New Statesman and Nation*, 27:674, 22 January 1941, 55.

[123] Henry Noel Brailsford, 'Dangers of a Western Union', *The New Statesman and Nation*, 28:717, 18 November 1944, 332; Henry Noel Brailsford, 'The Political and Constitutional Issues' , VV.AA., *The British Commonwealth and the United States in the Post-War World* (London: National Peace Council, 1941), 49. See also Kingsley Martin, 'Isolation and Expansion', *The New Statesman and Nation*, 24:618, 26 December 1942, 420-421; Kingsley Martin, 'American Opinion', *The New Statesman and Nation*, 29:743, 19 May 1945, 743-744.

[124] See Henry Noel Brailsford, 'The Political Aspects', in VV.AA., *The Future of Germany* (London: National Peace Council, 1943), 16-22; Henry Noel Brailsford, *Our Settlement with Germany* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1944), esp. 81-82, 140-146, 156-161; Henry Noel Brailsford, *The German Problem* (London: Common Wealth Publishing, 1944).

[125] G.D.H. Cole, *Reparations and the Future of German Industry* (London: Fabian Publications Research Series, 1945), 15-16.

[126] Leonard Woolf, 'The United Nations', *The Political Quarterly*, 16:1, January 1945, 14.

[127] See e.g. Leonard Woolf's plan for an International Authority in Leonard Woolf Papers, SxMs-13/1/E/2/B. A major exception was the Fabian International Bureau, whose members remained staunchly committed to European federalism. On the Fabian International Bureau, see Margaret Cole, *The Story of Fabian Socialism* (London: Mercury Books, 1963), 288-294 and Mark Minion, 'The Fabian Society and Europe during the 1940s: The Search for a Socialist Foreign Policy', *European History Quarterly*, 30, 237-270.

[128] See Peter Wilson, 'The New Europe Debate in Wartime Britain', in Philomena Murray and Paul Rich, *Visions of European Unity* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1996), 39-62.

[129] Mark F. Gilbert, 'The Sovereign Remedy of European Unity', 43.

[130] See Michael Newman, 'British Socialists and the Question of European Unity, 1939-1945', *European Studies Review*, 10 (1980), 75-100.

[131] On the Bryce Group, see Martin David Dubin, 'Towards the Concept of Collective Security: The Bryce Group's "Proposals for the Avoidance of War", 1914-1917', *International Organization*, 24:2 (1970), 288-318; Sakiko Kaiga, 'The Use of Force to Prevent War? The Bryce Group's "Proposals for the Avoidance of War", 1914-15', *Journal of British Studies*, 57:2, (2018), 308-322. On Zimmern, see Paul Rich, 'Reinventing Peace: David Davies, Alfred Zimmern and Liberal Internationalism in Interwar Britain', *International Relations*, 16:1 (2002), 117-133.

[132] Some of them may indeed be regarded as the forebears of International Political Economy (IPE): see e.g. Lucian M. Ashworth, 'Missing Voices: Critical IPE, Disciplinary History and H. N. Brailsford's Analysis of the Capitalist International Anarchy', in Stuart Sheilds, Ian Bruff, and Huw Macartney (eds.), *Critical International Political Economy: Dialogue, Debate and Dissensus* (Basingstoke-New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), 9-26. On this point, Brailsford, Cole, Martin and Woolf were arguably more ground-breaking than Mitrany, whose functionalism ended up crystallising once again the autonomy of politics: see David Long, 'International Functionalism and the Politics of Forgetting', *International Journal*, 48:2 (1993), 355-379.

[133] Lucian M. Ashworth, 'Where are the Idealists in Interwar International Relations?', *Review of International Studies*, 32:2 (2006), 306.

[134] As demonstrated, for example, by Brailsford ongoing calls for the creation of a 'world guard' in *Our Settlement with Germany* or Woolf's subsequent case for the centralisation of production and control of atomic energy under a world authority [L. Woolf, 'Britain in the Atomic Age', *Political Quarterly*, 17:1, January 1946, 12-24.

[135] See Ian Hall, *Dilemmas of Decline: British Intellectuals and World Politics, 1945-1975* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2012).