Mythologising the Ultra-Nation, Theorising the International

Fascist International Thought and the Study of International Relations in Britain, 1922-1945

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Abstract

While revisionist scholarship has redressed many of the fallacies once plaguing disciplinary histories of interwar International Relations (IR), there remains scant research concerned with the place of fascists and other fellow travellers of the extreme right within the nascent academic discipline or the wider intellectual field of 'expertise' in which it was situated. It thus remains unclear the degree to which or how fascists and sympathisers engaged with the fledgling field in order to propound alternative projects of worldmaking or offer diverging (and perhaps similar) responses to salient international questions. By discerning the international thought of key extremists operating within Britain, and how they were situated with respect to, and engaged with, prevailing ideas percolating interwar discourse on world politics and sites of scholarly or 'expert' knowledge on the international, I aim to offer a corrective to this historiographical gap. Focusing on select thinkers orbiting around the British Union of Fascists and the Chatham House-linked London Group for the Study of the Corporate State, this dissertation contends that several of the more intellectually astute adherents of fascism were not simply contemplating the international in an obscure abyss of extremism. Rather, they variously engaged with prevailing debates, thinkers, and institutions associated with IR's formative evolution. Indeed, some thinkers of the extreme right even had a direct impact on this intellectual landscape, whether by virtue of their contribution to the practical debates occupying mainstream thinkers and journals, or via their professional roles and 'intellectual labour'. In turn, this dissertation complicates prevailing conceptions of what was then an emergent field of study centred on international politics and fascism's relationship thereto, presents an immeasurably more complex image of fascist international thought relative to those commonly typifying historical IR, and carries interpretive implications for understanding IR's contemporary extra-disciplinary reception amongst far-right figures.

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In one of the stranger of romantic gestures, I dedicate this dissertation on conspiratorial cranks and far-right bigots to her.

Kye J. Allen

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Acronyms

APSA	American Political Science Association
APSR	*American Political Science Review*
BIIA	British Institute of International Affairs
BHLHP	Basil Henry Liddell Hart Papers
BUF	British Union of Fascists
CAUR	*Comitati d'Azione per l'Universalità di Roma*
CFR	Council on Forgien Relations
CINEF	*Centre International d'Etudes sur le Fascisme*
IOP	Institute of Politics
IR	International Relations
IWM	Imperial War Museum
LDP	Lawrence Dennis Papers
LIO	Liberal International Order
LSE	London School of Economics
NCPW	National Council for the Prevention of War
RIIA	Royal Institute of International Affairs
TNA	The National Archives
UN	United Nations

Chapter I.
Introduction
Locating the Fascists

In the professionalised discipline of twenty-first-century International Relations (IR), it would be disconcerting if such prestigious journals as the *American Political Science Review* (*APSR*) or *International Affairs* reviewed publications by, for example, the white nationalist Richard Spencer or doyen of neo-reactionary thought Nick Land. While ideologues of white supremacy and the Dark Enlightenment are valid subjects for scholarly scrutiny, their actual texts are justifiably not treated as coequal to the academic publications typically reviewed within contemporary IR journals.[1] During the interwar period, this was not the case. The 'capsule review' section of *Foreign Affairs* was replete with brief synopses of pro-fascist texts, both scholarly and lay. Reviewed authors ranged from the traditionalist thinker Julius Evola and corporatist theorist Giuseppe de Michelis to the French national syndicalist Georges Valois, Italian propagandist Luigi Villari, and prominent fascist internationalist Carlo Emilio Ferri. Expectedly, reviews were often derisive. *Mein Kampf* was, for example, bluntly summarised by William L. Langer, the designated reviewer for *Foreign Affairs* and a Harvard-based historian, as but the '[u]nimpressive memoirs of the Bavarian leader'.[2] Alternatively, others considered select fascist texts with detachment, while some applauded Mussolini and the Italian experiment.

Fascist thinkers occasionally attended conferences on the study of world politics too. During the mid-1930s, Roberto Forges Davanzati, a notable fascist politician, and Francesco Coppola—former Italian delegate to the League of Nations, IR professor at the University of Perugia, and an advocate for fascism's export—were involved with the annual International Studies Conference (ISC).[3] One former fellow at the Brookings Institution and a fascist professor of economics at the University of Rome, Fausto Pitigliani, also presented before the 1939 meeting of the American Political Science Association (APSA) on Italian and German efforts to achieve self-sufficiency.[4] A Janus-faced adulation even saturated the 1934 presidential address presented before the annual APSA conference. Therein the political scientist and Dean of Ohio State University Walter J. Shepard declared that if America is 'to escape fascism… it can only be by virtue of… a frank appropriation of many of its elements into the theory and practice of a new and vital orientation'.[5] This 'possible reorganization of government' implied a restricted suffrage, excluding 'the ignorant, the uninformed, and the anti-social elements which hitherto have so frequently controlled elections'. Shepard favoured an Aristotelian-cum-Wellsian 'aristocracy' based not on inherited privilege or wealth,

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[1] However, see Marine Le Pen, 'France's Next Revolution? A Conversation with Marine Le Pen', *Foreign Affairs* 95, no. 6 (2016): 2-8.

[2] William L. Langer, review of *Mein Kampf*, by Adolf Hitler, *Foreign Affairs* 4, no. 2 (1926): 340.

[3] Maurice Bourquin, ed., *Collective Security: A Record of the Seventh and Eighth International Studies Conference* (Paris: International Institute of Intellectual Cooperation, 1936). On Coppola and Davanzati, see Philip V. Cannistraro, ed., *Historical Dictionary of Fascist Italy* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1982): 136, 229.

[4] Fausto R. Pitigliani, 'Governmental Planning in Italy and Germany', *Plan Age* 6 (1940): 76-89.

[5] Walter J. Shepard, 'Democracy in Transition', *American Political Science Review* 29, no. 1 (1935): 11.

but 'intellect and character'.[6] Among APSA presidents, Shepard was not alone in offering qualified applause for the fascist experiment.[7]

Intersections between far-right extremists and the emerging study of IR extended beyond academic conferences and journals. Some fascists remained abreast of debates within political science and international affairs journals, or even institutional appointments. In 1936, the flagship periodical of the British Union of Fascists (BUF), the *Blackshirt*, lampooned the London School of Economics (LSE) as an 'alien-infested college of subversion' replete with 'plenty of stalwart sons of Judah', listing such scholars as the political scientist Harold Laski and international lawyer Hersch Lauterpacht.[8] Particular ire was directed towards the newly minted Montague Burton Chair of International Relations, a post which later hosted such luminaries as Susan Strange, R.J. Vincent, and Fred Halliday. With its endowment bequeathed by Jewish retail proprietor Sir Montague Burton and its selection committee headed by 'two of the most ardent sanctionists', namely Gilbert Murray and Lord Robert Cecil, the chair promised to instil in students all that is 'opposed to Fascist and National-Socialist virility'.[9] One piece in the *Blackshirt* likewise sarcastically commented on Lauterpacht's appointment to the Whewell Professorship of International Law at Cambridge, 'the second Jew to have been elected to the Chair' after L.F.L. Oppenheim.[10] Elsewhere in the *Fascist Quarterly*, A.K. Chesterton—a figure who later founded the National Front in 1967—targeted Laski. With a characteristic antisemitic tone, Chesterton quipped that were the professor to depart Britain for a chair of political science at Tel Aviv University, he would welcome Laski's appointment.[11] Elsewhere in the *Blackshirt*, its editor similarly remarked that Laski would be more suited to the Communist Academy of Moscow: 'The London University will be well rid of him'.[12]

These disparate examples are not exhaustive. Collectively, though, they allude to the existence of a peculiar history. As further discussed in Chapter II, scholars are yet to satisfactorily explore the extent to which and how fascist thinkers and other fellow travellers engaged with, were influenced by, or perhaps impacted directly upon, prevailing discourse about perpetual peace, appeasement, imperial federation, the so-called revolt against the West, and related issues pervading the thought of interwar 'experts' on the international. This omission is somewhat ironic in that while IR scholars have belatedly recognised Melian Stawell's addition to the 'Home University Library of Modern Knowledge', namely *The Growth of International Thought*—a text since adopted as a symbolic benchmark for the origins of the history of international thought subfield—scholars will undoubtedly be less cognisant of the 1931

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[6] *Ibid*, 18-9.

[7] Ido Oren, 'Uncritical Portrayals of Fascist Italy and Iberic-Latin Dictatorships in American Political Science', *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 42, no. 1 (2000): 87-118. I use the term 'experiment' deliberately, without implying a positive connotation. As Oren highlights, the term was common in interwar political science, and it was likewise recurrent in the writings of those figures explored below.

[8] 'The Jews Again', *Blackshirt*, 14 February 1936.

[9] *Ibid.*

[10] 'The Common Front', *Blackshirt*, 27 November 1937, 6.

[11] A.K.C. 'Fascism = Liberalism—A Laski Equation', *Fascist Quarterly* 2, no. 3 (1936): 446-50.

[12] 'Viscount Snowden Apologises', *Blackshirt*, 13 July 1934, 6.

tract commissioned for the same Home University series, *Fascism*.[13] Its author, James Strachey Barnes, was the leading English theorist of a universalist conception of fascism.

The Disciplinary History of IR, or: Where Are All the Fascists?

Per the idealised distortions that have often plagued retellings of the discipline's history, what passed for interwar IR was dominated by a tradition of liberal internationalism, one later supplanted by a pragmatic realism.[14] To the extent that fascist thought featured within such histories, it tended to be implicitly or explicitly reduced to an 'ideological glorification of power politics' and framed as a creed beyond the confines of the then emergent intellectual study of international politics.[15] A burgeoning revisionist literature has subjected IR's early history to re-evaluation, consequently challenging hitherto dominant assumptions. One revisionist faction has primarily emphasised the racial and imperial inclinations which typified IR's formative history.[16] As Barry Buzan and George Lawson observe, IR has its origins in nineteenth-century 'preoccupations with the superiority—or otherwise—of white races and Western civilization'.[17] A second group of revisionists have focused on restoring 'idealist' international thought and popular interwar IR debates to their original complexity.[18] In one exemplary contribution, Lucian M. Ashworth challenges the caricatured realist-idealist dichotomy of the 'First Great Debate'. Discourse was in actuality characterised by various debates organised around three broad axes: the relationship between war and capitalism, the issue of fascist revisionism, and the validity of American isolationism.[19]

While one may question whether such debates marked the core issues of contention among intellectuals concerned with the study of world politics, what is notable is that fascist thinkers are cast as ostensibly absent. Fascism, Torbjørn L. Knutsen adds, was a predominantly 'anti-intellectual movement, and exerted only slight influence on International Relations' as an emerging field of study. In the case that fascism was 'mentioned at all',

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[13] See Florence Melian Stawell, *The Growth of International Thought* (London: Butterworth, 1929); James Strachey Barnes, *Fascism* (London: Thornton Butterworth, 1931). The series was edited by H.A.L. Fisher, Julian S. Huxley, and Gilbert Murray.

[14] For an overview, see Benjamin de Carvalho, et al., 'The Big Bangs of IR: The Myths that Your Teachers Still Tell You about 1648 and 1919', *Millennium* 39, no. 3 (2011): 45-52.

[15] Michael W. Doyle, *Ways of War and Peace* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1997), 27. This phrase is borrowed from Doyle's summary of John Herz on realism and its extremes.

[16] See, e.g., David Long and Brian C. Schmidt, eds., *Imperialism and Internationalism in the Discipline of International Relations* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2005); John M. Hobson, *The Eurocentric Conception of World Politics: Western International Theory, 1760-2010* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012); Robert Vitalis, *White World Order, Black Power Politics: The Birth of American International Relations* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2015).

[17] Barry Buzan and George Lawson, 'Rethinking Benchmark Dates in International Relations', *European Journal of International Relations* 20, no. 2 (2012): 441.

[18] See 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, no. 5 (1998): 1-16; Lucian M. Ashworth, *International Relations and the Labour Party: Intellectuals and Policy Making from 1918-1945* (London: Tauris Academic Studies, 2007).

[19] Lucian M. Ashworth, 'Did the Realist-Idealist Great Debate Really Happen? A Revisionist History of International Relations', *International Relations* 16, no. 1 (2002): 33-4.

it was 'regularly rejected as unhelpful, if not inimical'.[20] Accordingly, revisionist accounts have rectified the distorted image of interwar thought oft-associated with IR's formative history. Yet by reconstructing the arguments propounded by liberal and left-wing internationalists, this historiography has inadvertently obscured the heterogeneity of fascist international thought and its relationship to interwar debates on international politics. Revisionist scholars have yet to adequately consider how the speculation of fascist thinkers compared with, or diverged from, the often racialised and imperial predicates of liberal and social democratic international thought. Furthermore, while I am inclined to concur with Knutsen's observation, this should not curtail efforts to recount disconcerting episodes that may be obscured by an overemphasis on (or rather a sanitised rendering of) IR's early liberal and social democratic credentials. Indeed, despite increased engagement with the imperial, racialised, and gendered dynamics of IR's Anglophone history, not least British and American international thought more broadly, it remains unclear the degree to which or how fascist thinkers and sympathisers engaged with the fledgling field in order to propound alternative projects of worldmaking or offer diverging (and perhaps similar) responses to salient international questions.

This dissertation aims to partially correct this omission. The following is not primarily concerned with the reception of fascist revisionism within interwar debates on world politics; that is, how fascist states were cast as a mounting threat to the British Empire and the prevailing international order, albeit the subsequent chapters occasionally touch upon such matters. Nor does the following attempt to retell the history of the academic study of IR as if fascists were somehow indispensable to its formative evolution. Instead, this dissertation poses the more modest question: how did fascist thinkers engage with the emerging study of international politics within interwar and wartime Britain? I deliberately deploy the term 'engage' loosely to encompass the array of possible interactions. This includes how such ideologues interpreted, utilised, rejected, or chastised other thinkers and popular ideas within this wider field of study, or indeed the direct reception they may have had on the latter. Importantly, this involves physical points of exchange, such as the despatch of correspondence or attending conferences, but also identifiable points of intellectual commonality and influence. As Casper Sylvest observes in a different context, '[i]n some instances, direct lines of inspiration or influence can be detected', yet in other circumstances, one may be redirected towards forms of 'style, temper or argumentative strategies'.[21] By discerning the international thought of key extremists and precisely how they were situated with respect to, and interacted with, prevailing ideas percolating interwar discourse on world politics and sites of scholarly or 'expert' knowledge on the international, I aim to offer an initial corrective to the aforementioned omission within both the history of international thought and IR's disciplinary history.

[20] Torbjørn L. Knutsen, *A History of International Relations Theory*, 3rd edn (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2016), 257-8.
[21] Casper Sylvest, *British Liberal Internationalism, 1880-1930: Making Progress?* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2009), 197.

Fascists and the Field

Simply stated, I argue that several of the more intellectually astute adherents of fascism operating within Britain were not simply contemplating the international in an obscure abyss of extremism. Rather, they were familiar with popular strands of international thought and variously engaged with prevailing debates, thinkers, and institutions that have since been recognised by scholars as important to IR's formative evolution. I do not doubt that many rank-and-file fascists were but peddlers of conspiracy theory and thuggery, actors with marginal regard for serious contemplation on international questions. Yet, blanket assertions must be avoided.

Outright fascists and fellow travellers of the extreme right borrowed ideas from, were influenced by, or used comparable concepts to those prevalent amongst other strands of mainstream international thought, not least thinkers associated with IR's formative history. Importantly, the influence thereupon by liberal and socialist international thought—prevalent ideological dispositions amongst interwar experts on world politics—was not solely of a negative character; that is, as a pole against which fascists defined their position. In the worldview of certain ideologues, such seemingly conflicting strands of international thought were consciously synthesised or otherwise implicitly informed a range of highly heterogeneous lines of argument.[22] Of course, for most fascist thinkers, one could hardly describe them as part of any emergent intellectual field, let alone an academic discipline. Some may have been familiar with thinkers, ideas, or debates that have been recognised as part of IR's early history. Yet the engagement of such fascists was from the position of an undeniable outsider or occasional spectator, not a sustained interlocutor or academic colleague. However, as argued in subsequent chapters, this was not always so. While scholars have duly observed the porousness typifying IR's early history, it is notable that the interwar decades through to the 1940s witnessed numerous unexplored instances where factions of the extreme right were themselves part of, or linked to, the academy. Indeed, beyond representing an obvious target for admonition and scorn, certain far-right thinkers had a direct impact on this emergent intellectual landscape, whether by virtue of their contribution to the practical questions and debates occupying thinkers and journals, or via their professional roles and 'intellectual labour'.

What are the wider implications of this argument? First, the historical account that I present carries interpretive insights for how IR scholars and historians of international thought alike understand IR's early history, its relationship to a wider intellectual field of enquiry, and the place of fascist thinkers therein. It must be captioned from the outset that this dissertation is not strictly a disciplinary history of *academic* IR. While this study unearths intersections between the extreme right and IR's formative history, it is less constrained by the institutional boundaries of academia, a point I will return to momentarily. Nevertheless, the episodes that I recover contain

[22] My focus on fascism's proclivity for synthesis builds on existing scholarship; see, e.g., Roger Eatwell, 'Towards a New Model of Generic Fascism', *Journal of Theoretical Politics* 4, no. 2 (1992): 161-94; Zeev Sternhell, et al., *The Birth of Fascist Ideology: From Cultural Rebellion to Political Revolution*, trans. David Maisel (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994). In the British context, see Philip M. Coupland, 'The Blackshirted Utopians', *Journal of Contemporary History* 33, no. 2 (1998): 255-72; Richard C. Thurlow, *Fascism in Britain: From Oswald Mosley's Blackshirts to the National Front* (London: I.B. Tauris, 1998), Chapter 5.

salient implications for prevailing histories of the field. Fascist thinkers not only contemplated many of the same questions that occupied interwar journals and scholars, but they were themselves privy to debates and forums intertwined with IR's early history. In this respect, this dissertation recovers the professional positionality and reception of far-right thinkers, the mediums through which their ideas were distributed, and the implications of these dynamics for understanding the variegated engagement of the extreme right within mainstream discussions occupying those who Jan Stöckmann calls the 'architects of IR'.[23] As Nicolas Guilhot notes, through recent scholarship, 'IR theory has emerged as a much more complex—and maybe less known—discipline than previously thought, connected to a constellation of adjacent scholarly fields, ideological formations, and institutional landscapes'.[24] The cases explored herein offer a novel history of the interaction between the fledgling field, institutional landscapes often associated with it, and an ideological formation typically absent from disciplinary histories. This dissertation not only further challenges the already discredited myth of a grand realist-idealist debate, but it refines revisionist accounts that have largely retained a focus on liberal, socialist, and realist thinkers, albeit affording more attention to their imperial and racist predilections. Fascists were, in varying forms, also engaged with the emerging intellectual field, and some were themselves part of the academic study of world politics.

Second, this dissertation—situated at the nexus between fascist studies, the history of international thought, and IR's disciplinary history—carries interpretive implications for how scholars concerned with historical IR understand the contents and nature of fascist international thought. The latter, I contend, cannot be reduced to a biologized debasement of realism or dismissed as a twentieth-century Darwinian redux, tropes common within the IR literature. A closer interrogation of fascist views on the international provokes scholars to reconsider not only *who was engaged in the production of international thought*, but also *who propounded what ideas*, highlighting the sheer degree to which ideas transcended ideological creeds and how diverse syntheses transpired as thinkers endeavoured to diagnose and remedy the prevailing sense of crisis in a process of worldmaking. In turn, this dissertation complicates prevailing understandings of early twentieth-century Anglophone international thought, fascism's place therein, and the rigidity with which ideas are often ascribed to delimited traditions. Varying programmes for international organisation, dreamworlds of perpetual peace, and qualified critiques of the liberal imperial order typified not only the divergent worldmaking projects of socialist, liberal, and subaltern thinkers, but fascist too.[25] Indeed, the visions of worldmaking held in the minds of several fascist thinkers contained important overlaps with some liberal and socialist counterparts, not least because the international thought of the former constituted, in part, a divergent outgrowth of intellectual strands to be found amongst the latter two. This is not, however, to suggest 'any ideological affinity' between such discordant thinkers, to borrow the observation of historian David Brydan. Yet to study such

[23] Jan Stöckmann, *The Architects of International Relations: Building a Discipline, Designing the World, 1914-1940* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2022).
[24] Nicolas Guilhot, 'Introduction', in *Historiographical Investigations in International Relations*, eds. Brian C. Schmidt and Nicolas Guilhot (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2019), 6.
[25] On worldmaking, see Duncan Bell, 'Making and Taking Worlds', in *Global Intellectual History*, eds. Samuel Moyn and Andrew Sartori (New York: Columbia University Press, 2013).

bodies of thought in tandem serves to 'highlight entanglements and parallels… not least from the perspective of many of the actors involved'.[26]

While the preceding contributions are centred on the relationship between fascism and the field's history and the contents of fascist international thought itself, the third contribution pertains to the contemporary import of the peculiar history that I unearth. As developed further in Chapter VII, my historical excavation ought to be understood against the backdrop of a somewhat obvious truism: whether as a nebulous interwar field of study or an increasingly concrete post-war discipline, IR has never been hermetically sealed from the 'real world' of international politics. After all, there remains considerable overlap between academic IR, policymakers, and international institutions. Policymakers undertake undergraduate or graduate classes in IR whilst in university. Many IR scholars have also engaged with policy via secondments, advising, consulting, and outright career changes. Such intersections reveal much about IR's tangible impact beyond citations practices, including its structural role in legitimising and perpetuating American hegemony.[27] Yet the presence of such intersections is perhaps not surprising.

By comparison, linkages between the extreme right and the post-war discipline may strike oneself as a less conspicuous form of extra-disciplinary engagement. While far-right extremists have been largely excised from the professionalised discipline, the sheltered walls of the ivory tower remain, in some form, susceptible to occasional breaches. The discipline has remained intertwined, albeit more sporadically, with broader histories of the far right. In a distant echo of the interwar period, the reception of disciplinary controversies and even theories have, in select instances, filtered into far-right discourse. While it is difficult to locate far-right extremists, Holocaust deniers, or white nationalists amongst the ranks of contemporary IR scholars, two salient forms of extra-disciplinary reception are still readily observable. First, some far-right actors have sought to gain credibility for their views by borrowing from, or hijacking, disciplinary figures or texts. From John J. Mearsheimer's views on the Russo-Ukrainian War to John M. Hobson's *The Eurocentric Conception of World Politics*, less palatable actors have managed to find value in IR literature. By contrast, others have latched onto academics and disciplinary controversies not to co-opt scholarly arguments for dubious ends, but to use them as either a target against which to direct their vitriol or unwitting pawns in their conspiratorial thinking. Whether it be bizarre narratives positioning individual scholars within broader globalist conspiracies, or the backlash amongst far-right commentators over the so-called #SdScandal, examples abound. Each of these modes of extra-disciplinary reception are typified by a distinct logic, what I call *co-optation* and *critique,* respectively. In this respect, a cognisance of the continued permeability of the disciplinary fourth wall points towards a peculiar and occasionally alarming post-script to my early-twentieth century history, alongside pertinent dilemmas, dangers, and opportunities for critical IR scholars and ongoing scholarship within historical IR. Not only

[26] David Brydan, 'Axis Internationalism: Spanish Health Experts and the Nazi "New Europe", 1939-1945', *Contemporary European History* 25, no. 2 (2016): 310.
[27] See Randolph B. Persaud, 'Ideology, Socialization and Hegemony in Disciplinary International Relations', *International Affairs* 98, no. 1 (2022): 105-23; Jasmine K. Gani and Jenna Marshall, 'The Impact of Colonialism on Policy and Knowledge Production in International Relations', *International Affairs* 98, no. 1 (2022): 5-22.

are there a raft of neglected cases to be unearthed, but there are tangible ethical and methodological questions to be asked and lessons to be learned from studying the nexus between IR and far-right extremism.

Conceptual Matters

Before I continue, it is necessary to establish a conceptual grounding on which to build. Two issues are important. First, if my intent is to explore how fascist thinkers engaged with ideas, persons, fora, and mediums affiliated with an emerging field of expertise on the international, then this raises questions about precisely what I understand the latter to be. Second, and relatedly, what is fascist international thought? I will first address the former.

Expertise and the Interwar Study of International Relations

As Edward Keene highlights, the post-war decades represent 'a distinct phase in the history of international political thought', one peculiar to the extent that 'speculation about international politics, law and organization has been consolidated within an academic discipline'.[28] G.L. Goodwin expressed a similar opinion some four decades earlier: '[t]he subject matter of international relations… has for centuries attracted the scrutiny of eminent scholars, be they historians, lawyers, or mere students of politics… Yet the academic subject, or specialism, of International Relations is of comparatively recent vintage.'[29] While the discipline's professionalisation is a recent development, by the late nineteenth century and the subsequent onset of the interwar period, dedicated chairs in IR and several international affairs journals—some of which remain leading peer-reviewed outlets—had materialised. From the vantage point of the present, one may observe the existence of a fledgling, if poorly demarcated, field of study. As George Lawson and Robbie Shilliam highlight, it is the emergence of such developments, namely the early twentieth-century 'institutionalization of the discipline', which recent revisionist accounts 'converge'.[30]

Several disciplinary historians have conceptualised the nature of IR's early history by prioritising its formative phase of porousness. David M. McCourt, taking a cue from sociology, describes IR as a particular 'social formation' in the aftermath of the First World War. Rather than solely constituting an 'academic specialty', IR was 'born at the intersection of government, the academy, and civil society'.[31] Alternatively, Randolph B. Persaud has used the (deliberately capitalised) term 'Disciplinary International Relations'.[32] This concept does not capture a specific historical moment in IR's history nor even the presence of a coherent academic discipline, but symbolises a body of 'scholarly' knowledge on the international that serves, consciously or otherwise, to underpin the grand strategy of hegemonic powers. In a recent addition, Stöckmann has labelled those who contributed to interwar debates about international politics as the 'architects of IR'.[33] This term, Stöckmann continues, is 'deliberately fuzzy

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[28] Edward Keene, *International Political Thought* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2005), 194.
[29] Geoffrey L. Goodwin, *World Institutions and World Order* (London: G. Bell and Sons, 1964), 5.
[30] George Lawson and Robbie Shilliam, 'Sociology and International Relations: Legacies and Prospects', *Cambridge Review of International Affairs* 23, no. 1 (2010): 69.
[31] David M. McCourt, '*The Inquiry* and the Birth of International Relations, 1917-19', *Australian Journal of Politics and History* 63, no. 3 (2017): 395, 402.
[32] Persaud, 'Ideology, Socialization and Hegemony'.
[33] Stöckmann, *Architects*.

and open-ended to appreciate thinkers who operated across traditional professions and to acknowledge the fact that the first generation of IR scholars had of course not been trained in IR'.[34] Such conceptualisations, amongst others, are useful and help to inform this dissertation, albeit I eschew adopting any particular one. Persaud's notion of 'Disciplinary International Relations' is overly generalised and difficult to apply in the present context. The fascists considered herein undoubtedly sought to uphold European hegemony, but this envisioned order was, in vital respects, at odds with, and explicitly conceptualised as the antithesis to, the liberal imperialism of those who Persaud identifies with 'Disciplinary International Relations'. Similarly, while this dissertation builds on Stöckmann's pioneering scholarship, I avoid the concept of 'architects' for largely semantic reasons: the language of *architect* implies deliberateness—that is, a conscious desire to design a discipline—and/or, in a looser sense, substantive influence over the discipline's formation. This may prove overly restrictive in the context of thinkers who engaged in some shape with the interwar study of world politics, but were neither academics nor pioneering thinkers on the international emanating from other professions.

While I do not attempt to offer a succinct conceptual phrase, I nevertheless embrace the notion that the interwar study of international politics comprised a fledgling academic core, which was part of a wider field of study that had emerged by the early twentieth century. Duncan Bell has emphasised the value of complementing disciplinary histories with what he has called 'histories of the global', namely 'the multiple ways in which global politics (or aspects of it) has been conceptualized across a variety of institutional sites'.[35] In the context of IR's formative history, Bell's injunction is not only useful, but a natural outgrowth of its amorphous interwar boundaries. From journalists and political scientists to geographers and psychoanalysts, an array of persons from diverse occupations and disciplinary credentials engaged in serious reflection on international affairs during the first half of the twentieth century. Influential thinkers that contributed to interwar IR journals and ongoing debates with scholarly interlocutors were often of professional (as opposed to academic) backgrounds. J.A. Hobson, H.N. Brailsford, and Norman Angell—all mainstays within revisionist disciplinary histories—were journalists.[36] Some such as Philip Noel-Baker intermittently rotated between academia, activism, and electoral politics. In this regard, it may prove futile to 'insist on some arbitrary division line between political science and practice, which may well not exist'.[37] Relatedly, other scholars have pointed to the crucial role of several think tanks in the production of international thought during IR's early history. Inderjeet Parmar, for example, asserts the 'importance [of Chatham House and the Council on Foreign Relations] to the development of international relations as a discipline'.[38] As recent literature has also indicated, some women published in traditional academic mediums, including Merze Tate,

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[34] *Ibid*, 19.

[35] Duncan Bell, 'Writing the World (Remix)', in *Historiographical Investigations in International Relations*, eds. Brian C. Schmidt and Nicolas Guilhot (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2019), 16.

[36] Lucian M. Ashworth, 'The Poverty of Paradigms: Subcultures, Trading Zones and the Case of Liberal Socialism in Interwar International Relations', *International Relations* 26, no. 1 (2012): 44.

[37] Stöckmann, *Architects*, 295.

[38] Inderjeet Parmar, 'Anglo-American Elites in the Interwar Years: Idealism and Power in the Intellectual Roots of Chatham House and the Council on Foreign Relations', *International Relations* 16, no. 1 (2002): 54.

Elizabeth Wiskemann, and Vera Micheles Dean.[39] To quote Stöckmann, 'one might legitimately call [such women] IR scholars in a narrow sense'.[40] Yet innumerable women also speculated about international affairs—or contributed their 'intellectual labour'[41]—from the academic periphery, whether as librarians, peace activists, secretaries, or research assistants.[42] Disciplinary boundaries were also highly permeable even within academia's confines, reflecting what Patricia Owens has referred to as 'IR's interdisciplinary origins'.[43] As Quincy Wright remarked in 1955: 'International relations is… an emerging discipline, but its nature and character cannot be understood without considering the disciplines which have contributed to its creation'.[44] Notable thinkers emanated from the cognate areas of, among others, history, colonial administration, sociology, classics, and law, as was the case with such eminent thinkers as, respectively, E.H. Carr, Lucy Philip Mair, Georg Schwarzenberger, Alfred Zimmern, and Lauterpacht.[45] In sum, where the broader *field of study* amongst ostensible experts ends, and an *academic discipline* begins, was exceedingly nebulous. While I therefore treat the latter as but one part of the former, both landscapes of international thought are understood to be important in IR's early history and, accordingly, constitute the centralising referent against which I endeavour to locate the fascist thinkers considered herein.

At its core, this interpretation accepts the inherently transnational and intra-imperial nature of the then study of international politics. With that said, I am primarily concerned with how fascists were situated with respect to expert debates on world politics as it evolved within Britain. Inescapably, though, the episodes discussed naturally propel the discussion in a transnational direction, as when the reception of thinkers transgress borders. This is an inevitability, not only because the fascists explored below contributed to discussions elsewhere in the world or were unsurprisingly influenced by ideas beyond Britain, but because IR's antecedents and early history transcended geographic borders. Any adequate understanding of the intellectual landscape of international thought within Britain cannot be divorced from its cross-pollination with ideas and professional connections in, for instance, France, Germany, the US, or transnational fora, such as the ISC.[46] Furthermore, the rise of IR in Britain—not least the settler-colonies[47]—was inextricably linked to the imperial project of those surrounding the South Africa-based

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[39] See especially Patricia Owens and Katharina Rietzler, eds. *Women's International Thought: A New History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2021).
[40] Jan Stöckmann, 'Women, Wars, and World Affairs: Recovering Feminist International Relations, 1915-39', *Review of International Studies* 44, no. 2 (2018): 220.
[41] Katharina Rietzler, 'U.S. Foreign Policy Think Tanks and Women's Intellectual Labor, 1920-1950', *Diplomatic History* 46, no. 3 (2022): 575-601.
[42] Valeska Huber, et al., 'Women's International Thought and the New Professions, 1900-1940', *Modern Intellectual History* 18, no. 1 (2021): 121-45.
[43] Patricia Owens, 'Women and the History of International Thought', *International Studies Quarterly* 62, no. 3 (2018): 474.
[44] Quincy Wright, *The Study of International Relations* (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1955), 28-9.
[45] Ian Hall, 'The English School's Histories and International Relations', in *Historiographical Investigations in International Relations*, eds. Brian C. Schmidt and Nicolas Guilhot (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2019), 172.
[46] See, e.g., Deniz Kuru, 'Institutes, Scholars, and Transnational Dynamics: A Disciplinary History of International Relations in Germany and France' (PhD diss., University of Southern California, 2013); Stöckmann, *Architects*.
[47] Alexander E. Davis, 'Making a Settler Colonial IR: Imagining the "International" in Early Australian International Relations', *Review of International Studies* 47, no. 5 (2021): 637-655.

Milner's Kindergarten and the subsequent Round Table movement.[48] Conversely, the place of the Global South in interwar debates cannot be reduced to an abstract space or voiceless populace that served only as the subject of discussion among European and American international thinkers. For example, as Martin Bayly details, there were an array of early twentieth-century interactions between scholars from South Asia and Anglophone international affairs and political science journals. Through these interlinkages, and the 'multiple forms of dialogue, contestation, and resistance' that attended them, Bayly demonstrates in microcosm how the 'discipline… was "global" at birth', albeit obviously a far cry from Amitav Acharya's ongoing call for a truly Global IR.[49] My focus on Britain is therefore a means to thematically orient the project and impose a manageable scope, yet I endeavour to hedge against transforming this editorial decision into a methodological or ontological blind spot. Simply, I reject a rigid methodological nationalism, one that reifies or naturalises the nation-state referent—in this case, the notion of siloed landscape of British international thought or a self-contained and distinctly 'British IR'—as a bounded unit of historical analysis.[50]

In sum, what I am herein concerned with is a wide intellectual field of so-called experts centred on the exploration of international affairs in Britain, a field which carried innumerable transnational linkages and exhibited fledgling signs of disciplinarity via specialised journals and academic posts, yet highly permeable boundaries and barriers of entry. It is the multiple forms of engagement between fascist thinkers and this intellectual field that is the subject of this dissertation.

Fascist International Thought

A second conceptual issue surrounds the meaning of fascist international thought. This begs the more rudimentary question: what is fascism? The generic attributes of fascism as a mindset, ideology, or concept has proved a focal point for avid debate within the field of comparative fascist studies.[51] However, as explored further in Chapter V, debate within the Anglophone world over fascism's meaning and generic features can be dated to the interwar period itself, with competing arguments inextricably linked to the pro- or anti-fascist politics of their authors. Within popular discourse, both historical and contemporary, usage reaches ever greater heights of ambiguity, if not meaninglessness. As George Orwell remarked in 1944: 'I have heard it applied to… Kipling, Gandhi, Chiang Kai-Shek, homosexuality, Priestley's broadcasts, Youth Hostels, astrology, women, dogs and I do not know what else.'[52] While facetious, this points to a potential conceptual challenge for the present study. At the risk of creating a

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[48] Vineet Thakur, et al., 'Imperial Mission, "Scientific" Method: An Alternative Account of the Origins of IR', *Millennium* 46, no. 1 (2017): 3-23.
[49] Martin J. Bayly, 'Imagining New Worlds', *British Academy Review* (Summer 2017): 53, https://www.thebritishacademy.ac.uk/documents/521/BAR30-12-Bayly.pdf.
[50] See Andreas Wimmer and Nina Glick Schiller, 'Methodological Nationalism, the Social Sciences, and the Study of Migration: An Essay in Historical Epistemology', *International Migration Review* 37, no. 3 (2003): 576-610.
[51] See, e.g., Arnd Bauerkämper, 'A New Consensus? Recent Research on Fascism in Europe, 1918-1945', *History Compass* 4, no. 3 (2006): 536-8.
[52] George Orwell, *The Collected Essays, Journalism and Letters of George Orwell, Volume III: As I Please, 1943-1945*, eds. Sonia Orwell and Ian Angus (New York: Harvest Book, 1968), 113.

strawman, there is a prospective problem of dilution, whereby if the meaning of fascism is sufficiently hollowed-out to include, for example, any brand of imperial or reactionary, conservative politics, then of course one would not be surprised in the slightest that 'fascists' had engaged with IR's past. Indeed, depending on the method of dilution, they may still be in our disciplinary midst. To avoid slipping into this error, a precise and historically sensitive conceptualisation of fascism is warranted. Moreover, while this injunction is primarily grounded in a concern for capturing fascism's distinctiveness relative to other ideologies, this conceptual move also serves to create something of a hard test: if fascism is defined in a highly precise fashion, it logically raises the evidentiary threshold that I need to fulfil in order to support my argument.

Following the oft-cited definition of the political scientist Roger Griffin, I understand fascism as 'a genus of political ideology whose mythic core in its various permutations is a palingenetic form of populist ultra-nationalism'.[53] Two concepts are key in this interpretation: palingenesis and ultra-nationalism. Griffin defines the former 'as a generic term for the vision of a radically *new* beginning which follows a period of destruction or perceived dissolution'.[54] Palingenesis thus entails a mythic hope of national rebirth. While the latter concept, namely ultra-nationalism, alludes to connotations of extreme nationalism—clearly a core feature of fascism—Griffin specifies that the prefix *ultra* is used per its Latin root to imply 'beyond'; that is, the fascist vision of the nation is 'irrevocably beyond the spectrum of social ideals compatible with liberal democracy', such as egalitarianism, individualism, and humanism.[55] Fascism, therefore, encompasses a reactionary component. However, it should not be conceived primarily as such.[56] Fascism was foremost a revolutionary creed, '*a totalizing vision of national or ethnic rebirth*'.[57] The imagined revolution and its prophecy of communal revivification were imbued with a regenerative, totalitarian, nationalist vision and a type of anthropological transformation to realise the lauded new fascist man.[58] As the leading Italian fascist internationalist, Asvero Gravelli, proclaimed:

> [T]he Fascist Revolution cannot be considered merely a movement of reaction, of counter-reformation, of anti-democracy, or anti-liberalism… Precisely because the development of the process of civilization is incessant, the ideas of democracy and liberalism cannot be considered final destinations, as if human civilization had exhausted its capacity… for progress.[59]

While key intellectual precursors developed in the late nineteenth century, fascism as a concrete ideology and transnational phenomena crystallised within the fractured societies of interwar Europe. As Griffin suggests,

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[53] Roger Griffin, *The Nature of Fascism* (London: Routledge, 1993), 44.
[54] *Ibid*, 33 (emphasis in original).
[55] Roger Griffin, *Fascism: An Introduction to Comparative Fascist Studies* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2018), 41-2.
[56] Cf. Joseph MacKay and Christopher David LaRoche, 'Why is there No Reactionary International Theory?', *International Studies Quarterly* 62, no. 2 (2018): 234-44.
[57] Roger Griffin, *Modernism and Fascism: The Sense of a Beginning under Mussolini and Hitler* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), 182 (emphasis in original).
[58] *Ibid.*
[59] Asvero Gravelli, 'Towards a Fascist Europe', in *Fascism*, ed. Roger Griffin (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), 66.

fascism was both a product of and a solution to the profound sense of epochal crisis that dominated Europe and the perceived decadence afflicting individual societies and Western civilisation as such.[60]

As it pertains to fascist *international* thought, then, it is difficult to provide synoptic generalisations about its contents due to fascism's vast ideological 'speciation'.[61] The internal diversity of fascist international thought is arguably more acute than other ideologies due to its numerous permutations, each 'an exclusive product of different national strands of interwoven history, culture and collective fantasy'.[62] Compare, for instance, the expansionist ambitions of German Nazism against the vision of perpetual peace imagined by BUF leader Oswald Mosley, what he dubbed the 'immense majesty of Fascist Peace', a subject explored in Chapter IV.[63] Unsurprisingly, this tendency towards diversity was also apparent within the worldview of fascists sharing a singular national community. For instance, notable differences demarcate the beliefs of Mosley from Arnold Leese, the latter a rabid biological antisemite and founder of the Imperial Fascist League. Despite Mosley's deployment of an ethnonationalist, conspiratorial form of antisemitism, Leese chastised Mosley as a 'Kosher' fascist for his supposed weakness on the 'Jewish Question'.[64] Differences of opinion on international affairs amongst interwar Anglophone thinkers of the extreme right may partly be attributable to the practicalities of politics, factionalism, divergent national traditions or perceptions thereof, and a variance in the eclectic intellectual resources from which actors borrowed. In a wider sense, though, the heterogeneity of fascist international thought reflects fascism's inherently 'protean quality'.[65]

This mutability is compounded by post-war developments in the extreme right landscape, from the advent of Third Positionism to Universal Nazism.[66] Moreover, while some post-war agitators have consciously identified as fascists, others have embraced comparable myths of ultra-nationalist palingenesis and adapted ideas from the canon of fascist thought, albeit avoiding self-ascription to the irredeemably tarnished and politically inexpedient F-word. However, if fascism's ideal-typical core is to be found in an ideological matrix privileging ultra-nationalist palingenesis, then fascist—versus, for example, conservative—international thought is simply speculation on world politics expounded by those who hold such myths. Yet this slightly cryptic definition begs the question: how do such myths manifest in the realm of international thought and are common features discernible? At this preliminary stage, two central attributes are fruitful to highlight.

First, the scope of the communal referent and envisioned unit of political authority (e.g., nation-state, empire, federation) is somewhat agnostic among fascist thinkers. Despite this heterogeneity, the fascist outlook vis-à-vis other polities and peoples is perforce anti-cosmopolitan, exclusionary, and hierarchical. Fascists were

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[60] Griffin, *Modernism and Fascism*.
[61] Griffin, *Fascism: An Introduction*, 64.
[62] *Ibid.*
[63] Oswald Mosley, *Blackshirt Policy* (London: B.U.F. Publications, 1933), 43.
[64] Steven Woodbridge, 'Fraudulent Fascism: The Attitude of Early British Fascists towards Mosley and the New Party', *Contemporary British History* 23, no. 4 (2009): 505.
[65] Griffin, *Fascism: An Introduction*, 63.
[66] Roger Griffin, 'Interregnum or Endgame? The Radical Right in the "Post-fascist" Era', *Journal of Political Ideologies* 5, no. 2 (2000): 163-78.

historically inspired by an especially visceral belief in social Darwinism and European cultural or racial superiority.[67] For some, this validated expansion and colonisation within the European heartland. For others, this ideological matrix was unaccompanied by expansionist dreams or otherwise confined to a desire for the maintenance of an existing empire. Territorial aggrandisement should therefore not be considered germane to the fascist 'quest for an ideal form of Fatherland', even if the nature of this creed renders it highly amenable to such ambitions.[68] Fuelled by notions of racial or national chauvinism, anti-cosmopolitanism is, however, an intrinsic attribute. For its protagonists, the ultra-nation—the fascist revolution's quintessential referent—may be imagined in relation to some geographically, racially, or ethnically defined nation-state, a transnational white race, a pan-European identity, or another referent altogether. In any case, the ultra-nation need not be parochially conceived. Yet the fascist opposition to egalitarianism and cosmopolitanism, or what interwar fascists often lambasted as 'internationalism',[69] inevitably sets spatial limits to the glorified imagined community. This is not to suggest that fascist ultra-nationalism cannot coexist with other ideological, civilisational, or racial solidarities. Such exclusionary and anti-cosmopolitan proclivities may still permit a sort of ecumenical fascism or a loose fascist universalism.

Second, fascist international thought is virulently anti-liberal and anti-Marxist. This disposition manifests not simply in an objection to materialism, individualism, egalitarianism, and the institutions of liberal democracy, but in the utopian dream of a revolutionary overhaul of society. To the extent that the ills of liberal-capitalist modernity are conceived as operating on a transnational level, this stance contains an innately international component. Whether understood in geopolitical terms as a rivalry between the so-called Anglo-French plutocratic powers and the 'have-nots', or framed as a pernicious assault on the nation, race, or civilisation by a network of liberal elites, international bureaucrats, and Jewish 'globalists', fascists have all too often levelled a vitriolic assault against the perceived constitution of the liberal international order (LIO) and those actors allegedly upholding it.

While these two characteristics afford insight into the broad contours of fascist international thinking, they do not capture the diversity nor breadth of contents. With that said, the chapters below add further substance to the above observations and highlight a raft of other attributes and intellectual threads. Yet it should be captioned from the outset that while I have offered some broad, illustrative observations on fascist international thought, this dissertation does not offer a neatly distilled checklist of its germane features. Indeed, attempting to derive a sort of *ur-fascism* for historians of international thought would be a foolhardy exercise, whereby one seeks in vain to offer a series of dot pointed characteristics amounting to a definitional checklist of fascist conceptions of the international. Such a list would inevitably be incomplete, too cumbersome to be heuristically useful, or overly Procrustean (thereby forcing diverse thinkers into a poorly fitted mould). Rather than offering such a list, then, I will repeat my

[67] See Eatwell, 'Generic Fascism', 175-6.
[68] Aristotle A. Kallis, 'To Expand or Not to Expand? Territory, Generic Fascism and the Quest for an "Ideal Fatherland"', *Journal of Contemporary History* 38, no. 2 (2003): 237-60.
[69] Aristotle Kallis, 'From CAUR to EUR: Italian Fascism, the "Myth of Rome" and the Pursuit of International Primacy', *Patterns of Prejudice* 50, no. 4-5 (2016): 362; Benjamin G. Martin, *The Nazi-Fascist New Order for European Culture* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2016), 3.

aforementioned observation: if the ideal-typical core of fascism is to be found in an ideological matrix privileging ultra-nationalist palingenesis, then fascist international thought is simply speculation on world politics expounded by those who hold such myths. As will become apparent in coming chapters, the international thought of such thinkers was remarkably heterogeneous, and it is precisely this messy complexity that I desire to capture.

A Catalogue of Unsavoury Characters

The empirical chapters below are organised into two parts, each structured around a key set of themes and thinkers. While I outline these in the next section, a brief comment is warranted on why the catalogue of individuals discussed are selected. Three points may be noted. First, my case selection begins by making recourse to the revisionist literature on IR's history; that is, I opt to focus on themes that are, while by no means the central focus of recent literature, prominent nevertheless. For example, in the aftermath of the First World War, the task of unearthing the causation of war and deciphering the schematics for its mitigation or eradication became focal points for research within the emerging field. Even a cursory survey of contemporaneous book or article titles betrays the sheer volume of reflection on this theme.[70] In some respects, rumination about the problematic of war reflected a sort of meta-debate. This theme—which revisionist disciplinary historiography has often, whether in detail or in passing, captured—impinged upon many of the more granular international questions occupying interwar thinkers, from capitalism's relationship to war and debate over the efficacy of the League's architecture, to contemplation regarding the establishment of a global air force and the fleeting popularity of world federalism.[71] It is this theme that undergirds Part I of the dissertation. Part II adopts a different point of departure, one increasingly present in revisionist disciplinary histories: the international affairs think tank. Scholars have provided episodic accounts of the then-recently formed Council on Foreign Relations (CFR), Chatham House, the Institute of Pacific Relations, and the Williamstown Institute of Politics (IOP), among other bodies.[72] By offering a forum for discussion and scholarship, think tanks had a central place in the dissemination of early twentieth-century international thought,

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[70] See, e.g., Dickinson, G. Lowes. *Causes of International War* (London: Swarthmore Press, 1920); Arthur Porritt, ed. *The Causes of War: Economic, Industrial, Racial, Religious, Scientific and Political* (London: Macmillan and Co., 1932); Henry Brinton, ed., *Does Capitalism Cause War?* (London: H. & E.R. Brinton, 1935); Quincy Wright, *The Causes of War and the Conditions of Peace* (New York: Longmans, Green and Company, 1935).

[71] See, e.g., Ashworth, 'Realist-Idealist Great Debate'; Casper Sylvest, 'Interwar Internationalism, the British Labour Party, and the Historiography of International Relations', *International Studies Quarterly* 48, no. 2 (2004): 409-32; Duncan Bell, 'Before the Democratic Peace: Racial Utopianism, Empire and the Abolition of War', *European Journal of International Relations* 20, no. 3 (2014): 647-70; Jens Steffek and Leonie Holthaus, 'The Social-Democratic Roots of Global Governance: Welfare Internationalism from the 19th Century to the United Nations', *European Journal of International Relations* 24, no. 1 (2018): 118; Ricardo Villanueva, 'How Norman Angell Reveals the Significance of Marxism and Socialism in Early IR and a Debate before the "First Great Debate"', *International Studies Review* 22, no. 3 (2020): 441-63.

[72] See, e.g., Andrew Bosco and Cornelia Navari, eds., *Chatham House and British Foreign Policy, 1919-1945: The Royal Institute of International Affairs During the Inter-War Period* (London: Lothian Foundation Press, 1994); Inderjeet Parmar, *Think Tanks and Power in Foreign Policy: A Comparative Study of the Role and Influence of the Council on Foreign Relations and the Royal Institute of International Affairs, 1939-1945* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004); James McAllister, *Wilsonian Visions: The Williamstown Institute of Politics and American Internationalism after the First World War* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2021).

alongside IR's evolution. By rooting the episodes that I study thoroughly in the existing revisionist literature, I seek to return to familiar themes, persons, scholarly outlets, and institutional settings, albeit approaching them from a new and perhaps uncomfortable angle. In turn, the attendant thinkers studied in this dissertation each represented not only influential thinkers within far-right circles, but avid commentators on imperial and international affairs within Britain who were selected precisely because they engaged with—as, indeed, I will argue—IR's early think tanks and ongoing debates about the problematic of war.

Second, to adequately understand fascist speculation on the international, the diversity therein, and the varied engagement of such thinkers with the study of world politics, I have sought to consider a cross-section of thinkers from different intellectual backgrounds, philosophical standpoints, and—to an extent—genders.[73] It is along such lines that this dissertation also discusses certain far-right commentators who did not necessarily subscribe to the quintessential fascist myth of a totalitarian transformation of the ultra-nation, yet nevertheless made frequent recourse to the discourse of fascist universality, espoused strong ideological sympathies towards domestic and continental fascists, and operated in close association with fascist counterparts. After all, the actual meaning of fascism was a topic avidly debated by interwar critics and proponents alike. While several of the Italophilic figures discussed in Part II may therefore not conform to the definitional ideal-type of fascism mentioned above, they nevertheless embody a type of philo-fascism that warrants their positioning within a broader constellation of extreme right-wing voices involved in efforts to interpret and define what fascism meant before an Anglophone audience.

Third, if the cases below still seem arbitrary, this need not fundamentally detract from my purpose or argument. Given that I aim to explore the intersection between the interwar study of international politics within Britain and fascist international thought, what is required is that I convincingly demonstrate the existence of tangible examples, wherever these may be found, and thus the presence of *a* history. The selection of particular figures is, at least in part, a decision made precisely because primary source material indicates tangible points of engagement between their thought or activities and early IR. Provided that my conclusions are tempered to conform with the scope and limits of my cases, I need not establish, nor do I make any claim to offer, *the* complete history on the matter. It must be reiterated that the following does not attempt to deliver a broad survey of fascist international thought percolating interwar Britain, nor is it merely intended to offer an introductory overview of such speculation. The episodes recounted are at the service of an analytical argument regarding the interaction between fascists and the intellectual study of interwar international politics.

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[73] While the individuals discussed below are predominantly men, I endeavour to avoid a mere 'pseudo-inclusion' of women. As explored in Chapter VI, one of my central case studies involves a detailed engagement with the thought of one far-right woman. Moreover, my approach to IR's early history—and to studying the woman above—is partly informed by the Leverhulme-funded Women and the History of International Thought project. On 'pseudo-inclusion', see Beverly Thiele, 'Vanishing Acts in Social and Political: Tricks of the Trade', in *Feminist Challenges: Social and Political Theory*, eds. Carole Pateman and Elizabeth Grosz (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1987).

Inevitably, the catalogue of thinkers (and themes) selected will lead to omissions in coverage. In particular, I place aside the question of how fascists within the US engaged with the emerging study of IR in Britain and American political science. While I touch upon points of trans-Atlantic intellectual engagement, this wider Anglo-American frame is one warranting separate treatment. Exclusions of this sort are unavoidable. For present purposes, however, the alignment between those thinkers and themes discussed promises a sufficiently wide yet deep treatment of the subject. It provides a sound basis for exploring some of the most important manifestations of fascist international thought within interwar Britain and how such thinkers variously engaged with the study of international politics.

Outline

Following this introduction, Chapter II builds the foundations on which this dissertation develops. Its objectives are threefold. First, I elucidate the relevant lacunae by reviewing scholarship within the history of international thought and IR's disciplinary history regarding the intersection between fascism and the interwar study of world politics. Second, I propose a case for closer interdisciplinary engagement between IR and thematic and methodological developments within fascist studies. The latter, I argue, provides a valuable platform on which historical IR ought to proceed if it is to adequately engage with the subject of fascist international thought. Third, and based on the guiding assumptions established in the preceding section, I discern the specific methodological approach deployed in subsequent chapters.

The substantive, empirical chapters follow next. Part I conducts an exegesis of the international thought of Oswald Mosley, alongside adjacent ideologues within the BUF, as it pertains to the causes of war and the potential for its abolition. Accordingly, Chapter III excavates the strange, Janus-faced nature of Mosley's thought on the nexus between capitalism, imperialism, and war, alongside the various roots from which such thinking evolved. Emphasis is placed on J.A. Hobson's thought, the idiomatic pervasiveness of quasi-Malthusian logics, and a form of conspiratorial antisemitism. As I reveal, Mosley's thought is demonstrative of the fascist propensity to borrow and absorb ideas from across the political spectrum, including ideologically malleable and ostensibly anti-imperial lines of argumentation popular within the emergent study of international politics.

Chapter IV shifts towards the remedy proffered by Mosley to eradicate the scourge of war and realise an allegedly pacific states-system. As I argue, BUF discourse was replete with references to their supposed 'realist' inclinations. Intriguingly, however, Mosley's thought was also typified by a profound utopianism, offering a perceived solution to enact a permanent peace based on a particular ideological and 'raciological ordering of the world'.[74] Mosley's remedy and his defence thereof drew from varied intellectual currents and popular international

[74] Though coined by Paul Gilroy, I draw the phrase from from Musab Younis, 'The Grand Machinery of the World: Race, Global Order and the Black Atlantic' (PhD diss., University of Oxford, 2017), 14-40. Raciological ordering denotes the contingent, discursive construction of global order and race's central place therein. This encompasses both how a thinker believes an order presently 'operates' and/or their programmatic vision for reordering the international.

thinkers, many of which will be familiar to IR scholars. Whether it was Mosley's utilisation of a forerunner to the offence-defence theory—the latter an outgrowth of interwar strategic thought—to episodic reviews of key BUF ideologues in international affairs journals, a wider array of sporadic points of commonality, antecedence, and interaction were present. Indeed, as the chapter demonstrates, Mosley's mythic peace evolved out of the Victorian and Edwardian imperial discourse of 'Greater Britain', sharing many affinities with ideas found amongst the aforementioned Milner's Kindergarten and the Round Table movement, themselves 'some of the most influential theory–policy thinkers in [what Persaud calls] early British IR'.[75] This imperial vision was combined with a Wellsian belief in the pacifying potential of modern science, economic planning, and technology, which emerged from a common intellectual milieu that encompassed the likes of Hobson, Laski, and G.D.H. Cole.

In Part II, I turn towards an eclectic network of thinkers surrounding the so-called London Group for the Study of the Corporate State, a circle formerly affiliated with Chatham House. Foremost among this clique were Harold Elsdale Goad, director of the British Institute of Florence and lecturer of Italian at University College London (UCL); historian and foreign editor of the *English Review* Charles Petrie; British journalist Muriel Innes Currey; the aforementioned Italophilic propagandist James Strachey Barnes; fellow UCL professor and leading fascist internationalist Camillo Pellizzi; and former member of the League Secretariat's information section (1920-3) turned fascist propagandist Commendatore Luigi Villari. Except for the latter three, such figures did not embrace the revolutionary potential of fascism in its totality. Instead, they gravitated towards a form of philo-fascist, High Tory conservatism.

As alluded to above, Chapter V adopts as its point of departure the institutional setting of the international affairs think tank. The underlying ethos and research output of interwar IR think tanks have typically been viewed as elitist bastions of liberal internationalism and imperialism. Yet fascist engagement with such institutions is a comparatively neglected subject. By exploring how this clique interpreted continental fascist experiments, engaged with contemporaries in the study of IR, and utilised their membership within the Royal Institute of International Affairs (RIIA) to promote their ideas on the corporate state, Chapter V offers insight into a curious and unexplored episode in IR's formative history and interwar international thought.

Chapter VI builds on the prior, exploring Muriel Currey's thought in detail. Rather than focusing on Currey's views on corporatism, I turn towards her rumination on the problematic of war and its prevention, alongside the question of fascist imperialism and revisionism. In the process, I reveal the variegated beliefs and tensions encapsulated within her worldview as she attempted to reconcile advocacy for the League of Nations with a peculiar melange of High Tory conservatism, Italophilic solidarity, and pro-fascist affinities.[76] In turn, I not only

[75] Persaud, 'Ideology, Socialization and Hegemony', 113.

[76] Parts of Chapters II, VI, and VII have been published in Kye J. Allen, 'Why is There No History of Fascist International Thought?', *Millennium* 51, no. 3 (2023): 758-84; Kye J. Allen, "A Pro-Fascist English Lady": The International Thought of Muriel Innes Currey'. *Global Studies Quarterly* 3, no. 1 (2023): 1-13.

recover the international thought of a woman largely marginalised in historical accounts of British fascism and entirely absent from IR, but unearth her varied points of engagement with IR's early history.

Finally, Chapter VII surveys the main interpretive implications and scholarly contributions of this dissertation. Crucially, though, I also delve into the contemporary relevance of studying forms of far-right engagement with political science and IR. In this sense, the second half of Chapter VII offers a postscript to my interwar history, wherein I outline and elucidate the implications of two modes of extra-disciplinary reception typifying the sporadic post-war nexus between far-right actors and disciplinary IR.

Chapter II.
The Disciplinary History of IR, or: Where Are All the Fascists?

Per the norm within fascist studies, one can research fascism in an empathic fashion while continuing to approach the matter 'in a strictly non-apologetic, non-revisionist sense'.[1] Simply, fascist political thought may be subjected to historical excavation, without moral exculpation. While approaching the content of such thought as a serious body of ideas is commonplace within fascist studies, it is perhaps a proposition less familiar to some IR scholars. Consequently, this chapter implores the latter to adapt salient thematic and methodological developments within fascist studies as a basis on which to take the ideas of the extreme right 'seriously' as a subject of enquiry, a necessary precursor if one is to situate such thinkers within, or in relation to, the interwar study of international politics.[2]

This chapter comprises three parts. First, I survey the comparative lack of research within IR about the relationship between fascist international thought and the interwar study of world politics. Second, I outline the empathic approach within fascist studies, its disciplinary divide from the history of international thought, and the grounds for greater interdisciplinarity. Third, and building on the prior, I detail the specific methodological tools used within this dissertation.

Fragments and Limitations

Fascism was a subject of intense discussion within interwar Anglo-American academe. IR textbooks from the period offer fascinating glimpses not only into fascism's reception amongst noted international thinkers, but the actual content of fascist thought itself.[3] A flurry of interwar studies also emerged on the Italian corporate state by such scholars as G. Lowell Field, Michael T. Florinsky, Carmen Haider, Carl T. Schmidt, Herbert W. Schnieder, and H. Arthur Steiner, among others. Alongside scholarship authored by Anglophone academics and thinkers, many Italian and German tracts regularly featured in the review section of leading IR and political science journals. Some notable IR scholars in the immediate post-war decades, such as Elizabeth Wiskemann and John Wheeler-Bennett, also became recognised experts on, respectively, fascist Italy and Nazi Germany.[4] While interest in studying fascism amongst IR scholars gradually faded over the post-war decades, the subject was clearly a topical one amongst interwar contemporaries. Nevertheless, IR scholars and historians of international thought have yet to adequately

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[1] Roger Griffin, 'The Fascination of Fascism: A Concluding Interview with Roger Griffin', in *A Fascist Century: Essays by Roger Griffin*, ed. Matthew Feldman (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), 211.

[2] This phrase, 'taking fascists seriously', borrows from Michael Mann, *Fascists* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), Chapter 1. It is also central to Feldman's edited volume, *A Fascist Century*. This chapter transplants this injunction onto IR's disciplinary history and the history of international thought.

[3] See, e.g., Frederick L. Schuman, *International Politics: An Introduction to the Western State System*, 2nd edn. (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1937); Harold Sprout and Margaret Sprout, eds., *Foundations of National Power: Readings on World Politics and American Security* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1945).

[4] On Wiskemann and Wheeler-Bennett, see, respectively, Geoffrey Field, 'Elizabeth Wiskemann, Scholar-Journalist, and the Study of International Relations', in *Women's International Thought: A New History*, eds. Patricia Owens and Katharina Rietzler (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2021); Victoria Schofield, *Witness to History: The Life of John Wheeler-Bennett* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2012).

explore the reception of fascist thinkers and how such extremists engaged with the early field. IR's disciplinary history has been traditionally cast as overwhelmingly dominated by a naive liberal internationalism, one eventually supplanted by a pragmatic realism. For Stanley Hoffmann, the interwar period was characterised by a 'reassertion of utopia', an idealism that confused 'the savage world of the 1930s for a community, the League for a modern Church, and collective security for a common duty'.[5]

Since the mid-1990s, however, IR's history has been re-evaluated. Two strands of revisionist literature are particularly relevant. One faction has challenged the 'noble myth' that the field immaculately emerged in 1919 with the mission of eliminating the scourge of war.[6] To quote one somewhat dated exercise in disciplinary stocktaking: '[t]he increasing need to avoid war served, understandably, as the greatest stimulant to the study of International Relations'.[7] In place of this simplified rendition, scholars have highlighted the less palatable imperial and racist side of liberal internationalist thinking and IR's disciplinary origins. Robert Vitalis, for instance, discerns how in its nineteenth-century American antecedence, IR was effectively synonymous with the study of 'race relations', while the politics of colonial administration were at the forefront of academic enquiry.[8] Another group of revisionists have focused on correcting misconceptions about, and recovering the nuances of, so-called 'idealist' international thought and wider debates occupying the nascent field.[9] As Brian Schmidt summarises, 'the basic problem with the story of interwar idealism is that it is essentially mistaken'.[10] Ashworth, for example, argues that the intellectual landscape was not typified by a realist-idealist 'Great Debate', but punctured by numerous fissures and organised around three main axes: the relationship between war and capitalism, the question of fascist revisionism, and the validity of American isolationism.[11]

Both revisionist avenues have added much to rectify the distorted image of interwar British international thought and the emerging study of world politics. However, by recovering the arguments propounded by internationalists who have been identified as dominant voices within IR's formative history, much revisionist historiography has inadvertently placed fascist thought beyond its purview. As Sylvest notes, '[t]he historiography is skewed in left-liberal directions'.[12] There is a comparative silence on the political right and 'the intellectual underpinnings of a more sceptical, conservative stance on international politics, except as they have been (not always

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[5] Stanley Hoffmann, 'An American Social Science: International Relations', *Daedalus* 106, no. 3 (1977): 43.
[6] de Carvalho, et al. 'Big Bangs of IR', 749.
[7] Trevor Taylor, 'Introduction: The Nature of International Relations', in *Approaches and Theory in International Relations*, ed. Trevor Taylor (London: Longman, 1978), 7.
[8] Vitalis, *White World Order*, 1.
[9] See especially Long and Wilson, *Thinkers of the Twenty Years' Crisis*.
[10] Brian C. Schmidt, 'Anarchy, World Politics and the Birth of a Discipline: American International Relations, Pluralist Theory and the Myth of Interwar Idealism', *International Relations* 16, no. 1 (2002): 9.
[11] Ashworth, 'Realist-Idealist Great Debate', 33-4.
[12] Sylvest, *British Liberal Internationalism*, 239.

reliably) relayed by their ideological opponents'.[13] This observation is equally applicable to fascist international thought and its relationship to the interwar study of international politics.

In one sense, Nazi antisemitism and militarism had an enduring impact on IR, precipitating the emigration of notable Jewish scholars including Carl Deutsch, Ernst B. Haas, John Herz, Hans J. Morgenthau, Georg Schwarzenberger, and Arnold Wolfers.[14] Yet this *disciplinary* impact is somewhat inadvertent and indirect; the emigration of such figures was a byproduct of fascist policy. Others have pointed to the ostensible delegitimisation of geopolitics within the emerging field due to its association with Karl Haushofer and the Nazi regime.[15] Yet neither of these developments necessarily touch on how fascist thinkers themselves engaged or interacted with the early field. A similar observation can be applied to recent disciplinary histories: Axis *revisionism* was a referent around which international thinkers ruminated and mobilised, yet one is imparted with the impression that fascist *thinkers* were to be found nowhere near the field. For example, within Ashworth's expansive body of scholarship, which addresses various aspects of IR's disciplinary history and international thought more broadly, fascists are relegated to the periphery. While debates occupying contemporary commentators centred around fascist revisionism, the 'voice' of fascist thinkers remains absent. What can be pieced together from existing histories about fascism's relationship to the field is largely an assortment derived from, admittedly interesting and informed, snippets.

With that said, several pieces since the advent of IR's 'historiographical turn' and the concurrent 'international turn' in intellectual history have dealt with aspects of fascist international thought and its relationship to currents of thinking popular within the study of international politics.[16] As noted in Chapter I, Knutsen, while largely dismissing fascism's place within the field, at least touches on the subject: fascism was a predominantly 'anti-intellectual movement, and exerted only slight influence on International Relations'. In the rare instance that fascism was mentioned, it was 'regularly rejected as unhelpful, if not inimical'.[17] Stöckmann offers a different interpretation. For him, fascism was not absent from the interwar field. Rather, it was present yet naively approached: 'the corpus of early IR scholarship was ill-equipped to handle the authoritarian leaders… Instead, political extremists used

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[13] *Ibid.* For exceptions, see Jennifer Welsh, '"I" is for Ideology: Conservatism in International Affairs', *Global Society* 17, no. 2 (2003): 165-85; Ian Hall and Nicholas Rengger, 'The Right that Failed? The Ambiguities of Conservative Thought and the Dilemmas of Conservative Practice in International Affairs', *International Affairs* 81, no. 1 (2005): 69-82; Knutsen, *History of International Relations Theory*. Scholarship on the history of twentieth-century realism abounds. Though conservative in disposition, realism—as a scholarly tradition—is agnostic in party-political terms.

[14] Felix Rösch, ed., *Émigré Scholars and the Genesis of International Relations: A European Discipline in America?* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014).

[15] See, e.g., A.J.R. Groom, et al., *International Relations Then and Now: Origins and Trends in Interpretation*, 2nd edn. (Abingdon: Routledge, 2019), 146; Amitav Acharya and Barry Buzan, *The Making of Global International Relations: Origins and Evolution of IR at its Centenary* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019), 141.

[16] On the historiographical and international turn, see, respectively, Duncan Bell, 'International Relations: The Dawn of a Historiographical Turn?', *British Journal of Political and International Relations* 3, no. 1 (2001): 115-26; David Armitage, *Foundations of Modern International Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012).

[17] Knutsen, *History of International Relations Theory*, 257-8.

academic conferences to propagate official foreign policy'.[18] Indeed, Stöckmann briefly mentions a speech that the aforementioned Villari made before Chatham House in defence of Italy's invasion of Abyssinia. Stöckmann likewise nods towards the prior noted contribution of Davanzati and Coppola, alongside the participation of the German lawyer Fritz Berber, at the ISC.[19] Howard LeRoy Malchow's textbook offers an incisive comment on fascism's status as a 'ghost at the table' of 'interwar international relations theory', a spectral figure whose absence is curious given, he adds, the ostensible affinity between 'Cold War Realism' and fascist international thought.[20] In this sense, Malchow veers towards a similar interpretation to Stöckmann insofar as fascist thinkers are implied to be present, in some shape or form, within contemporary debates, yet absent from subsequent retellings of the field's history.

Others have also pointed to fascist participation in the ISC. Peter Marcus Kristensen contends that fascist thinkers were by and large absent from its sessions. Yet he draws attention to the select few 'vocal delegates' from Italy and Germany who attended.[21] Jo-Anne Pemberton likewise notes that fascist efforts to engage with the International Institute of Intellectual Cooperation formed part of a wider effort to promote Italian soft power.[22] In turn, she highlights the call by Italian nationalist-turned-fascist hierarch Alfredo Rocco for the 'scientific study of international relations', while unearthing the efforts of the Italian Coordinating Committee for the Scientific Study of International Relations, then under the presidency of Minister of Public Education Giovanni Gentile.[23] In another contribution, Kristensen and his co-author Ole Wæver return to the so-called realist-idealist debate, finding that a dispute of sorts did transpire during the 1930s contrary to revisionist scholars, yet it was quite unlike the 'Great Debate' conjured in traditional narrations. In studying the ISC archives, Kristensen and Wæver identify such fascist scholars as Berber, Coppola, and Davanzati as important voices whose arguments, while in the minority, shaped the terms of debate at the ISC around which noted thinkers responded, from G.M. Gathorne-Hardy and Charles Manning to Gilbert Murray. Notably, too, such fascists made early recourse to the 'realist' label, which served as a rhetorical move in defence of their preferred position.[24]

Katharina Rietzler has interrogated the curious case of the aforementioned Berber in further detail. In the process, her account offers insight into the entanglements between the German jurist and the interwar study of international politics. Berber briefly lectured on international relations at a Quaker college in Birmingham after

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[18] Stöckmann, *Architects*, 305.
[19] *Ibid*, 234.
[20] Howard LeRoy Malchow, *History and International Relations: From the Ancient World to the 21st Century*, 2nd edn. (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2020), 32.
[21] Peter Marcus Kristensen, '"Peaceful Change" in International Relations: A Conceptual Archaeology'. *International Theory* 13, no. 1 (2021): 44. See also Michael Riemens, 'International Academic Cooperation on International Relations in the Interwar Period: The International Studies Conference', *Review of International Studies* 37, no. 2 (2011): 921.
[22] Jo-Anne Pemberton, *The Story of International Relations, Part Two: Cold-Blooded Idealists* (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2019), 76-7.
[23] *Ibid*, 76-92.
[24] Peter Marcus Kristensen and Ole Wæver, 'The Realism-Idealism Debate in the International Studies Conference, 1933-1937', *Security Studies* 33, no. 4 (2024): 573-606.

finishing his legal studies in 1926 and from 1930 he would come to teach at the *Deutsche Hochschule für Politik* (German Academy for Politics).[25] Under the Third Reich, Berber grew close to Foreign Minister Joachim von Ribbentrop and was subsequently appointed as acting director of the Hamburg *Institut für Auswärtige Politik* (Institute for Foreign Policy) and later a professor at the University of Berlin.[26] As Rietzler reveals, Berber's treatment of international law 'found admirers among disaffected liberal internationalists and legal sceptics abroad'.[27] E.H. Carr even quoted Berber's *Sicherheit und Gerechtigkeit* favourably in *The Twenty Years' Crisis*.[28] Moreover, Berber was engaged with a raft of institutions centred on the study of world politics, lecturing at the European Centre of the Carnegie Endowment and Chatham House, while he effectively used the 'ISC as a launch pad to enmesh himself in a transnational network of international relations specialists'.[29]

Pemberton provides a brief reference to James Strachey Barnes' *The Universal Aspects of Fascism*, as well as sporadic citations to one article by Charles Petrie.[30] In a similar vein, Ian Hall's doctoral dissertation on Herbert Butterfield, Arnold Toynbee, and Martin Wight makes incidental reference to reviews in *International Affairs* which pertain to figures discussed in Part II, albeit it is unclear if Hall is aware of their fascist sympathies. One review is a trenchant 1929 reply to Toynbee's *Survey of International Affairs* by the aforementioned Barnes—which Hall offhandedly describes as not dissimilar to Carr's critique a decade later—while the other was written by Wight himself on one of Petrie's post-war books.[31] Elsewhere, while not fully capturing the extent to which the acclaimed military strategist J.F.C. Fuller 'flirted' with fascism, Hall offers a perceptive comment regarding his links to the BUF and how a tainted post-war reputation made it difficult for him 'to establish something akin to an "English school" of strategic studies'.[32]

Alternatively, Jens Steffek's seminal scholarship on technocratic internationalism has probed illiberal currents of thinking, drawing attention to, for example, E.H. Carr's fascistic influences—a subject I explore in detail within Chapter V—as well as the similarities between David Mitrany's functionalism and the thought of Italian diplomat and corporatist theorist Giuseppe de Michelis.[33] Along a different route, Andrew Crozier has explored the interlinkage between Chatham House and appeasement. While touching on themes that also detain this dissertation,

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[25] Katharina Rietzler, 'Counter-Imperial Orientalism: Friedrich Berber and the Politics of International Law in Germany and India, 1920s-1960s', *Journal of Global History* 11, no. 1 (2016): 118-9.
[26] *Ibid*, 121.
[27] *Ibid*, 124.
[28] *Ibid*, 123.
[29] *Ibid*, 124.
[30] Pemberton, *Story of International Relations*, 498.
[31] Ian Hall, 'Sir Herbert Butterfield, Arnold J. Toynbee and Martin Wight and the Crisis of International Politics: A Study in International Thought' (PhD diss., University of St Andrews, 2002), 54, 191-2.
[32] Ian Hall, *Dilemmas of Decline: British Intellectuals and World Politics, 1945-1975* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2012), 155.
[33] Jens Steffek, 'Fascist Internationalism', *Millennium* 44, no. 1 (2015): 3-22; Jens Steffek, *International Organization as Technocratic Utopia* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2021), Chapter 4; Jens Steffek and Francesca Antonini, 'Toward Eurafrica! Fascism, Corporativism, and Italy's Colonial Expansion', in *Radicals and Reactionaries in Twentieth-Century International Thought*, ed. Ian Hall (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015).

Crozier's account focuses on two mainstays of interwar IR: Toynbee and Lord Lothian. Aside from a couple mentions of Berber, Crozier does not investigate how fascist thinkers themselves engaged with Chatham House.[34] Likewise, while not concerned with fascist interactions *with* the field, Seán Molloy offers a rich account of Hegel's reception *within* IR, which had once been heavily tainted by his perceived culpability in laying Nazism's ideological foundations. In the process, Molloy provides some interesting comments on how Wickham Steed, Chatham House member and former *Times* editor, conceived of the so-called German geopolitical school and its Hegelian roots.[35] Leonie Holthaus has also offered a perceptive treatment of Carr's comments on the international thought of Hitler and the historian's reception amongst his liberal and left-wing contemporaries.[36] With that said, Holthaus' study is more concerned with Carr's reflections on Nazism and how this filtered into his thought, rather than on Carr's engagement with fascist intellectuals or how the latter may have directly interacted with, or published in the outlets read by, Carr. In fact, it is curious that Carr's citations to the scholarship of Berber are not expressly touched upon.[37]

Alternatively, Ido Oren's seminal account investigates how fascism figured in the scholarship of interwar American political science.[38] Vitalis, who also cites Oren, likewise offers intriguing comment on the reception of Frederick L. Schuman's 1936 *Nazi Dictatorship*, which received some critique by fellow political scientists for its overly critical portrayal of the Third Reich.[39] My study diverges from Oren's in three obvious respects. First, the focus herein is primarily on Britain, rather than the US. Second, and relatedly, the referent which I am concerned with, namely the interwar study of world politics, entails the exploration of a more nebulously bordered terrain. What passed for the study of international politics in Britain was undertaken by a diverse range of scholars and professionals. It is this ecosystem which I am focused on and not purely the discipline of political science. Third, and most importantly, this dissertation's point of departure is how fascists engaged with the study of international politics, rather than how any such emergent field thought about fascism (albeit this angle is inevitably touched upon in subsequent chapters). Moreover, while some political scientists discussed by Oren advocated the study of the Italian experiment as to draw lessons for American democracy, they did not embrace the latter's usurpation by fascist dictatorship.[40]

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[34] Andrew J. Crozier, 'Chatham House and Appeasement', in *Chatham House and British Foreign Policy, 1919-1945: The Royal Institute of International Affairs During the Inter-War Period*, eds. Andrew Bosco and Cornelia Navari (London: Lothian Foundation Press, 1994).

[35] Seán Molloy, 'Reception, Context and Canonicity: The Demonization, Normalization and Eventual Proliferation of G. W. F. Hegel in International Relations', *Leiden Journal of International Relations* 35, no. 3 (2022): 497-520.

[36] Leonie Holthaus, 'Prussianism, Hitlerism, Realism: The German Legacy in British International Thought', in *Radicals and Reactionaries in Twentieth-Century International Thought*, ed. Ian Hall (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015).

[37] E.H. Carr, *The Twenty Years' Crisis, 1919-1939: An Introduction to the Study of International Relations* (London: Macmillan, 1939).

[38] Oren, 'Uncritical Portrayals'.

[39] Vitalis, *White World Order*, 88.

[40] Oren, 'Uncritical Portrayals', 113.

Initial forays have also been made into IR's evolution under Italian and German dictatorships. Federico Giona's doctoral dissertation studies interwar Italian international affairs think tanks, touching on interesting intersections between the study of international politics in Italy and the Anglophone world.[41] Pemberton, albeit to a much lesser degree, also comments upon Italian think tanks, as mentioned above.[42] Deniz Kuru's doctoral dissertation explores IR's disciplinary history in Germany and France. While granting readers snippets on the fate of the *Deutsche Hochschule für Politik*, he explicitly places the Nazi era beyond his purview.[43] Steven D. Korenblat has similarly enquired into the history of the *Hochschule*. While focusing on the period between 1920 and 1933, his account provides keen insight into the organisation's transformation under Nazi rule.[44] By contrast, Ashworth touches on the fuzzy case of Karl Haushofer, his international thought constituting 'a particularly right-wing and anti-democratic variety of geopolitics', yet one bereft of the 'Nazi preoccupation with race'.[45] Ashworth's research offers comment on this current of thought, the non-existence of the infamous *Institut für Geopolitik*, and the influence of geopolitics on (and the Haushoferian foil used by) the likes of Isaiah Bowman and Derwent Whittlesey.[46] Lastly, I would be remiss not to add that amongst the ever-expanding literature on Carl Schmitt's international thought, scholars have offered some tantalising comments on his interaction with, and influence on, Morgenthau (not least the latter's accusation that Schmitt plagiarised his doctoral dissertation).[47]

Notwithstanding the identification of such fascinating snippets, the relationship between fascists and the early study of international politics in Britain has garnered vastly less attention compared to other strands of thought, whether realist, liberal, socialist, subaltern, varying imperial discourses, or wider currents of white supremacism. Indeed, there is no singular article or monographic treatment on how fascists engaged with IR's interwar history in Britain, nor the US for that matter. This omission reflects a broader trend within historical IR regarding the comparatively limited extent of enquiry into fascist international thought. For Alexander D. Barder, the study of

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[41] Federico Giona, 'Think Tanks and International Affairs during the Interwar Period: ISPI (Institute for Studies in International Politics) between Foreign Policy and Public Opinion (1919-1943)' (PhD diss., IMT School for Advanced Studies Lucca, 2016).

[42] Pemberton, *Story of International Relations*.

[43] Kuru, 'Institutes, Scholars, and Transnational Dynamics'.

[44] Steven D. Korenblat, 'A School for the Republic? Cosmopolitans and Their Enemies at the *Deutsche Hochschule für Politik*, 1920-1933', *Central European History* 39, no. 3 (2006): 394-430.

[45] Lucian M. Ashworth, *A History of International Thought: From the Origins of the Modern State to Academic International Relations* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2014), 203-6.

[46] See *ibid*, alongside Lucian M. Ashworth, 'Mapping a New World: Geography and the Interwar Study of International Relations', *International Studies Quarterly* 57, no. 1 (2013): 138-49. For further on the 'myth' of the institute, see David Thomas Murphy, 'Hitler's Geostrategist?: The Myth of Karl Haushofer and the "*Institut für Geopolitik*"', *The Historian* 76, no. 1 (2014): 1-25.

[47] See especially Martti Koskenniemi, 'Carl Schmitt, Hans Morgenthau, and the Image of Law in International Relations', in *The Role of Law in International Politics: Essays in International Relations and International Law*, ed. Michael Byers (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000); William E. Scheuerman, 'Carl Schmitt and Hans Morgenthau: Realism and Beyond', in *Realism Reconsidered: The Legacy of Hans Morgenthau in International Relations*, ed. Michael C. Williams (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008).

fascism from a comparative and global angle 'remains missing' in IR.[48] Identifying a similar omission, Bell concludes that the history of international thought has, with few exceptions, been absent of research into 'radical and reactionary forms of internationalism, from Communist through to Nazi'.[49] Fascism remains curiously absent even when this should seemingly not be the case. For example, Karma Nabulsi's idea of 'martialism', a tradition centred on the transcendent value of war and the right to conquest, is one largely pervading interwar fascist thought.[50] While Nabulsi astutely recognises this symbiosis, her study does not recover how this tradition manifested in fascist thought, but rather illuminate its oft-neglected prevalence among British thinkers of other ideological persuasions. This absence is more conspicuous in Jens Bartelson's study of 'ontogenetic war'.[51] As Antoine Bousquet opines, 'it is rather surprising that fascism does not receive a single mention throughout since its ideology and political manifestations arguably represent the apogee of such a view'.[52] Even within the panoramic surveys of international thought provided by Keene and Ashworth, fascism receives scant attention.[53] Beyond a brief comment on how Nazi geopolitics 'blunted geography's long-term involvement in any new discipline of IR', the survey offered in *International Relations Then and Now* likewise gives sparse reflection of fascism's relationship to the emergent study of Anglophone international politics.[54]

The reasons for this lack of engagement are inevitably multifaceted. Alongside the fact that fascists typically published in languages other than English, the Anglo-American geographical and linguistic particularities of IR's early formation as a social science may partly explain the comparative dearth of research into fascist international thought, not least the intersection between this ideological creed and the field's history. One may also mention the close relationship during the 1980s and 1990s between the ascension of normative IR theory and the history of international thought, the former retaining an integral role in the latter's evolution. As Chris Brown notes, the development of a normatively inclined international political theory à la Andrew Linklater and Charles Beitz 'stimulated the emergence of contemporary historians of international political thought' (although the influence of such developments on scholarship since the historiographical turn, which tends to be rooted in the methods of intellectual history, is arguably more distant).[55] Naturally, fascist thinkers were banished from sensible discussion. After all, one tends not to turn towards fascist thought as a basis for understanding contemporary world politics nor as a foundation for normative theorising, notwithstanding the literature surrounding Schmitt among critical

[48] Alexander D. Barder, 'Fascism in International Relations and History: An Interview with Richard Steigmann-Gall', *International Politics Reviews* 10, no. 1 (2022): 124-30.
[49] Bell, 'Writing the World (Remix)', 20.
[50] Karma Nabulsi, *Traditions of War: Occupation, Resistance, and the Law* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), Chapter 4.
[51] Jens Bartelson, *War in International Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018).
[52] Antoine Bousquet, 'In Defence of Ontogenesis and for a General Ecology of War', *Millennium* 48, no. 1 (2019): 71.
[53] Keene, *International Political Thought*; Ashworth, *A History of International Thought*.
[54] Groom, et al., *International Relations*, 46.
[55] Chris Brown, 'Political Thought, International Relations Theory and International Political Theory: An Interpretation', *International Relations* 31, no. 3 (2017): 228.

theorists.[56] The suggestion here is neither to recommend that IR deploy nor embrace fascist thinkers. It is simply to argue that the instinctual avoidance of such dubious figures is part of the reason one can find, for example, published accounts of Kant's international thought, but not that of Giovanni Gentile. Borrowing Oren's words from a not dissimilar context, '[t]he reason for this [historiographical] omission might be that fascism, unlike communism, had lost any respectability as a philosophy or self-descriptive identification'.[57]

But the problem lingering within IR is not simply about a lack of research into fascist international thought and its relationship to the field's past, but how this questionable body of thought is often understood. Beyond some of the aforementioned exceptions, one tends to identify instances where fascist international thought, to the extent that it is mentioned, is confined to ad hoc remarks about its relationship with Nazi geopolitics or otherwise cast as an antiquated Darwinian realism or a biological debasement thereof.[58]

This tendency may be found in Wight's formative scholarship on the history of international thought. As Wight inferred, 'considerable discrimination… [is required] to elicit the principles or theories of international politics by which' fascist ideologues 'believed they were guided'.[59] While Wight's characterisation of the Hitlerian vision for world order is sound, alternative imaginaries—such as those envisaging a fascistised system of sovereign states—are not considered. Indeed, Wight's account of Italian fascism fails to capture the heterogeneous proposals emanating from the peninsula. Italian fascism lacked a revolutionary zeal independent of its negations, its counter-revolutionary qualities a mere byproduct of its anti-Bolshevism. Juxtaposed against Hitler's 'creed of racial hierarchy', Italy conducted 'a policy of aimless restlessness', while Mussolini was nothing more than 'a bombastic journalist of mediocre political ability',[60] an interpretation perhaps influenced by his colleague at Sussex, Elizabeth Wiskemann.[61] Wight's contempt for *Il Duce* was palpable.[62]

Similar simplifications reappear in more recent scholarship, albeit avoiding Wight's polemics. As Ashworth mentions regarding one Francesco Coppola, his form of realism was in the minority; it was neither representative of pre-1939 realism nor akin to late-twentieth-century strands.[63] The fascist-inclined Coppola, alongside similar-minded 'advocates of national interest' within democratic states, promoted 'war and state conflict… [to maintain

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[56] On scholarship regarding Schmitt, see David Chandler, 'The Revival of Carl Schmitt in International Relations: The Last Refuge of Critical Theorists?', *Millennium* 37, no. 1 (2008): 27-48; William Hooker, *Carl Schmitt's International Thought: Order and Orientation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009); Benno Gerhard Teschke, 'Fatal Attraction: A Critique of Carl Schmitt's International Political and Legal Theory', *International Theory* 3, no. 2 (2011): 179-227.

[57] Oren, 'Uncritical Portrayals', 87.

[58] See, e.g., Groom, et al., *International Relations*, 31-2, 146.

[59] Martin Wight, 'Why is there No International Theory?', in *Diplomatic Investigations: Essays on the Theory of International Politics*, eds. Herbert Butterfield and Martin Wight (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019 [1966]), 44.

[60] Martin Wight, *Power Politics*, eds. Hedley Bull and Carsten Holbraad (New York: London: Continuum, 1978), 86.

[61] On Wiskemann's views regarding fascist Italy, see Field, 'Elizabeth Wiskemann', 209.

[62] Hedley Bull, introduction to *Systems of States*, by Martin Wight (Leicester: Leicester University Press in association with the London School of Economics and Political Science, 1977), 10-11.

[63] Ashworth, 'Realist-Idealist Great Debate', 45-6.

the] vitality of civilization'.[64] In essence, this mode of thinking constituted 'a 20th-century continuation of the social Darwinist ideas of the late 19th century'.[65] A similar remark may be found in Vitalis' seminal *White World Order, Black Power Politics*. Vitalis quotes Mark Mazower to the effect that foreign policy experts under the Third Reich understood 'international relations as racial struggle', to which Vitalis adds that Mazower 'might as well have been discussing the [IR] discipline and its popularizers in the United States'.[66] While Vitalis' comment draws attention to the similarities and direct linkages in American and German international thought, one may understandably suspect that such a comparison glosses over important nuances. This carries important implications in the present context not least because some strands of fascist rumination on the international diverged in fundamental respects from both Nazi geopolitics and the concerns of the popularisers to whom Vitalis refers. To offer one telling anecdote from 1946, the staunch white supremacist Lothrop Stoddard, a key figure in Vitalis' account of early American IR, corresponded with Lawrence Dennis, America's leading fascist thinker. Interestingly, Stoddard politely rebuffed Dennis; the former grasped and respected the 'logic' underlying Dennis' international thought, but they ultimately differed because the two began from 'quite different premises'.[67]

More broadly, the brutalist simplicity, 'Machiavellian opportunism',[68] and Darwinian character often imparted onto fascist thought appears starkly juxtaposed against the diversity and substance germane to currents of liberal and socialist thinking, alongside manifestations of realism expressed by Carr, Morgenthau, or Reinhold Niebuhr. Indeed, Knutsen suggests that one of the foremost challenges in studying fascism is its anti-intellectualism. While admitting exceptions, 'fascists tend to be actors rather than analysts'.[69] The intellectual history of fascist international thought may therefore appear somewhat of a misnomer: what intellectual substance could possibly be found in the worldview of thugs equipped with castor oil and a repertoire of conspiracy theories and demagogy? Mosley captured this sentiment in a presentation before the English-Speaking Union: 'when you read that I was to lecture on "The Philosophy of Fascism," probably many of you said: "What has this gangster to do with philosophy?"'.[70] The conclusion that fascists prioritised deed over dogma is not necessarily incorrect. 'Fascism is a creed of life in action', opined the *Fascist Quarterly*; a creed for the 'modern man… [that] has become over-weary of dogmas, theses and ideas'.[71] The *Fascist Week* once took aim at 'all the Gilbert Murrays… and the [Woodrow] Wilsons'; that is, those whom the author derisively called the 'professors'.[72] While anti-intellectualism cannot be discounted, this should not be at the expense of recognising the heterogeneous ideas and intellectual inspirations

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[64] *Ibid*, 46.
[65] *Ibid*.
[66] Vitalis, *White World Order*, 87.
[67] Lothrop Stoddard to Lawrence Dennis, 22 May 1946, 5.18, Lawrence Dennis Papers (hereafter LDP), Hoover Institution Library & Archives, Stanford.
[68] Robert Jackson, *Classical and Modern Thought on International Relations: From Anarchy to Cosmopolis* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), 64-5.
[69] Knutsen, *History of International Relations Theory*, 264.
[70] Oswald Mosley, 'The Philosophy of Fascism', *Fascist Quarterly* 1, no. 1 (1935): 35.
[71] 'Notes of the Quarter', *Fascist Quarterly* 1, no. 1 (1935): 4.
[72] Lucifer (pseud.), 'Fascist Peace in Practice', *Fascist Week*, 9—15 February 1934, 3.

contained therein. To provide the obligatory alteration on Wight's classic phrase, while fascist international thought is characterised by 'moral poverty', it is not necessarily typified by 'paucity' nor a lack of 'intellectual' substance. Nevertheless, it remains 'scattered, unsystematic, and mostly inaccessible to the layman'.[73]

Moreover, to return to the overarching lacuna, scholarship has yet to systematically investigate how fascist thinkers engaged with, and were therefore impacted by or contributed to, the fledgling study of international relations. This omission is an outdated oversight. The surge of scholarship on race and empire is emblematic of a sustained effort to study less palatable individuals, facets of otherwise familiar thinkers, and other questionable aspects of IR's disciplinary history. Consequently, the comparative neglect of the extreme right is an even more conspicuous absence. The question thus remains: where are all the fascists?

Disciplinary Divisions and Complementarities

> I should stress that this does not mean—as some people have alleged—that I am engaged in creating a complex *apologia*… In this case *tout comprendre*, *N'EST PAS tout pardonner* [to understand all is NOT to forgive all].[74]
>
> — Roger Griffin

Historical IR ought to systematically build on the research output and methodological insights developed within fascist studies, especially its concept of 'methodological empathy', as a basis on which to explore the intersection between fascist international thought and IR's formative history. This call for increased interdisciplinarity is a guiding methodological principle within this dissertation and one which I posit to have broader applicability for historians of international thought, a subject I interrogate in the present section and return to in Chapter VII. It should be qualified from the outset that the survey which follows prioritises certain developments within fascist studies. Conversely, I am unable to provide adequate treatment of scholarship at the nexus of fascist studies and global history or related efforts to de-centre and decolonise the field.[75] With that said, my methodological approach, as outlined in the subsequent section, expressly borrows from postcolonial scholarship in IR and cognate disciplines.

In the late 1990s, Griffin controversially claimed that a 'new consensus' had developed within fascist studies. While numerous scholars have diverged from Griffin's minimalist ideal-typical heuristic cited in Chapter I, it may nevertheless be argued that historians have broadly converged on the view that fascism should be approached as neither an anti-modern reactionary movement nor one lacking in ideological substance.[76] As Griffin notes, this

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[73] Wight, 'Why is there No International Theory?', 40.
[74] Griffin, 'Fascination of Fascism', 207.
[75] See especially Reto Hofmann and Daniel Hedinger, 'Editorial — Axis Empires: Towards a Global History of Fascist Imperialism', *Journal of Global History* 12, no. 2 (2017): 161-5; Liam Liburd and Paul Jackson, 'Debate: Decolonising Fascist Studies', *Fascism* 10, no. 2 (2021): 323-45.
[76] Roger Griffin, 'The Primacy of Culture: The Current Growth (or Manufacture) of Consensus within Fascist Studies', *Journal of Contemporary History* 37, no. 1 (2002): 21-43; Constantin Iordachi, 'Comparative Fascist Studies: An Introduction', in *Comparative Fascist Studies: New Perspectives*, ed. Constantin Iordachi (Abingdon: Routledge, 2009).

notion 'has become part of the common sense of the discipline'.[77] Rather than reducing fascism to its negations or merely construing it as some type of dictatorship of capital,[78] scholars have built on what the pioneering historian George Mosse dubbed 'methodological empathy'.[79] While by no means affording moral validity, the injunction of this 'cultural' or 'empathic' approach encourages one to examine fascism from the perspective of its proponents and thereby consider its 'positive' axioms.[80] I use 'positive' not to imply 'laudable', but merely to reflect the reality that fascists promoted an alternative modernity, a professed mission to revolutionise society and the state.[81] Fascism, Michael Mann summarises, 'must not be dismissed as crazy, contradictory, or vague'.[82]

Subsequent to the embrace of this empathic approach—and often reflecting its core tenets, implicitly or otherwise—scholars of fascism have increasingly co-opted the precepts of transnational history.[83] Reflecting such thematic, ontological, and methodological shifts, a sizeable literature has recounted the transnational connections between fascists and other facts of the far right, the practical efforts to adapt or export fascism, and the ideological beliefs underpinning such efforts.[84] This represents progress within a field that had remained beholden to the ontological silos of methodological nationalism and, in the scant comment on the matter, reduced fascist internationalism to bogus propaganda.[85]

While fascist international thought has scarcely been considered within IR, this has not been the case within fascist studies. For scholars belonging to the latter, to question 'why is there no history of fascist international thought'[86]—as I have elsewhere—may appear odd, if not misleading. The intent here is not to marginalise the immensely productive output of fascist studies nor reaffirm disciplinary divides. It is the opposite. Beyond the rare

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[77] Roger Griffin, 'Studying Fascism in a Postfascist Age. From New Consensus to New Wave?', *Fascism* 1, no. 1 (2012): 13. Other pioneers include Roger Eatwell, Emilio Gentile, and Stanley G. Payne.

[78] Fascists also contested this reductionist interpretation. As one (presumably John Beckett) quipped, political scientist W.A. Rudlin 'accepts the unthinking Red-Front theory that everything they do not like is Fascism; English Government and weather is therefore regarded with deep suspicion'. See J.B., review of *The Growth of Fascism in Great Britain*, by W.A. Rudlin, *Fascist Quarterly* 1, no. 4 (1935): 508-9. On divisions between, and efforts to bridge, the empathic and Marxist approaches, see David D. Roberts, 'Fascism, Marxism, and the Question of Modern Revolution', *European Journal of Political Theory* 9, no. 2 (2010): 183-201.

[79] George L. Mosse, *The Fascist Revolution: Toward a General Theory of Fascism* (New York: Howard Fertig, 1999), x-xi. Griffin has been integral in popularising this coinage.

[80] Matthew Feldman, introduction to *A Fascist Century: Essays by Roger Griffin*, ed. Matthew Feldman (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), xxiv.

[81] Dietrich Orlow, 'Fascists among Themselves: Some Observations on West European Politics in the 1930s', *European Review* 11, no. 3 (2003): 252.

[82] Mann, *Fascists*, 2.

[83] Ángel Alcalde, 'The Transnational Consensus: Fascism and Nazism in Current Research', *Contemporary European History* 29, no. 2 (2020): 243-52.

[84] For a sample, see Arnd Bauerkämper and Grzegorz Rossoliński-Liebe, eds., *Fascism without Borders: Transnational Connections and Cooperation between Movements and Regimes in Europe from 1918 to 1945* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2017).

[85] For the classic exception, see Michael Arthur Ledeen, *Universal Fascism: The Theory and Practice of the Fascist International, 1928-1936* (New York: Howard Fertig, 1972).

[86] Allen, 'Fascist International Thought'.

exception,[87] there has been negligible cross-pollination between these cognate endeavours, a disconnect to the detriment of not only historical IR, but fascist studies too. Despite the laudable extent of relevant scholarship within fascist studies, this otherwise eclectic historiography has often been underpinned by the aforementioned transnational approach, the latter focused on cross-border interactions between networks, regimes, and movements. By contrast, in-depth study into the *international* thought of fascist agitators, their intellectual pedigree, and the specific debates they were engaged in are often not at the forefront of analysis. This distinction is, however, a matter of degree. Intellectual and transnational history are not antithetical. To use David Armitage's pithy paraphrasing of Kant, 'intellectual history without material history will be empty, while material history uninformed by intellectual history will be blind'.[88] Furthermore, studying fascist international thought—in particular, the transmission and reception of ideas—requires attentiveness to transnational networks and ideational transfers across borders.[89] This exercise would be akin to Armitage's subdivision within international intellectual history, namely 'the intellectual history of the international and an internationalised intellectual history', the latter concerned with 'the circulation, transmission and reception of texts, ideas and thinkers'.[90] In this respect, the ethos of the transnational turn is integral for any attempt to study the history of fascist international thinking.

As the literature stands, however, the emphases embodied within each field carry relevant implications. A transnational orientation uses relational interactions as the primary ontological referent, while the history of international thought—of which recent literature on IR's disciplinary history arguably constitutes one subcategory of research—focuses on the illocutionary force of arguments, the beliefs or ideas of thinkers, and their intellectual antecedents or reception. To illustrate, transnational historians typically use 'internationalism' not as a term to denote some world order project contained within the minds or texts of individuals. Rather, it is used to describe ideologically malleable practices of transnational cooperation. Ángel Alcalde captures this point in reviewing Ricky W. Law's monograph, *Transnational Nazism*. As the former argues, the concept of 'Transnational Nazism' is deployed in a range of ad hoc contexts, and thus it 'remains severely undertheorised'.[91] Consequently, Law 'unduly reifies a fluid historical process (the transfer of ideas), converting it into a pre-existing object that historical actors allegedly "adopted" or "articulated" as though it were a distinct ideological system'.[92] By focusing on *processes of internationalism*, as opposed to *ideas of internationalism*, it may be argued that this literature does not adequately address certain questions, such as matters of intellectual inheritance or the debates in which actors were engaged.

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[87] See Mark Mazower, *Governing the World: The History of an Idea* (London: Penguin Books, 2012); Madeleine Herren, 'Fascist Internationalism', in *Internationalisms: A Twentieth-Century History*, eds. Glenda Sluga and Patricia Clavin (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016); Benjamin G. Martin, 'International Legal Cooperation in the Nazi-Fascist New Order', *International Politics* 55, no. 6 (2018): 870-87.

[88] Armitage, *Foundations*, 8.

[89] For a similar point regarding the study of 'intellectual fascism', see Daniel Knegt, *Fascism, Liberalism and Europeanism in the Political Thought of Bertrand de Jouvenel and Alfred Fabre-Luce* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2017), 35-6.

[90] Armitage, *Foundations*, 7.

[91] Alcalde, 'Transnational Consensus', 250.

[92] *Ibid*, 250-1.

Relevant literature is obviously not the monopoly of this transnational approach, the latter a somewhat recent development in any case. Moreover, a transnational approach does not foreclose the study of ideas.[93] Various accounts have detailed the beliefs and biographies of fascist international thinkers. Fascist studies has therefore explored the *international thought* of the extreme right, albeit without necessarily using this language. However, analytical blind spots and historical lacunae remain. The tendency for disciplinary compartmentalisation has inhibited the subfield of the history of international thought and academics situated within fascist studies from posing intriguing questions at the nexus of their respective enterprises and building on the comparative advantages and scholarship of each field. The broad subject matter and international orientation of historical IR may allow affiliated scholars to build on a familiar and vast literature that has explored an expansive array of discourses, thinkers, and traditions. The distinctive qualities of the field offer a fruitful basis to probe questions that have escaped fascist studies or are yet to be satisfactorily addressed: how did fascist visions for world order diverge from, or build on, other 'dreamworlds of race' within the mainstream?[94] How were familiar concepts within interwar international thought—anarchy, peaceful change, idealism, or pooled/collective security, among others—deployed by fascist thinkers? How did fascists understand the causes of war? What is the relationship between fascist international thought and 'realism'? More generally, what roles did fascist and far-right thinkers have in IR's formative history?

Some interesting snippets may be located in fascist studies regarding the relationship between the early field and transnational fascism, albeit the link is understandably not elucidated further. Martin Kristoffer Hamre, for example, explores the internationalism of the Nazi jurist Hans Keller. From 1932, Keller's research abroad was supported by the Rockefeller Foundation, a point which Hamre identifies as 'an interesting overlap of funding and personnel between liberal (in this case US-American philanthropical) and nationalist internationalism'.[95] By 1934, Keller founded the Nationalist International (*Internationale Arbeitsgemeinschaft der Nationalisten*) as a counterweight to Italian efforts to universalise fascism, an initiative that he suggested was built upon his academic and political contacts developed whilst travelling with the support of the Rockefeller Foundation.[96] Indeed, the delegates that attended the International's three congresses hailed from an array of academic backgrounds; some were professors in economics, international law, and political science.[97] Alternatively, Giulia Simone has drawn attention to the position of Rocco within the League's International Committee on Intellectual Cooperation,[98] while Daniel Knegt's detailed treatment of the French philosopher and fascist sympathiser Bertrand de Jouvenel introduces readers to morsels of likely interest to historians of international thought. This includes Jouvenel's post-war friendship with

[93] See, e.g., Martin Kristoffer Hamre, "'Nationalists of All Countries, Unite!": Hans Keller and Nazi Internationalism in the 1930s', *Contemporary European History* 33, no. 2 (2024): 477-96.
[94] Duncan Bell, *Dreamworlds of Race: Empire and the Utopian Destiny of Anglo-America* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2020).
[95] Hamre, 'Nazi Internationalism', 481.
[96] *Ibid*, 482n28.
[97] *Ibid*, 485.
[98] Giulia Simone, "'A League of Minds"? Uses and Abuses of the League of Nations' Internationalism by Fascist Italy', *Journal of Modern Italian Studies* 28, no. 3 (2023): 259-77.

Henry Kissinger (first formed whilst the latter was a PhD candidate at Harvard) and Raymond Aron, as well as the mixed reception of Jouvenel's 1948 *On Power* by Morgenthau, who despite his qualms deemed its author 'a political thinker of the first order'.[99] Similar to Oren, the well-known scholar of fascism A. James Gregor has also touched on the reception of Italian fascism amongst American intellectuals, including political scientists such as Herbert Schneider, Paul Einzig, and William G. Welk.[100]

It is necessary to build, albeit in a more systematic fashion, upon the fleeting glimpses offered by historians of fascism and international thought alike. Griffin highlights the propitious grounds for interdisciplinary 'synergies' contained within the empathic approach.[101] This dissertation promotes one such complementarity between fascist studies and both the history of international thought and IR's disciplinary history. After all, the disconnect between fascist studies and these IR subfields is somewhat odd given the affinity between the historicist ethic of contextualism, as typically deployed by the latter, and the methodological empathy permeating the former. Debatably, this empathic ethos is already implicit in some recent IR literature. Nevertheless, it is valuable to render explicit certain assumptions on which scholarship may advance.

First, it must be appreciated that while fascism lacked a biblical text analogous to Marxism (for which it was not alone), it was not bereft of intellectual foundations, philosophical reflection, or programmatic statements. For instance, the late Zeev Sternhell traced the ideological origins of fascism to *fin-de-siècle* France in a synthesis between a Sorelian, anti-Marxist, revolutionary syndicalism and the integral nationalism of Charles Maurras.[102] In this sense, fascist ideology was not irrational but anti-rational, for 'whilst it rejected the central tenets of Enlightenment optimism, it did so on the basis of new intellectual developments'.[103] Moreover, fascist movements attracted notable interwar intellectuals, exemplified not least by the gravitation of Schmitt towards Nazism and the prominent place of the neo-Hegelian Gentile within Italy. In a similar vein, one can identify a litany of ideological tracts, including numerous that impinged on international affairs, from Francis Parker Yockey's *Imperium* to Evola's *Revolt Against the Modern World.* As the founding leader of the *Movimento Sociale Italiano*, Giorgio Almirante, once described Evola, he is 'our Marcuse only better'.[104] Simply then, the international thought of such figures should not be *prematurely* dismissed as incoherent.

Second, an empathic approach would implore one to interpret such persons as 'innovating ideologists' in the Skinnerian sense and thus studied, at least methodologically, in a manner not dissimilar to the mainstays of

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[99] Knegt, *Fascism*, 40, 237, 246.

[100] A. James Gregor, *Mussolini's Intellectuals: Fascist Social and Political Thought* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005), 8. During Gregor's early career, he developed links with, and published several pieces in, Mosley's post-war magazine. For the only serious engagement with this curious overlap, see Graham Macklin, *Failed Führers: A History of Britain's Extreme Right* (London: Routledge, 2020).

[101] Griffin, 'Studying Fascism', 16.

[102] Sternhell, et al., *Birth of Fascist Ideology*.

[103] Roger Eatwell, 'On Defining the "Fascist Minimum": The Centrality of Ideology', *Journal of Political Ideologies* 1, no. 3 (1996): 306.

[104] Griffin, *Modernism and Fascism*, 16-7.

intellectual history. To quote Bell: 'the task of the "innovating ideologist" is to legitimate, somehow to justify, "untoward social actions" through manipulating the meaning and/or application of concepts in order to modify political behavior'.[105] The language of untoward social actions is apt, if somewhat of an understatement in the fascist context. To be clear, I am not positing the necessity of some specifically Skinnerian scripture, but rather stressing the compatibility between the concept of methodological empathy and the broad historicist strictures of a contextualist approach. In this sense, contextualism is interpreted as 'a matter of restoring a text to the historical context in which it was composed and the question(s) to which it was offered as an answer or the problem(s) to which it was proposed as a solution'.[106] Similarly, neither the aforementioned use of Griffin's ideal-typical definition, nor my endorsement of methodological empathy, should be construed to imply a Griffinite monopoly within fascist studies. As with numerous scholars, I borrow from Griffin's pioneering efforts, while diverging in other respects, as demonstrated by my contextualist emphasis. As Constantin Iordachi adds, 'there is an imperious need to continually revisit the comparative foundations of fascism studies, turning it into a flexible framework that can creatively integrate new approaches'.[107]

None of this is to deny that there are challenges involved in studying fascist international thought.[108] Above all, one must contend with Knutsen's aforementioned observation: fascists often prioritised action over theoretical abstractions. Even the most erudite and programmatic of fascists still tended to assail intellectualism. As Liberal Nationals MP Robert Bernays flippantly remarked regarding Mosley's fascists: 'It is obviously more fun to go and beat up the East End than to join a study circle on the fallacies of Socialism.'[109] Accordingly, a cautionary note should be sounded. One must remain attentive to the vagaries that accompany the practice of politics—a problem especially acute for the more demagogic of figures—and the fallacy of imparting a degree of coherence or continuity in thought that may not have in existed in the worldview of certain individuals. Yet one can accept this injunction without subscribing to a Mannheimian view of the right, whereby its ideological scaffolding is either a retroactive invention to justify conservative reaction or mere irrational mythmaking.[110] The international thought of fascist ideologues and how and why they arrived at their ideas ought to be matters subject to individualised scrutiny, rather than blanket assertions of irrationality or retroactive justification.

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[105] Duncan Bell, 'Language, Legitimacy, and the Project of Critique', *Alternatives* 27, no. 3 (2002): 337.
[106] Terence Ball, 'Professor Skinner's Vision', *Political Studies Review* 5, no. 3 (2007): 353. See also Quentin Skinner, 'Meaning and Understanding in the History of Ideas', *History and Theory* 8, no. 1 (1969): 3-53; James H. Tully, 'The Pen is a Mighty Sword: Quentin Skinner's Analysis of Politics', *British Journal of Political Science* 13, no. 4 (1983): 489-509.
[107] Constantin Iordachi, 'From "Generic" to "Real-Existing" Fascism: Towards a New Transnational and Historical-Comparative Agenda in Fascism Studies', in *Beyond the Fascist Century: Essays in Honour of Roger Griffin*, eds. Constantin Iordachi and Aristotle Kallis (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2020), 294.
[108] In the realm of political thought, see Gregor, *Mussolini's Intellectuals*, Chapter 1.
[109] Robert Bernays, 'The Future of British Fascism', *Spectator*, 18 December 1936, 1075.
[110] Karl Mannheim, *Ideology and Utopia: An Introduction to the Sociology of Knowledge*, trans. Louis Wirth and Edward Shils (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1936), 122-3, 206-7.

Notwithstanding such caveats, these challenges need not fundamentally detract from the above point: the ideas professed by international thinkers of a fascist persuasion can be prima facie taken seriously as a body of thought and methodologically treated in a manner not dissimilar to others, particularly those involved in political practice. After all, the corollary of the 'Skinnerian revolution' is such that the researcher may interpret 'theorists as politicians' and, conversely, 'politicians as theorists'.[111] Scholarship on the history of international thought since the 'historiographical turn' undoubtedly, albeit often implicitly, reflects this injunction. Continuing in this vein, the retrieval of extreme right international thought warrants special focus on the 'non-intellectual contexts' of arguments. In promoting the complementarity between intellectual and parliamentary history, Max Skjönsberg has recently observed that 'historians of political thought must become more careful analysts of events, institutions, and quotidian politics, as well as broader historiographical contexts'.[112] The history of fascist international thought necessitates comparable attentiveness.

A Dose of Methodological Pluralism

Herbert Butterfield once advocated the necessity of a 'historical imagination', one which attained its 'sublimest achievements' when capturing the beliefs of another individual radically discordant with those of the historian.[113] As William Bain adds, Butterfield implored historians to accept, although not necessarily endorse, the proposition that the ideas and concerns of prior generations are as legitimate and important as those contemporaneous to the historian.[114] Given fascism's repellent character, it would not be unreasonable to view the acme of this imagination as realised in the deployment of a Mossean empathy. To understand fascism from the 'inside out',[115] and thus empathise on a methodological front with a figure wholly unsympathetic from a personal perspective, appears a necessary precondition for historical IR to recover the international thought of such individuals and their engagement with the field. In essence, to study fascist international thought requires an empathetic and contextualist ethos. However, the precise methodological decisions that one deploys will naturally depend on the nature of the subject and intent behind the research project. This poses a consequent question: while contextualism is a vital basis for proceeding, what specific methodological tools are herein used?

By virtue of this dissertation's intent, several prospective approaches are deemed less fruitful. For example, while this dissertation impinges on IR's history, it is not amenable to the 'internalist' methods found in Peter

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111 Kari Palonen, 'Political Theorizing as a Dimension of Political Life', *European Journal of Political Theory* 4, no. 4 (2005): 351.

112 Max Skjönsberg, 'The History of Political Thought and Parliamentary History in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries', *Historical Journal* 64, no. 2 (2021): 501.

113 Cited in William Bain, 'The English School and the Activity of Being an Historian', in *Theorising International Society: English School Methods*, ed. Cornelia Navari (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), 152.

114 *Ibid.*

115 Mosse, *Fascist Revolution*, x.

Galison's idea of 'subcultures' or John G. Gunnell's 'internal discursive history'.[116] As applied to IR, the former primarily focuses on an identifiable intellectual community alongside the mediums and physical venues through which ideas and a common language are disseminated, while the latter prioritises the conceptual language or discourse shared among—and the dialogue and debate transpiring between—intellectual interlocutors. Despite their merits, both approaches present methodological conundrums for the study of far-right engagement with the field. As Bell explains, such 'internalist' methods may overly focus attention on disciplinary concerns at the expense of exogenous contexts, turning 'a useful corrective heuristic into a problematic methodological precept'.[117]

Against such alternatives, I pursue a less rigid and more methodologically plural contextualist approach. Following Bell, I understand contextualism as involving 'the historicisation of political thought and the attempt to locate texts within their original terms of reference'.[118] In this sense, this dissertation employs a 'broad historicist sensibility', recognising the historicity of political language and the temporally-bound nature of political argumentation.[119] In this pursuit, I utilise a vast array of primary source materials, including hundreds of articles and books from contemporaries of the period, alongside over twenty physical and digital archival deposits drawn from Britain and the US. Importantly, Bell adds that the general tenets of Skinnerian contextualism 'offers no interpretative panacea', and thus 'a dose of methodological pluralism is highly advisable'.[120] After all, as Keene correctly observes, even if some Skinnerian template can be deduced, it holds no 'methodological hegemony among intellectual historians'.[121] Simply, 'not all contextualists are Skinnerian'.[122] While each of the empirical chapters below deploys a contextualist sensibility, I use this in tandem with insights drawn from postcolonial approaches to IR and, per its application by Claire Vergerio, reception theory.

The former offers a useful point of departure for two reasons. First, I build this dissertation on recent literature centred on the critique of the Eurocentric foundations of Western international thought and IR's origins in the style of Hobson and Vitalis. This scholarship is indispensable in contextualising fascist international thought within wider currents of imperial and racial thinking. Second, the conceptual scaffolding employed by postcolonial approaches affords a heuristically valuable lens through which to unpack the varied ways in which notions of race, culture, and civilisation featured in fascist forms of worldmaking and their response to topical 'international questions'. To quote

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[116] For applications of 'subcultures' and 'internal discursive history', see, respectively, Ashworth, 'Poverty of Paradigms'; Brian C. Schmidt, *The Political Discourse of Anarchy: A Disciplinary History of International Relations* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1998).

[117] Bell, 'Writing the World (Remix)', 25. See also Ian Hall and Mark Bevir, 'Traditions of British International Thought', *International History Review* 36, no. 5 (2014): 826-7.

[118] Duncan Bell, 'Political Theory and the Functions of Intellectual History: A Response to Emmanuel Navon', *Review of International Studies* 29, no. 1 (2003): 153.

[119] Mark Bevir, 'The Contextual Approach', in *The Oxford Handbook of the History of Political Philosophy*, ed. George Klosko (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 19.

[120] Bell, 'Language', 332.

[121] Edward Keene, 'International Intellectual History and International Relations: Contexts, Canons and Mediocrities', *International Relations* 31, no. 3 (2017): 342.

[122] Bell, 'Political Theory', 153.

Daniel Hedinger: 'As fascists aimed above all at a new, hierarchical, and racist world order, the inclusion of postcolonial theory, which has scrutinised Eurocentrism and white supremacy as a byproduct of colonialism for decades, seems even more a necessity.'[123]

The second methodological addendum is that of reception theory. As Vergerio argues, studying the reception of texts in not 'an addition to "Cambridge School" contextualism, but rather… it is an immanent possibility within this form of contextualism'.[124] The essence of this approach is encapsulated in the idea of 'serial contextualism'. This implies a process of discerning not only a text's original context, but the subsequent context in which it was received and (re)interpreted. Both contexts are essential: an author's original context and intent 'constitutes a benchmark against which one can measure the extent to which the text has been re-interpreted by the receivers'.[125]

The rationale for adopting this mode of reception theory is again twofold. First, it offers a means through which to appreciate the importance of perceived traditions. While Quentin Skinner presents a valid critique against the proposition of timeless (or otherwise retrospectively constructed) traditions, Bell cautions that one 'should not ignore the importance of the relationship that theorists sustain with those they consider to be their intellectual progenitors'.[126] Realism and its varied strands is illustrative, with IR scholars often consciously identifying as such.[127] Alternatively, traditions (imagined or otherwise) can act as something that one defines their political thought against or a useful device to disparage others. Political thinkers are not averse to 'mispresenting opponents' views, constructing arguments *ad hominem,* and using almost any rhetorical weapon'.[128] Carr's *The Twenty Years' Crisis* perhaps betrayed a 'violently pugnacious style', yet the grossly misleading 'utopian' label he ascribed to his opponents has endured nevertheless.[129] Whether a tradition is something that an author subscribes to—and thus is of the belief that they belong within it—or something which one defines their political thought against, I embrace the injunction that 'the historian must recognize the vital role of *perceived* traditions'.[130] Consequently, reception theory offers a valuable method to capture this perceptual dimension.

Second, the application of reception theory aligns with this dissertation's underlying contextualist ethos as it allows one to trace the inheritance of fascist thinkers among other currents of international thought and *vice versa*. As Vergerio observes, 'IR scholars must possess the tools to critically evaluate the provenance of their presumed

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[123] Liburd and Jackson, 'Debate', 330.
[124] Claire Vergerio, 'Context, Reception, and the Study of Great Thinkers in International Relations', *International Theory* 11, no. 1 (2019): 120.
[125] *Ibid*, 129.
[126] Bell, 'Language', 333. This resembles the distinction between 'analytical' and 'historical' traditions in Brian C. Schmidt, 'The Historiography of Academic International Relations', *Review of International Studies* 20, no. 4 (1994): 349-67.
[127] Bell, 'Language', 333.
[128] Terence Ball, *Reappraising Political Theory: Revisionist Studies in the History of Political Thought* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995), 18.
[129] Ashworth, 'Realist-Idealist Great Debate', 35.
[130] Bell, 'Language, 333 (emphasis in original).

forebearers' ideas'.[131] An exemplary case can be located in the influence of Lawrence Dennis—aptly branded 'America's No. 1 intellectual Fascist'[132]—upon Carr's 1942 *Conditions of Peace*, a subject discussed in Chapter V. While Friedrich Hayek lambasted Carr's book as betraying the mindset of a closeted totalitarian, and Gilbert Murray considered it representative of newly popular and 'utterly repugnant' ideas, Carr was no pseudo-fascist.[133] Nor could it be reasonably claimed that his recourse to Dennis' thought automatically rendered him ideologically suspect. As Carr remarked in a review of Dennis' *The Dynamics of War and Revolution*, '[t]he real need is for more, not for less, democracy'.[134] What is therefore essential, and what the historicist ethos of reception theory implores, is the ability to delineate how a thinker understands the ideas of another, which aspects of their thought are utilised and towards what ends, and how the ideas of an author are reinterpreted (or which parts are ignored). To again quote Vergerio: this alludes to a process of 'translation rather than transmission'.[135]

[131] Vergerio, 'Context, Reception, and the Study of Great Thinkers', 132.
[132] "'The Ism of Appeasement": Roosevelt Brands Foes of His Foreign Policy', *Life*, 20 January 1941, 26.
[133] See Hall, *Dilemmas of Decline*, 39, 81. As Holthaus notes, '[w]hat really caught… [the] attention [of contemporaries] was Carr's apparently affirmative borrowing from German fascism'. Holthaus, 'Prussianism, Hitlerism, Realism', 133. There is a subtle irony insofar as surprisingly few contemporaries (or scholars since) have noticed Carr's borrowing from Dennis.
[134] E.H. Carr, review of *The Dynamics of War and Revolution*, by Lawrence Dennis, *International Affairs Review Supplement* 19, no. 3/4 (1940—1941): 163.
[135] Vergerio, 'Context, Reception, and the Study of Great Thinkers', 123.

Part I

Civilisational Crisis and Perpetual Peace:
The International Thought of Oswald Mosley

Chapter III.

From Liberal Squire to a Fascistised Hobsonite

Oswald Mosley and the Causes of War

> [T]he prime cause of war is the international struggle for markets and raw materials supported by international finance.[1]
>
> — Oswald Mosley

Speculation about a reversion to war and the prospects for its prevention loomed prominently in British international thought and the early IR field. Against the traumatic backdrop of the preceding conflict, debate over the causes of war represented an integral aspect of a broader crisis mentality saturating political thought. To quote the military theorist Basil Liddell Hart, another global conflagration would portend nothing less than 'the breakdown of Western civilization'.[2] '[E]very one agrees', claimed Leonard Woolf, 'that another great war will destroy civilised society'.[3] Gilbert Murray captured the logical conclusion, poignantly affirming that 'only by the abolition of war can… civilization be saved'.[4] International intellectual historians and disciplinary historians alike have recovered popular explanations of war within British international thought. By contrast, less is understood about how fascist ideologues themselves theorised or otherwise contemplated the causes of war and how such speculation was situated with respect to prevailing discourse permeating the emergent study of IR. Even Kenneth Waltz's *Man, the State, and War* is entirely devoid of comment.[5] While Waltz's study is not confined to the interwar period nor is it in any sense a disciplinary history, it is thematically focused on past rumination on the causes of war. His omission of fascism is not conspicuous, but it is emblematic.

This chapter turns towards the international thought of Mosley and other BUF ideologues as an entry point into fascist speculation on the causes of war. I present two central claims. First, Mosley was influenced by popular ideas professed by a disparate array of traditions and thinkers, not least from figures important in IR's early history. Indeed, certain roots of Mosley's explanation for war may be located within the relative mainstream, in particular the thought of Conservative politician and League architect Lord Robert Cecil, the liberal radicalism of J.A. Hobson, and popular quasi-Malthusian notions linking demographic change with international instability. Yet in the case of Mosley's increasingly virulent antisemitic conspiratorialism, such prejudice—while not absent among other international thinkers—arguably transcended the mainstream.

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[1] Oswald Mosley, *10 Points of Fascist Policy: Fascism Explained* (London: BUF Publications, 1933), 6.

[2] B.H. Liddell Hart, *Paris, or the Future of War* (New York: E.P. Dutton & Company, 1925), 4.

[3] Leonard Woolf, 'Labour's Foreign Policy', *Political Quarterly* 4, no. 4 (1933): 514-5.

[4] Gilbert Murray, *The Ordeal of this Generation: The War, the League, and the Future* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1929), 236.

[5] Kenneth N. Waltz, *Man, the State, and War: A Theoretical Analysis* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1959).

Second, the place of capitalism within Mosley's explanation for war and his critique thereof epitomises the mutability and ambivalence of Hobson's qualified line of anti-imperial thinking within interwar thought.[6] Recourse to such arguments was not the preserve of liberal, socialist, and/or subaltern thinkers, but fascist too. Mosley synthesised antisemitic tropes with a popular radical critique of high finance and its relationship to international conflict in order to provide an argument opposing foreign entanglements and war. Yet, in a fashion not unlike Hobson, this anti-imperial line was deployed in such a manner as to promote a form of *counter-imperial* worldmaking, rather than an *anti-imperial* agenda: the fascist leader not only remained an ardent defender of the British Empire, but afforded validity to the expansionism of other virile nations.[7] I thus highlight both the racialised lines of stratification that underpinned this strand of fascist anti-war discourse and the degree to which such Hobsonite ideas—then popular within interwar IR—transgressed disciplinary and ideological boundaries.

This chapter proceeds as follows. After briefly outlining Mosley's sentiment towards war, I trace his thinking on its causes as he gravitated across the political spectrum. In the process, I discern Mosley's evolution from a liberal internationalist à la Lord Cecil to what I have dubbed a fascistised Hobsonite. I subsequently disentangle the peculiar duality implicit within Mosley's thinking between, on the one hand, the supposed malign imperial machinations of Jewish capitalists and, on the other, the legitimacy afforded to the British Empire and the demographic imperialism of other virile nations. In turn, I reveal the highly contingent nature of Mosley's anti-war stance. The concluding section reflects on the foregoing discussion, questioning what Mosley's speculation on war suggests about the diversity of fascist international thought and the reception of Hobson's qualified anti-imperialism.

A Sacred Task

In the seminal 1936 tract *Theories of International Relations*, Frank M. Russell—professor of political science at the University of California—observed that in the minds of fascists war may hold a 'necessary cleansing and purifying' purpose.[8] This conclusion was not without reason. Fascism, Mussolini proclaimed, 'does not, generally speaking, believe in the possibility or utility of perpetual peace'.[9] In 1934, one foreign correspondent probed Mosley, then leader of the BUF, on whether he concurred with Mussolini's statement. Mosley responded: 'War is obsolete as a test of manhood'.[10] While the values of the 'war generation' extolled by Mosley betrayed an affinity to Mussolini's glorified 'trenchocracy',[11] the former nevertheless did not view war with comparable positivity. For Mosley,

[6] Oswald Mosley, 'The World Alternative', *Fascist Quarterly* 2, no. 3 (1936): 387.
[7] Oswald Mosley, *Tomorrow We Live* (London: Abbey Supplies, 1938). As Bell argues, 'the labels "pro-imperial" and "anti-imperial"… are usually too crude for satisfactory historical and theoretical discrimination'. See Duncan Bell, 'Ideologies of Empire', in *The Oxford Handbook of Political Ideologies*, eds. Michael Freeden, et al. (Oxford University Press, 2013), 541. For this reason, I borrow the term 'counter-imperial' from Rietzler, 'Counter-Imperial Orientalism'.
[8] Frank M. Russell, *Theories of International Relations* (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1936), 497.
[9] Benito Mussolini, *Fascism: Doctrine and Institutions* (Rome: Ardita, 1935), 19.
[10] Harold Callender, 'Mosley's Creed: A Revealing Interview', *New York Times Magazine*, 24 June 1934, 16.
[11] See Simon Ball, 'Mosley and the Tories in 1930: The Problem of Generations', *Contemporary British History* 23, no. 4 (2009): 445-59.

'heroism' was not simply meant for war, 'which is a mere stupidity', but the conquest of 'destiny'.[12] Social Darwinism was a mainstay of fascist thinking. For many fascists, this fuelled grandiose visions of foreign conquest. For others, Mosley included, the notion of perennial struggle more so implied the maintenance of a society 'healthy enough to avoid falling into the false cosiness of individualistic-materialistic domesticity'.[13] As Mosley would later opine against the backdrop of the Second World War, '[s]uch is the rivalry and such is the struggle of the future—not of man against man or nation against nation—but of man against nature in the wresting of ever greater rewards for his toil'.[14] This line of thinking echoes a notion found amongst a wide array of interwar thinkers, from liberal internationalists to psychoanalysts: peace necessitated the redirection of certain passions inherent within human nature. For Mosley, war was considered not only fratricidal, but counterproductive to the monumental task of realising the fascist revolution. British abstention from foreign expansion and interstate conflict were considered a precondition for fascism's true actualisation.[15]

Mosley's worldview therefore diverged from an uncritical 'martial' glorification of warfare.[16] It was not simply the case that, as Knutsen suggests, 'fascists attribute… ennobling qualities to war… [which justifies] a fascist foreign policy of imperial expansion'.[17] Mosley's mythologising of the 'war generation' did not amount to a *universal* view alleging the revitalising power of warfare nor its potential to construct the mythic fascist man. Abhorring the atrocities of the First World War and anxious that another general war would precipitate civilisational decline, Mosley repeatedly expressed his commitment to 'the sacred task of bringing peace to mankind' (or at least a segment thereof) throughout the interwar period.[18] As Mosley claimed, the only victor of another war, a conflict which would threaten the 'collapse of European civilisation', was its 'most bitter enemy—the anarchy of communism'.[19]

In this sense, the Mackinderian vision of an 'Oriental' other besieging the citadel of Western civilisation was not the primary menace besetting the West, notwithstanding Mosley's ominous warnings about imperial demise. As former Ulster Unionist MP and fascist ideologue W.E.D. Allen observed, civilisation 'may be restored and renovated, or it may be destroyed from within, but it can scarcely be overthrown from without'.[20] For Mosley, the racialised threat of the East was only capable of conquering the West were the latter to essentially commit collective suicide in another fratricidal war. The 'realist' understands, argued one article within the *Blackshirt* periodical, 'that

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[12] Mosley, *Tomorrow We Live*, 72.
[13] Eatwell, 'Generic Fascism', 176.
[14] Oswald Mosley, *The British Peace—How to Get It* (Greater Britain Publications, 1940), 10, OMD/2/3/4, Oswald Mosley Papers, Cadbury Research Library, University of Birmingham.
[15] Oswald Mosley, *The Greater Britain*, new edn. (London: BUF, 1934), 157; Oswald Mosley, *Britain First* (Greater Britain Publications, 1939), 15, KV 2/885, The National Archives (hereafter TNA), Kew.
[16] On the 'martial' tradition, see Nabulsi, *Traditions of War*.
[17] Knutsen, *History of International Relations Theory*, 264.
[18] Mosley, *Blackshirt Policy*, 58.
[19] *Ibid*, 59.
[20] James Drennan (pseud.), *B.U.F.: Oswald Mosley and British Fascism* (London: John Murray, 1934), 195. Some BUF members certainly held apocalyptic notions of a civilisational-onslaught by 'backward and militaristic nations'. See, e.g., Lucifer (pseud.), 'Current Cant and Fascist Fact', *Fascist Week*, 15—21 December 1933, 2.

another European war will threaten Western civilisation with destruction'.[21] Importantly, such civilisational anxieties were explicitly couched within a feared end to 'European supremacy in world affairs'.[22] As Mosley claimed in a profoundly apocalyptic tone:

> Triumphant on the ruins of Financial-Democratic Europe rises the jackal of oriental Communism summoning the Western peoples not only to the suicide of Europe but to an oriental Armageddon which will finally make the world safe for anarchy and Jewry.[23]

Accordingly, Mosley ardently eschewed crusading wars for regime change or foreign entanglements which could trigger great power conflict. Yet this begs the question: if Mosley sought to prevent war, where was its causal locus to be found? The fascist leader viewed international entanglements as complicit, but how did he reason (or imagine) this to be the case? Why did his thought evolve in the manner that it did? It is towards such questions that I turn.

Sectional Interests, Underconsumption, and War

The concept of anarchy, popularised by such twentieth-century publicists as Angell and G. Lowes Dickinson, did not feature within Mosley's comments on international affairs.[24] Whether it was 'anarchic capitalism' or the threat of 'red anarchy',[25] the *term* recurred frequently, albeit to imply chaos and disorder, rather than a *concept* connoting an international realm devoid of an overarching Leviathan. This is not, however, to diminish the implicit role of anarchy residing within Mosley's thought. Throughout his period as MP for Harrow (1918-24), during which he initially served as a member of the Conservative Party, Mosley was an ardent advocate for the League of Nations. This position placed him in the realm of such liberal internationalists as Angell, Murray, Zimmern, and especially Lord Cecil.[26] These figures embodied, to use Bell's term, a 'structural-liberal' argument, locating the underlying causes of war not in the domestic character of society, but predominantly in the 'failure of political and economic cooperation between states', whether due to human fallibility, the extremes of nationalism, or the anarchic properties of the states-system.[27] Thinkers who may be placed under this banner reasoned that limitations on the recourse to war

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[21] 'Fascism and Peace', *Blackshirt*, 17 April 1933, 1.

[22] 'Notes of the Quarter', *British Union Quarterly* 2, no. 4 (1938): 10.

[23] Mosley, 'World Alternative', 382. Citing Churchill's *Sinews of Peace* speech in his post-war apologia *My Answer*, Mosley claimed vindication: Germany's defeat, he argued, had enabled the rise of the Soviet superpower. See Oswald Mosley, *My Answer* (Ramsbury: Mosley Publications, 1946), 28-9.

[24] On the discursive evolution of 'anarchy', see Schmidt, *Political Discourse*.

[25] Mosley, *Blackshirt Policy*, 24; Oswald Mosley, *Fascism: 100 Questions Asked and Answered* (London: BUF Publications, 1936), Point 5.

[26] While Cecil never held an academic post, he was a 'public man' embedded amongst likeminded internationalists influential in IR's evolution. To offer one telling anecdote, Cecil served as the chairman for Noel-Baker's inaugural lecture as the first LSE Cassel Chair of IR in October 1924. See F.S. Northedge, 'The Department of International Relations at LSE: A Brief History, 1924-1971', in *International Relations at LSE: A History of 75 Years*, eds. Harry Bauer and Elisabetta Brighi (London: Millennium Publishing Group, 2003), 9.

[27] Bell, 'Before the Democratic Peace', 650.

could therefore be realised through the promotion of free trade, furtherance of international law, and—especially during the opening decades of the twentieth century—the construction of international organisations.[28]

Mosley gravitated towards this structural-liberal position. The forces of instability emanated from the deleterious role of 'miniature Napoleons' acting on the 'European stage', the retention of 'vast hordes of [conscripted] armed men', and the mutual suspicions that this precarious situation entailed.[29] Combined with a revulsion at the atrocities befalling the war generation, Mosley became a vocal supporter of the League and mutual disarmament, even advocating in 1920 for a global reduction of arms 'to the level of an international police force'.[30] The League was, Mosley claimed, 'the one dominant question in politics, the one thing that really matters'.[31] An outlier within the Conservative Party, Mosley fervently embraced the League, espoused the liberal mantra of free trade, and disdained the nineteenth-century diplomatic system and its precarious pre-war balance of power. This critique of what Mosley once called the 'fatal system of balance of power' aligned with a then popular usage of the term.[32] For many thinkers, the balance of power constituted a pejorative euphemism for maintaining rival coalitions and entangling alliances, behaviours implicated in the onset of the First World War.[33]

A vital influence shaping Mosley's early international thought was the aforementioned Cecil. Mosley claimed to have first leaned towards Cecil due to their common opposition to British intervention in the Russian Civil War.[34] Thereafter, Cecil would become a formative mentor, particularly on matters regarding foreign policy. As Robert Skidelsky argues, Cecil 'profoundly and permanently influenced Mosley's approach to foreign affairs'.[35] Indeed, Mosley's admiration seemingly endured, later recalling in his 1968 autobiography that Cecil 'embodied the mature, experienced and traditional wisdom of statesmanship'.[36]

Partly by virtue of this friendship, Mosley became involved in the interwar peace movement and other institutional bastions of internationalist thinking. For one, he was included among the original 756 members of the British Institute of International Affairs (BIIA), an honour presumably afforded by Cecil, then convenor of the Committee of Selection.[37] Mosley also collaborated alongside Cecil within the League of Nations Union (LNU),

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[28] *Ibid.*

[29] Hansard, HC Deb, 12 February 1920, vol.125: cc.338-41.

[30] *Ibid.* Mosley even questioned whether the British government would propose 'universal disarmament', an idea Conservative leader Bonar Law rejected as not yet 'practicable'. Hansard, HC Deb, 27 October 1919, vol.120: c.277.

[31] Hansard, HC Deb, 16 June 1920, vol.130: c.1314.

[32] 'League of Nations Union', *Western Daily Press*, 20 July 1924, 7.

[33] See M.L. Roi and B.J.C. McKercher, '"Ideal" and "Puch-Bag": Conflicting Views of the Balance of Power and their Influence on Interwar British Foreign Policy', *Diplomacy & Statecraft* 12, no. 2 (2001): 47-78.

[34] Oswald Mosley, *My Life* (London: Nelson, 1968), 108, 136.

[35] Robert Skidelsky, *Oswald Mosley* (London: Papermac, 1981), 93.

[36] Mosley, *My Life*, 136.

[37] See 'The British Institute of International Affairs', annual report, 1920, Chatham House Archive (hereafter CHA), London. Mosley's involvement with the institute appears marginal; he disappeared from the 1922 membership registry. While Mosley's participation seemingly ended (albeit his first wife, Lady Cynthia Mosley,

wherein he lectured throughout Britain on the organisation's behalf and in 1920 achieved the position of Parliamentary Secretary to its executive.[38] Churchill aptly described the relationship in 1922: Mosley was the 'squire' to Lord Cecil's League crusade.[39] Through his link with the LNU, Mosley also interacted with such notable IR thinkers as Gilbert Murray and Philip Noel-Baker, the latter of whom he would later describe, by then a Nobel Prize recipient, as 'probably [having] worked longer and more assiduously for world peace than any man alive'.[40] Notably too, before the final rejection of the Draft Treaty of Mutual Assistance by the first MacDonald government in late 1924—an abortive effort to bolster the League—Mosley and the likes of Murray were assigned by Cecil to a commission tasked with the proposed treaty's revision.[41] In conjunction with his LNU responsibilities, Mosley's activism would also lead to his election in May 1924 as Chairman of the Executive Committee within the National Council for the Prevention of War (NCPW). During this brief stint, Mosley sought the centralisation of related groups under the federal structure of the NCPW, albeit without success.[42]

Notwithstanding Mosley's relationship with Cecil, the former defected from the Tories in November 1920 in opposition to the violence perpetrated by the Black and Tans in Ireland. In fact, Mosley came to act as secretary for the extra-parliamentary Peace with Ireland Council, a group comprising such figures as Ramsay MacDonald, Leonard Woolf, and G.D.H. Cole.[43] Following a brief dalliance with Cecil's attempt to establish a 'centrist bloc' in 1921 under the leadership of former Foreign Secretary Lord Grey, the then-independent Mosley joined the Labour Party in early 1924, later achieving success at the 1926 by-election for Smethwick.[44] Yet by this point, Mosley was already vocally expressing his dissatisfaction with the Conservative government's foreign policy, especially its perceived mishandling of the League. In one notable instance, he even quarrelled with Murray, then LNU chairman, over the latter's opposition to an abortive declaratory amendment censuring the British response to the Ruhr crisis, the proposed development of a naval base in Singapore, and the failure to utilise the League as a forum to address the issue of reparations and inter-allied war debts. Murray objected on the basis that the union ought to avoid

joined in 1930, shortly before her death in May 1933), it is interesting to note that he was named alongside the likes of Helena Swanwick, E.D. Morel, Brailsford, Angell, Bertrand Russell, and Maude A. Royden as a possible Labour representative on Chatham House's Executive Committee. The list was drafted by British socialist and suffragette Ethel Snowden. Minutes of 65th Meeting of the Executive Committee, 5 November 1924, CHA.

[38] See, e.g., 'Meetings', *The League* 2, no. 3 (1919): 52. Mosley, *My Life*, 140; Skidelsky, *Oswald Mosley*, 93-4.

[39] Hansard, HC Deb, 8 February 1922, vol.150: c.261.

[40] Mosley, *My Life*, 211.

[41] Gaynor Johnson, *Lord Robert Cecil: Politician and Internationalist* (Farnham: Ashgate Publishing, 2013), 137.

[42] 'Prevention of War', *Derby Daily Telegraph*, 10 May 1924, 3; Minutes of LNU Executive Committee, 22 May 1924, Papers of the League of Nations Union, LSE Digital Library, https://digital.library.lse.ac.uk/Documents/Detail/minutes-of-the-meetings-of-the-executive-council-of-the-lnu-1924-1925/292195?item=292196; Martin Ceadel, *Semi-Detached Idealists: The British Peace Movement and International Relations, 1854-1945* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 250.

[43] Skidelsky, *Oswald Mosley*, 101.

[44] Helen McCarthy, 'Leading from the Centre: The League of Nations Union, Foreign Policy and "Political Agreement" in the 1930s', *Contemporary British History* 23, no. 4 (2009): 529-30.

partisan politics.[45] Likewise, Mosley also found himself at odds with Cecil over the 1923 Corfu crisis. The former was eager to impose sanctions against Italy by invoking Article 16 of the Covenant. Mosley later claimed that Cecil was partial to applying sanctions, but any such plans faltered upon receiving a lacklustre response from Prime Minister Stanley Baldwin.[46]

It is, however, the changes transpiring within Mosley's interpretation of the causes of war that are particularly notable for present purposes. Mosley exited the Labour Party in February 1931, after which he established the fleeting New Party the following month and, in October 1932, the BUF. From this period of transition, Mosley emerged with a different interpretation of war, one grounded in the socio-economic structures of capitalism, and thus the state's internal constitution and the international economic system acquired overriding importance in his thinking. Mosley gravitated from a Cecilian liberal internationalism towards a bastardised version of what Bell has called a 'radical-liberal' argument, one retaining a closer affinity with prominent social democratic thinkers.[47]

Mosley's gravitation in this direction reflected a broader division amongst socialist and liberal thinking on the causes of war. A stark contrast developed between such intellectuals as Brailsford, Laski, and L.T. Hobhouse, who prioritised economic instigators of war, and Angell's pro-interdependence position, which emphasised the pernicious consequences of anarchy and national chauvinism.[48] For the former grouping, capitalism represented, if not war's primary cause, an issue requiring correction before a stable and just international order could be realised. As one socialist pamphlet argued, 'Secret Diplomacy' served to cloak an otherwise 'Naked Capitalism', without which there would be immense 'difficulty in engineering a civilised nation into war'.[49] For Laski, a leading pluralist, a peaceful (although not necessarily war-less) order could only be actualised within an international society of socialist states, without which governments would inexorably advocate the parochial interests of the dominant class.[50] By virtue of the League's conservative framework and the failure to curtail capitalist exploitation, the new international organisation thus amounted to a 'League of Victors' in defence of the status quo, while the proposition

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[45] 'League of Nations Union', *Western Daily Press*, 20 July 1924, 7. This was not Mosley's first dispute with the LNU leadership. See also Oswald Mosley to Gilbert Murray, 14 November 1923, MS. Gilbert Murray 192, Archive of Gilbert Murray, Bodleian Archives & Manuscripts, University of Oxford.

[46] Mosley, *My Life*, 142; Skidelsky, *Oswald Mosley*, 94. The LNU likewise had a milder response to the Corfu crisis than Mosley desired. See, e.g., Gilbert Murray, 'The Graeco-Italian Crisis', *Headway* 5, no. 10 (1923): 424-5.

[47] See Bell, 'Before the Democratic Peace', 650-4. Bell distinguishes the radical-liberal position from the socialist insofar as the latter focuses on capitalism, while the former centres on elite machinations more broadly. As Bell suggests, though, the two blur into one another amongst reform-minded Anglophone socialists.

[48] On this debate, see Brinton, *Does Capitalism Cause War?*, alongside Cecil's foreword therein. For a superb recent treatment, see Villanueva, 'Norman Angell'.

[49] Thomas Johnston, *Secret Diplomacy, Capitalism and War* (Forward Printing and Publishing Company, 1915), 7, PRO 30/69/1830, TNA.

[50] Peter Lamb, 'Harold Laski (1893-1950): Political Theorist of a World in Crisis', *Review of International Studies* 25, no. 2 (1999): 332.

of a permanent League army was nothing but a 'police force of allied capitalism'.[51] Despite this scepticism, opposition towards the League among Labour intellectuals became less irresolute after 1923,[52] particularly due to the influence of pragmatic voices within the Advisory Committee on International Questions.[53] Nevertheless, divisions over the causes of war remained a topical issue, especially during the mid-1930s. These points of tension are indispensable in comprehending the changing nature of Mosley's thought as he entered the Labour Party and eventually motioned towards far-right extremism.

To access the core features of Mosley's radical-liberal interpretation of war, one must turn towards its putative roots. In the first instance, its precursor may again be located in Cecil's worldview and his subscription to the 'old Liberal doctrine' linking foreign intervention to the diversionary stratagems of elites.[54] As Mosley suggested in 1927, the foremost 'danger to peace in Europe' emanated from a coalition between the Tory-led British state and fascist Italy.[55] Mimicking a standard liberal critique of old diplomacy and the balance of power, one common among liberals and social democrats alike,[56] he conjured a vivid picture of government ministers who were cynically draped in 'white robes of peace', obscuring from public view their 'jack-boots' and 'spurs'.[57] International adventurism acted to distract the masses from societal ills and necessary domestic reform. For Mosley, to quote Skidelsky, 'Peace, Retrenchment and Social Reform all fitted perfectly together as in a beautifully constructed machine'.[58] Mosley's critique of 'old diplomacy' was nothing out of the ordinary; it was a staple of interwar international thought and the so-called 'architects of IR'.[59]

Upon gravitating towards the Labour Party, Mosley also absorbed an explicitly critical disposition towards capitalism, one that saturated both his political and international thought. It was precisely within this intellectual milieu that the Keynesian and, in particular, socialist features of Mosley's thought developed.[60] Paramount in Mosley's broader conception of civilisational crisis were the ills and prospective collapse of global capitalism, in

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[51] See, respectively, Donald S. Birn, 'The League of Nations Union and Collective Security', *Journal of Contemporary History* 9, no. 3 (1974): 154; H.N. Brailsford, 'A Socialist Foreign Policy', in *Problems of a Socialist Government*, eds. Christopher Addison, et al. (London: Victor Gollancz, 1933), 263.

[52] Ashworth, 'Poverty of Paradigms', 46.

[53] Sylvest, 'Interwar Internationalism'.

[54] Skidelsky, *Oswald Mosley*, 95.

[55] Cited in Labour Research Department, *Who Backs Mosley? Fascist Promise and Fascist Performance* (London: Labour Research Department, 1934), 5.

[56] See, e.g., Labour Party, *Labour and the Nation* (Labour Party, n.d.), 43, PRO 30/69/1830, TNA.

[57] Labour Party, *Report of the Twenty-Eighth Annual Conference of the Labour Party* (London: Labour Party, 1928), 188.

[58] Skidelsky, *Oswald Mosley*, 95.

[59] Stöckmann, *Architects*, 295-6.

[60] As Nicholas Mosley alleges, his father first read Keynes' *A Tract on Monetary Reform* while travelling India in 1925. See Nicholas Mosley, *Rules of the Game: Sir Oswald and Lady Cynthia Mosley, 1896-1933* (London: Secker & Warburg, 1982), 59. Since Skidelsky's portrayal of Mosley as a Keynesian spearhead, debate has persisted over his early economic thought and the extent of Keynes's influence. See, e.g., Daniel Ritschel, 'Why was there No Keynesian Revolution under the Second Labour Government? A Reassessment of Sir Oswald Mosley's Alternative Economic Agenda in 1930-31', in *Britain's Second Labour Government, 1929-31: A Reappraisal*, eds. John Sheperd, et al. (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2011), 57.

particular what he came to view as the tendency towards underconsumption and its deleterious consequences.[61] According to Mosley's son, *The Perfect Wagnerite* by Fabian playwright and 'socialist imperialist' George Bernard Shaw made a 'profound impression', the book itself based on Wagner's *The Ring of the Nibelung*.[62] After acquiring the text through happenstance during a trip to India in late 1924, Mosley was allegedly captivated by its 'parable about the collapse of capitalism and the emergence of a classless type of man to lead the proletariat'.[63] As Mosley observed in 1925, '[c]risis after crisis sends capitalist society staggering ever nearer to abysses of inconceivable catastrophe to suffering millions'.[64]

It was Mosley's entry into the Independent Labour Party (ILP)—of which he would subsequently become a member of its National Administrative Council (1927-9)—and his introduction to the intellectual John Strachey that proved most integral in the evolution of his thought.[65] In turn, J.A. Hobson's underconsumption thesis featured prominently in Mosley's thinking during the second half of the 1920s. As argued in *The Physiology of Industry* by Albert F. Mummery and Hobson, 'undue exercise of the habit of saving is possible', which 'impoverishes the Community' by fomenting an overaccumulation of capital and, in turn, overproduction, unemployment, and the reduction of wages.[66] Mosley gradually formulated a series of evolving plans that amalgamated various inspirations: a high-wage Fordism based on his travels in the US, strands of social-imperialism with a prolonged pedigree in British international thought, Keynesian monetarism, Clifford H. Douglas' theory of 'social credit', and what Matthew Worley referred to as 'Labour's implicit but undeveloped notion of economic planning'.[67] Yet at its diagnostic core, Hobson's influence arguably remained key.[68] As Mosley explained in a manner reminiscent of Hobson: 'The trouble is the working-class has no "effective demand." They have not the purchasing power to command the production of the goods which they require'.[69] This premise would persist, underpinning Mosley's prognosis during the 1930s.

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[61] Mosley, *10 Points*, 4.
[62] Mosley, *Rules of the Game*, 59.
[63] *Ibid.* See also Skidelsky, *Oswald Mosley*, 133.
[64] Oswald Mosley, *Revolution by Reason: An Account of the Birmingham Proposals, Together with an Analysis of the Financial Policy of the Present Government which has Led to Their Great Attack Upon Wages* (Leicester: Blackfriars Press, 1925), 7.
[65] Daniel Ritschel, *The Politics of Planning: The Debate on Economic Planning in Britain in the 1930s* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997), 57-8; Matthew Worley, 'What Was the New Party? Sir Oswald Mosley and Associated Responses to the "Crisis", 1931-1932', *History* 92, no. 1 (2007): 45, 55-6.
[66] A.F. Mummery and J.A. Hobson, *The Physiology of Industry: Being an Exposure of Certain Fallacies in Existing Theories of Economics* (London: John Murray, 1889), iv.
[67] Matthew Worley, *Oswald Mosley and the New Party* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 4. See also Richard C. Thurlow, 'Political Witchcraft Roots of Fascism', *Patterns of Prejudice* 11, no. 3 (1977): 19; Robert Skidelsky, 'Reflections on Mosley and British Fascism', in *British Fascism: Essays on the Radical Right in Inter-War Britain*, eds. Kenneth Lunn and Richard C. Thurlow (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1980), 105-6; Ritschel, *Politics of Planning*, 57. For a superb treatment on Mosley's link to the concept of economic planning, one that informs my treatment, see Ritschel, *Politics of Planning*, Chapter 2.
[68] For a contrasting opinion, one downplaying the Hobsonite influence on Mosley's thinking during the 1920s, see Skidelsky, *Oswald Mosley*, 141.
[69] Mosley, *Revolution by Reason*, 8-9. See also Oswald Mosley, 'The Labour Party's Financial Policy', *Socialist Review* (September 1927): 23.

As Mosley later claimed in his biography, he had merely 'added ideology to the economics' of his Labourite thought,[70] a position largely endorsed by Richard Thurlow: 'Mosley's fascist economic programme derived from the main ideas of his socialist and radical synthesis of the 1920s transposed into an ultra-national context'.[71] Indeed, his fascist turn witnessed what Thurlow refers to as 'a reversion to some of the themes of J.A. Hobson'.[72]

The influence of Hobson's underconsumption thesis extended further than Mosley's economic thought, inflecting his explanation of war too. As will be familiar to IR scholars, Hobson applied his thesis to help explain 'new imperialism' and modern war. Hobson's ideas were built on a Cobdenite critique of aristocratic interference in foreign affairs, albeit updated from its nineteenth-century roots to instead frame many international conflicts as, to quote David Long, 'the product of a sectional interest, [typically] certain financiers and industrial magnates, manipulating the press, public opinion and politicians of industrialized societies'.[73] Onto this focus on malign machinations, Hobson added a formulaic economic model grounded in the above underconsumptionist ideas, linking a lack of effective demand with the concomitant tendency of industrialised powers to pursue an insatiable crusade for investment opportunities abroad or the export of surplus products. This model was by no means entirely novel. As Gregory Claves notes, the central thesis of Hobson's *Imperialism* was firmly rooted in late nineteenth-century international thought,[74] its antecedents identifiable in the ideas of, among others, French economist Paul Leroy-Beaulieu and the American journalist and economist Charles Conant.[75] However, whereas these thinkers viewed imperialism as a positive release for surplus capital, Hobson followed a similar logic, albeit arriving at a vastly different conclusion. Objecting to the unrelenting crusade to secure foreign markets, Hobson proposed domestic social reform to redress underconsumption.[76] There were thus two interrelated explanatory models for modern imperialism in Hobson's interpretation, one veering towards the conspiratorial and the other rooted in the structural forces of underconsumption. As Long affirms, Hobson's thinking should not be reduced to either: 'Structural and conspiracy theories are mutually complementary, indeed, integrally linked, in Hobson's theory.'[77] In this sense, to

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[70] Mosley, *My Life*, 319-20.
[71] Thurlow, *Fascism in Britain*, 122.
[72] *Ibid*, 121.
[73] David Long, 'J.A. Hobson and Idealism in International Relations', *Review of International Studies* 17, no. 3 (1991) 287.
[74] Gregory Claeys, 'The "Left" and the Critique of Empire c. 1865-1900: Three Roots of Humanitarian Foreign Policy', in *Victorian Visions of Global Order: Empire and International Relations in Nineteenth-Century Political Thought*, ed. Duncan Bell (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 256.
[75] Torbjørn L. Knutsen, 'A Lost Generation? IR Scholarship before World War I', *International Politics* 45, no. 6 (2008): 662-3. Langer voiced a similar opinion decades prior: Hobson had probably borrowed from Conant's 'remarkable' but since forgotten article, 'The Economic Basis of "Imperialism"'. William L. Langer, 'A Critique of Imperialism', *Foreign Affairs* 14, no. 1 (1935): 102.
[76] Henry Gaylord Wilshire—a wealthy socialist—also deserves mention for a similar critique that gained attention in the US and influenced Hobson. See Ricardo Villanueva, 'Hobson's Theory of Imperialism and its Indebtedness to Socialism: A Challenge to Conventional Narratives of Early International Relations', *Australian Journal of Politics & History* 63, no. 4 (2017): 508-23.
[77] David Long, *Towards a New Liberal Internationalism: The International Theory of J.A. Hobson* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 93.

again quote Long, 'Hobson's critique of imperialism was a political statement, not the statement of scientific theory'.[78]

From the acclaimed American historian-cum-isolationist Charles A. Beard to Nikolai Bukharin, Hobson's views on imperialism and war permeated early twentieth-century thought and filtered into the debates of IR's formative history.[79] For Parker T. Moon, a prominent political scientist at Columbia University, Hobson's tract constituted 'the classic indictment of imperialist doctrines and practices'.[80] As the political scientist and Fabian H.R.G. Greaves posited, 'war is the inevitable consequence of capitalism, which engenders the perpetual search for safe areas of investment'.[81] Given the close relationship between the British Labour Party and many of the most prominent figures in the interwar study of IR, this influence among some within the field is not all that surprising.[82] However, not all were approving. William L. Langer systematically attacked Hobson's thesis in *Foreign Affairs*.[83] Likewise, in one *International Affairs* review of John Strachey's *The Theory and Practice of Socialism*, the proposition of war as a product of capitalism was critiqued because it failed to satisfactorily appreciate the implications of the 'political organisation of the world into States sovereign in themselves… between whom there is no arbiter but force'.[84]

Importantly, Hobson's thesis not only traversed continents, professions, and disciplinary boundaries, but the left-right political divide. While I have not located an explicit reference to Hobson within Mosley's writings as it pertains to the question of war, it is apparent that this Hobsonite emphasis on underconsumption, sectional interests, and the tendency towards what the *Fascist Quarterly* referred to as 'Export Imperialism' provided a vital foundation for his fascistised diagnosis of conflict.[85] As Mosley explained:

> The main cause of War is the struggle for markets. Each nation produces more than it can sell at home and so tries to sell its surplus abroad, in cut-throat competition with other nations.

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[78] *Ibid*, 72.

[79] On Beard's Hobsonite influence, see Richard Drake, *Charles Austin Beard: The Return of the Master Historian of American Imperialism* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2018).

[80] Parker Thomas Moon, *Imperialism and World Politics* (New York: Macmillan Company, 1926), 475n3.

[81] H.R.G. Greaves, review of *Property or Peace?*, by H.N. Brailsford; *An Atlas of Current Affairs*, by J.F. Horrabin; and *Quo Vadimus? A Public Lecture Delivered on 5 February 1934*, by Alfred Zimmern. *Political Quarterly* 5, no. 3 (1934): 434.

[82] See Ashworth, *International Relations and the Labour Party*.

[83] Langer, 'Critique of Imperialism'.

[84] M.G. Balfour, review of *The Theory and Practice of Socialism*, by John Strachey, *International Affairs* 16, no. 2 (1937): 285-6. Regarding Strachey's thinking on the causes of war, see John Strachey, *The Theory and Practice of Socialism* (London: Victor Gollancz, 1936), Chapter 22.

[85] 'Notes of the Quarter', *Fascist Quarterly* 1, no. 2 (1935): 116.

> Diplomacy, finance, armaments and ultimately War are used as weapons in the struggle for markets.[86]

Mosley considered it fallacious that nationalism alone could be in any shape imbricated in the onset of war. Nationalist sentiments may be manipulated and led astray by the intervening influence of sinister interests. Yet, to recognise this meant that the actual causal locus of most modern wars was to be found in 'economic factors'.[87] In this sense, Mosley's critique of finance capitalism was intertwined with a form of what Bell has called the 'democratic war thesis', a broad line of thought linking the impressionable passions of the masses with the use of military force.[88] For Mosley, then, financial machinations, geopolitical tensions, and public agitation were all interlinked. As he remarked in 1936: 'With the return of the Balance of Power we witness the return of the arms race and the concomitant press agitation which inflames the mind and spirit of Europe to fresh fatality.'[89]

The broad contours of this mutated Hobsonite diagnostic saturated BUF discourse. As Margaret Collins, BUF Joint Director of the Press Bureau, stated: 'Chief among the causes of war is the struggle for markets, and it is that struggle which Fascism proposes to end, thereby eliminating the major cause of… war to-day.'[90] The case of the acclaimed military strategist-turned-Mosleyite fascist J.F.C. Fuller is particularly interesting. While embracing the idea that violence was intrinsic to human nature in his 1923 *The Reformation of War*, Fuller's conception of war gradually transmuted into one framing international conflict as a product of civilisational decadence and decline.[91] The latter interpretation was partly tied to a critique of high finance. As with Mosley, Fuller presented 'trading and all it includes' as the 'greatest causes of war'.[92] Yet this diagnostic was also linked to a critique of liberal democracy, with Fuller promoting a similar thesis to Mosley regarding democracy's war-like propensity.[93] In his capsule review for *Foreign Affairs*, Langer aptly described Fuller's *War and Western Civilisation, 1832-1932* as a 'forceful critique… of the democratic urge towards war'.[94] The germ of this idea may be found in Fuller's reading of Gustave Le Bon's thesis on crowd psychology.[95] Fuller equated democracy with 'demagogy', a 'drug' that 'hallucinated' the masses

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[86] Mosley, *Fascism*, Point 87. While Mosley consistently emphasised international finance after 1932, he at occasionally framed it as a prime cause—rather than *the* prime cause—of war.
[87] Oswald Mosley, *Fascism for the Million* (London: B.U.F. Publications, 1936), 65.
[88] See Bell, 'Before the Democratic Peace'.
[89] Mosley, 'World Alternative', 379.
[90] 'Fascist Powers Bloc', *Barnsley Chronicle*, 17 July 1937, TAC/7/2, Trade Advisory Council Archive, UCL.
[91] Azar Gat, *Fascist and Liberal Visions of War: Fuller, Liddell Hart, Douhet, and Other Modernists* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998), Chapter 2.
[92] J.F.C. Fuller, 'What the British Union Has to Offer Britain', pamphlet ('Action' Publications, n.d.), 6, LH 15/3/188, Basil Henry Liddell Hart Papers (hereafter BHLHP), Liddell Hart Centre for Military Archives, King's College London.
[93] J.F.C. Fuller, 'Fascism and War', *Fascist Quarterly* 1, no. 2 (1935): 140-55.
[94] William L. Langer, review of *War and Western Civilisation, 1832-1932: A Study of War as a Political Instrument and the Expression of Mass Democracy*, by J.F.C. Fuller, *Foreign Affairs* 11, no. 3 (1933): 527.
[95] Gat, *Fascist and Liberal Visions of War*, 21-2.

with war.[96] On one occasion, this led Fuller to a forceful critique of Angell, albeit his tone was measured by comparison to much of his later articles. Presumably unacquainted with Angell's earlier scholarship (which was, ironically, also heavily imbued with Le Bon's influence), Fuller held that the liberal thinker was of the belief that war was a predominantly 'logical problem', a matter of restricting the use of force and the means of war. Angell failed to recognise that, in Fuller's estimation, the problem of war was 'a psychological and a sociological' one.[97] Chesterton expressed a similar belief in the linkage between malign private interests, the misdirection of the 'national spirit', and the 'exploitation of mass hysteria', without which, he added, 'wars can scarcely be made'.[98] Allen, too, expressed a disdain towards liberal democracy's warmongering tendencies. Placing less emphasis on crowd psychology, Allen instead focused on liberalism's paradoxical quest of achieving peace through war. Directing his fire towards Gilbert Murray and his internationalist ilk, he lambasted liberalism as the 'political philosophy which had been responsible for the greatest outbreak of organized violence in the history of the world'.[99] Allen found it incredulous that one 'might find some intellectual justification for the slaughters that had "made the world safe for democracy"'.[100]

With all that said, one should avoid generalisations about the thought of BUF propagandists. Some expressed a belief in a link between trade, investment, and war or democracy's allegedly war-prone nature, yet such thinking may have been influenced by different strands of conspiratorial theorising or simply reflected a dutiful toeing of party discourse. In Mosley's case, however, this line of thinking was a product of his period within the ILP. Indeed, among the Labour movement, it is difficult to understate the profound influence that Hobson's *Imperialism* held, not least due to his prominent role in the Union of Democratic Control of Foreign Policy, Labour's Advisory Committee on International Questions, and the ILP's comparable body. As Skidelsky observes, Hobson's treatise represented a bible within the Labour movement, providing the standard account of the relationship between capitalism, imperialism, and war.[101] Brailsford, for instance, described Hobson's *Imperialism* as a 'masterly work', 'one of the most notable contributions of our time to the scientific study of contemporary politics'.[102] As Strachey outlined in his 1925 book, *Revolution by Reason*, an extension of Mosley's eponymous tract,

> Capitalism is an underlying, economic cause of modern war, the running irritation which starts the all too easily aroused passions and jealousies, which are its immediate cause. It is this special feature of Capitalism—this necessity to export owing to *an inability to distribute enough purchasing*

[96] J.F.C. Fuller, *War and Western Civilization, 1832-1932: A Study of War as a Political Instrument and the Experience of Mass Democracy* (London: Duckworth, 1932), 7.
[97] J.F.C. Fuller, 'Britain's Security', *Headway* 16, no. 8 (1934): 150-1. Regarding Le Bon's influence on Angell, see Adam B. Lerner, 'Pathological Nationalism?: The Legacy of Crowd Psychology in International Theory', *International Affairs* 98, no. 3 (2022): 1002-3.
[98] A.K. Chesterton, 'To H.G. Wells and the Internationalists: You Will Secure International Order Through National Order', *Fascist Week*, 9—15 February 1934, 8.
[99] Drennan (pseud.), *B.U.F.*, 210.
[100] *Ibid*, 211.
[101] Skidelsky, *Oswald Mosley*, 235.
[102] H.N. Brailsford, *The War of Steel and Gold* (London: G. Bell & Sons, 1914), 74.

> *power to provide an effective home market for the goods it produces*—which keeps the world in a state of bellicose disorder.[103]

While Skidelsky raises the topic of Hobson's thesis in order to highlight the profound disjunct that evolved between Mosley's concurrent support for 'Imperialism' and 'insulation'—which had already materialised in some form whilst a Labour MP—versus the internationalism and anti-imperialism espoused by many other Labour intellectuals, this seems to underplay the subtle yet abiding influence that Hobsonite thinking held over Mosley's views on imperialism and war in the late 1920s and into the subsequent decade during which he led the BUF.[104]

Beyond Hobson, one may also detect the influence of other liberal and left-wing thinkers whose thought shaped Mosley's views on this subject, reinforced them, or were otherwise strategically harnessed to add rhetorical heft to his arguments. For example, in an intriguing passage, Mosley reprints a sizeable quotation by Ramsay Muir, an early interdependence theorist and a liberal historian affiliated with the imperial Round Table, wherein the latter alludes to a democratic deficit undergirded by the financial influence of 'the City'.[105] Mosley utilised the thought of James Arthur Salter in a similar fashion, the latter a British diplomat, Gladstone Professor of Political Theory and Institutions at Oxford, and an important influence on functionalist thinking within IR.[106] Upon favourably quoting Salter's 'brilliant' book *Recovery*, Mosley opined that such words were 'the finest description yet produced in general terms of the structure of the Fascist State'.[107] Elsewhere in his 1932 manifesto, Mosley boasted that his pitch for a 'National Council' of technocratic experts, as encapsulated within his 1930 *Mosley Memorandum*, had since been 'developed' by Salter (at least in Mosley's estimation).[108] While recognising that Salter was not consciously fascist—indeed, in flirting with corporatist ideas, Salter was cognisant of the totalitarian dangers of the Italian experiment[109]—Mosley believed that the functionalist thinker 'appears to have but a short road left to travel'.[110]

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[103] John Strachey, *Revolution by Reason: An Account of the Financial Proposals Submitted by Mr. Oswald Mosley* (London: Leonard Parsons, 1925), 73 (emphasis in original).
[104] Skidelsky, *Oswald Mosley*, 234-5.
[105] Mosley, *Fascism for the Million*, 43. On Muir, see Dennis Kavanagh, 'British Political Science in the Inter-War Years: The Emergence of the Founding Fathers', *British Journal of Politics and International Relations* 5, no. 4 (2003): 594-613.
[106] See Leonie Holthaus and Jens Steffek, 'Experiments in International Administration: The Forgotten Functionalism of James Arthur Salter', *Review of International Studies* 42, no. 1 (2016): 114-35.
[107] Mosley, *Greater Britain*, 18, 111. For the relevant passage, see Arthur Salter, *Recovery: The Second Effort* (London: G. Bell and Sons Ltd., 1932), 21.
[108] Mosley, *Greater Britain*, 37.
[109] Holthaus and Steffek, 'Experiments in International Administration', 127.
[110] Mosley, *Greater Britain*, 111. This rhetorical move recurs in BUF discourse, where selective quotations are used to harness the authority of notable thinkers. The rhetorical heft lies not only in the respectability of the quoted authors, but that avowed anti-fascists are caught allegedly supporting fascist policies or claims to truth. For example, alongside Salter and Muir, one *Action* article during the Munich Crisis attempted to co-opt Toynbee's earlier writings on the Sudeten German minority, citing his words, anti-fascist credentials, professorial status, and even his familial ties to leading IR scholar-cum-anti-fascist Gilbert Murray. See George Sutton, 'Czechoslovakia and Jewry', *Action*, 28 May 1938, 7.

It is also notable that after 1930, John Maynard Keynes temporarily jettisoned the belief that free trade was inherently pacifying, observing the deleterious consequences of demographic expansion and competition over market access.[111] As Donald Markwell suggests, it may have been that Keynes was persuaded by liberal radicals and socialists on this question.[112] For Duncan Kelly, Keynes' newfound views on 'economic imperialism' 'sounded oddly similar' to Hobson's radical line of argument.[113] Keynes' mounting scepticism towards the pacific nature of free trade in *The General Theory* reflected the broader context in which he drafted the book, namely the aforementioned debate during the mid-1930s about the relationship between capitalism and war.[114] Why is Keynes' evolving international thought of concern? Mosley held considerable regard for the Cambridge economist, particularly before the BUF's advent. While perhaps overstating his case, Skidelsky even presented Mosley's *Revolution by Reason* as 'the first political attempt to apply Keynes's ideas to economic policy'.[115] Keynes had shared some sympathies with Mosley's proposals under the Labour and New Party, while Mosley corresponded with Keynes prior to his fascist turn, soliciting advice from the latter.[116] Against this backdrop, Keynes' gravitation towards self-sufficiency during the 1930s added further credence to Mosley's fascistised diagnosis. As Mosley remarked, even 'the most powerful mind of the old economists, Mr. Keynes, has been compelled to admit that national self-sufficiency tends towards Peace'.[117] As he elsewhere remarked, '*Laissez-faire*… is dead, and Mr. J. M. Keynes… wrote the obituary notice of this doctrine'.[118]

In concluding this discussion, it is worthwhile qualifying that while I point to a transition in Mosley's thought—from the liberal-structuralism of the internationalist Tory to a radical-liberal position under Labour and the New Party, before finally culminating in a fascistised mutation of the latter—the inherent messiness of his evolving worldview should not be downplayed. This chronological narrative fails to adequately reflect that the division between the liberal-structural and radical-liberal lines of argumentation are not absolute but often blur together. Even Hobson did not reduce all instances of contemporary war nor the motivations of old diplomacy to financial machinations. As Hobson carefully qualified in the preface to the 1938 edition of *Imperialism*, the 'demand for markets and for profitable investment' is the 'dominant' (but not sole) motive for modern imperialism, but 'I

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111 John Maynard Keynes, *The General Theory of Employment, Interest, and Money* (London: Macmillan and Co., 1936), 381.

112 Donald Markwell, *John Maynard Keynes and International Relations: Economic Paths to War and Peace* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 160.

113 Duncan Kelly, 'Malthusian Moments in the Work of John Maynard Keynes', *Historical Journal* 63, no. 1 (2020): 148.

114 Markwell, *Keynes and International Relations*, Chapter 5.

115 Robert Skidelsky, *John Maynard Keynes, Volume II: The Economist as Saviour, 1920-1937* (New York: Allen Lane, 1992), 246.

116 See Harold Nicolson, *Diaries and Letters, 1930-1939*, ed. Nigel Nicolson (London: Collins, 1966), 71-2; Worley, 'What Was the New Party?', 42; David Howell, 'The Sheik… A Valentino in Real Life: Sir Oswald Mosley and the Labour Party, 1924—1931', *Contemporary British History* 23, no. 4 (2009): 436.

117 Mosley, *Blackshirt Policy*, 42.

118 Mosley, *Fascism for the Million*, 20.

am not here arguing the case for an exclusively or even a mainly economic causation of modern Wars [*sic*]'.[119] Mosley likewise blurred such lines of argumentation insofar as he espoused both a classic liberal disdain at secret diplomacy and the balance of power, a radical critique of capitalist imperialism, and views typical of a more structural-liberal form of argumentation. For example, in 1928 the Labourite Mosley expressed the opinion that international 'suspicion' remained 'one of the prime causes of war', an opinion he reiterated in 1936.[120] Conversely, as early as February 1923, Mosley linked parochial financial interests with international conflict, expressing fears in the House of Commons about the prospect of war over Iraq: 'If there is to be a war in the Near East, it will be a commercial war', an 'immense catastrophe' fought for 'money-collecting reasons' and 'the interests of a handful of traders'.[121] With that said, it is clear that the central directionality of Mosley's diagnosis of war mutated over the course of the 1920s and early 1930s. In fact, Mosley's turnabout on this theme was not lost on contemporaries. As Frank Owen, a figure most known for his co-authorship of *Guilty Men*, remarked of Mosley in the House of Commons in November 1930: '[w]e used to hear that wars and revolutions sprang out of the greeds and fears of economic nationalism. Now we on these benches hear from the same fount of truth that peace and plenty are the fruits of *economic nationalism*' (Owen tied the latter phrase to the utterances of Mosley's deputy, John Strachey).[122]

'Demographic Imperialism' and the 'Have-Nots'

After Mosley's fascist turn in 1932, his Hobsonite critique acquired a more extreme character. While Hobson remained beholden to the welfare benefits and pacifying effects of a reformed free trade system,[123] Mosley viewed free trade and the entire liberal edifice as not only incapable of addressing Britain's domestic qualms, but deleterious to international stability. In turn, he levelled a sustained assault against the prevailing order and the sectional interests allegedly upholding it, namely the 'internationalism' pursued by the 'old gang' of established parties and the machinations of London and Wall Street financiers. It was the parochial interests of such factions and efforts to defend the iniquitous Versailles settlement which increased the propensity for conflict, either through direct agitation for war on the part of the former or by preventing the satisfied states from accommodating the grievances of the emerging powers: Nazi Germany, fascist Italy, and imperial Japan.[124] As one article in the *Fascist Quarterly* opined, 'a sympathetic understanding of the needs of the "have-not" Powers [is required], if the cataclysm of another civil war of the white race is to be avoided'.[125]

Mosley's validation of such revisionist ambitions relied not solely on a fascist solidarity, but a belief that the emergent, virile great powers ought to be afforded an 'outlet' for their expanding population and access to raw materials, without which such countries would experience an acute decline in living standards. While Mosley

[119] John A. Hobson, *Imperialism: A Study*, 3rd edn. (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1938), v, x.
[120] Labour Party, *Report*, 188; Oswald Mosley, 'Peace with Germany', *Action*, 12 March 1936, 9.
[121] Hansard, HC Deb, 15 February 1923, vol.160, cc.405-6.
[122] Hansard, HC Deb, 4 November 1930, vol.244: c.779 (emphasis added).
[123] Long, *New Liberal Internationalism*, Chapter 7.
[124] See, e.g., Mosley, *Tomorrow We Live*, 61-8.
[125] 'Notes of the Quarter', *Fascist Quarterly* 1, no. 4 (1935): 399.

accepted that Britain was not over-populated—its issue in this regard was instead one of inefficient land cultivation[126]—this was not the case for the rising powers. Such nations must 'expand or explode', and to prevent the former is to foment instability.[127] For Mosley, the situation necessitated the 'peaceful revision of frontiers' and the 'natural and orderly expansion by great and virile peoples'; failure to accommodate such change would beget 'war for great nations and utter destruction for small nations'.[128] In this respect, Mosley diverged from Hobson acutely. The latter explicitly rejected the proposition that imperialism served as an outlet for overpopulation.[129] Mosley's diagnosis of war and the instability ingrained within the prevailing order thus synthesised a mutated Hobsonite critique of capitalist imperialism, a social Darwinist conception of perennial struggle between virile great nations, and the appropriation of a quasi-Malthusian notion prevalent in interwar discourse, one linking over-population to an increased propensity for national expansion and international instability.

Two comparisons are warranted to further clarify this aspect of Mosley's diagnosis. First, Mosley's Malthusian logic was by no measure unique. As Mazower indicates, continental discourse was replete with Kjellénian 'biological metaphors', anxious speculation about national 'asphyxiation', and discussion of the necessity for expansive 'living space'.[130] Robert R. Kuczynski summarised the popular view in a 1928 *Foreign Affairs* article: 'Wars, unemployment, poverty, and many other evils under which humanity suffers are usually attributed to over-population.'[131] Carr himself referred to such thinkers as the 'disciples of Malthus'.[132] *Foreign Affairs* even carried an article by Francesco Coppola, a figure once described at Chatham House as among 'the most authoritative Fascist writers',[133] wherein he regurgitated oft-repeated grievances against Italy's 'unjustly mutilated' victory and 'her vital need for expansion'.[134] Whether raised to confirm the centrality of demographic variables, qualify the import of population pressures, or dismiss their relevance, such ideas saturated early IR discourse.[135]

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126 Mosley, *Fascism for the Million*, 33.

127 Mosley, *Tomorrow We Live*, 64-5. Mosley repeatedly used this rhetorical dichotomisation: orderly expansion versus disorganised explosion.

128 Mosley, *British Peace*, 8, OMD/2/3/4, Oswald Mosley Papers.

129 Long, *New Liberal Internationalism*, 84.

130 Mark Mazower, *Dark Continent: Europe's Twentieth Century* (London: Penguin Books, 1999), 71. On Kjellén, see Ola Tunander, 'Swedish-German Geopolitics for a New Century Rudolf Kjellén's "The State as a Living Organism"', *Review of International Studies* 27, no. 3 (2001): 451-63.

131 Robert R. Kuczynski, 'The World's Population', *Foreign Affairs* 7, no. 1 (1928): 30.

132 E.H. Carr, 'Public Opinion as a Safeguard of Peace', *International Affairs* 15, no. 6 (1936): 846.

133 Carlo Rosselli, 'The Foreign Policy of Fascist Italy', 16 March 1933, RIIA/8/266, CHA.

134 Francesco Coppola, 'Italy in the Mediterranean', *Foreign Affairs* 1, no. 4 (1923): 114.

135 See, e.g., Alexander Pearce Higgins, *Studies in International Law and Relations* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1928), 11; A.M. Carr-Saunders, 'Fallacies about Overpopulation', *Foreign Affairs* 9, no. 4 (1931): 646-56; A.M. Carr-Saunders, 'Population and Peace', *Headway* 17, no. 12 (1935): 231-2; N. Bukharin, 'Imperialism and Communism', *Foreign Affairs* 14, no. 4 (1936): 563-77; Frederick Sherwood Dunn, *Peaceful Change: A Study of International Procedures* (New York: Council on Foreign Relations, 1937); Emil Ludwig, 'The Coming War', *Current History* 45, no. 6 (1937): 41-2.

This war-prone Malthusian logic was embraced not only by conservative and fascist thinkers, but some on the political left, exemplified not least by Keynes, who had been a member of the Malthusian League.[136] Where Mosley differed on this problematic relative to Keynes and most other interwar liberal and social democratic thinkers was, however, in his view that the youthful virility of such nations legitimised their territorial ambitions (unless these were to impinge on the interests of the British Empire). While therefore revealing a disdain at 'Export Imperialism' given its alleged role in war's causality, 'Demographic Imperialism' was only linked to conflict insofar as status quo states sought to contain such imperialism, rather than the actual expansionism of rising nations themselves.[137] Despite Keynes' above-noted scepticism about the pacifying potential of free trade, alongside his apprehensions over the Versailles settlement, he nevertheless differed starkly on this point: population pressures were a perennial challenge to address through socio-economic reform, yet one that did not simply validate revisionism.[138] As Salter once remarked in language similar to Mosley, albeit arriving at a conclusion closer to Keynes: 'if explosions are to be prevented, the peoples of the world must work positively and co-operatively at finding a safety-valve for the explosive forces [of localised population growth], and not merely defensively at national policies designed to direct the explosion elsewhere'.[139]

Second, Mosley's critique of the satisfied powers is reminiscent of a debate about 'peaceful change' that came to the fore following the Italo-Abyssinian War. Discussion of peaceful change manifested in varying forms. Many of IR's early figures, from Lauterpacht to Toynbee, engaged the theme.[140] At its core, discussion of peaceful change evolved from an observed disjunct between 'a more homoeostatic and increasingly anachronistic political structure' and processes of change in economic, industrial, military, demographic, and other domains.[141] For some thinkers, notions of peaceful change were underpinned by what the Yale political scientist Frederick Sherwood Dunn called 'the theory of the "Haves" and the "Have-nots"', a supposed 'general theory of international politics' whose popularity went beyond intellectuals residing in the revisionist states.[142] This 'theory' was predicated on a perceived disparity in colonies, space, and natural resources between the rising 'have-nots' and the satisfied 'haves', under which the US, Britain, France, and in some interpretations the Soviet Union, were lumped. While some

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136 Markwell, *Keynes and International Relations*, 166.

137 'Notes of the Quarter', *Fascist Quarterly* 1, no. 2 (1935): 116-7. These central yet vaguely defined concepts were often referenced using synonymous terms. Notably, while specific labels varied, the underlying ideas recurred with consistency. The pseudonymous 'Lucifer' referred to 'Liberal-Capitalist Imperialism', while Mosley elsewhere used 'Imperialist export capitalism'. Fuller, meanwhile, constructed a comparable dichotomy on the causes of war: 'over-population' and 'fiscal-economic anarchy'. See, e.g., Lucifer (pseud.), 'Current Cant and Fascist Fact', *Fascist Week*, 15—21 December 1933, 2; Fuller, 'Fascism and War', 141; Mosley, 'World Alternative', Mosley, 'World Alternative', 387; J.A.M., review of *Next Year's War? A Study of Rival Imperialisms*, by F.A. Ridley, *Action*, 9 July 1936, 12; 'Lunch with the Leader of the British Union', *Action*, 19 December 1936, 5.

138 Keynes, *General Theory*, 381-2.

139 Arthur Salter, 'The Economic Causes of War', in *The Causes of War: Economic, Industrial, Racial, Religious, Scientific and Political*, ed. Arthur Porritt (London: Macmillan and Co., 1932), 17.

140 For a sample, see C.A.W. Manning, ed., *Peaceful Change: An International Problem* (New York: Macmillan, 1937).

141 Kristensen, '"Peaceful Change" in International Relations', 38.

142 Dunn, *Peaceful Change*, 4.

framed peaceful change positively, implying a broader reformist effort in pursuit of a more just order, others utilised the class-based language of the 'have-nots' as a basis for advocating appeasement. Within British IR, the archetypal proponent of a more 'negative' brand of peaceful change, one focused on the lesser goal of preventing general war by placating the grievances of the 'have-nots', remains E.H. Carr's 'realism'.[143] Outlined within *The Twenty Years' Crisis*, Carr evinced a scepticism at status quo powers' moralising arrogance and the pernicious influence that a doctrine of 'utopianism' held over British foreign policy.[144]

It is important to recall that this discourse of peaceful change, even when it manifested in a pro-appeasement guise with respect to Italy or Germany, permeated across the political spectrum. In fact, it typified the thought of many foreign policy experts at Chatham House. The institute's World Order study group, established on the eve of the Second World War, reasoned that '[n]o nation can remain stationary; it must either develop or perish'. Britain was obliged to cautiously assist Germany in 'acquiring new markets and… economic sources' on a 'give and take' basis.[145] Moreover, while many socialists were amongst the most vocal in promoting action against the revisionist powers, notions of peaceful change via appeasement did not escape left-wing thought.[146] As one Chatham House report added regarding the Italo-Abyssinian War:

> If a majority of the British electorate had supported one of the various policies advocated by Mr. Amery, Sir Oswald Mosley, Mr. Lansbury, or Sir Stafford Cripps, Great Britain would certainly not have taken the lead in calling for the application of sanctions. There would, perhaps, have been no sanctions against Italy [at all].[147]

Even as the situation in Europe declined and war with Germany loomed, certain staunch socialists and pacifists remained beholden to a cynical view of pooled or collective security, and a desire to appease the 'have-not' powers. Ashworth's account of the international thought of Helena Swanwick, head of the British section of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, and her opposition to so-called 'League Wars' is demonstrative.[148]

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[143] Kristensen, '"Peaceful Change" in International Relations'.
[144] Carr, *Twenty Years' Crisis*.
[145] Typescript of report entitled 'Rearmament in Peace', n.d., MS. 15363/178, Archive of David Astor, Bodleian Archives & Manuscripts, University of Oxford.
[146] Ceadel, *Semi-Detached Idealists*, 321. Though left-wing thinkers disagreed on its implications, the concept of 'peaceful change' was widely invoked. See, e.g., New Fabian Research Bureau, *Revision of Treaties and Changes in International Law: A Report of the International Section of the Bureau Under the Chairmanship of Mr Leonard Woolf* (London: New Fabian Research Bureau and Victor Gollancz, 1934).
[147] John Fischer Williams, et al., *International Sanctions: A Report by a Group of Members of the Royal Institute of International Affairs* (London: Oxford University Press, 1938), 137.
[148] Lucian M. Ashworth, 'Feminism, War and the Prospects for Peace: Helena Swanwick (1864-1939) and the Lost Feminists of Inter-war International Relations', *International Feminist Journal of Politics* 13, no. 1 (2011): 25-43.

A not entirely dissimilar line of thought and conceptual repertoire permeated BUF discourse, emphasising the hypocrisy of the status quo powers and chastising what Fuller likewise derided as 'League Wars'.[149] Relying on a domestic analogy, proponents of the League offered a distinction between private wars and public sanctions, the latter distinguishable by the legitimacy and legality conferred by a representative international body.[150] For fascists who believed such a body constituted an anti-fascist great power alliance or a tool wielded by a sinister conspiracy, no such public-private distinction was tenable. Against the backdrop of the sanctions debate over Abyssinia, the BUF Director of Propaganda, William Joyce, targeted Angell in the *Fascist Quarterly*, a figure who would similarly attract Carr's ire in *The Twenty Years' Crisis*.[151] Angell's *The Great Illusion* first came under Joyce's assault for the oft-cited (albeit misleading) claim that he had naively prophesied the impossibility of future war. After establishing himself 'as the quintessential incarnation of pacifism', Angell then engaged in an alleged turnabout, expressing a willingness to fight on behalf of the false notion of 'Collective Security', for which Joyce rebuked him.[152] Fuller offered a similar opinion: 'what the Fascist most of all objects to is the insidious moral attack which is launched under… a smoke cloud of pious platitudes and hysterical hypocrisy against all that is virile and spiritual in mankind'.[153] Citing a chapter in Brailsford's edited volume, *The Intelligent Man's Way to Prevent War*, Fuller expressly critiqued the notable internationalist thinker William Arnold-Forster for allegedly condoning a 'universalised' conception of war.[154] This conception was one wherein states ceased to retain the honourable 'right of private peace' (i.e., neutrality), having been supplanted by the embrace of war as something sanctioned by a public body.[155] What was obscured behind this façade of public consensus was, in Fuller's estimation, the legitimate grievances of the 'dissatisfied' nations and the actuality that international society was increasingly punctured by a deep ideological rift, one that promised a 'return to the year 1618' and the religious wars of early modern Europe.[156] In a not dissimilar vein, one reviewer in a BUF periodical even commended Carr's 1937 *International Relations Since the Peace Treaties*, citing the book as evidence that 'public men' were belatedly recognising the deleterious consequences of imposing German reparations.[157]

Notwithstanding similarities, there are limits to any such affinity between negative conceptions of peaceful change and BUF discourse. Carr's case is again illustrative. Liberal contemporaries sought to taint *The Twenty Years' Crisis* by constructing a proverbial bridge between fascism and Carr's self-proclaimed realism. The book was a

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[149] J.F.C. Fuller, *The First of the League Wars: Its Lessons and Omens* (London: Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1936).
[150] Sylvest, 'Interwar Internationalism', 422.
[151] William Joyce, 'Collective Security', *Fascist Quarterly* 1, no. 4 (1935): 423.
[152] *Ibid.*
[153] Fuller, 'Fascism and War', 144-5.
[154] Arnold-Forster, a professional painter without academic qualifications, was shortlisted for the Woodrow Wilson Chair—though ultimately passed over in favour of C.A. Macartney and Carr, the latter receiving the appointment.
Brian Porter, ed., *The Aberystwyth Papers: International Politics, 1919-1969* (London: Oxford University Press, 1972), 365-6.
[155] Fuller, *League Wars*, 237.
[156] *Ibid*, 229, 237.
[157] M.H.P., review of *International Relations Since the Peace Treaties*, by E.H. Carr, *Action*, 26 June 1937, 12.

'veritable gold mine' to be exploited by Goebbels, said Angell.[158] For Woolf, it was—to quote Peter Wilson—'little more than a rationalization of intimidation and violence in the vein of Nietzsche, de Gobineau, Spengler, and other continental romantic disparagers of reason'.[159] Despite such criticism, Carr's thinking was in actuality deeply tinged by Marx. The same cannot be said of Mosley; the aetiology of his thought and its underlying reasoning differed in obvious respects.

First, Mosley's vehement assault against the prevailing order predated Carr's scepticism or that displayed by likeminded scholars, such as Montague Burton Professor at the LSE Charles Manning. The attitude of such thinkers only altered in the mid-1930s by virtue of their disillusionment with the League. Rather than shifting position in the aftermath of the Italo-Abyssinian War, Mosley approached the crisis with a pre-formulated derision aimed at the extant order.

Second, while Carr relied on a Mannheimian argument about the 'relativity of thought' and the inter-state friction this induces,[160] Mosley demonstrated an ideological solidarity towards international fascism, one entirely lacking in the former. In fact, Carr feared that wedding democracy with the territorial status quo would undermine the former. He cautioned that unless the 'problem of peaceful change' was satisfactorily addressed, fascism would present for many a viable revolutionary alternative, and 'European democracy will fall to Fascism as surely as nineteenth-century European autocracy fell before the forces of democracy and nationalism'.[161] For Carr, peaceful change was a *necessary* reform-minded concession to achieve stability and salvage democracy's international legitimacy. This is a far cry from Mosley, for whom revisions were an ideologically *positive* development, a natural stage in realising a fascistised states-system.

Third, Carr did not embrace the idea that demographic change was linked to war in any straightforward, mechanistic fashion.[162] Pursuant to his focus on the relativity of thought, international tension and war may be fuelled by the status quo powers' hypocritical stance, the denial of equal imperial rights, or the commensurate prestige to the 'have-nots'. Yet to support appeasement on such grounds is quite a different argument to one that genuinely embraces the veracity of quasi-Malthusian arguments about war as a rationale for expansion.

Lastly, while Carr waged a polemic against many of the same idealist foes who attracted the BUF's ire, the tenor of their respective critiques diverged. Angell, for example, received numerous mentions in BUF publications for his anti-fascist activities, supposed warmongering ('homicidal pacifism'), and misguided embrace of the 'Liberal Free Trade psychology'.[163] For some, this veered into a conspiratorial fantasy land and was often marked by a

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[158] Norman Angell, *Why Freedom Matters* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1940), 47.
[159] Peter Wilson, *The International Theory of Leonard Woolf: A Study in Twentieth-Century Idealism* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), 178.
[160] Keene, *International Political Thought*, 191-2.
[161] Carr, 'Public Opinion', 860.
[162] *Ibid*, 846-7.
[163] See, respectively, 'Before the War: "War is Impossible", To-Day: "Peace is Impossible"', *Blackshirt*, 16 August 1935, 3; G.S., review of *The Money Mystery*, by Norman Angell, *Action*, 9 April 1936, 12.

virulent strand of antisemitism, a subject addressed further in the following section. As one article alleged, Angell, a so-called 'pacifist', would not 'fight to defend Britain, but will fight and advocate war against any other white race that his Jewish masters care to nominate'.[164]

My intent in highlighting points of commonality and difference is not to serve as a retrospective (and further) indictment of mainstream appeasers; guilt by discursive association. Carr and his prescriptions may be criticised on their *own* terms because they proved ill-guided, not because they had, in some respects, an affinity with those adumbrated by Mosley. However, what may be gleaned from this comparative exercise is how Mosley and other BUF ideologues were cognisant of prevailing debates about international affairs and navigated popular discursive constructs.

The Socialism of Fools

While Mosley's fascistised explanation for war was grounded in a Hobsonite interpretation, by the mid-1930s this account was increasingly synthesised with conspiratorial accusations alleging an undue influence over matters of foreign policy emanating from left-wing forces and factions of anti-fascist Jews. As Thurlow opines, Mosley's political thought may have been among the 'most articulate and coherent of all the European ideologists of fascism'.[165] Nevertheless, 'it still contained elements which neither were rational nor avoided contradictions'.[166]

Conspiracy Theories and Mosley's International Thought

There were numerous vehement antisemites among the ideologues of the BUF, including Fuller, Joyce, Chesterton, and BUF Director of Policy and chief theorist of the corporate state Alexander Raven Thomson.[167] The locus of prejudice differed between individuals, whether biological, religious, economic, ethnonationalist, or some ambiguous amalgam. While undoubtedly an antisemite, Mosley eschewed Joyce's obsessive conspiratorialism and the biological racism typifying the worldview of, for example, Arnold Leese. 'There is no evidence that he originally intended to make antisemitism a central part of BUF propaganda', argues Martin Pugh.[168] Despite the recurrence of flagrant or otherwise coded antisemitic language within BUF publications during the early 1930s, Mosley avoided an explicit antisemitic platform before late 1934.[169] As the *Blackshirt* stated in May 1933: '*Anti-Semitism is no issue of Fascism, and is unknown to Fascism outside the Teutonic races. In Germany, anti-Semitism is a symptom, not of Fascism, but of*

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[164] See 'Pacifists Fight Only for Judah', *Blackshirt*, 2 May 1936, 7. Fascist critique of Angell and responses thereto spread into the mainstream press. See Barbara Hayes, 'A Reply to the Fascists', *Stroud Journal*, 5 February 1937, TAC/7/1, Trade Advisory Council Archive.

[165] Richard C. Thurlow, 'Racial Populism in England', *Patterns of Prejudice* 10, no. 4 (1976): 29.

[166] *Ibid.*

[167] See, e.g., William Joyce, *Fascism and Jewry* (London: Steven Books, 1998 [1936]); J.F.C. Fuller, 'The Cancer of Europe', *Fascist Quarterly* 1, no. 1 (1935): 66-81; A.K. Chesterton, 'The Apotheosis of the Jew', *British Union Quarterly* 1, no. 2 (1937): 45-54.

[168] Martin Pugh, 'Britain and its Empire', in *The Oxford Handbook of Fascism*, ed. R.J.B. Bosworth (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 503.

[169] Thurlow, *Fascism in Britain*, 73-4.

Germany.'[170] In a 1934 interview, Mosley objected to accusations of antisemitism, claiming '[t]here will be no racial or religious persecution under fascism in Britain'.[171] This position can be partially attributed to Mosley's effort in the first half of 1934 to retain the patronage of Lord Rothermere, an anti-socialist conservative and media proprietor. Mosley's approach to antisemitism was, at least partly, strategic.[172] In fact, the drastic evolution of Mosley's views on the Jewish people, both during and prior to the 1930s, encapsulates the oddity of his international thought and one of the key challenges in studying him as a politician-cum-international thinker. For example, in June 1923, Laski organised a debate between Mosley and the Duke of Northumberland, Ian Alan Percy, at the LSE, wherein the former—then an independent MP—presented not only a strong defence of 'international idealism', but lampooned Percy's recourse to 'the phantom figures of the elders of Zion'.[173] Mosley's views had evidently mutated over the next decade.

Despite his initial reluctance to publicly link the BUF with antisemitism, Mosley adopted such bigotry as a propagandistic plank following the cessation of Rothermere's support after the riotous Olympia rally of June 1934. This shift was fomented not least by John Beckett, Joyce, and Chesterton's increasing influence within the BUF leadership, alongside the apparent popularity of a series of public antisemitic diatribes within the East End of London.[174] Yet it also reflected Mosley's assessment by the 1930s of the influential place of select Jews within society, a view seemingly bolstered by the cultural and conspiratorial antisemitism of Chesterton, whom Mosley had tasked to study the 'Jewish Question' on his behalf.[175] To quote Toynbee, then RIIA research director, what followed was 'the adoption of a policy of provocation' (especially within the East End), among 'the well-tried weapons in the Continental armoury of the post-war ideologies'.[176] This development also coincided with a shift in Mosley's sympathies from 'Italophilia to Naziphilia', a transition consecrated with the subsequent renaming of the party in June 1936 ('British Union of Fascists and National Socialists').[177] As Claudia Baldoli observes, this gradual reorientation reflected 'the new concept of Anglo-German complementarity in the New European Order'.[178] Chapter IV will return to this imagined states-system in detail, yet indispensable to the present point is that this

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[170] 'Editorial', *Blackshirt*, 16 May 1933, 2 (emphasis in original). See also 'Fascism and the Jews', *Blackshirt*, 1 April 1933, 1.

[171] Callender, 'Mosley's Creed', 3, 16.

[172] Pugh, 'Britain and its Empire', 503.

[173] Woodbridge, 'Fraudulent Fascism', 494-5; Stephen Dorril, *Blackshirt: Sir Oswald Mosley and British Fascism* (London: Penguin Books, 2007), 68.

[174] Jakub Drábik, 'Spreading the Faith: The Propaganda of the British Union of Fascists', *Journal of Contemporary European Studies* 25, no. 2 (2017): 217.

[175] Thurlow, *Fascism in Britain*, 73, 116; Gary Love, '"What's the Big Idea?": Oswald Mosley, the British Union of Fascists and Generic Fascism', *Journal of Contemporary History* 42, no. 3 (2007): 459.

[176] Arnold J. Toynbee, *Survey of International Affairs 1936* (London: Oxford University Press, 1937), 37.

[177] Claudia Baldoli, 'Anglo-Italian Fascist Solidarity? The Shift from Italophilia to Naziphilia in the BUF', in *The Culture of Fascism: Visions of the Far Right in Britain*, eds. Julie V. Gottlieb and Thomas P. Linehan (London: I.B. Tauris, 2004), 157.

[178] *Ibid.* This Naziphilic reorientation reflected a wider shift among many European fascists. See Arnd Bauerkämper, 'Transnational Fascism: Cross-Border Relations between Regimes and Movements in Europe, 1922-1939', *East Central Europe* 37, no. 2-3 (2010): 214-46.

order was not to be predicated on 'a Roman form of fascism but rather a Teutonic one, led by Germany and Britain'.[179]

This is not to suggest that Mosley thereafter simply adopted a form of biological antisemitism. While Mosley contended that many Jews held conflicting loyalties, placing their Jewish identity above the British state,[180] this prejudice was predicated less on biological notions of race, but rather a form of ethnocentrism and the paramountcy of the perceived national interest.[181] Moreover, Jews were regarded as overrepresented among anti-fascist circles, both domestically and internationally.[182] For example, notwithstanding Mosley's acquaintance with Laski during the 1920s, the latter's anti-fascism elicited counter-responses and overtly antisemitic ridicule within BUF publications.[183] One *Blackshirt* article scolded Laski as a 'War-Mongering Pacifist', deriding him as 'the little Jewish professor who spent the War skulking in the safe hiding-place of an American university'.[184] For the *Fascist Quarterly*, Laski was 'a familiar figure to Blackshirts since he embodies so much that is repellent in the democratic mentality'.[185] In a similar vein, Mosley, and BUF discourse broadly, racialised the Soviet Union as the embodiment of both Jewish subversion and an emergent revolt against the West. As the introductory article to the *Fascist Quarterly* claimed, 'Communism is Judaeo-Asiatic'.[186] From the 'Scythian steppes' to the 'East', it emerges as a 'poisonous vapour'; '[t]he Mark of the Beast is upon it, and the snarl of the submen is its choir'.[187] The supposed 'slavization of Eastern Europe' was thus abhorred, for Soviet communism represented a reincarnation 'of an old menace… assuming new forms'.[188]

Supposed Jewish and left-wing machinations were not necessarily synthesised into a coherent explanation for war as a phenomenon. Rather, they offered Mosley a supplementary rationale and propagandistic tool to both chastise his opponents and explain contemporary ills within the states-system.[189] In May 1935, for example, Mosley despatched a telegram to Julius Streicher, editor of the infamous antisemitic tabloid *Der Stürmer*. In an apparent response to Streicher's effort to hold an international antisemitic conference in Nuremberg, Mosley responded with

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[179] Baldoli, 'Anglo-Italian Fascist Solidarity?', 157.
[180] Mosley, *Tomorrow We Live*, 59.
[181] Thurlow, 'Racial Populism', 29. Although by the late 1930s, biological notions of difference may have tinged Mosley's antisemitism: the Jew 'comes from the Orient and physically, mentally and spiritually, is more alien to us than any Western nation'. Mosley, *Tomorrow We Live*, 59.
[182] See, e.g., the Mosley-Rothermere correspondence in Lucy Houston, 'Lord Rothermere is Right', *Saturday Review*, 11 August 1934, 943-4; Mosley, *Tomorrow We Live*, 57-9.
[183] At Beatrice Webb's request, Laski befriended Mosley, assisting his entry into the Labour Party. However, the relationship declined by the late 1920s, Laski unimpressed by Mosley's 'luxurious and fast life'. Isaac Kramnick and Barry Sheerman, *Harold Laski: A Life on the Left* (New York: Allen Lane and Penguin Press, 1993), 183-4, 193.
[184] 'War-Mongering Pacifists', *Blackshirt*, 22—28 July 1933, 3. Laski was mentioned in at least 44 *Blackshirt* articles.
[185] 'Notes of the Quarter', *Fascist Quarterly* 2, no. 1 (1936): 9.
[186] 'Notes of the Quarter', *Fascist Quarterly* 1, no. 1 (1935): 5.
[187] *Ibid.*
[188] *Ibid*, 19.
[189] By 1946, Mosley sought to disassociate himself from the 'crude absurdities about Jews' espoused by fascist conspiracists he deemed overly fantastical or eliminationist. 'The deficiency of these people', he argued, 'arose from the head rather than from the character; they were honest but incredibly stupid… walking caricatures of a Fascist Movement'. Mosley, *My Answer*, 23.

an affirmation that '[t]he powers of Jewish corruption must be attacked in all lands before Europe's future justice and peace can be secured'.[190] While this strand of anti-Bolshevik and antisemitic rhetoric populated BUF discourse amidst the Italo-Abyssinia War,[191] such themes were particularly prevalent during its 'Peace Campaign', an initiative that occupied the movement after the *Anschluss* in March 1938 through to the Phoney War, abruptly ending with Mosley's internment in May 1940. BUF propaganda focused on what Baldoli aptly described as 'the bizarre notion of an international Bolshevik plot organised in Britain by politicians such as Churchill and Baldwin, who supported "international Jewish finance"'.[192] Mosley held that war against Germany was provoked by malign forces for purposes of regime change. Consequently, Mosley objected to fighting Germany and sacrificing the British Empire in a 'quarrel of Jewish finance';[193] it was thus the BUF's prerogative to dissuade the public from war and impel a negotiated peace. Mosley would similarly allege that the lack of agitation for intervention against Russia over its invasion of Finland—an option Mosley was opposed to in any case—was due to the same reason behind British Germanophobia: undue Jewish influence desiring the elimination of the Nazi regime.[194]

Mosley, alongside wider BUF discourse, challenged the apparent misunderstanding of international events among left-wing thinkers, who were cast as overly sympathetic towards, or part of a conspiracy with, international communism. Thomson, for example, criticised G.D.H Cole's ascription of war-mongering intentions to national socialism. Cole neither recognised that fascism was a parochial nationalist ideology, nor that international interference is the prime cause of war, and thus he was unable to appreciate that danger emanated not from Germany, but international communism.[195] As war beckoned, Mosley directed his ire towards the supposed double standard of the Labour Party. Despite repeated claims from socialist intellectuals about capitalism's relationship to war, the party had sided with the interests of capital against Germany.[196] The combination of such malign forces not only militated against accommodation with the virile fascist powers, Mosley reasoned, but had actively propagated for conflict and agitated for an Anglo-French alliance with Russia. As one flier claimed, 'Labour and Communist leaders demanded the War'. Such factions had betrayed the workers, for 'this capitalist war' was one 'which enriches the financier and the capitalist profiteer'.[197] Curiously, some pieces in the BUF press even sought to co-opt the authority of leading left-wing international thinkers for rhetorical heft or to turn the arguments of socialist and liberal intellectuals against themselves. In one case, *Action* published a piece quoting Brailsford, the

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[190] 'Mosley Hails Streicher', *New York Times*, 11 May 1935, 8.
[191] See Dorril, *Blackshirt*, 359-60.
[192] Claudia Baldoli, *Exporting Fascism: Italian Fascists and Britain's Italians in the 1930s* (Oxford: Berg, 2003), 168-9.
[193] Cited in 'Mosley Urges Peace: British Fascist Head Says War is No Quarrel of Empire', *New York Times*, 9 September 1939, 8.
[194] Richard Griffiths, 'A Note on Mosley, the "Jewish War" and Conscientious Objection', *Journal of Contemporary History* 40, no. 4 (2005): 683.
[195] Alexander Raven Thomson, review of *Practical Economics, or Studies in Economic Planning*, by G.D.H. Cole, *British Union Quarterly* 1, no. 3 (1937): 102-4.
[196] Speech by Oswald Mosley during a British Union meeting at Victoria Park Square, typescript, 5 May 1940, KV 2/884, TNA.
[197] Leaflet entitled 'The Capitalist Wolf', 1939, 3L/CAP, British Union Collection, Special Collections and Archives, University of Sheffield.

'veteran supporter' of collective security, arguing to the effect that in any prospective alliance between Britain, France, and Russia, Czechoslovakia would be a mere 'pawn… in the strategical chess of imperial rivalry' vis-à-vis Germany. 'From the lips of one of the greatest exponents of the peace alliance', concluded the fascist author, 'comes this terrible indictment'.[198]

While much of this propagandistic discourse was directed towards mass consumption, it is nevertheless intriguing to note how antisemitic, conspiratorial thinking was intertwined with the earlier discussed ideas about demographic pressures or otherwise linked to nebulous ideas of national virility. In one revealing article, Thomson emphasised the parallels between British reactions to the French Revolution and those aroused by the advent of fascism. Thomson described a counter-revolutionary reaction by Britan's 'plutocratic regime', which fuelled an '[a]ttempted encirclement by economic means' of Germany, 'the equivalent of the first military coalitions to encircle revolutionary France'.[199] Yet these efforts to target 'one of the great resurgent nations of the world' were ineffectual, 'merely provoking… the inevitable explosion of Germany through Eastern Europe'.[200]

Antisemitism and British International Thought

While Mosley's thought has been positioned within a left-wing milieu of speculation about capitalism and its relationship to war, the sheer virulence of its antisemitic element also represents a vital difference demarcating the arguments of prominent radical liberal and social democratic internationalists from Mosley's similarly Hobsonite prognosis. Yet an important qualification is warranted. One should avoid constructing a rigid bifurcation on the matter of antisemitism, for such beliefs were not a monopoly of the extreme right within British international thinking.

While antisemitic conspiracism was popular among figures of the Edwardian radical right in the style of Arnold White, Hillaire Belloc, and G.K. Chesterton, such thinking was also rampant on the political left during the century's opening decades.[201] From H.G. Wells to G.B. Shaw, examples abound.[202] On the subject of antisemitism and war, however, one must again return to Hobson' influential role. In his 1900 study, *The War in South Africa*, Hobson alleged that the Boer War was largely a product of Jewish financial interests.[203] Indifferent towards Jews on theological grounds and abhorring the racial doctrines of the Germanophile Houston-Stewart Chamberlain, Hobson

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198 Michael Goulding, 'Sham Peace Alliance: Brailsford Exposes Capitalist Intrigue', *Action*, 4 June 1938, 1.
199 Alexander Raven Thomson, 'Britain and the Continent: A Study in Ideological Conflict', *British Union Quarterly* 4, no. 1 (1940): 41.
200 *Ibid.*
201 On antisemitism in Victorian liberal and socialist international thought, see, e.g., Colin Holmes, 'Goldwin Smith (1823–1910)', *Patterns of Prejudice* 6, no. 5 (1972): 25-30; Anthony S. Wohl, '"Dizzi-Ben-Dizzi": Disraeli as Alien', *Journal of British Studies* 34, no. 3 (1995): 375-411.
202 See, e.g., Bryan Cheyette, 'H. G. Wells and the Jews: Antisemitism, Socialism and English Culture', *Patterns of Prejudice* 22, no. 3 (1988): 22-35. Some pieces within the BUF's *Action* regurgitated Wells' antisemitism; see Dennis Glover, 'Wells and the Jews', *Action*, 5 December 1936, 8; 'Truth from Strange Quarters', *Action*, 14 August 1937, 8; 'Wells on Jewish Conspiracy', *Action*, 12 August 1939, 18.
203 John A. Hobson, *The War in South Africa: Its Causes and Effects* (London: James Nisbet & Co., 1900).

instead based his prejudice on a somewhat vaguer assessment of 'character'.[204] While antisemitism was not at the core of Hobson's general theory of capitalist imperialism, lingering vestiges of his prejudice can be detected within his classic tract, commenting on the 'single and peculiar race… [who] are in a unique position to control the policy of nations'.[205] While these prejudices were not novel within the international thought of early British socialists, Hobson was nevertheless instrumental in reifying such conspiracism as 'conventional wisdom' with regard to the Boer War and beyond.[206] As Stephen Dorril suggests, Hobson's formative analysis was absorbed into the anti-capitalist thinking of many ILP members.[207] As Brailsford contended in one of his earlier tracts: 'In the heroic age Helen's was the face that launched a thousand ships. In our golden age the face wears more often the shrewd features of some Hebrew financier'.[208] In a similar fashion, it was this Hobsonite antisemitism which, at least in part, 'served as the basis for Mosley's… "rationalist" anti-Semitism'.[209]

These qualifications are not to exaggerate the extent nor centrality of antisemitism within the international thought of socialists or liberal radicals, nor is it intended to homogenise the foundations of such prejudice. Despite the profuse recurrence of antisemitism across the political spectrum, Mosley's prejudice should not simply be viewed as 'fairly routine', as Pugh implies.[210] For most within the mainstream, such antisemitic beliefs were not necessarily adopted as a *central* explanatory factor to account for imperialism and war. While Angell made recourse to racist tropes before and after the First World War, he also evidenced a clear disdain for the antisemitism displayed during the Dreyfus Affair, placing it in a similar camp to the irrational jingoism of the Boer War and the 1898 American invasion of Cuba.[211] Likewise, in an *International Affairs* review of Fuller's *Empire Unity and Defence*, Zimmern captured the absurdity of BUF claims rather aptly: 'What is one to say of a writer who describes the League of Nations as "a pink Jew-Bolshevik baby"'.[212] The majority did not construe imperialism and conflict, not least the Second World War, as but Jewish machinations. Of course, countervailing examples may be found. In June 1939, for instance, the journal of the ILP, *Forward*, criticised 'Jewish control' of British foreign policy.[213] Yet by and large, Mosley's conspiracies were at odds with the majority of prominent social democratic and liberal internationalists, not least

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[204] John Allett, 'New Liberalism, Old Prejudices: J.A. Hobson and the "Jewish Question"', *Jewish Social Studies* 49, no. 2 (1987): 99-102.
[205] John A. Hobson, *Imperialism: A Study* (London: James Nisbet, 1902), 64.
[206] Claire Hirshfield, 'The Anglo-Boer War and the Issue of Jewish Culpability', *Journal of Contemporary History* 15, no. 4 (1980): 619-31.
[207] Dorril, *Blackshirt*, 78.
[208] Brailsford, *War of Steel and Gold*, 54. See also Lucian M. Ashworth, 'Warriors, Pacifists and Empires: Race and Racism in International Thought before 1914', *International Affairs* 98, no. 1 (2022): 298.
[209] Dorril, *Blackshirt*, 78. See also Liam J. Liburd, 'The Eternal Imperialists: Empire, Race and Gender on the British Radical Right, 1918-1968' (PhD diss., University of Sheffield, 2019), 138. For laudatory references to Hobson amongst the post-war far right, see, e.g., Ivor Benson, 'Iran: Some Angles on the Islamic Revolution', *Journal of Historical Review* 9, no. 2 (1989): 141-75; Mark Weber, 'The Boer War Remembered', *Journal of Historical Review* 1, no. 3 (1980): 234-46.
[210] Pugh, 'Britain and its Empire', 503.
[211] Ralph Lane, *Patriotism Under Three Flags: A Plea for Rationalism in Politics* (London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1903).
[212] Alfred Zimmern, review by *Empire Unity and Defence*, by J.F.C. Fuller, *International Affairs* 13, no. 5 (1934): 714.
[213] Cited in Skidelsky, *Oswald Mosley*, 439.

among those of Jewish heritage or faith, such as Laski and Woolf. To cite the common adage, 'antisemitism is the socialism of fools'.[214]

Conversely, in the mind of many within IR's early history, anxiety over the prospect of another war was inextricably connected to fascist militarism and, to use Mazower's apt phrase, the 'Battle of Ideologies'.[215] For Stephen King-Hall, then a member of the Chatham House Council, 'the unity of western civilization is endangered or is at any rate obscured by the clash between rival ideologies'.[216] Fascism was faulted by many for this acute rupture. Frederick L. Schuman, a highly respected IR scholar at Williams College and a self-professed 'realist' who proved prescient in his forebodings of the Nazi threat, remarked that it may 'be doubted whether western civilization… can survive the continuation of international strife which belligerent patriotism breeds'.[217] As Bertrand Russell claimed in rather visceral terms, the fact that fascist ends 'can only be achieved through the ruin of civilization does not make them irrational, but only Satanic'.[218] Woolf similarly described a Western civilisation—unequal, imperialistic, and highly imperfect as he viewed it—besieged by modern authoritarian 'barbarians', the successors of a Spartan society of 'rulers and ruled'.[219] From Toynbee and Cole to Harold Nicolson, fascism and Nazism were variously interpreted as a barbaric form of violent nationalism, a bastardised redux of Prussian militarism, or an idolatrous glorification of the state.[220]

Likewise, among many socialists engaged in interwar debates on world politics, fascism was interpreted as a byproduct of reactionary capitalism; it was therefore both symptomatic of, and compounding, the climate of civilisational crisis and descent towards war.[221] Strachey, the former Mosleyite turned Marxist, emerged after 1931 as one of the most ardent British anti-fascists, publishing various influential tracts. To quote Strachey's *The Menace of Fascism*: 'War and the preparation of war are to become the most sacred duties of human life [under fascism]', constituting a thinly veiled means to distract the masses.[222] Unless 'overthrown', international fascism would 'produce the chaos, the ruin, the dirt, the squalor, the ignorance and the superstition, the dark night of twelfth-century Europe'.[223] For Laski, 'the implications of Fascist practice in the international field' were readily apparent:

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[214] Allett, 'New Liberalism', 106.

[215] See Mazower, *Governing the World*, Chapter 6.

[216] Stephen King-Hall, *Chatham House: A Brief Account of the Origins, Purposes, and Methods of the Royal Institute of International Affairs* (London: Oxford University Press, 1937), 127.

[217] Schuman, *International Politics*, 232.

[218] Bertrand Russell, 'The Revolt Against Reason', *Political Quarterly* 6, no. 1 (1935): 15.

[219] Leonard Woolf, *Barbarians at the Gate* (London: Victor Gollancz, 1939), 92.

[220] On Toynbee, Nicolson, and Cole, see, respectively, Ian Hall, *The International Thought of Martin Wight* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), 73-4; Derek Drinkwater, *Sir Harold Nicolson and International Relations: The Practitioner as Theorist* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 129-33; G.D.H. Cole, *A History of Socialist Thought, Volume V: Socialism and Fascism, 1931-1939* (London: Macmillan and Co., 1960), Chapter 1.

[221] Cole, as cited above, represents a notable exception.

[222] John Strachey, *The Menace of Fascism* (London: Victor Gollancz, 1934), 43, 69. Allen responded to Strachey's linkage of fascism with war, branding it 'characteristic of the confused throbbing which passes for thinking' among the left. W.E.D. Allen, 'The Fascist Idea in Britain', *Quarterly Review* (October 1933): 231.

[223] John Strachey, 'Fascism in Great Britain', *New Republic*, 2 May 1934, 332.

'the inescapable outcome of its habits is war'.[224] Woolf also mocked the fascist glorification of war: under fascism, 'the highest object of the individual man is to be blown to pieces on the field of battle and of the individual woman to bear men children to be blown to pieces'.[225] Thus, for many observers, the plague of fascist militancy constituted an affront to Western civilisation and, while not necessarily the perennial cause of war, constituted the probable instigator of impending conflict.

Imperialism, War, and the Standard of Civilisation

Mosley's international thought embodied a dualism: a simultaneous imperialist orientation and a highly qualified anti-imperial and anti-war position. It is important to further interrogate this facet of Mosley's thinking to gauge the fundamentally imperial and white supremacist underpinnings of his international thought, the contingent nature of his anti-war position, and the implications of these features for how he understood the causes of war.

While Mosley remained a staunch imperialist throughout the interwar decades, the nature of his imperial imaginary evolved considerably. Mosley originally campaigned on a working-class social-imperial platform in 1918, what he referred to as 'socialistic imperialism'.[226] Notwithstanding his affinities with Hobson's thinking on war, this position would seemingly place Mosley at odds with the qualified anti-imperialist stance of a Hobsonite 'New Liberalism'. Hobson, after all, increasingly admonished precisely this concept of 'socialistic imperialism' from the turn of the century.[227] However, Mosley nevertheless reconciled his support for the British Empire with a new form of international trusteeship. According to his broadly liberal internationalist creed during the 1920s, Mosley viewed the League's mandate system in a manner somewhat akin to Hobson's 'sane imperialism'. Hobson had imagined a form of imperial trusteeship under which mandated control would not only be directed towards the development of a 'lower race', 'but… proceed from some organised representation of civilised humanity'.[228] Mosley aligned with this sentiment. In one revealing episode, he launched an impassioned attack in the House of Commons against the expropriation of phosphate deposits in Nauru. To establish a monopoly on the island was contrary to the mandate system's ethos and would itself constitute a marked reversion to the 'predatory imperialism of the past'.[229] In 1922, Mosley likewise claimed that the granting of independence to mandated Iraq would be not only logical insofar as it avoided the costly imposition of rule on an increasingly unwilling populace, but to act otherwise would be contrary to 'new conceptions… of world affairs'.[230]

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[224] Harold J. Laski, foreword to *The Spirit and Structure of German Fascism*, by Robert A. Brady (London: Victor Gollancz, 1937), 15.
[225] Woolf, 'Labour's Foreign Policy', 505.
[226] Worley, *Oswald Mosley and the New Party*, 164.
[227] See, e.g., John A. Hobson, 'Socialistic Imperialism', *International Journal of Ethics* 12, no. 1 (1901): 44-58. Although Hobson held a closer affinity with social imperialist ideas prior to the late 1890s. See Peter Cain, *Hobson and Imperialism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), Chapter 3.
[228] John A. Hobson, *Imperialism: A Study* (London: James Nisbet, 1902), 245.
[229] Hansard, HC Deb, 16 June 1920, vol.130, cc.1313-4.
[230] Hansard, HC Deb, 11 July 1922, vol.156, cc. 1099-1102.

Mosley's position reflected the vocabulary of contemporary critics who variously sought to rehabilitate notions of empire. Imperialism (or at least certain conceptions thereof) was increasingly cast by an array of thinkers—including British proponents of the League and Round Table imperialists—as an anachronistic, nefarious, and exploitative act at odds with the emerging norm of (qualified) self-determination and the paternalistic animus justifying both the mandate system and the continuation of the British Empire. Mosley's strand of social imperialism may be situated within this wider current. In fact, in late 1920, Mosley marked himself as among the most vociferous critics of General Dyer, comparing the Amritsar massacre to Prussian atrocities and thus contrary to the British Empire's civilising mission.[231]

By the 1930s, Mosley's worldview had evolved in a more intransigent and anxious direction. Unlike the social Darwinism of, for example, Madison Grant and Lothrop Stoddard—which stood in tension with Lamarckism[232]—Mosley's overriding concern was not centred around a dilution in racial purity.[233] Mosley rejected the imposition of a formalised racial hierarchy and miscegenation laws at home or abroad, albeit on the grounds that such actions would be neither tactful in sustaining a transnational empire nor *presently* necessary.[234] While questions of miscegenation did not feature as a key policy priority for Mosley at this juncture, he did evince a strong sympathy towards ideas of Anglo-Saxon racial purity. This was exemplified not only by his absolutist opposition to immigration,[235] but also by the BUF's admiration of the exclusionary 'White Australia Policy'.[236]

Above all, though, Mosley became alarmed by the potential demise of the Empire. The Great War decimated the British economy, while internal imperial pressures—from anti-colonial agitation and governmental concessions vis-à-vis the Indian independence movement, to the financial expenditure of upholding the mandates—only furthered the sense that the Empire was on a precarious precipice. Developments within Africa, Asia, and the metropole portended a challenge to the supremacy of the British Empire and the white race. Within Mosley's global racial imaginary loomed the 'menacing shadow of the primitive man in backward countries'.[237] This figment was

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231 Skidelsky, *Oswald Mosley*, 96; Paul Stocker, *Lost Imperium: Far Right Visions of the British Empire, c.1920-1980* (New York: Routledge, 2021), 96.

232 See Richard C. Thurlow, 'The Developing British Fascist Interpretation of Race, Culture and Evolution', in *The Culture of Fascism: Visions of the Far Right in Britain*, eds. Julie V. Gottlieb and Thomas P. Linehan (New York: I.B. Tauris, 2004), 70.

233 This is not to suggest, however, that such fears were absent from BUF discourse. Arthur Pillans Laurie, a fascist sympathiser and pioneer in the scientific study of paintings, anxiously speculated about projected population differentials between Europeans and persons of colour. He believed such demographic forces may portend a London occupied by Slavic people or a French 'negroid republic'. A.P. Laurie, 'Race Suicide', *British Union Quarterly* 4, no. 1 (1940): 46-50.

234 Mosley, *Fascism*, Point 93. After the Second World War, Mosley strongly advocated anti-miscegenation policies. David Redvaldsen, '"Science Must be the Basis". Sir Oswald Mosley's Political Parties and their Policies on Health, Science and Scientific Racism 1931-1974', *Contemporary British History* 30, no. 3 (2016): 378-9.

235 Mosley, *Fascism*, Point 94; Mosley, *Fascism for the Million*, 51.

236 Evan Smith, 'The Pivot of Empire: Australia and the Imperial Fascism of the British Union of Fascists', *History Australia* 14, no. 3 (2017): 378-94.

237 Mosley, *Blackshirt Policy*, 24.

both a victim of the West and a challenge to it through capitalism's global dynamics. Africans and Asians were supposedly amenable to arduous hours of menial labour in exchange for marginal pay.[238] Subjected to 'the new slavery of a greedy and anarchic capitalism', such populations were impelled by the predations of capitalism to produce inexpensive goods which undercut 'white labour' and the 'white standard of life'.[239] The West had thus created and exported capitalism for it to only then embark 'on an unbridled career of destruction'.[240] As Mosley proclaimed in an apparent white supremacist echo of Marx, 'finance drives the West to produce the means of its own destruction'.[241] In this respect, Mosley's critique of capitalism constituted a form of 'white labourism' in defence of a transnational working-class that comprised, first and foremost, British workers, followed by a tiered hierarchy wherein the settler-colonies were positioned, followed by a broader solidarity towards what Mosley once referred to as the 'industry and life of Western Man'.[242]

Mosley's racialised anxiety over the British Empire and the white world order as such was not uncommon, as recent studies of *fin-de-siècle* and interwar international thought demonstrate. While less partial to Mosley's brand of antisemitism, similar fears may be detected among the racial imaginaries of liberal imperialists associated with the Round Table movement and, in particular, the architect of the League of Nations, Jan Smuts.[243] As Mazower observes, '[t]he threat they feared was not so much from Germany as from the restless peoples of Asia and Africa whose sheer numbers made them question their power to civilize the world'.[244]

Yet Mosley's racial-imperial beliefs cannot simply be equated with those embodied in contemporaneous liberal imperialist thought, notwithstanding notable points of intellectual commonality and antecedents, a point discussed further in Chapter IV. As Raul Cârstocea adds, one must remain attentive of how 'fascist notions of empire were profoundly distinct from liberal ones'.[245] Three points should be noted at this juncture. First, while Mosley continued to believe in Britain's civilising mission, this was cast in explicitly illiberal terms; it was absurd to bequeath a liberal parliamentary system onto the Crown colonies that was already outdated in the West. The corporate system was the institutional apparatus of the twentieth century, and thus it was to be externalised as the appropriate colonial model.[246] Indeed, Mosley argued that parliamentary democracy was not only antiquated, but anathema to Indian traditions. Corporatism, he believed, was more aligned with Indian history and the Panchayat

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[238] Mosley, *Greater Britain*, 82.
[239] Mosley, *Blackshirt Policy*, 24; Mosley, *Greater Britain*, 82.
[240] Mosley, *Blackshirt Policy*, 24.
[241] Mosley, *Tomorrow We Live*, 36.
[242] *Ibid.* See also Mosley, *Britain First*, 10, KV 2/885, TNA. On the relationship between the BUF, white labourism, and the settler-colonies, see Smith, 'Pivot of Empire', 381.
[243] On the Round Table's place in early IR, see Thakur, et al., 'Imperial Mission'.
[244] Mazower, *Governing the World*, 132. See also Jacob Kripp, 'The Creative Advance Must Be Defended: Miscegenation, Metaphysics, and Race War in Jan Smuts's Vision of the League of Nations', *American Political Science Review* 116, no. 3 (2022): 940-53.
[245] Liburd and Jackson, 'Debate', 329.
[246] Mosley, *Fascism*, Point 83.

system.[247] Second, Mosley came to view the League-sanctioned mandates as burdensome. This placed Mosley at odds not only with such figures as Zimmern, Angell, and Murray—who championed the mandate system as a novel and progressive form of international trusteeship—but conservative imperialists in the style of Leo Amery, who staunchly defended British claims to the perpetuation of mandate control.[248] Third, while espousing a paternalistic belief in the 'fair treatment' of colonial subjects, Mosley's worldview implied an insurmountable boundary demarking 'backward' peoples from white Britons. The BUF thus rejected the 'illusion' of 'self-government'.[249] As many liberal and socialist thinkers increasingly grappled with the movement towards Indian autonomy, Mosley was steadfast in his conviction that it was Britain's 'right' by conquest, and indeed moral 'duty', to remain on the subcontinent, for 'withdrawal of British authority would result in nothing less than the collapse of Indian civilisation'.[250] For Mosley, the provision of self-determination to 'primitive peoples' was tantamount to offering sacrifice to the exploitative whims of capitalism.[251] It is in this guise that Mosley sought to disentangle what he viewed as an authentic and paternalistic British imperialism from its modern subversion by finance capitalism and Jewish infiltration.[252] The option was thus not between empire and self-determination, but between a truer, nobler form of imperialism and imperialistic exploitation by global finance. As Mosley concluded: 'We have to choose between Empire and Usury; British Union chooses Empire.'[253]

Mosley evidently developed a critique of imperialism and a commensurate justification for the continuation of the British Empire grounded in antisemitism and white supremacism, beliefs that suffused broader claims to the moral validity of European empire. In this sense, there is a stark difference between Mosley's use of anti-imperial discourse and the ascription of the label anti-imperialist, an act that would not only be anachronistic, but grossly misleading.[254] By no benchmark can it be argued that his antisemitic tirades were worthy of the anti-imperial label, not least because Mosley counted himself an arch-imperialist. The 'world mission' of fascism, Mosley declared, 'is the maintenance and development of the heritage of Empire'.[255] Subsumed within Mosley's thinking on the causes of war and his counter-imperial vision was thus a bastardised critique of imperialism, one underpinned by a

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[247] Mosley, *Greater Britain*, 140-5; Oswald Mosley, 'Our Policy—Britain First! That is the Blackshirt Watchword', *Saturday Review*, 10 February 1934, 154.

[248] For example, the BUF Director of Overseas Policy targeted Amery on this point. See R. Gordon-Canning, 'Germany and the Mandates: A Question for 1938', *British Union Quarterly* 1, no. 4 (1937): 25.

[249] Mosley, *Tomorrow We Live*, 43.

[250] Mosley, 'Our Policy', 154.

[251] Mosley, *Blackshirt Policy*, 35.

[252] See, e.g., Mosley, *British Peace*, 6, OMD/2/3/4, Oswald Mosley Papers. For a brilliant exposition on this point, see Liburd, 'Eternal Imperialists', Chapter 2.

[253] Mosley, *Tomorrow We Live*, 42.

[254] I emphasise this in part to pre-empt any association between Mosley and a positive anti-imperial agenda. After all, post-war New Right thinkers have cast themselves as opponents of a universalising liberal ideology, promoting instead an 'anti-imperialist' ethno-regionalism. See Alberto Spektorowski, 'The New Right: Ethno-regionalism, Ethno-pluralism and the Emergence of a Neo-fascist "Third Way"', *Journal of Political Ideologies* 8, no. 1 (2003): 111-30.

[255] Mosley, 'World Alternative', 384.

commitment to avoiding foreign quarrels and fratricidal European war, the defence of white labour, and—at least nominally—a disquiet at the exploitation of non-Western persons by the excesses of finance capitalism.

This amalgam carried implications for the scope of Mosley's anti-war stance. His thought exhibited an acute division in the allotment of sympathies and rights to non-intervention based on a racialised standard of civilisation. While Mosley expressed, sincere or otherwise, concern over the welfare of colonised and non-European persons, war or warlike violence was deemed permissible against such people in certain circumstances, a far cry from his steadfast opposition to the imposition of sanctions or war against European powers.[256] For example, BUF propaganda staunchly defended Italy's Abyssinian campaign. The competing motivations behind this are complex. Beyond demographic reasons justifying Italian expansion, Mosley also argued that Abyssinia was but a backward slave state that ought not to have been admitted into the League in the first place nor recognised as a sovereign equal.[257] In its perceived lack of civilisation, Mosley—among many other pro-Italian voices—viewed Abyssinia as merely parodying sovereignty, and therefore, to borrow Musab Younis' apt phrase, 'making a mockery of the institution itself'.[258] As the logical corollary, Italy was conceived as engaged in a comparable civilising mission to the British Empire.[259] Moreover, Abyssinia's nominal sovereign equality was not only cast as an absurdity, but apprehension over a potential European defeat in Africa was understood as a serious affront to Western civilisation, one warranting abstention from the use of sanctions and a rejection of efforts by the League to arbitrate the conflict.[260] Yet, as Baldoli emphasises, the BUF campaign was also partly fuelled by a racialised class logic, namely a concern over the adverse effects of sanctions on white British labour.[261] It should be added that the BUF had received covert Italian funds. Nevertheless, the 'Mind Britain's Business' campaign ought not be interpreted as a simple *quid pro quo*.[262] Mosley's motivations were deeply influenced by an abiding racial-imperial outlook, ideological sympathies, and a lasting opposition to (intra-European) war. Viewed collectively, then, it is apparent that Mosley's aversion to the use of military force (or supporting its employment by another state) was underpinned by a deeply racialised logic that allowed for him to define the 'colonial exception', rendering his anti-war stance highly contingent.[263]

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[256] Fuller held similar views, tinging his ideas on *jus ad bellum* and *jus in bello*. To quote one of his particularly heinous conclusions: 'in small wars against uncivilized nations, the form of warfare to be adopted must tone with the shade of culture existing in the land, by which I mean that, against people possessing a low civilization, war must be more brutal in type'. J.F.C. Fuller, *The Reformation of War* (London: Hutchinson & Co., 1923), 191.
[257] Oswald Mosley, 'Eden of Ethiopia', *Blackshirt*, 7 June 1935, 1.
[258] Musab Younis, 'Race, the World and Time: Haiti, Liberia and Ethiopia (1914-1945)', *Millennium* 46, no. 3 (2018): 366.
[259] Mosley, *Tomorrow We Live*, 64.
[260] Baldoli, 'Anglo-Italian Fascist Solidarity?', 157-8; Liburd, 'Eternal Imperialists', 134-5.
[261] Baldoli, 'Anglo-Italian Fascist Solidarity?', 157-8.
[262] See, e.g., Love, 'British Union of Fascists and Generic Fascism', 454.
[263] On the 'colonial exception', see Partha Chatterjee, 'Empire and Nation Revisited: 50 Years After Bandung', *Inter-Asia Cultural Studies* 6, no. 4 (2005): 487-96.

Notwithstanding the above, two points of nuance may be noted. First, Mosley's comments on Japan reveal the peculiar intersection between race, imperialism, and latent demographic and material power within his international thought. By the twentieth century, 'grading of powers' based on material capabilities had become an increasingly important hallmark of status within international society. As Keene argues, Japan's admission into the family of nations may have had less to do with its adherence to the standard of 'civilisation', than its status as a rising power within the worldview of contemporary Western observers.[264] For Mosley, the latter was essential. By virtue of Japan's emergent power, he believed the nation ought to garner rights of expansion in order to provide an export destination for surplus goods, access to raw materials, and an outlet for its population. Mosley even referred to Japan's right to develop an East Asian empire for the benefit of local people, 'and thus perform a service to herself and the world'.[265] But to Mosley's dismay, British foreign policy was insufficient: 'By denying expansion… we have provoked explosion, and by encouraging to resistance primitive populations whom we have neither the will nor the means to defend, we sacrificed their blood and our own prestige'.[266]

Alongside government policy, the BUF lampooned 'Socialist propagandists', naming Brailsford, for seeking to provocatively curtail Japanese interests in China.[267] Yet Mosley's acquiescence to Japanese imperial ventures was tempered by anxiety over intra-imperial rivalry in Asia and the undermining of white British workers through the sale of cheap Japanese goods. Japan was thus considered a virile, dynamic nation with legitimate rights to expansion, yet the extent of such privileges ought not to be at the expense of European supremacy, not least British maritime dominance.[268] Rivalry within Europe was a distraction which divided the great powers and inhibited a satisfactory response to the excesses of Japanese expansion; Mosley cited the 1939 Tientsin incident as a case in point.[269]

Second, it is notable that during the Phoney War, Mosley transposed part of his rationale for extra-continental empire onto a defence of Nazi imperialism within Central and Eastern Europe. This served as a rhetorical act to both legitimise German foreign policy, lambast British guarantees to Poland, and argue for a negotiated end to the Second World War. During a speech in late April 1940, Mosley compared the 'backwoods of Europe' to the conditions existing in China and India.[270] In the former were numerous 'backward, illiterate, down

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[264] Edward Keene, 'The Standard of "Civilisation", the Expansion Thesis and the 19th-Century International Social Space', *Millennium* 42, no. 3 (2014): 665.

[265] Mosley, *Fascism*, Point 89. Many German and Italian fascists also held a Janus-faced admiration for Japanese imperialism. See Daniel Hedinger, 'The Imperial Nexus: The Second World War and the Axis in Global Perspective', *Journal of Global History* 12, no. 2 (2017): 184-205.

[266] Mosley, *Tomorrow We Live*, 65.

[267] Lucifer (pseud.), 'Current Cant and Fascist Fact', *Fascist Week*, 8—14 December 1933, 7. Brailsford, the so-called 'belligerent internationalist', was subject to several attacks in BUF publications. See, e.g., Lucifer (pseud.), 'Pink Pansies Bloom in Bloomsbury', *Blackshirt*, 7 October 7—13 1933, 2, 5; 'Old Heroes for New', *Action*, 25 June 1938, 9; 'National Socialist Attack—Points for Speakers', *Action*, 19 November 1938, 19.

[268] See, e.g., 'Notes of the Quarter', *Fascist Quarterly* 1, no. 2 (1935): 115-6.

[269] Mosley, *Tomorrow We Live*, 64; 'Notes of the Quarter', *British Union Quarterly* 3, no. 3 (1939): 12-4; Mosley, *Britain First*, 29, KV 2/885, TNA.

[270] Chief Constable's Officer, Lancashire Constabulary, 'Fascist Meeting at Nelson on the 21st April, 1940', typescript, 22 April 1940, KV 2/884, TNA.

and out people' who, under the whims of 'Western financiers', were turned into 'industrial fodder'.[271] Accordingly, such 'small nations' had no conception of 'freedom' (although beyond Poland, it is unclear which European nations Mosley had come to believe were less-than-civilised). The implications of this were significant. For Britain to wage war to maintain the freedom of such smaller nations was hypocritical, merely upholding the status quo of financial exploitation. By contrast, German expansionism promised to assist such nations 'along the path of progress to something approaching civilisation', a goal tantamount to the supposedly nobler intentions of Britain's civilising mission.[272] As Mosley implied in his post-war apologia, *My Answer*, the Teutonic German was a 'higher civilisation' which should 'guide a lower', a hierarchy seemingly grounded in divergent levels of 'cultural achievement or even in nature'.[273] Evidently, Mosley's 'colonial exception'—whether in relation to Japan or Poland—was exceedingly malleable.

In sum, Mosley's racialised worldview and preoccupation with population pressures interacted with a critique of finance capitalism, one increasingly antisemitic in tone, to underlie a conceptual division on the meaning of imperialism and its relationship to war. Mosley's rhetorical act of constructing two dichotomous forms of imperialism, one illegitimate and the other permissible, was not out of the ordinary among contemporaries. As already alluded to, Hobson cast modern imperialism as a deviant, 'insane' mutation, not only because of the parasitic relationship between high finance and empire, but because it concretised a '*parasitic* rule of whites over nonwhites' and thus constituted a 'corruption of settler colonialism'.[274] While the sane-insane dichotomy is often linked to Hobson, this rhetorical move was part of a broader trend. Liberal imperialists in the style of Lord Rosebery, British Idealists including R.B. Haldane and Bernard Bosanquet, and such New Liberals as Hobson and Hobhouse, all used this terminology to juxtapose their desired, but often highly divergent, forms of counter-imperialism against one another, thus presenting the other as an immoral, antiquated, and 'insane' alternative.[275] Mosley relied on a not dissimilar rhetorical bifurcation. On one end of the spectrum was a type of exploitative financial imperialism. It was this brand of imperialism that had allegedly corrupted Britain's civilising mission and underpinned war-prone imperial squabbles over market access. As the historian Liam Liburd notes:

> For Hobson and left-wing critics of Empire, similar arguments [against financial interests] had been part of an overall critique of imperialism whereas for Raven Thomson and other Mosleyites they were a means of making the point that the British Empire had strayed from what they regarded as its "true" and "heroic" purpose.[276]

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[271] *Ibid.*

[272] *Ibid.* See also Mosley, *British Peace*, 7-8, OMD/2/3/4, Oswald Mosley Papers.

[273] Mosley, *My Answer*, 32.

[274] Benjamin R.Y. Tan, 'Hobson on White Parasitism and Its Solutions', *Political Theory* 52, no. 1 (2024): 124 (emphasis in original).

[275] David Boucher, '"Sane" and "Insane" Imperialism: British Idealism, New Liberalism and Liberal Imperialism', *History of European Ideas* 44, no. 8 (2018): 1189-1204. Cf. ILP, *Imperialism* (City Branch Offices of the ILP, 1900), PRO 30/69/1830, TNA.

[276] Liburd, 'Eternal Imperialists', 124.

Located at the other pole was a noble civilising mission, alongside the legitimate imperial rights afforded to emergent virile nations, as dictated by impersonal forces of demographic change and vague assessments of national virility. While finance capitalism, and thus the former understanding of imperialism, was conceived as directly causing war, demographic imperialism was framed as a somewhat natural and thus neutral phenomena. To the extent that the latter conception was implicated in war, it was not expansion as such which represented its underlying cause, but efforts to prevent inevitable demographic trends. Yet, it was those people deemed backward or uncivilised who were expected to endure the brunt of territorial expansion. As Fuller asserted, 'when a country becomes over-populated… it can commit suicide in a civil war or occupy… territory, which means war unless it is inhabited by pact-intoxicated pacifists'.[277]

Conclusion

What does the nature of Mosley's interpretation suggest about the content of fascist international thought and the interwar study of international politics? Firstly, Mosley's causal diagnosis of war comprised a peculiar melange of ideas. The fascist ideologue was versed in the views of a number of experts on international affairs and influenced by a disparate array of traditions. Certain roots of Mosley's explanation are to be located within the mainstream, in particular popular quasi-Malthusian ideas of population pressure and Hobson's radical critique of imperialism. Such ideas were widely discussed. As Bukharin questioned in *Foreign Affairs*: 'Is the present tendency to violent expansion… displayed so strikingly in Japan, Germany and Italy a purely natural function of land and race, or is it a function of the social-economic system?'[278]

What is particularly intriguing about Mosley's diagnostic is precisely how he borrowed from left-wing critiques of capitalism. Hobson's theory of war transcended professional and ideological boundaries. This was a point perceptively identified in 1935 by the aforementioned William Langer, an early mentee of Archibald Cary Coolidge—then editor-in-chief of *Foreign Affairs*—and himself a prominent figure in IR's interwar development.[279] Langer argued that Hobson's *Imperialism* 'served as the starting point for most later discussions and… has proved a perennial inspiration for writers of the most diverse schools'.[280] Echoing Langer's observation, this chapter reveals how Hobson's strand of anti-imperialist (or counter-imperial) reasoning was not the sole preserve of liberal, socialist, and subaltern currents of international thought. While Mosley's increasingly virulent antisemitism sets him apart from the mainstream, such prejudice was certainly not devoid among prominent thinkers involved with the interwar study of international politics. In fact, the germ of Mosley's anti-imperial antisemitism debatably evolved out of its firm grounding among, following Hobson, international thinkers within the Labour Party's Advisory Committee on International Questions.

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[277] Fuller, 'Fascism and War', 141.

[278] Bukharin, 'Imperialism and Communism', 567.

[279] On Langer, see Robert L. Wolff, 'William Leonard Langer', *Proceedings of the Massachusetts Historical Society* 89 (1977): 187-95.

[280] Langer, 'Critique of Imperialism', 102. Langer does not specifically mention fascists, but rather Hobson's 'Neo-Marxian' followers.

For Langer, discussion of imperialism was often 'lost in nebulous concepts and bloodless abstractions': Hobson's account was emblematic.[281] 'If imperialism', Langer continued, 'is to mean any vague interference of traders and bankers in the affairs of other countries, you may as well extend it to cover any form of influence'.[282] It is precisely this conceptual fuzziness that granted space to Mosley. Echoing the ambiguity of prevailing terminology, Mosley offered a distinction between a type of demographic imperialism and a capitalistic export one, the latter reliant on a radical critique of high finance, foreign entanglements, and war. This distinction allowed Mosley to filter antisemitic tropes into his diagnosis and reconcile any lingering tension that may have existed between, as alluded to in Bukharin's aforementioned question, two seemingly contradictory explanations of war: one grounded in socio-economic structures and financial interests, the other implanted in the almost immutable laws of nature. In turn, Mosley's critique of capitalist imperialism points towards a peculiar and underexplored area in the reception history of Hobson, exemplifies the inherent mutability of interwar anti-imperial discourse within and beyond the emerging intellectual field of international relations, and presents in microcosm the syncretic tendency of fascist thinking on international politics.

[281] *Ibid*, 107.
[282] *Ibid.*

Chapter IV.
'The Immense Majesty of Fascist Peace'

World Fascism and the Twenty Years' Crisis

> A Fascist triumph in Britain will mean that several of the Great Powers of Europe are under Fascist Government, and that the other Great Powers will certainly follow with similar forms of government. Thus will be established a Fascist leadership of Europe… united by the universal brotherhood of Fascism.[1]
>
> — Oswald Mosley

Mosley's vision for continental peace, grounded in a form of fascist solidarity, appears odd relative to the extreme nationalism integral to fascism as an ideological genus. If fascism constitutes a 'palingenetic form of populist ultra-nationalism',[2] then the idea of 'fascist internationalism' is ostensibly paradoxical.[3] As historians have increasingly reiterated, however, various ideologues conceived fascism as not merely a phenomenon of disparate national movements, but as the basis for a project through which to collectively revitalise Europe, defend Western civilisation against a state of terminal decadence, and inaugurate a purportedly pacific international order. Mosley was among the paramount Anglophone proponents of such thinking. For Mosley, fascism was a 'world-wide movement'.[4] Its diffusion would provide the foundation for a utopian scheme to rejuvenate the British Empire and realise a permanent peace within European international society.[5]

The idea of fascist pan-Europeanism warrants a degree of scepticism, particularly provided the use of such language during the fleeting period of German continental dominance. As observed by John W. Wheeler-Bennett, an important figure in the RIIA's history and later IR Fellow at St Antony's College: 'the Nazi leaders have sought to hide the naked truth of their predatory intentions with a cloak of economic mysticism and Utopian blather'.[6] Yet not all fascist conceptions of internationalism can be cast as a farce or façade. In fact, Mosley's thought differed substantially, seeking to reconcile the dual myths of a fascist-governed 'Greater Britain' and a fascistised European society of independent sovereign powers. As Griffin notes, '[s]uch "universalist" sentiments, so alien to the mentality of Hitler or Goebbels, form a recurrent theme of Mosley's… political vision'.[7]

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[1] Mosley, *Blackshirt Policy*, 59.
[2] Griffin, *Nature of Fascism*, 26.
[3] See especially Walter Laqueur, *Fascism: Past, Present, Future* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), 218.
[4] Oswald Mosley, 'On to Fascist Revolution!', *Blackshirt*, February 1933, 1.
[5] 'Utopian' is neither a positive nor pejorative descriptor. A utopian project 'invokes or prescribes the radical transformation or elimination of at least one of the pervasive practices or ordering principles that shape human collective life', such as socio-economic inequality, humanity's ontological constitution, or war. Bell, 'Before the Democratic Peace', 658.
[6] John W. Wheeler-Bennett, 'Hitler's New Order — Slavery', *New Europe* 1, no. 2 (1941): 6, F11, Sir John Wheeler-Bennett Collection, St Antony's College Archives, Oxford.
[7] Griffin, *Nature of Fascism*, 138.

The following chapter develops a twofold argument. First, I posit that, per Mosley, a permanent peace necessitated a diffusion of the autarkic corporate state, combined with a degree of ideological homogeneity among the European great powers, in order to eradicate the causes of war and realise a just and pacific international order. Kingsley Martin, editor of the *New Statesman*, once summarised the gist of this scheme in the *Political Quarterly*: 'As Blackshirt authority spreads in Europe, the nations, free from the complications of international finance and concentrating on internal construction, would be less likely to be warlike.'[8] It was the prescribed domestic constitution of the state—autarkic, totalitarian, and corporate—and the concurrent utopian belief in the pacifying effects of a fascistised Europe that clearly demarcates Mosley's solution to war from liberal and socialist experts on international politics.[9]

This fascist utopia was not, however, simply formulated in an obscure abyss of extreme conspiratorialism, nor was the influence of liberal and socialist international thought solely that of a negative pole. Second, then, I argue that Mosley's remedy and his defence thereof drew from varied intellectual currents and popular international thinkers, many of which will be familiar to IR scholars. Whether it was Mosley's utilisation of a forerunner to the offence-defence theory or episodic reviews of key BUF ideologues in international affairs journals, a wider array of sporadic points of commonality, antecedence, and interaction were present. As the chapter demonstrates, Mosley's mythic peace evolved out of the Victorian and Edwardian imperial discourse of 'Greater Britain', sharing many affinities with ideas found amongst the aforementioned Milner's Kindergarten and the Round Table movement, themselves 'some of the most influential theory–policy thinkers in [what Persaud calls] early British IR'.[10] This imperial vision was combined with a Wellsian belief in the pacifying potential of modern science, economic planning, and technology, which emerged from a common intellectual milieu that encompassed the likes of Hobson, Laski, and Cole.

Between 'Realism' and 'Idealism'

On 13 April 1934, an odd group of individuals dined at the Savoy Hotel in London to discuss a central theme, namely 'The Next War' or—as Winston Churchill cautiously recommended his co-participants refer to the topic—'How to Prevent the Next War'.[11] The diary of acclaimed military strategist Sir Basil Liddell Hart offers a curious snapshot into the ensuing presentations: 'Fuller concise if a little too loud, Lloyd George very quiet and balanced,

[8] Kingsley Martin, 'Public Opinion: Fascism and the "Daily Mail"', *Political Quarterly* 5, no. 2 (1934): 274.
[9] IR's engagement with the idea of an autarkic peace has been sporadic, while the notion of a fascist variant has garnered scant attention. While some, such as Bull and Doyle, have hinted at the former, Eric Helleiner has offered a comparatively more detailed treatment on autarkic thought. See Hedley Bull, *The Anarchical Society: A Study of Order in World Politics*, 4th edn. (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002), 242-3; Doyle, *Ways of War and Peace*, 149; Eric Helleiner, 'The Return of National Self-Sufficiency? Excavating Autarkic Thought in a De-Globalizing Era', *International Studies Review* 23, no. 3 (2021): 933-57.
[10] Persaud, 'Ideology, Socialization and Hegemony', 113.
[11] 'B.H.LH. Special Diary Notes, 1934', typescript, LH 11/1934/1, BHLHP. This event was likely part of Churchill's 'The Other Club', to which Mosley belonged during the early 1930s.

Churchill characteristically as if half intoxicated, Mosley very concise and shrewd.'[12] Liddell Hart's description, albeit brief, is revealing insofar as Mosley's thinking is not unfavourably dismissed. Liddell Hart provides no further details on Mosley's address. This, of course, begs the question: how did Mosley believe it possible to prevent the next war? If there was 'something' faulty in the existing 'methods employed' to achieve peace, as one BUF foreign policy statement alleged, what alternatives did Mosley proffer?[13]

Pacificism

As noted in Chapter III, one of Mosley's central beliefs during the 1930s was that the prospect of war, or at least British participation therein, could be avoided by resolutely evading foreign entanglements. Nevertheless, Mosley's thought cannot simply be reduced to isolationism. As BUF Director of Overseas Policy, Captain Robert Gordon-Canning, remarked: fascism is 'against the policy of complete detachment as propounded by Beaverbrook, but not against insulation'.[14] In this notion of insulation, a point I will return to shortly, Mosley's thought gravitated into the realms of utopia, imagining a world where the alleged causes of war were curtailed, the West's decline reversed, and the prevailing ideological character of the states-system fundamentally altered. Yet the anti-war position of the BUF, or Mosley for that matter, was not absolute, constituting a far cry from anything that called be called pacifism.[15] Fuller aptly captured the prevailing sentiment, contending that:

> [h]aving studied war historically and psychologically, the Fascist comes to the conclusion that in certain circumstances wars are necessary… Therefore he decides that circumstances are the prime factor, that it is these which create wars, and that, consequently, war itself is not a disease, but instead the climax of a diseased state of peacefulness.[16]

In this vein, aspirations for disarmament were, for the fascistised Mosley, a premature red herring. After all, Mosley remained an avid proponent for rearmament throughout the 1930s. Remaining a first rank military power was both a security necessity and requisite foundation on which to fulfil Britain's 'leadership to Peace'.[17] More forcefully, as Fuller argued, barring particular methods of warfare was pointless, for the use of gas or aerial attack would remain until such point as the underlying causes of war were removed.[18]

Furthermore, it should be recalled that Mosley's anti-war and qualified anti-imperial disposition were predicated on a racially and culturally stratified worldview. His vision for peace was therefore an intra-European peace or, more accurately, one confined to a specific conception of the West. Gordon-Canning, for example,

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[12] *Ibid.*

[13] Document describing BUF foreign policy, typescript, n.d., OMN/B/4/8/7, Oswald Mosley Papers.

[14] R. Gordon-Canning, 'Some Aims and Principles of British Fascism in the Conduct of Imperial and Foreign Affairs', *Fascist Quarterly* 2, no. 1 (1936): 69.

[15] Mosley explicitly rejected the label: 'I could never be called a pacifist'. Mosley, *My Life*, 136.

[16] Fuller, 'Fascism and War', 140.

[17] Mosley, *Fascism*, Point 90.

[18] J.F.C. Fuller, *Towards Armageddon: The Defence Problem and Its Solution* (London: Lovat Dickson Limited, 1937), 128.

approvingly cited an *International Affairs* article by Harold Nicolson to the effect that one could not be both a pacifist and an imperialist; there was an irreducible incompatibility between, on the one hand, embracing coercive power in the maintenance of empire and, on the other, rejecting the use of force and preparedness for war within the international realm.[19] Following in this vein, such ideologues rejected the perceived hypocrisy of pacifism, instead acknowledging and embracing the permissibility of coercive power in the maintenance of empire. Accordingly, in the succinct phrasing of W.E.D. Allen, fascism would 'assure to Europe, peace—and to the world, order'.[20]

In these respects, Mosley's position amounted to a perverted form of what Martin Ceadel has labelled pacificism, a stance professing the dream of abolishing the scourge of war through reform, albeit accepting the pragmatic necessity of 'military force to defend its political achievements against aggression' and uphold imperial order.[21] In expressing this racialised utopianism, BUF discourse was replete with references to 'realism'. In the realm of political thought, fascism was cast as a 'realist creed', one which approached the world with a cognisance of the changed conditions of the modern age, rejecting antiquated or somehow 'immortal principles'.[22] Mosley and other BUF ideologues were also partial to describing fascist foreign policy in a similar fashion. According to Hall, it is during the 1930s that the phraseology of 'realism' (rather than, for example, Machiavellianism) entered the vocabulary of British international thought.[23] For Fuller, the fascist acknowledgement of the incontrovertible facts regarding demographic imperialism meant that 'the Fascist is a realist'.[24] Deploying the metaphor of a physician tending to an ailing body, a common rhetorical move in early twentieth-century Anglophone international thought, Fuller asserted that the fascist examines the problem of war as the doctor would a patient: 'If the problem is solvable it will be solved scientifically', in an 'orderly' fashion, and with an 'impartial mind'.[25] By contrast, advocates of the League merely defended the status quo and thus they pursued a form of pseudoscience, standing for 'myth, inertia, and not for a reality—change'.[26] The LNU leaders, Cecil and Murray, were 'sincere idealists' to be 'condemned simply for being silly', naïve, and impetuous in their defence of the League.[27] A.K. Chesterton described 'pacifists' favouring an international police force as deluded individuals unacquainted with 'realist thought' and unable to 'vex their minds with certain difficulties'.[28] Conversely, BUF publications were fond of declaring their diagnosis of war

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[19] Gordon-Canning, 'Some Aims and Principles', 75; Harold Nicolson, 'Modern Diplomacy and British Public Opinion', *International Affairs* 14, no. 5 (1935): 599-618.
[20] Allen, 'Fascist Idea in Britain', 232.
[21] Martin Ceadel, *Thinking About Peace and War* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987), 5. For a similar observation, see Stephen Cullen, 'The Development of the Ideas and Policy of the British Union of Fascists, 1932-40', *Journal of Contemporary History* 22, no. 1 (1987): 130.
[22] Mosley, *Greater Britain*, 22. Mosley's usage of 'realism' in this context dates to the 1920s. See Mosley, *Revolution by Reason*, 28.
[23] Ian Hall, 'Power Politics and Appeasement: Political Realism in British International Thought, c. 1935-1955', *British Journal of Politics and International Relations* 8, no. 2 (2006): 178.
[24] Fuller, 'Fascism and War', 140.
[25] *Ibid.* On this metaphor, see Stöckmann, *Architects*, 304.
[26] Fuller, 'Fascism and War', 143.
[27] E.D. Hart, 'The Damnation of the L.P.T.B.', *Action*, 25 September 1937, 12.
[28] A.K. Chesterton, 'Storm Troops for the Great International Army', *Blackshirt*, 3 January 1936, 4.

and remedial policy as reflective of reality. The fascists appreciated that to 'contain realities within the empty form of pacts and agreements', and thereby 'refuse to recognise the vital needs for demographic expansion', would render peace an impossibility.[29]

In an important sense, such language riffed on the wider usages of the 'realist' term within British international thought during the late 1930s. As Ashworth has noted, idealism developed a pejorative association with the League's proponents.[30] By contrast, realism was associated for many with 'those who advocated a return to what was regarded… as the pre-1914 norms of diplomacy such as the balance of power, military alliances and secret diplomacy'.[31] Alternatively, for others, recourse to the rhetoric of realism became closely affiliated with Chamberlain's appeasement policy.[32] BUF's ideologues made recourse to such terminology, yet they regularly sought to offer a middle-ground based on a particular synthesis, a rhetorical move not uncommon amongst interwar international thinkers. For Mosley, realism was not about a return to the balance of power; that is, a system of rivalrous blocs. Pursuant to his Cecilian pedigree, Mosley believed that such an institution was wanting as a mechanism for peace.[33] Nor was realism solely about recognising facts or espousing a pessimistic pragmatism. Realism implied a readiness to embrace *change* based on the alleged facts. To borrow Kristensen and Wæver's terminology, Mosley and other BUF ideologues rhetorically deployed the 'realist-idealist fractal' to dichotomise the 'realistic' basis of fascist foreign policy against the utopian screeds of 'idealists'. This was accompanied by a 'concretization-abstraction move', whereby 'more realism' denoted an approach to 'examining concrete problems and the actual demands for change by "have-nots"', rather than 'advocating for general and systematic mechanisms for change' grounded in 'abstract and principled terms'.[34] These rhetorical and positioning devices were coupled with an additional 'hybridizing move': idealism was not simply used without abandon as a pejorative, but co-opted in a manner not dissimilar to Carr's later realist-idealist synthesis; that is, fascist foreign policy promised to find an amorphous, dialectical middle-ground.[35] As Fuller observed, 'the Fascist philosophy is one of *idealism* governed by *realism*'.[36] 'Nothing but that combination of Idealism and realism which Fascism alone provides can bring Peace to Europe', argued one BUF policy statement.[37] To quote a lofty albeit revealing comment by Mosley: 'With cold realism Fascists will remove the economic causes of war and will construct on the new and solid foundation of each great nation reorganised and recreated in a new consciousness the immense majesty of Fascist Peace.'[38]

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[29] 'Notes of the Quarter', *Fascist Quarterly* 1, no. 2 (1935): 117.
[30] Lucian M. Ashworth, 'Where are the Idealists in Interwar International Relations?', *Review of International Studies* 32, no. 2 (2006): 296.
[31] *Ibid.*
[32] Hall, 'Power Politics and Appeasement'.
[33] See, e.g., Mosley, 'World Alternative', 378; Skidelsky, *Oswald Mosley*, 94-5.
[34] Kristensen and Wæver, 'Realism-Idealism Debate', 585-6.
[35] *Ibid*, 581.
[36] J.F.C. Fuller, 'British Strategy in the Mediterranean', *Fascist Quarterly* 1, no. 4 (1935): 431 (emphasis added).
[37] Document describing BUF foreign policy, typescript, n.d., OMN/B/4/8/7, Oswald Mosley Papers.
[38] Mosley, *Blackshirt Policy*, 43. See also Oswald Mosley, 'The Immense Majesty of Fascist Peace', *Fascist Week*, 29 December 1933—4 January 1934, 5; 'Mosley Says', *Blackshirt*, 16 May 1936, 1.

'Can Faust Renew His Youth?' [39]

In 1934, W.E.D. Allen released a history of the BUF, published under the pseudonym James Drennan. The account evidenced a familiarity with the thought of the German philosopher Oswald Spengler. Allen was, as one reviewer conceded in *APSR*, 'the ablest of the theoreticians' attached to the movement (although Allen remained nominally outside of the BUF).[40] James Meston, a key architect behind Chatham House and Chairman of its Executive Committee between 1920 and 1926, outlined in *International Affairs* that he was neither fond of the book's excessive length nor its 'rhapsodical Spenglerism', albeit Meston conceded that one could not deny the immanent power contained within Allen's mutinous call against modernity.[41]

Meston's review captures an integral feature in the thought of Allen and, by proxy, Mosley: the amalgam of Spenglerian pessimism and revolutionary optimism. Progress within civilisation and, indeed, fundamental change in the configuration of world order were feasible. Mosley's capacity to imagine a new order was undergirded by his broader conception of history. This aspect of Mosley's political thought has been reconstructed by several historians, chief among them Richard Thurlow. As Thurlow argues, it was foremost Spengler's *The Decline of the West* which provided the intellectual 'rationalizations' for Mosley's fascist worldview and its underlying philosophy of history, having first encountered the study in 1931.[42]

In his popular two-part world history, Spengler speculated about the West's trajectory and the Faustian culture from which it descended. For Spengler, 'cultures' were subject to natural stages of evolution, illustrated with reference to a particular season. Each unit progressed through an 'organic life-cycle', evolving from creative, virile cultures into increasingly degenerate civilisations, the latter ever more divorced from its particularistic cultural groundings. It was this state of decay which Spengler believed the Faustian civilisation to have entered by the nineteenth century, the French Revolution a historical turning point in this regard.[43] The subsequent period was typified by the ascension of a paralytic system of bourgeois liberal democracy, the degeneracy of the urbanised megalopolis, the 'revenge' of the 'exploited world', and the atomising forces of materialism, individualism, capitalism, and rationalism.[44] As with all civilisations, Spengler prophesised the West's inevitable demise. While this

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[39] Drennan (pseud.), *B.U.F.*, 196.
[40] Arthur N. Halcombe, review of *Do We Want Fascism?*, by Carmen Haider, and *B.U.F.: Oswald Mosley and British Fascism*, by James Drennan, *American Political Science Review* 28, no. 4 (1934): 689-90.
[41] James Meston, review of *B.U.F.: Oswald Mosley and British Fascism*, by James Drennan, *International Affairs* 14, no. 4 (1935): 575.
[42] Richard C. Thurlow, 'Destiny and Doom: Spengler, Hitler and "British" Fascism', *Patterns of Prejudice* 15, no. 4 (1981): 24; Skidelsky, *Oswald Mosley*, 465.
[43] Thurlow, 'Destiny and Doom', 21.
[44] Oswald Spengler, *Man and Technics: A Contribution to a Philosophy of Life* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1932), 102; Oswald Spengler, *The Decline of the West, Volume I: Form and Actuality*, trans. Charles Francis Atkinson. London: George Allen & Unwin, 1932.

fatalism was to be delayed by the periodical emergence of Caesarist figures, history was unchangeable and thus civilisational decline cyclical.[45]

Mosley accepted Spengler's description of the present crisis and his 'colossal contribution to modern thought', observing that all the hallmarks of civilisational decline were identifiable in the present.[46] Mosley thus affirmed Spengler's account of both the 'ordained irretrievable downfall' of all prior civilisations and the disintegrative forces besetting the contemporary Faustian civilisation: the machinations of high finance and the 'City', a decadent and ineffectual parliamentary system, and the rise of barbarism beyond the West.[47] Indeed, as Thurlow argues, Mosley's increasing emphasis on the supposedly undue influence of 'Money Power' probably derived from Spengler, albeit Mosley often espoused this in explicit antisemitic terms.[48] Moreover, as Thomas Linehan observes, Mosley also adopted an organic, Spenglerian conception of both Western civilisation and the British nation, interpreting them alike as living entities 'apparently exhibiting signs of acute "physical" enfeeblement, ill-health and degeneracy'.[49] This type of communal personification was commonplace within fascist thought—the nation anthropomorphised into a living organism.[50]

Vitally, though, Mosley's Spenglerian appropriation was qualified, explicitly rejecting the inevitability of decline and the temporary nature of Spengler's Caesarism. In his biographical account of Mosley, the pro-fascist Allen aptly captured this sentiment, juxtaposing fascism's permanent revolution against the temporary reprieve of Caesarism.[51] While indebted to Spengler, the German therefore also became the 'great antagonist'.[52] As Eatwell notes, fascist ideologues typically eschewed cyclical conceptions of history.[53] Instead, proponents 'synthesized natural and historical arguments by adapting vitalist and activist ideas' that offered the prospect of conquering modernity.[54] Mosley was no exception. As the BUF ideologue Alexander Raven Thomson observed: 'Fascists do not accept the pessimistic conclusions of the Spengler school'.[55] Rather than submitting to a prophesied decline, '[i]t is the purpose of Fascism to give a new impetus to civilization through the regenerative force of youth in revolt

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[45] Thurlow, 'Destiny and Doom', 20-1. From Weber to Gramsci, the concept of 'Caesarism' had varied uses within early twentieth-century thought. See Gerhard Casper, 'Caesarism in Democratic Politics—Reflections on Max Weber', John W. Kluge Center, Library of Congress, 22 March 2007, https://dx.doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.1032647.

[46] Mosley, *Tomorrow We Live*, 70.

[47] *Ibid*, 71; Thurlow, *Fascism in Britain*, 125.

[48] Thurlow, 'Destiny and Doom', 25.

[49] Thomas Linehan, 'The British Union of Fascists as a Totalitarian Movement and Political Religion', *Totalitarian Movements and Political Religions* 5, no. 3 (2004): 400.

[50] Griffin, *Fascism: An Introduction*, 42. Anthropomorphic reifications were not exclusive to fascists. Previously dominant among nineteenth-century conservatives, 'organic analogies' also became common among some liberals, including Hobson. See Keene, *International Political Thought*, 190.

[51] Drennan (pseud.), *B.U.F.*, 18.

[52] Mosley, *Tomorrow We Live*, 70.

[53] Eatwell, 'Generic Fascism', 176.

[54] *Ibid.*

[55] Alexander Raven Thomson, 'Correspondence', *Fascist Quarterly* 1, no. 4 (1935): 513.

against materialistic values'.[56] Mosley, therefore, approached this civilisational 'challenge' with a 'radiant optimism': the revivification of civilisation was achievable.[57]

By rejecting Spengler's determinism, Mosley returned history to the realm immanent linearity, albeit a highly contingent one. This was no Whiggish teleology or Marxist dialectic, nor for that matter was it a biologically determinant conception of historical directionality. Yet, Mosley did not view world history as devoid of patterns or meaning; he remained beholden to the prospect of substantive 'social evolution'.[58] This understanding of social progress was, however, at stark odds with the gradualism of his former socialist associates; that is, the so-called 'evolutionary Socialists' typified by Beatrice and Sidney Webb.[59] To quote Linehan's elegant phrasing, Mosley imagined 'a revolt against evolutionary and biological *time*'.[60] Progress in this reading of history was seemingly limitless, yet its actualisation inherently reliant on the revolutionary potential of human action in an evolutionary contest of ideas.[61] As Mosley observed: 'If Fascism does not succeed in delivering at least this minimum demand [of 'improving social organisation'], then… it will die a natural death… No system can live, or has the right to live, unless it is a success'.[62]

For Mosley, this capacity to transcend cyclicality was afforded by the potential of modern science and the revolutionary impetus of fascism, a creed synthesising the Nietzschean Superman and a secularised Christian spirit of service and sacrifice.[63] In the first instance, Mosley subscribed to a 'belief in the Promethean power of science', technocracy, and economic planning.[64] This emphasis was already apparent within Mosley's thought during his stint in the Labour Party.[65] Such optimism would undergird his subsequent reaction to Spengler. The latter's pessimism, Mosley conjectured, emerged 'from his entire ignorance of modern science and mechanical development'.[66] Precisely how these features would manifest in Mosley's vision for world order is a subject explored later in this chapter. For present purposes, it is sufficient to highlight that Mosley betrayed a belief in the power of modern technology, economic planning, and technocratic governance afforded by the 'revolution that science has created'.[67] As Mosley claimed, 'under Fascism and through Fascism, science shall rule Great Britain in the name of order,

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[56] *Ibid.*
[57] Mosley, *Tomorrow We Live*, 70.
[58] Mosley, *Fascism for the Million*, 67.
[59] Mosley, *Greater Britain*, 93.
[60] Linehan, 'Totalitarian Movement', 401 (emphasis in original).
[61] *Ibid.*
[62] Mosley, *Fascism for the Million*, 9.
[63] Mosley, 'Philosophy of Fascism'. For an excellent treatment on Mosley's synthesis of Christianity and Nietzsche, see Thomas Linehan, '"On the Side of Christ": Fascist Clerics in 1930s Britain', *Totalitarian Movements and Political Religions* 8, no. 2 (2007): 297-8.
[64] Linehan, 'Totalitarian Movement', 406.
[65] See, e.g., Mosley, 'Labour Party's Financial Policy', 35.
[66] Mosley, 'Philosophy of Fascism', 37.
[67] Mosley, 'Fascist Revolution!', 4.

civilisation and illimitable progress'.[68] Mosley's tone was, to borrow Philip M. Coupland's apt phrasing, 'almost Wellsian'.[69]

This techno-utopianism was synthesised with two discordant themes: a Nietzschean emphasis on human will and a secularised Christian spirit of communal service. The intellectual inspiration for this synthesis was manifold. One influence was H.G. Wells' idea of an enlightened ruling elite, as encapsulated within his 1928 novel *The Open Conspiracy*.[70] While Mosley later branded Wells as but a 'story-teller rather than a thinker', his post-war dismissal should not be accepted uncritically.[71] After all, Wells castigated Home Secretary Herbert Morrison for releasing Mosley from internment in 1943; he even published a 1946 article calling for the abdication of King George VI over alleged financial ties to the BUF.[72] Despite Mosley's chiding of the science fiction author-cum-internationalist and Wells' palpable disdain for the fascist leader, the two were intermittent interlocutors prior to the BUF's advent. Mosley dispatched Wells a draft of the New Party platform and actively sought his support for the movement.[73] Notably, in December 1931, Harold Nicolson—an Oxford-educated former diplomat, leading figure within the New Party, and later 'authority on international relations'[74]—reviewed the third edition of Well's *What Are We to Do with Our Lives?*, wherein observing a congruence between Wells' thought and the New Party platform.[75] Nicolson eagerly recommended *The Open Conspiracy* to readers, while co-opting Wells' secularised religiosity as a call not for a return to 'outworn creeds', but a belief in an ideal that transcends the individual and a dutiful commitment thereto.[76] As Coupland has shown, Mosley sent a letter to Wells as late as August 1932, wherein enclosing a pre-publication copy of *The Greater Britain* and expressing his interest in Well's speech on 'Liberal Fascism' delivered at the Oxford Summer School. Mosley proceeded to remark that 'like most prophets, you will probably have the unpleasant experience of recognising many of your own teachings of the past reproduced and reshaped by less capable hands'.[77] Despite this formative influence, any such link between the two was evidently severed over, amongst other reasons, irreconcilable ideological divisions: Mosley embraced the totalitarian future of fascist modernity, while Wells (not least Nicolson, who shortly thereafter dissociated himself from Mosley) remained beholden to the 'Democratic Myth'.[78]

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[68] *Ibid.*

[69] Coupland, 'Blackshirted Utopians', 259.

[70] Worley, 'What Was the New Party?', 60.

[71] Mosley, *My Life*, 226.

[72] See H.G. Wells, *The Mosley Outrage* (London Caledonian Press, 1943), MSS.15X/2/138/7, Maitland Sara Hallinan Collection, University of Warwick, Coventry; John S. Partington, 'H.G. Wells: A Political Life', *Utopian Studies* 19, no. 3 (2008): 569.

[73] Worley, 'What Was the New Party?', 60; Philip M. Coupland, 'H.G. Wells's "Liberal Fascism"', *Journal of Contemporary History* 35, no. 4 (2000): 541-58.

[74] Drinkwater, *Harold Nicolson*, 28.

[75] Harold Nicolson, review of *What Are We To Do With Our Lives?*, by H.G. Wells, *Action*, 24 December 1931, 12-3.

[76] *Ibid.*

[77] Coupland, 'H.G. Wells's "Liberal Fascism"', 556.

[78] James Drennan (pseud.), 'Critique of a Liberal Historian', *Fascist Quarterly* 2, no. 2 (1936): 226.

Alongside this embrace of technology and science was Mosley's focus on a more nebulous 'spiritual urge' which constituted the primary animus behind the 'movement of humanity'.[79] To appreciate the basis of this supposed urge, one must turn to the thought and impact of the famed Irish playwright and socialist George Bernard Shaw, a figure who himself admired the youthful Mosley.[80] Mosley was influenced by Shaw's *Back to Methuselah*, his admiration of Julius Caesar, and the deeper notions of life force and creative evolution which he espoused.[81] Lying at the root of such vitalist thinking was a nineteenth-century Lamarckian conception of evolution. The allegedly transmissible nature of acquired characteristics thus allowed for the possibility that human evolution was not simply an impersonal Darwinian process of perpetual happenstance.[82] Rather, human will was at the centre of social change. Shaw was influenced by the likes of Arthur Schopenhauer and Nietzsche, while borrowing heavily from Samuel Butler and his aptly titled 1887 tract, *Luck, or Cunning*; this book an explicit response to Darwin's popularisation.[83] One may also observe an uncanny similarity between Shaw's thinking and the evolutionary idealism or *élan vital* (vital impetus) of the famed French philosopher and later president of the International Committee on Intellectual Cooperation, Henri Bergson. While Bergson's thought has made only few appearances in modern IR theory,[84] he was among the most popular philosophers of the early twentieth century and thus it is not surprising that he was widely discussed among contemporary international thinkers. As Andrew Williams notes: 'British and American commentators on Bergson before about 1914 were torn between bewilderment, dislike, incomprehension, and

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[79] Mosley, *Blackshirt Policy*, 67. See also Thomas Linehan, *British Fascism, 1918-39: Parties, Ideology and Culture* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000), 96.

[80] On this Shavian influence, see Skidelsky, *Oswald Mosley*, 313, 349, 550; Linehan, *British Fascism*, 95; Thurlow, 'Race, Culture and Evolution', 76; Redvaldsen, 'Health, Science and Scientific Racism', 374.

[81] See, e.g., Mosley, *My Life*, 222-5; Thurlow, 'Destiny and Doom', 25; Thurlow, 'Race, Culture and Evolution', 76. BUF publications occasionally mentioned Shaw favourably, whether for his views on fascism or his opposition to sanctions against Italy. See, e.g., R.T., 'Bernard Shaw Flirts with Fascism', *Fascist Week*, 1—7 December 1933, 8; 'Shaw on Italy', *Blackshirt*, 10 January 1936, 5; 'G.B.S. Slangs the Pacifists', *Blackshirt*, 23 May 1936, 1.

[82] Piers J. Hale, 'The Search for Purpose in a Post-Darwinian Universe: George Bernard Shaw, "Creative Evolution", and Shavian Eugenics: "The Dark Side of the Force"', *History and Philosophy of the Life Sciences* 28, no. 2 (2006): 191-213. This Shavian rejection of a purely Darwinian conception of evolution also marked Thomson's thought. See Alexander Raven Thomson, *Civilization as Divine Superman: A Superorganic Philosophy of History* (London: Williams and Norgate, 1932), 29-30; Matthew McMurray, 'Alexander Raven Thomson, Philosopher of the British Union of Fascists', *European Legacy* 17, no. 1 (2012): 45.

[83] Eric Bentley, 'From George Bernard Shaw to G.B.S.', *Independent Shavian* 7, no. 3 (1969): 34.
Skidelsky, *Oswald Mosley*, 476; Hale, 'Search for Purpose', 192-4.

[84] See, e.g., Peter Lenco, '(Re-)Introducing Deleuze: New Readings of Deleuze in International Studies', *Millennium* 43, no. 1 (2014): 124-44; James Der Derian and Alexander Wendt, eds., *Quantum International Relations: A Human Science for World Politics* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2022). While Bergson is less popular in contemporary IR theory, recent historical literature has discussed Bergson's internationalist activities. See Jimena Canales, 'Einstein, Bergson, and the Experiment That Failed: Intellectual Cooperation at the League of Nations', *MLN* 120, no. 5 (2005): 1168-91; Jo-Anne Pemberton, 'The Changing Shape of Intellectual Cooperation: From the League of Nations to UNESCO', *Australian Journal of Politics and History* 58, no. 1 (2012): 34-50; Geert Somsen, 'The Philosopher and the Rooster: Henri Bergson's French Diplomatic Missions, 1914-1925', *Historical Studies in the Natural Sciences* 50, no. 4 (2020): 364-83.

admiration'.[85] Yet Bergson's *élan vital* seemed to capture a popular sentiment; over coming decades it developed into a broader idiom that Anglophone thinkers were acquainted with or a term to be casually deployed, even without deeper engagement with Bergson's thought.[86] In Shaw's case, Bergson's influence was palpable and direct, if retroactive. As the literary critic Eric Bentley once observed, Bergson's 1907 *Creative Evolution* would come to influence Shaw, yet the basic premise of this Bergsonian thread was already immanent within Shaw's thought, exemplified by his 1903 drama, *Man and Superman*.[87] Notwithstanding the close similarities, Shaw insisted on his separateness from the Bergson.[88] In any case, it was this Shavian-cum-Bergsonian emphasis on the attainability of a new type of 'man' and the Nietzschean 'Will to Power' which carried influence in shaping Mosley's thinking.[89]

Mosley's worldview, a synthetic admixture of continental and British political thought, offered the prospect of realising, through social reform and human volition, an almost 'anthropological revolution' to inaugurate the mythic fascist man and state.[90] Fascism, in this sense, constituted a form of 'collective Caesarism'; pursuant to his organic conception of the nation, each individual Blackshirt constituted a 'cell' within the body politic.[91] By replicating the fascist revolution throughout Europe, as I reveal below, Mosley imagined the prospect for a rejuvenated West and an international order transformed. Against the backdrop of this philosophy of history and Mosley's utopian belief in the alterability of world politics, the remainder of this chapter will return to his pacific remedy and its intellectual roots.

The 'Universal Brotherhood of Fascism'

From Clarence Streit's vision of a transatlantic democratic league to the federalist-colonial projects detailed by Count Coudenhove-Kalergi, the interwar period witnessed a plethora of schemes imagining the reorganisation of the states-system or segments therein. While Mosley's fascist peace was fundamentally utopian, he remained beholden to the idea of a European society of sovereign states.

Mosley emerged as a key proponent for European federation after the Second World War, or what he called 'Europe a Nation'.[92] This was not the case during the 1930s. While affording incipient support for European integration in his 1936 article, 'The World Alternative', Mosley's 'European union' was a moral one, a 'spiritual

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[85] Andrew Williams, 'Norman Angell and His French Contemporaries, 1905-1914', *Diplomacy & Statecraft* 21, no. 4 (2010): 580.
[86] See, e.g., David C. Lamb, 'Do the Fittest Survive', pamphlet, 1935, FHN/1, Special Collections, LSE.
[87] Bentley, 'George Bernard Shaw', 33-6. While one off-hand use of the term *élan vital* appears in Mosley's *The Alternative*, it is unclear whether he ever read Bergson directly. See Oswald Mosley, *The Alternative* (Ramsbury: Mosley Publications, 1947), 304.
[88] Piers J. Hale, 'Of Mice and Men: Evolution and the Socialist Utopia. William Morris, H.G. Wells, and George Bernard Shaw', *Journal of the History of Biology* 43, no. 1 (2010): 50.
[89] Linehan, *British Fascism*, 33, 95; Redvaldsen, 'Health, Science and Scientific Racism', 374.
[90] On fascism's 'anthropological revolution', see Emilio Gentile, *The Struggle for Modernity: Nationalism, Futurism, and Fascism* (London: Praeger, 2003), 7-8.
[91] Mosley, 'Philosophy of Fascism', 43.
[92] Oswald Mosley, *Europe: Faith and Plan* (Essex: Washburn and Sons, 1958).

communion of the world creed', rather than a political federation.[93] As Mosley claimed in 1971, a 'Common Market' was perhaps a possibility during the 1930s, 'but the union of Europe' had been resolutely rejected.[94] The movement's discourse repeatedly shunned supranational schemes. In 1936, the *Blackshirt* mocked the integrationist project of the 'World Foundation' and its supporters, such as Angell, King-Hall, Salter, and its founder, the Spanish diplomat Salvador de Madariaga.[95] Chesterton similarly derided the concept of an 'International Army' outlined by the likes of Angell and Bertrand Russell.[96] He likewise dismissed the Wellsian idea of world government earlier in the 1930s. For Chesterton, world government elicited racial fears of miscegenation and societal degradation. As he argued,

> the breaking down of barriers would not be economical and political alone, but sociological, ethical and biological… [I]n the resultant amalgamation our descendants would no doubt be a handsome piebald in colour, and perhaps possess the physique of a Congo pigmy, the mind of an Australian aborigine, and the morals of the Levant.[97]

As another contributor, H.T. Mills, argued regarding Federal Union, '[t]he result of such an unnatural society would be, no doubt, the reduction of all peoples and standards to a mixed, hum-drum and low-case mediocrity'.[98] For Mills, the malign forces of international finance, the New Commonwealth Union's calls for an international police force, and Count Coudenhove-Kalergi's federalist Pan-Europa programme 'merge[d] into the policy of Federal Union', which was moving to become the 'real war aim of the Allies'.[99] Moreover, world government was in any case a fanciful route to peace, one starkly at odds with the soundness of fascism. As Chesterton wrote in response to Wells: fascism 'plans, not for the Millennium, but for the world of to-morrow, and to-morrow will come before your Millennium. Action, not dreams, is the order of the day.'[100] Mosley himself explicitly opposed Streit's wartime 'ultra-international' Federal Union, which had gained the support of such noted thinkers as Angell, William Beveridge, and leading Round Tabler Lionel Curtis.[101] Mosley's stance was based not only on technical grounds of feasibility and opposition to the ostensible loss of one's nationality, but the conspiratorial supposition that control of such a union, regardless of the sincerity of many of its progenitors, would

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[93] Mosley, 'World Alternative', 382, 395. Cf. Nicholas Hillman off-handedly makes the stronger, erroneous claim that Mosley 'backed European integration' in 1936. See Nicholas Hillman, '"Tell Me Chum, In Case I Got It Wrong. What Was It We Were Fighting During the War?" The Re-emergence of British Fascism, 1945-58', *Contemporary British History* 15, no. 4 (2001): 11.

[94] Arthur Butler, 'The First European: Arthur Butler Talks to Sir Oswald Mosley', *Spectator*, 13 November 1971, 682.

[95] 'One Thousand Jews', *Blackshirt*, 26 December 1936, 5.

[96] Chesterton, 'Storm Troops', 4.

[97] Chesterton, 'H.G. Wells', 8.

[98] H.T. Mills, 'Money and Federal Union', *Action*, 28 March 1940, 3

[99] *Ibid.*

[100] Chesterton, 'H.G. Wells', 8.

[101] Mosley, *British Peace*, OMD/2/3/4, Oswald Mosley Papers. On the reception of Streit's Federal Union, see Talbot C. Imlay, *Clarence Streit and Twentieth-Century American Internationalism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2023), 51-129.

succumb to the nefarious 'racket' of 'Jewish Finance'.[102] It is also noteworthy that Mosley, despite adumbrating the mantra of Eurafrica in collaboration with former South African Defence Minister Oswald Pirow in the post-1945 period,[103] he had yet to arrive at such imperial proposals during the 1930s, notwithstanding their interwar popularity.[104] In fact, while the *Fascist Quarterly* directed sympathisers towards *La corporazione nel mondo* by fascist internationalist Giuseppe de Michelis, it is unclear whether Mosley was acquainted with the Eurafrica ideal then espoused by the Italian thinker.[105]

Even the League, worlds apart from the more expansive supranational schemes above, retained an ambivalent position within Mosley's fascist program. A 1934 article in the *Round Table* highlighted the challenge of accounting for Mosley's change in opinion, fluctuating from a League advocate at the 1928 Labour Party conference to an avowed opponent.[106] While ostensibly puzzling, a logic behind this shift may be discerned. Skidelsky suggests that it was the Corfu crisis and its resolution via the Conference of Ambassadors which marked the 'effective end of the League' for Mosley, after which he substituted imperial defence for collective security.[107] This reflects the account that Mosley himself espoused in his post-war autobiography: 'The League was eventually wrecked for all practical purposes in 1923 by Mussolini'.[108]

While Mosley's faith in the League certainly declined, as did his active participation within the LNU, this interpretation by Skidelsky (or retelling on Mosley's part) ought to be tempered. In the first place, Skidelsky labels Mosley's apparently prescient belief in the practical end of the League as 'rightly' arrived at. This assessment on the part of the historian skews towards the anachronistic. As revisionist historiography has emphasised, the League's record, especially during the 1920s, was by no means an unmitigated disaster, even in the security realm.[109] Second, Skidelsky's treatment arguably downplays the derision which the fascistised Mosley hurled towards the League. The organisation was not simply ineffective; it had been captured by sinister, anti-fascist interests. For Mosley, one could

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[102] Mosley, *British Peace*, 8-9, OMD/2/3/4, Oswald Mosley Papers. As Mosley added, one need not presume 'sinister motives', for many Federal Union advocates exhibited a defect 'of the head rather than of the heart'. See Oswald Mosley, '"Federal Union" Examined', *Action*, 7 December 1939, 5. Federal Union attracted attack by others in the BUF press. One author, 'Canute', went further than Mosley, alleging the project was part of a Jewish conspiracy: 'Abraham, Isaac and Jacob are not specifically mentioned as the directors of the new international Paradise, but a brief study of this impudent scheme leaves no doubts.' See 'Peace or Collective Security', *Action*, 8 April 1939, 4; Canute, 'Britons Beware!', *Action*, 15 February 1940, 2.

[103] See, e.g., Oswald Pirow, 'An African Solution', *The European*, August 1953, 8-18.

[104] See Benjamin J. Thorpe, 'Eurafrica: A Pan-European Vehicle for Central European Colonialism (1923-1939)', E*uropean Review* 26, no. 3 (2018): 503-13.

[105] 'Books for Students of Fascism', *Fascist Quarterly* 1, no. 1 (1935): 108. On de Michelis, see Steffek, 'Fascist Internationalism'.

[106] Anonymous, 'The Blackshirts', *Round Table* 24, no. 96 (1934): 723.

[107] Skidelsky, *Oswald Mosley*, 94. Dorril, *Blackshirt*, 68, relays a similar interpretation.

[108] Mosley, *My Life*, 141.

[109] See especially Susan Pedersen, 'Back to the League of Nations', *American Historical Review* 112, no. 4 (2007): 1091-117.

therefore 'find in the name of the League the balance of power restored to the world'.[110] Third, Skidelsky seemingly obscures the extent to which the Labourite Mosley continued to espouse the internationalist mantra during the second half of the 1920s, notwithstanding his increased cognisance of the League's limitations. As Ashworth notes, the League's social democratic proponents emphasised 'the interrelated ideas of arbitration, sanctions (or "security") and disarmament'.[111] Mosley was no exception. In 1928, he applauded with uncannily similar language the League's 'three main pillars—arbitration, security, and disarmament'.[112] In this respect, Mosley argued that there remained no comparable 'instrument of national peace ever devised'.[113] As the corollary to his continued faith in the League, Mosley was vocal in his criticism of British foreign policy under Foreign Minister Austen Chamberlain's stewardship. Britain had abandoned the principle of international arbitration, stalled the Preparatory Commission for the Disarmament Conference, and prevented agreement at the 1927 Geneva Naval Conference.[114] Notwithstanding Mosley's continued, if less strident, support for the League, he made it clear that organisational effectiveness was contingent on member states; the former, after all, was but a 'machine' to be wielded.[115] Yet prudent statecraft proved less than forthcoming, and as the historian Helen McCarthy makes apparent, Mosley's prior enthusiasm had evidently dissipated after his 1931 exit from Labour and concurrent formation of the New Party.[116] Against the backdrop of the Manchuria crisis, *Action*, the New Party's periodical edited by Nicolson, expressed disappointment with the inability of the League to reconcile its 'idealism' with the 'realism' warranted by events.[117] Reconciliation between the two necessitated not legalism, but political pragmatism. Events called for the League's architects to 'differentiate the spirit of the Covenant from its letter'.[118] This critique gained a new level of virulence after the formation of the BUF. Despite such vitriol, Cecil's former squire did not entirely abandon the *idea* of international organisation. As one *Blackshirt* article noted, it would be imprudent to disband an organisation 'which can assist to stabilise and to pacify Europe'.[119]

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[110] "'Restore Germany's African Colonies": Sir Oswald Mosley at Canterbury', *Kent Herald*, 22 June 1938, TAC/7/7, Trade Advisory Council Archive. Joyce phrased it similarly: 'The new "Collective Security" is in practice the old Balance of Power writ large.' Joyce, 'Collective Security', 424.

[111] Ashworth, 'Poverty of Paradigms', 46.

[112] Labour Party, *Report*, 187.

[113] *Ibid*.

[114] *Ibid*, 187-9.

[115] *Ibid*, 188; Mosley, *My Life*, 141.

[116] McCarthy, 'Leading from the Centre'. While the League figured less prominently in New Party policy, this does not mean that belief in international organisation was unimportant to key members. For instance, in *The Political Quarterly*, former New Party member and popular philosopher C.E.M. Joad favoured an 'international economic board' as an alternative to imperialism and war. C.E.M. Joad, 'Prolegomena to Fascism', *Political Quarterly* 2, no. 1 (1931): 89.

[117] 'Romance Smiles Upon the Board of Trade', *Action*, 26 November 1931, 2.

[118] *Ibid*, 2-3.

[119] 'Who are the War-Mongers Now?', *Blackshirt*, 1 June 1933, 1. See also Mosley, *Greater Britain*, 151-2. For Fuller, it was, as he flippantly remarked, a 'far wiser course' to despatch a 'few thousand tons of contraceptives' to Japan than rely on the League. Fuller, 'Fascism and War', 141.

Mosley concluded that the League 'machinery' or a variant thereof would remain, but it would be reformed and redirected towards 'new purposes' under new conductors.[120] The League's efficacy was thus contingent on the prior transformation of Europe. As 'realists', implementing change was necessary.[121] Not only had the 'defection of America deprived the League of the ability to pursue the domestic analogy', but the organisation had eventually succumb to the malign anti-fascist interests of Russia and the satisfied Anglo-French powers.[122] As an aside, the 'domestic analogy' was, according to Chiara Bottici, coined by Manning in a 1935 lecture, before it was later popularised by Hedley Bull.[123] While earlier references to the 'domestic analogy' of *parentage* or the *household* may be found,[124] Mosley's usage of this specific phrase in the vein which it is presently understood in IR theory is perhaps among its first.

As it currently existed, Mosley explained before the Oxford University Fascist Association, the League's loftier goals had been perverted. In its place, the organisation reverted to the pursuit of the 'balance-of-power', or what Mosley understood to be a malicious containment policy.[125] It had devolved into an 'unholy alliance of decaying democratic systems, with the bloodstained Soviet against the renaissant Fascist countries'.[126] In this situation of intra-civilisational fracture, 'international law and order' suffered a breakdown.[127]

Furthermore, it was an alleged error to predicate 'European peace on a polyglot committee which labours under the absurd delusion that all nations… are equal'.[128] Applying an (un)democratic analogy, the *Blackshirt* posited that it was but an 'illusion', a dangerous 'myth', to suppose 'that the vote of the village idiot must be equal in importance to the vote of a highly skilled technician'.[129] Gordon-Canning phrased it bluntly when he opined that

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[120] Mosley, *Blackshirt Policy*, 59. This idea—namely that it was a lack of will and the League's ideological corruption, rather than any integral failure in its 'machinery'—was maintained by Mosley into the post-war decades. While Mosley uses the term 'machinery' loosely, there were certain fundamentals underlying the organisation that he nevertheless rejected, especially norms of sovereign equality. Mosley carried this belief into the age of the United Nations (UN), believing sovereign equality had attained absurd proportions under the General Assembly. See Mosley, *My Life*, 136, 140-1.

[121] Mosley, *Greater Britain*, 152.

[122] Mosley, 'World Alternative', 379.

[123] Chiara Bottici, *Men and States: Rethinking the Domestic Analogy in a Global Age*, trans. Karen Whittle (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), 12.

[124] See, respectively, Minutes of the 10th Session of the Permanent Mandates Commission (League of Nations, 1926), 2-3, R52/1/55200/16466, UN Library & Archives Geneva, https://archives.ungeneva.org/permanent-mandates-commission-proces-verbaux-of-the-10th-session-of-the-commission-geneva-november-1926; Committee on Foreign Affairs, House of Representatives, *Commission for Enduring Peace* (Government Printing Office, 1916), 11-2.

[125] 'Sir Oswald's "Cure-all" Policy', *Oxford Mail*, 25 February 1938, TAC/7/7, Trade Advisory Council Archive.

[126] Mosley, *Fascism*, Point 92.

[127] 'Notes of the Quarter', *British Union Quarterly* 2, no. 2 (1938): 8. The prior year, E.D. Hart compared the League's anti-fascist turn with the fatal descent of the Holy Alliance into an 'Anti-Liberal International'. E.D. Hart, 'The Tragedy of Geneva (I)', *British Union Quarterly* 1, no. 4 (1937): 44.

[128] 'Fascism and Peace', *Blackshirt*, 17 April 1933, 1.

[129] 'Who are the War-Mongers Now?', *Blackshirt*, 1 June 1933, 1.

'the votes of Haiti and Guatemala should not affect European problems, nor should their vote count as equal with those of Norway and Turkey in world disputes'.[130] While materially weaker states (and those deemed culturally inferior) were to be granted a vague form of representation, Mosley believed that equality within the League was a design flaw and, in any case, utterly absurd.[131] Indeed, Mosley took aim at Lord Halifax's speech before Chatham House in June 1939, in which the Foreign Secretary reaffirmed the commitment of Britain to defend, by force if necessary, 'international law and order'.[132] For Mosley, this was no solution at all, but merely treating the ailing system with a 'stronger dose' of League-style 'internationalism'.[133]

In order to ensure efficient international governance, Mosley proclaimed that '[i]n foreign affairs as in domestic affairs the principle of leadership and authority must be established'.[134] Conversely, sovereign equality was an artificial construct, derivative of the 'democratic ideology' transplanted onto the international.[135] By virtue of the material distribution of power, leadership was thus the prerogative of the great powers.[136] Ideally, such powers would be under the sway of fascism. Under the 'competent' control of the fascistised great powers, a reformed international organisation could then be realised.[137] The League of Nations was therefore to be replaced by a great power-led 'League of National States'.[138] In this sense, one may observe a mutation on the then popular idea held amongst liberal internationalists, such as Murray and Zimmern, which considered nationalism a potentially productive force in the movement towards internationalism and peace. For Melian Stawell, 'sane nationalism… points the way to internationalism as its completion'.[139] As Gordon-Canning remarked in not dissimilar language: 'Internationalism can only be successful when constructed on a basis of sound nationalism'. Yet liberal nationalism, the affordance of self-determination, and the recognition of sovereign equality constituted, in his mind, a '*false nationalism*'.[140] Two points may be glossed from this. First, Mosley's fascist peace relied on a return to a system dominated by the great powers. Second, such great powers were to be transformed by the allegedly pacifying effects of World Fascism, the latter constituting a truer, sounder form of nationalism.

Despite the transformation in Mosley's perspective on the League, his emphasis on the great powers was already present during the 1920s. As Skidelsky observes, the Conservative turned Labourite Mosley differed from

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130 Gordon-Canning, 'Some Aims and Principles', 78.
131 Mosley, *Blackshirt Policy*, 58; Oswald Mosley, 'We Shall Not Be Long Now: The Sacred Task of Bringing Peace to Mankind', *Fascist Week*, 26 January—1 February 1934, 5.
132 'Lord Halifax's Speech on June 29, 1939 on British Foreign Policy', *Bulletin of International News* 16, no. 14 (1939): 8.
133 Mosley, *British Peace*, 8, OMD/2/3/4, Oswald Mosley Papers.
134 Mosley, *Blackshirt Policy*, 59.
135 Mosley, *Greater Britain*, 153. See also Mosley, *Tomorrow We Live*, 67.
136 Mosley, *Blackshirt Policy*, 59.
137 *Ibid.*
138 Mosley, *Fascism*, Point 92. See also the document describing BUF foreign policy, typescript, n.d., OMN/B/4/8/7, Oswald Mosley Papers.
139 Stawell, *Growth of International Thought*, 7.
140 Gordon-Canning, 'Some Aims and Principles', 77 (emphasis in original).

his mentor, Robert Cecil. While the latter viewed the League primarily as a 'forum of moral opinion', Mosley envisaged it as a collective 'concentration of power' capable and willing to 'settle international problems'.[141] As Skidelsky adds, 'it was akin to Shaw's vision of a union of Higher Powers to keep the unruly lower ones under control'.[142] One witnesses this line of thinking, indeed precisely this contrast, in the New Party journal:

> We have nothing but respect for Lord Cecil. He is conciliatory, high-minded and alert. But he dislikes the frontal attack… And there are moments when the Ark of the Covenant should be carried on high and not hidden in the scrub of compromise. Corfu was such an occasion. Manchuria was another.[143]

While not discarding the idea of international organisation after 1932, Mosley's remedy came to rely on the proposition of a fascistised system of collective security and great power management, or what he once referred to as the 'union of the great powers of Europe through universal Fascism'.[144] In this respect, Mosley's remedy presents as, to adopt Bell's incisive label, a variant on the 'empire peace thesis', a somewhat heterogeneous *fin-de-siècle* discourse proffered by notable Anglo-American figures.[145] At the root of this discourse was the proposition that a stable order was susceptible to effective management if divided into a system of expansive empires. According to Bell, this discourse manifested in two key forms. The first specified only the imperial nature of the polity yet was ambivalent as to the domestic constitution of its metropole. Empire promised order among its constituent units and peoples, alongside an inter-imperial system of great power management. By contrast, for some thinkers the ideological configuration of the state was integral. In Waltzian parlance, the 'second image' proved vital: peace could only be achieved if the world was divided into a limited number of empires governed by democratic states.[146] Mosley's solution necessitated a similar focus on the internal ideological framework of the state, albeit inflecting this line of thinking with a distinctly fascist character.

Naturally, there is an inherent tension within the idea and practice of fascist internationalism. Mosley frequently disparaged the so-called 'old gang' for their treacherous policy of 'Internationalism', juxtaposing it against the Blackshirt mantra of 'Britain First'.[147] Moreover, BUF discourse constantly sought to reiterate the movement's autochthonic foundations, pre-empting charges that the BUF was but a foreign import.[148] Mosley's apprehensions were not without reason; accusations of this variety were commonplace. American humourist and political scientist Leo C. Rosten depicted the BUF as 'an Anglicized version of Italian corporatism and Nazi chauvinism',[149] while the

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[141] Skidelsky, *Oswald Mosley*, 94.
[142] *Ibid.*
[143] 'League of Nations Shows its Lack of Guts', *Action*, 8 October 1931, 30.
[144] Mosley, *Fascism*, Point 88. See also Mosley, *Greater Britain*, 152.
[145] Bell, 'Before the Democratic Peace', 654-6.
[146] *Ibid.*
[147] Mosley, 'Our Policy', 155.
[148] See, e.g., Mosley, 'Fascist Revolution!', 1.
[149] Leo C. Rosten, 'The Rise of Oswald Mosley', *Harper's Monthly Magazine* (September 1934): 493.

political scientist George Catlin reasoned that Mosley presented the pertinent 'question [of] whether a movement so obviously reminiscent of Italy and Germany can appeal to the British'.[150]

While it is misleading to construe the BUF as a form of continental mimicry, such accusations nevertheless allude to an important dimension of Mosley's thought, namely a sense of transnational solidarity. As Angell opined, 'there is a co-operation, only partially conscious at present, across frontiers, irrespective of national divisions, between Fascists throughout the world'.[151] Despite objecting to the concept of internationalism, there remained a definitively international aspect within Mosley's worldview and that of other BUF ideologues. The Blackshirt uniform represented 'the *universal* symbol in the modern world of young men dedicated to the salvation of *great nations* from decadence and degeneration'.[152] Fascism was, as Mosley defined it, 'the embodied and organised determination of young manhood to rescue great nations from decadence, and to march forward to a higher and a nobler order of civilisation'.[153] Fascism was universal insofar as it was both a transnational phenomenon and comprised of a common revolutionary essence. Yet the peculiarities of how fascism manifested were nationally specific. Fuller aptly captured its duality, positing that, 'as a national creed', fascism 'is also a universal philosophy'.[154]

Fascism was therefore conceived as not only a transnational phenomenon of disparate movements, but innately universal in its ideological content. The BUF and foreign fascist movements were thereby 'united… by indissoluble bonds of friendship in universal Fascism'.[155] Indeed, Mosley's turn towards fascism occurred against the backdrop a rising Italian discourse of fascist universality.[156] Accompanied by Nicolson, Mosley visited Italy in January 1932 in an effort to study the fascist creed, notably receiving a reception with Mussolini.[157] Evermore impressed by the fascist experiment, Mosley disbanded the New Party in April 1932. He would subsequently inaugurate the BUF on 28 October, an event symbolically coinciding with the decennial of the March on Rome.[158] While Mosley would largely avoid participation in the fleeting Italian-led effort to establish a Fascist Internationale,[159] the impact of this internationalist current upon his thought and the movement's wider support for

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[150] George E.G. Catlin, 'Fascist Stirrings in Britain', C*urrent History* 39, no. 5 (1934): 546.
[151] Norman Angell, 'The New John Bull', *Political Quarterly* 7, no. 3 (1936): 325.
[152] Mosley, 'Our Policy', 155 (emphasis added).
[153] Mosley, *Blackshirt Policy*, 7.
[154] Fuller, *League Wars*, 289. See also Mosley, *Fascism*, Point 7.
[155] 'Visit to Rome', *Blackshirt*, 1 May 1933, 1.
[156] On this discourse, see Ledeen, *Universal Fascism*; Kallis, 'From CAUR to EUR'.
[157] Richard Griffiths, *Fellow Travellers of the Right: British Enthusiasts for Nazi Germany 1933-39* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1983), 35; Matthew Worley, 'Why Fascism? Sir Oswald Mosley and the Conception of the British Union of Fascists', *History* 96, no. 1 (2011): 79. Nicolson's involvement with the New Party ceased as Mosley gravitated towards right-wing extremism. As he noted in his diary on 2 November 1931: 'He believes in fascism. I don't. I loathe it.' Nicolson, *Diaries and Letters*, 97.
[158] Aristotle A. Kallis, *The Third Rome, 1922-43: The Making of the Fascist Capital* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), 238.
[159] Mauro Marsella, 'Assessing European Fascism: The View from Mussolini's Italy' (PhD diss., McMaster University, 2006), 166; Dorril, *Blackshirt*, 270.

'World Fascism' should not be discounted.[160] *Antieuropa*, a spearhead of fascist internationalism founded by the aforementioned Gravelli, even featured an article by Mosley.[161]

Based on this sense of ideological solidarity, Mosley reasoned that the successful fascistisation of the European great powers would not only reverse the degeneracy and decay besieging Western civilisation, but bestow the foundation for international cooperation, mitigate the risk of war, instil the necessary spirit that would render collective security a reality, and in the process deter the Soviet Union with overwhelming force.[162] 'Upon that firm friendship of Fascist nations', one *Blackshirt* article claimed, a 'new Europe' would be constructed, 'united by the "immense majesty" of Fascist peace'.[163] For Gordon-Canning, the spread of fascism would 'create an international peace and understanding based on the firm pillars of nationalism, the only permanent peace'.[164] As Fuller opined: 'As a revolutionary conception it [fascism] is warlike, nevertheless, from its evolutionary point of view it is pacific, because the establishment of a new morality within a nation is the first step towards the establishment of a new morality between nations.'[165]

Alongside an amorphous ideological solidarity, this belief in fascism's pacific nature partly relied on a distortion of what was then a common rhetorical move in interwar international thought, namely that the passions of war ought to be diverted towards the elusive quest for international peace. Mosley and other BUF ideologues constructed a distinct variation on this theme insofar as fascism held the promise to unlocking this method of redirection. Fuller, for example, contrasted the pacific logic of international fascism against the alleged democratic propensity for war. Within democracies, self-sacrifice and other ennobling values were said to be actualised in and through war, while fascism harnessed and redirected such qualities in the peacetime pursuit of constructive endeavours.[166] For Mosley, 'heroism' was not simply meant for war, 'which is a mere stupidity', but the conquest of 'destiny'.[167]

By enhancing European cohesion and prioritising national rejuvenation, the envisioned order would sustain the supremacy of the white race vis-à-vis the supposed Judaeo-Bolshevik menace. As noted above, by the mid-1930s Mosley's internationalism emphasised the paramount role of Anglo-German leadership. German power and British strategic interests were not 'antithetical but complementary', namely British maritime supremacy and German terrestrial dominance in the East.[168] This compatibility was such that the duopoly of Greater Britain and the Third Reich would 'become two of the main pillars of world order and civilization'.[169] This partnership would provide 'a

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[160] Baldoli, *Exporting Fascism*, 44.
[161] Oswald Mosley, 'Modern Dictatorship and British History', *Antieuropa* 5, no. 5-9 (1933): 271-3. At least prior to Mosley's Germanophilic turn, Gravelli applauded the BUF. See Dorril, *Blackshirt*, 235.
[162] See especially Mosley, 'World Alternative'; Mosley, *Tomorrow We Live*, 67.
[163] 'Visit to Rome', *Blackshirt*, 1 May 1933, 1.
[164] Gordon-Canning, 'Some Aims and Principles', 80.
[165] Fuller, *League Wars*, 298.
[166] *Ibid*, 288-9.
[167] Mosley, *Tomorrow We Live*, 72.
[168] *Ibid*, 66.
[169] Mosley, 'World Alternative', 385.

world bulwark against Oriental Communism'.[170] While Britain prioritised its maritime empire and the civilising thereof, Nazi Germany would be unrestrained to pursue its alternative, but complimentary, mission of defending Western civilisation from its eastern borders via *Lebensraum*.[171] This alliance was to be supplemented by a more expansive Four Power Bloc or Pact of fascist states which included Italy and France.[172] The collective sum of such revolutions was to grant 'white civilization' with a 'comprehensive policy' grounded in the 'reality of mutual interests and… the spiritual communion of the world creed of the Twentieth Century'.[173] As Mosley argued in a particularly lofty passage: 'We stretch out our hands to our brother Fascists of the world. We shall not be long before we join them in the sacred task of building on the rock foundation of Universal Fascism the enduring Peace of Mankind.'[174] While the idealised order would be one constituted by fascist great powers, in practice the *British Union Quarterly* came to view the Munich agreement with hope insofar as it 'laid the foundations of a Four Power Bloc for Western Europe' and allegedly mitigated the continent's precarious ideological fissures.[175]

The Internationalisation of National Autarky

Notwithstanding the preceding discussion, the pacifying potential of this Brotherhood relied not only on ideological solidarities, but a supposedly rational reorganisation of the state. The reconciliation of institutional schemes for peace, whether through domestic reform or international organisation, with more amorphous notions of spiritual union was not unusual for interwar internationalists. As in the case of Murray or Zimmern, the League's apparatus complemented the perceived pacifying benefits of the liberal spirit.[176] Mosley's strand of imperial peace relied on both the solidarity of a common ideological creed *and* the alleged pacificatory effects of rational institutional reform *within* the empire and state. As Mosley argued, under fascism the 'struggle for markets' would be subdued, while the 'struggle for raw materials [would be simultaneously] reduced to manageable proportions', thereby becoming 'susceptible of agreement between men of like mind'.[177] This warrants consideration of how the perennial struggle encapsulated within Mosley's diagnosis of war was to be reduced to such levels as to render international questions amenable to agreement among likeminded leaders. One must therefore turn towards the pacifying role of the corporativist autarkic empire.

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[170] Mosley, *Tomorrow We Live*, 66. See also 'Notes of the Quarter', *British Union Quarterly* 3, no. 2 (1939): 14.
[171] Mosley, 'World Alternative', 384; Mosley, *Tomorrow We Live*, 66.
[172] Mosley, 'World Alternative', 395. BUF discourse also used the language of a 'Four Power Pact', echoing Mussolini's terminology.
[173] *Ibid.*
[174] Mosley, 'We Shall Not Be Long Now', 5.
[175] 'Notes of the Quarter', *British Union Quarterly* 2, no. 4 (1938): 5. See also 'Notes of the Quarter', *British Union Quarterly* 3, no. 1 (1939): 12-3.
[176] Jeanne Morefield, *Covenants without Swords: Idealist Liberalism and the Spirit of Empire* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005).
[177] Mosley, *Blackshirt Policy*, 42-3; Mosley, 'Immense Majesty of Fascist Peace', 5. There is a striking rhetorical parallel between Mosley's argument and that of his former follower, John Strachey. Unlike Mosley, Strachey believed—at least during his Marxist heyday in the mid-1930s—that eradicating war's economic causes required abolishing capitalism itself. Yet like Mosley, he argued that addressing such factors would make other causes, such as 'habitual nationalism' and 'unconscious aggressions', more 'manageable'. Strachey, *Theory and Practice*, 267.

The concept of 'economic planning' featured prominently in Mosley's pre-fascist thought. Indeed, Daniel Ritschel has persuasively argued that Mosley and his pre-fascist clique, such as Strachey and Nicolson, were important in introducing the notion of 'economic planning' into mainstream British discourse via the 1930 *Mosley Memorandum* and *Manifesto*, alongside the New Party platform.[178] During the 1930s, however, Mosley's call for planning and his economic critique against the prevailing system manifested as part of a more expansive assault against liberal democracy as such, one reliant on a contrast between the post-war climate and the mind and methods of the nineteenth century. The tumultuous events of 1931, in particular the collapse of the MacDonald government and the economic plight befalling the country, led Mosley to the belief that a crescendo in the prevailing crisis was not only imminent, but that 'newer, more modern political movements would necessarily come to the fore'.[179] For Mosley, a 'system of Government designed by, and for, the nineteenth century' was poorly equipped to address the twentieth-century ills of post-war Britain and European international society.[180] It is here that one observes the inextricable relationship between Mosley's political and international thought. As Mosley proclaimed, fascism rejects the 'whole humbug of the old gang of democratic government'.[181] Bourgeois liberal democracy and the paralysed system of parliamentarianism were simply incapable of providing the necessary leadership through which Britain could circumvent the ongoing crisis.

With Mosley's fascist turn, his conception of economic planning dispensed with the pretence of liberal democracy and adopted an explicitly autarkic and intra-imperial dimension, the latter already incipient within his calls for 'Commonwealth Insulation', first adumbrated in October 1930, and the subsequent New Party platform.[182] While many social democratic thinkers, such as Hobson, espoused a reformed free trade regime, conservatives often relied instead on protective tariffs. Mosley stood apart on both accounts, arguing that unless Britain located an outlet for its products and prevented the undercutting of industry via the import of goods produced by exploited foreign labour, the imposition of tariffs would remain ineffective within an increasingly competitive global capitalist system.[183] In this respect, Mosley reasoned that the methods of internationalists, 'whether of a Socialist or Capitalist financial character', relied on the 'fallacy of international trade'.[184]

Accordingly, Mosley jettisoned the 'international fantasy' of free trade, promoting instead the construction of a self-contained empire 'equipped with a purchasing power adequate to absorb the production of… industrial machines'.[185] By institutionalising a form of transcontinental imperial planning and the power of modern technology,[186] the mythic Greater Britain was to be realised, effective demand achieved, and the 'modern problem'

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[178] Ritschel, *Politics of Planning*, Chapter 2.
[179] Worley, 'Why Fascism?', 77.
[180] Mosley, *Greater Britain*, 17.
[181] "'I Accuse—"! Sir Oswald Mosley on Traitor Politicians', *Blackshirt*, February 1933, 4.
[182] Mosley, *Greater Britain*, 116.
[183] Mosley, *10 Points*, 5-6. See also Thurlow, *Fascism in Britain*, 122-3.
[184] Mosley, *Blackshirt Policy*, 21.
[185] *Ibid.*
[186] See especially *ibid*, 34-5.

of unemployment resolved. To the extent that exports or foreign goods were to be permitted, these were to be bilaterally negotiated or purchased from the dominions and Crown colonies.[187] As Mosley opined, the internationalisation of autarky would consolidate the remaining external trade, thereby allowing governments to 'settle between each other by reasonable agreement the allocation of raw materials which are sufficient for all'.[188] This necessitated the domestic implementation of the totalitarian corporate state and the reorganisation of the dominions and Crown colonies. As Mosley unambiguously stated regarding the former, '[t]he main object of a… Fascist movement is to establish the Corporate State'.[189] By implementing a mixed economy under the auspices of a newly minted corporatist system, the fascist state was to raise wages and salaries, '*as science, rationalisation and industrial* technique increase the power to produce'.[190] '*Consumption will be adjusted to production*', Mosley added, '*and a Home Market will be provided by the higher purchasing power*'.[191]

On the international front, the empire would be reorganised and stratified along economic, racial, and cultural lines. Mosley did not envision a unified transcontinental state subsuming the dominions, not least colonies. This was to be a fascist empire planned from the metropole, one predicated on a division of labour whereby the colonies supplied raw materials and labour, the increasingly industrialised dominions focused primarily on the export of agricultural products and natural resources, and the British heartland would in turn export manufactured goods.[192] In this respect, Greater Britain was both a monolithic imperial 'economic system' and one 'entirely self-contained'.[193] The colonies, understood as racially distinct and culturally backward, were obligated to participate for they were eternally indebted to the civilisation of the British Empire.[194] For the dominions, this schema was to be willingly accepted for it was not only economically rational, but because it was predicated on 'kinship and history',[195] an innate and 'common loyalty to the Crown' which unified the white peoples of the empire.[196] With the rise of fascist movements throughout the dominions and grandiose dreams for their ascension—partly based on the belief that a BUF-led government would bolster the prospects of such movements—the foundations for agreement would only be further enhanced.[197]

Importantly, the US was to remain detached within this imperial imaginary. While the political scientist George Catlin, among the most vocal proponents of Anglo-American union, had previously acted in a research

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[187] Mosley, *Fascism for the Million*, 40; Mosley, *Britain First*, 14, KV 2/885, TNA; Thurlow, 'Racial Populism', 29-30; Smith, 'Pivot of Empire', 383.
[188] Mosley, *Blackshirt Policy*, 42.
[189] Mosley, *Greater Britain*, 34.
[190] Mosley, *10 Points*, 4-5 (emphasis in original).
[191] *Ibid*, 5 (emphasis in original).
[192] Mosley, *Blackshirt Policy*, 32-5; Mosley, *Greater Britain*, 136.
[193] Oswald Mosley, 'Self-Contained Empire and the Export Trade', *Fascist Week*. 15—21 December 1933, 5.
[194] Mosley, *Blackshirt Policy*, 34.
[195] Mosley, *Tomorrow We Live*, 43.
[196] Mosley, *Greater Britain*, 137.
[197] See, e.g., 'The New Empire Union', *Blackshirt*, 8—14 July 1933, 1, 3; Mosley, 'Self-Contained Empire', 5, 7; Mosley, *Fascism*, Point 80.

capacity under the Labourite Mosley, during which he contributed to the *Mosley Memorandum*, it does not appear that he had a formative influence on Mosley's imperial thought.[198] Indeed, Catlin disassociated from Mosley after the New Party's formation. For the fascistised Mosley, Fordist America, while culturally and racially similar, was to remain a separate country beyond the bounds of the envisaged Greater Britain.[199]

As suggested above, the fascistisation of the states-system operated to uphold the supremacy of Britain and the white race. The realisation of Greater Britain promised to perpetuate Britain's pacific, civilising empire.[200] Failure to plan the empire accordingly would not only forebode its 'disintegration', but constitute a 'crime' against 'economic common-sense' and the 'pride and achievement' of the British 'race'.[201] Yet Greater Britain's supposed pacifying potential extended further. By reconstructing the empire and metropole along corporate, autarkic lines, Greater Britain would allegedly eradicate the unrestricted capitalistic exploitation of persons within the Crown colonies, remove the war-prone impetus to acquire raw materials outside the empire's boundaries, and eliminate the capacity of malign forces to foment conflict for private benefit. Vitally, by the late 1930s, this vision came to explicitly entail the deportation of Jews and the formation of a 'National State' in what Mosley called a 'final solution' to the 'Jewish problem'.[202]

Extrapolating the international implications of this vision, Mosley reasoned that the fascist, autarkic model contained within its schematics not simply a restraint on British adventurism, but the foundations for world peace. Britain had a pioneering role, indeed responsibility, in this regard.[203] For Mosley, 'armed antagonism' would remain an irreducible possibility between nations until they 'cease behaving like quarrelsome little shopkeepers'.[204] This peculiar domestic analogy should not be interpreted as a loose critique of national rivalries and war. Rather, the analogy's class-centred nature—that is, its emphasis on disorganised and unproductive competition amongst the middle class—ought to be understood as a deliberate critique of unregulated capitalism transposed onto the international level. Indeed, Mosley elsewhere made other analogical references to class relations: 'the prospects of industrial peace are always increased when each side is organized. When we have the corporate organization between all the great countries under Fascist government, it will be possible… for nations to discuss rationally and peacefully

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[198] Daniel Gorman, 'George Catlin, the Science of Politics, and Anglo-American Union', *Modern Intellectual History* 15, no. 1 (2018): 123-52. On notions of Anglo-American unity, see Duncan Bell, 'Beyond the Sovereign State: Isopolitan Citizenship, Race and Anglo-American Union', *Political Studies* 62, no. 2 (2014): 418-34.

[199] Transatlantic cooperation featured more prominent in Mosley's post-1945 worldview. However, he never endorsed an Anglo-American *political union*. Mosley, 'World Alternative', 150-2.

[200] Mosley, 'World Alternative', 384. Expectedly, faith in the empire's pacifying potential was rife within BUF discourse. See, e.g., Fuller, 'What the British Union Has to Offer Britain', 6, LH 15/3/188, BHLHP.

[201] Mosley, *Blackshirt Policy*, 35.

[202] Note, for example, the shift in Mosley's position from the conditional deportation of 'big financiers' to the express desire to deport Jews to some unspecified homeland. See Mosley, *Fascism for the Million*, 51-2; Mosley, *Tomorrow We Live*, 60-1.

[203] Mosley, 'World Alternative', 395.

[204] Mosley, *Fascism for the Million*, 66.

the allocation of war materials and markets.'[205] Contrary to many international thinkers who linked 'economic nationalism' with conflict, Mosley believed the inverse and countered arguments to the contrary.[206]

In Mosley's mind, 'national organisation' constituted a prerequisite for 'international organisation'.[207] While such ideas may be found in passing within Mosley's 1932 *The Greater Britain*, they came to feature more prominently in his output, and had evidently crystallised into a more concrete (if still somewhat broad) plan, as the 1930s progressed.[208] It was paradoxically through the internationalisation of the ultra-nationalist, autarkic, corporate state that the primary causes of war could be eradicated, namely the dynamics of 'Export' and 'Demographic' imperialism. As Mosley once remarked, the Anglo-French powers were erroneously 'still thinking in terms of Imperialist export capitalism rather than in terms of National-Socialist autarchic development'.[209] Through an embrace of the latter, Mosley thus combined the amorphous idea of a fascist solidarity with a replicable 'scientific' schematic of national reorganisation. In deploying yet another form of domestic analogy, Mosley opined that one needed to first set their 'own house in order', which would act as a prelude to other nations following suit.[210] Chesterton presented a comparable argument about the linkage between 'peace' and a 'co-ordinated' international order, albeit deploying a different domestic (in the sense of household) referent:

> The Fascist knows… that a house made of crumbling bricks must fall before the gale. On that account he asserts the need for good bricks as the pre-requisite of his task… In other words, Fascism believes that national order must precede international order.[211]

Mosley's imaginary relied on a belief that the capacities of modern science allowed for self-sufficiency amongst large-scale imperial bodies. As he argued, '[t]he conjunction of the vast resources of our Empire with the genius of modern science can solve the problem of our age', namely the 'closing [of] world markets', the 'obsolescence and decadence of the international system', and the matching of productive capacity with adequate purchasing power.[212] Science thus created new horizons of possibility, and with the capacity to construct these discrete units came the prospect to remove the insatiable quest for international markets—'among the prime causes of war'—and the concurrent 'struggle for foreign influence between interested financiers'.[213] Belief in the coming importance of large-scale blocs also led Mosley to argue in the mid-1930s that territorial revisions would be needed

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[205] Cited in Drennan (pseud.), *B.U.F.*, 257.
[206] Mosley, *Blackshirt Policy*, 41; Mosley, 'Immense Majesty of Fascist Peace', 5; Mosley, *Greater Britain*, 147. For obvious reasons, this phrasing ('economic nationalism') was popular amongst those studying world politics during the 1930s. See, e.g., T.E. Gregory, 'Economic Nationalism', *International Affairs* 10, no. 3 (1931): 289-306; Arthur Salter, 'The Future of Economic Nationalism', *Foreign Affairs* 11, no. 1 (1932): 8-20; Francis B. Sayre, 'The Menace of Economic Nationalism', *Proceedings of the Academy of Political Science* 16, no. 2 (1935): 82-90.
[207] 'Fascism and Peace', *Blackshirt*, 17 April 1933, 1.
[208] See, e.g., Cullen, 'Ideas and Policy', 129.
[209] Mosley, 'World Alternative', 387.
[210] Mosley, *Greater Britain*, 148. See also Fuller, *League Wars*, 290.
[211] Chesterton, 'H.G. Wells', 8.
[212] Mosley, *Tomorrow We Live*, 37.
[213] Mosley, *Blackshirt Policy*, 42.

to establish a form of economic federation among minor European powers, thereby offsetting their lack of space.[214] The impetus for small nations to merge, at least economically, was a necessity, for such states were deemed to be 'uneconomic units… with a constant tendency to disturb the peace' and thus ill-suited to the forthcoming order.[215]

By contrast, this spatial imaginary, alongside Mosley's racialised worldview and critique of finance capitalist exploitation, combined to produce a bleak dismissal of the prospect for self-determination on the part of colonised persons and, at least during the Phoney War, select nations in Central and Eastern Europe. Germany, Italy, and Japan were therefore to be afforded respective rights to expand and develop autarkic systems, subsuming such territory and persons. This development would not only function as a necessary stage towards eradicating the economic causes of war, but foreclose the prospect of conflict over the issue of 'Demographic Imperialism'. Towards this end, Mosley suggested that Britain acquiesce to Japanese ambitions in Northern China and proposed the contingent abdication of British mandated territories to the revisionist powers.[216] The British Empire already comprised vast territorial swathes and the mandates were but cumbersome tracts which, as temporary trusteeships, were not an innate part of the empire. Territorial redistribution favouring the dissatisfied states would thus contribute to their placation and assist such powers in constructing their respective self-sufficient empires.[217]

It was on similar grounds that Mosley evinced a disinterest in Eastern Europe. In July 1939, Mosley discussed the prospect of a Nazi 'Monroe Doctrine in the East', the latter but the 'natural' inverse of American hegemony within the Western Hemisphere.[218] W.E.D. Allen had previously conjured the image of an 'Italian-Mediterranean' and 'German-Danubian' 'Munro Doctrine' in 1938.[219] Interestingly, a comparable analogy was proposed by Carl Schmitt in early 1939. This led the *Daily Mail* and the *Times* to comment on Schmitt's thought in early April, casting him 'as the theorist behind Hitler's expansionary policy'.[220] While the extent of Schmitt's influence on German foreign policy should not be overstated, it nevertheless ought to be recognised that his 'transatlantic reference' fermented not only discussion on the subject within Germany,[221] but indirectly led to Hitler's usage of the analogy on April 28, albeit he probably remained oblivious to its Schmittian pedigree.[222] It is unclear whether Mosley arrived at this analogy by himself, co-opted it from others within the BUF, or if it filtered down to him via journalistic coverage of German debate. In any case, Mosley reaffirmed such discourse, legitimating the necessity of redressing Nazi grievances as a basis on which to achieve peace. By alleviating the German fears of

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[214] *Ibid*; Mosley, 'Immense Majesty of Fascist Peace', 5.
[215] Mosley, *Greater Britain*, 153.
[216] See, e.g., Mosley, 'World Alternative', 393; Mosley, *Fascism*, Point 89.
[217] See, e.g., Mosley, 'World Alternative', 385-6; Mosley, *Tomorrow We Live*, 67; Mosley, *British Peace*, OMD/2/3/4, Oswald Mosley Papers.
[218] Mosley, *Britain First*, 15, KV 2/885, TNA. References to the Monroe Doctrine also appear in BUF discourse in relation to the hypocrisy of America or the 'haves'. See, e.g., 'Notes of the Quarter', *British Union Quarterly* 3, no. 3 (1939): 6-7; 'Notes of the Quarter', *British Union Quarterly* 3, no. 4 (1939): 9.
[219] James Drennan (pseud.), 'Why Not "Der Drang Nach Osten"?', *British Union Quarterly* 2, no. 4 (1938): 26.
[220] Joseph J. Bendersky, *Carl Schmitt: Theorist for the Reich* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1983), 257-8.
[221] Mazower, *Governing the World*, 183.
[222] Bendersky, *Carl Schmitt*, 258-9.

encirclement, Mosley argued, this would provide a foundation for Hitler to reciprocate in efforts towards arms reductions.[223]

A Victorian Redux

The intellectual roots of Mosley's worldmaking project drew upon and synthesised an eclectic range of ideas from across the political spectrum. The preceding chapter has already noted the salience of, among others, Hobson and Keynes on Mosley's economic thought, to which one must add Italian experimentation with the corporate state, alongside the reflections of Alexander Raven Thomson, the BUF's foremost ideologue.[224] Importantly, the imperial-cum-international frame on which Mosley's economic system was transplanted combined ideas from ideologically eclectic traditions of social imperialism and empire free trade, alongside socialist, radical, and liberal thought on scientific internationalism and economic (as well as imperial) planning.

Social Imperialism, Self-Sufficiency, and Imperial Federation

While Mosley was inspired by continental developments—Italy and later Germany serving as valued autarkic exemplars—his thinking maintained clear autochthonous roots. By 1930, Mosley already used the language of national 'Insulation', before only subsequently conjoining this with the newly fashionable 'Autarchic' terminology.[225] Rapid advancement in communications technology and comparable revolutions in transportation and industrial technologies during the late nineteenth century fundamentally altered the spatial imaginaries and content of British imperial thinking. 'Hubristic interpretations of technological change restructured intellectual horizons', Bell argues, 'remaking the kinds of (political) worlds that agents considered both plausible and desirable'.[226] It is within this milieu of evolving British imperial thought that the antecedents to Mosley's Greater Britain may be located. Indeed, Liburd has persuasively argued that Mosley's imperial scheme cannot be divorced from the broader history of empire and white supremacism in British imperial thinking.[227]

Naturally, one should not discount the importance of contemporary debates among Conservatives over Empire Free Trade, a programme staunchly defended by the media proprietor Lord Beaverbrook and the *Daily Mail's* Lord Rothermere. BUF imperial policy was often framed as to attract conservatives disaffected by increasing Indian autonomy, and at least during the first half of the 1930s, some conservatives betrayed a sympathy for Mosley's imperial plans both prior to and after the BUF's formation.[228] For example, Conservative MP and occasional Round Table collaborator, Leo Amery, professed a sympathy for the ideas of tariff reform and imperial preference

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[223] See, e.g., Mosley, *Britain First*, 16, KV 2/885, TNA.
[224] On Thomson, see McMurray, 'Alexander Raven Thomson'.
[225] Refer to the preface in Mosley's *The Greater Britain*. For some left-wing thinkers, self-sufficiency also appeared a desirable future. See, e.g., Clark Foreman, *The New Internationalism* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1934).
[226] Bell, 'Making and Taking Worlds', 264.
[227] Liburd, 'Eternal Imperialists'.
[228] See, e.g., Paul Stocker, '"The Imperial Spirit": British Fascism and Empire, 1919-1940', *Religion Compass* 9, no. 2 (2015): 50.

contained within the *Mosley Manifesto*.[229] As L.P. Carpenter notes, Amery's 1944 tract, *The Framework of the Future*, continued to espouse the mantra of 'national unity, Empire free trade, and a corporatist economic structure brought in to reconcile private property with the national interest'.[230] Even after Mosley's fascist turn, the BUF imperial vision was such that some Tories found it possible to collaborate with fascist circles, epitomised above all by the January Club, a group comprising Conservatives, Italophiles, and intellectuals who betrayed fascist sympathies.[231] There was even some overlap between the January Club membership and that bastion of the foreign policy establishment, Chatham House. Such individuals as Lieutenant-Colonel H.E. Crocker; Sir Paul Dukes; Basil P. Howell; P.G. Whitefoord; the historian L.F. Rushbrook Williams; foreign correspondent of the *Daily Mail*, G. Ward Price; and even BUF Director of Overseas Policy, Robert Gordon-Canning, belonged to both such groups.[232] With that said, the roots of Mosley's imperial worldview may be traced further into British imperial history. The influence of British traditions of social imperialism—especially the discourse of 'Greater Britain', the Round Table movement, Mackinderian geopolitics, and left-wing strands of imperial planning—standout in this regard, lineages which have been highlighted by historians of British fascism for some decades.[233]

The Victorian and Edwardian imaginary of Greater Britain saturated international thought, constituting a broad discourse centred on the prospect of some type of unity between Britain and the 'white' settler-colonies based on a common racial or cultural foundation. As Bell notes in his magisterial intellectual history of the concept, Greater Britain resurfaced 'in its most malevolently intoxicating appearance' under Mosley.[234] Unfortunately, Bell does not elaborate on this further. Nevertheless, the lineage connecting earlier strands of thinking on Greater Britain to its Mosleyite rendition is readily apparent. Some members of the BUF envisaged a fascist empire as the modern heir to the organic imperialism proffered by nineteenth-century advocates of Greater Britain. Gordon-Canning, for example, alleged that 'Internationalists and Socialists' argued for the incompatibility between 'Empire and peace', a contention he believed was not inherent to, but contingent on the form of, imperialism.[235] Citing a passage from

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[229] W.F. Mandle, 'Sir Oswald Leaves the Labour Party, March 1931', *Labour History* 12 (May 1967): 43. Embracing Count Coudenhove-Kalergi's pan-Europeanist plans, Amery also endorsed the notion of a united Europe acting in parallel with a unified British Empire. L.S. Amery, 'The British Empire and the Pan-European Idea', *Journal of the Royal Institute of International Affairs* 9, no. 1 (1930): 1-22.

[230] L.P. Carpenter, 'Corporatism in Britain, 1930-45', *Journal of Contemporary History* 11, no. 1 (1976): 19.

[231] See, e.g., Martin Pugh, *'Hurrah for the Blackshirts!': Fascists and Fascism in Britain between the Wars* (London: Pimlico, 2006), 12.

[232] 'January Club', pamphlet, n.d., LH 5/18, BHLHP. Ward Price presented before Chatham House during the war. See G. Ward Price, 'The Eastern Mediterranean War Zone: Combatants and Onlookers', 8 May 1941, RIIA/8/719, CHA.

[233] See Bernard Semmel, *Imperialism and Social Reform: English Social-Imperial Thought, 1895-1914* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1960), 248-57; Neill Nugent, 'The Ideas of the British Union of Fascists', in *The British Right: Conservative and Right Wing Politics in Britain*, eds. Neill Nugent and Roger King (Farnborough: Saxon House, 1977); Linehan, *British Fascism*, Chapter 1; Alan Sykes, *The Radical Right in Britain: Social Imperialism to the BNP* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), 59.

[234] Duncan Bell, *The Idea of Greater Britain: Empire and the Future of World Order, 1860-1900* (Princeton: Princeton University press, 2007), 266.

[235] Gordon-Canning, 'Some Aims and Principles', 70.

The Expansion of England by English historian and leading proponent of Greater Britain J.R. Seeley, Gordon-Canning contended that an empire held together by mere economic ties and sustained for purposes of pure capitalist exploitation was perforce unstable. For the fascist, 'Imperialism' entailed 'unity of action and effort, discipline, a sense of duty and self-sacrifice'; it was, in essence, the distant offspring of Seeley's organic union.[236] Comparable rhetorical moves were also employed. For some proponents of Greater Britain, it was believed that the liberalising and pacific qualities of this transcontinental union may be undermined by prematurely expediting its evolutionary birth or merely imposing mechanistic, internationalist schemes. As one contemporary historian and advocate argued: 'Economic organisation, like human society, is built upward. The family; then the community; then the nation; then mankind. Each stage must be well and truly settled before the next can be obtained.'[237] This type of argument can be found in BUF conceptions of Greater Britain too. As Gordon-Canning stated:

> Before you can build a nation, you must have villages, districts and towns, each with their local patriotisms. Out of these one welds a unified country where these local patriotisms give way before the greater patriotisms to the unified country. Similarly, before building an united Europe or an united world, it is necessary to create a series of nations, each of whose bases are sound and well-balanced from the economic point of view… [*sic*].[238]

To act otherwise would be illusory, tantamount to 'bidding Britain turn internationalist in a nationalist world', as A.K. Chesterton once argued in a critique of H.G. Wells' world state.[239]

Within this melange of social imperial thought, Mosley betrayed a foremost affinity with radical liberal turned conservative tariff reformer Joseph Chamberlain.[240] From the 1890s, Chamberlain—concerned about the ascension of peer competitors and British decline—promoted a form of social imperialism centred around the creation of a tariff-protected, intra-imperial free trade zone, a British 'imperial *Zollverein*'.[241] Chamberlain was a spearhead within what Linehan has referred to as an 'influential prewar anti-Cobdenite protectionist tradition',[242] one geared towards galvanising working class support for empire. By 1928, Mosley was already decrying that there had 'been no Dominions policy since Joseph Chamberlain went down on his great Protectionist cry in 1906'.[243] The fascist leader would subsequently exclaim that Chamberlain had offered the Conservatives a 'Protectionist policy'

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[236] *Ibid*, 71.
[237] Charles Lucas cited in Mark Lee, 'The Story of Greater Britain: What Lessons Does It Teach?', *National Identities* 6, no. 2 (2004): 133.
[238] Robert Gordon-Canning, 'The Authority of Fascism', *Blackshirt*, 29 June 1934, 2.
[239] Chesterton, 'H.G. Wells', 8.
[240] As Neill Nugent relays based on correspondence with Mosley from 1974, the latter denied having been greatly influenced by Chamberlain. While Mosley's denial is debatable, Nugent remarks that if accepted, 'the resemblances [with Chamberlain] are, ironically, all the more striking', with both thinkers responding to similar circumstances with similar responses. Nugent, 'Ideas of the British Union', 146.
[241] Bell, *Greater Britain*, 58.
[242] Linehan, *British Fascism*, 17-8.
[243] Hansard, HC Deb, 8 November 1928, vol.222: c.303.

some three decades ago.[244] Since thoroughly outdated, the Tories had remained 'immune from the painful process of fresh thought'.[245] Mosley adopted a Chamberlainite ethos, yet offered a sympathetic critique. For Mosley, one could not simply enclose the British Empire as it presently existed nor create uniform or ad hoc tariffs; a more calibrated form of imperial planning and a preceding reorganisation of the state and intra-imperial relations was required. In this vision, Mosley's thinking was thoroughly tinged by a British tradition of geopolitics that saturated interwar international thought. This is unsurprising. The politics of space were central to many social imperialists. 'The day of the small nations has long passed away', proclaimed Joseph Chamberlain, 'the day of Empire has come'.[246] It is here that one may witness the enduring place of Mackinderian geopolitics in Mosley's worldmaking. Halford Mackinder, an Oxford-educated geographer at the LSE, had previously espoused the free-trade mantra, but from 1903 embraced Chamberlain's protectionist, social imperialism, ultimately professing a belief in an organic federation of Anglo-Saxon states (including the US).[247]

Parallels may also be drawn between Mosley's thought and the imperial federalist thinking espoused by several individuals surrounding Milner's Kindergarten and its successor, the Round Table, itself a bastion of early IR.[248] Indeed, Linehan and Baldoli have separately drawn attention to the similarities between BUF arguments against parliamentary democracy and Alfred Milner's technocratic strand of 'national efficiency'.[249] Milner's brand of social imperialism was arguably somewhat unusual among British thinkers in that he blended calls for social and tariff reform with what the historian Bernard Semmel termed 'reservations' about parliamentary democracy.[250] On the international-imperial level too, the similarities are discernible. Milner's emphasis on the so-called 'primordial' connections of blood, language, history, and traditions—rather than purely 'material ties'—between Britain and the settler-colonies finds much common ground with BUF conceptions of empire.[251] This is not surprising given that both were influenced, albeit Mosley more distantly, by Chamberlain's imperial thought. As one 1914 retrospective phrased it, 'more than any other British administrator', Milner was 'associated with Mr. Chamberlain's Imperial policy'.[252] Accordingly, Liburd has not unfairly described Mosley's recourse to the self-professed language of 'imperial socialism' and 'socialistic imperialism' as 'distinctly Milnerite'.[253] This was a strand of imperial thinking that

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[244] Mosley, *Greater Britain*, 104.
[245] *Ibid*, 105.
[246] Cited in Pugh, *'Hurrah for the Blackshirts!'*, 11.
[247] Semmel, *Imperialism*, 166; Linehan, *British Fascism*, 20; Dorril, *Blackshirt*, 38.
[248] See Paul Williams, 'A Commonwealth of Knowledge: Empire, Intellectuals and the Chatham House Project, 1919–1939', *International Relations* 17, no. 1 (2003): 35-58.
[249] Linehan, *British Fascism*, 20-1; Baldoli, *Exporting Fascism*, 49-50. Round Table membership fluctuated, as did the thought of members. Accordingly, I focus more on the thought of individuals, rather than asserting any singular Round Table 'perspective'.
[250] Semmel, *Imperialism*, 185.
[251] Cited in *ibid*, 180.
[252] Alfred Milner, et al., preface to *Life of Joseph Chamberlain* (London: Associated Newspapers, Ltd.), vi.
[253] Liam J. Liburd, 'Beyond the Pale: Whiteness, Masculinity and Empire in the British Union of Fascists, 1932-1940', *Fascism* 7, no. 2 (2018): 281.

embraced domestic social reform and ardent advocacy for the perpetuation and reconfiguration of the empire; the two were inextricably linked.

Via this Milnerite influence on the Round Table, there is a strong resemblance between Mosley's conception of Greater Britain and the imperial federalist schemes espoused by some of the field's earliest experts. Lionel Curtis—an important thinker in IR's interwar history and a founding figure of both the Round Table and Chatham House—published a 1916 tract advocating complete imperial federation between Britain and the English-speaking dominions as the only viable means of perpetuating the empire's civilising force.[254] While Curtis' imperial isopolity and its supra-national parliamentary system afforded the dominions comparative equality with the British metropole[255]—a stark contrast with Mosley's scheme—salient similarities are nevertheless readily apparent. While notions of imperial federation suffered a considerable blow after the First World War, strands of thought prevalent among the diverse array of Round Table members shared with Mosley a belief in the pacifying role of the British Empire, an existential anxiety about its prospective demise, and a geographically expansive and politically ambitious scheme to incorporate the culturally and racially akin English-speaking dominions into an integrated, transcontinental empire. As one commentator in *APSR* stated: 'In his advocacy of a commonwealth of Greater Britain, Mr. Curtis forcibly champions the plan of organic unity.'[256]

Interestingly, one anonymous *Blackshirt* article on fascism's 'rational' philosophical basis also appropriated the evolutionary idealism or 'Holism' of League architect and white supremacist statesman Jan Smuts, synthesising it with Spenglerian thought in order to argue that the 'civilised state' or empire 'must be something more than a mere collection of human individuals'.[257] While it is unclear whether Mosley was cognisant of Smut's metaphysics during the interwar period, this piece only further illustrates the overlap between BUF international thought and strands of imperial thinking that—popular within the early study of international politics—developed out of the white settler-colonial experience.

While rooted in such strands of imperial thinking, or what Benjamin R.Y. Tan has aptly referred to as a wider discourse of 'the more unrestrained visions of white racial utopia',[258] Mosley also diverged starkly, particularly from the Round Tablers. Three contrasts are illustrative. First, as noted above, Mosley's self-contained empire was totalitarian in its domestic constitution and imperial organisation. The transcontinental parliament comprising the British metropole and the dominions alike, as imagined by some Round Tablers, was anathema to Mosley's thought. As Jeanne Morefield argues, the Round Table sought to create 'a universal, democratic, transnational state capable

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[254] Lionel Curtis, *The Problem of the Commonwealth* (London: Macmillan, 1916).
[255] See Alex May, 'The Round Table and Imperial Federation, 1910-17', *Round Table* 99, no. 410 (2010): 547-57.
[256] Theodore H. Boggs, review of *The Problem of the Commonwealth*, by Lionel Curtis, *American Political Science Review* 10, no. 4 (1916): 794. Intriguingly, J.A. Hobson criticised Curtis' alleged belief in absolute state authority, a principle antithetical to the 'lineage of British freedom'. Curtis' subservience of the individual was akin to the beliefs of 'pretentious Prussian theorists'. J.A. Hobson, review of *The Commonwealth of Nations*, edited by Lionel Curtis, *Manchester Guardian*, 11 September 1916, 3.
[257] 'Fascism and Philosophy: A Rational Basis', *Blackshirt*, 16 May 1933, 1.
[258] Tan, 'White Parasitism', 135.

of commanding the ultimate loyalty of its citizens while, simultaneously, excluding non-white subjects from democratic participation'.[259] While the latter carries obvious affinities with Mosley's racially stratified vision of worldmaking, the continued embrace of democracy (at least as it pertains to the Anglo-Saxon metropole and dominions) by Round Table thinkers marks a clear division. In this respect, Mosley's vision was closer to earlier notions of Greater Britain, rather than Curtis' latent dreams of an organic commonwealth. Any dilution of British sovereignty through the formation of a transcontinental imperial parliament was simply untenable; Mosley advocated a policy of Britain First, and any empire was thus to be under Britain's unambiguous control.

Second, such Milnerites, in their quest for national efficiency, sought to transcend party divides, aspiring towards the creation of a type of 'national government' derived from the major parties.[260] These ideas found an echo via Mosley's New Party. While the New Party programme led some to ominously describe Mosley as the head of British fascism, it would be anachronistic to view his critics as entirely prescient. As Worley argues, the eventual gravitation from the New Party to the BUF was not preordained. Indeed, the former had been founded, at least originally, with the intent of avoiding the revolutionary upheavals of either communism or fascism.[261] Yet over the course of 1931, the movement had increasingly crept towards supporting the corporate state and after the BUF's foundation any semblance of faith in liberal parliamentary democracy was supplanted by ideas of a dictatorial single-party state, rather than an executive cross-party cabinet.

Third, for many, including Mackinder and members of the Round Table, Britain's democratic tradition, juxtaposed against Oriental despotism, was still considered an important bedrock of, and indeed the basis on which Britain retained a right to, empire (notwithstanding Mackinder's reservations about parliamentary democracy in a world of growing imperial competition).[262] Per Gerry Kearns' treatment of Mackinder,

> The extended family of the Britains was important for the future of the world because of the exceptional nature of this people with their democratic inheritance… Given British exceptionalism, Mackinder believed that it was unrealistic to rely upon an international League of Nations since democratic values were not widely accepted outside the lands settled by the British.[263]

If anything, then, the ideologues of the BUF embraced a comparable scepticism towards the feasibility of larger units of political authority or League-style internationalist schemes, albeit for precisely the opposite reason. As Fuller remarked, 'a united Europe is a great ideal and one the Fascist… believes

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[259] Jeanne Morefield, "'An Education to Greece": The Round Table, Imperial Theory and the Use of History', *History of Political Thought* 28, no. 2 (2007): 330.
[260] G.R. Searle, 'Critics of Edwardian Society: The Case of the Radical Right', in *The Edwardian Age: Conflict and Stability, 1900-1914*, ed. Alan O'Day (London: Macmillan Press, 1979), 82-3.
[261] Worley, 'What Was the New Party?', 61.
[262] See Morefield, 'Round Table', 334-5. On Mackinder's democratic reservations, see Semmel, *Imperialism*, 175-6.
[263] Gerry Kearns, *Geopolitics and Empire: The Legacy of Halford Mackinder* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 150.

to be possible under Fascist control'. However, 'the supreme fact to-day is', he continued, 'that the only real league of nations in the world is the British Empire'.[264] Simply, for Mackinder, an effective international institution was unlikely because other states lacked sufficient *democratic* credentials; for Fuller, it was because too few states were *fascist*.

Moreover, the members of the Round Table were, in the aftermath of the Great War, anxious to avoid accusations of 'Prussianism' which may accompany their call for a transcontinental conception of Anglo-Saxon statehood.[265] While Mosley did become increasingly apprehensive to avoid not dissimilar charges of likeness to his continental counterparts, he did not, unlike the Round Table, counter such critiques by rooting his vision of empire in a mythologised culture of Anglo-Saxon *democracy*—which he believed, in any case, to be a false idol—or eschewing explicit claims to a primordial racial kinship across continents, as Curtis attempted. It is precisely these contrasts which forewarn against drawing any simplified equivalency or overly neat line of ancestry between Mosley and proponents of Greater Britain, Milner's Kindergarten, or the Round Table.

Alongside such conservative and liberal roots, Mosley's thematic emphasis on economic and empire planning may also be found in the international thought of the Labour movement, a number of thinkers who would come to shape the interwar study of IR. Mosley professed in his post-war autobiography that such radicals and guild socialists as Hobson, Cole, and A.R. Orage—whom he increasingly studied in 1924—influenced his economic thinking and subsequent scheme of corporate planning, juxtaposing them against a Fabian-style socialism.[266] This is not all that unusual. Indeed, it is interesting to note how, as Oren highlights, discussion about pluralism and occupational representation gained traction in American political science during the interwar period, not least due to Laski's influence. 'Incidentally', he adds, 'it so happened that Italian fascism professed allegiance, in rhetoric at least, to ideals that, broadly speaking, were located down some of the same intellectual paths along which American political science was moving'.[267] 'In some respects… fascism resembles guild-socialism', remarked the earlier mentioned James Strachey Barnes, an Italian-based British fascist and Chatham House member.[268] Yet how did the left influence Mosley's *imperial* thought?

In the first place, there are notable similarities between Mosley's thought and the imperial protectionism of Robert Blatchford, a late Victorian socialist and founder of the immensely popular weekly *The Clarion*. This observation was first noted by Semmel several decades ago.[269] Despite his socialist credentials, Blatchford was a vocal critic of not only what he viewed to be the Labour Party's unpatriotic, Cobdenite foreign policy, but the

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[264] Fuller, 'Fascism and War', 155. See also E.D. Hart, 'The Tragedy of Geneva (II)', *British Union Quarterly* 2, no.1 (1938): 72.
[265] Morefield, 'Round Table', 333.
[266] Mosley, *My Life*, 173; Richard C. Thurlow, 'The Return of Jeremiah: The Rejected Knowledge of Sir Oswald Mosley in the 1930s', in *British Fascism: Essays on the Radical Right in Inter-War Britain*, eds. Kenneth Lunn and Richard C. Thurlow (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1980), 107; Dorril, *Blackshirt*, 69, 73.
[267] Oren, 'Uncritical Portrayals', 90.
[268] Barnes, *Fascism*, 193.
[269] See Bernard Semmel, *Imperialism*.

parliamentary edifice as such.[270] To quote Semmel, Blatchford was 'an imperialist, a militarist, a nationalist, [and] a protectionist'.[271] Whether Mosley had read or was otherwise directly familiar with Blatchford's popular tracts is unclear. In any case, BUF discourse expressly referred to the notion of a mythologised 'Merrie England' and the slogan of 'Britain for the British', phrases popularised by, respectively, Blatchford's 1893 and 1902 eponymous pieces.[272] Indeed, one BUF member, Wilfred Risdon, explicitly argued that fascism was the continuation of the ideal of 'Merrie England', as 'envisaged by the early Socialist movement'.[273]

More important than these rhetorical similarities, though, was Mosley's position within the ILP during the 1920s. Mosley's claim to a form of planned, 'scientific protection', which he juxtaposed against the Conservative penchant for ad hoc tariffs, may be found in his earlier turn towards imperial insulation in 1930.[274] This turn effectively drew from a 'well established school of socialist protectionism within the post-war ILP', Ritschel adds.[275] In a rather vivid example, Ritschel highlights that even such a left-wing luminary as Cole espoused a socialist-inspired variant of imperial protection.[276] In this sense, and notwithstanding the criticism levelled by some within the Labour Party at the notion of Commonwealth Insulation,

> Mosley's 'imperialism' [prior to abandoning the Labour Party] added little to the ILP's own position on the subject of controlled trade within the empire. Both grew out of the logic of their shared postulate of a high-wage economy, sheltered behind "scientific" regulation of imports, and their common view of the empire as a natural extension of the home market.[277]

Two additional points of liberal and left-wing intellectual exchange and overlap are worth noting, albeit these filtered into the rhetorical repertoire of Mosley and the BUF, thereby bolstering ideas already arrived at, rather than inspiring or fundamentally shaping them. Firstly, there are parallels shared by BUF ideologues and pluralist thinkers in what was a similar backward gaze upon the English guild system, a recurrent referent in thinking about the future of domestic and international political ordering. Recourse to this system was commonplace amongst interwar pluralists. As Schmidt observes, Laski located the origins of the modern state 'in the philosophical and legal response to the crisis caused by the decline of the medieval idea of a unified Christendom'.[278] It is no surprise, then,

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[270] While Blatchford was an idiosyncratic thinker, the pre-1914 British left had never been devoid a tradition of social imperialism. As Semmel notes, Chamberlain's vision of tariff reform divided leading Fabians; while some remained committed to free trade, others—not least Shaw, before breaking with the group—admired Chamberlain's anti-Cobdenite system of imperial preference as a route to improving working-class conditions. Semmel, *Imperialism*, Chapter 6.

[271] Semmel, *Imperialism*, 231.

[272] Cullen, 'Ideas and Policy', 123-4; McMurray, 'Alexander Raven Thomson', 41.

[273] W. Risdon, 'The Heritage of National Socialism', *British Union Quarterly* 1, no. 3 (1937): 28.

[274] Ritschel, 'Keynesian Revolution', 63.

[275] *Ibid.*

[276] Ritschel, *Politics of Planning*, 71.

[277] *Ibid*, 71.

[278] Brian C. Schmidt, 'Lessons from the Past: Reassessing the Interwar Disciplinary History of International Relations', *International Studies Quarterly* 42, no. 3 (1998): 445.

that medieval and early modern England were subjects of historical interest to pluralists precisely because they were typified by a more heteronomous organisation of society and politics at odds with modern notions of the centralised sovereign state.[279] Mosley and BUF discourse more broadly also turned towards a distant historical referent: eschewing the 'complacent lethargy of the prosperous Victorian epoch', they instead glorified the pre-capitalist Tudor age, an epoch marked by 'the bright, gay, virility of that highly popular movement, the Tudor dictatorship'.[280] The likes of Henry VII, Francis Drake, John Hawkins, and Walter Raleigh were idealised in BUF outlets, alongside Cromwell, a figure who had reclaimed the mantle of popular dictatorship after a period of perceived decay under the House of Stuart.[281] In a sense, fascism sought to reinstate a modernised version of the supposed proto-fascist Tudor England and reclaim the pioneering spirit of their forebearers who spearheaded the British Empire.[282] As Mosley stated, the 'new Britons require the virility of the Elizabethan combined with the intellect and method of the modern technician'.[283] Simultaneously, and more to the point, this bygone system of English guilds served as a referent for thinking about (or at least a useful propagandistic device rooted in English history to illustrate) the envisioned corporatist order, with emphasis placed on the Tudor period precisely because the local system of guilds was developed under national, centralised auspices.[284] Pluralist and socialist thinkers differed on this point relative to the BUF: the former implied that the Tudor age was the death knell of the guild system,[285] while BUF discourse posited that it lived on under a benevolent dictatorship. In any case, both referred to their respective interpretations of the guild system. Fuller thus described the fascist corporate state as, in effect, 'a modernised feudal one', synthesising 'aristocracy and guild socialism or vocational democracy'.[286] Thomson viewed fascism as a 'return to the medieval spirit of communal service and Guild organisation'.[287] Mosley himself, as mentioned above, was influenced by guild socialism and, as Dorril remarks, '[s]ome guild socialists found their spiritual home in the BUF, attracted by… [Mosley's] economic ideas and his synthesis of social imperialism, syndicalism, guild socialism and… [Orage's] *New Age* philosophy'.[288]

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[279] Schmidt, 'Birth of a Discipline', 27. While space precludes deeper investigation, it is curious that nineteenth-century debate over imperial federalism—which later fed into BUF discourse—also influenced, although distantly, pluralist thinking about alternative forms of political association beyond the state. Bell, *Greater Britain*, 267.

[280] Mosley, 'Modern Dictatorship', 272.

[281] See, e.g., *ibid*; Allen, 'Fascist Idea in Britain', 227; A.L. Glasfurd, 'Fascism and the English Tradition', *Fascist Quarterly* 1, no. 3 (1935): 363; Linehan, *British Fascism*, 15; Thomson, 'Britain and the Continent', 44; Baldoli, 'Anglo-Italian Fascist Solidarity?', 151-2.

[282] Thurlow, *Fascism in Britain*, 120; Linehan, *British Fascism*, 15.

[283] Mosley, *Tomorrow We Live*, 72.

[284] Glasfurd, 'Fascism', 362.

[285] See H.M. Hyndman, *The Historical Basis of Socialism in England* (London: Kegan Paul, Trench & Co., 1883), 55-8; Harold J. Laski, *The Foundations of Sovereignty and Other Essays* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1921), 13.

[286] Fuller, *League Wars*, 287.

[287] Alexander Raven Thomson to G.K. Chesterton, 29 August 1933, Add. MSS 73240, British Library, London.

[288] Dorril, *Blackshirt*, 77.

Secondly, as noted in Chapter III, Keynes had come to the belief, perhaps following those further to the left, that 'economic internationalism' had not been 'particularly successful in avoiding war'.[289] In 1930, he promoted emergency tariffs and, by 1933, a gradualist approach to economic isolation and national self-sufficiency, a position Mosley applauded.[290] One article in the *Blackshirt* thus managed to argue that 'Mr. Keynes comes to the conclusion that present international methods are liable to lead to war' and, by consequence, 'powerfully supports' the 'Fascist case that national organisation can be made the basis of future peace'.[291] Another *Blackshirt* piece countered that fascist 'nationalism is not a "wild nationalism"', but 'simply a sane economic nationalism'. The author continued: 'Read Mr. J. M. Keynes. Better still, read "The Greater Britain."'[292] The author believed there to be not only an affinity between the two thinkers, but that the former's views added credence to those of the latter. This co-optation calls to mind a critique that Woolf once made against Keynes' defence of 'National Self-sufficiency'. As the former argued: 'It is not the intelligent, pacific, tolerant, very-nearly-socialistic, internationally-minded Mr. Keynes who will translate his arguments into practice, but some hoary-headed capitalist, Tory Protectionist or some crazy "Aryan" or some patriotic newspaper proprietor.'[293]

Evidently, autarky, empire free trade, and national self-sufficiency were among 'the most influential political discourses in the interwar period', including among the liberal and socialist left.[294] While Mosley's remedy drew from this milieu, both substantively and rhetorically, the fascist thinker inevitably differed from such currents of international thought in vital respects. In fact, Keynes responded to Mosley's aforementioned adulation by explaining, with characteristic wit, that his support for national self-sufficiency was intended 'not to embrace you but to save the country from you'.[295] Keynes was careful not to entirely condone the pursuit of 'economic nationalism' in Italy, Germany, or the Soviet Union, which offered a forewarning against the 'haste', 'intolerance', and 'silliness of the doctrinaire'.[296] Moreover, in contrast to the various, and occasionally intersecting, strands of radical, liberal, and socialist lines of thought discussed above, Mosley subsumed his promotion of autarkic self-sufficiency within a broader plan for reorganising the British Empire and metropole under fascism's ideological aegis. If Mosley's 1930 program for 'Commonwealth insulation' found marginal backing amongst ILP members because he sought, echoing his Conservative counterparts, to confine his approach towards international planning

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[289] Cited in Markwell, *Keynes and International Relations*, 161.
[290] *Ibid*, Chapter 5.
[291] 'J. M. Keynes' Conversion to Fascist Economics', *Blackshirt*, 22—28 July 1933, 1, 4.
[292] 'Our Letter Box', *Blackshirt*, 30 December 1933—5 January 1934, 4.
[293] Woolf, 'Labour's Foreign Policy', 521.
[294] Benjamin J. Thorpe, 'The Time and Space of Richard Coudenhove-Kalergi's Pan-Europe, 1923-1939' (PhD dissertation, University of Nottingham, 2018), 252.
[295] Cited in David Howell, *Mosley and British Politics 1918-32: Oswald's Odyssey* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), 210. For Mosley's belated response, see Oswald Mosley, 'Automation: Problem and Solution', *The European*, October 1955, 5-17.
[296] John Maynard Keynes, 'National Self-Sufficiency', *Studies* 22, no. 86 (1933): 191-3. See also Kelly, 'Malthusian Moments', 145-6.

to the bounds of empire,[297] then support was expectedly nil amongst socialists and radical liberals for his later vision of a grand fascist empire. Furthermore, unlike Keynes, Mosley's promotion of self-sufficiency was not a pragmatic shift based on contingent developments. Rather, national autarky, coupled with the fascist revolution, were positive ideals to be replicated internationally in pursuit of permanent peace.

The Promethean Power of Planning and Science

Alongside this autarkic discourse, Mosley's internationalism was imbued with a 'rational', technocratic character. This thematic emphasis appears partly derivative of discourse surrounding the international application of economic planning and scientific control. These ideas were pervasive not only among internationalists within the Labour Party, such as Hobson's 'new liberalism' and David Mitrany's functionalism, but also certain radical Tories. Then Conservative MP Harold Macmillan exemplified the latter, a figure who shared certain affinities with Mosley's youthful New Party: 'A rational organisation of the internal life of national communities would undoubtedly further the rational organisation of international relationships'.[298] To eliminate 'conflicts' within the state is to lessen the 'danger of reactions which intensify the struggle between national groups in the world at large'.[299]

This mode of reasoning relied on a belief in the power of 'science' and its application to international affairs. Pursuant to prevailing usage, 'science' was deployed in a nebulous fashion, often bandied around as synonymous with *technical*. It was, in effect, 'a quasi-ideology that could serve as the basis for a new means of articulating and promoting inter- and intrasocietal cooperation'. [300] From advocacy for the role of transnational technical experts and the construction of issue-specific international organisations, through to the extension of economic planning to the international realm, this quasi-ideology manifested in various forms.

Mosley's political and international thought embodied themes indicative of this wider current. Mosley constantly emphasised the rational, scientific, and technocratic foundations of the so-called 'modern movement', both during his leadership of the New Party and the BUF. Domestically, fascism promised to create an occupational franchise, a 'Parliament of technicians and not of Party politicians'.[301] 'Fascism alone', Mosley argued, was 'the real Technocracy of Government'; it embodied 'the spirit… and the science of the modern age translated into a movement of action'.[302] On one occasion, Allen even derisively quoted Brailsford's words, who suggested that it

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[297] Unlike Mosley's imperial preference system, ILP members generally favoured 'import and export boards to enter into contracts with all countries, irrespective of their connection with Britain'. As Ritschel qualifies, however, Mosley's imperial scheme at the turn of the decade was hardly a far cry from other left-wing thinkers. See Skidelsky, *Oswald Mosley*, 235; Ritschel, *Politics of Planning*, 70-2.

[298] Harold Macmillan, *The Middle Way: A Study of the Problem of Economic and Social Progress in a Free and Democratic Society* (London: St Martin's Press, 1966 [1938]), 3.

[299] *Ibid.*

[300] Jan-Stefan Fritz, 'Internationalism and the Promise of Science', in *Imperialism and Internationalism in the Discipline of International Relations*, eds. David Long and Brian C. Schmidt (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2005), 144.

[301] Mosley, 'Fascist Revolution!', 1.

[302] *Ibid*, 4.

may be the 'engineers and the organizers' that were 'destined to become the makers of history', rather than Marx's proletariat; this was an observation which Allen believed fascism acknowledged at its core and thus the left-wing thinker was 'about fifteen years too late' in his discovery.[303] Internationally, Mosley specified that fascist autarky was predicated on a form of 'scientific protection', while the reorganisation of each national unit was to provide the rational foundation for international order as such. As the *Blackshirt* periodical observed, the 'new world order will be found through the *national* organisation of *universal* Fascism'.[304]

Despite endorsing the international application of science, Mosley's conception differed acutely from such theorists as Salter, Mitrany, or Hobson. For example, notwithstanding Mosley's references to Salter, the former's views on the relationship between technocracy and the international departed from Salter's brand of corporatist, functionalist thinking.[305] Unlike Mosley, Salter's advocacy for a form of technocratic governance *within* Britain was founded on an 'international analogy', abstracting reform programmes for domestic society from his experience as an international civil servant.[306] By contrast, Mosley's fascistised conception of planning did not rely on an international analogy. Neither, for that matter, did he promote a straightforward domestic analogy based on the corporate state. Stated differently, Mosley abstracted certain implications for international order from his conception of corporatism, but these centred around *replicating* the autarkic corporate state throughout Europe on a national basis, rather than transplanting a corporate system to the international in any *supranational* sense. Most acutely, Salter and Mitrany abhorred the monist state that fascism glorified, notwithstanding their critical embrace of parliamentary reform. Moreover, both promoted a gradualist, ostensibly non-ideological approach to functional cooperation, and in Mitrany's case this included the development of issue-specific supranational authorities that went thoroughly beyond transgovernmental cooperation.[307] Such prescriptions are a blatant contrast to Mosley's fascistised system of great power management. Similarly, Mosley's international thinking strongly diverged from the socialist pluralism of, for example, Laski and Cole, which was predicated on a scepticism towards state sovereignty and a normative commitment to individualism.[308] Mosley's totalitarian corporatism was not only a far cry from the devolved guild socialism or federalist systems offered by pluralists, but its international implications per Mosley—namely, the need for the spread of national autarky—were anathema to pluralism. None of this is to mention the political chasm that divided the two, pitting guild socialists against fascists as natural political enemies.[309] As one writer sarcastically remarked in *Action*,

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[303] Drennan (pseud.), *B.U.F.*, 209.
[304] 'Only Organised Nations Can Kill Depression', *Blackshirt*, 18 March 1933, 2 (emphasis added).
[305] On Salter's corporatist thought, see Carpenter, 'Corporatism in Britain'.
[306] Holthaus and Steffek, 'Experiments in International Administration'.
[307] On Mitrany, see Lucian M. Ashworth, 'David Mitrany on the International Anarchy: A Lost Work of Classical Realism?', *Journal of International Political Theory* 13, no. 3 (2017): 311-24.
[308] Casper Sylvest, 'Beyond the State? Pluralism and Internationalism in Early Twentieth-Century Britain', *International Relations* 21, no. 1 (2007): 67-85.
[309] During the twilight of Mosley's Labour stint, Cole—who previously supported the *Mosley Memorandum*—had already distanced himself from the rebel MP following the release of the *Mosley Manifesto*. Dorril, *Blackshirt*, 157.

> If you want to be a social success, young man, join the democratic front against Fascism and War… The first stage of your democratic education is to read all the authoritative books on the subject of Democracy and World Peace. But for heaven's sake, *think for yourself*. Don't allow yourself to be influenced for a moment by reactionary, anti-workers Fascist writings [*sic*]. Don't be spoon-fed! Try reading unbiased authors like Strachey, Cole and Laski if you wish to hear the truth.[310]

Notwithstanding such crucial differences, Mosley's application of 'science' and 'rational' planning to the international derived from a common intellectual milieu that encompassed the likes of Mitrany, Hobson, Laski, and Cole, namely his formative experience within Labour, wherein such themes were commonplace. As Sylvest suggests, the 'vocabulary Labour employed in domestic politics conditioned what could be argued in international politics' and thereby 'the idea of *ordering*… came to occupy a prominent place in Labour's internationalism'.[311] Mosley's language of planning and organisation, transcending the domestic-international binary, ought to be viewed in a similar fashion. As the *Blackshirt* periodical stated, 'the organised state is an indispensable preliminary to an organised world'.[312]

The Immense Fallacy of Fascist Peace

During the 1920s, several notable scholars approached fascism with overconfident derision.[313] By the mid-1930s, however, the threat posed by fascist revisionism had become a focal point of debate among early contributors to IR journals and learned discussion on world politics. Some affiliated with the Round Table, including Philip Kerr, actively promoted the appeasement of Nazi Germany in order to satiate the have-not power.[314] Concurrently, though, many prominent liberal and social democratic internationalists—such as Angell, Brailsford, Hobson, Mitrany, Toynbee, Woolf, and Zimmern—espoused an increasingly vehement opposition to fascist revisionism.[315] Similarly, leading socialist thinkers, including Cole and Laski, coalesced around Victor Gollancz's Left Book Club, an anti-fascist publishing group established in 1936.[316] By the mid-1930s, Harold Nicolson, Mosley's former New

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[310] Guy Chesham, 'Through Pink Spectacles', *Action*, 30 October 1937, 12.
[311] Sylvest, 'Interwar Internationalism', 419 (emphasis in original).
[312] 'Fascism: The Basic Idea', *Blackshirt*, 1 June 1933, 4.
[313] See, e.g., Harold J. Laski, 'Lenin and Mussolini', *Foreign Affairs* 2, no. 1 (1923): 43-54; Gilbert Murray, foreword to *Italy and Fascismo*, by Luigi Sturzo, trans. Barbara Barclay Carter (London: Faber and Gwyer, 1926).
[314] Andrea Bosco, 'Lord Lothian and the Federalist Critique of National Sovereignty', in *Thinkers of the Twenty Years' Crisis: Inter-War Idealism Reassessed*, eds. David Long and Peter Wilson (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995), 250; Crozier, 'Appeasement'.
[315] Angell, who happened to be seated next to Mosley during the latter's much-lauded parliamentary speech before exiting the Labour Party, remarked that the fascist leader's character—'its arrogant angers… intolerances, and hint of utter ruthlessness'—'made one shudder'. Norman Angell, *After All: The Autobiography of Norman Angell* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1951), 252-3.
[316] See Nigel Copsey, *Anti-Fascism in Britain* (Basingstoke: Macmillan Press, 2000), 45-6. In 1936, BUF members attacked an Oxford-based meeting that featured speeches by Cole, Gollancz, and J.B.S. Haldane. See Dave Renton, *Red Shirts and Black: Fascists and Anti-fascists in Oxford in the 1930s* (Oxford: Ruskin College Library, 1996), 10-11.

Party confidante, was likewise forcefully warning of the danger posed by Germany, a position he expressed before Chatham House. In fact, between December 1937 and May 1938, Nicolson took part in the All Souls Foreign Affairs Group—a body spearheaded by Salter, then Gladstone Professor of Political Theory and Institutions at Oxford—wherein vocally opposing the appeasement of Germany, a position similarly extolled within the group by Murray and Toynbee.[317] Many Anglo-American international thinkers directly engaged with and challenged fascist propositions for world order. Strachey for one argued that in an age of monopoly capitalism and decreasing tracts of 'undeveloped territories', no revised territorial settlement could redress the grievances of all capitalist empires.[318] Publishing in *Foreign Affairs*, Bukharin branded any such link between autarky and non-interference in the affairs of other states 'a childish absurdity'.[319] Even the BUF's specific worldmaking project was briefly subject to review and scrutiny in *Foreign Affairs*; Langer sceptically referred to Fuller's *Empire Unity and Defence* as betraying '[s]omewhat extravagant proposals'.[320]

Against the backdrop of an increasingly precarious environment, debate among liberal and socialist interlocutors gradually turned towards the question of how to address fascist revisionism, whether through collective action under League auspices or via the formation of an Anglo-French coalition.[321] The retrieval of this discourse has challenged the grossly misleading narrative that the supposed 'idealists' were naïve and inept vis-à-vis fascist revisionism. After all, it was Carr and not his antagonists who advocated appeasement. The retrospective labelling of such figures as mere 'idealists' is thus an 'extreme disservice'.[322] It not only distorts their international thought, but obfuscates the reality that it was precisely such thinkers who were at the intellectual forefront within Britain of challenging fascist revisionism. It is this assault by liberal and left-wing thinkers which renders abundantly apparent the profound divide separating Mosley from the mainstream in the realm of international thought.

As war materialised, Mosley continued to call for the appeasement of Germany, relying in part on the supposition that modern science had granted the defender an immense advantage.[323] Mosley co-opted what *Action* called the 'defence theory of war',[324] a forerunner of sorts to the 'offence-defence' theory, the latter of which can be found with greater theoretical sophistication in the neorealist canon and strategic studies literature. Liddell Hart's thought was important in this respect. Indeed, in a reply to Fuller, Liddell Hart published his views on the role of the defence in the right-wing *English Review*, an article that Sean M. Lynn-Jones identifies as an early ancestor of the

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317 Drinkwater, *Harold Nicolson*, 137, 143-5. This group also included Angell, Curtis, Liddell Hart, Murray, Toynbee, as well as the Labour politician and staunch pacifist Clifford Allen; historian and co-editor of the *Home University Library of Modern Knowledge*, H.A.L. Fisher; then Conservative MP Harold Macmillan; Oxford lecturer of modern history E.L. Woodward; and the historian, socialist, and poet, A.L. Rowse.

318 Strachey, *Theory and Practice*, 239.

319 Bukharin, 'Imperialism and Communism', 573.

320 William L. Langer, review of *Empire Unity and Defence*, by J.F.C. Fuller, *Foreign Affairs* 12, no. 4 (1934): 699.

321 Ashworth, 'Poverty of Paradigms', 50.

322 Ashworth, 'Idealists', 292.

323 See, e.g., Chief Constable's Officer, Lancashire Constabulary, 'Fascist Meeting at Nelson on the 21st April, 1940', typescript, 22 April 1940, KV 2/884, TNA.

324 "'Defence is Supreme": Captain Liddell-Hart Confirms Mosley Policy', *Action*, 21 December 1939, 5.

offence-defence theory.[325] Mosley evidenced an interest in Liddell Hart's strategic thinking in the early 1930s, at one point expressing his inquisitive desire 'to sit at my feet', as Liddell Hart relayed in his diary.[326] The *British Union Quarterly* would later boast that '[m]ilitary experts, even including the much-boosted Anti-Fascist, Liddell Hart, take the view that the development of modern weapons has given the defensive such strength', a view they believed vindicated by the Phoney War.[327]

Yet this emphasis on the defensive may initially appear surprising given that Fuller, the doyen of mechanised warfare and its offensive potential, was the BUF's leading military theorist and defence advisor. Moreover, BUF publications lauded Fuller's treatment on the profound changes in military tactics wrought by technological change and the advent of armoured warfare.[328] Mosley's belief in defensive advantage seemingly jars against the central direction of Fuller's thought, not least the latter's anxieties about the potential negation of Britain's natural geographic advantage through aerial attack and the broader hyperbolic discourse of a 'knock-out blow' to which this fear belonged.[329] However, Mosley's embrace of the defence may be demystified by firstly placing such thinking in the broader context of his views on aerial warfare and imperial planning and, second, through adopting a more fine-grained interpretation of Fuller's own rumination on air power. Mosley wagered a belief in the profound military implications of the aeroplane as early as 1919:

> No great exercise of the imaginative faculty should be required to foresee the day when the aviation tank and the aeroplane will have driven the Infantry… from the battlefield, whilst the furious speed and mobility of the aerially-armed plane… will have banished the battleship and the merchant ship from the ocean.[330]

As he argued before parliament in April 1921, '[t]he future, not only of commerce, but still more of war, if it has a future—I hope it has'not—certainly lies in the air [*sic*]'.[331] The significance of the aeroplane in future warfare, itself a popular subject in expert discourse of international politics, was a constant in Mosley's thinking throughout the interwar period, hardly surprising given his emphasis on the revolutionary potential of modern technology and

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[325] See B.H. Liddell Hart, 'Aggression and the Problem of Weapons', *English Review* (July 1932): 71-8; Sean M. Lynn-Jones, 'Offense-Defense Theory and Its Critics', *Security Studies* 4, no. 4 (1995): 661.
[326] 'B.H.LH. Special Diary Notes, 1934', typescript, LH 11/1934/1, BHLHP. On one occasion, Fuller convinced Liddell Hart to dine with Mosley at BUF headquarters. Dorril, *Blackshirt*, 311.
[327] 'Notes of the Quarter', *British Union Quarterly*, 4, no. 1 (1940): 3. For similar appeals to Liddell Hart's authority, see '"Defence is Supreme": Captain Liddell-Hart Confirms Mosley Policy', *Action*, 21 December 1939, 5; 'Liddell Hart Plays Balaam to Beaverbrook's Balak', *Action*, 8 February 1940, 5; E.W.P. Veale, '2,000,000 For What?', *Action*, 11 January 1940, 8. An earlier statement on the power of the defence may be found in 'Notes of the Quarter', *British Union Quarterly* 2, no. 4 (1938): 10.
[328] See, e.g., J.A.M., review of *Memoirs of an Unconventional Soldier*, by J.F.C. Fuller, *Fascist Quarterly* 2, no. 3 (1936): 436-40.
[329] See Fuller, *Reformation of War*, 150; J.F.C. Fuller, *War and Western Civilization, 1832-1932: A Study of War as a Political Instrument and the Experience of Mass Democracy* (London: Duckworth, 1932), 236.
[330] Hansard, HC Deb, 17 April 1919, vol.112: c.673.
[331] Hansard, HC Deb, 21 April 1921, vol.140: c.2143.

the commensurate BUF policy platform for a massive expansion of the Royal Air Force.[332] It is possible that the thinking of other figures linked to the BUF, such as Air Commodore J.A. Chamier and Colonel Norman Thwaites, had some influence in this regard. As Chamier argued before the January Club in March 1934: 'There is no question about the air danger… If we had air power on a reasonable scale we should be reasonably secure'.[333] In a similar vein, the fascistised Mosley came to emphasise the indispensable, if ambiguous, *nature* of aerial power. Its defensive properties were immense, especially for Britain. As Mosley argued, 'even a greatly inferior air force acting as a defender from home bases against an attack over long sea routes has an overwhelming advantage'.[334] However, in the absence of sufficient aerial power, an attacker could establish local air supremacy for offensive advantage, as Mosley argued was the case during Germany's invasion of Norway.[335] Yet when the prospective power of the air force was combined with British maritime dominance, and supplemented by self-sufficiency in foodstuffs, Mosley held that this trinity would ensure Britain's indestructibility.[336]

Much of this was not necessarily inconsistent with Fuller's strategic thought. Indeed, notwithstanding Mosley's faith in the defensibility of Britain, BUF discourse was not bereft of popular anxieties about the capacity of aerial power to transcend the defensive properties of geography: 'We are no longer an isolated island resting behind the wooden bulwarks of our ancient navy. Modern science and above all aerial development make us a part of Europe and subject to European dangers.'[337] Moreover, despite Fuller's warnings of an aerial knock-out blow against London using gas (in which he imagined an air campaign beckoning catastrophic defeat within a 48-hour war), his views on the rapidity of defeat seem to have tempered somewhat as the 1930s progressed, partially bridging the gap between the optimism and pessimism of, respectively, Mosley and Fuller.[338] In fact, Fuller already argued before Chatham House in March 1934 that France would constitute 'an immense fortified aerodrome' if its armed frontiers were supported by British aircraft. Alternatively, if Britain was placed in the position of supporting a state which lacked military or natural fortifications, then it was necessary to interlink mechanised units with the air force to create a 'mobile fortress'; that is, a form of expeditionary force under which the mechanised army was subordinate to the air force (an 'air-army', as Fuller labelled it).[339] While Fuller never entirely abandoned a belief in the immense offensive power of aerial warfare, he did holdout a place for the defensive utility of this so-called 'master-weapon'

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[332] Mosley, *Blackshirt Policy*, 62.
[333] Cited in Bernhard Dietz, *Neo-Tories: The Revolt of British Conservatives against Democracy and Political Modernity (1929-1939)*, trans. Ian Copestake (London: Bloomsbury, 2018), 159.
[334] Oswald Mosley, 'Invasion Stories and Mediterranean Dangers', *Action*, 9 May 1940, 5.
[335] *Ibid.*
[336] Mosley, *British Peace*, 5-6, OMD/2/3/4, Oswald Mosley Papers.
[337] Document describing BUF foreign policy, typescript, n.d., OMN/B/4/8/7, Oswald Mosley Papers.
[338] See, e.g., L.E.O. Charlton, 'Air Power and the Principle of Parity', *International Affairs* 17, no. 4 (1938): 505-6; J.F.C. Fuller, 'Foreign Policy and Imperial Strategy', *British Union Quarterly* 2, no. 3 (1938): 32-3.
[339] C.E. Turle, J.F.C. Fuller, and P.R.C. Groves, 'The Balance of Armed Forces in Imperial Defence', 6 March 1934, 17-9, RIIA/8/320, CHA.

when in conjoined with other military instruments: 'the whole of the land and sea forces become the garrison of the fortress (country) from which an air force is operating'.[340]

Thus, believing in the overwhelming strength of the defensive, the *British Union Quarterly* claimed during the Phoney War that 'fortified lines are as impregnable to modern means of attack as were the city walls' within a medieval polity.[341] Without the advent of some sudden technological advancement, the Western Front would remain indecisive.[342] In turn, Mosley's trust in the power of aerial and naval defence, alongside a myopic focus on the defensibility of the British Isles, underpinned foreign and defence policies not only at odds with Churchillian anti-appeasers and left-wing international thinkers, but the basic edifice of British foreign policy over the preceding centuries, namely the prevention of continental hegemony.[343]

If the 'benefit of the doubt' that E.H. Carr afforded Hitler after Munich appears 'rash' and his defence of appeasement 'ill-judged',[344] Mosley's misguided prescriptions and tirades about imagined Jewish conspiracies would seem by comparison to enter the realm of utter absurdity. While Angell critiqued *The Twenty Years' Crisis* as a defence of 'do-nothingism',[345] Mosley's *continued* espousal of appeasement despite the Nazi blitzkrieg against the Low Countries amounted to strategic nonsense. Indeed, Mosley's faith in the defensibility of fortress Britannia is difficult to square even with Fuller's own strategic thinking from as late 1937. Fuller's ideal form of British strategy was never to create a proverbial 'Maginot line' or 'Great Wall of China', but '*mobile* fortresses' with offensive capabilities.[346] Notwithstanding Fuller's Mosleyite thinking on imperial planning, his strategic thought emphasised a manoeuvrist strategy of defence.[347] Moreover, while Fuller's fears of a knock-out blow tempered somewhat from his predictions in the early 1920s, he remained wedded to the belief that democracies were uniquely undisciplined, rendering the political will of the people still highly susceptible to aerial attack. Mosley embraced a comparable idea insofar as the efficiency of fascist government would assist Britain in any strategic competition with Germany, particularly through its capacity to render the nation self-sufficient in foodstuffs.[348] Yet in the absence of a fascist revolution, a discrepancy seemingly emerges between the two thinkers: Fuller's faith in the ability to effectively

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[340] Fuller, *Towards Armageddon*, 141.
[341] 'Notes of the Quarter', *British Union Quarterly* 4, no. 1 (1940): 5.
[342] *Ibid*, 3.
[343] See, e.g., Oswald Mosley, 'Britain Still Shall Live', *Action*, 16 May 1940, 1, 3. For a similarly damning assessment, see Richard C. Thurlow, 'The Black Knight', *Patterns of Prejudice* 9, no. 3 (1975): 18-9. For a less scathing treatment, see Skidelsky, *Oswald Mosley*, 444-6.
[344] Peter Wilson, 'E.H. Carr's The Twenty Years' Crisis: Appearance and Reality in World Politics', *Politik* 12, no. 4 (2009): 21.
[345] Norman Angell to Alfred Zimmern, October 1939, cited in Paul Rich, 'Reinventing Peace: David Davies, Alfred Zimmern and Liberal Internationalism in Interwar Britain', *International Relations* 16, no. 1 (2002): 132.
[346] Fuller, *Towards Armageddon*, 130-1, 217 (emphasis added).
[347] Craig Stockings, 'The Domain in Which We Dwell: The Foundations, Form and Future of Land Warfare' (Working Paper No. 403, Strategic and Defence Studies Centre, Australian National University, April 2007), 19-20, https://www.files.ethz.ch/isn/30646/wp_sdsc_403_Apr07.pdf/.
[348] See Mosley, *British Peace*, 4-5, OMD/2/3/4, Oswald Mosley Papers; Oswald Mosley, 'What Chance for Peace?', *Action*, 21 March 1940, 1.

withstand coming aerial warfare was contingent on *regime type*. By contrast, Mosley's resounding optimism was largely predicated on the *perceived material properties* of weapons technology and the effective coordination of naval and air power, what he called 'the hard military facts of modern defensive technique'.[349]

However, it was not only Mosley's enduring defence of appeasement that was at odds with expert opinion within the mainstream. Rather, it was the entire assumption on which his programme was premised, namely that a system of autarkic fascist states was either feasible or conducive to peace. Mosley was perhaps correct to prophesise that war would beckon the end of the British Empire. However, it is dubious whether aligning with Hitler would have salvaged it. As Mazower adds, Anglo-German alliance necessitated 'an impossible transformation in British values', both in terms of the domestic constitution of the state and the 'liberal imperialist creed' underpinning the empire.[350] Furthermore, his vision of imperial autarky presumed dominion participation. 'Ignoring the recent Imperial Conference as completely as if it never had been', reported the *New York Times* in 1930, 'Sir Oswald and his associates demand an economic agreement with the Dominions'.[351] Despite some developments in the direction of 'Empire Free Trade' during the 1932 Ottawa Conference, Mosley's fascistised imperial dreamworld was only further disconnected from the politico-economic interests expressed by the self-governing dominions.[352] With the notable exception of Lionel Curtis, even erstwhile followers of the Round Table, such as Philip Kerr, had by the close of the First World War dispensed with 'shadowy scheme[s] of federation for which opinion was not yet ripe'.[353] None of this is to mention that notions of peace via grand imperial planning relied on what Carr, in an attack against a broad church of 'British isolationists', sceptically called 'a right of control, management and discipline over the backward and less favoured races', the 'permanence' of which he rightly believed 'rash to count on… in modern conditions'.[354]

Even had a fascistised states-system materialised, scepticism is warranted as to its pacific qualities. The proposition of fascist internationalism is one replete with internal tensions, if not outright contradictions. The idea of an Anglo-German duopoly was admittedly present within Hitler's *Second Book*.[355] The counterfactual of a fascistised international order under Anglo-German hegemony should therefore not be dismissed as a *logical* impossibility. As Allen once argued, 'all the diverse contributions to the theory of World Fascism can be complementary rather than disruptive'.[356] Yet it remains doubtful whether Mosley's Greater Britain could be *practicably* reconciled with Hitler's imperium in a manner satisfactory to each. After all, as Mazower pithily

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[349] Mosley, *British Peace*, 6, OMD/2/3/4, Oswald Mosley Papers. See also 'Notes of the Quarter', *British Union Quarterly* 4, no. 1 (1940): 7-8, which adds that attack on the civilian population would likely not precipitate defeatism, but stoke enmity towards the enemy and boost the costs willing to be sustained.
[350] Mazower, *Dark Continent*, 74-5.
[351] Charles A. Seldon, 'Labor Group Urges Super-Cabinet of 5 to Rescue Britain', *New York Times*, 7 December 1930, 1, 21.
[352] Thurlow, 'Racial Populism', 30.
[353] Philip Kerr cited in May, 'Round Table', 553.
[354] Carr, 'Public Opinion', 851.
[355] Gerhard L. Weinberg, ed., *Hitler's Second Book*, trans. Krista Smith (New York: Enigma, 2003).
[356] James Drennan (pseud.), 'The Nazi Movement in Perspective', *Fascist Quarterly* 1, no. 1 (1935): 47.

summarises, '[t]he essential feature of the "new European Order" was that it was a German Order'.[357] Indeed, Italian proponents of universal fascism increasingly found the reality of this emergent order difficult to reconcile with their own latent imperial dreams. In a somewhat desperate compensatory act, such thinkers placed ever more reliance on the amorphous cultural radiance of Rome,[358] while leading fascist ideologues, such as Giuseppe Bottai and Camillo Pellizzi, eventually proffered international federalism, not least in order to re-assert whatever semblance of Italian autonomy remained after 1943.[359] James Strachey Barnes, a figure discussed at length in Part II, came to promote the idea of a 'new Europe' and a 'European Charter' by the early 1940s. This was, in his estimation, 'the only other [arm] we can forge to win the war', a belief that only became more intense and desperate as the war dragged on.[360]

While Britain's geopolitical situation differed from its continental counterparts—the former ostensibly existing in splendid isolation across the English Channel—a similar result was nevertheless possible, if not probable. The dialectical outcome of Mosley's utopia and Hitler's *Stufenplan* would not be a positive perpetual peace, but at most a Cold Peace, and a rather repugnant one at that.[361] If collective security fails, Toynbee argued in March 1938, 'the world is going to be unified politically, not by peaceful agreement, but by the ancient method of force in the shape of military conquest by some Power or group of Powers'.[362] Rather than a majestic fascist peace, the negative connotation and anxious register in which Toynbee discussed such a prospect seem closer to its reality.

Returning to my earlier comparison with Carr, Jonathan Haslam once referred to the famed IR professor as 'a Don Quixote without even a Sancho Panza'.[363] While Carr's defence of an increasingly untenable and unfashionable appeasement policy certainly made him the 'archetypal lone crusader',[364] his worldview, unlike the fictional Don, was not drawn into the recesses of the fantastical. By contrast, Mosley, a self-professed 'realist' clad in blackshirt, proved more akin to a 'Black Knight',

> a twentieth century Don Quixote who when his policies were blocked retired into a fantasy world… It was as though he was constructing a feudal British Utopia from where the world

[357] Mark Mazower, 'Hitler's New Order, 1939-45', *Diplomacy & Statecraft* 7, no. 1 (1996): 36.
[358] Kallis, *Third Rome*, Chapter 8.
[359] Dino Cofrancesco, 'Ideas of the Fascist Government and Party on Europe', in *Documents on the History of European Integration, Volume 1: Continental Plans for European Union 1939-1945*, ed. Walter Lipgens (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1985).
[360] Claudia Baldoli and Brendan Fleming, eds., *A British Fascist in the Second World War: The Italian War Diary of James Strachey Barnes, 1943-45* (London: Bloomsbury, 2014), 124, 173. See also Paul Jackson, 'James Strachey Barnes and the Fascist Revolution: Catholicism, Anti-Semitism and the International New Order', in *Modernism, Christianity and Apocalypse*, eds. Erik Tonning, et al. (Leiden: Brill, 2014), 200.
[361] For a similar assessment, see Love, 'British Union of Fascists and Generic Fascism', 465-6.
[362] Arnold J. Toynbee, 'The Issues in British Foreign Policy', *International Affairs* 17, no. 3 (1938): 317.
[363] Jonathan Haslam, *The Vices of Integrity: E.H. Carr, 1892-1982* (London: Verso, 1999), 73.
[364] *Ibid.*

could be ignored and internal harmony maintained through a high consumption economy and constant propaganda tilting at the Internationalist-Jewish-Communist windmill.[365]

Conclusion

Building on Chapter III, I have sought to discern how Mosley's international thought was situated within, and partly drew from, contemporary discourse on the study of international politics. The link between Mosley's conception of history and his prescribed remedy to eradicate war points towards a more complex image of fascist international thinking and its place within interwar British international thought. Above all, this chapter challenges overly simplistic views of the former as a mere nineteenth-century Darwinian realism. While Mosley lampooned ivory tower intellectualism, he was not entirely divorced from existing academic and intellectual traditions in Britain which saturated the thought of interwar experts on international affairs.[366] Mosley was strongly influenced by autochthonous strands of thinking: notions of Greater Britain and imperial federation, economic planning, and scientific internationalism. While it would be wildly inaccurate to position Mosley within IR's formative history, it is apparent that he drew upon ideas and modes of thinking that have since been recognised by intellectual and disciplinary historians as important to the field's early formation. In this sense, Mosley's thought presents a curious case of overlap between prevailing ideas within the then emergent study of international politics and its wider reception across the political spectrum.

[365] Thurlow, 'Black Knight', 19.

[366] On anti-intellectualism within the BUF, see Linehan, *British Fascism*, 239-40.

Part II

Chatham House, Philo-Fascist Italophiles, and the Making of the Corporate State

Chapter V.
Offering 'Fascist' Answers to International Questions

In 1995, Gianfranco Fini, Secretary of the far-right *Movimento Sociale Italiano*, was invited to speak at Chatham House, prompting Labour MPs to object in parliament and triggering anti-racist protests.[1] As one MP stated:

> Chatham House's reputation is to be put to the test by its extraordinary decision to provide platform for the rising star of Europe's reborn Fascist movement… Never before in its history has Chatham House lent its prestige to such an extreme right-wing figure.[2]

Unfortunately, the latter claim is false. During the interwar period, a similar invitation would not have garnered such controversy. At its inauguration, former Foreign Minister Viscount Grey declared the BIIA was 'constituted for the study of International Questions'.[3] This phrase recurs throughout the institute's records. One annual report noted the institute aimed to 'maintain means of information upon international questions and promote the study and investigation of international questions'.[4] Throughout the interwar decades, the institute canvassed and platformed extreme right-wing views on such questions. In March 1934, Fuller was enlisted to speak on 'The Balance of Armed Forces in Imperial Defence',[5] while in February 1938 the RIIA held a presentation by Admiral Sir Barry Domvile, an original BIIA member, ardent anti-Semite, and Nazi sympathiser later interned during the war.[6] Italian diplomat Daniele Varè lectured twice on matters of British and Italian foreign policy, though his audience proved unreceptive.[7] Even a Hitler Youth representative, Jochen Benemann, spoke on the road to peace via mutual understanding amongst Europe's youth.[8]

As this latter example suggests, the remit of international questions addressed at Chatham House extended beyond imperial matters, foreign policy, or debates over international institutions. Pertinent questions also revolved around domestic issues of transnational relevance, such as rising unemployment, labour relations, and emerging corporate governance models. In March 1933, for instance, the institute discussed forming a study group on 'Unemployment as an International Problem'.[9]

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[1] Rosemary Righter, 'Anti-Racist Picket London Talk by Right-wing Italian', *Times*, 16 February 1995, 15.
[2] Denis MacShane, 'A Fascist at Chatham House?', *Times*, 20 January 1995, 18.
[3] 'The British Institute of International Affairs', annual report, 1920, 11, CHA.
[4] 'Report of the Council of the Royal Institute of International Affairs, 1936-1937', annual report, 1937, 5, CHA.
[5] Turle, Fuller, and Groves, 'Balance of Armed Forces', RIIA/8/320, CHA.
[6] Barry Domvile, 'The Strategic Aspects of the Situation in the Far East', 1 February 1938, RIIA/8/516, CHA.
[7] Daniele Varè, 'The Long View in Foreign Politics in Relation to the Mediterranean and the Far East', 21 March 1939, RIIA/8/586, CHA; Daniele Varè, *The Two Impostors* (London: John Murray, 1949), 115, 192-4.
[8] Jochen Benemann, 'Young Germany and Youth: An Effort Towards Mutual Understanding', 14 February 1934, RIIA/8/367, CHA.
[9] Minutes of 28th Meeting of the Study Group Committee, 1 March 1933, CHA.

Comparable issues occupied a fascist-leaning clique attached to Chatham House. Such thinkers were linked by not only shared Italophilic, pro-fascist affinities, but also through their association with the fleeting London Group for the Study of the Corporate State (hereafter London Group), an offshoot of the RIIA. These individuals offer an intriguing perspective into the evolution of British fascism, its place within interwar international thought, and—through the role of Chatham House and adjacent think tanks—IR's early history. Who were these figures, and how did they operate within Chatham House? What ideas did they hold regarding fascism and the corporate state? How were their views expressed—and received—among early international politics experts? In probing such questions, this chapter follows recent disciplinary histories that focus 'not only [on] theoretical constructions and geopolitical spheres but also concrete physical and intellectual loci: institutional sites, research groups, think tanks, private associations, international conferences, and personal encounters'.[10]

Alongside several adjacent thinkers, this chapter centres on six key figures: James Strachey Barnes, Charles Petrie, Muriel Currey, Harold E. Goad, and the Italian thinkers, Camillo Pellizzi and Luigi Villari. Throughout the interwar period, all six engaged with questions of international relations, expressing their views through monographs, scholarly outlets such as *International Affairs*, alongside speeches, popular periodicals, and the press. Their views were undergirded by an Italophilic disposition born of personal affinities or citizenship, alongside an admiration for the Italian regime and its fascist experiment. Through ideological sympathies, professional links, and personal friendships, they orbited around shared associates and institutions, forming a loose network peddling the fascist gospel.

This chapter proceeds in three parts. The first section examines the impact of an emergent discourse of fascist universality, alongside the specific influence of Pellizzi, upon Goad and Barnes, two central figures propagating fascism before a British audience. These individuals serve as an entry point into this network of thinkers, introducing the contours of their thought and salient ideological divisions amongst them. Subsequently, I discuss how these three, alongside Currey, Petrie, and Villari, among other more peripheral figures, used forums affiliated with the fledgling IR field to promote their ideas on the corporate state, and the reception of such persons among the discipline's early architects. Lastly, the chapter explores Pellizzi's wartime corporatist thinking, and how his international thought drew upon ongoing debates in Anglophone studies of world politics.

From the British Fascisti to Fascist Universality

During much of the 1920s, Italian fascism lacked substantive doctrinal reflection: fascism was a movement of action and deed, not theory and dogma. Accordingly, until the early 1930s, fascism—whether as an Italian movement or generic ideology—was poorly understood by Anglophone observers. This was partly because fascism was, for many external viewers, bereft of substance; it was nothing more than reaction. Prominent international thinkers often derided fascists for their 'anti-intellectualism'. By 1923, Laski had described fascism as a sort of anti-ideology, a

[10] Or Rosenboim, 'Threads and Boundaries: Rethinking the Intellectual History of International Relations', in *Historiographical Investigations in International Relations*, eds. Brian C. Schmidt and Nicolas Guilhot (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2019), 117.

creed devoid of intellectual substance and punctured by 'incoherent naïveté'.[11] As Gilbert Murray opined, the 'educated Englishman' is dumbfounded at how a nation such as Italy allowed its institutions to be claimed by a mafia-style 'Camorra', one 'dominated by gangs of young roughs armed with bludgeons and castor-oil bottles'.[12] 'Outside Italy', Murray continued, Mussolini was generally 'regarded as a theatrical performance, and Fascism… as a subject for jests'.[13] Writing in 1933, Carmen Haider echoed this view, concluding that '[t]hought occupies only a secondary place. Indeed, anti-intellectualism is one characteristic of Fascism'.[14] To borrow Mazower's apt observation, fascism was viewed by many as a 'burst of collective insanity, a form of mass madness over which reason must eventually prevail'.[15]

Placing aside the voice of critics, the comparative dearth of doctrinal reflection amongst fascist themselves meant that the meaning of fascism adhered to by self-professed British proponents was itself not entirely clear. This was partly because fascism was an evolving creed, not yet attaining a self-conscious fixity around, to borrow Michael Freeden's terminology, certain 'ineliminable' components or a core.[16] As Mosley conjectured before the English Speaking Union in 1935, fascism has 'only been in existence little more than ten years', and has not yet 'assumed a… concrete and definite form'.[17] This lack of settled meaning displayed itself in the landscape of the British far right. Britain's first self-declared fascist movement, the British Fascisti (BF), later renamed the British Fascists, was established on 6 May 1923 by Rotha Lintorn-Orman.[18] The historiography of British fascism has tended to treat the BF, not without reason, as an eccentric, militaristic brand of conservatism devoid of revolutionary schemes and any ideological substance beyond a deep anti-Bolshevik sentiment, an adoration for the British Empire, and a social imperialist streak.[19] This echoed contemporary views. In the 1930s, Mosley himself distanced the ideologically programmatic BUF from its predecessor: 'Their policy, if they had one at all, was of a reactionary character.'[20] For Thomson, the BUF was 'entirely contrary to those insignificant neo-Fascist organisations'.[21] Yet focusing solely on the BF's marginality risks overlooking key nuances (not least the organisation's gradual adoption of a more thoroughgoing conception of corporatism during its twilight).[22] For one, it is critical to emphasise the ideological fissures within, and in response to, the BF among the landscape of the British far right. During the late 1920s, factions splintered from the BF, one of which focused on developing a more coherent fascist ideological. As Dorril

[11] Laski, 'Lenin and Mussolini', 51.
[12] Murray, foreword to *Italy and Fascismo*, v-vi.
[13] *Ibid*, viii.
[14] Carmen Haider, 'The Meaning and Significance of Fascism', *Political Science Quarterly* 48, no. 4 (1933): 560.
[15] Mazower, *Dark Continent*, 26.
[16] Michael Freeden, *Ideologies and Political Theory: A Conceptual Approach* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996).
[17] Mosley, 'Philosophy of Fascism', 36.
[18] On the BF and Lintorn-Orman, see, Linehan, *British Fascism*, 61-71; Julie V. Gottlieb, *Feminine Fascism: Women in Britain's Fascist Movement, 1923-1945*, 2nd edn. (London: I.B. Tauris, 2021), Chapter 1.
[19] For an overview, see Linehan, *British Fascism*, 63, 68-70.
[20] Mosley, *Fascism for the Million*, 14.
[21] Alexander Raven Thomson to G.K. Chesterton, 29 August 1933, Add. MSS 73240, British Library.
[22] Woodbridge, 'Fraudulent Fascism', 498-9.

notes, two figures are particularly important in this respect, 'Captain Harold Goad… and James Strachey Barnes of the Royal Institute of International Affairs'.[23]

It is no surprise that such efforts emanated from these two. I will delve more into Barnes' background below; however, suffice it to note that while deriding intellectualism, he was no philistine. Educated at Eton, Sandhurst, and Cambridge, Barnes later socialised regularly with the famed intellectual circle, the Bloomsbury set (Mary Hutchinson and Lytton Strachey were, respectively, Barnes' sister and cousin).[24] By the mid-1920s, Barnes attacked the BF for their poor grasp of fascism and its philosophic substance. Before an audience at Chatham House in 1926, Barnes began by proclaiming that fascism was 'inadequately understood' in Britain 'by its friends and… foes' alike.[25] He counselled listeners not to hold much stead in the BF's reactionary ramblings, whose likeness to fascism was confined to their 'borrowing [of] a few exterior and picturesque outward symbols'. They held 'no positive idea' of fascism and thus lacked any 'right whatever to call themselves Fascist'.[26] While he recognised that the action-oriented creed did not attain power with a 'ready-made Philosophy',[27] Barnes endeavoured to develop precisely such a theoretic mooring to educate the British public of the Italian experiment and its export potential. Similarly, Goad's intellectual credentials were sound: an Oxford graduate of modern history and later lecturer at UCL.[28] Notwithstanding his links to the BF—having written for *The Patriot* newspaper, which for a period operated from the same premises as the self-proclaimed fascist organisation[29]—he likewise lamented the pervasiveness with which fascism was misunderstood by British adherents and critics alike.[30]

Pellizzi and the Embrace of Universal Fascism

This critique and the concomitant search for a theoretical foundation must be understood against the backdrop of a wider Italian discourse on fascism's export potential. As early as the mid-1920s, a formative attempt to create a Fascist Internationale was proposed by Giuseppe Bastianini, undersecretary of the *Partito Nazionale Fascista* and later ambassador to London (1939-40), who campaigned for fascism's diffusion via the *Fasci Italiani all'Estero*, a party-linked expatriate body.[31] Yet throughout much of the 1920s, the regime adopted the position that fascism was an

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[23] Dorril, *Blackshirt*, 199.

[24] David Bradshaw and James Smith, 'Ezra Pound, James Strachey Barnes ("the Italian Lord Haw-Haw") and Italian Fascism', *Review of English Studies* 64, no. 266 (2013): 672-4.

[25] James Strachey Barnes, 'The Doctrine of Fascism', 19 January 1926, 1, RIIA/8/35, CHA.

[26] *Ibid*, 5. See also Linehan, *British Fascism*, 146n44; Dorril, *Blackshirt*, 199.

[27] James Strachey Barnes, *The Universal Aspects of Fascism*, 2nd edn. (London: Williams and Norgate, 1929), 30.

[28] 'University Intelligence', *Times*, 24 July 1900, 6.

[29] Woodbridge, 'Fraudulent Fascism', 496; Tamara Colacicco, "'A New Form of Democracy": Italian and Transnational Corporatism in the Thought of Harold Goad', *Contemporanea* 21, no. 4 (2018): 588n1; Tamara Colacicco, '*Il fascismo e le università in Gran Bretagna: Dalle sezioni di* Italian Studies *alla* "*propaganda universitaria*" *di* Luigi Villari', in *La difficile transizione: l'Università italiana tra fascismo e repubblica*, edited by Tamara Colacicco and Simona Salustri (Bologna: *Società editrice Il mulino*, 2022).

[30] Harold E. Goad, W*hat Is Fascism? An Explanation of Its Essential Principles*, 3rd edn. (Florence: *Italian Mail and Tribune*, 1931), 3.

[31] Kallis, *Third Rome*, 227-8.

exclusively national phenomenon. In fact, in reaction to an upsurge in discussion caused by Bastianini's internationalist call, Mussolini provided a hitherto unprecedented imprimatur to a *Foreign Affairs* article by Undersecretary of Colonies Roberto Cantalupo, wherein the latter dismissed the notion that fascism contained universal pretensions. Fascism did 'not profess to be a formula applicable to the needs of all nations.'[32] For Mussolini, this endorsement aimed to reassure foreign observers that Italy was not propagating an exportable revolution, while suppressing a divisive debate within the party regarding fascism's prospective universality.[33] As Luca de Caprariis notes, even such a staunch advocate for fascism's export as Pellizzi, a figure I will return to momentarily, sided against such an internationalist programme at this juncture. While eager to fascistise Italian migrant communities, he believed that most self-professed, foreign fascist movements lacked a true revolutionary zeal.[34]

Notwithstanding Mussolini's claims about the non-exportability of fascism, the late-1920s only witnessed further doctrinal reflection and the growing traction of internationalist thinking. As Aristotle Kallis observes, the mantra of fascist universality fell onto the mantle of an intellectual clique spearheaded by Italian propagandist Asvero Gravelli and, despite his objections to Bastianini's programme, Pellizzi.[35] In part, this discourse was also propelled by a youthful generation of Italian fascists. Dismayed by the stultified revolution, these young zealots advocated for fascism's diffusion abroad, a second revolution that would transform Italy and European civilisation alike. From Arnaldo Mussolini's School of Fascist Mysticism and the Milanese-based efforts of Carlo Emilio Ferri, to Gravelli's international mediums of *Ottobre* and *Anti-Europa*, Italy became a hotbed of journals, periodicals, and institutions integral in promoting this revolutionary thought.[36] The high point of this discourse came with the founding of the regime-sanctioned *Comitati d'Azione per l'Universalità di Roma* (CAUR) in July 1933. To a large extent, granting this discourse an institutional manifestation was fuelled by a concern over the rise of Nazism.[37] As Gravelli remarked: 'opinions exist in Germany which seek to suggest that Berlin wants to replace Rome as the centre of Western civilisation'.[38] While the German ideological rival later added an impetus, belief in the spiritual foundation of fascism and its universal application had become a mainstay of the regime's discourse by 1930.[39]

This discourse would carry a marked influence on the likes of Barnes and Goad, a point that I will return to momentarily. Initially, it is important to more fully introduce the aforementioned Pellizzi, who stands out in shaping this transnational diffusion of ideas. After serving in the First World War and graduating from law in Pisa in 1917, Pellizzi moved to England to pursue further studies at Cambridge in March 1920. Though brief, his period

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[32] Roberto Cantalupo, 'Fascism in Italian History', *Foreign Affairs* 4, no. 1 (1925): 61-71.
[33] Luca de Caprariis, '"Fascism for Export"? The Rise and Eclipse of the *Fasci Italiani all'Estero*', *Journal of Contemporary History* 35, no. 2 (2000): 168-9.
[34] *Ibid*, 168; Robert May, 'Breaking Boundaries: British Fascism from a Transnational Perspective, 1923 to 1939' (PhD diss., Sheffield Hallam University, 2019), 184.
[35] Kallis, *Third Rome*, 228.
[36] On this movement and the wider universality discourse, see Ledeen, *Universal Fascism*.
[37] Kallis, 'From CAUR to EUR', 367.
[38] Cited in Baldoli, *Exporting Fascism*, 57.
[39] Kallis, *Third Rome*, 228.

at Cambridge was followed by an extended residence in London until 1939. Whilst in London, he carved out a founding role in the *Fascio*, the local outgrowth of the Italian Fascist Party, and rapidly ingratiated himself with Mussolini. Crucially, Pellizzi also became a lecturer and later professor at UCL from 1920.[40] In this capacity, Pellizzi spoke widely on Italian art, literature, history, and society, a role which included, from 1926 until the mid-1930s, his delivery of the annual Barlow public lecture series on Dante.[41] Alongside Magdalen College's Professor in Italian, Cesare Foligno—himself a propagandist with links to Italian ambassador Dino Grandi—Pellizzi also acted during the early 1930s as an examiner in modern Italian language within Oxford.[42] Beyond his passion for Italian culture, though, Pellizzi was a leading thinker on fascism. Indeed, he carved out a veritable reputation as a fascist intellectual and, as alluded to above, emerged as one of the foremost proponents for fascism's internationalisation. Moreover, he eagerly spread the fascist gospel at numerous professional, political, and elite associations around London during the interwar decades, while seeking to turn the London-based Dante Alighieri Society into a bastion of propaganda under his presidency during the 1930s.[43] In one telling example, Pellizzi even published, at the behest of Ramsay MacDonald no less, an article on fascism in the *Socialist Review*, a decision which garnered the ire of communist and anti-fascist campaigner Sylvia Pankhurst.[44] A key plank of his efforts was geared towards educating Britons on fascism; as with Goad and Barnes, Pellizzi believed that the BF had minimal grasp of the ideology's fundamentals.[45]

While converting to Roman Catholicism in 1924, Pellizzi's conception of fascism was heavily inspired by Gentile's (secularised) neo-Hegelian Actualism, two discordant dispositions that he sought to reconcile. Pellizzi envisioned the realisation of a new organic, 'ethical' (and inherently totalitarian) state led by the anointed aristocracy—that is, an intellectual vanguard of youthful fascists—in a ceaseless revolutionary process.[46] Yet Pellizzi's understanding of fascism entailed more than a myth of national palingenesis. He was one of the earliest and most forceful proponents for fascism's universal pretensions, expounding this line in his *Problemi e realtà del fascismo* and *Fascismo-aristocrazia*. Pellizzi's international thought professed not only the standard desire for colonial living space, but embraced a more amorphous imperial-spiritual commitment to the reconfiguration of European order through fascism's immanent universality.[47] As with Barnes and Goad who argued that any effort to tutor the

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[40] Biographical information on Pellizzi is drawn from Roberta Suzzi Valli, '*Il fascio Italiano a Londra: L'attività politica di* Camillo Pellizzi', *Storia contemporanea* 26, no. 6 (1995): 957-8; Tamara Colacicco, '*L'emigrazione intellettuale Italiana in Inghilterra: I docenti universitari di Italianistica tra fascismo e antifascismo (1921-39)*', *Italianist* 35, no. 1 (2015): 163-4; Colacicco, 'Thought of Harold Goad', 590; Danilo Breschi and Gisella Longo, *Camillo Pellizzi: La ricercar delle élites tra politica e sociologia (1896-1979)* (Soveria Mannelli: Rubbettino, 2003), 22, 28.

[41] See, e.g., J.M.A. Lindon, 'One Hundred Years of Barlow Lectures', *Italian Studies* 32, no. 1 (1977): 8-20.

[42] University of Oxford, *Oxford University Gazette, Vol. LXIV: 1933-1934* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1934), 811. On Foligno, see Tamara Colacicco, '*Il fascismo e gli* Italian Studies *in Gran Bretagna. Le strategie e i risultati della propaganda* (1921-40)', *California Italian Studies* 6, no. 2 (2016).

[43] Baldoli, *Exporting Fascism*, 14-5.

[44] Valli, '*Il fascio Italiano a Londra*', 975; Sylvia Pankhurst, 'Our View', *Worker's Dreadnought*, 23 June 1923, 5.

[45] Marco Cuzzi, *Antieuropa: Il fascismo universale di Mussolini* (Milan: M&B Publishing, 2006), 31-2.

[46] Breschi and Longo, *Camillo Pellizzi*, 71; Gregor, *Mussolini's Intellectuals*, 166-7; David D. Roberts, 'Myth, Style, Substance and the Totalitarian Dynamics in Fascist Italy', *Contemporary European History* 16, no. 1 (2007): 19-20; Colacicco, '*L'emigrazione intellettuale Italiana in Inghilterra*', 165.

[47] See Ledeen, *Universal Fascism*, 160-1; Gregor, *Mussolini's Intellectuals*, 176-7, 184.

British in the Italian experiment required an articulation of fascist philosophy and corporate structures, so Pellizzi believed that any hope of spreading fascism necessitated a firmer exposition of its fundamentals.

The influence of Pellizzi, and this wider universalist discourse, on Goad and Barnes is readily traceable. Prior to the First World War, Goad spent much of his time writing religiously-inflected books and poetry, as well as travelling the Balkans and Italy; he even established an orphanage in 1902 for illegitimate children in Assisi.[48] As conflict beckoned, however, Goad—with knowledge of Greek and Italian, among other languages—was eventually despatched as British Liaison officer to the Italian Expeditionary Force from 1916, resigning his commission in early 1920.[49] Having previously graduated from Trinity College, Oxford in 1900, Goad later found himself in academia. Developing a specialisation in Italian language, culture, and the study of Saint Francis of Assisi, he frequently lectured at UCL in the 1920s and served as a Reader at the university between 1920 and 1922.[50] Evidently, Goad held an abiding adoration for Italy and what he once referred to as the 'incomparable civilising qualities' of its people.[51]

Tamara Colacicco, following the lead of the historian Chiara Chini, has suggested that Goad's embrace of fascism in all probability emerged in the early 1920s, a byproduct of his interaction with his academic colleagues at UCL, namely Pellizzi and Antonio Cippico, the latter a former Italian delegate to the League of Nations; foundational figure of such propagandistic organs as the Dante Alighieri Society and later the London Fascio; and, until 1925, UCL lecturer.[52] As Colacicco illustrates, the development of links to scholars of Italian language and culture in British universities was one part of the regime's propaganda efforts; UCL seems a particular breeding ground in this respect.[53] Already in 1920, the Italophilic Goad was a member of the Britain Italian League,[54] and by 1922 he had formed links with Pellizzi's *Fascio*, an association which led Goad, in one unusual episode, to march on Westminster Abbey alongside Italian fascists in November 1922.[55] In turn, Pellizzi's thinking appeared to have a formative and important influence on his friend, particularly as it pertained to Goad's views on the universal lessons of the Italian experiment.[56]

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[48] Griffiths, *Fellow Travellers*, 17.
[49] 'Mr. H.E. Goad', *Times*, 28 May 1956, 14. See also the records pertaining to Goad's military service, WO 339/59462, TNA.
[50] 'Mr. H.E. Goad', *Times*, 28 May 1956, 14.
[51] Harold E. Goad, 'Eastern Europe and Italy', *Saturday Review*, 3 April 1920, 329.
[52] Colacicco, 'Thought of Harold Goad', 591-2. On Cippico, see, e.g., Tamara Colacicco, 'Fascism and Italian Studies at Manchester, Leeds and Liverpool Universities in the 1930s', *Annali di storia delle università italiane* 2 (2018): 29, 32; Alfio Bernabei, 'Mussolini's "Proud Boys"', *Searchlight*, 29 March 2021, https://www.searchlightmagazine.com/2021/03/mussolinis-proud-boys-article-by-alfio-bernabei-published-in-spring-2021-issue-of-searchlight/#.
[53] Colacicco, 'Fascism and Italian Studies'.
[54] See Harold E. Goad, 'The Unrest in Italy', *Daily Telegraph*, 20 September 1920, 14.
[55] Alfio Bernabei, 'Italian Fascists were Active in 1920s Britain', *Searchlight* (October 2011): 32.
[56] Colacicco, 'Thought of Harold Goad', 591-2.

In the course of 1922, Goad became director of the British Institute of Florence, serving until 1939. In one sense, Goad was aptly suited for the position. He had previously extolled the cost-effective value of the British Council, to which the Florence-based institute became linked, and he was steadfast in the belief that cultural and linguistic soft power, rather than the cruder propaganda of Prussian militarism, held tangible benefits in sustaining positive relations. As Goad concluded during a 1934 Q&A at Chatham House: 'England's best propagandist was William Shakespeare'.[57] Notably, Chatham House included the British Institute of Florence in its *Directory of Societies and Organizations in Great Britain Concerned with the Study of International Affairs*, epitomising the broad nature of those persons and bodies deemed to be engaged in enquiry into world politics.[58] Yet under Goad's tutelage, the institute was realigned in a distinctly pro-fascist direction.[59] Goad even had an intermediary role in connecting Mussolini and the BUF via Ian Hope Dundas, a confidante of Mosley who later served as the movement's liaison.[60] In both thought and deed, Goad evidently and increasingly embraced the sort of universalist discourse adumbrated by Pellizzi and the official CAUR.[61]

Unlike Goad, Barnes was no scholar (although, as mentioned above, he was no layperson on matters of philosophy and politics). While Barnes spent the first months of the First World War in Italy, he subsequently came to enlist in the Household Cavalry and later the Royal Flying Corps, distinguishing himself on both the Western and Italian Fronts.[62] Towards the war's close, Barnes developed an abiding interest in so-called 'Balkan questions'. As he once remarked of his knowledge, 'I probably knew more about Albania than any living Englishman… [with the exception of the scholar] Miss [Edith] Durham, who knew a good deal more than I. But then she was an English *woman*'.[63] His newfound interest led him to lecture before the Royal Geographical Society on Albania in April 1918. This speech precipitated his assignment to the British Foreign Office Delegation at the Paris Peace Conference, specifically the South European Section under the leadership of Harold Nicolson.[64] By 1924, Barnes returned to

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[57] Cited in Ivy Lee, 'The Problem of International Propaganda', 3 July 1934, v, RIIA/8/347, CHA. See also Harold E. Goad, 'The Need of British Institutes in Southern and Eastern Europe', *Fortnightly Review* (November 1919): 759-70.

[58] Stephen A. Heald, ed., *A Directory of Societies and Organizations in Great Britain Concerned with the Study of International Affairs* (London: RIIA, 1929), 57-8, CHA.

[59] 'This is the *Anti*-British Institute!', declared acclaimed poet D.H. Lawrence, before being forcibly ejected from the premises. Hunter Davies, *The Grand Tour* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1986), 102 (emphasis in original).

[60] Dorril, *Blackshirt*, 233.

[61] Colacicco, 'Thought of Harold Goad', 589-90.

[62] 'Mr. H.E. Goad', *Times*, 28 May 1956, 14; Bradshaw and Smith, 'Ezra Pound', 674.

[63] James Strachey Barnes, *Half a Life Left* (New York: Coward-McCann, 1937), 50 (emphasis in original).

[64] *Ibid*, 51-2; James Strachey Barnes, 'The Future of the Albanian State', *Geographical Journal* 52, no. 1 (1918): 12-27. Nicolson's opinion of Barnes appears mixed. As Conservative MP and intelligence officer Aubrey Herbert remarked in his diary, Nicolson believed Barnes 'quite straight, but stupid'. Bejtullah D. Destani and Jason Tomes, eds., *Albania's Greatest Friend: Aubrey Herbert and the Making of Modern Albania, Diaries and Papers 1904-1923* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2011), 327.

Italy via a posting with the *Financial Times*. Over the ensuing years, he befriended Mussolini and became an honorary member of the Fascist Party.[65]

While embracing the fascist creed, Barnes' intellectual influences were varied, from the nationalism of Alfredo Rocco and Enrico Corradini to Keynes' critique of *laissez-faire* and Georges Sorel's syndicalism.[66] Yet, as with Goad, Barnes held a strong admiration for Pellizzi and, as Baldoli and Brendan Fleming suggest, the latter 'had perhaps the strongest impact' on his thought.[67] He later penned in his diary that Pellizzi was among his 'best friends' and the godfather to his son.[68] As with Pellizzi, Barnes viewed fascism as an ongoing revolution that would reach ever greater heights as fascist youth supplanted their predecessors.[69] More importantly, following Pellizzi, Barnes embraced fascism's universal pretensions. In the *Edinburgh Review*, Barnes contrasted fascism, an inherently national force in his view, against Freemasonry, socialism, and Christian democracy, all of which were derided as manifestations of 'Internationalism'.[70] Yet Barnes distinguished between the fascist party, a formal group particular to Italy, and the 'Fascist revolutionary movement' (or simply 'Fascism' or 'Romanism'), the latter of which, notwithstanding its national character, contained generalisable principles.[71] By 1926, Barnes anticipated Mussolini's infamous prediction in the 1932 *Enciclopedia Italiana*: the twentieth century would be a 'fascist century'.[72] As Barnes pronounced before an audience at Chatham House, 'the principles of Fascism will prove in the 20th century no less powerful' than those of the French Revolution in the nineteenth.[73] Barnes' fascist advocacy led Mussolini to appoint him—on the recommendation of Luigi Villari no less, a key propagandist that I return to shortly—as Secretary-General of the newly inaugurated *Center International d'Études sur le Fascism* (CINEF) in 1927, a position he held until 1930 when the institute was suspended.[74] CINEF's public purpose was the seemingly banal task of bibliographic compilation.[75] While Barnes stressed that the institute was not a propagandistic organ, any claim to impartiality was belied by its institutional links to the Italian regime and the exuberant tone in which members praised fascism and its universal applicability.

While this overview of CINEF illustrates Barnes' thorough immersion within this universalist discourse, a brief detour into the institute's wider affiliations is worthwhile, insofar as it highlights some of the complex, transnational interlinkages between the extreme right, academia, and the expert study of world politics. Alongside Barnes was an eclectic range of academics, former heads of government, and cabinet ministers on CINEF's

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[65] Bradshaw and Smith, 'Ezra Pound', 675.
[66] Barnes, *Universal Aspects*.
[67] Baldoli and Fleming, *British Fascist*, 6.
[68] *Ibid*, 35.
[69] Ledeen, *Universal Fascism*, 90.
[70] James Strachey Barnes, 'The Basis of Fascism', *Edinburgh Review* (July 1924): 2.
[71] *Ibid*, 1-3.
[72] See Roger Griffin, 'Mussolini Predicted a Fascist Century: How Wrong Was He?', *Fascism* 8, no. 1 (2019): 2.
[73] Barnes, 'The Doctrine of Fascism', 5, RIIA/8/35, CHA.
[74] Baldoli and Fleming, *British Fascist*, 6.
[75] James Strachey Barnes, 'Fascism and the International Centre of Fascist Studies', *Dublin Review* (October—December 1929): 264-81.

governing body. Amongst the institute's ranks was its secretary, namely the Swiss antisemite, devout Catholic, and former professor of diplomatics and palaeography at the Catholic University of Nijmegen, Herman de Vries de Heekelingen; fascist philosopher Giovannie Gentile; political geographer Johann Wilhelm Mannhardt; Professor John L. Gerig of Columbia University's Department of Romance Languages; Fellow of Trinity College Dublin and Spain expert Professor Walter Starkie; and Albert de Geouffre de Lapradelle, a Parisian professor of international law, member of the *Institut de droit international*, and head of the *Institut des hautes études internationales*.[76] Interestingly, Professor Edmund Gardner was also affiliated with CINEF, himself a colleague of Goad's at UCL in the Serena chair of Italian studies and a reputable Italophile with links to other fascist supporters, including Pellizzi and Villari. Indeed, among the co-authors of a 1921 memorial volume on Dante were Gardner and the fascist Antonio Cippico.[77] Following Gardner's death in 1935, propagandist and professor Cesare Foligno even penned a lengthy obituary for the British Academy, of which Gardner was a member.[78] Fabian and LSE lecturer of public administration Herman Finer reportedly contributed to a CINEF yearbook as well.[79] This is odd, given that Finer was a scathing critic of fascism. In one memorable instance, he savaged *The Fascist Government of Italy* by American scholar and apologist Herbert Schneider (a book based on research funded by the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace). As Katy Hull aptly remarks: 'Finer's review was the sort that could leave a self-respecting academic cringing for decades. Perhaps it had this effect on… Schneider, since he never wrote about fascist Italy again'.[80] In this sense, Finer's passing link to CINEF may itself illustrate how, at least for many, association with self-identified fascists was anything but beyond the pale.

Ideological Innovation and High Toryism

While this universalist discourse clearly influenced these Italophiles, it is imperative to note four points of nuance. First, and most importantly, there were key divisions between Barnes and, on the other side, Goad, Currey, and Petrie. As Baldoli and Fleming summarise, Barnes' beliefs were immeasurably more militant, representing the 'most extreme case' among the British Italophiles.[81] A Fabian socialist before the First World War,[82] Barnes mutated into a fascist revolutionary of the first order, placing him much closer to Pellizzi. Barnes, after all, once described his 'chief regret in life' as his absence from the March on Rome.[83]

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[76] CINEF, *A Survey of Fascism: The Year Book of the International Centre of Fascist Studies, Volume 1* (London: Ernest Benn Limited, 1928).
[77] See 'Dante Sexcentenary', *Times*, 9 July 1920, 14; Colacicco, '*L'emigrazione intellettuale Italiana in Inghilterra*', 163.
[78] Cesare Foligno, 'Edmund Garratt Gardner, 1869-1935', *Proceedings of the British Academy* 21 (1935): 464-79.
[79] Barnes, 'International Centre of Fascist Studies', 279.
[80] Katy Hull, *The Machine Has a Soul: American Sympathy with Italian Fascism* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2021), 146-7; Herman Finer, review of *The Fascist Government of Italy*, by Herbert W. Schneider, *Public Opinion Quarterly* 1, no. 2 (1937): 148-50.
[81] Baldoli and Fleming, *British Fascist*, 2.
[82] See, e.g., Barnes, *Half a Life Left*, 25.
[83] *Ibid.*

By contrast, Currey, Goad, and Petrie admired fascism, appropriated ideas from continental fascist experiments (or an interpretation thereof), and were to varying degrees partial to Mosley's BUF, yet their political creed may be considered adjacent to and intertwined with, rather than reducible to, fascism.[84] The overlaps with are difficult to escape: 'corporatism, anti-liberalism, anti-communism, authoritarianism, anti-feminism'.[85] For the historian Jonas Bressler, though, the difference was an important one grounded in 'habitus and class'; that is, 'fascism was far too plebeian, too violent and too loud' for wholesale application in Britain.[86] This sentiment was aptly captured in Petrie's diary entry upon attending a BUF rally at Albert Hall: 'I agreed with about half he [Mosley] said, but the whole thing was very cheap, and went against the grain in me'.[87] Moreover, the fascist tendency towards 'political violence, antisemitic rabble-rousing and the cult of the leader' were not entirely compatible with the worldview of such thinkers, notwithstanding their admiration for Italian fascism.[88] At least on the part of Currey, Goad, and Petrie, this ideological gap may partly account for their varied relations with the BUF and simultaneous gravitation towards the Italian experiment.[89] Even Currey—who, despite a closer affiliation with the BUF—did not entirely embrace the totalistic fascist revolution.

Even observers within the BUF drew a distinction between themselves and those radical conservatives orbiting such Italophilic circles, while simultaneously emphasising points of overlap.[90] Despite distinguishing themselves, the BUF sought to co-opt such highly networked individuals, and indeed the party's various print outlets included the writings of Currey, Goad, and Petrie within their reading lists and even made some material available for purchase. Moreover, authors within BUF publications cited their texts or speeches, and afforded space for review and praise.[91] As Thomson excitedly concluded regarding Goad and Currey's *The Working of a Corporate State*:

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[84] Petrie was also deeply influenced by the French extreme right and had ties to *Action Française*—a topic beyond this chapter's scope. See Tom Villis, *British Catholics and Fascism: Religious Identity and Political Extremism Between the Wars* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), 146. Dietz has also argued that the transfer of ideas from thinkers associated with the German Conservative Revolution were the 'most productive and important' for those he calls Neo-Tories. While these influences are beyond the present scope, I do not find Dietz's contention borne out for certain figures discussed in Part II. Bernhard Dietz, 'The Neo-Tories and Europe: A Transnational History of British Radical Conservatism in the 1930s', *Journal of Modern European History* 15, no. 1 (2017): 86.

[85] Jonas Bressler, 'Crusade against Bolshevism: Cooperation between Fascists and Conservatives during the Spanish Civil War (1936-1939)', *Fascism* 13, no. 1 (2024): 82.

[86] *Ibid.*

[87] Cited in Dietz, 'Neo-Tories and Europe', 90.

[88] Dietz, *Neo-Tories*; 1.

[89] Dorril, *Blackshirt*, 234, also suggests that Barnes never joined the BUF, finding antisemitism absurd. For a similar observation, see Villis, *British Catholics*, 25. Given Barnes' later antisemitic diatribes (discussed further in Chapter VI), such an explanation requires heavy qualification. Indeed, traces of overt antisemitism appear in his earlier writings as well. See Barnes, 'Basis of Fascism', 2.

[90] See, e.g., H.W.J.E., review of *The Necessity of Freedom: Notes on Christianity and Politics*, by Douglas Jerrold, *British Union Quarterly* 2, no. 3 (1938): 82-4.

[91] See, e.g., 'What is Fascism?', *Blackshirt*, 23—29 December 1933, 2; H.W. Luttman-Johnson, 'Excellent Publications', *Fascist Week*, 16—22 1934, 8; Robert Gordon-Canning, review of *Half a Life Left*, by James Strachey Barnes, *Action*, 3 July 1937, 12; 'Useful Booklets', *Action*, 6 November 1937, 9; 'Literature', *Action*, 20 January 1938, 18.

'all who are interested in Fascism, should certainly obtain this little book, which is extraordinary good value at the price'.[92]

To reflect this ideological disjunct, I locate the thought of Currey, Goad, and Petrie within a related, yet distinct, tradition of far-right politics. Bernhard Dietz utilises the fruitful terminology of 'Neo-Toryism', while Richard Griffiths deploys the phrase 'High Toryism' and Gary Love, following Petrie himself, the language of 'real Toryism'.[93] In any case, such thinkers espoused a coherent body of (paradoxically) revolutionary conservative thought. This ideological matrix became closely associated with the *English Review*, a popular right-wing periodical. Indeed, the namesake of the journal has been used by historians as a shorthand to concisely capture a wider network of fellow-travellers (not least because there was an *English Review* Luncheon Club). In mid-1931, the outlet was subsumed within the publishing house Eyre and Spottiswoode under the general editorship of friend and colleague, Douglas Jerrold.[94] Jerrold was himself a reputed, if controversial, thinker. The writer Wyndham Lewis once described him as 'the brains of the Right',[95] and not without reason. The Oxford-educated Jerrold considered his central preoccupation as the waging of an 'intellectual counter-revolution'.[96] While the *English Review* had adopted a noticeably Conservative leaning during the 1920s, under Jerrold's editorship it became a focal point for a type of radical conservatism, pro-fascist politics, and anti-Baldwinite sentiment.[97] It was, to quote one contemporary, 'notoriously sympathetic to Mosleyism'.[98] It is unsurprising, then, that the journal afforded considerable space to the Italophilic clique which occupies this chapter. Petrie, for example, was the journal's foreign editor between 1931 and 1937, publishing his own regular commentary on matters of international affairs. Likewise, as Petrie himself stated, 'Mr. Harold E. Goad and Miss Muriel Currey need no introduction to readers of *The English Review*'.[99]

What did this radical form of Toryism emanating from the *English Review* entail, and why were a subset of thinkers particularly drawn towards the Italian corporate state? In the first place, it ought to be borne in mind that a sense of malaise was pervasive within interwar British political thought, a sentiment aptly captured in what Stuart Middleton has referred to as the 'crisis of democracy'.[100] This sentiment would arguably precipitate and filter into

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[92] Alexander Raven Thomson, review of *The Working of a Corporate State: A Study of National Co-operation*, by Harold E. Goad and Muriel Currey, *Fascist Week*, 8—14 December 1933, 8.

[93] See, respectively, Dietz, *Neo-Tories*; Griffiths, *Fellow Travellers*, 15-6; Gary Love, '"Real Toryism" or Christian Democracy? The Political Thought of Douglas Jerrold and Charles Petrie at the *New English Review*, 1945-50', *Historical Research* 93, no. 261 (2020): 551-76. Villis studies what he calls the 'Catholic literary right', which was connected to the *English Review* and includes many of the same thinkers that I discuss. Yet the clique I focus on is not reducible to Villis', not least because not all were Catholic. Villis, *British Catholics*.

[94] Valerie Eliot and John Haffenden, eds., *The Letters of T.S. Eliot, Volume 5: 1930-1931* (London: Faber and Faber, 2014), 505.

[95] Cited in Dietz, *Neo-Tories*, 17.

[96] Villis, *British Catholics*, 137.

[97] Gary Love, 'The Periodical Press and the Intellectual Culture of Conservatism in Interwar Britain', *Historical Journal* 57, no. 4 (2014): 1033.

[98] Rosten, 'Rise of Oswald Mosley', 495-6.

[99] Charles Petrie, 'Foreign Affairs', *English Review* (January 1934): 97.

[100] Stuart Middleton, 'The Crisis of Democracy in Interwar Britain', *Historical Journal* 66, 1 (2023): 186-209.

discussion on the concepts of 'planning, corporatism and parliamentary reform' that would permeate 'across the political and social spectrum'.[101] 'Parliament is dying, and dying discreditably', argued John Strachey and the popular philosopher C.E.M. Joad, both of whom were New Party members.[102] In a more measured tone, Laski also lamented the ineptitude of the parliamentary system. While sceptical of Mosley's gravitation towards semi-dictatorial proposals under the New Party, Laski questioned the efficacy of addressing 'the problems of the twentieth century' with institutions devised to resolve 'the problems of the nineteenth'.[103] For Laski, '[t]he main questions for discussion are, in almost any field, of so technical a character, so quantitative in their aspect, that discussion by party debate is not, at least obviously, the best method for their solution'.[104] Such sentiments were shared by other noted 'IR theorists and students of democracy', such as Cole and Salter.[105]

The High Tory Italophiles, alongside the fascistic Barnes, likewise shared a critical disposition towards parliamentary democracy and the nineteenth-century system of free trade and finance capitalism, placing them at odds with much mainstream Tory opinion. In fact, Barnes held early sympathies for Mosley's New Party. Harold Nicolson unsuccessfully sought to persuade Barnes to stand as a party candidate, while the two, alongside the Catholic reactionary and famed poet T.S. Eliot, established tentative plans in March 1932 to produce an edited volume on the direction of modern politics, ideally including such thinkers as Keynes and Salter.[106] As with his New Party counterparts, Barnes demonstrated an appreciation for Keynes: 'Fascism entirely agrees with Mr. Maynard Keynes, despite the latter's prominent position as a Liberal'.[107] Barnes even suggested that Keynes' 1926 study, *The End of Laissez-Faire*, could 'serve as a useful introduction to fascist economics', and invited Keynes to study the Italian experiment, for '[a]n essay from his pen… would doubtless prove a most valuable piece of constructive criticism'.[108] Yet for these Italophiles, their critique of parliamentary democracy diverted along an immeasurably more radical direction relative to the likes of Laski or Salter, stridently opposed as these High Tories were to the materialism and individualism of liberal modernity as such.

Moreover, while their critical disposition towards capitalism was of similar vehemence to their pluralist and socialist counterparts (and shared some similarities with Keynes), it was tinged with a palpably illiberal, nationalist, and elitist character. Crucially, this manifested in the form of a highly paternalistic ethos towards the working class.

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[101] Worley, 'What Was the New Party?', 58.
[102] John Strachey and C.E.M. Joad, 'Parliamentary Reform: The New Party's Proposals', *Political Quarterly* 2, no. 3 (1931): 319. See also Harold Nicolson, 'Can the New Party Survive?', *Saturday Review*, 9 January 1932, 35. Joad was no IR scholar, yet it is interesting to note his reception within the early field; see, e.g., the bibliography on 'Psychology of International Relations' in Wright, *Study of International Relations*, 435.
[103] Harold J. Laski, 'The Mother of Parliaments', *Foreign Affairs* 9, no. 4 (1931): 570-1.
[104] *Ibid*, 569.
[105] Holthaus and Steffek, 'Experiments in International Administration', 116.
[106] Nicolson, *Diaries and Letters*, 111; Skidelsky, *Mosley*, 286; David Bradshaw, 'Politics', in *T.S. Eliot in Context*, ed. Jason Harding (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 270-1; Baldoli and Fleming, *British Fascist*, 5-6.
[107] Barnes, *Universal Aspects*, 113.
[108] *Ibid*, 13-5.

As much was captured in the self-deprecating sardonicism of Arthur Bryant, a popular historian and radical Tory affiliated with the *English Review*:

> Dear Petrie… I am afraid I cannot come and help you feast Jerrold… as I shall be lecturing to the proletariat on that evening. So while you are gorging caviare and swilling champagne, and drinking die-hard toasts to the destruction of the toiling masses, think of me kindly cherishing them, binding up their wounds and washing their soiled faces which you in your horris [*sic*] Fascist manner have ruthlessly ground in the dust.[109]

For some, this concern with the working class and poor had formative roots in religious and anti-capitalist political thought on the left and right. Influenced by guild socialism, syndicalism, Orage's *New Age*, and the right-wing Catholic beliefs of Hilaire Belloc and G.K. Chesterton, Jerrold glorified the guild system of medieval England, which offered a self-organising economic system that was less exploitative (and fractious) relative to modern capitalism.[110] In one discussion at Chatham House, Goad too suggested that he 'admire[d] the Corporate State from the angle of an old Socialist'. He added that the 'principal creators of the Corporate State in Italy had also been Socialists'.[111] It is here that one may glean the crux of their vision for British society: unlike their left-wing counterparts and the false Toryism which they derided, these Italophiles sought—for the sake of the British economy, empire, and the livelihood of the working class and poor, not least to ward off the Bolshevik menace—radical reform under the auspices of a much stronger leadership and an institutional reconfiguration based on inter-class cooperation via the corporate state.[112] Vitally, their call for the state's transformation was not synonymous with the imposition of a fascist, totalitarian system, a key distinction from Barnes. Instead, as Goad stated, the desire was for a strong national or 'unitary Government', akin in some respects to that which was 'partially obtained' during the First World War.[113]

The second point of nuance I desire to flag follows logically from the prior: the body of ideas expounded by Goad and his High Tory counterparts, alongside the fascist Barnes for that matter, did not merely parrot Italian discourse. In one revealing *International Affairs* review, Currey commented on Gravelli's internationalist tract, *Verso l'internazionale fascista*. While Gravelli envisaged a Fascist International involving an array of movements, Currey diverged. She argued that the majority of the 'so-called "Fascist Parties"' discussed by Gravelli lacked a 'real understanding of the foundations on which the Corporate State is built'.[114] For Currey and her associates, corporatism was evidently vital to the fascist experiment, a major force behind their attraction thereto, and a facet that ought to feature in comparable 'fascist' movements. While Currey and her counterparts may have therefore

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[109] Arthur Bryant to Charles Petrie, 5 November 1936, E/3, Arthur Bryant Papers, Liddell Hart Centre for Military Archives, King's College London.
[110] See, e.g., Villis, *British Catholics*, 137-8; Dietz, *Neo-Tories*, 50.
[111] Harold E. Goad, 'The Corporate State', *International Affairs* 12, no. 6 (1933): 787.
[112] See, e.g., Baldoli, *Exporting Fascism*, 101-4.
[113] Goad, W*hat Is Fascism?*, 9.
[114] Muriel Currey, review of *Verso L'Interationale Fascista*, by Asvero Gravelli, *International Affairs* 12, no. 2 (1933): 269.

been influenced by currents of fascist internationalism gaining currency in Italy, this was not mere ideological mimicry.

Thirdly, while this opening discussion has centred on the reception of universalist discourse across the English Channel, intellectual borrowing was not confined to a cross-national process of Italian thinkers and discourse influencing British Italophiles. The interpretations arrived at by the latter also shaped the thinking of, and was used by, other far-right British thinkers. Goad's thinking on the transferability of the corporate model was, for example, greatly influenced by Barnes' treatment of universal fascism.[115] Similarly, as Linehan suggests, CINEF had an important bearing on the development of British fascism, offering intellectual fodder to fellow traveller and extremists who desired a 'more solid theoretical… base'.[116] For one, Jerrold professed his sympathy for Barnes' CINEF in the *English Review*, lauding the account of the fascist creed expressed in its yearbook.[117] Alternatively, while it may be a simplification to depict Currey as a mere 'spokesman' for Goad's views,[118] the influence of the latter on the former cannot be denied. None of this is to mention the reception of such Italophiles amongst self-identified fascists associated with the BF, Imperial Fascist League, and later the BUF.

Fourth, the directionality of transnational influence cut in both directions. Barnes, for one, sought to cast a particular strand of clerical fascism as mainstream within Italian discourse, while those propounding a secularised deification of the state, the so-called 'idolaters of the State', were depicted as increasingly marginal.[119] This may be an overstatement and, indeed, Barnes' clerico-fascism stood at stark odds with the thinking of the preeminent fascist ideologue, Giovanni Gentile. In this respect, such British thinkers were themselves important not only in *propagating* an Italian-inflected conception of fascism (much to the pleasure of party hierarchs), but their output *shaped* the meaning(s) of fascism before an international audience, a point discussed further in the next section. Indeed, before the London Group, Pellizzi even suggested that 'foreign students of Fascism have sometimes been more successful in their attempts at finding a definition of the movement than Italian Fascists themselves'.[120] After all, Barnes considered his 'part in the Revolution' as that of 'chronicler and prophet', deeming his writings of value in 'defining the doctrine' itself.[121]

In this vein, it is noteworthy that much of the literature spread by such Italophiles went beyond the British far right to enter a wider transnational circulation amongst likeminded movements. In an effort to resolve comparable misconceptions about fascism allegedly pervading the Netherlands, Goad and Currey's *The Working of*

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[115] Colacicco, 'Thought of Harold Goad', 592.
[116] Linehan, *British Fascism*, 128.
[117] Douglas Jerrold, 'Current Comments', *English Review* (February 1929): 136-7.
[118] Griffiths, *Fellow Travellers*, 17.
[119] Barnes, 'International Centre of Fascist Studies', 265.
[120] Camillo Pellizzi, 'The Historical Background of the Corporate State', typescript, n.d., 3, LH 15/3/365, BHLHP.
[121] Barnes, *Half a Life Left*, 24-5.

a Corporate State received a Dutch translation.[122] Most significantly, the output of such thinkers was reviewed by notable Italian fascists and utilised as propaganda by the Italian regime itself. For example, Goad penned a pamphlet on fascism and the corporate state after the British Institute was allegedly inundated with queries about fascism.[123] The publication was lauded by officials as an apt reflection of the Italian experiment and it achieved wide circulation, leading not only to several reprints, but the release of a book-length treatment.[124] In 1938, the Ministry of Popular Culture also distributed Currey's *The Position of Women in Italy* via the Liverpool consulate,[125] while copies of Goad and Currey's book had been arranged for staff at the Italian embassy in Washington in 1934.[126] In the prior November, Italian ambassador Grandi had relayed his approval of the book to Mussolini himself, ecstatic by its inclusion of an admiring preface by Chatham House member and then British Minister for Agriculture Walter Elliott, a 'courageous' thinker and a pro-Italian proponent of the corporate state.[127] In fact, the output of such Italophiles rose in importance as the decade progressed, partly because support from Grandi and the Italian embassy for the BUF markedly declined by the mid-1930s, the latter viewed as evermore remote in British politics, while its realignment towards Germany caused concern amongst Italian officials. This loss of confidence led Grandi to increasingly promote Italian soft power via a network of British Italophiles.[128] Indeed, the Italian embassy, and especially Grandi, functioned as important conduits for this Italophilic clique. They were personally acquainted with Grandi, while Currey also acted as an 'intelligence asset' to the ambassador.[129]

Corporatism and the Interwar Think Tank

Barnes, Goad, Pellizzi, and several other Italophiles and British-based Italian fascists waged a concerted defence of the fascist regime via innumerable speaking engagements, a litany of popular periodicals, and the despatch of copious letters to newspaper editors. Yet early IR journals, university lecture halls, and international affairs think tanks also came to have a prominent role. This section begins with the so-called London Group for the Study of the Corporate State, using the output and activities of its participants as a point of entry into understanding how these Italophiles and their Italian counterparts engaged with the early study of international relations in Britain.

Chatham House and the London Group

In 1933, an Italophilic clique formed the London Group in order to study the 'possibilities of the Corporate State', to quote the memoirs of the popular historian Charles Petrie.[130] The earlier mentioned LNU activist and journalist

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[122] Harold E. Goad and Muriel Currey, *Onder Fascistisch Bewind: Een Corporatieve Staat in de Praktijk*, trans. H. Onderstal (Utrecht: Nederlandsche Nationaal-Socialistische Uitgeverij, 1934).
[123] Goad, W*hat Is Fascism?*
[124] Harold E. Goad, *History of the British Institute of Florence* (Giannini & Giovannelli, 1939), 42.
[125] Colacicco, '*Il fascismo e le università in Gran Bretagna*'.
[126] Baldoli, *Exporting Fascism*, 20.
[127] See the intercepted communication between Dino Grandi and the Italian Foreign Ministry, 28 November 1933, HW 12/174, TNA.
[128] Baldoli, *Exporting Fascism*, 97.
[129] Dorril, *Blackshirt*, 361.
[130] Charles Petrie, *A Historian Looks at His World* (London: Sidgwick & Jackson, 1972), 114.

Muriel Currey served as the Honorary Secretary, while Petrie chaired the collective.[131] Participation therein encompassed a range of figures, yet its founding members derived from its formative affiliation with Chatham House. Barnes, who lectured before the London Group in early 1933,[132] was also among the BIIA's original members, the latter a possible byproduct of his acquaintance with Philip Kerr, founding editor of the *Round Table* journal and co-author of one of the earliest IR textbooks.[133] Goad, who would speak before the London Group on such matters as the institutional configuration of the corporate state, was appointed to Chatham House in November 1920,[134] and Currey the following March.[135] George Young—former *Charge d'Affaires* in Washington turned journalist, Middle East expert, and an original BIIA member—also engaged (perhaps fleetingly) with the Lond Group, lecturing before its participants on Spanish and Portuguese experimentation with corporativism.[136]

Petrie was another important Italophile orbiting this circle. While an Irish baronet, Petrie spent his childhood in Liverpool and later graduated from Corpus Christi College, Oxford in 1919 after spending the First World War in an artillery regiment and the War Cabinet Office.[137] During the interwar period, he gained a reputation as a noted historian and a figure thoroughly networked into Conservative politics, serving as, for example, Chairman of the West London Ashridge Circle in the 1930s. His studies often impinged on the contemporary politics of foreign countries and international dynamics more generally. Petrie undertook a range of speeches on matters of international concern, and lectured on foreign affairs at the Bonar Law Memorial College, Ashridge, the latter established to promote intellectual engagement amongst Conservatives.[138] In late 1933, for instance, Petrie helped to deliver an Ashridge course on 'Broadcasting and Public Opinion', wherein lecturing on 'Broadcasting and International Affairs'.[139] Moreover, his publications on international and diplomatic history were reviewed in international affairs journals. After all, as Geoffrey Field notes, '[t]he distinction between international history and IR was extremely vague in British universities… until the early 1960s and, arguably, well beyond that'.[140] Oddly, though, Petrie belatedly joined the RIIA in 1933, the same year in which the London Group formed. His institutional membership was proposed by Lieutenant-Colonel Sir Arnold Wilson, Conservative MP, controversial anti-Baldwinite editor of the *Nineteenth Century and After* (1934-8), and himself an avid fascist sympathiser associated with

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131 Griffiths, *Fellow Travellers*, 17, 44.

132 Muriel Currey to Dino Grandi, 1 April 1933, MS 366/17/3/3, Blackshirt Collection, Special Collections and Archives, University of Sheffield.

133 Kerr's private opinion of Barnes appears mixed. 'Jim Barnes is an ass', remarked Kerr on one occasion, at least according to Herbert's recollection. Destani and Tomes, *Albania's Greatest Friend*, 328-9.

134 See, respectively, 'Corporate State Group Forthcoming Meetings', typescript, n.d., LH 15/3/365, BHLHP; Minutes of 9th Meeting of the Executive Committee, 24 November 1920, CHA.

135 Minutes of 12th Meeting of the Executive Committee, 1 March 1921, CHA.

136 'Notes on a Lecture Delivered by Sir George Young on the Corporate Experiment in Spain and Portugal', typescript, n.d., LH 15/3/365, BHLHP. See also George Young, *Constantinople* (London: Methuen, 1926); George Young, *Egypt* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1927).

137 For biographical information on Petrie, see his autobiographies, *Chapters of Life* (London: Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1950), and *A Historian*.

138 Minutes of 93rd Meeting of the Election Committee, 8 February 1933, 30b, CHA.

139 'Political Notes', *Times*, 24 October 1933, 14.

140 Field, 'Elizabeth Wiskemann', 216.

the *English Review* circle.[141] Interestingly, it was seconded by John W. Wheeler-Bennett, a thinker well-acquainted with the Italophiles, a prominent individual in Chatham House's history, and subsequently an IR Fellow at St Antony's College, Oxford.[142] While Wheeler-Bennett's biographer is grossly inaccurate in asserting that he 'virtually created the new early twentieth-century academic discipline of "international relations"', suffice it to note that Wheeler-Bennett was a notable British international thinker.[143]

Several of the figures who partook in the London Group were deeply involved in the activities of Chatham House in a variety of ways. Records even indicate that Barnes, Currey, and Goad gifted items to the Chatham House library during its early development.[144] Moreover, as I will discuss further in the next section, such thinkers—Currey, in particular—contributed book reviews to *International Affairs* and its precursors. These were, in turn, referenced by others orbiting such far-right circles. For example, Goad's review of *The Fascist Experiment* by his friend Villari was, in turn, cited with approval in Barnes' *The Universal Aspects of Fascism*.[145] Such individuals also regularly attended lectures at Chatham House and, as transcripts reveal, they frequently directed questions to the speaker during the subsequent discussions. Barnes for one occasionally attended lectures in the early 1920s,[146] and pursuant to his close ties to the Albanian movement for independence, he requested in 1921 that the nation's London representative be allowed to attend a forthcoming meeting, an invitation denied by the Executive Council due to its then stance against admitting foreigners.[147] Nevertheless, Barnes' expertise was certainly acknowledged within the institute. Indeed, the 1923 BIIA minutes record a recommendation that Barnes, alongside Edith Durham, be expressly invited to a forthcoming speech by one Captain Diggle to discuss the emerging fascist movement.[148] Most notably, Barnes later spoke at the institute on fascist doctrine in 1926, with former British Ambassador to Italy Sir Rennell Rodd acting as chair. While the script was not printed in the institute's journal, it would feature in the right-wing *National Review*.[149]

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[141] Before his wartime death, Wilson wrote on international affairs, particularly regarding Italy and the Middle East, for which he was a recognised expert. His study *The Suez Canal* was reviewed in *International Affairs*, while he presented abridged versions before the institute in 1933 and 1939. He also chaired a presentation by archaeologist D.G. Hogarth on Wahabism and presented on developments in the East. As with other Italophiles, Wilson made notable donations to Chatham House's library. See the 'The Library' and 'Meetings of the Session' in *Journal of the British Institute of International Affairs* 5, no. 2 (1926); D.G. Hogarth, 'Wahabism and British Interests', *Journal of the British Institute of International Politics* 4, no. 2 (1925): 70-81; Arnold Wilson, 'Constitutional Tendencies in Eastern Countries', 8 February 1932, RIIA/8/183, CHA; H.A. Smith, review of *The Suez Canal: Its Past, Present and Future*, by Arnold Wilson, *International Affairs* 13, no. 3 (1934): 450; Arnold Wilson, 'The Suez Canal', 3 April 1933, RIIA/8/271, CHA; Arnold Wilson, 'The Suez Canal', *International Affairs* 18, no. 3 (1939): 380-95.

[142] Council Minutes, 8 February 1933, 23b, CHA; Minutes of 93rd Meeting of the Election Committee, 8 February 1933, 30b, CHA.

[143] Schofield, *Witness to History*, 282.

[144] Reference to such donations appear in the 'Chatham House Notes' issued alongside various editions of *International Affairs* and its predecessors.

[145] Barnes, *Universal Aspects*, 62-3.

[146] See, e.g., Barnes' contribution to a discussion led by Toynbee in 'Meetings of the Autumn Session', *Journal of the British Institute of International Affairs* 2, no. 1 (1923): 44.

[147] Minutes of the Executive Committee, 12 January 1921, CHA.

[148] Minutes of 50th Meeting of the Executive Committee, 6 November 1923, CHA.

[149] James Strachey Barnes, 'The Doctrines and Aims of Fascism', *National Review* (June 1926): 568-86.

Barnes added a degree of gravitas to his remarks, beginning his presentation by highlighting that Mussolini had personally read and approved of his notes in advance of the talk.[150] This speech was a prelude to the 1928 release of Barnes' widely read *The Universal Aspects of Fascism*, a book which carried a foreword by Mussolini (evidently, the *Duce* had reversed his position on fascism's exportability).[151] Intriguingly, the title page of this monograph emphasised Barnes' membership of the RIIA. As Barnes used Mussolini's personal approval to establish his bona fides on fascism before his audience at Chatham House, so it appears that he utilised his status as an RIIA member, then still limited to a few hundred elite individuals, to impart a modicum of authority onto a treatise intended to 'urgently' persuade British readers of fascism's moral value and replicability.[152]

Others were also engaged in varied ways with the institute's regularly scheduled presentations. In February 1934, Petrie chaired a presentation on 'Franco-Italian Relations' by Maurice Pernot, a French journalist and commentator on international affairs.[153] Shy of two years prior, Petrie spoke before the institute on the same topic, the diplomatic historian and one-time head of the National Peace Council G.P. Gooch acting as chairperson.[154] Young presented a lively talk on the Russian Revolution before the institute, and would later speak again in 1934 about the evolving situation in Spain.[155] Goad also attended several Chatham House presentations both before and after his appointment to the British Institute of Florence,[156] and he was likewise granted the opportunity to present on the corporate state before the institute in October 1933, a speech not only chaired by Petrie, but subsequently published in *International Affairs*.[157] In this case, Goad's delivery before the wider institute offered an opportunity to spread the new gospel beyond the London Group. As he concluded his speech: 'If I have said enough to stimulate you to the study of this great new philosophy, this new system of government, I shall have done all that I intended in venturing to address you'.[158] Perhaps unsurprisingly, Goad's institutional involvement was not uncontroversial. On one occasion following an address before Chatham House's 'Italian Group' (not to be confused with the London Group for the Study of the Corporate State), Goad was scolded by G.M. Gathorne-Hardy, joint Honorary Secretary of Chatham House and formerly chief editor of its journal, for violating the institute's confidentiality rule. Contravening accepted etiquette, Goad relayed to Mussolini's brother, Arnoldo, and one Signor Pirelli (probably Dr Alberto Pirelli, an industrialist, then President of the International Chamber of Commerce, and later president of the Italian Institute for International Political Studies) supposedly libellous comments made by the prominent

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[150] Barnes, 'The Doctrine of Fascism', 2, RIIA/8/35, CHA.
[151] Benito Mussolini, preface to *The Universal Aspects of Fascism*, by James Strachey Barnes (London: Williams and Norgate, 1928).
[152] Barnes, *Universal Aspects*, 238.
[153] Maurice Pernot, 'Franco-Italian Relations', *International Affairs* 13, no. 4 (1934): 508.
[154] Charles Petrie, 'Franco-Italian Relations', 6 June 1932, RIIA/8/212, CHA.
[155] George Young, 'The Situation in Spain', 8 February 1934, RIIA/8/311, CHA.
[156] Examples may be found in the yearly 'List of Meetings' detailed in the compiled 'Chatham House Annual Reports, 1919-1925', annual reports, CHA, alongside the 'Report of the Council of the Royal Institute of International Affairs to the Seventh Annual General Meeting of the Institute', annual report, 1926, CHA.
[157] Goad, 'Corporate State'. Goad published a similar piece some months before; see 'The Principles of the Corporate State', *English Review* (March 1933): 267-78.
[158] Goad, 'Corporate State', 783.

journalist Wickham Steed, himself a vocal critic of fascism.[159] Communicating with his Italian colleagues via a third-party, Goad subsequently relayed their replies to Steed in an ill-guided effort to convince him to recant his position, albeit only managing to attract his ire.[160]

Several England-based Italian nationals would also come to be associated with these Italophilic thinkers and partake in the London Group in some form. For instance, Gabriele Paresce—Press Attache at the Italian Embassy during the early 1930s, a dear friend of Barnes whom he met during the Italo-Abyssinian War, and later a senior official within the Ministry of Popular Culture—presented papers on social services provided under, and the economic activities of, the corporate state.[161] Beyond the London Group, he was invited to speak, on the recommendation of Goad no less, before the institute itself on Italian foreign policy. This presentation was chaired by the pro-Nazi merchant banker E.W.D. Tennant and reproduced in *International Affairs*.[162] Paresce was something of an outsider within the embassy. Indeed, he complained of his colleagues' snide remarks, viewing him as an overly intellectual party zealot.[163] Admittedly, his academic credentials were notable. Whilst in England, Paresce travelled to Oxford. He was hosted at New College by the liberal historian H.A.L. Fisher for one month, having been introduced through the liberal Italophile and Regius Professor of History, G.M. Trevelyan. During his Oxford stint, Paresce studied in preparation for a class on the ruling elite that he was to deliver at the esteemed political science institute, *Cesare Alfieri*, as part of his habilitation in the History of Treaties and Diplomatic Relations.[164]

Likewise, Signor Zuccoli (presumably Giuseppe Zuccoli, an Italian banker and a delegate to the International Chamber of Commerce) was invited by the London Group to deliver a paper on banking as it pertained to Italian corporatism.[165] In an undated letter to Liddell Hart, Currey also despatched a copy of a manifesto by fascist internationalist and economics professor Carlo Emilio Ferri, which called for the serious study of the corporate state by 'thinking men all over the world'. By this point, the document had already received Petrie's

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[159] Notwithstanding his own antisemitic streak, Steed attracted the BUF's ire. See 'Current Cant and Fascist Fact', *Fascist Week*, 1—7 December 1933, 2. On Steed's antisemitism, see Andrew Liebich, 'The Antisemitism of Henry Wickham Steed', *Patterns of Prejudice* 46, no. 2 (2012): 180-208.

[160] Minutes of 104th Meeting of the Council, 11 January 1928, CHA.

[161] Muriel Currey to Dino Grandi, 8 April 1933, MS 366/17/3/3, Blackshirt Collection; Muriel Currey to Basil Liddell Hart, 1 June 1932, LH 15/3/365, BHLHP; Muriel Currey to Basil Liddell Hart, 20 May 1933, LH 15/3/365, BHLHP; Gabriele Paresce, 'Economic Activities of the Corporate State', typescript, n.d., LH 15/3/365, BHLHP; Gabriele Paresce, 'Social Services and the Corporate State', typescript, n.d., LH 15/3/365, BHLHP. On Barnes' relationship to Paresce, see Barnes, *Half a Life Left*, 274; Baldoli and Fleming, *British Fascist*, 45.

[162] Gabriele Paresce, *Memorie di un diplomatico: Londra, Washington, Seoul (1931-1966)*, ed. Giuseppe Spagnulo (Napoli: Editoriale Scientifica, 2023), 69-70; Gabriele Paresce, 'Italian Foreign Policy', *International Affairs* 10, no. 3 (1931): 352-71.

[163] Paresce, *Memorie di un diplomatico*, 77.

[164] *Ibid*, 71, 75-6. In the 1950s, Paresce recounts how he nearly, by accident, secured a post at Berkeley teaching diplomatic relations. *Ibid*, 157-8.

[165] Zuccoli (presumably Giuseppe Zuccoli), 'Banking in the Corporate State', typescript, 22 February 1933, LH 15/3/365, BHLHP.

signature.[166] Importantly, Grandi himself received typescripts of presentations and was kept abreast of developments. On one occasion, Grandi even floated the idea to Currey that Giuseppe Bottai, prominent fascist politician and corporatist thinker, travel to London and lecture before the London Group. Petrie, writing to Grandi, eagerly embraced this proposition, and suggested that Bottai also add the newly formed Oxford University Fascist Association to his list of speaking events.[167]

Among this litany of characters was Luigi Villari, who not only lectured to the London Group on corporatism,[168] but was actively involved in the wider *English Review* circle, a regular contributor to outlets closely linked to IR's formative history, and a close counterpart of Goad, Currey, Petrie, and the 'oldest existing friend' of Barnes.[169] Villari himself had thorough practical experience in international affairs. Between 1906 and 1910, he held consecutive posts as vice-consul in New Orleans, Philadelphia, and Boston.[170] Following the outbreak of the First World War, he served as liaison officer with allied forces in Macedonia, where he developed a friendship and deep respect for Goad.[171] He later passed through the League Secretariat and, in 1926, was appointed by Mussolini to coordinate a propaganda campaign targeting educated British opinion, a mission he dutifully undertook until the mid-1930s and on whose status he reported directly to the dictator.[172] While in London, he published several English books on Mussolini and fascism (and reportedly even supplied material to Petrie which the latter used in his English-language biography of Mussolini).[173] Expectedly, contemporaries sought Villari's expertise on such matters. He was, for example, amongst an illustrious cast who lectured before the 1928 Summer School of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom on 'New Theories of Government… and their Relation to International Peace'. Other lecturers included Brailsford, Swanwick, the anti-fascist Gaetano Salvemini, alongside William Thomas Goode and Edward Frank Wise—both original Chatham House members and prominent socialists. The school ended with a debate, which asked: 'Is any one form of Government more likely to promote International Peace than another?'[174] Villari also spoke before a range of Anglophone audiences on matters of Italian foreign policy. He delivered lectures in 1926 at the Royal United Service Institution on such topics as Italian aspirations in the Mediterranean and Italy's 'Red Sea Colonies'; the Ottawa, Toronto, and Vancouver branches of the Canadian Institute of International Affairs in early 1934; and Chatham House in March 1935.[175]

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[166] Muriel Currey to Basil Liddell Hart, n.d., LH 2C/247/1, BHLHP; Carlo Emilio Ferri, 'The Corporate System: An Appeal to Common Sense', typescript, n.d., LH 2C/247/1, BHLHP.
[167] Charles Petrie to Dino Grandi, 2 April 1933, MS 366/17/3/3, Blackshirt Collection.
[168] Luigi Villari, 'The XIII Confederation', typescript, n.d., LH 15/3/365, BHLHP.
[169] Baldoli and Fleming, *British Fascist*, 35.
[170] Colacicco, '*Il fascismo e le università in Gran Bretagna*'.
[171] Luigi Villari, *The Macedonian Campaign* (London: T. Fisher and Unwin Ltd., 1922), 6; Destani and Tomes, *Albania's Greatest Friend*, 238.
[172] Baldoli, *Exporting Fascism*, 10; Colacicco, '*Il fascismo e le università in Gran Bretagna*'.
[173] Colacicco, '*Il fascismo e le università in Gran Bretagna*'.
[174] 'International Summer School in England', *Woman's Leader*, 15 June 1928, 153.
[175] See Luigi Villari, 'The Italian Red Sea Colonies', *Journal of the Royal Central Asian Society* 14, no. 2 (1926): 115-29; Luigi Villari, 'The Aspirations of Italy in the Mediterranean', *Royal United Services Institution Journal* 72, no. 485

Unsurprisingly, Pellizzi engaged with the London Group, having established himself as a prominent figure amongst far-right circles and a reputable thinker within Chatham House. In the foreword to one of the RIIA's most well-known interwar outputs, namely the report on *Nationalism* chaired by Carr, Lord Astor acknowledges those who 'materially assisted' the study's select group of researchers. Various interwar IR mainstays are mentioned: Mitrany, Schwarzenberger, Zimmern. One would be forgiven if, upon surveying this list, Pellizzi's inclusion was casually overlooked.[176] Clearly, Pellizzi commanded respect among contemporary commentators. In 1933, Pellizzi commented on the massive influx of queries he had received related to fascism, a situation he imagined must confront his colleagues at Cambridge and Oxford on absurd proportions.[177] Whatever the situation of his Oxbridge counterparts, Pellizzi's expertise was evidently in demand. He obliged, readily sharing his reflections on matters of Italian foreign policy and the corporate system's universal application. Pellizzi even published an article in the BIIA journal on Italian fascism, its contents reflecting his speech presented before the institute in February 1923, with the esteemed Trevelyan serving as chair.[178] Notably, this speech amassed 'an unprecedentedly large attendance'.[179] Pellizzi returned to lecture at Chatham House in December 1931, on this occasion discussing Italo-Vatican relations, wherein he directly engaged with Toynbee's thoughts on the matter, who was also serving as chair.[180] Later, Pellizzi contributed a book on Italian foreign policy to the *Ambassadors at Large* series, wherein peddling—in an effort to sway an increasingly hostile British opinion—oft-repeated grievances that Italy was no aggressor, but a mistreated 'Have-Not'.[181] This series, edited by none other than E.H. Carr, aimed to solicit prominent voices from each of the great powers to recount their respective views on international politics and thus inform the politically engaged British public on world affairs.[182] As former Minister of Finance Alberto de' Stefani noted, Pellizzi 'needs no introduction… to the educated Anglo-Saxon public'.[183]

Finally, it should be noted that there is a curious lack of evidence to indicate the Jerrold participated in the London Group, notwithstanding his leading role within the *English Review*. Nevertheless, it is worthwhile noting that Jerrold was recognised as a commentator on international politics and maintained some links to Chatham House. In 1932, for example, it was reported to the institute's council that Angell was undertaking a project on public

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(1927): 144-60; 'Report of the Council of the Royal Institute of International Affairs, 1933-1934', annual report, 1934, 69-71, CHA; Luigi Villari, 'Italian Foreign Policy', *International Affairs* 14, no. 3 (1935): 320-45.

[176] Waldorf Astor (Viscount Astor), foreword to *Nationalism: A Report by a Study Group of Members of the Royal Institute of International Affairs*, by E.H. Carr, G.M. Gathorne-Hardy, Morris Ginsberg, N.F. Hall, T.H. Marshall, L.G. Robinson, D.A. Routh, C.G. Vickers, and M.G. Balfour (London: Oxford University Press, 1939). On this report, see Michael Cox, 'E.H. Carr, Chatham House and *Nationalism*', *International Affairs* 97, no. 1 (2021): 219-28. See also Breschi and Longo, *Camillo Pellizzi*, 126-7.

[177] Ledeen, *Universal Fascism*, 75.

[178] 'Forthcoming Meetings', *Journal of the British Institute of International Affairs* 2, no. 1 (1923): 50; Camillo Pellizzi, 'The Fascista Movement', *Journal of the British Institute of International Affairs* 2, no. 3 (1923): 119-24.

[179] 'Meetings of the Spring Session', *Journal of the British Institute of International Affairs* 2, no. 2 (1923): 83.

[180] Camillo Pellizzi, 'Italy and the Vatican', 10 December 1931, RIIA/8/174, CHA.

[181] Camillo Pellizzi, *Italy* (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1939).

[182] See the correspondence between the publishing house, Longman, and E.H. Carr, 23 September 1937, MS 1393 3/5927, Longman Group Archive, University of Reading.

[183] Alberto de' Stefani, foreword to *Italy*, by Camillo Pellizzi (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1939), ix.

opinion and the League. Upon the draft's completion, it was to be despatched to a series of reputed persons, including Zimmern, Kingsley Martin, Rachel Crowdy, G. Lowes Dickinson, Lord Lloyd, and Douglas Jerrold no less.[184] His publications were also reviewed in the institute's journal, while he was invited to speak before members on the danger of pacifism in 1932.[185]

Notwithstanding the above information about its participants (or, conversely, as the above comment on Jerrold illustrates), details on the London Group *itself* are incredibly scant. In fact, there is no express reference to its existence within the RIIA's Executive Committee minutes and its associated bodies, nor is there any mention in King-Hall's contemporaneous study of Chatham House. Records suggest that a fledgling and provisional 'Italian Group' had formed by 1926, albeit its formalisation was contingent on whether it managed to attract requisite demand.[186] Rather than being a direct outgrowth of this group, or somehow reflective of a selective organisational amnesia, it is more likely that the corporate study group formed as a private enterprise loosely affiliated with, and physically held within, Chatham House. The institute had allowed members to organise, with express permission, informal meetings in the Common Room since at least the mid-1920s and a trend later emerged towards the creation of 'Members' Private Groups', a development that the council seemed to applaud, at least in principle.[187] In fact, the title of the London Group even alludes to its RIIA-links and the institute's 'Study Group Method'. As Parmar argues, Chatham House advocated a 'scientism'—nebulously defined—'focused around the collection and analysis of facts by experts'.[188] Drawing upon the language of science acted to legitimate knowledge of the international by conveying an objective aura. As one contemporary phrased it, Chatham House's purpose was to remove 'foreign affairs' out from the 'atmosphere of prejudice and sentiment'.[189]

By virtue of this documentary scarcity, it is difficult to gauge the London Group's substantive impact. Its most tangible output would prove to be Currey and Goad's book-length treatment, *The Working of a Corporate State*. While the book's partisan nature was palpable, the authors introduced the study with a tone reminiscent of the 'scientism' characteristic of Chatham House. The study was 'neither an attack nor a defence of Fascism, but an objective description of a novel political experiment in national co-operation'.[190] This was a line echoed more widely by these Italophiles. As Currey opined in a debate with Laski, one should remove 'this whole question of a new form of democracy in Italy out of the emotional atmosphere, and see if there is anything we can learn from it'.[191]

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[184] Report for the Council by Lord Trenchard, 13 July 1932, CHA.
[185] Douglas Jerrold, 'Pacifism: A Danger to World Peace?', 24 October 1932, RIIA/8/229, CHA.
[186] Minutes of 92nd Meeting of the Council, 1 December 1926, CHA.
[187] Minutes of 65th Meeting of the Executive Committee, 5 November 1924, CHA; 'Report of the Council of the Royal Institute of International Affairs, 1931-1932', annual report, 1932, 16, CHA.
[188] Parmar, 'Anglo-American Elites', 56. See also Williams, 'Commonwealth of Knowledge', 50-1.
[189] King-Hall, *Chatham House*, 3.
[190] Harold E. Goad and Muriel Currey, *The Working of a Corporate State: A Study of National Co-operation* (London: Ivor Nicholson and Watson, 1933), 10.
[191] 'Laski v. Yeats-Brown', *Fascist Week*, 27 April—3 May 1934, 5.

Barnes likewise professed before his audience at Chatham House that his speech to follow was not 'in any sense a special pleading on behalf of Fascism', but merely 'matters of fact and not of opinion'.[192]

While such claims are farcical, the group did appear—at least partly and at one point—to entertain divergent opinions. Young's participation is suggestive. After resigning his wartime commission in January 1919, he travelled to Berlin as correspondent for the left-radical *Daily News*. The resulting book detailing his experience revealed the mind not of a proto-fascist, but a democratic opponent of Kaiserism, Junkerism, and Prussianism.[193] Indeed, Young was a member of Labour's Advisory Committee on International Questions.[194] His book-length treatments of international issues, often reviewed in *International Affairs*, reflected his left-wing roots. This was exemplified by his laudatory assessment on the 'new Spain' under Manuel Azaña's constitutional republicanism.[195] Young also wrote more broadly on international affairs—including an introductory textbook, *Diplomacy Old and New*, for G. Lowes Dickinson's *International Handbooks* series[196]—developing a reputation as a respected international thinker during the 1920s. In 1929, he spoke before the Williamstown IOP, a beacon of early American IR,[197] and received the prestigious *Yale Review* award for a piece he wrote on the Near East, an honour granted to such luminaries as Salter and Walter Lippmann.[198] Evidently, the London Group was not beyond inviting thinkers experimenting with corporatist ideas, yet unsympathetic to the Italian regime. Pursuant to Chatham House's 'Study Group method', the nominal intent was to achieve 'synthesis', and 'not necessarily to obtain unanimity'.[199] Whether this was meaningfully achieved in the London Group is, however, another matter: the line between unanimity and synthesis blurs when participation was largely constrained to the already faithful.

In fact, while its members appealed to a non-partisan aura popular at Chatham House, the London Group had become disassociated from the institute by April 1933, its project too overtly political for the RIIA.[200] In one revealing letter to Liddell Hart, the institute's postal address at St James's Square was abruptly crossed out and replaced.[201] The activities of the London Group thereafter relocated to Currey's flat and its meetings held in at least

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192 Barnes, 'The Doctrine of Fascism', 2, RIIA/8/35, CHA.
193 George Young, *The New Germany* (London: Constable and Company, 1920).
194 See, e.g., William P. Maddox, 'Advisory Policy Committees for Political Parties', *Political Science Quarterly* 49, no. 2 (1934): 257; George Young, *The Reform of Diplomacy* (London: The Labour Party, n.d.), PRO 30/69/1830, TNA.
195 George Young, *The New Spain* (London: Methuen & Co., 1933).
196 See George Young, *Diplomacy Old and New* (London: Swarthmore Press, 1921); George Young, *The Pendulum of Progress: An Essay in Political Science and Scientific Politics* (London: Oxford University Press, 1931).
197 My thanks to James McAllister for pointing this out. On Young's stint at Williamstown, see, *inter alia*, Louis Stark, 'Say All Nations Must Study Peace', *New York Times*, 15 August 1929, 12; Louis Stark, 'Clash at Williams on Peace by Force', *New York Times*, 21 August 1929, 13; Louis Stark, 'Asks Our Offices to Stay War in East', *New York Times*, 27 August 1929, 10.
198 'Yale Review's Award Won by George Young', *New York Times*, 19 September 1929, 31.
199 'Report of the Council of the Royal Institute of International Affairs, 1933-1934', 14, CHA.
200 Muriel Currey to Dino Grandi, 8 April 1933, MS 366/17/3/3, Blackshirt Collection; Dorril, *Blackshirt*, 234.
201 Muriel Currey to Basil Liddell Hart, 30 April 1933, LH 15/3/365, BHLHP.

two other locations in Belgravia and Piccadilly.[202] As Currey relayed to Grandi in April 1933, this relocation was not due to 'any lack of friendliness' on the institute's part. Instead, the decision was made to circumvent limitations imposed by Chatham House's Royal Charter, which prevented the institute from 'expressing any opinions' and, by proxy, rendered the London Group's meetings 'strictly private'. While acknowledging that this meant forgoing the benefits of acting through Chatham House, she argued that 'the moment has come for a certain amount of publicity'.[203] As Petrie similarly remarked: 'The disadvantages have come to outweigh the advantages, as we now want to make our activities as widely known as possible, and it is difficult to do this without implicating the Royal Institute of International Affairs'.[204] Despite this disaffiliation, many London Group members continued to operate within Chatham House and use the institute to proselytise corporatism, a point explored further below.

With that said, the London Group's fate is unclear. While a conclusive chronology is difficult to construct, its meetings may have petered out partly because key members sought out larger projects and partook in other initiatives likely to gain corporatism a wider audience. For example, alongside such fascist luminaries as Joyce and Thomson, Petrie and Goad lectured before Oxford's budding fascist students on Mussolini and corporatism.[205] Writing to Grandi, Petrie also turned his attention towards the prospect of arranging an international conference in Italy to foster a transfer of ideas about the corporate state.[206] As Colacicco noted, in late 1933 Goad also sought support for creating an International Corporation Study Centre in Sanremo. Its intention was to educate students from the University of London and Oxford on contemporary social issues and the corporate state.[207] Moreover, it is arguable that the BUF's intellectual front, the January Club, and its post-Mosleyite successor, the Windsor Club, were viewed by former London Group members as a continuation of their agenda.[208] Several figures involved with the *English Review* constituted a key faction within the club, including Currey, Goad, and Petrie. In May 1934, for instance, Petrie was invited to debate Mosley on the 'Roads to Fascism' during a special ladies' dinner hosted by the club.[209] Goad was also among the 'principal speakers' at the dinner during which the club was first conceived.[210] As *Fascist Week* reported, the dinner's express purpose was to form a club to promote 'the Corporate State idea among

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[202] Though Liddell Hart was acquainted with many fascists and fellow travellers—some of whom viewed him as a potential convert and courted his expertise—he was no fascist himself, despite occasionally praising the Italian experiment during the 1920s. See B.H. Liddell Hart, 'The New Romulus and the New Rome', *Atlantic Monthly* (July 1928): 108-19; Henry William Luttman-Johnson to Basil Liddell Hart, 23 June 1934, LH 5/18, BHLHP; B.H. Liddell Hart, 'Message for the Queen's Hall Meeting June 8 1938', typescript, 8 June 1938, LH 12/1938/14, BHLHP.

[203] Muriel Currey to Dino Grandi, 8 April 1933, MS 366/17/3/3, Blackshirt Collection.

[204] Charles Petrie to Dino Grandi, 2 April 1933, MS 366/17/3/3, Blackshirt Collection.

[205] See Oxford University Fascist Association term card, 1934, 92/32/1, HW L-J 11, IWM Collections. 'The Corporate State', *Blackshirt*, 30 August 1935, 10.

[206] Charles Petrie to Dino Grandi, 2 April 1933, MS 366/17/3/3, Blackshirt Collection.

[207] Tamara Colacicco, 'The British Institute of Florence and the British Council in Fascist Italy: From E. Goad to Ian G. Greenless, 1922-1940', *Modern Italy* 23, no. 3 (2018): 321.

[208] Griffiths, *Fellow Travellers*, 51, alludes to a similar interpretation.

[209] Gottlieb, *Feminine Fascism*, 200-1.

[210] Henry William Luttman-Johnson to Basil Liddell Hart, n.d., LH 5/18, BHLHP.

the more intellectual sections of Great Britain'.[211] Accordingly, the January Club may have promised to grant such Italophiles precisely the wider audience they had hoped to attract upon distancing themselves from the RIIA's premises.

A 'Curious Confusion': Legitimising the 'Essentials' of Fascism

In the discussion below, I focus less on the *activities* of this pro-fascist clique within Chatham House, but the types of *arguments* that they peddled via the institution and adjacent forums and mediums. Two forms of argumentation are stressed. First, it was necessary to defend the Italian experiment, not least through downplaying its violent excesses, as to ensure that any system of government affiliated with the regime was not deemed unpalatable before a British audience. The second involved the abstraction of fascism and/or the corporate state from its Italian manifestation as to render such phenomena, or at least an interpretation thereof, universalisable.

In one typical instance of the former argument, Pellizzi, during the Q&A of his 1923 Chatham House speech, presented a reportedly 'amusing defence of Mussolini': '[H]is action was constitutional, though there was force behind it. He had the support of both chambers. True, he was rude to them'.[212] Along similar lines, Goad criticised such detractors as Gilbert Murray and the Christian socialist and anti-fascist exile Luigi Sturzo by defending Mussolini and the fascist movement against controversy over the infamous murder of Italian socialist deputy Giacomo Matteotti. Allegations that his death was premeditated or somehow ordered, Goad forcefully added in the RIIA journal, 'must surely appear "temerarious," to say the least!'[213] Likewise, in his popular book aimed at the British people, *The Fascist Experiment*, Villari cast the movement's violent excesses as the product of a statistical inevitability, the odd 'black sheep… among the Black Shirts',[214] or what Goad referred to as the 'windy rhetoric of irresponsible enthusiasts and the arbitrary and often reckless violence of secondary and local leaders', who would, in any case, be responsibly dealt with by the state.[215] While sporadic acts of violence were unfortunate, Goad implored the journal's readers to avoid 'calumny and wild exaggeration'.[216] Referring to the Dreyfus affairs, Weimar-era assassinations, atrocities in Ireland, or the 'innumerable lynchings in the United States', Villari similarly argued that the occasional act of violence in Italy no more made it an uncivilised power than such shameful incidents detracted from the unimpeachably civilised status of France, Germany, Britain, or America.[217] During his 1926 Chatham House lecture, Barnes also downplayed fascist violence as the result of 'unscrupulous and undesirable' opportunists or 'agents provocateurs [who] insinuate[d] themselves into the ranks of the revolutionary party'.[218] In any case, the fascist revolution 'pale[d] into insignificance' against the backdrop of the 'awful horrors' accompanying

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[211] 'The Advance to the Corporate State', *Fascist Week*, 22—28 December 1933, 7.
[212] 'Meetings of the Spring Session', *Journal of the British Institute of International Affairs* 2, no. 2 (1923): 84.
[213] Harold E. Goad, review of *Italy and Fascismo*, by Luigi Sturzo, *Journal of the Royal Institute of International Affairs* 6, no. 2 (1927): 121-2.
[214] Luigi Villari, *The Fascist Experiment* (London: Faber & Gwyer, 1926), viii.
[215] Goad, review of *Italy and Fascismo*, 122.
[216] *Ibid.*
[217] Villari, *Fascist Experiment*, ix.
[218] Barnes, 'The Doctrine of Fascism', 3, RIIA/8/35, CHA.

the French Revolution.[219] As he proclaimed: 'Never, perhaps, was there a revolution so amazingly bloodless and so little affecting the liberty of the subject'.[220]

In *Headway*, the LNU journal, Currey sought to dispel myths casting Italy as a lawless, militaristic state ruled by Mussolini's whims. Currey reassured readers this was a far cry from reality; Italy was, in fact, sublimely boring. It was 'as peaceful and unexciting as it is at Stoke Tootington'.[221] Other aspects of the regime's authoritarianism were also doubted or legitimated. Barnes' Chatham House speech cast the regime's 'exceptional restrictions of liberty' as 'necessitated in revolutionary times'.[222] During a Q&A session at the institute, Barnes even claimed that the violence and restrictions accompanying fascism's rise—in any case, marginal compared to those of the French Revolution—were rapidly coming to an end as fascism cemented itself; he reassured listeners that Mussolini himself had told him as much.[223] Currey likewise downplayed the regime's restrictions on civil liberties. She once critiqued an anti-fascist book in *International Affairs*, quipping that its pseudonymous author 'incessantly proclaims that there is no freedom of thought or speech in Italy, and yet his criticisms of the Corporate State are largely composed of speeches and writings made and published in that country'.[224] As late as 1941, Goad made a similar rhetorical move while reviewing Benedetto Croce's *History as the Story of Liberty*. In the *International Affairs Review Supplement*, Goad subtly challenged Croce's depiction of living in peculiarly 'illiberal times', countering that the actuality of his book having been published in 'fascistically-minded Naples is… a happy proof that this pessimistic view *is* an illusion'.[225]

As the 1930s progressed, conscious efforts emerged not only to sublimate or justify the regime's violence and repression, but also to disassociate it from German Nazism's extremes—a topic I explore further in Chapter VI. Villari's 1935 comments at Chatham House are illustrative:

> Much has been said of the resemblances between Fascism and Nazism. Certain features of Nazism appealed to Italians… But other features were wholly repugnant to the logical and reasonable Italian spirit. The resemblances were, in fact, more apparent than real. The two peoples are widely different, the origins of the two movements are equally different, and the leaders embodying the two are as different as they can be.[226]

As alluded to above, Currey regularly defended the regime via her *International Affairs* reviews. Though never publishing a research article, she contributed frequent reviews challenging anti-fascist views, praising fascist Italy,

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[219] *Ibid*, 3-4.
[220] *Ibid*, 4.
[221] Muriel Currey, 'Italy To-Day: A New Political Experiment', *Headway* 15, no. 2 (1933): 32.
[222] Barnes, 'The Doctrine of Fascism', 3, RIIA/8/35, CHA.
[223] Carlo Sforza, 'European Dictatorships', 8 March 1932, 19, RIIA/8/190, CHA.
[224] Muriel Currey, review of *Fascism at Work*, by William Elwin, *International Affairs* 14, no. 3 (1935): 433.
[225] Harold E. Goad, review of *History as the Story of Liberty*, by Benedetto Croce, *International Affairs Review Supplement* 19, no. 5 (1941): 268 (emphasis in original).
[226] Villari, 'Italian Foreign Policy', 329.

and surveying publications by Italophilic peers, official organs of the regime, and noted Italian fascists.[227] This highlights both the gendered and varied platforms through which women contributed to IR and the subtle politicisation of the journal's seemingly mundane review section. Currey chastised scholars for inaccuracies, alleged anti-fascist bias, and supposedly unwarranted focus on fascist violence. In one review, she lambasted the 'usual plan of all anti-Fascist books', whereby liberal Italy is represented as a 'country with a few local disturbances and a few hotheads enamoured of Lenin and his principles'.[228] Italy, Currey quipped, was not a 'red and peaceful paradise only disturbed by the brutality of the Blackshirts',[229] what she once referred to as the 'customary stories… of the Fascists who broke into this Eden'.[230] Inversely, it was hypocritical to chronicle all of fascism's violent excesses, while ignoring communist crimes.[231] *Fascism in Italy*, penned by British historian and liberal Italophile Bolton King, was attacked on such grounds: King's 'indictment [against the Italian regime] is based entirely on the statements of the avowed enemies of Fascism; the only occasion on which a Fascist author is quoted is when he records a Fascist outrage'.[232] Ultimately, such efforts to obfuscate and justify fascist violence were typical amongst fascist apologists. For that reason, I will not dwell further on this defence, beyond highlighting one critical takeaway: learned platforms involved in IR's early history, whether the think tank lecture hall or the pages of scholarly journals, were viewed and used as one avenue to peddle such apologetics.

The corollary to this obfuscation was an emphasis on national consent, alongside an unparalleled degree of order, national unity, and efficiency inoculated under the Italian experiment, reversing the instability hitherto plaguing Italy. As Pellizzi titled one chapter: 'From Disunity to Fascism'.[233] Mussolini was placed centre stage. At Chatham House, Petrie cast Mussolini as the latest in a line of Italians—Mazzini, Garibaldi, Cavour, Vittorio Emanuele—who arose to lead in the nation's hour of need.[234] Alongside this adoration, such thinkers eagerly emphasised the movement's successes. The first such achievement was the suppression of the communist spectre.

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[227] See, e.g., Muriel Currey, review of *The Development and Work of the Corporate Organisation*, by the Ministry of Corporations; and *Il consiglio nazionale delle corporazioni*, by Giuseppe Bottai, *International Affairs* 12, no. 4 (1933): 563-4; Muriel Currey, review of *Scritti e discorsi di Benito Mussolini*, Vols. I and VII, *International Affairs* 13, no. 2 (1934): 293; Muriel Currey, review of *Scritti e discorsi di Benito Mussolini*, Vols. II and VIII, *International Affairs* 13, no. 4 (1934): 595; Muriel Currey, review of *Esperienza corporativa (1929–1935)*, by Giuseppe Bottai, *International Affairs* 14, no. 5 (1935): 728.

[228] Currey, review of *Fascism at Work*, 432.

[229] Muriel Currey, review of *The Making of the Corporate State*, by Harold E. Goad; *Il problema dell'espanzione Italiana ed il Levante Islamico*, by Santi Nava; *Ten Years of Tyranny in Italy*, by Pietro Nenni; and *The Makers of Modern Italy: Napoleon—Mussolini*, by John A.R. Marriott, *International Affairs* 11, no. 4 (1932): 561.

[230] Currey, review of *Fascism at Work*, 432.

[231] Currey, review of *The Making of the Corporate State*; *Il problema dell'espanzione Italiana ed il Levante Islamico*; *Ten Years of Tyranny in Italy*; and *The Makers of Modern Italy*, 561.

[232] Muriel Currey, review of *Italia e Francia nei problemi attuali della politica Europea*, by Arrigo Solmi; *On prépare un crime: La guerre Franco-Italienne*, by Mario Simonatti; and *Fascism in Italy*, by Bolton King, *International Affairs* 10, no. 6 (1931): 853. On King, see Marcella Pellegrino Sutcliffe, 'The Toynbee Travellers' Club and the Transnational Education of Citizens, 1888-90', *History Workshop Journal* 76, no. 1 (2013): 137-59.

[233] Pellizzi, *Italy*, Chapter 1.

[234] Petrie, 'Franco-Italian Relations', 5, RIIA/8/212, CHA.

In the RIIA journal, Goad challenged Luigi Sturzo's claim that communism was already suppressed after the *Biennio Rosso* (1919-20), some two years prior to the March on Rome. For Goad, Sturzo was oblivious to the supposedly 'unrestricted bands of brigands' and 'gangs of "Communist" ruffians'. '[E]very Englishman who was in Italy during 1922', Goad added, 'will surely be ready to reply that life and property were safe for no one at that time'.[235] Goad went further, praising the regime's multifaceted achievements. In the RIIA journal, he lauded UCL lecturer and fascist Antonio Cippico's book, which provided a reliable 'record of the progress made in Italy under the Fascist regime—a record', Goad qualified, 'now generally accepted'.[236] Likewise, Goad commended Villari's *The Fascist Experiment* in the institute's journal, which challenged any who would downplay or deny the regime's achievements. As Goad argued:

> Everyone must acknowledge the obvious improvement in all the external manifestations of Italian national life, the railways, the exchange, the absence of strikes, the disappearance of chronic unemployment, the general order and discipline, the growing respect for the law, the steady return to the Church, and a hundred other symptoms.[237]

Goad advised that Villari's account of fascist achievements could not be ignored by anyone studying 'the evolution of modern political and social ideas'.[238] Pellizzi also took his opportunity to speak before the BIIA to offer one of the earliest expositions on the regime's varied activities following the March on Rome.[239]

In her regular reviews, Currey expectedly offered similar comments.[240] Regarding one book which touched upon the Italian mafia, she relayed that its author recounted the 'true story of its suppression by Signor Mussolini, the first Italian statesman who dared to tackle it'.[241] Currey similarly implied that royal authority still predominated in Italy, not a dictatorship without consent. In one *International Affairs* review, she challenged Emil Ludwig's 'curious error', who argued that King Victor Immanuel III originally endeavoured to curtail the March on Rome by decreeing martial law. Currey cautioned readers to reject this account. Rather, in what may be fairly called 'a remarkable travesty of Italian history',[242] Currey suggested the King not only averted 'civil war' but, unlike the party politicians, acted on

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[235] Goad, review of *Italy and Fascismo*, 121.
[236] Harold E. Goad, review of *Italy: The Central Problem of the Mediterranean*, by Antonio Cippico, *Journal of the Royal Institute of International Affairs* 5, no. 5 (1926): 261.
[237] Harold E. Goad, review of *The Fascist Experiment*, by Luigi Villari, *Journal of the Royal Institute of International Affairs* 5, no. 6 (1926): 311-2.
[238] *Ibid*, 312.
[239] Pellizzi, 'Fascista Movement'.
[240] Currey's defence of the Italian experiment applauded the regime's apparent efforts to impart economic rights to women. However, this gendered theme was absent from her *International Affairs* reviews. Cf. Allen, 'Muriel Innes Currey', 5; Muriel Currey, 'Women and the Corporate State', *Blackshirt*, 1 June 1934, 4; Muriel Currey, 'Women in Italy', *Blackshirt*, 8 June 1934, 5; Muriel Currey, *The Position of Women in Italy* (Rome: Forum, 1938).
[241] Muriel Currey, review of *Fascist Italy*, by Herbert Vivian, *International Affairs* 15, no. 6 (1936): 951.
[242] This phrasing is borrowed from Pugh, *'Hurrah for the Blackshirts!'*, 50.

the will of the 'great mass of the Italian people' by appointing Mussolini as prime minister.[243] Here, Currey loosely echoed the views of her colleague Petrie, a Jacobite who authored a chapter on Mussolini within one of the books under Currey's review. Petrie admired the once absolute English monarchy, hoped for a monarchical restoration across Europe, and in pursuit of such a reactionary dreamworld was appointed as president of the so-called Royalist International in 1932.[244] While Petrie defended royalism, he resented monarchs who—as *International Affairs* reviewers acknowledged—abrogated their responsibility, lampooning the 'unwise or cowardly'.[245] In this respect, fascism appealed to Petrie as a bulwark against Bolshevism, a radical solution to the qualms of modern society, and a remedy for liberal democracy's failures. It promised a strong leadership and a corporate system while preserving the monarch's traditional role. Accordingly, Petrie reasoned that by appointing Mussolini after the March on Rome, the King was not abrogating his duty, but reflected the people's will, a view Currey reiterated in multiple *International Affairs* reviews of her colleague's scholarship.[246]

Such apologetics were not unique to the far right among those studying interwar world politics. As Oren reveals in relation to American political science, whether it was the myth that fascism saved Italy from Bolshevism or the downplaying of fascist violence, such arguments recurred within scholarly discourse. Nicholas Murray Butler, for example, branded the fascist revolution 'silent and bloodless', while Herbert Schneider, a pupil of John Dewey, contended that communism's rise had 'set the emotional stage for fascism'.[247] Yet key differences demarcate the Italophilic authors discussed here from the political scientists occupying Oren's attention. Oren qualifies that the latter were not 'unalloyed fascists', nor did they advocate the 'installation of dictatorship in America'.[248] Some believed the Italian corporate state held fascinating lessons for the US, while others, reflecting popular views of Italian backwardness, 'condoned authoritarian dictatorship as appropriate for Iberic-Latin societies alone'.[249]

Though Petrie or Currey cannot fairly be called fascist, the extent of their adoration for the Italian experiment, and innumerable links with Italian fascists, sets them apart from the sympathetic voices in American political science studied by Oren, or comparable British scholars. Nor were they susceptible to the same aura of Anglo-Saxon superiority that marked many whom Oren studies. Stated differently, this clique diverged in the ardency of their Italophilic predilections and the belief that fascism was not simply an immature, peculiarly Italian political tradition, but a movement embodying *universalizable* features. 'The attitude towards Fascism in England has

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[243] Muriel Currey, review of *The Man and the Hour: Studies of Six Great Men of Our Time*, edited by Arthur Bryant; and *Leaders of Europe*, by Emil Ludwig, *International Affairs* 13, no. 6 (1934): 854.
[244] Dietz, *Neo-Tories*, 49, 110-11.
[245] I.F.D.M., review of *Monarchy*, by Charles Petrie, *International Affairs* 13, no. 2 (1934): 275; J. Guest, review of *Spain*, by Charles Petrie, *International Affairs* 14, no. 2 (1935): 276-7
[246] See Muriel Currey, review of *Il Patto di Londra: Storia diplomatica dell'intervento Italiano (1914-1915)*, by Mario Toscano; *L'Italia fascista nella politica internazionale*, by Dino Grandi; *Mussolini*, by Charles Petrie; and *D'Annunzio: A Portrait*, by Frederico Nardelli and Arthur Livingston, *International Affairs* 11, no. 1 (1932): 132; Currey, review of *The Man and the Hour*, 854.
[247] Oren, 'Uncritical Portrayals', 93-4.
[248] *Ibid*, 88.
[249] *Ibid*, 113.

become involved in so many side issues', noted Currey in *International Affairs*. Such 'picturesque and irrelevant details', 'sensational stories', and 'arguments over the treatment meted out to certain individuals' obscured 'the real basis on which it rests and the new theory it embodies'.[250] For Goad, '[t]here are still a number of English people who are unwilling to recognise the success of the Fascist experiment… because they believe that such acknowledgment would imply its applicability to England'. This 'curious confusion', Goad opined, stems from a failure to grasp 'the essence of Fascismo'. The prevailing image is unduly predicated on its 'negative or "repressive" aspect', yet this dimension is, Goad qualifies, simply a historical accident peculiar to Italy.[251] In Aristotelian language, Barnes similarly cautioned against seizing on the movement's 'accidentals', lest one fails to recognise its universal 'essentials'.[252] Here one may detect the clear traces of the earlier discussed universalist discourse permeating quarters of Italian international thought. Pellizzi, after all, was a spearhead of such thinking, and he too spread the universalist gospel before the London Group: the institutions of fascism were 'of universal interest among modern nations'.[253]

Three overlapping points may be noted here. Firstly, this endeavour to explicate the experiment's essentials was inevitably bound to discussions over its intellectual roots. This necessitated rebuking those who alleged that the regime—or fascism itself—lacked serious theoretical scaffolding. In one exemplary case, Barnes, attending a Chatham House presentation by Italian liberal Count Carlo Sforza, took aim at the statesman's 'facile generalization' depicting European dictatorships as mere *coup d'états*. For Barnes, fascism (as with Bolshevism) was an exception, for it contained 'a definite body of doctrine'. Barnes quipped that '[h]e could give a catalogue of books, from five to ten thousand of them, which formed an encyclopaedia of Fascist doctrine'.[254] In lieu of this intellectually sterile rendition of fascism, Barnes and his counterparts traced its intellectual pedigree or created one based on their preferred interpretation. For example, Pellizzi, speaking before the BIIA, traced fascism's origins to the revolutionary syndicalism of Sorel and Blanqui.[255] He later elaborated before the Study Group, identifying fascism's roots in 'revolutionary syndicalism and various schools of nationalistic thought', veering towards the thinking of Lassalle, Blanqui, Proudhon, and Sorel, rather than Marx or Lenin.[256] Yet he stressed that fascism was still developing, and as it matures one may 'detect… characteristics of other ancestors and relations'.[257] Villari, addressing the London Group, noted how the 'Fascist outlook' rejected materialism, revived 'spiritual values', and sought to overcome left-right distinctions in jettisoning the language of class-struggle.[258] In a lecture to Chatham House's wider membership, Barnes traced fascism to three traditions: syndicalism, nationalism, and Catholicism.[259] The

[250] Currey, review of *The Making of the Corporate State*; *Il problema dell'espanzione Italiana ed il Levante Islamico*; *Ten Years of Tyranny in Italy*; and *The Makers of Modern Italy*, 560.
[251] Goad, review of *The Fascist Experiment*, 310.
[252] Barnes, *Universal Aspects*, 240. The same language was used in Goad, W*hat Is Fascism?*, 3.
[253] Pellizzi, 'The Historical Background of the Corporate State', 1, LH 15/3/365, BHLHP.
[254] Sforza, 'European Dictatorships', 18, RIIA/8/190, CHA.
[255] Pellizzi, 'Fascista Movement', 121.
[256] Pellizzi, 'The Historical Background of the Corporate State', 5-6, LH 15/3/365, BHLHP.
[257] *Ibid*, 6.
[258] Villari, 'The XIII Confederation', 2, LH 15/3/365, BHLHP.
[259] Barnes, 'The Doctrine of Fascism', 6, RIIA/8/35, CHA.

syncretic fascist ideology amounted to a 'revolution', one 'as fundamental as the French or Russian Revolution', for it represented 'a complete reversal of the fundamental principles governing the theory of politics that have ruled in most civilised States during the past century'.[260] In *International Affairs*, Currey also added gravitas to Mussolini's proclamations as the mouthpiece of a new revolution. One such compendium of Mussolini's speeches was deemed to be 'among the fundamental historical documents of the twentieth century', a point so obvious as to be 'hardly necessary to add'.[261]

Secondly, as previously suggested, Catholicism and fascism were inextricably linked in the minds of some, a view peddled via outlets and institutions engaged with the formative study of international relations. Pellizzi spoke before the RIIA in 1931 on Italy's relations with the Holy See following its recognition of Vatican sovereignty under the Lateran Pacts. Rejecting Toynbee's claim that the Church-state rupture began with the Risorgimento, Pellizzi traced it much farther to Charlamagne. In any case, Pellizzi believed that there was no 'essential, inherent, inevitable, insoluble difference' between fascism and Catholicism.[262] Goad's devout religiosity likewise suffused his political thought and personal life. Francis Yeats-Brown, famed writer of *The Lives of a Bengal Lancer* and himself an Italophile linked to the *English Review*, remarked: 'I've never met a man who is nearer a saint'.[263] Yet unlike many High Tory Italophiles who embraced Catholicism, Goad served as warden of the *Anglican* Church in Florence.[264] Nevertheless, he much admired fascism's traditionalism and perceived paternalistic religiosity. Moreover, as he expressed in the Q&A to Pellizzi's speech, Goad warmly welcomed the Lateran Pacts as a sign of 'hope… for all nations', and while he was cognisant that fascism and the Church were not one, not least because the fascist movement contained many anti-clerical figures, he believed in the 'promise' that the two could 'march together… in perpetual bickering and a perpetual reconciliation'.[265]

Religion featured most prominently in Barnes' promotion of fascism. After converting to Catholicism in 1914, his religiosity eventually reached militant heights. As one observer quipped in a review of Barnes and Aline Lion—herself a fascist sympathiser who studied Gentile's philosophy at Oxford—he was 'more Catholic than the Pope'.[266] As noted earlier, Barnes espoused a form of clerico-fascism, its clearest expression found in his tract, *The Universal Aspects of Fascism*. Directed at a British audience and published under his authoritative title as an RIIA member, Barnes—unlike Goad—framed fascism as inseparably bound to Catholicism. For Barnes, Saint Thomas Aquinas' *Communitas Perfecta* was realised in the 'national State' of fascism.[267] Importantly, this was no secularised deification of the state à la Gentile's neo-Hegelian interpretation of fascism. Barnes abhorred 'that kind of

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[260] *Ibid*, 2-3. See also Barnes, *Universal Aspects*, 37.
[261] Muriel Currey, review of *Scritti e discorsi di Benito Mussolini*, Vol. IX, *International Affairs* 15, no. 4 (1936): 618-9.
[262] Pellizzi, 'Italy and the Vatican', 9, RIIA/8/174, CHA.
[263] Cited in John Evelyn Wrench, *Francis Yeats-Brown, 1886-1944* (London: Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1948), 180.
[264] A.E.H. Swaisland, 'Mr. H.E. Goad', *Times*, 1 June 1956, 13.
[265] Cited in Pellizzi, 'Italy and the Vatican', vii-viii, RIIA/8/174, CHA.
[266] Review of *The Pedigree of Fascism*, by Aline Lion; and *The Universal Aspects of Fascism*, by James Strachey Barnes, *Spectator*, 21 January 1928, 89. For Lion's views on fascism, see Aline Lion, *The Pedigree of Fascism: A Popular Essay on the Western Philosophy of Politics* (London: Sheed & Ward, 1927).
[267] Barnes, *Universal Aspects*, 99.

Nationalism which is in opposition to God'—a 'cult of the Nation-God or State-God'.[268] His thinking was informed by a yearning for the values of the Catholic Middle Ages, a period before the corrupting influences of the Renaissance, capitalism, the industrial and French Revolutions, alongside the individualistic and materialistic ideologies of liberalism and communism.[269] Only though fascism's 'new universal message' could Europe return to this Golden Age.[270]

The third and most important exportable feature was corporatism, towards which much effort was dedicated to discerning and promoting its prospective learnings. In part, this simply entailed placing corporatism on the radar of British intellectuals. On one occasion, Currey presented a highly sympathetic review of Dr Paul Einzig's *The Economic Foundations of Fascism*, a figure who similarly lamented the indifference of the British towards the Italian experiment, as if it 'were one of the remote provinces of China or the unexplored regions of Brazil, instead of one of the leading countries of Europe'.[271] Currey ended her review by surmising that Einzig is 'anxious that our self-appointed instructors in political and economic questions should also go and see [the Italian experiment] for themselves'—a call she wholeheartedly endorsed.[272] Currey likewise praised Petrie's biographical treatment of Mussolini as a useful account of fascism and the corporate state, devoid of the 'sensationalism' typically 'considered an essential part of any volume dealing with Signor Mussolini'.[273]

On the other hand, such thinkers strived to debunk persistent critiques levelled at the corporate state. Commonplace were allegations that the corporations were ineffectual, existed merely on paper, or were but a façade for capitalist interests. Such views saturated both the popular press and interwar political science journals: 'Is the Corporative State a dream on paper or a working reality? This is a much disputed question'.[274] In one exemplary case, Langer wrote the following in *Foreign Affairs*:

> [C]ountless books and articles have hailed the new corporative state in Italy. Professor Salvemini, whose scholarly competence no one will question, here subjects the whole organization and its operation to a ruthlessly realistic analysis. His conclusions, based almost

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[268] *Ibid*, 61.
[269] *Ibid*, 35, 53-4, 150; Linehan, *British Fascism*, 129-30.
[270] Barnes, *Universal Aspects*, 162.
[271] Currey quotes this passage from Paul Einzig, *The Economic Foundations of Fascism* (London: Macmillan and Co., Limited, 1934), 1. Einzig's scholarship was respected amongst fascist thinkers for much of the 1930s. BUF discourse recommended his books to followers, and he attended the 1932 Volta Conference—an early universalist initiative—at the invitation of the Royal Academy of Italy. See 'Reference Library Founded', *Blackshirt*, 21 December 1934, 12; Alexander Raven Thomson, review of *Bankers, Statesmen and Economists*, by Paul Einzig, *Fascist Quarterly* 2, no. 1 (1936): 150-1; Einzig, *Economic Foundations*, viii-ix.
[272] Muriel Currey, review of *The Economic Foundations of Fascism*, by Paul Einzig, *International Affairs* 12, no. 5 (1933): 681.
[273] Currey, review of *Il Patto di Londra*; *L'Italia fascista nella politica internazionale*; *Mussolini*; and *D'Annunzio*, 132.
[274] C.J.S. Sprigge, review of *The Economic and Financial Position of Italy*, by the RIIA Information Department, *International Affairs* 14, no. 5 (1935): 725.

> exclusively upon official fascist material, are little short of startling… The corporate state appears as a huge mystification, designed to camouflage the failure of the dictatorship.[275]

For the fascist-admiring clique, attention was thus directed towards debunking such alleged myths and enlightening Britons on the facts. Goad tackled the question head on in his 1933 speech: 'It is constantly said that there are no corporations in Italy'.[276] Likewise, in *International Affairs*, Currey ransacked one book: the chapter on the Italian syndicates and corporations was 'so inaccurate as to be entirely misleading'.[277] Elsewhere in the journal, Currey recommended the scholarship of former Brookings Institution fellow Dr Fausto Pitigliani. The *British Union Quarterly* called his book, *The Italian Corporative State*, '[t]he best treatise on the subject'.[278] Currey agreed, urging that Pitigliani be read by those ignorant persons 'who so gaily rush… to declare that "the corporations do not exist"'.[279]

Importantly, though, the promotion of corporatism by these Italophiles entailed a more elaborate argument. It was not enough to argue the existence or even efficacy of such institutions. These claims were paired with an emphasis on the corporate system's nominally democratic qualities. As much was revealed during a 1934 presentation before Chatham House by Ernest Barker, a noted political scientist and British pluralist, during which Currey posed a series of pointed critiques. Responding to claims that Italians lacked rights to political expression, Currey countered that representation via the Corporate Chamber was, in fact, more responsive to the people than most British MPs.[280] This form of democracy was viewed as fundamentally different from British parliamentarianism, the latter deemed ill-suited to the Italian people in any case.[281] Yet by casting corporatism as an 'experiment in a new form of democracy', as Goad called it in *International Affairs*, it was rendered feasibly suitable, pursuant to some necessary adaptation, to the British political system.[282] For this reason, Currey and her peers argued that the regime had implemented a 'new principle of democracy' undergirded by 'new theories', and thus fascism's 'dictatorial phase' eroded after 1925, an opinion impossible to sustain in hindsight and implausible even to contemporaries.[283] In the LNU journal, Currey herself lamented the hurdles she confronted in persuading others:

> It is equally difficult to induce the English public to believe that the days of a personal dictatorship are at an end and have been succeeded by the Corporate State. It is because of this

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[275] William L. Langer, review of *Under the Axe of Fascism*, by Gaetano Salvemini, *Foreign Affairs* 14, no. 4 (1936): 718.
[276] Goad, 'Corporate State', 779.
[277] Currey, review of *Fascism at Work*, 433.
[278] 'Select Bibliography', *British Union Quarterly* 1, no. 2 (1937): 126.
[279] Muriel Currey, review of *The Italian Corporative State*, by Fausto Pitigliani, *International Affairs* 12, no. 6 (1933): 818.
[280] Ernest Barker, 'Democracy Since the War and Its Prospects for the Future', 15 March 1934, 26, RIIA/8/324, CHA.
[281] See, e.g., Goad, review of *The Fascist Experiment*, 311.
[282] Goad, 'Corporate State', 775.
[283] Cited in Barker, 'Democracy Since the War and Its Prospects for the Future', 26-7, RIIA/8/324, CHA.

> ignorance that Fascism remains for so many either an exciting adventure or an infamous form of tyranny.[284]

Currey's arrival at this opinion did not stem from some sycophantic act of doublethink nor sheer obliviousness. Rather, she emphasised the routinisation of governance via the corporate state's evolving institutional bodies and its complex system of occupational representation. As Leonard Woolf once summarised: 'The Italian Fascist State is… simply Mussolini'.[285] Currey and her counterparts adopted the opposite view. In *Headway*, Currey argued that 'popular government' had not reached its apogee with liberal democracy. Embodied within the corporate state was 'popular government in a new guise'.[286] Juxtaposed against 'preconceived' notions of democracy, corporatism understands the 'individual not as a voter but as a producer… who has his recognised task and his recognised rights within the framework of the nation'.[287] As she reiterated in *International Affairs*, the state's apparatus was not simply devised by Mussolini with a 'wave of his hand'; it was an intricate system developed by many with 'care and labour'.[288] Likewise, Goad wrote in the RIIA journal in 1927 that the fascist regime was 'unquestionably… a revolutionary and transitional vehicle of temporary government' that would coalesce in the 'establishment of a radically different constitution'.[289] Speaking with painstaking detail at Chatham House years later, Goad described the corporate state as 'machinery with checks upon every wheel'.[290] For Goad, the corporate apparatus embodied a form of democratic control that was still open to criticism and contestation, albeit grounded in technocratic lines of argument and competent vocational representation rather than party-political interests. It fostered a 'more dry, far less rhetorical' style of debate, 'with no appeal to passion or party'.[291]

Though the 'democratic' label was not always invoked, these thinkers often juxtaposed the dictatorial tyranny of old against a new form of constitutionalised, corporatist, and popular rule. 'Fascism denies that there is anything sacrosanct in the idea of Parliamentary sovereignty', relayed Barnes before Chatham House. Yet there is 'nothing arbitrary in the systems which Fascism would set up'.[292] Any 'arbitrariness', he reassured, stemmed from the 'revolutionary period', which was 'hastening to its conclusion'.[293] In any case, as Barnes added in his 1931 tract (again endorsed with his RIIA credentials), the fascist government was 'broadly based upon the people', integrating the masses into a 'hierarchy of authority' that was 'as much subordinate to the laws of the land as the humblest

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[284] Currey, 'Italy To-Day', 32.
[285] Leonard Woolf, review of *Mussolini's Italy*, by Herman Finer; and *Mussolini, Red and Black*, by Armando Borghi, *New Statesman and Nation*, 27 July 1935, 130.
[286] Currey, 'Italy To-Day', 32.
[287] Currey, review of *The Making of the Corporate State*; *Il problema dell'espanzione Italiana ed il Levante Islamico*; *Ten Years of Tyranny in Italy*; and *The Makers of Modern Italy*, 560.
[288] Currey, review of *The Development and Work of the Corporate Organisation*; and *Il consiglio nazionale delle corporazioni*, 564.
[289] Goad, review of *Italy and Fascismo*, 122.
[290] See, e.g., Goad, 'Corporate State', 783.
[291] *Ibid*, 781.
[292] Barnes, 'The Doctrine of Fascism', 16, 18, RIIA/8/35, CHA.
[293] *Ibid*, 18.

citizen'.[294] Addressing the London Group, Pellizzi similarly opined that, as was the Civil Code integral in the constitutionalisation of the French Revolution, so the 'Corporate State is the Socialist Revolution in western countries becoming constitutional'.[295] Thus, it was deemed superficial to view the fascist state as merely the dictatorship of a single man, destined to wither once he is no more. The Italian experiment represented 'a new type of collectivist or corporate state'.[296] A similar conceptualisation was even pronounced to the London Group by the left-wing Young, albeit he depicted fascism in less flattering terms: 'the Corporate State is a constitutional principle, Fascism is an unconstitutional procedure… Such dictatorships can only justify themselves as a means of arriving at a new form of democracy by substituting for parliamentary party democracy the functional democracy of the Corporate State'.[297]

Though seemingly a transient figure in the London Group, Young raised a key point echoed by Currey, Goad, and Petrie: corporatist planning was a central feature of the fascist regime, yet fascism was not reducible to it nor was the corporate state definitionally inseparable from fascism. Corporatism was neither a sufficient nor necessary condition for fascism. Fascism could exist without a corporate state, as indeed the Italian regime did throughout much of the 1920s.[298] Simply, the two were not synonymous. As Currey suggested in one *International Affairs* review, fascism implied more than a form of government. The reviewed author, while invoking such descriptors as 'statocratic' or 'monocratic', failed to understand fascism's 'psychology'.[299] Likewise, Goad prefaced his 1933 Chatham House speech by clarifying that he would focus on neither fascism nor dictatorship, but the corporate state—three concepts, he insisted, that were fundamentally distinct and should not be 'confused'. As he stated: 'There can be a Corporate State without Fascism and without Dictatorship; you can certainly have Fascism or Dictatorship without a Corporate State'.[300] Responding to Goad's presentation, Petrie emphasised the corporate state's prospective lessons, reaffirming that it was not tied to any specific form of government.[301] This conceptual division was even present in a notably late *International Affairs* review by Goad, albeit his attitude towards fascism—by then discredited—was more subdued. Surveying James Meenan's *The Italian Corporative System* in 1946, Goad largely praised the book, but found the author frequently substituted 'Fascist' where 'Italian' would have been more

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[294] Barnes, *Fascism*, 195, 207.
[295] Pellizzi, 'The Historical Background of the Corporate State', 7, LH 15/3/365, BHLHP.
[296] *Ibid*, 2.
[297] 'Notes on a Lecture Delivered by Sir George Young on the Corporate Experiment in Spain and Portugal', typescript, n.d., LH 15/3/365, BHLHP.
[298] Currey, review of *The Economic Foundations of Fascism*, 680-1; Barker, 'Democracy Since the War and Its Prospects for the Future', 26, RIIA/8/324, CHA.
[299] Muriel Currey, review of *L'empire fasciste: Les origines, les tendances et les institutions de la dictature et du corporatisme Italiens*, by Marcel Prelot, *International Affairs* 17, no. 4 (1938): 575.
[300] Goad, 'Corporate State', 775. See also, Goad, 'Principles of the Corporate State', 267-8.
[301] Goad, 'Corporate State', 783.

appropriate. In turn, '[t]ypical and traditional Italian failings, as well as practical methods of achievement, are often erroneously taken as the fruits of fascism'.[302]

With that said, fascism—or aspects thereof—and the corporate state were viewed as complimentary during the 1930s. In one telling letter, Goad was captivated by Harold Macmillan's Keynesian tract *Reconstruction* and pondered whether to invite him to the January Club. Yet Macmillan, Goad added, 'evidently knows nothing at all about Fascism or the Italian experiment'.[303] Goad had earlier argued, drawing on *The New Democratic Constitutions of Europe* by Agnes Headlam-Morley, later Montague Professor of IR at Oxford, that European democracies were increasingly typified by a weak, unstable executive.[304] Fascism, as Goad defined it, was simply a certain 'passion for national cooperation'.[305] Pursuant to this loose, even banal, conceptualisation, it was only logical that some sort of fascist solidarity amongst one's compatriots was a helpful ingredient in actualising the organic, corporate state. A similar sentiment may be gathered from Currey's comments in one of her *International Affairs* reviews. As she remarked,

> It is difficult for the English, with their preconceived ideas of "a democratically organised State," to appreciate that there can be any other relation between the citizen and the Government… [I]n Italy the State is interested in the individual not as a voter but as a producer, as a contributor to the good of the whole… Fascism is both a method of government and a means for industrial organisation.[306]

A subtle difference amongst the thinkers discussed here warrants note. Petrie, Currey, and Goad sought to conceptually disentangle fascism and corporatism. Though not always precise in their use of terminology, this division was nevertheless based on a desire to advocate corporatism under a new, illiberal state, and while sympathetic towards, and borrowings from, Italian fascism, they cautiously distanced their brand of Toryism (especially as the 1930s progressed), lest they be accused of seeking to impose an ill-suited, un-English import. In contrast, for Barnes and Pellizzi—both self-identified fascists—this division between corporatism and fascism was less clearcut and indeed less necessary to make. As Pellizzi remarked before the London Group: 'Fascism is the seed of *the new State* in civilized countries'.[307] In Barnes' case, he expounded fascism's universal applicability well before the rise of a formal corporate architecture, focusing more on its spiritual, anti-liberal, and anti-materialist values than on Italy's institutional framework. Indeed, in his 1926 Chatham House speech, Barnes expressly jettisoned the idea that fascism entailed any single system of governance. What he lauded in this new *Weltanschauung* was its rejection

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[302] Harold E. Goad, review of *The Italian Corporative System*, by James Meenan, *International Affairs* 22, no. 2 (1946): 300.
[303] Harold E. Goad to Henry William Luttman-Johnson, 11 January 1934, 92/32/1, HW L-J 1, IWM Collections.
[304] Goad, W*hat Is Fascism?*, 35.
[305] Goad, 'Corporate State', 775. See also *ibid*, 7.
[306] Currey, review of *The Making of the Corporate State*; *Il problema dell'espanzione Italiana ed il Levante Islamico*; *Ten Years of Tyranny in Italy*; and *The Makers of Modern Italy*, 560.
[307] Pellizzi, 'The Historical Background of the Corporate State', 9 (emphasis in original), LH 15/3/365, BHLHP.

of an individualistic, rationalist, and liberal conception of the social contract in favour of an understanding of the state as a Spencerian, living organism to be governed by an enlightened 'aristocracy'.[308] Fascism, then, presented a revolutionary challenge to the despised 'doctrinaire Liberalism'.[309]

A Chequered Reception

The output of this Italophilic clique was lauded by the far right and widely reviewed in the popular press. Although newspapers and periodicals may help to illustrate the influence and circulation of their corporatist thought, the discussion below adopts a narrower frame. I focus on the reception of these Italophiles in early IR journals, books composed by thinkers often identified in disciplinary histories, and other fragmented locations associated with the then expert study of international relations.

Even within this narrow frame, references to these Italophiles and British-based Italians appear in a range of sources. Some of Goad and Currey's publications were listed in the CINEF bibliography on fascism and the corporate state, later used by the League of Nations Library in the compilation of their own resource list.[310] Citations to *The Working of a Corporate State* may also be found in scholarly studies, including Chatham House publications,[311] while Petrie's regular *English Review* foreign affairs column and Currey's pro-Italian tracts appeared in the *APSR* recent publications compilations. Villari's *The Expansion of Italy* found itself on a *Foreign Affairs* reading list on the 'Ethiopian Question'.[312] The same book, alongside Currey's treatment of Hungarian-Romanian relations, was included in Chatham House's compilation of material on minority questions.[313] Pellizzi's *Italy* was also recommended in the RIIA's wartime *Reading List for Relief Workers*.[314] Within early IR journals and textbooks too, such figures received mention and occasional praise. Several of their texts were deemed sound or even commendable pieces of scholarship, unlikely in any case to stir political controversy.[315] For example, Petrie's biography of Foreign Secretary Austen Chamberlain received positive comment in the *International Affairs Review Supplement* from the earlier mentioned James Meston. Petrie's account of the Foreign Secretary as a 'sagacious' statesman had 'done for… Chamberlain what Mr. Churchill has recently done for himself'.[316]

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[308] Barnes, 'The Doctrine of Fascism', 10-18, RIIA/8/35, CHA. See also Barnes, *Universal Aspects*, Chapters 2 and 3.

[309] Sforza, 'European Dictatorships', 20, RIIA/8/190, CHA.

[310] *Material Relating to the Corporative Movement* (League of Nations Library, 1934), S1702/14, UN Library & Archives Geneva, https://archives.ungeneva.org/gpw3-27bk-8rns.

[311] See, e.g., RIIA Information Department, *The Economic and Financial Position of Italy*, 2nd edn. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1935), 15n2.

[312] 'A Short Bibliography of the Ethiopian Question', *Foreign Affairs* 14, no. 1 (1935): 157.

[313] C.A. Macartney, 'A Select List of References on Minorities', *Journal of the Royal Institute of International Affairs* 9, no. 6 (1930): 819-25.

[314] RIIA, *A Reading List for Relief Workers* (London: RIIA, 1944), 29, CHA.

[315] See, e.g., William L. Langer, review of *The History of Spain*, by Louis Bertrand and Charles Petrie, *Foreign Affairs* 13, no. 1 (1934): 172.

[316] James Meston, review of *Life and Letters of the Right Hon. Sir Austen Chamberlain, Vol. II*, by Charles Petrie, *International Affairs Review Supplement* 19, no. 2 (1940): 118.

Reception of other publications—especially those lauding the fascist state—was decidedly varied. For example, the disjunct between Goad and Currey's enthusiasm and professed objectivity was noted by Meston in *International Affairs*.[317] R.W. Seton-Watson, a prominent historian and Chatham House member, called Goad's *International Affairs* article '[a]n interesting, but quite unconvincing, theoretical study'.[318] John H. Humphreys, secretary of the Proportional Representation Society, also voiced scepticism during the Q&A to Goad's aforementioned Chatham House speech. For Humphreys, it was doubtful that a corporate system could be enacted without dictatorial rule and the circumvention of political rights.[319] Similarly, one reviewer for the RIIA journal reasoned Petrie's *The History of Government*, a book which weaved in the monarchical and pro-fascist sentiments of its author, to be 'very interesting' in some respects, while 'in others curiously disappointing'. In the latter camp, the reviewer found Petrie's treatment of the institutional structure of the fascist state lacking insofar as it failed to elucidate its distinctive qualities.[320] In the *Church and State in Fascist Italy*, historian and former diplomat D.A. Binchy argued Petrie apportioned a degree of power to the King in resolving the so-called 'Roman question' which 'few detached observers' would concur with.[321] In *Foreign Affairs*, Harvard historian Robert Gale Woolbert noted that Petrie made no effort to hide his bias, granting a favourable treatment of 'Mussolini's brand of Fascism'.[322]

Barnes' output came under particular fire. E.L. Woodward, later Montague Burton Professor of International Relations (1944-7), reviewed two dichotomous pieces for Chatham House: Barnes' *The Universal Aspects of Fascism* and *The Fascist Dictatorship in Italy* by academia's foremost anti-fascist, the exiled historian Gaetano Salvemini—a figure familiar to contemporaries such as G. Lowes Dickinson, Laski, and Murray.[323] Woodward praised Salvemini's study as 'an attack supported by evidence… made by a historian of European reputation'.[324] By contrast, Woodward limited his remarks on Barnes to one paragraph: 'Mr. Barnes attempts to discover a philosophic basis for Fascism. Ramsay Muir's [anti-fascist] preface to Signor Salvemini's book is a sufficient answer to his thesis. If further answer were needed, any impartial text-book of European history would suffice'.[325] Similarly, with sardonic wit, one reviewer in *APSR* condemned Barnes' *Fascism*: 'Beguiling words… were never more in place. For

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[317] James Meston, review of *The Working of a Corporate State: A Study of National Co-operation*, by Harold E. Goad and Muriel Currey; and *L'expérience corporative en Italie*, by Jean Borel, *International Affairs* 13, no. 2 (1935): 292.
[318] R.W. Seton-Watson, *Britain and the Dictators: A Survey of Post-War British Policy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1938), 163n2.
[319] Cited in Goad, 'Corporate State', 784-5.
[320] C.A.M., review of *The History of Government*, by Charles Petrie, *Journal of the Royal Institute of International Affairs* 8, no. 4 (1929): 406.
[321] D.A. Binchy, *Church and State in Fascist Italy* (London: Oxford University Press, 1941), 184n1.
[322] Robert Gale Woolbert, review of *Twenty Years' Armistice—And After*', by Charles Petrie, *Foreign Affairs* 20, no. 1 (1941): 203.
[323] On Salvemini's exile and reception in London, see Alice Gussoni, 'Salvemini's Antifascist Exile in London: Attracting the Attention of a British Audience', *Modern Italy* 28, no. 4 (2023): 296-311.
[324] E.L. Woodward, review of *The Fascist Dictatorship in Italy*, by Gaetano Salvemini; and *The Universal Aspects of Fascism*, by James Strachey Barnes, *Journal of the Royal Institute of International Affairs* 7, no. 4 (1928): 277.
[325] *Ibid*, 278. Elsewhere in *International Affairs*, Goad and Salvemini's views on corporatism were presented as dichotomous. C.J.S.S., review of *Le corporatisme fasciste*, by G. Valenziani; and *Le corporatisme en Italie*, by Sotiris Agapitides, *International Affairs* 15, no. 6 (1936): 950-1.

it is no slight task to disguise such a doctrine as a "new age of faith," civilization's great step forward.'[326] Frank M. Russell likewise branded Barnes a 'Fascist apologist' in his early IR textbook.[327] Alternatively, an *APSR* reviewer dismissed the CINEF yearbook as 'a miserable failure'. Although Barnes' chapter on 'The Reform of the State in Italy' was among its stronger contributions, the book was replete with such 'blatant propaganda' as to dimmish almost any 'practical value' in it.[328] In a more measured tone, Wheeler-Bennett noted the total absence of anti-fascist perspectives, undermining the yearbook's impartiality.[329]

Some individuals expressed scepticism over the link between religion and fascism; after all, many Italian fascists were anti-clerical. Woolbert, for example, found Jerrold's *The Future of Freedom* of mixed quality. It was a 'vigorous but by no means always logical onslaught on international capitalism, Communism, secularism peace at any price, etc.' With a hint of derision, Woolbert concluded: 'Mr. Jerrold apparently favors some sort of Christian Fascism.'[330] In his 1941 study, issued under Chatham House auspices, Binchy joked at Barnes' expense, the latter having frankly admitted in his 1928 treatise that he found it difficult to follow Giovanni Gentile's neo-Hegelian philosophy in all its aspects. Binchy remarked that Barnes ought to 'have found still greater difficulty… in reconciling as much of it as he could follow with the doctrines of Christianity, although he nowhere alludes to this discrepancy'.[331] In a similar vein, Virginia Mary Crawford, a Catholic suffragist and RIIA member with extensive links to Italian anti-fascist circles, expressed a comparable scepticism at Pellizzi's efforts to reconcile fascism and Catholicism in the halls of Chatham House, believing that he had muted the tension that arises between the two by virtue of the former's totalitarian character.[332]

More broadly, while Villari and Pellizzi were certainly popular, both courted critique and controversy. The Williamstown IOP presents a case in point. While the institute was a bastion of liberal internationalist thinking, James McAllister's seminal examination also reveals how Italian fascism was something of a popular subject.[333] As with Chatham House, the Italian experiment was explored through affording invitation to fascist speakers. In 1925, Goad's aforementioned UCL colleague Antonio Cippico presented a series of controversial lectures, wherein

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[326] L.M. Pape, review of *Fascism*, by James Strachey Barnes; *Liberty and Restraint*, by Louis Le Fevre; and *Modern Civilization on Trial*, by C. Delisle Burns, *American Political Science Review* 26, no. 1 (1932): 160.
[327] Russell, *Theories of International Relations*, 486n21.
[328] Shepard B. Clough, review of *La civiltà fascista illustrata nella dottrina e nelle opere*, by Giuseppe Luigi Pomba; *Storia del fascismo*, by Giorio Pini and Federico Bresadola; and *A Survey of Fascism: The Yearbook of the International Centre of Fascist Studies*, by CINEF, *American Political Science Review* 24, no. 1 (1930): 184.
[329] J.W. Wheeler-Bennett, review of *A Survey of Fascism: The Yearbook of the International Centre of Fascist Studies*, by CINEF; and *My Autobiography*, by Benito Mussolini, *Journal of the Royal Institute of International Affairs* 8, no. 1 (1929): 63.
[330] Robert Gale Woolbert, review of *The Future of Freedom: Notes on Christianity and Politics*, by Douglas Jerrold, *Foreign Affairs* 17, no. 1 (1938): 177.
[331] Binchy, *Church and State*, 322.
[332] Cited in Pellizzi, 'Italy and the Vatican', iv, RIIA/8/174, CHA. On Crawford, see John Keating, 'Looking to Europe: Roman Catholics and Christian Democracy in 1930s Britain', *European History Quarterly* 26, no. 1: 57-79.
[333] McAllister, *Wilsonian Visions*, 112.

expounding a martialist conception of war and detailing Italy's international grievances.[334] Observers were unimpressed. Russell even cited segments in order to convey the militaristic features of fascist international thought in his 1936 textbook, *Theories of International Relations*.[335] While Cippico's lectures, published by the IOP and Yale University Press, still managed to receive a brief yet positive review in *Foreign Affairs* and a laudatory appraisal by Goad in the RIIA journal,[336] Villari's appearance at Williamstown during a 1931 lecture series on the global economic crisis proved 'particularly egregious', not least did it damage 'the academic and political reputation of the Institute in Europe'.[337] As one *International Affairs* review remarked of the ensuing publication, *Bolshevism, Fascism, and Capitalism*: 'The spokesman of Fascism claimed that the Fascist system had solved the economic problem by substituting class peace for class warfare; but Fascism evidently excites relatively little interest at Williamstown.'[338] Surprisingly, Villari's impression seems to be somewhat different, privately voicing to Liddell Hart in October 1931 that not only was his period in the US pleasant, but that he had been invited to return to the IOP during the next summer.[339] Both Pellizzi and Villari were subject to a litany of other negative reviews. In *Foreign Affairs*, Woolbert remarked that Giorgio Pini's biography of Mussolini, translated into English by Villari, was 'quite uncritical'.[340] In the pages of the *American Journal of International Law*, the IR scholar H. Arthur Steiner described Pellizzi's *Italy* as 'nothing more than a sympathetic interpretation of Italian foreign policy' and 'other aspects of Fascist doctrine'; with a dose of derision, he remarked of the book's lack of originality and its strong reliance on the '"have-not' mythology'.[341]

Expectedly, the most damning treatments belonged to left-wing or exiled opponents of the regime, who were deeply familiar with the writings of these fascist apologists. As William Gillies, International Secretary of the Labour Party, observed in 1934, Goad 'is becoming a prolific correspondent in the press in defence of Mussolini'.[342] Foremost among Italian critics was the aforementioned Salvemini, whose castigation of Italian foreign policy and the regime's domestic record carried some weight in learned British circles. Salvemini was also a vocal sceptic in debates over the corporate state. '[W]hatever secrets the future may hold', remarked Salvemini, 'of one fact we may be sure: the corporations which were glorified from 1927 to 1935, were the greatest humbug of the twentieth

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[334] *Ibid*, 125-7.
[335] Russell, *Theories of International Relations*, 483n17, 492.
[336] William L. Langer, review of *Italy: The Central Problem of the Mediterranean*, by Antonio Cippico, *Foreign Affairs* 4, no. 4 (1926): 689; Goad, review of *Italy: The Central Problem of the Mediterranean*.
[337] McAllister, *Wilsonian Visions*, 201.
[338] Anonymous, review of *Bolshevism, Fascism, and Capitalism: An Account of the Three Economic Systems*, by George S. Counts, Luigi Villari, Malcolm C. Rorty, and Newton D Baker; *A Scientist Amongst the Soviets*, by Julian Huxley; *Seeing Soviet Russia*, by Hubert Griffith; *An Editor Looks at Russia: One Unprejudiced View of the Land of the Soviets*, by Ray Long; *Russia: Market or Menace*, by Thomas D. Campbell; *Die Tscheka bei der Arbeit*, by G. Agabekow; and *Le Gouvernement de Moscou et les Républiques Soviétiques*, by Louis de Quirielle, *International Affairs* 11, no. 4 (1932): 569.
[339] Luigi Villari to Basil Liddell Hart, 15 October 1931, LH 1/718, BHLHP.
[340] Robert Gale Woolbert, review of *The Official Life of Benito Mussolini*, by Giorgio Pini, *Foreign Affairs* 18, no. 3 (1940): 573.
[341] H. Arthur Steiner, review of *Italy*, by Camillo Pellizzi, *American Journal of International Law* 34, no. 2 (1940): 378.
[342] William Gillies to Carlo Rosselli, 2 January 1934, LP/WG/ITA/80, Labour History Archive and Study Centre, People's History Museum, Manchester.

century'.[343] He quipped that it would be 'interesting to see what heights of enthusiasm Mr. Goad, Miss Currey and Signor Bottai will attain when the corporations have really begun to function'.[344] Notably, Salvemini's *Under the Axe of Fascism* also targets American political scientists Paul Einzig and Nicholas Murray Butler, along with Italophile output promoted by major think tanks—explicitly citing Villari's IOP speech, Petrie's RIIA presentation, and Goad's 1933 lecture and corresponding *International Affairs* article. Salvemini even criticised a 1935 RIIA report, *The Economic and Financial Position of Italy*, believing—rightly or wrongly—that its erroneous account of Italy's corporations before 1930 was likely borrowed from Barnes or Goad.[345] Likewise, during his 1932 RIIA speech, exiled statesman Count Sforza warned Barnes not to fall prey to the regime's expertise in publicity and Potemkin-like skill in 'receiving foreign visitors'. In florid terms, Sforza called the corporate state, contra Barnes, a farce, while the fascist hierarchs were tantamount to actors who would, upon the regime's inevitable collapse, escape to Hollywood and immediately 'bankrupt' all the film stars.[346]

While some criticised the bias of these Italophiles or scathingly dismissed their publications, others treated such texts as valuable contributions to scholarship. Meston's aforementioned *International Affairs* review heaped neither condemnation nor overt praise, but recognised Goad and Currey's book as one of interest and detail.[347] 'Whatever one's personal feelings toward Bolshevism and Fascism may be', remarked Wheeler-Bennett of the CINEF yearbook, 'it is impossible to ignore either the Left or the Right Wing of modern political thought'.[348] Langer, reviewing for *Foreign Affairs*, simply called Goad's *The Making of the Corporate State* a 'concise and sympathetic study of Fascist development',[349] while Barnes' *The Universal Aspects of Fascism*, in its reading of fascism as an 'attempt to reintegrate… national forces and realize a type of industrial Christianity', was among the finest 'general books on Fascism in English'.[350] Alternatively, one *International Affairs* reviewer appreciated Petrie's antidemocratic tone. Petrie was, the reviewer concluded, 'unsparing in his strictures upon "the dullness of democracy" and in his criticism of the objections that have been advanced against monarchical government. A provocative—therefore useful—book'.[351]

While the political leanings of Villari and Pellizzi were never in doubt, they nevertheless received several anodyne reviews and even praise. Villari's books attained a fair circulation, receiving review in the periodical press

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[343] Gaetano Salvemini, *Under the Axe of Fascism* (London: Victor Gollancz, 1936), 154.
[344] *Ibid.*
[345] *Ibid.*
[346] Sforza, 'European Dictatorships', 30, RIIA/8/190, CHA.
[347] Meston, review of *The Working of a Corporate State*; and *L'expérience corporative en Italie*, 292-3.
[348] Wheeler-Bennett, review of *A Survey of Fascism*; and *My Autobiography*, 63.
[349] William L. Langer, review of *The Making of the Corporate State*, by Harold E. Goad, *Foreign Affairs* 10, no. 4 (1932): 707.
[350] William L. Langer, review of *The Universal Aspects of Fascism*, by James Strachey Barnes, *Foreign Affairs* 6, no. 3 (1928): 512-3.
[351] I.F.D.M., review of *Monarchy*, 275.

from such noted persons as Toynbee and Liddell Hart,[352] while multiple of his interwar publications were surveyed in the *Royal United Services Institution Journal*, *International Affairs*, and *Foreign Affairs*, among other political science journals.[353] Likewise, *Foreign Affairs* included Pellizzi's early fascist internationalist tract, *Problemi e realtà del fascismo*, in its review section, describing its author as a 'philosophic adherent'.[354] Langer similarly primed readers of *Foreign Affairs*, describing Villari's *The Fascist Experiment* as 'a well-known historian's latest work'.[355] Villari's subsequent release, *Italy*, was said to contain 'a number of good chapters on the Fascist system, the new syndicalism, foreign policy, and the problem of church and state.' For Langer, it was '[o]n the whole a stimulating volume' written by 'one of the most capable exponents of the Fascist view'.[356] In 1940, Woolbert could still describe Pellizzi's *Italy* as a 'handy précis, pro-Fascist in tone, of Italian foreign policy'.[357] In a review of another book by Villari, the former British Ambassador to Italy, Sir Rennell Rodd—himself well acquainted with Barnes, Villari, and Pellizzi as chairman of the British-Italian League—expressed his 'appreciation of an extremely interesting volume'. Published in the RIIA journal, the review opined that Villari dispenses with the 'excesses of uncompromising partisanship'. Instead, Villari presents the regime's 'case with moderation and… convinces the reader that, whether or not the ultimate remedy has been found, the malady which existed was one that called for drastic treatment'.[358] Pellizzi's 1923 Chatham House speech on the new fascist movement also garnered a range of responses. The chair and esteemed liberal historian G.M. Trevelyan, yet to be fully disillusioned by the new fascist government, echoed Pellizzi in offering a hopeful, even positive, assessment of the fledgling movement; regular Chatham House attendee Major-General George Aston raised the thorny question of the extent to which fascismo was compatible with democracy; the MP Captain Walter Elliott, later a keen admirer of Mussolini, criticised Italy's foreign policy but seemed to express a fondness for the movement's emphasis on youth; while one Mr. Wigglesworth 'strongly corroborated the lecturer's view as to the success of the [fascist] movement'.[359] In response to Pellizzi's subsequent 1931 Chatham House speech, the onetime and since disillusioned Communist MP Walton Hewbold also found much agreeable in the speaker's positive appraisal. Hewbold applauded the fascist 'enthusiasts' who had provided a 'great service to

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[352] Arnold J. Toynbee, review of *Italy and Fascismo*, by Luigi Sturzo; and *The Fascist Experiment*, by Luigi Villari, *The Nation & Athenaeum*, 4 December 1926, 340-1; B.H. Liddell Hart, review of *They That Take the Sword*, by Esmé Wingfield-Stratford; *The Dragon's Teeth: A Study of War and Peace*, by J.F.C. Fuller; *Ludendorff: The Tragedy of a Specialist*, by Karl Tschuppik; and *The War on the Italian Front*, by Luigi Villari, *English Review* (April 1932): 438-44.
[353] See, e.g., Harry Elmer Barnes, review of *The Awakening of Italy*, by Luigi Villari, *Foreign Affairs* 3, no. 1 (1924): 156; I.F.D. Morrow, review of *The War on the Italian Front*, by Luigi Villari; and *L'Italie fasciste*, by Georges Roux, *International Affairs* 11, no. 5 (1932): 724-5; review of *The Expansion of Italy*, by Luigi Villari, *Royal United Services Institution Journal* 75, no. 499 (1930): 655-6.
[354] Harry Elmer Barnes, review of *Problemi e realtà del fascismo*, by Camillo Pellizzi, *Foreign Affairs* 3, no. 1 (1924): 156.
[355] William L. Langer, review of *The Fascist Experiment*, by Luigi Villari, *Foreign Affairs* 5, no. 2 (1927): 339.
[356] William L. Langer, review of *Italy*, by Luigi Villari, *Foreign Affairs* 8, no. 1 (1929): 160.
[357] Robert Gale Woolbert, review of *Italy*, by Camillo Pellizzi, *Foreign Affairs* 18, no. 4 (1940): 756.
[358] Rennell Rodd, review of *Italy*, by Luigi Villari, *Journal of the Royal Institute of International Affairs* 8, no. 5 (1929): 529-31. See also 'Signor Grandi Welcomed', *Times*, 29 November 1932, 16.
[359] 'Meetings of the Spring Session', *Journal of the British Institute of International Affairs* 2, no. 2 (1923): 83-4. On Trevelyan's views on fascism, see Alastir MacLachlan, 'Becoming National? G.M. Trevelyan: The Dilemmas of a Liberal (Inter)nationalist, 1900-1945', *Humanities Research* 19, no. 1 (2013): 23-43.

Italy' and, believing the emergent fascist creed to be one of two modern outgrowths from the French Revolution (the other being Bolshevism), he seemed to hold much hope in fascism's potential to unify the Italians.[360]

Ultimately, it is difficult to discern a straightforward assessment on how this Italophilic clique was situated within and received by interwar IR scholarship, open as their views were to ridicule and praise (or, in some book reviews, treated via impartial and straightforward summaries). Yet what is apparent and indeed noteworthy is that such far-right thinkers and their texts were not only directly and extensively engaged with by many affiliated with the emerging study of IR, but that such engagement was undertaken in a manner not dissimilar to other scholarly texts and that the authors of such extremist views were themselves given space in contemporary journals and lecture halls. Indeed, the review platform with which Currey was *regularly* provided in *International Affairs* is itself illustrative. In at least one instance, Currey's surveys attracted a measure of ire. The pseudonymous 'William Elwin' protested Currey's 'accusation of inaccuracy' levelled against his 'carefully documented treatment of the Corporate State', while expressing his disappointment at *International Affairs* for allowing a 'hostile critic' to present such allegations 'without the support of a single reference'.[361] As with any author, Currey was granted space to reply: 'Reviews… are necessarily brief'. Unable to offer a complete 'catalogue [of] Dr. Elwin's mistakes', Currey limited herself to three such examples, trenchantly concluding that '[t]hese are matters of fact, not of opinion'.[362]

I began this dissertation with the comical observation that one would be unlikely to find reviews of Nick Land or Richard Spencer in *International Affairs* or *APSR*. Likewise, a student would be hard-pressed locating recommendations to New Right publications in IR textbooks or reading lists. Of course, one may certainly and increasingly read serious scholarly studies on far-right international thought or even happen across far-right texts included as primary sources on reading lists. Yet these scenarios—entirely sensible and legitimate in any case—are worlds apart from treating the texts of such actors as serious scholarly studies warranting review in IR journals or positioning them on reading lists as if reflecting but another respectable theoretical approach comparable to, for example, constructivism, neoclassical realism, or the English School. As illustrated in this section, the circumstances surrounding the interwar field were a far cry from the present. Fascists and fellow-travellers were still taken seriously within the nascent academic discipline, operating as they were within a wider field of expertise heavily geared towards praxis over theory-building, not least a climate wherein fascism was, at least for many reputable voices on world politics, neither entirely clear in its meaning nor beyond the pale.

Fascist International Thought and the Conditions of Peace

With the onset of the Second World War, Villari, Pellizzi, and Barnes coalesced behind the Italian war effort, while Petrie, Goad, and Currey remained beholden to Britain. While I will discuss the wartime trajectory of these thinkers in more detail in Chapter VI, it is, for present purposes, useful to consider the evolution in Pellizzi's technocratic,

[360] Pellizzi, 'Italy and the Vatican', v-vi, RIIA/8/174, CHA.
[361] William Elwin (pseud.) and Muriel Currey, 'Correspondence', *International Affairs* 14, no. 5 (1935): 747-8.
[362] *Ibid*, 748.

corporatist thinking and as to how this was influenced by Anglophone thought gaining currency in and beyond wartime IR.

The Technocratic Future

Between 1940 and 1943, Pellizzi served as President of the National Institute of Fascist Culture (NIFC) by appointment from Mussolini, in which capacity he became a vocal emissary for a post-war fascist order.[363] Yet Pellizzi, already somewhat unsettled by the regime's antisemitic turn, would eventually become disenchanted with not only Italian inferiority vis-à-vis Germany, but the stultified fascist revolution and Mussolini himself; the latter a point of wartime tension in his friendship with Barnes.[364] Indeed, despite grave concerns about the prospect of Allied occupation, Pellizzi expressed the sense that Italian defeat may be preferable to a German victory; by then, the imperial nature of the Nazi New European Order had become palpably clear.[365] As alluded to in Chapter IV, it was at this juncture that Pellizzi increasingly came to proffer European federalism. In the pages of *Civiltà fascista* during December 1942, Pellizzi, its then editor, anxiously speculated about Europe's relative decline and the fear of becoming but 'a mere appendage of the Asiatic continent'.[366] Accordingly, Pellizzi called for, where necessary, 'subduing national particularism' and creating a European federal system, one that embraced a truer form of pan-Europeanism and not merely the primacy of a single state.[367]

In his capacity as NIFC president, Pellizzi's evolving reflections—alongside ongoing friction between the institute and the Fascist Party—elicited some controversy.[368] In June 1943, an unsigned and subsequently banned article believed to be penned by Roberto Farinacci—a high-profile member of Fascist Grand Council, staunch antisemite, and wartime Germanophile—lampooned Pellizzi on the front-page of *Il regime fascista*. The unidentified author directed their ire at an article by Pellizzi in the aforementioned *Civiltà fascista*, wherein the latter argued that the war had ceased to be comprehensible as a mere struggle between fascists and anti-fascists, for the same ideology and revolution was spreading across, and manifesting in different shapes within, all major countries involved in the conflict.[369] In this comment, Pellizzi points to what he viewed as a common tendency towards planning and technocracy. Farinacci was aghast at such a conclusion. For him, the war was evidently one animated by the desire to eliminate fascism, for fascism is the antithesis of the Allies' ideological commitments: 'Fascism is, and continues

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[363] Gregor, *Mussolini's Intellectuals*, 166.
[364] Baldoli and Fleming, *British Fascist*, 122.
[365] See, e.g., *ibid*, 13, 47, 123.
[366] Cited in Cofrancesco, 'Ideas of the Fascist Government', 192-3.
[367] Cited in *ibid*, 192.
[368] For further on such internal tension, see Mariuccia Salvati, '*Teoria e uso della propaganda nella guerra fascista*: *Il caso di* Camillo Pellizzi', *Ricerche dell'Istituto Storico Germanico di Roma* 11 (2017): 205, 211.
[369] 'Disputes in the Italian Fascist Party', Review of the Foreign Press, Series A: Memoranda on Axis-Controlled Europe, No. 43, 6 July 1943, CHA.

to be, anti-Communist, anti-plutocratic, anti-democratic, in short, anti-Jewish'.[370] While Farinacci's article was prohibited, Pellizzi was in any case replaced as NIFC President in early July.[371]

Pellizzi's evolving and somewhat controversial beliefs were influenced by important strands of thinking circulating Anglophone discourse, the NIFC having had an unusual degree of access to a range of publications typically prohibited within Italy.[372] *The Managerial Revolution* by New York University professor of philosophy James Burnham stands out in this regard, Pellizzi having read the book in 1942.[373] Burnham, a Trotskyite turned militant conservative, was 'widely read on the British left in the 1940s and 50s',[374] and his classic tract would later carry much influence in the political thought of American paleoconservatism.[375] Notably, he has recently been re-written into IR's post-war disciplinary history by Jean-François Drolet and Michael C. Williams, with Burnham representing a vocal opponent of the supposedly effeminate realism of Morgenthau, George Kennan, and Walter Lippmann.[376] For Pellizzi, Burnham's argument about the inherent directionality of socio-political evolution was of particular interest. Whether the Soviet Union, Britain, or the US, all revealed common signs of a new, educated, managerial class who would govern their respective societies.[377] Pellizzi's fascination with Burnham would lead him to translate *The Managerial Revolution* and its sequel, *The Machiavellians*, in 1946 and 1947 respectively.[378] As Patricia Chiantera-Stutte highlights in her treatment of Pellizzi's post-war apologia, *Una rivoluzione mancata* ('missed revolution'), the intellectual had envisioned fascism as a technocratic revolution, one that would herald an aristocracy of technicians who would spearhead an efficiently governed third-way between capitalism and communism.[379] In this regard, Pellizzi's thought shared certain similarities with Burnham's analysis, yet unlike the latter who speculated about the managerial revolution with trepidation, ultimately fuelling his messianic anti-communist crusade, Pellizzi welcomed it and the prospect of a ruling technocratic elite.[380]

Curiously, E.H. Carr proved to be another influence on Pellizzi's wartime thinking. As Danilo Breschi and Gisella Longo note, Carr was acquainted with Pellizzi during the interwar period and held him in high regard.[381]

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[370] *Ibid.*
[371] 'Italy in Crisis: The Party's Role', Review of the Foreign Press, Series A: Memoranda on Axis-Controlled Europe, No. 54, 20 July 1943, CHA.
[372] Breschi and Longo, *Camillo Pellizzi*, 164-5.
[373] Salvati, '*Teoria e uso della propaganda nella guerra fascista*', 219.
[374] Ben Jackson, *Equality and the British Left: A Study in Progressive Thought, 1900-64* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2007), 155.
[375] See, e.g., Samuel T. Francis, *Power and History: The Political Thought of James Burnham* (Lanham: University Press of America, 1984).
[376] Jean-François Drolet and Michael C. Williams, 'The Radical Right, Realism, and the Politics of Conservatism in Postwar International Thought', *Review of International Studies* 47, no. 3 (2021): 281-3.
[377] James Burnham, *The Managerial Revolution: What is Happening in the World* (New York: John Day, 1941).
[378] Salvati, '*Teoria e uso della propaganda nella guerra fascista*', 204.
[379] Patricia Chiantera-Stutte, '"Missed Revolutions": Historical Narratives During Italian Fascism (from Delio Cantimori to Camillo Pellizzi)', *History* 108, no. 382 (2023): 365-87.
[380] *Ibid*, 386.
[381] Breschi and Longo, *Camillo Pellizzi*, 127.

After all, Pellizzi's aforementioned book, *Italy*, was included in Carr's *Ambassadors at Large* series, although it should be qualified that Carr prefaced the book with a statement to the effect that the editor was responsible for none of the opinions contained therein.[382] During the war, Pellizzi found Carr's sequel to *The Twenty Years' Crisis*, namely his 1942 *Conditions of Peace* (hereafter *Conditions*), of considerable interest. Pellizzi produced a report on *Conditions* and even advocated staging a radio broadcast to constructively reply in English to Carr's book.[383] As late as 1961, one prominent neo-fascist publisher sought suggested readings from Pellizzi. The latter would recommend *Conditions*.[384] Evidently, the book's impression was lasting.

Carr's *Conditions* needs to be understood in the wider context of wartime Anglophone international thought. Against the backdrop of war and ruin came what Or Rosenboim called 'the emergence of globalism', namely an array of projects and plans for (re)organising world politics.[385] The sentiment was aptly captured in the title of Laski's book-length treatment, *Where Do We Go From Here?*[386] While the proffered schemes were as diverse as they were numerous, speculation about the viability and desirability of supranational schemes emerged as one focal point around which much expert discussion coalesced. As Bruce Lockhart, later to become wartime Director-General of the Political Warfare Executive, remarked in a letter to Wheeler-Bennett, 'one of the great difficulties is to restrain the various cranks who have pet schemes for the reformation of the world. Federalisation is the new slogan'.[387] Proponents propagated such schemes, while critics inevitably had to navigate them. Carr's intervention within this discourse proved to be a best-seller, attaching itself to, as he later recalled, 'the current mood'.[388]

In 1936, Carr viewed with cautious positivity the gradual expansion of a pacified British Commonwealth and the advent of a fledgling security community between Britain, France, and the US. Nevertheless, the world was not yet 'ripe… for the establishment of a super-national force'.[389] During the Second World War, however, Carr increasingly turned towards integration and European federalism. Yet he objected to the foolhardy imposition of Streit's Federal Union or some revivified League.[390] In its stead, Carr promoted a gradualist approach, blending notions of international planning with functionalism to redress certain basic material needs. Alongside his socialist sensibilities, Carr's wartime remedy was therefore inspired by the functionalist thinking of, for example, Mary Parker Follett, Salter, and Mitrany.[391] To cite Wilson, Carr 'substituted "the planned society" for the liberal *laissez faire*

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[382] E.H. Carr, preface to *Italy*, by Camillo Pellizzi (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1939).
[383] Breschi and Longo, *Camillo Pellizzi*, 165n80.
[384] *Ibid*, 357-8.
[385] Or Rosenboim, *The Emergence of Globalism: Visions of World Order in Britain and the United States, 1939-1950* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2017).
[386] Harold J. Laski, *Where Do We Go From Here?* (New York: Viking Press, 1940).
[387] Bruce Lockhart to John W. Wheeler-Bennett, 1 January 1940, B29, Sir John Wheeler-Bennett Collection.
[388] E.H. Carr, 'An Autobiography', in *E.H. Carr: A Critical Appraisal*, ed. Michael Cox (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2000), xix.
[389] Carr, 'Public Opinion', 861.
[390] E.H. Carr, *Conditions of Peace* (New York: Macmillan Company, 1942), 167.
[391] See, e.g., Ashworth, 'Poverty of Paradigms', 39; Holthaus and Steffek, 'Experiments in International Administration', 131; Steffek, *International Organization*, 128-9.

conceptions of natural harmony and spontaneous order'.[392] Carr would later describe *Conditions* as promoting 'a sort of liberal Utopia, mixed with a little socialism'.[393] This was not entirely off the mark: Carr's functionalist thinking rejected *laissez-faire* capitalism and embraced Keynesianism and the welfare state, albeit transposed onto the international.[394] Moreover, Carr co-opted functionalism's nominally depoliticised logic in promoting a vision for a 'European Planning Authority' and a 'Bank of Europe', while simultaneously diverging from Mitrany by ultimately promoting the idea of European federation.[395] Yet Carr also imagined this order to be one with marginal regard for the agency and sovereignty of small states; this was to be a system divided amongst and dominated by a select few large regional units.[396]

Pellizzi's thinking resembled Carr's in some respects. In the first place, as the historian Mariuccia Salvati suggests, Pellizzi appreciated Carr's realist ethos and the need for a pragmatic, non-moralistic approach to the defeated powers in any post-war settlement. Pellizzi compiled a report on *Conditions* for Mussolini to this effect (although Salvati is unable to confirm its dispatch or the dictator's receipt).[397] Yet Carr's influence went deeper, inflecting Pellizzi's aforementioned corporatist thinking on a post-Westphalian Europe. In September 1943, Pellizzi professed a desire to 'cut off' what he called the 'dragon's head, i.e. the notion of state sovereignty'. Importantly, he qualified that this did not require the mere imposition of a supranational structure, but could proceed from the gradual formation of 'interstate European bodies', each concerned with 'certain common interests (exchange rates, communications, foreign trade etc., then defence and colonies, and so on)'. While Pellizzi believed that the catastrophe of the war would provide much impetus to such a 'revolutionary process', he also held the opinion that its actualisation would probably require some 'minimum common denominator of ideology'. This could simply be what he referred to as a 'modernized form of socialism, free from bigotry and based on broadly-conceived programmes to meet the basic needs of the great civilian masses of the European countries'.[398] In this latter point, one may detect not only a loose Burnhamite echo centred around the managerial structure of future socio-political organisation, but Carr's socialist-inflected, pragmatic approach to functionalist cooperation.

A Transatlantic Reception

In studying the transnational circulation of *Conditions*, there is another curious angle worthwhile noting; that is, the illiberal influences upon Carr's thinking. Specifically, one may observe a process of second order reception. Not

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[392] Wilson, 'E.H. Carr's The Twenty Years' Crisis'.
[393] Carr, 'An Autobiography', xix.
[394] Andrew Linklater, 'E.H. Carr, Nationalism and the Future of the Sovereign States', in *E.H. Carr: A Critical Appraisal*, ed. Michael Fox (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2000), 237.
[395] Steffek, *International Organization*, 128-9. On Mitrany's wartime thinking, see Lucian M. Ashworth, 'A New Politics for a Global Age: David Mitrany's *A Working Peace System*', in C*lassics of International Relations: Essays in Criticism and Appreciation*, eds. Henrik Bliddal, et al. (London: Routledge, 2013).
[396] Rosenboim, *Emergence of Globalism*, 54.
[397] Salvati, '*Teoria e uso della propaganda nella guerra fascista*', 219-20.
[398] Cited in Cofrancesco, 'Ideas of the Fascist Government', 195.

only did Pellizzi familiarise himself with Carr's book, but the latter was itself influenced by another fascist thinker, Lawrence Dennis.

After serving as Second Lieutenant in the military police during the First World War, Dennis returned to Harvard. Having first enrolled in 1915, he graduated in 1920 with majors in political science and international law.[399] On the latter subject, he was taught by none other than Quincy Wright.[400] Over the coming decade, Dennis developed an expertise in foreign affairs, particularly American policy in the Western hemisphere, through diplomatic posts with the State Department. These included stints in Haiti, Romania, Honduras, and Nicaragua, the latter of which he served as *Charge d'Affaires* during the 1926 Nicaraguan Civil War, overseeing an intervention by the Marine Corps. By 1927, disillusioned with American neo-imperialism, Dennis resigned from the State Department and entered Wall Street. Until 1930, he was employed by the investment bank J.W. Seligman, representing the firm in Peru. Dennis' diplomatic and banking experience led him to publish two *Foreign Affairs* articles somewhat critical of American regional interventionism.[401] Crucially, Dennis emerged from his stretch on Wall Street as a prophet forewarning of the impending Great Depression.[402] By the early 1930s, Dennis' thought grew more radical, and with this he evolved into a public intellectual, a prophet of *The Coming American Fascism*, as he titled one such book.[403] As Langer summarised in *Foreign Affairs*, Dennis '*repeats* his conviction that Fascism is coming and that it will do good'.[404] Carmen Haider, a Columbia PhD and early expert on fascism linked to the Brookings Institution, referred to Dennis as 'America's accepted advocate of Fascism'.[405] Yet Dennis' reputation as an astute observer of politics and international affairs persisted during the 1930s, precisely because of his controversial beliefs. His views on a fascist America were even given space in the *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, and he spoke before such reputable venues as the University of Virginia's Institute of Public Affairs and various branches of the Foreign Policy Association.[406]

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[399] 'The Reminiscences of Lawrence Dennis', transcript of interview conducted by William R. Keylor, 1967, 26, Oral History Archives, Digital Library Collections, Columbia Center for Oral History, Columbia University. https://dlc.library.columbia.edu/catalog/cul:1c59zw3t2j.

[400] Lawrence Dennis, *The Appeal to Reason*, 8 September 1962, 17.1, LDP.

[401] Lawrence Dennis, 'Revolution, Recognition and Intervention', *Foreign Affairs* 9, no. 2 (1931): 204-21; Lawrence Dennis, 'Nicaragua: In Again, Out Again', *Foreign Affairs* 9, no. 3 (1931): 496-500.

[402] For a fuller biographic treatment of Dennis, see Gerald Horne, *The Color of Fascism: Lawrence Dennis, Racial Passing, and the Rise of Right-Wing Extremism in the United States* (New York: New York University Press, 2006).

[403] Lawrence Dennis, *The Coming American Fascism* (New York: Harper, 1936).

[404] William L. Langer, review of *The Coming American Fascism*, by Lawrence Dennis, *Foreign Affairs* 14, no. 3 (1936): 534 (emphasis added).

[405] Cited in Andy Lanset, 'Better Late than Never: A Talk WNYC Censored in 1934', WNYC, 31 December 2020, https://www.wnyc.org/story/better-late-never-talk-wnyc-censored-1934/. On Haider, see Michael Joseph Roberto, 'The Origins of American Fascism', *Monthly Review* 69, no. 2 (2017): 26-41.

[406] See, respectively, Lawrence Dennis, 'Fascism for America', *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 180 (1935): 62-73; Chas G. Maphis to Lawrence Dennis, 5 October 1934, Box 78, Papers of the University of Virginia Institute of Public Affairs, University of Virginia Archives, Charlottesville; Maximilian St.-George and Lawrence Dennis, *A Trial on Trial: The Great Sedition Trial of 1944* ([place unknown]: National Civil Rights Committee, 1946), 381.

Dennis' books were also read widely by international thinkers of the period and cited or reviewed in political science and international affairs journals.[407] For example, British economist and sociologist Barbara Wootton—a figure who has recently garnered attention from the Leverhulme-funded 'Women and the History of International Thought' project—published a 1933 review on Dennis' *Is Capitalism Doomed?*,[408] while this book, alongside Dennis' later treatment of American fascism, were included as suggested readings in Schuman's IR textbook.[409] In *Foreign Affairs*, Witney Shepardson, an American businessman and prominent CFR figure, grouped Keynes and Dennis together insofar as they both espoused self-sufficiency.[410] Alternatively, one reviewer for *Social Forces*, riffing off Sinclair Lewis' 1935 dystopic novel about a fascist America, *It Can't Happen Here*, remarked of Dennis' *The Coming American Fascism* that 'he believes that it can and should happen here'. Repulsed by Dennis' 'romantic' depiction of fascism as a 'benevolent despotism' led by 'philosopher-kings', the reviewer rejected the book's sociological merit, calling it 'dangerous both intellectually and socially', worth reading only as a 'sign and portent' of emergent beliefs sociologists could not ignore.[411] In *International Affairs*, one reviewer found Dennis' comments on 'American bankers… too scathing to bear repetition', while the book was overly lengthy and tedious. '[T]he coming American Fascist', the reviewer quipped, 'will have to be supplied with a brilliantly coloured shirt if he is to get any thrills under the leadership of Mr. Dennis'.[412] In *Pacific Affairs*, Dennis' wartime book, *The Dynamics of War and Revolution* (hereafter *Dynamics*), was said to contain 'many sharp, clever and even devastating things to say' on 'capitalism and the social order', notwithstanding the reviewer's anti-fascist position.[413] In rather banal language, Woolbert too described *Dynamics* in *Foreign Affairs* as the product of an 'American Fascist' who 'paints a highly unconventional picture of this country's role in contemporary world politics'.[414] Others lambasted the book. In *APSR*, political scientist and émigré Waldemar Gurian highlighted Dennis' Spenglerian influences, elitist and antidemocratic sentiments, and his belief in an emerging international order dominated by grand national socialist empires.[415] While

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[407] Unsurprisingly, BUF press recommended Dennis' output. See, e.g., Alexander Raven Thomson, review of *The Coming American Fascism*, by Lawrence Dennis, *Fascist Quarterly* 2, no. 4 (1936): 576-8; 'Select Bibliography', *British Union Quarterly* 1, no. 2 (1937): 123.

[408] Barbara Wootton, review of *Is Capitalism Doomed?*, by Lawrence Dennis, *Economic Journal* 43, no. 169 (1933): 150-2. On Wootton's international thought, see Or Rosenboim, 'A Plan for Plenty: The International Thought of Barbara Wootton', in *Women's International Thought: A New History*, eds. Patricia Owens and Katharina Rietzler (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2021).

[409] Schuman, *International Politics*.

[410] Whitney H. Shepardson, 'Nationalism and American Trade', *Foreign Affairs* 12, no. 3 (1934): 405. For a similar observation, see Frank M. Russell, 'Is Isolation Possible and If Possible Desirable?', *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 283 (1952): 34n12.

[411] Thomas D. Eliot, review of *The Coming American Fascism*, by Lawrence Dennis, *Social Forces* 16, no. 2 (1937): 299.

[412] Leger, review of *The Coming American Fascism*, by Lawrence Dennis, *International Affairs* 15, no. 4 (1936): 640.

[413] O.L., review of *The Dynamics of War and Revolution*, by Lawrence Dennis; and *Hitler is No Fool: The Menace of the Man and His Program*, by Karl Billinger, *Pacific Affairs* 14, no. 1 (1941): 121.

[414] Robert Gale Woolbert, review of *The Dynamics of War and Revolution*, by Lawrence Dennis, *Foreign Affairs* 19, no. 2 (1941): 467.

[415] Waldemar Gurian, review of *The Dynamics of War and Revolution*, by Lawrence Dennis, *American Political Science Review* 35, no. 2 (1941): 352.

Dennis was branded a 'brilliant writer', a 'master in the coining of sharply ironical formulas', Gurian believed Dennis' prophecy reflected, ironically, a utopian mindset: 'One can himself be unrealistic, excited, and emotional even if one accuses his opponent of being unrealistic, excited, and emotional'.[416] Harvard political scientist Pendleton Herring, writing in the *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, echoed this view, suggesting that despite Dennis' efforts to be '"hard boiled" and realistic, the author far overreaches himself and ends in this talk of folkish, mystical unity'. Herring conceded *Dynamics* was an 'extraordinary' and occasionally penetrating book, yet overall, it was quite irritating in its tone and not overly convincing. Indeed, he added that it was 'difficult to review fairly since the author is himself so unsparing in his personal judgements of men, institutions, and ideas'. Crucially, Herring argued that Dennis' 'fascistic future' remains a 'dangerous possibility', but one whose inevitability few are likely to accept, let alone welcome. For Herring, democracy still had ample vigour to confront the problems of the present and future.[417]

As Dennis' publications were read by scholars on both sides of the Atlantic, so too was he familiar with the thought of, and even sought to personally engage with, a raft of prominent international thinkers engaged in the practice and/or study of international politics. In June 1936, for instance, Dennis contacted Laski to organise a meeting upon his upcoming visit to London. While Laski had initially responded positively, the socialist thinker despatched a second letter admitting that he had been unacquainted with Dennis' positive appraisal of fascism and, after reading his book, advised against any such meeting.[418] Alternatively, in the pages of the *Nation*, the political scientist Max Lerner, Dennis, and the aforementioned IR professor Frederick Schuman engaged in a debate over the newly released *Dynamics*. Other relations proved more intellectually agreeable.[419] In February 1942, for example, Dennis received a letter from former President Herbert Hoover, who remarked that the former's 'thesis is too big for the present American imagination', which is, he continued, 'proceeding under the re-establishment of the Wilson Europe!'[420] Dennis was particularly close with the non-interventionist and esteemed political scientist (and subsequent Holocaust denier) Harry Elmer Barnes. Having first contacted Barnes following the latter's review of his 1932 book, *Is Capitalism Doomed?*, the two formally met at the University of Virginia's Institute of Public Affairs in 1940, after which they continued to correspond for decades.[421] Even Keynes and the earlier discussed John Stachey reportedly had great admiration for Dennis' thinking in the early 1930s, one that was mutually felt.[422]

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[416] *Ibid*, 352-4.

[417] Pendleton Herring, review of *The Dynamics of War and Revolution*, by Lawrence Dennis, *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 213 (1941): 198. For a similar critique, see Ira Jewell Williams, 'The Future of Democracy in the United States', *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 180 (1935): 84.

[418] Harold J. Laski to Lawrence Dennis, 9 and 22 June 1936, 4.9, LDP.

[419] Frederick L. Schuman, et al., 'Who Owns the Future?', *The Nation*, 11 January 1941, 36-44.

[420] Herbet Hoover to Lawrence Dennis, 4 February 1942, 3.43, LDP.

[421] Harry Elmer Barnes to Lawrence Dennis, 8 March 1960, 2.15, LDP. Presumably they met during Barnes' 1940 lecture in Virginia. See Harry Elmer Barnes, 'Europe's War and the United States', typescript, 18 June 1940, Box 48, Papers of the University of Virginia Institute of Public Affairs.

[422] 'The Reminiscences of Lawrence Dennis', Oral History Archives. The *Economic Journal*, then edited by Keynes, also published a co-authored article by Dennis; see Lawrence Dennis and H. Somerville, 'Usury and the Canonists: Continued', *Economic Journal* 42, no. 166 (1932): 312-23.

While Dennis' controversial reputation gained him much attention during the 1930s and provided a bridging point between himself and noted non-interventionists—such as Barnes, senators Burton K. Wheeler and Gerald Nye, ambassador Joseph P. Kennedy Sr., and the voice of the America First Committee, Charles Lindbergh[423]—his contrarian illiberalism harmed his credibility among some and militated against the wider reception of his thought after the war in Europe had set-in (and particularly following America's entry therein). Writing to the Harvard linguist and philologist, George Kingsley Zipf—himself an admirer of Dennis who assigned his research in class[424]—the fascist intellectual lamented the downturn in speaking invitations: 'I used to get thirty or forty speaking dates a winter for Foreign Policy Association meetings, colleges and large forums. Now I am tabu [*sic*] except among those who are absolutely secure from the charge of being pro-Nazi'.[425]

Despite Dennis' engagement with international affairs and reputation as an influential voice of non-intervention, he has attracted comparatively sparse attention from historians,[426] not to mention scholars of international thought. Gerald Horne offers the only book-length biography. While informative, his approach to Dennis' thought is, on occasion, too heavily guided by the central theme undergirding the book, namely the link between Jim Crow racism; the deep psychological impact accompanying Dennis' racial 'passing' (his mother was Black); and the embrace of fascism in an act of intellectual overcompensation.[427] For example, Horne remarks that Dennis 'invoke[d] nettlesome matters of class' when deploying the language of the 'Haves' and 'Have-Nots', terms 'that barely concealed the question of "race"'.[428] Horne imparts more uniqueness and psychological meaning to Dennis' terminological choice than is warranted. By contrast, situating this vocabulary in the context of interwar international thought would confirm that it was tied to an international analogy of class, but one that was extremely common among far-right thinkers and the ideologically permeable discourse of 'peaceful change'. In what seems to be the only comment on the linkage between Dennis and Carr among historians of international thought, Steffek adds that 'it is quite plausible that Carr might have taken inspiration' from Dennis, given that the latter 'shared Carr's belief that Anglo-American liberalism was obsolete and a Nazi-style, managed economy was the way forward'.[429] Steffek's treatment, while I would suggest is correct, is rather fleeting on this point. Indeed, Steffek's exposition on

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[423] On Dennis' connections to the non-interventionist movement, see Horne, *Color of Fascism*.

[424] George Kingsley Zipf to Lawrence Dennis, 22 March 1941, 5.42, LDP. Zipf's own *National Unity and Disunity: The Nation as a Bio-Social Organism* (Bloomington: Principia Press, Inc., 1941), was sympathetic to Nazi Germany. For a scathing takedown, see Svend Riemer, review of *National Unity and Disunity: The Nation as a Bio-Social Organism*, by George Kingsley Zipf, *American Journal of Sociology* 48, no. 2 (1942): 285-7.

[425] Lawrence Dennis to George Kinglsey Zipf, 11 February 1941, 5.42, LDP. Dennis tried, arguably in vain, to spread the gospel of *Dynamics*, despatching copies to elite universities, the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace Library, and the official journal of the Institute of Social Science, then led by Max Horkheimer and Frederick Pollock.

[426] For exceptions, see David Spitz, *Patterns of Anti-Democratic Thought: An Analysis and a Criticism with Special Reference to the American Political Mind in Recent Times* (New York: Macmillan Company, 1949), Chapter 3; Justus D. Doenecke, 'The Isolationist as Collectivist: Lawrence Dennis and the Coming of World War II', *Journal of Libertarian Studies* 3, no. 2 (1979): 191-207; Horne, *Color of Fascism*.

[427] Horne, *Color of Fascism*.

[428] *Ibid*, 61.

[429] Steffek, *International Organization*, 129.

how the image of the Nazi New Order shaped Carr's approach to continental planning is more fleshed-out relative to his elaboration on the hidden dialogue between Dennis and Carr.[430]

What evidence is there to support the proposition that Carr drew upon Dennis' *Dynamics*? Of course, as Steffek presumably builds his contention on, Carr directly cites Dennis on two occasions within *Conditions*.[431] While many prominent international thinkers—including Murray and even Manning—challenged *Conditions* for its attack on liberalism and alleged affinity to fascist conceptions of world order, it appears that few contemporaries—indeed, perhaps only one—actually commented on Carr's citing of Dennis.[432] In a 1942 issue of *Time and Tide*, the acclaimed writer Rebecca West lampooned Carr's book: 'It is as odd for a serious English writer to quote Sir Oswald Mosley'.[433] Yet focusing on Carr's couple of offhand citations may only obscure Dennis' more substantive and unacknowledged influence. After all, one of Carr's aforementioned citations to Dennis centred on the irony that liberty was the watchword of the comfortable, while the downtrodden merely wanted 'ham and eggs'.[434] This was hardly a profound insight. Moreover, both authors arrived at similar critiques regarding the hypocrisy of the satisfied liberal powers (and of the scholars and internationalists who attacked the 'have-nots'). There is an ironic circularity here insofar as Dennis' *Dynamics*, in a reversal of the direction of reception, cites with approval Carr's earlier tract, *The Twenty Years' Crisis*:

> A commendably honest exception to the general rule may be found in Professor Carr's history… in which he frankly recognizes that international peace has become really "a special vested interest of the predominant powers" rather than a general interest. This must remain true as long as present inequalities of economic opportunity prevail both among nations and among individuals within nations.[435]

In any case, Carr's indebtedness to Dennis may have been, upon closer inspection, much deeper. For example, it is fascinating to note that Carr himself observed certain commonalities between the critique of *laissez-faire* capitalism contained within Dennis' *Dynamics* and the 1939 tract *The End of Economic Man* by Austrian émigré economist Peter Drucker.[436] What is significant is that Carr not only favourably observed similarities between Drucker and Dennis' wartime books,[437] but that Carr's *Conditions* expressly cites Drucker and, as with Dennis' *Dynamics*, arguably echoes *The End of Economic Man* in a more substantive fashion not truly captured by citation

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[430] *Ibid*, 128-9. On Carr's views regarding German economic planning, see also Haslam, *Vices of Integrity*, 97-8.
[431] Carr, *Conditions*, 33n1, 109n1.
[432] Regarding Murray and Manning, see, respectively, Gilbert Murray, 'Prof. Carr's Second Thoughts', *Headway* (May 1942): 1-3; David Long, 'C.A.W. Manning and the First Great Debates', in *International Relations and the First Great Debate*, ed. Brian C. Schmidt (London: Routledge, 2012), 80.
[433] Cited in Haslam, *Vices of Integrity*, 99.
[434] Carr, *Conditions*, 33n1.
[435] Lawrence Dennis, *The Dynamics of War and Revolution* (New York: The Weekly Foreign Letter, 1940), 115.
[436] Carr, review of *The Dynamics of War and Revolution*, 161.
[437] See Paul Rich, 'E.H. Carr and the Quest for Moral Revolutions in International Relations', in *E.H. Carr: A Critical Appraisal*, ed. Michael Fox (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2000), 206.

practices. The latter provided a social analysis of the rise of German totalitarianism, emphasising how the pitfalls of *laissez-faire* capitalism, particularly the rise of unemployment, had provided fertile ground for Nazi demagogy. In turn, Drucker suggested that the Third Reich sought to redress the fears and uncertainty of anarchic capitalism through developing a 'non-economic society of *Wehrwirtschaft*' (i.e., economics of the military state), one 'exorcising the demon of unemployment' by naturalising warfare and rearmament as 'not only rational and sensible but definitely desirable'.[438] Drucker, certainly no fascist, believed that the prudent democratic response to fascist totalitarianism was to develop a counter 'non-economic concept': 'neither capitalism nor socialism can be restored… [T]he Western European democracies themselves will be forced into totalitarianism unless they produce a non-economic society striving for the freedom and the equality of the individual'.[439] As with Drucker, Carr was in search of a more long-term cure for the 'major social scourge' of unemployment beyond the temporary need for wartime rearmament.[440] As Carr opined: 'The crisis of democracy is closely intertwined with the economic crisis; and the revolution against nineteenth-century liberal democracy is a part of the revolution against *laissez-faire* economics'.[441]

More important than this perceived likeness between Drucker and Dennis' critique of *laissez-faire* capitalism is Dennis' recognition of his *own* thought in Carr's tract. As he added, 'I think I may say without lack of modesty that Carr followed my analysis rather closely in the first part of his book'. Dennis accordingly took much pleasure in the popular reception of *Conditions* and the fact that Carr was a 'most influential brainstruster'.[442] In his weekly newsletter, Dennis labelled Carr's *The Twenty Years' Crisis* a 'brilliant book', before telling his audience that, '[i]ncidentally', yours truly was cited in Carr's most recent book, *Conditions*.[443] Haslam's magisterial biography of Carr adds further credence to this interpretation. Dennis was not off the mark. In fact, the title given to the opening chapter in *Conditions*, 'War and Revolution', is uncannily similar to Dennis' book, *The Dynamics of War and Revolution*.[444] 'As usual', Haslam remarks, 'Carr rummaged in any cupboard for whatever he needed… The *Dynamics* was not a work that Carr skimmed through in his customary manner, but a book he returned to more than once in the course of writing'.[445] Indeed, Carr reviewed Dennis' *Dynamics* in Chatham House's wartime journal. Carr's appraisal was mixed. He referred to Dennis as that 'rare phenomenon', namely 'an American critic of democracy', yet he was also an 'intellectual snob' and was readily aware of Dennis' 'fervently anti-British' attitude. While Carr opined that Dennis was misplaced in his belief that American interests were not at stake in the Second World War, neither this 'miscalculation nor Mr. Dennis's provocative style should', he concluded, 'prevent anyone from reading this book'. For Carr, Dennis 'really has something to say; and while some of it may be misguided and most of it overstated,

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[438] Peter F. Drucker, *The End of Economic Man: A Study of the New Totalitarianism* (London: William Heinemann, 1939), 180.
[439] *Ibid*, 229.
[440] Carr, *Conditions*, 82, 93-6.
[441] *Ibid*, 34-5.
[442] Lawrence Dennis to Moses J. Aronson, 30 September 1942, 2.11, LDP.
[443] Lawrence Dennis, *The Weekly Foreign Letter*, 9 July 1942, 3, 11.8, LDP.
[444] Haslam also highlights this resemblance.
[445] Haslam, *Vices of Integrity*, 97.

much of it is stimulating and worth while [*sic*]'.[446] As Carr concluded, 'whatever may be thought of his conclusions, he has the advantage over most writers… of understanding what the real issues are and of having the courage to face them'.[447]

What was it that Dennis argued in *Dynamics*, and what utility did Carr find in his thought? Dennis opposed American entry into the Second World War, albeit he was certainly no pacifist; in a post-war oral history, he expressly juxtaposed his position against Bertrand Russell's principled opposition to war.[448] While a fuller treatment of Dennis' international thought is beyond the present scope, suffice it to note that Dennis instead constructed an intriguing argument for American neutrality and autarkic isolation reliant on a series of mutually reinforcing beliefs. This included not only a faith in the inevitable decline of Anglo-French power, but a critique of the war-mongering logic germane to capitalist expansion, which was rendered more pernicious by, reflecting on the thought of historian Frederick Jackson Turner, the closure of the frontier and with it a stable route to limitless economic growth and full employment. As with Burnham, albeit predating his classic tract, the technocratic, managerial society was believed to be emerging across the industrialised world. Yet he developed an additional critique of the erroneous route of achieving this teleological endpoint through mobilising the nation for costly foreign crusades, rather than pre-emptively developing widescale, job-creating, public works projects (what he called, echoing Keynes, 'pyramid building') and implementing the nominally peaceful institutionalisation of an elite-led, corporatist, welfare state.[449]

Of course, there were broad similarities between Dennis' critique of the hypocritical status quo powers and Carr's own realism, as already alluded to. Yet Carr found this aspect, alongside Dennis' critique of American foreign policy, to be less interesting relative to 'his study of the crisis of democracy and capitalism'.[450] It is the commonalities between Dennis and Carr, and the latter's apparent borrowings from the former, on these fronts that are most striking. Carr came to the belief that mass unemployment and the inequality in consumption were major scourges which liberal democracy and *laissez-faire* capitalism had hitherto failed to address. This question of unemployment was likewise central to Dennis' thinking, a point which Carr himself was aware of and commented upon. The 'problem of unemployment' was, wrote Carr in summary of Dennis' *Dynamics*, the 'crucial test which democracy has so far failed to meet'.[451] The animating force of the nineteenth-century system—namely a 'belief in the harmony of interests' and the society-structuring 'moral purpose' of the profit motive—were coming unstuck.[452] Carr suggested that there were two main reasons for why this order had hitherto been sustained.[453] What is important for present purposes is that one of these explanations, and arguably that which impinges more on the question of why this

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[446] Carr, review of *The Dynamics of War and Revolution*, 161.
[447] *Ibid*, 163.
[448] 'The Reminiscences of Lawrence Dennis', 65, Oral History Archives.
[449] For the most thorough overview of Dennis' thought, see Justus D. Doenecke, 'Lawrence Dennis: Revisionist of the Cold War', *Wisconsin Magazine of History* 55 no. 4 (1972): 275-86.
[450] Carr, review of *The Dynamics of War and Revolution*, 163.
[451] *Ibid*, 162.
[452] Carr, *Conditions*, 106.
[453] *Ibid*, 106-9.

system faltered, bared an uncanny resemblance to Dennis' interpretation. Carr even cites the fascist author in a relevant passage, albeit the footnote yet again appears as a brief aside to bolster Carr's argument, rather than a substantive acknowledgement of Dennis' fundamental thesis about the closing of the frontier.[454] As with Dennis, Carr suggested that the expansion of markets over prior centuries portended, particularly amongst Anglophone countries, a dynamic of investment-driven profit and production, which increased savings and led to higher patterns of consumption within society, eliciting further investment and production.[455] Crucially, the unceasing expansion of markets was itself underpinned by what Carr referred to as 'the impulse of constantly expanding frontiers and expanding population'.[456] This circular dynamic could thus sustain the moral purpose of *laissez-faire* capitalism until such a point as these building blocks eroded. By the *fin-de-siècle*, European populations were on the decline, and the 1920s witnessed the US significantly curb immigration. Meanwhile, the 'frontiers of the civilised world had ceased to advance'.[457] This carries a Mackinderian echo, recalling to mind a world map divided amongst the great powers, and with it the foreclosure of supposedly untrammelled, unoccupied land. Yet it would seem, especially given Carr's explicit recourse to the language of the 'frontier', that his argument builds instead on Dennis' *Dynamics* and the latter's interpretation of the 'closed-space' thesis of Turner.[458] As Dennis argued: 'Democracy or capitalism… was never anything but the commercial and industrial revolution, with its accompaniments of extremely rapid population growth, frontier settlement and easy imperialist wars'.[459] As with Carr after him, Dennis illustrated how these foundations had collapsed.[460] In his review of *Dynamics*, Carr would again demonstrate his familiarity and, by and large, agreement with Dennis' diagnosis.[461]

Yet the salient question for Carr was *how* the problem of unemployment and inequality could be solved. Carr reasoned that the organisation of political communities necessitated a turn towards 'economic planning'. It is in this respect that Carr lamented that others, blinded by disgust, had failed to properly learn from nascent experiments in planning developed in Germany and the Soviet Union.[462] With that said, the route to planning was evidently not singular. One rudimentary option was rearmament and warfare. This was the approach partly taken by Germany (albeit underpinned by the sacrificial spirit of an extremist creed) and, on a temporary basis, Britain following the failure of appeasement.[463] However, as a lasting solution, this was less-than-ideal in the British context. Carr arrived at the frank position that this route was questionable neither because warfare was innately immoral nor wasteful.[464] For Carr, dedicating labour and resources to the development of arms 'does not differ in its economic

[454] *Ibid*, 109n1.
[455] *Ibid*, 108.
[456] *Ibid*, 109.
[457] *Ibid.*
[458] For a comparison of the 'closed-space' theories of Mackinder and Turner, see Gerry Kearns, 'Closed Space and Political Practice: Frederick Jackson Turner and Halford Mackinder', *Society and Space* 2, no. 1 (1984): 23-34.
[459] Dennis, *Dynamics*, 14.
[460] *Ibid*, Part 2.
[461] Carr, review of *The Dynamics of War and Revolution.*
[462] Carr, *Conditions*, 97.
[463] *Ibid*, 98.
[464] *Ibid.*

consequences from the production of any other kind of non-productive goods'.[465] As he vividly explained: 'the same economic results—the full utilisation of available labour and resources—could be achieved in peace-time by producing armaments and dumping them in the sea, or by building castles and [in a subtle echo of Keynes and Dennis alike] pyramids'.[466] That is, a population is unlikely prepared to commit the necessary sacrifices to achieve such dubious ends, such as developing arms to be deliberately scuttled. Large scale arms-building for the purposes of national survival was thus a temporary solution for unemployment made possible by the circumstances of general war.[467] The perennial challenge was therefore to find a suitable *peacetime* alternative, a 'moral purpose as potent as was religion in the Middle Ages or as is war to-day'.[468] Without this, Carr believed a tendency towards conflict would remain, not least because unemployment bred instability, and if war redressed unemployment, then arms competition, international rivalry, and warfare were cyclically linked. On this point, one may again find Dennis' intellectual shadow nearby. As Carr writes in both summary and approval of Dennis' *Dynamics*, a passage worthwhile quoting at length:

> The Pharaohs built pyramids and the men of the Middle Ages built cathedrals. But the only social end which we recognise as sufficiently important to override, on any large scale, the economic self-interest of the capitalist system… is war. Since war is the one thing for which we are prepared to make really vital sacrifices, war is necessary in order to make the wheels of our social system go round… The United States, like Europe, will be driven into war by the necessity of finding a cure for unemployment. The thesis, though crudely stated, carries a large measure of conviction.[469]

With that said, it is this assessment regarding the ills of unemployment and its international implications where Dennis' influence arguably ends. Carr suggested that Dennis was only 'concerned with diagnosis rather than with prescription', and thereby he 'offers no remedy'.[470] While this contention is debatable, Dennis admittedly did write in an obtuse fashion. He had a penchant for dealing out strident criticism against liberal democracy and capitalism, yet he fancied himself as a detached scientist who was not in his own right a fascist, merely the diagnostician of a teleologically preordained revolution. Of course, Dennis' qualifiers may not be overly convincing; his admiration for the totalitarian powers was, after all, palpable. One astute observer noted as much in the *Review of Politics*, highlighting that Dennis placed too much faith in the 'permanent vitality' of national socialist revolutions and operated with certain 'suppressed value judgments', which meant that *Dynamics* was in actuality 'a partisan allotment of praise of totalitarianism and blame for democracy'.[471] In any case, the British historian diverged from

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[465] *Ibid*, 103.
[466] *Ibid*.
[467] *Ibid*, 104.
[468] Carr, *Conditions*, 124.
[469] Carr, review of *The Dynamics of War and Revolution*, 162-3.
[470] *Ibid*, 163.
[471] Willis D. Nutting, review of *The Dynamics of War and Revolution*, by Lawrence Dennis, *Review of Politics* 3, no. 2: 261.

America's fascist prophet. While drawing on Dennis and Drucker, Carr gravitated more towards the latter. As he remarked in his review of *Dynamics*: 'I have not yet been driven to share his pessimism… The real need is for more, not for less, democracy'.[472] For Carr, the moral substitute for war and arms production was not fascism (which would veer towards the paradoxical), but to supplant the prior *laissez-faire* drive towards 'wealth' with a moral purpose centred on fulfilling the basic 'welfare' of individuals.[473]

In sum, what may be observed in this exploration of Pellizzi, Carr, and Dennis' wartime thought is a peculiar reception process, whereby America's leading fascist intellectual influenced one of IR's foremost thinkers, whose writing was, in turn, read by a key theorist of fascist universalism. In this vein, it is also worthwhile noting that while Carr at no point cited Burnham's *Managerial Revolution* in his *Conditions*, there is a strong resemblance between the central thesis espoused by Dennis and Burnham insofar as they both believed that the society of the future was to be a managerial one; Dennis *himself* acknowledged the similarities.[474] While it is unclear if Pellizzi read Dennis' output, it is apparent that he was indirectly influenced by the American fascist via the closely related ideas of Burnham and a second-hand reading of Dennis' *Dynamics* by Carr. Indeed, in the sceptical diary remarks of James Strachey Barnes, one may detect Dennis' echo:

> He [Pellizzi] adds that probably a long war would solve all problems. Economic Liberalism would die everywhere and communism would become more moderate, so that we should end up all more or less thinking alike and all more or less fascists. It is certainly an interesting thought.[475]

Conclusion

This chapter has sought to unearth how a clique of British-based Italophilic and fascist thinkers affiliated with Chatham House engaged with the emergent study of international politics. In 1933, W.E.D. Allen remarked that '[t]he political and economic aspects of Fascist belief are now fairly well known, even if—outside Italy and Germany—they continue to be both misrepresented and misunderstood'.[476] Progress towards the former was in no insignificant degree a direct result of the activities of the Italophiles discussed herein, while the continuation of alleged misrepresentations and misunderstandings was not despite a lack of effort.

The position of this chapter is not that Chatham House was the primary avenue through which such thinkers sought to influence British opinion regarding the corporate state. Yet it was one among other important sites through which such thinkers entered the marketplace of ideas, not only by presenting speeches, but via the house journal. Membership within the institute or the invitation to speak before it carried influence, conferring an

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[472] Carr, review of *The Dynamics of War and Revolution*, 162-3.
[473] Carr, *Conditions*, 101.
[474] Lawrence Dennis, *The Appeal to Reason*, 16 October 1948, 2, 12.8, LDP. The post-war divide between them was, however, stark: Dennis was an isolationist and fierce critic of the Cold War; Burnham, a messianic Cold Warrior.
[475] Cited in Baldoli and Fleming, *British Fascist*, 37.
[476] Allen, 'Fascist Idea in Britain', 224.

aura of expertise and affording an opportunity to network with high-profile political and intellectual figures. More broadly, as this chapter has demonstrated, figures such as Barnes, Currey, Goad, Pellizzi, Petrie, and Villari were all deeply enmeshed in the study of world politics. While they did not consciously conceive of themselves as contributing to a nascent discipline, each nevertheless contributed to or were otherwise discussed in interwar political science and IR journals; they were often respected amongst leading figures in the field due to their expert (if partisan) knowledge; and all were privy to salient debates occupying, and borrowed ideas from other thinkers involved with, the interwar and wartime study of international politics.

Chapter VI.
'A Pro-Fascist English Lady'

The International Thought of Muriel Innes Currey

> A pro-fascist English lady…[1]
>
> — *Foreign Affairs*

Thus was described the journalist, peace activist, and indeed fascist sympathising lady, Muriel Innes Currey, OBE. While Muriel was born in Dublin in 1884 to Katherine Annesley and Commander Edward Hamilton Currey, scant information is available on her formative decades.[2] Nonetheless, it is evident that by 1908 she participated in the Lyceum Club, a London establishment for women in the arts. She therein aided the establishment of a subcommittee representing dramatists, a passion that occupied her before the First World War.[3] Indeed, she had previously attended acting school in London under the tutelage of American actress Kate Josephine Bateman, of whom Currey was a 'well-known pupil'.[4] Currey later enlisted in the Women's Royal Naval Service following its wartime foundation, achieving the position of Assistant Director of Recruiting and, after the armistice, Demobilisation.[5] Thereafter, she emerged as an 'indefatigable speaker' on behalf of the LNU.[6]

Yet Currey's interwar activities were multifaceted. Juxtaposed against her League crusade, she collaborated alongside prominent fascist sympathisers, frequently published pro-fascist reviews within *International Affairs*, and served as Honorary Secretary to the earlier discussed London Group.[7] Evelyn Wrench, founder of the English-Speaking Union, once described Currey as an occasional 'amanuensis' to Goad and Yeats-Brown. Such roles were said to involve the provision of 'typing and research' assistance.[8] While Currey belonged to an exclusive clique of male fellow travellers, her place therein cannot be construed as purely secretarial. Currey herself was a reputable international thinker. As the *Observer* published:

> When in London she is to be found at most of the meetings of the Royal Institute of International Affairs, and there are few discussions at Chatham House to which she cannot

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[1] Review of *A Woman at the Abyssinian War*, by Muriel Currey, *Foreign Affairs* 15, no. 1 (1936): 217.
[2] E.H. Currey dabbled in naval history; see *Sea-Wolves of the Mediterranean: The Grand Period of the Moslem Corsairs* (New York: E.P. Dutton and Company, 1910).
[3] 'Plays and Players', *Sunday Times*, 7 January 1912, 4; Lionel Carson, ed., *"The Stage" Year Book 1915* (London: 'The Stage' Offices, 1915), 65. Currey's passion for the performing arts continued during her wartime service and the interwar decades. See, e.g., 'Florence Musical and Dramatic Festival', *Times*, 11 April 1935, 2.
[4] 'London Letter', *Manchester Courier*, 6 July 1909, 6; 'Paris Fancies and Fashions', *Gentlewoman*, 21 July 1906, 85.
[5] Ursula Stuart Mason, *The Wrens, 1917-77: A History of the Women's Royal Naval Service* (Reading: Educational Explorers, 1977), 26.
[6] 'News of Ex-W.R.N.S. Members', *Wren*, October 1921, 3, LBYE.5/377.1, Imperial War Museum (IWM) Collections, London.
[7] Dorril, *Blackshirt*, 233-4.
[8] Wrench, *Francis Yeats-Brown*, 243-4.

> make a constructive contribution. Miss Currey is one of the most generous of experts, and she is always willing to place her almost encyclopaedic knowledge at the disposal of others.[9]

This reputation notwithstanding, Currey has attracted no attention within disciplinary histories and marginal reflection amongst scholars of fascism. Griffiths' account of British fellow travellers offers only a limited introduction to Currey, wherein her thought is arguably cast as derivative of Goad.[10] Similarly, some have commented, however briefly, on her views regarding the Italo-Abyssinian War.[11] Alternatively, Julie Gottlieb's unsurpassed study of British 'feminine fascism' provides an overview of Currey's thought pertaining to the intersection of fascism and gender.[12] As Gottlieb observes, Currey represented the BUF's foremost advocate on the treatment of women in fascist Italy. Yet this theme captures only one dimension of Currey's thought, inadvertently obscuring her status as an international thinker. In contrast, Baldoli offers the most incisive discussion of Currey's international thought.[13] However, as but one figure within her expansive study, Baldoli's treatment is incomplete.

This chapter redresses this fragmented situation, recovering Currey's international thought and the institutional and discursive positions she occupied within the interwar study of international politics. As Stöckmann notes, '[t]he origins of feminist IR are closely related to the history of women's peace activism'.[14] I pursue a similar entry point, namely Currey's peace activism, but divert course pursuant to the evolving nature of her thought. In turn, I highlight the variegated beliefs and tensions encapsulated within Currey's worldview as she attempted to reconcile advocacy for the League with her fascist sympathies.

The intent of this chapter is twofold. First, exploring Currey's thinking on war and empire adds to a burgeoning literature that has recovered women's international thought from undue obscurity. With the publication of several agenda-setting articles, case studies, and seminal edited volumes, the content of women's international thought has been gradually exhumed.[15] By focusing on the diverse content and the multiplicity of positions from which women theorised, this literature 'shifts established understandings of what counts as international thought and traditional conceptions of who counts as an international thinker'.[16] Along similar lines, this chapter enquires

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[9] 'London Week by Week', *Observer*, 5 September 1937, 11. This laudatory appraisal may partly reflect the paper's editorial line under J.L. Garvin—an anti-Nazi yet pro-Mussolini editor acquainted with several Italophiles discussed in Part II.

[10] Griffiths, *Fellow Travellers*.

[11] Amalia Ribi Forclaz, *Humanitarian Imperialism: The Politics of Anti-Slavery Activism, 1880-1940* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015); Neelam Srivastava, *Italian Colonialism and Resistances to Empire, 1930-1970* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018).

[12] Gottlieb, *Feminine Fascism*, 127.

[13] Baldoli, *Exporting Fascism*.

[14] Stöckmann, 'Women, Wars, and World Affairs', 220.

[15] See Owens and Rietzler, *Women's International Thought*; Patricia Owens, et al., eds., *Women's International Thought: Towards a New Canon* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2022).

[16] Huber, et al., 'Women's International Thought', 121.

into a hitherto neglected woman, yet one pro-fascist in orientation.[17] As with other individuals considered in this dissertation, Currey's thought borrowed from diverse sources and defied readily ascribable categories. While betraying similar imperial predilections to prevailing accounts of 'white women's IR', she differed starkly in her peculiar mélange of High Toryism, Italophilism, and fascist sympathies. Notwithstanding her formative liberal internationalism, Currey would eventually espouse a strand of thought popular among her clique of far-right thinkers, one that applauded a Locarno-style détente and admired Mussolini's foreign policy. Second, this chapter delves further into the oft-neglected place of fascism within the interwar study of international politics. In this sense, recovering Currey's thought contributes to redressing a double erasure: the gendered elision of women's international thinking within the early field and the concurrent amnesia surrounding ideological creeds since deemed unpalatable. Indeed, the two are inextricably connected. As Owens concludes, the study of women's international thought may alter disciplinary histories, refocusing attention from traditional books by 'canonical men' to a 'variety of often highly gendered subjects, locations, and genres'.[18] Currey may have been on the academic periphery; however, she was nevertheless a thinker who engaged in debates occupying interwar IR and interacted with one of its foremost institutions, Chatham House.

Before proceeding, a disclaimer is warranted. Material regarding Currey frequently surfaces in eclectic mediums: newspapers, book advertisements, travel writings, short stories, reviews, and radio broadcasts. Material is not only scattered across libraries and archives, but of scant quantity relative to her male counterparts. As Swati Srivastava highlights, one must remain attentive to 'biases generated in the preservation of history' emanating from the relegation of women to 'uncatalogued boxes' and the discarding of materials deemed unimportant. These biases carry 'serious implications for representing women in international history'.[19] This chapter is a product of this reality and an effort to overcome it.

The following proceeds in five parts. While organised thematically, I combine this framing with a chronological narration to emphasise key features in Currey's evolving thought. The first section explicates her formative liberal internationalism during the 1920s. I then consider her ardent belief during the 1930s in Anglo-Italian cooperation. Subsequently, I recount Currey's views on empire and the Italo-Abyssinian War. The final two substantive sections address her commentary on appeasement and, in turn, the wartime and post-war reception of Currey and her counterparts.

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[17] While not explicitly situated within IR, for a notable exception (on which I build), see Julie V. Gottlieb, *'Guilty Women', Foreign Policy, and Appeasement in Inter-War Britain* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015).

[18] Owens, 'Women and the History of International Thought', 475.

[19] Tobias Lemke, at al., 'Forum: Doing Historical International Relations', *Cambridge Review of International Affairs* 36, no. 1 (2023): 25.

'The Peace Machine'[20]

During the 1920s, Currey's thought aligned with her liberal internationalist contemporaries. For Currey, the League was not a 'ready-made panacea'. It was a form of political 'machinery'—one reliant on the 'desire' of its member states—that endeavoured 'to apply to international affairs the ordinary laws which govern every civilised country'.[21] To ensure that the League flourished, Currey sought to ferment the requisite 'desire'. Attached to the LNU London headquarters, she emerged as a competent campaigner and lecturer.[22] Alongside such figures as Maude Royden and Lord Cecil, Currey partook in organising a 1921 countrywide recruitment initiative, the National Pilgrimage and Hyde Park Rally.[23] Many of her lectures also carried a noticeably gendered dimension. She regularly presented before women's associations and, during the 1924 British Empire Exhibition, delivered the so-called Children's Lantern Lecture.[24]

It would be misplaced, however, to interpret Currey's speeches as confined to an audience of women and children. The LNU was comparatively open to women, affording Currey the space in which to reflect upon international questions and disseminate her thought to a wider audience. From cities to regional towns, she presented numerous lectures throughout the 1920s in public halls and local LNU branches.[25] On another occasion, Currey was even invited to speak before the inaugural meeting of the Lancaster LNU branch; the other guest speaker was none other than the aspiring MP, Oswald Mosley.[26] The 1920 LNU Annual Report calculated that a total of 358 speeches had already been delivered by the joint efforts of Currey and the Fabian Frederick Whelen.[27] Currey was, as the LNU's Colonel Caldwell stated, a 'well-known speaker, and has had much experience by attending important conferences at Geneva and elsewhere'.[28] Indeed, Currey's reputation preceded her. On one occasion, the Traffic in Women and Children Advisory Committee was requested to despatch a speaker to address the Lingfield Women's Association. One League official suggested contacting LNU headquarters instead, specifically recommending Currey.[29]

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[20] This phrase is borrowed from the title of one of Currey's LNU lectures, albeit it is not her coinage. See 'Harlow', *Essex Chronicle*, 21 March 1930, 12.
[21] Muriel Currey, 'To Seek Peace and Ensue It', *Wren*, May 1921, 1-2, LBYE.5/377.1, IWM Collections.
[22] Gladstone Murray, 'The Organisation of Meetings', *Headway* 4, no. 5 (1922): 86.
[23] 'News of the Union', *Headway* 1, no. 3 (1921): 38-9, https://digital.library.lse.ac.uk/Documents/Detail/headway-journal.-vol-1.-no-3.-march-1921/301582.
[24] 'The L.N.U. at Wembley', *Headway* 6, no. 6 (1924): 108.
[25] Alongside local newspapers, these events were commonly listed in the LNU magazine, *Headway*, alongside the *Common Cause*, a weekly publication of the National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies.
[26] Janet Nelson, 'Lancaster LNU: Inaugural Meeting, October 1920', Documenting Dissent, accessed 17 May 2025, http://www.documentingdissent.org.uk/lancaster-lnu-inaugural-meeting-october-1920/.
[27] LNU, *Annual Report 1920* (LNU, 1921), 24, Papers of the League of Nations Union, LSE Digital Library, https://digital.library.lse.ac.uk/Documents/Detail/annual-report-presented-3-june-1920/296385?item=296386.
[28] 'League of Nations Union', *Dover Express and East Kent News*, 28 March 1924, 10.
[29] Traffic in Women and Children Advisory Committee to Greta Hazell, 17 November 1926, S157/12/23, UN Library & Archives Geneva, https://archives.ungeneva.org/traffic-in-women-and-children-advisory-committee-outgoing-correspondence-50.

From the Geneva Protocol and the achievements of Locarno to the League's humanitarian activities, Currey's addresses were diverse. Therein she provided resolutely positive reviews of the international organisation. As the *Western Daily Press* reported: 'She saw in the League the one hope of the future.'[30] Among other accomplishments, Currey commended the League's handling of the Åland Islands and Vilnius dispute, its stabilisation of the Austrian economy via the Economic and Financial Organisation, and the secretariat's efforts in the realm of international public health, human trafficking, and the opium trade.[31] As a corollary, she defended the organisation against criticism. By 1928, for instance, Currey lamented the limited progress towards disarmament, but qualified that the League was not at fault. Conversely, it had become 'more vital, and the delegates much more courageous than formerly'.[32]

Currey's internationalist spirit extended to other activities. She was extensively involved in the veteran women's group, the Association of Wrens, wherein contributing a front-page article to its magazine entitled, 'To Seek Peace and Ensue It'. This group embodied an internationalist stance, publishing updates on LNU events and carrying articles by such internationalist-minded women as Edith Crowdy, representative on the LNU Women's Advisory Council, and Lucy Philip Mair, a notable LNU activist and an LSE lecturer within the IR department.[33] Moreover, between 1925 and 1930, Currey edited the *World Bulletin* (subsequently the *Council Fire*) of the Girl Guides and Girl Scouts, a position for which her 'wide knowledge of international affairs' was praised.[34] She was among several veterans eager to promote peace and disarmament via the international Girl Scouts.[35] Currey's internationalism also led her abroad. Until at least 1932, she was reportedly a regular attendee of the League's Geneva assemblies.[36] Additionally, she travelled on behalf of the All Peoples' Association. Established in 1930 by the aforementioned Evelyn Wrench, the group aimed to encourage understanding and amity across international borders.[37]

The advent of Chatham House afforded Currey another avenue for activism. As Meera Sabaratnam observes, '[t]he often-international intellectual circle cultivated around the Institute was… populated by those who

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[30] 'League of Nations Union', *Western Daily Press*, 5 October 1921, 6.
[31] *Ibid*; 'Armed Camps in Europe', *Hull Daily Mail*, 16 July 1923, 7; 'News from Associations', *Liberal Woman's News* (January 1928).
[32] 'League of Nations Supporters Meet', *Courier and Advertiser*, 6 October 1928, 5.
[33] Edith was the sister of Rachel Crowdy, director of the League's Social Questions and Opium Trafficking Section. On Mair's thought, see Owens, 'Women and the History of International Thought'.
[34] *First Biennial Report* (Girl Guides and Girl Scouts, 1930), 18, R2269/5C/18247/2796, UN Library & Archives Geneva, https://archives.ungeneva.org/world-conference-of-girl-guides-foxlease-hants-england-5-17-july-1930.
[35] See Tammy M. Proctor, 'Daughters of War: Girl Guides and Service after the First World War', *Twentieth Century British History* 33, no. 1 (2022): 103-28.
[36] Ivor Nicholson and Watson, advertisement, *Times Literary Supplement*, 5 May 1932, 329.
[37] 'For News of Ex-Wrens', *Wren*, May 1930, 3-4, LBYE.5/377.1, IWM Collections. Goad similarly applauded the All Peoples' Association. Harold E. Goad, 'The British Institute of Florence and International Goodwill', *Spectator*, 15 February 1930, 235.

saw themselves on the side of peace and progress'.[38] For Currey, meetings thereat were not simply 'a pleasant way of spending an evening [but] rather… an occasion for the serious study of international affairs'.[39] Unlike its closest counterpart, the CFR, membership was open to women and, indeed, the institute afforded opportunities for women's intellectual participation.[40] After joining the then BIIA in 1921, Currey became deeply involved in its activities.[41] This included editing the second volume of *The Hungaro-Rumanian Dispute*, a RIIA publication intended to inform readers about the facts of the case presented before the League.[42] As Currey remarked, there were once three persons in London familiar with the case: the first, Foreign Secretary Austen Chamberlain, 'has had a serious illness as the result of trying to understand it; the second, a colleague of mine [Edgar Dugdale], has retired from the League of Nations Union sooner than have to cope with it any longer, so I alone remain'.[43] Based on her experience, Currey was also considered for the position of assistant to the Information Department in November 1932, albeit the role was ultimately offered to Elizabeth Monroe.[44]

Evidently, Currey was a vociferous peace campaigner. However, at no point was she an absolute pacifist. Reflecting on the then looming Italo-Abyssinian War, Currey stated:

> I attempted once again the useless effort of defining one's own mental attitude towards war—of reconciling the points of view of the young gentlemen at Oxford who announced that they would not fight for King and country, and of the men who believe… that life is a thing to be lived with gaiety and daring, and that courage on the field of battle is the ultimate test of character.[45]

Currey 'arrived at the usual bromidic conclusion that war is both good and bad; that as a woman one must hate and dread it, while one's heart is with the men who fight'.[46] Despite this gendered register, her 'gendered pacifist activism' was not founded on some claim to a maternal ethic. As Jane Clarke persuasively argues, Currey instead appealed to the wartime service of women.[47] She emphasised the 'bitter experience' of the First World War and the role veteran women ought to perform in agitating for peace.[48]

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[38] Meera Sabaratnam, 'Introduction: 100 Years of Empire and Decolonization', *International Affairs* (October 2022): 6, https://static.primary.prod.gcms.the-infra.com/static/site/ia/document/Archive%20collection%20intro%20Oct%202022%20final.pdf?node=3bce2d52d82d6e6936f2

[39] 'Record of Proceedings of Fifteenth Annual General Meeting', annual report, January 1935, CHA.

[40] Rietzler, 'Think Tanks and Women's Intellectual Labor'.

[41] 'Rules and List of Members', annual report, September 1921, CHA.

[42] Muriel Currey, *The Hungaro-Rumanian Dispute* (Information Service on International Affairs, 1929), D(4)/D61, Special Collections, LSE.

[43] Muriel Currey, 'Some Personal Problems', *Wren*, February 1929, 2, LBYE.5/377.1.

[44] Minutes of 19th Meeting of the Information Committee, 21 November 1932, 74b-75a, CHA.

[45] Muriel Currey, *A Woman at the Abyssinian War* (London: Hutchinson & Co., 1936), 70.

[46] *Ibid.*

[47] *Ibid.*

[48] Currey, 'To Seek Peace and Ensue It', 2, LBYE.5/377.1, IWM Collections.

Nevertheless, the use of force had a legitimate function within Currey's worldview. First, and in accordance with her pro-League stance, Currey defended the legal imposition of collective measures against a 'traitor nation'.[49] In this respect, she embodied the ethos of mainstream thought percolating within the British peace movement and many liberal thinkers within IR's early history.[50] Even the titular slogan of Currey's article, 'To Seek Peace and Ensue It', was of common usage. As E.H. Carr remarked: 'To seek peace and ensue it is nowadays the motto of nearly all of us.'[51] Second, and placing her somewhat at odds with her LNU counterparts, she later deemed armed force permissible against a member state if deployed to end the abject misery of 'backwards' people, a point to which this chapter returns.

Alongside her zealous quest for peace, Currey came to hold other affiliations derived from her Italophilic predisposition and increasing fascination with fascism. The origins of Currey's Italophilia are difficult to discern, in part because, relative to her more numerous male counterparts, biographical material is scant. It is apparent, though, that Currey increasingly developed linkages with fellow travellers of the extreme right. As Griffiths notes, it would be 'impossible' to discuss Goad without reference to Currey.[52] One should avoid casting Currey's thought as purely derivative of Goad, yet her link with the latter is key to note as it regards her position within this Italophilic clique. Indeed, she certainly acted alongside Goad during the early 1930s in her capacity as editor of the Florence-based weekly, *Italian Mail and Tribune*—a beacon for Italophilic Britons that Goad was affiliated with since the 1920s and which included several editions of his pamphlet, *What Is Fascism?*, among its publications.[53] Over the coming decade, Currey served as Secretary to the Anglo-Italian Society and published in the *British-Italian Bulletin*, the latter edited by Secretary of the London Fascio, Carlo Camagna.[54] Meanwhile, Currey was engaged with such fora as the *English Review*, the BUF's *Blackshirt* periodical, the Mosley-linked January Club, and the prior discussed RIIA-linked London Group.[55] Notably, Currey even participated alongside other Italophiles, such as Barnes, in the 'British Union of Friends of Italy' (later the 'Anglo-Italian Cultural Association'), a group supported by the Ministry of Popular Culture and the spearhead of fascist universalism, CAUR.[56]

Currey's efforts to propagate the corporate state and her thinking thereupon have already been detailed in Chapter V. In the following, I intend to shift towards Currey's views on imperial and geopolitical questions. As

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[49] *Ibid*, 1.

[50] See Martin Ceadel, 'The Peace Movement: Overview of a British Brand Leader', *International Affairs* 90, no. 2 (2014): 351-65.

[51] Carr, 'Public Opinion', 848.

[52] Griffiths, *Fellow Travellers*, 17.

[53] Currey was made editor in September 1931. Muriel Currey, 'Italy', *Wren*, April 1932, LBYE.5/377.1, IWM Collections.

[54] See, e.g., Muriel Currey. 'The Unconquered Colony', *British-Italian Bulletin*, 15 February 1936, 3.

[55] 'The January Club', *Times*, 22 March 1934, 11; 'The January Club', *Fascist Week*, 25—31 May 1934, 2; 'England Could Be Bombed Within 6 Minutes of War Says Speaker at January Club Dinner', *Fascist Week*, 20 March—5 April 1934, 5; Dorril, *Blackshirt*, 258; Gottlieb, *Feminine Fascism*, 292-3.

[56] Former Round Tabler Leo Amery supported this group's efforts. See Baldoli, 'Anglo-Italian Fascist Solidarity?', 158-60.

revealed below, Currey's effort to reconcile fascist sympathies with her pro-League position increasingly guided her thought, a worldview plagued by tensions. While the focus below is on Currey's thinking, I also build on the prior chapter, contextualising her views amongst those of her pro-fascist counterparts.

Italo-British Cooperation and International Order

Currey and her associates seized any occasion to defend Mussolini's foreign policy. In one exemplary instance during a BIIA speech by Edward Wood (later Viscount Halifax) in October 1923, Goad used his opportunity to pose a question for the speaker to instead present a defence of the 'Italian standpoint' on Corfu.[57] In the institute's journal, Goad also praised the output of aforementioned fascist propagandist and former UCL professor Antonio Cippico. In Goad's estimation, '[i]f the object of the study of international affairs… [is] the promotion of peace by the sympathetic understanding of the point of view of other nations, then Count Cippico's candid book should contribute not a little to the peaceful solution of the Central Problem of the Mediterranean'.[58] On another occasion during the Q&A of one Chatham House speech by Pellizzi, a Mr Hope remarked that the 'real stumbling block', that is 'if Dr Pellizzi wished to gain friends for Fascism in England', was the fear that fascism reflected a resurgent 'old Prussian spirit'.[59] It was this concern that Currey sought to disabuse British audiences of. In one revealing *International Affairs* review, Currey recognised that the author was 'a firm admirer of the régime', although she qualified that his chapter regarding Italian foreign policy was particularly 'disappointing'.[60] For Currey, it was not only 'superficial', but indicated no understanding of Mussolini's 'objectives'. Above all, Mussolini was a proponent of peace, Currey reasoned. She emphasised, as the *Times Literary Supplement* phrased it, 'the pacific tendencies of Mussolini's policy'.[61] As Currey opined, 'Mussolini has, with ever-increasing determination, sought to secure and safeguard peace'.[62] In the LNU journal, Currey contrasted her interpretation against the so-called 'Mussolini myth', namely the 'illusion' that *Il Duce* was to suddenly emerge 'over the Alps at the head of his Blackshirts, having challenged the whole of Europe'.[63] Accordingly, in the review section of *International Affairs*, she directed her praise towards those publications which countered this narrative. For example, commenting on Emilio Bodrero's *La fine di un'epoca*, Currey exclaimed that his treatment of the Italian *teoria dell'impero* (theory of empire) 'should do much to remove the fears of those who believe that Fascism is bent on a campaign of conquest'.[64]

Simultaneously, Currey's interpretation amounted to an assault against the interrelated narrative proffered foremost by the exiled historian Gaetano Salvemini. Per his rendition, Italian foreign policy was dangerous and

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[57] 'Notes of Meetings', *Journal of the British institute of International Affairs* 2, no. 6 (1923): 269-70.
[58] Goad, review of *Italy: The Central Problem of the Mediterranean*, 261.
[59] Pellizzi, 'Italy and the Vatican', ix, RIIA/8/174, CHA.
[60] Muriel Currey, review of *Orientamenti di politica estera (da Versailles a Losanna)*, by Leonardo Salemi, *International Affairs* 12, no. 6 (1933): 818.
[61] Review of *Italian Foreign Policy, 1918-1932*, by Muriel Currey, *Times Literary Supplement*, 12 May 1932, 355.
[62] Muriel Currey, *Italian Foreign Policy, 1918-1932* (London: Ivor Nicholson and Watson, 1932), 321.
[63] Currey, 'Italy To-Day', 32.
[64] Muriel Currey, review of *La fine di un'epoca*, by Emilio Bodrero, *International Affairs* 13, no. 3 (1934): 441.

incoherent.[65] Mussolini was no master statesman, but a bombastic improviser concerned with foreign policy's propagandistic value. In effect, foreign adventurism functioned as a diversionary strategy.[66] In one indicative instance, Currey positively reviewed *La Paix Française* by then French ambassador to Italy Henri de Jouvenel. However, it was 'a pity that he relies quite so much on Signor Salvemini's evidence, obviously not an impartial witness'.[67] Commentators similarly highlighted the contrast between Currey and her antagonist. Langer, reviewing for *Foreign Affairs*, described Currey's 1932 study on Italian foreign policy as a counterpart to Salvemini's tracts, one granting 'students of international relations' a desperately needed 'Fascist version'.[68]

By virtue of Italy's advocacy for the reduction of reparations, role as joint Locarno guarantor, activity within the League, and opposition to *Anschluss*, Mussolini was no tyrant aimlessly stumbling on the international stage nor an unsatiable revisionist, but a patron of peace and stability. As Petrie wrote based on a lecture that he delivered at Bonar Law Memorial College, 'no statesman in Europe has striven harder to establish peace upon a lasting basis than Mussolini. Those who criticise him for taking what may appear to be excessive precautions forget that Italy has the Balkans at her back door'.[69] Villari's *The Fascist Experiment* likewise challenged those who supposed that fascism entailed revisionist adventurism. Mussolini was no sentimental prophet of perpetual peace, yet he was animated by a need for 'peace and conciliation'.[70] Barnes expressed a similar sentiment, challenging 'caricatures' of Mussolini 'which represent him as a pinchbeck Napoleon'; he seemed to have H.G. Wells front in mind here.[71] On one occasion, Barnes even penned a lengthy letter published in the RIIA's journal, which took aim at Toynbee's 1927 *Survey of International Affairs*: 'The notion that Mussolini's policy is bellicose exists only in the minds of anti-fascists and in the brain of certain tender-minded persons'.[72] Toynbee's 'style' was 'studiously moderate', but Barnes could not 'acquit him of studious impartiality'.[73]

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[65] Stephen Corrado Azzi, 'The Historiography of Fascist Foreign Policy', *Historical Journal* 36, no. 1 (1993): 187–9.
[66] Journalistic and scholarly examples abound. See, e.g., 'The Duce Boasts', *Manchester Guardian*, 20 May 1930, 10; Schuman, *International Politics*, 735.
[67] Muriel Currey, review of *La Paix Française*: *Témoignage D'une Génération*, by Henri de Jouvenel, *International Affairs* 12, no. 2 (1933): 267.
[68] Langer, review of *Italian Foreign Policy, 1918-1932*, by Muriel Currey, *Foreign Affairs* 11, no. 1 (1932): 197. For a less positive contrast, see Robert Gale Woolbert, review of *Italian Foreign Policy, 1918-1932*, by Muriel Currey; *Mussolini diplomatico*, by Gaetano Salvemini; *Le Fascisme à Genève*, by Silvio Trentin; and *La politique fasciste et la Société des Nations*, by Egidio Reale, *Journal of Modern History* 5, no. 2 (1933): 263-5.
[69] Charles Petrie, 'Mussolini', in *The Man and the Hour: Studies of Six Great Men of Our Time*, ed. Arthur Bryant (London: Philip Allan, 1934), 114. Yeats-Brown, an admirer of Mussolini, was less beholden to such lofty language. While recognising Mussolini as a prudential statesman, he was 'not a man of peace'. Mussolini's 'views, plainly stated, are that perpetual peace is an impossibility'. Francis Yeats-Brown, *European Jungle* (Philadelphia: Macrae Smith Company, 1939), 88.
[70] Villari, *Fascist Experiment*, 231.
[71] Barnes, *Universal Aspects*, 26-7.
[72] James Strachey Barnes, 'Correspondence', *Journal of the Royal Institute of International Affairs* 8, no. 5 (1929): 540.
[73] *Ibid*, 534.

Through this framing, Currey obscured Mussolini's increasing revisionism, while simultaneously reconciling the disjunct between Italian policy and the League's principles. As one reviewer remarked, 'Currey in her pro-League zeal' accepts the belief 'that Fascism has made its peace with Geneva'.[74] While seemingly in tension, the antecedents of this dual embrace of Italy and the League may already be detected during the zenith of her LNU activism. In September 1923, she travelled to Italy as part of an LNU-organised Summer School, during which Mussolini received her party. Notably, Currey was granted the opportunity to present a lecture at the University of Bologna, wherein expressing her desire to bolster Italo-British relations and Italian support for the League.[75]

While an admirer of the League's technical functions, Currey also professed a belief in the managerial role of the great powers, whether that be the Locarnite spirit or Mussolini's proposal for a Four Power Pact. In one *International Affairs* review, she concurred with the opinion that the Four Power Pact was the 'logical development of Signor Mussolini's thought', a theme common among her counterparts.[76] Charles Petrie, himself an admirer and biographer of Locarnite architect Austen Chamberlain, aptly summarised this vision of great power managerialism: 'Allowance must be made for discussions being held between the Great Powers direct, as envisaged by Signor Mussolini in the Four-Power Pact'.[77] As Petrie added, '[t]here are the Great Powers and the lesser Powers, and unless the fact that there is a decided difference between them is… officially admitted by the League, then the latter will continue to be based upon a false premise.'[78] For Petrie, Mussolini's scheme of great power managerialism sought to overcome the fractures within Europe between those powers upholding the status quo and others desiring territorial revision. In this proposal, 'the most important contribution to the peace of the world', Mussolini was both an adherent of the traditional balance of power and a 'good European'.[79] While broadly sympathetic towards Chamberlain's Locarnite policy, such thinkers therefore supplanted his Francophilia with a resolute Italophilic orientation, embracing Mussolini's Four Power Pact.

This form of great power managerialism was marked by an unmistaken Italophilia, yet it also relied on motifs common within British imperial discourse. Chatham House was replete with former-Milnerite and Round Table thinkers who believed in the British Empire's indispensable pacifying role.[80] As James Cotton suggests, the institute's mission marked something of an inheritor to the imperial Round Table.[81] To support Chatham House was thus, at least for Stephen King-Hall, 'a contribution to the unity of the Empire' and by proxy 'to the peace of

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[74] Woolbert, review of *Italian Foreign Policy, 1918-1932*, 264.
[75] 'Italy and the League', *Hull Daily Mail*, 7 September 1923, 3.
[76] Muriel Currey, review of *Il patto Mussolini: Storia di un Piano Politico e di un Negoziato Diplomatico*, by Francesco Salata, *International Affairs* 13, no. 3 (1934): 424.
[77] Charles Petrie, 'Foreign Affairs', *English Review* (January 1934): 93.
[78] *Ibid*, 92. For his appraisal of Chamberlain's Locarnite policy, see Charles Petrie, *The Chamberlain Tradition* (New York: Frederick A. Stokes Company, 1938), 208-9, 217.
[79] Petrie, 'Mussolini', 112-3.
[80] James Strachey Barnes to Basil Liddell Hart, 6 January 1930, LH 2B/34/1-5, BHLHP.
[81] James Cotton, 'On the Chatham House Project: Interwar Actors, Networks, Knowledge', *International Politics* 55, no. 6 (2018): 820. See also Williams, 'Commonwealth of Knowledge'.

the World'.[82] Unsurprisingly, those within this Italophilic clique embraced a similar reading of the British Empire. While this notion was commonplace within interwar thought, these Italophiles were loosely positioned within a broader imperial milieu linking Milner's Kindergarten, the Round Table, and Chatham House. Indeed, Barnes notes that he contributed at least one article to the *Round Table*, although as many of its issues were published anonymously, its subject matter is unclear.[83] Perhaps more explicitly, Jerrold once remarked at Chatham House that the imposition of empire on the Indian subcontinent was a modern parallel to the Antonines period of the Roman Empire, which had implemented 'the nearest approach to world peace which the world has ever known'.[84] For Jerrold, the Raj constituted 'a successful example of a super-imposed sovereignty backed indeed by force but exercised under… law and applied to the maintenance of peace over a long period among peoples of different race, religion, civilization and climatic conditions'.[85] Petrie was likewise unapologetic in his belief that empire had brought 'peace, justice, and progress' to the subcontinent, while 'a strong and resolute Britain' remained the 'surest guarantee of [world] peace'.[86]

Evidently, such thinkers believed in the British Empire's pacific role as a touchstone of great power managerialism and a bedrock for peace within Europe and beyond. Yet these Italophiles maintained a special place for Anglo-Italian cooperation. Petrie's *Lords of the Inland Sea* was aptly described in one BUF review as a 'Plea for Anglo-Italian Friendship'. [87] In this sense, Currey and her compatriots appended the promise of a revivified Rome under fascist auspices onto this wider discourse of a British imperial peace. As Wheeler-Bennett concluded: Currey constructed 'a clever comparison between the foreign policy of lethargic post-War Italian Liberalism and that of the most robust and virile Fascist *régime* [*sic*]'.[88] With the advent of fascism, Italy and the British Empire were to form a duopoly for the benefit of international order: 'Italian-English friendship is one of the buttresses of European peace and stability'.[89] Publishing in one of the flagship journals of the *Istituto per gli Studi di Politica Internazionale* (Institute for International Political Studies), Currey highlighted a compatibility in interests—not least in the maintenance of an independent Austria—and lauded Italy's role in the campaign for disarmament.[90] As she posited in the LNU journal:

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[82] King-Hall, *Chatham House*, 114-5.
[83] James Strachey Barnes to Basil Liddell Hart, 6 January 1930, LH 2B/34/1-5, BHLHP.
[84] Jerrold, 'Pacifism', 2, RIIA/8/229, CHA.
[85] *Ibid.*
[86] Typescript entitled "'The ..... Movement" Stands for a British Policy Based on British Principles', circa March 1934, 92/32/1, HW L-J 6, IWM Collections.
[87] J. S.-H., review of *Lords of the Inland Sea: A Study of the Mediterranean Powers*, by Charles Petrie, *Action*, 17 April 1937, 12.
[88] J.W. Wheeler-Bennett, review of *Italian Foreign Policy, 1918-1932*, by Muriel Currey, *International Affairs* 11, no. 4 (1932): 562.
[89] Currey, *Italian Foreign Policy*, 323. Grandi expressed a comparable sentiment. See 'Aims of Modern Italy', *Times*, 26 January 1933, 7. Villari also espoused this line before a 1935 RIIA presentation no less. For Villari, 'the two countries must collaborate if the rest of the world is to be kept at peace'. Villari, 'Italian Foreign Policy', 329-30.
[90] Giona, 'Think Tanks', 82.

> In a Europe still suffering from the reactions of the war, where so many nations regard each other with fear and suspicion, Anglo-Italian friendship… is a bulwark for peace, not only in the Mediterranean but for the whole continent.[91]

This was not a purely pragmatic friendship. It was forged through historical solidarities, cultural commonalities, and an eternal indebtedness to Italy for all that it had bequeathed to Western civilisation.[92] Positive Italo-British relations were therefore actively sought by such Italophiles. For some, this was at the behest of fascist authorities themselves. Pellizzi, for example, disabused his audience at Chatham House of the belief that the then newly established fascist movement was 'anti-British'. As he reassured listeners, Italo-British relations 'are as cordial as ever'.[93]

Before turning to the reception of Currey's thought, a brief mention must be made of her flirtation with autarky. In one intriguing comment in *International Affairs*, Currey criticised historian R.B. Mowat for his 'despair [at] the system of economic nationalism which is strangling international trade'. As Currey adds, Mowat considers the 'motives which have led… countries to the effort to become "self-sufficient," [albeit] he omits… the fear of war'.[94] In this objection, Currey alludes to an anti-Cobdenite interpretation, whereby self-sufficiency is conducive to peace. As shown in Part I, this reasoning acquired traction across the political spectrum. Indeed, as with Currey's Italophilic associate Yeats-Brown, one witnesses a sort Milnerite-cum-Mosleyite emphasis on '[i]mperial self-sufficiency', concern over the 'international free fight for markets', and belief in the requisite for 'each Great Power… [to place] its own house in order' to achieve stability.[95] Yeats-Brown, after all, exhibited an early enthusiasm for Mosley's New Party scheme of empire planning and later endorsed fascism as the surest route to peace.[96] Nevertheless, Currey did not appear to have developed this thread of autarkic pacificism further. In fact, as late as 1941, she responded to an RIIA presentation by emphasising the pernicious consequences of the Ottawa Conference and its mantra of 'Empire Free-Trade' on Italo-British relations.[97] Goad shared this critique, partly blaming finance capitalism and the 'economic nationalism' of the great powers for having propelled Italy towards a defensible policy of expansion in Abyssinia and economic self-sufficiency.[98] Yet Goad ostensibly went further, imagining a supranational corporate

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[91] Currey, 'Italy To-Day', 33.

[92] Currey, *Italian Foreign Policy*, 322-3. Other Italophiles shared this sense of civilisational debt. See, e.g., Daniel Waley, *British Public Opinion and the Abyssinian War, 1935-6* (London: Maurice Temple Smith, 1975), 129; Baldoli and Fleming, *British Fascist*, 8.

[93] Pellizzi, 'Fascista Movement'.

[94] Muriel Currey, review of *Revolution and Recovery*, by R.B. Mowat, *International Affairs* 13, no. 6 (1934): 854.

[95] Yeats-Brown, *European Jungle*, 350. This autarkic call, though not as absolute compared to Mosley, also marked Petrie's thinking. See Charles Petrie to Henry William Luttman-Johnson, 22 March 1934, 92/32/1, HW L-J 6, IWM Collections. Ironically, Petrie was tutored by Mowat at Oxford and held him in high regard. Charles Petrie, *A Historian*, 55-6.

[96] Francis Yeats-Brown, review of *A National Plan*, by Oswald Mosley, *Spectator*, 28 February 1931, 314; Francis Yeats-Brown, 'War, Women and Fascism', *Fascist Week*. 8—14 December 1933, 1-2.

[97] See Aubrey Waterfield, 'Our Relations with Italy', 8 July 1941, RIIA/8/736, CHA.

[98] Harold E. Goad, 'The Root of the Matter', *British-Italian Bulletin*, 15 February 1936, 2. Goad voiced an earlier opinion on self-sufficiency at Chatham House, albeit this was not linked to any wider notion of autarkic peace. In

system to eradicate the economic causes of war and placate the unsatisfied powers through technocratic regulation of shared interests.[99] In any case, there is scant evidence Currey fully embraced Mosleyite autarky. Instead, she remained wedded to the increasingly illusory promise of Anglo-Italian cooperation.

Currey's defence of Italian foreign policy was received with scepticism among some IR thinkers. Woolbert conceded her 1932 study was unquestionably the most impressive 'treatment of the subject from the Fascist angle', eschewing 'cruder forms of adulation' and 'customary Italian hyperboles'.[100] Nevertheless, Currey failed to comprehend the 'essentially opportunistic nature' of Mussolini's foreign policy, her book 'an uncritical apology', avoiding contradiction simply by 'ignoring unfavorable evidence'. Woolbert wryly added: 'One would expect a book issued under the *imprimatur* of Luigi Villari to be pro-Fascist, and Miss Currey does not disappoint us.'[101] At one Chatham House presentation by Seton-Watson, Currey claimed Italy sought no such hegemonic position over Austria or Hungary, but merely hoped—in a manner not dissimilar to British policy towards Belgium—for such states to serve as a buffer, a position Villari subsequently endorsed in a letter to *International Affairs*.[102] Seton-Watson countered that 'Italy's encouragement of Hungarian revisionist propaganda was hardly compatible with that statement'.[103] Another Chatham House speaker, anti-fascist exile Carlo Rosselli, observed the inapplicability of Currey's 'theory' of Italian foreign policy. Currey had suggested the 'war-like impression' many English observers held of Mussolini stemmed from challenges of translation.[104] For Rosselli, the real problem was the innate difficulty of translating Mussolini not into English, but the 'language of peace':

> Only too naturally it finds a difficulty in conceiving its foreign policy in terms of liberalism, peace, and mutual agreement. It may do so temporarily for reasons of necessity or convenience, but never through innate conviction.[105]

The benign depiction of Italian foreign policy by Currey's associates occasionally received similar responses. One *International Affairs* review highlighted Petrie's 'vigorous partisanship' and 'fervid admiration' for Mussolini. While welcoming the transparency with which Petrie declared his anti-democratic, 'right-wing sympathies', the reviewer raised several objections. One chapter was branded a 'singularly able if not wholly convincing vindication

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Goad's view, Italy should retain control over its peacetime maritime trade, as to ensure that its food supply was not severed in the event of war. 'Meetings of the Spring Session', *Journal of the British institute of International Affairs* 1, no. 3 (1922): 97.

[99] Colacicco, 'Thought of Harold Goad'.

[100] Woolbert, review of *Italian Foreign Policy, 1918-1932*, 263-4.

[101] Alternatively, BUF press showcased Currey's book as a perfect Christmas gift. 'The Christmas Gift Season is Rapidly Approaching! Books Make the Ideal Useful Gift!!', *Action*, 25 November 1937, 9.

[102] R.W. Seton-Watson, 'Some Aspects of the Danubian Problem', *International Affairs* 13, no. 5 (1934): 665; Luigi Villari, 'The Danubian Problem', *International Affairs* 14, no. 1 (1935): 152.

[103] Seton-Watson, 'Danubian Problem', 666.

[104] In his critique of Toynbee, Barnes similarly stressed the '*nuances* of the Italian language', Mussolini's style of speech as a true 'artist', and the failure of some to interpret correctly. Barnes, 'Correspondence', 540 (emphasis in original).

[105] Rosselli, 'The Foreign Policy of Fascist Italy', 3-4, RIIA/8/266, CHA.

of all the actions undertaken by the Duce from the March on Rome down to the present'. Likewise, Petrie's treatment of Spain was 'a brilliant example of special pleading' (he having been a key figure associated with the pressure group 'Friends of Nationalist Spain').[106] Ultimately, Petrie's biases occasionally led 'him into statements which, to put it mildly, are open to question'.[107]

Despite a negative reception amongst some, Currey's output was not deemed beyond the pale nor useless propaganda by contemporary experts. Her 1932 book was cited by several scholars, not least because it utilised official documents granted by Mussolini and the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs.[108] Though unsympathetic to her depiction of Italian foreign policy, the anti-fascist Schuman added the study as suggested reading in his acclaimed IR textbook.[109] Reviewers also offered praise. Despite misgivings, Stanford political scientist Graham H. Stuart called it a 'scholarly study', one 'doubly valuable' in correcting the 'dearth of unbiased historical material' on Italy. The 'dispassionate perusal' of Currey's sources would 'astonish the reader' accustomed to the idea of a 'militant-mad Mussolini'.[110] Historian Howard R. Marraro, publishing in *APSR*, argued its 'chief merit' was its presentation of a 'strikingly different picture' of Italian policy relative to those who, 'through ignorance and willful misrepresentation, have created an atmosphere unfriendly to Italy'.[111] Similarly, Wheeler-Bennett concluded that '[s]he approaches her subject in a benevolent but unbiassed [*sic*] attitude'.[112] Currey 'performed a real service', for Italian foreign policy was among the least understood subjects, 'even by the intelligent public', having been disposed to 'so much misrepresentation'. Wheeler-Bennett concluded by approvingly quoting Villari's preface: one who wants to understand international affairs cannot 'afford to ignore Miss Currey's book'.[113] Comparably positive assessments appeared in early IR journals regarding the output of Currey's colleagues. For example, in the RIIA journal, Wheeler-Bennett lauded Villari's *The Expansion of Italy*. While noting Villari's unmistaken fascist sympathies, he was apposite to convey the Italian position, a task which 'he does… with a grace and wit that make his book as delightful as it is

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[106] On this group, see especially Dietz, *Neo-Tories*, 170-90.

[107] Hector C. Bywater, review of *The Dangerous Sea: The Mediterranean and Its Future*, by George Slocombe; *Lords of the Inland Sea: A Study of the Mediterranean Powers*, by Charles Petrie; and *Italia, Francia, Inghilterra nel Mediterraneo*, by Pietro Silva, *International Affairs* 16, no. 5 (1937): 813-4.

[108] 'News of Ex-Wrens', *Wren*, July 1932, 2, LBYE.5/377.1, IWM Collections. Post-war references are less common and less favourable. See H. Stuart Hughes, 'The Early Diplomacy of Italian Fascism, 1922-1932', in *The Diplomats, 1919-1939*, eds. Gordon A. Craig and Felix Gilbert (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994 [1953]), 210n1; James Barros, *The Corfu Incident of 1923: Mussolini and the League of Nations* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1965), 25.

[109] Schuman, *International Politics*, 430.

[110] Graham H. Stuart, review of *Italian Foreign Policy, 1918-1932*, by Muriel Currey, *American Journal of International Law* 27, no. 2 (1933): 388.

[111] Howard R. Marraro, review of *Italian Foreign Policy, 1918-1932*, by Muriel Currey, *American Political Science Review* 26, no. 6 (1932): 1125-6.

[112] Wheeler-Bennett, review of *Italian Foreign Policy, 1918-1932*, 562.

[113] *Ibid.* Wheeler-Bennett had previously reviewed Clarence Cresswell's pro-fascist book, making note of her limited 'attention' to international politics. Evidently, Currey's study was an improvement. J.W. Wheeler-Bennett, review of *The Keystone of Fascism: A Study of the Ascendency of Discipline*, by C.M. Cresswell, *Journal of the Royal Institute of International Affairs* 9, no. 3 (1930): 421.

important'.[114] Meanwhile, the contribution to Carr's *Ambassadors at Large* series by Pellizzi was welcomed in *International Affairs* as a valuable study of continuity in Italian foreign policy.[115]

'A War Against Ignorance, Dirt, Disease, and Apathy'[116]

From the mid-1930s, Italy's colonial ambitions featured prominently within Currey's thought. As the Italo-Abyssinian War approached, Currey acquired Mussolini's direct permission to embed with the invading force as a journalist. This led not only to the 1936 publication of *A Woman at the Abyssinian War*, but her award of the meritorious *Croce di Guerra*.[117] As receipts discovered in the Ministry of Popular Culture later confirmed, Currey received some subsidies from the Italian embassy for her propagandistic activities.[118] During this period, she broadcast from Italy on Abyssinia, recounted her adventures in various newspapers and journals,[119] and engaged alongside Pellizzi and others in the activities of the fascist-aligned British-Italian Council for Peace and Friendship, the latter of which included Currey presenting on her exploits before a large audience at Caxton Hall in Westminster.[120] In early 1938, Currey was also hosted by the American Association of University Women, during which she made radio appearances under her authority as a Chatham House member and organised a series of lectures to be presented upon her subsequent return to the US.[121] In the meantime, Currey again traversed the Atlantic to study the Italian colony.

The gendered reception of Currey's reportage is worth special note. The peculiarity of a British woman receiving official sanction, alongside the perceived oddity of Currey's presence on the frontline, was mobilised by her publisher as a selling point.[122] Currey's account was not merely 'unique', but 'undoubtedly one of the most

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[114] J.W. Wheeler-Bennett, review of *The Expansion of Italy*, by Luigi Villari, *Journal of the Royal Institute of International Affairs* 9, no. 6 (1930): 848.

[115] George Martelli, review of *Italy*, by Camillo Pellizzi; and *France*, by Wladimir d'Ormesson, *International Affairs* 18, no. 6 (1939): 852.

[116] Currey, *Woman at the Abyssinian War*, 249.

[117] Dorril, *Blackshirt*, 359.

[118] See the extracts of documents seized from the Italian Ministry of Popular Culture contained within the report by A.F. Blunt, 9 November 1945, KV 4/153, TNA. See also Dorril, *Blackshirt*, 359.

[119] Muriel Currey, *An Englishwoman's Impressions of Tigrai under Italian Rule: A Broadcast*, typescript, 14 January 1936, FHN/3, Special Collections, LSE; Muriel Currey, 'East Africa in War Time', *Great Britain and the East*, 19 March 1936, 364; '*Una giornalista Inglese in A.O.*', *L'Italia Nostra*, 24 January 1936, 3.

[120] '*Le conferenze*', *L'Italia Nostra*, 14 February 1936, 4. On the council, see Ribi Forclaz, *Humanitarian Imperialism*, 166-7.

[121] See, e.g., 'British Woman Says Italians Aid Ethiopians', *Washington Post*, 22 February 1938, 11; 'British Visitor is Entertained', *Washington Post*, 19 February 1938, 10; Columbia Broadcasting System, *The Columbia Program Book: March, 1938* (New York: Columbia Broadcasting System, 1938), 46.

[122] While Currey held this distinction, she was not the only woman to cover the conflict; Mussolini later permitted Louise Diel to report on Italy's occupation. See Louise Diel, *"Behold Our New Empire"—Mussolini*, trans. Kenneth Kirkness (London: Hurst and Blackett, 1939). The romanticised pro-Italian account of Marie-Édith de Bonneuil, alongside Christine Sandford's highly critical position, are also notable. See, respectively, Gianmarco Mancosu, 'Broadcasting the Fascist Empire to Non-Italian Audiences (Ethiopia 1935)', in *Images of Colonialism and Decolonisation in the Italian Media*, eds. Paolo Bertella Farnetti and Cecilia Dau Novelli (Newcastle upon Tyne:

authoritative and sensational books ever written by a woman'.[123] Yet, Currey herself politicised traditional gender roles to promote a type of 'feminine fascism'.[124] In an exemplary case, she argued that Eritrea 'was (of course) no fit place for a woman'.[125] However, Currey qualified this observation with a laudatory assessment of fascist Italy: 'Italians take the eminently sensible attitude that if a woman is prepared to do the same work as a man, and accept the same conditions as a man, no unreasonable obstacles should be placed in her way'.

Beyond this gendered dimension, it is also worthwhile highlighting that Currey's journalism was located at a peculiar nexus between travel writing and war reportage, a manifestation of what Gottlieb refers to as 'fascist tourism'.[126] Based on her travels in such countries as Greece, Austria, and Yugoslavia, Currey had previously published or otherwise appeared in print and radio.[127] Echoing her travel writing, Currey's war reportage was 'imaginative and idealized',[128] conveying, for example, a romanticised image of the Italian soldier. For one odious reviewer, Currey was 'betrayed by her naive pleasure in the gallantry of the officers of the General Staff, and the courtesy so universally shown her', a product of 'Currey's femininity'. As the reviewer added bitterly: 'One wonders if the mere male correspondent was equally fortunate'.[129]

Currey's literary style was not lost on contemporaries; Hutchinson & Co. advertised her book under the banner of 'Travel, Adventure & Sport'. Similarly, as one sympathetic reviewer summarised, '[s]he does not attempt to offer… any detailed account of the actual operations. Her concern is solely with the life of the Italian army and with the attitude of the native population'.[130] To this, one may add the rugged stories of the war reporter.[131] Indeed, Currey compared her experience to Rudyard Kipling's imperial tales.[132] In this respect, her commentary belongs within a broader history of the interlink between travel writing and empire. Travel writers, Debbie Lisle summarises, 'participated in the international realm by disseminating the goals of Empire: stories of "faraway lands" were crucial in establishing the unequal, unjust and exploitative relations of colonial rule'.[133]

Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2017); D.A. Sandford, 'Ethiopia: Reforms from Within Versus Foreign Control', *International Affairs* 15, no. 2 (1936): 183-201.

123 Cited in 'News of Ex-WRENS', *Wren*, July 1936, 3, LBYE.5/377.1, IWM Collections.

124 Gottlieb, *Feminine Fascism*.

125 Currey, *Woman at the Abyssinian War*, 14-5.

126 Gottlieb, *Feminine Fascism*.

127 See 'To-Day's Wireless Programmes', *Courier and Advertiser*, 22 June 1928, 10; 'Romantic Dalmatia', *Nottingham Evening Post*, 7 August 1936, 1; Muriel Currey, *Dalmatia* (London: Philip Allan, 1930); Muriel Currey, *Yugoslavia: A Guide Book Approved by the Official Tourist Department for Yugoslavia* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1939).

128 Baldoli, 'Anglo-Italian Fascist Solidarity?', 159.

129 M.D., review of *Woman at the Abyssinian War*, by Muriel Currey, *North-China Herald*, 14 October 1936, 80.

130 'Literary Critic', review of *A Woman at the Abyssinian War*, by Muriel Currey, *Saturday Review*, 18 April 1936, 504.

131 See N. Reynolds Packard, 'Hyenas Cramped Her Bridge Style in Tigre, Girl Says', *New York Herald Tribune*, 16 December 1935, 1.

132 Currey, *Woman at the Abyssinian War*, 60.

133 Debbie Lisle, *The Global Politics of Contemporary Travel Writing* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 1.

Many of Currey's colleagues emphasised issues of demographic and material necessity as justifications for Italy's invasion. The aforementioned Conservative MP and Chatham House member Arnold Wilson even interviewed Mussolini during one of his meetings with the dictator. He relayed Mussolini's territorial claims as the head of a virile nation and called into question Britain's hypocritical stance,[134] points repeatedly echoed by Currey's associates.[135] For example, Wilson, alongside Petrie and Jerrold, were involved in signing a letter to the editor of the *Times*, wherein exclaiming against British policy by recourse to the familiar language of the 'Haves' and 'Have Nots'.[136] Interestingly, Honorary Secretary of the January Club H.W. Luttman-Johnson attempted to corral others into signing this letter, including Edward Grigg, joint-editor of the *Round Table* journal, Chatham House member, and vehement critic of Abyssinia. Grigg shared a 'very poor opinion of the Sanctions [*sic*] policy', but eschewed signing due to an antipathy toward joint letters.[137] Pellizzi likewise repeated this standard language; one chapter in his 1939 *Italy* was plainly titled, 'Italy's Problems as a "Have-Not"'.[138]

By quoting the opinions of those who she conversed with, Currey indirectly reproduced this image of Italy as an unjustly confined, and thus unsatisfied, power.[139] Yet, by and large, Currey's apologetics focused on the plight of the Abyssinian people. As Currey noted,

> [I provide] a faithful record of the attitude of the native population to the advancing troops, of the immediate results of the freeing of the slaves, of the provision of free medical treatment, of the feeding of the hungry and the effort to establish law and peace, which were unknown blessings in the Tigrai.[140]

Currey positioned a magnanimous Italy in relation to an impoverished and backward people ruled, however flimsily, by a tyrant. She thus believed it an absurd myth inculcated in the British public that Abyssinia was a nation fighting for freedom and self-determination.[141] Accordingly, her commentary praised Italian colonialism and applauded the occupier's 'achievements'.[142] Italians were welcomed as 'liberators', for they had abolished slavery and

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134 'Duce's Outspoken Views on Sanctions', *British-Italian Bulletin*, 22 February 1936, 2.
135 See, e.g., Luigi Villari, 'Italy and Abyssinia: The Italian Case', *English Review* (August 1935): 143-9.
136 Douglas Jerrold, et al., 'To the Editor of the Times', *Times*, 6 December 1935, 12. Others, including Pellizzi and Villari, also engaged in fervent letter writing. See, e.g., Camillo Pellizzi, 'To the Editor of the Times', *Times*, 10 October 1935, 10; Waley, *British Public Opinion*, 122-3. In Yeats-Brown's estimation, Villari 'made rather a fool of himself' in the sheer virulence of his letters. Francis Yeats-Brown to Arthur Bryant, 24 March 1938 or 1939, E/3, Arthur Bryant Papers.
137 Edward Grigg to Henry William Luttman-Johnson, 27 November 1935, 92/32/1, HW L-J 1, IWM Collections. Notably, Mosley approvingly cited Grigg's critique of Abyssinian slavery, while Grandi, in a letter to Mussolini, referenced a Nottingham speech in which Grigg discussed the application of a corporatist system to sustain colonial rule. See, respectively, Mosley, 'World Alternative', 380; Baldoli, *Exporting Fascism*, 38.
138 Pellizzi, *Italy*, Chapter 5.
139 Currey, *Woman at the Abyssinian War*, 22-4.
140 *Ibid*, vii.
141 Muriel Currey, review of *Ethiopian Realities*, by E.W. Polson Newman, *Great Britain and the East*, 20 February 1936, 240.
142 Muriel Currey, review of *L'Impero (A.O.I.)*, edited by Tomaso Sillani, *International Affairs* 17, no. 6 (1938): 863-4.

inaugurated 'a high standard of public security', while Italian developments in infrastructure, especially the construction of roads, were deemed laudable.[143] 'She believes that under Italian rule', as the *Washington Post* summarised, 'law and order will be established and conditions improved for all the population.'[144] This included the end to practices of child marriage, wherein 'little girls… [are] exposed to sufferings too horrible to be described in these pages'.[145] Evidently, her civilisational paternalism co-opted an explicitly gendered referent: the infliction of violence against girls served as a marker of societal barbarism and a justification for colonial administration.

In essence, Currey's apologia was twofold. First, it relied on the simultaneous obfuscation of Italian war crimes and a tacit legitimation of its violent excesses, whereby, for example, the use of chemical weapons was but a reasoned response to Abyssinian atrocities.[146] As Currey concluded: 'War isn't a pretty thing anyway, but the reports [of Italian crimes] are undoubtedly grossly exaggerated propaganda'.[147] In this respect, Currey's thinking betrayed a wider tendency within Italian international thought which, to quote Italo Brandimarte, racialised the 'Ethiopian subject as a breathless, uncivilised and less-than-human being whose conditions justified Mussolini's imperial project'.[148]

Second, Currey sincerely believed in Italy's civilising mission. Mussolini's rhetoric was not bereft of such paternalistic language, especially in proclaiming the abolition of Abyssinian slavery, a point Currey emphasised in her adulation for *Il Duce*.[149] Yet for Mussolini, colonies were but 'geopolitical assets' and imperialism a Darwinian law.[150] Currey diverged, remaining beholden to the paternalism characteristic of nineteenth-century liberal imperialism and a wider settler-colonial framing that conceived of Abyssinia as 'being catapulted into the modern world through an act of violent colonial replenishment'.[151] As Neelam Srivastava concludes, 'Currey constantly emphasizes (or implicitly reveals) her belief in the "civilization" and the modernity of the Italians, who will bring progress… to the backward Ethiopians'.[152] It should be added that Currey's paternalism was underpinned by a 'negative' opposition to the Negus' rule and pity for the Ethiopian people, rather than any 'positive' attachment or respect for the latter. While claiming that the Italians stridently sought to avoid disrupting 'local customs', provided these did not defy 'civilized standards',[153] Currey also remarked that she 'did not, indeed, particularly like' the

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143 Muriel Currey, 'Italy Puts Effort into East Africa', *New York Times*, 18 December 1938, 78. See also Currey, *An Englishwoman's Impressions*, FHN/3, Special Collections, LSE.
144 'British Woman Says Italians Aid Ethiopians', *Washington Post*, 22 February 1938, 11.
145 Currey, *Woman at the Abyssinian War*, 223.
146 Edward M. Spiers, 'The Geneva Protocol: Tested and Found Wanting', *Journal of Strategic Studies* 8, no. 3 (1985): 334.
147 'British Woman Says Italians Aid Ethiopians', *Washington Post*, 22 February 1938, 11.
148 Italo Brandimarte, 'Breathless War: Martial Bodies, Aerial Experiences and the Atmosphere of Empire', *European Journal of International Relations* 29, no. 3 (2023): 539.
149 Currey, *An Englishwoman's Impressions*, FHN/3, Special Collections, LSE.
150 Alexander De Grand, 'Mussolini's Follies: Fascism in its Imperial and Racist Phase, 1935-1940', *Contemporary European History* 13, no. 2 (2004): 127-8.
151 Younis, 'Race, the World and Time', 362.
152 Srivastava, *Italian Colonialism*, 155.
153 Currey, 'Italy Puts Effort into East Africa', 78.

'inhabitants'.[154] In fact, she 'thought that the Italians were too generous and too indulgent in their treatment of the local population'.[155] In turn, Currey embraced every opportunity to defend the noble, higher civilisation of the invading Italians. In this endeavour, she even sought to rebuke seemingly minor allegations, such as those made at Chatham House by John M. Melly, head of the first British Red Cross unit during the conflict, regarding the rampancy of Typhus amongst Italian forces.[156] Conversely, the invasion was foremost 'a war against ignorance, dirt, disease, and apathy'.[157]

While departing from Mussolini, Currey's strand of paternalistic imperialism also diverged from contemporary liberal internationalists. For such figures as Zimmern and Murray, both arch-defenders of the British Empire and critics of Italy's invasion, the nature of imperialism had changed: unilateral colonisation was an antiquated nineteenth-century practice discordant with the League and the paternalistic animus underlying the mandate system. In this respect, one may witness how Currey instead drew upon lingering sentiments about, to borrow a phrase from Adom Getachew, Abyssinia's 'burdened and racialized membership' within international society, sentiments which gained increased currency after Abyssinia's conditional admittance to the League in 1923.[158] Such views, it should be added, extended beyond fascist and Italian international thought into the wider Anglophone world.[159] War and the eclipse of Abyssinian sovereignty, in contravention of international law, was deemed legitimate for Currey, given what she believed to be both the Negus' failure to attain for Abyssinia the civilisational standards necessary for statehood and Italy's willingness to bequeath by force the safety and order of civilisation.

In 1930, Villari's account on *The Expansion of Italy* could still be described in *Foreign Affairs* as '[a]n eloquent defense of the Italian colonial policy under the Fascist régime'.[160] Wheeler-Bennett welcomed the book in Chatham House's journal as a 'refreshing' contribution, not least because he believed it diverged from the 'large mass of literature, most of it propagandist', on the 'subject of Fascismo'. The book was, he observed, 'as delightful as it is important'.[161] Against the backdrop of the Italo-Abyssinian War, comparable praise within IR and political science journals was increasingly uncommon. This is not to suggest that fascist and pro-Italian tracts on the war were ignored. Even Mario Pigli's *Italian Civilization in Ethiopia* and G.C. Baravelli's *Abyssinia: The Last Stronghold of Slavery*, particularly egregious yet popular pro-Italian pamphlets released by the Dante Alighieri Society and *British-Italian*

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[154] Muriel Currey, 'On the Tigre Front', *Nineteenth Century and After* (March 1936): 349.
[155] *Ibid*.
[156] *Ibid*, 342. See also Muriel Currey, 'Italian Soldiers: Healthier in Abyssinia than at Home?', *Manchester Guardian*, 16 April 1936, 16. For Melly's comments, see John M. Melly, 'Ethiopia and the War from the Ethiopian Point of View', *International Affairs* 15, no. 1 (1936): 103-21.
[157] Currey, *Woman at the Abyssinian War*, 249.
[158] Adom Getachew, *Worldmaking after Empire: The Rise and Fall of Self-Determination* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2019), 40.
[159] On Abyssinia's 'burdened' membership, see *ibid*, Chapter 2.
[160] William L. Langer, review of *The Expansion of Italy*, by Luigi Villari, *Foreign Affairs* 9, no. 1 (1930): 168.
[161] Wheeler-Bennett, review of *The Expansion of Italy*, 848.

Bulletin, received review in *International Affairs*.[162] Rather, it is merely to state that positive comment was less forthcoming. In fact, during a Chatham House speech chaired by Toynbee, Villari spoke on Italian foreign policy, wherein commenting on the emerging Abyssinia crisis:

> [T]here had been for a long time in various parts of Africa an agitation against white men and against Europe as a whole… But all European Powers ought to work together to spread European civilisation as widely as possible… for the benefit of the natives as well as of the rest of the world'.[163]

Alongside a series of pointed questions from Seton-Watson—to which Currey, present in the audience and true to form, took the liberty to rebuke—Villari was at the receiving end of one Freda White, a figure who would shortly after pen an LNU pamphlet, *The Abyssinian Dispute*, contesting Italian claims. White criticised the regime's obstinate refusal to negotiate the Wal-Wal incident and while she agreed with the speaker insofar as it was Europe's prerogative to spread civilisation, her paternalism did not justify violence; indeed, the virtues of civilisation dictated the opposite.[164]

Unsurprisingly, Currey's arguments on Abyssinia were often sceptically received too. One rebuke occurred in the pages of *International Affairs*. Currey argued in the journal that Marshal De Bono's *La preparazione e le prime operazioni* nullified allegations that the invasion resulted from pre-planned machinations.[165] This elicited a debate between Currey and Major-General A.C. Temperley.[166] The latter countered that Currey's claims were unfounded. She, in turn, reasserted her position: Italy's invasion was a legitimate response to contingent events and Temperley was incorrect, for he had not considered vital evidence, namely the 'congestion [of Italian forces] at Massawa and the total lack of roads in Eritrea'.[167] Stated differently, if the pretence for war was already concocted, certainly more preparations would have been organised in advance. Such was the unsatisfactory nature of her response that Gathorne-Hardy submitted a letter to the editor expressing that he was 'profoundly startled' by Currey's 'ingenious' reply.[168] For him, De Bono's book was in actuality a 'conclusive vindication' of those who alleged that Italy had devised a 'concrete scheme' to conquer Abyssinia.[169]

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[162] Anonymous, review of *Italian Civilization in Ethiopia*, by Mario Pigli, *International Affairs* 16, no. 2 (1937): 321; H.G.L., review of *Abyssinia: The Last Stronghold of Slavery: What Abyssinia Is*, by G.C. Baravelli; and *Italian Civilisation in Ethiopia*, by Mario Pigli, *International Affairs* 15, no. 5 (1936): 787.
[163] Villari, 'Italian Foreign Policy', 337, 339.
[164] *Ibid*, 340-4.
[165] Muriel Currey, review of *La preparazione e le prime operazioni (La conquista dell'impero)*, by Emilio de Bono, *International Affairs* 17, no. 1 (1938): 130.
[166] A.C. Temperley, 'Correspondence', *International Affairs* 17, no. 2 (1938): 303-4.
[167] Muriel Currey, 'Correspondence', *International Affairs* 17, no. 3 (1938): 464.
[168] G.M. Gathorne-Hardy, 'Miss Currey on Marshal De Bono', *International Affairs* 17, no. 4 (1938): 605-6.
[169] For a comparable interpretation to Gathorne-Hardy, see G.L. Verschoyle, review of *What Next, O Duce?*, by Beatrice Baskerville, *International Affairs* 17, no. 3 (1938): 451-2.

While reportedly the only woman embedded with the military, Currey was not alone among British correspondents in her pro-Italian reportage. Notwithstanding a high level of censorship, the invasion elicited 'an avalanche of books… written by war correspondents',[170] not least affiliates of Currey and the BUF. Fuller reported on behalf of Rothermere's *Daily Mail*, while Barnes was appointed, on the recommendation of Grandi himself, as Reuter's chief war correspondent in October 1935 (ironically, the Governor of Italian Somaliland Rodolfo Graziani suspected that the embedded Barnes was an intelligence agent).[171] Comparable criticism was leveraged against such fellow travellers within the fledgling field of IR. Woolbert lambasted Fuller's *The First of the League Wars*, deeming its 'remarks on political questions… of questionable value in view of his frankly Fascist predilections'.[172] Similarly, *Italy's Conquest of Abyssinia* by Major E.W. Polson Newman, a leading Italophile in close contact with the Italian embassy and himself a Chatham House member, was summarised as such in *International Affairs*: 'The Walwal incident… the use of poison gas, and the aerial bombardment of Red Cross camps are not allowed the space which they deserve, and the Italian point of view only is given'.[173] Characteristically, Polson Newman received a more sympathetic assessment by Currey in *International Affairs*.[174]

Despite criticism, the degree to which pro-Italian sentiments permeated Chatham House is notable. Institutional publications often approached the conflict in a detached register. One contemporary described its highly popular pamphlet, *Abyssinia and Italy*, as 'comprehensive, informative and coldly impartial'.[175] Yet, through the *Bulletin of International News*, a fortnightly publication founded by the aforementioned Wheeler-Bennett and then under the editorship of Hugh Latimer, Chatham House increasingly published an output that 'accepted the assumption that Ethiopia was incapable of governing itself', recognised the veracity of Italian grievances, and 'favoured a pro-Italian and anti-German foreign policy based on the idea that British foreign policy had to support

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[170] R.E. Cheesman, review of *Eyewitness in Abyssinia*, by Herbert Matthews, *International Affairs* 17, no. 1 (1938): 131.
[171] See J.F.C. Fuller, 'The Italo-Ethiopian War: A Military Analysis by an Eye-witness Observer', *Army Ordnance* 16, no. 96 (1936): 340-8; R. Tattersallael, 'Further Interrogation Report of Barnes, Buona', typescript, 30 September 1946, WO 204/12841, TNA; Paresce, *Memorie di un diplomatico*, 92. Barnes and Currey's experience in Abyssinia overlapped, while both were aboard the same liner destined for New York in December 1937. Barnes, *Half a Life Left*, 151-2; 'Ocean Travelers', *New York Times*, 30 December 1937, 17.
[172] Robert Gale Woolbert, review of *The First of the League Wars: Its Lessons and Omens*, by J.F.C. Fuller, *Foreign Affairs* 16, no. 1 (1937): 190.
[173] R.E. Cheesman, review of *Italy's Conquest of Abyssinia*, by E.W. Polson Newman, *International Affairs* 17, no. 1 (1938): 132.
[174] Muriel Currey, review of *The Abyssinian Storm*, by Thomas Comyn-Platt; and *Ethiopian Realities*, by E.W. Polson Newman, *International Affairs* 15, no. 4 (1936): 631-2.
[175] P.G. Elgood, review of *Abyssinia and Italy*, by the RIIA Information Department, *International Affairs* 14, no. 5 (1935): 733. See also William L. Langer, review of *Abyssinia and Italy*, by the RIIA Information Department, *International Affairs* 14, no. 1 (1935): 176; Richard Pankhurst, 'Pro- and Anti- Ethiopian Pamphleteering in Britain during the Italian Fascist Invasion and Occupation (1935-41)', *International Journal of Ethiopian Studies* 1, no. 1 (2003): 153-76.

an Anglo-Italian axis as joint guarantors of the Locarno treaty'.[176] While authorship in the *Bulletin* was often anonymous, Baldoli notes that the Italophilic circle within the institute was actively involved in its production.[177]

Interestingly, one can detect Currey's influence in the international thought of Wheeler-Bennett himself, who—notwithstanding his disgust at Mussolini's ill-timed invasion of Abyssinia—chastised Foreign Secretary Anthony Eden's subordination of 'common-sense to principles' by opposing Italy, thereby sacrificing the anti-German Stresa front.[178] Wheeler-Bennet was a colleague and friend of Currey, while his diaries also confirm an acquaintance with Villari.[179] In fact, in the preface to one of his studies, *The Disarmament Deadlock*, Wheeler-Bennett offered his gratitude for Currey's 'great assistance', singling out her role in preparing the chapter on the Four Power Pact.[180] As stated within the chapter in question, 'Roman Interlude':

> The genesis of the Four-Power Pact is to be found in the foreign policy pursued by Signor Mussolini… He had always believed that the first, and indeed the essential, condition for the peace of Europe was a good understanding between Italy, Great Britain, France, and Germany.[181]

Appeasement and Nazi Barbarism

Currey bemoaned the poor state of Anglo-Italian relations after the Italo-Abyssinia War and the degree to which the hostility of the British government had undermined 'mutual confidence and understanding'.[182] Jerrold similarly regretted the public outcry over Abyssinia and called for a shift from 'sentiment to realism'.[183] Petrie likewise lamented Baldwin's 'provocative attitude' and endorsed a proposal made by Amery, no sympathiser of the League, for a pragmatic Anglo-French compromise with Italy.[184] Failure to accord Italy its requisite rights was deemed

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[176] Baldoli, *Exporting Fascism*, 106; Baldoli and Fleming, *British Fascist*, 2.
[177] Baldoli, *Exporting Fascism*, 106.
[178] Speech entitled 'British Foreign Policy' by John W. Wheeler-Bennett at the Institute of Public Affairs, University of Virgina, typescript, 5 July 1938, F15, Sir John Wheeler-Bennett Collection.
[179] See, e.g., Wheeler-Bennett's diaries from 1930 and 1933 contained within D1, Sir John Wheeler-Bennett Collection. Villari's friendship with Wheeler-Bennett is also indicated by his acceptance of an invitation to lodge with the latter during his 1938 visit to the US. Luigi Villari to Marjorie MacLachlan, 31 May 1938, Box 103, Papers of the University of Virginia Institute of Public Affairs.
[180] J.W. Wheeler-Bennett, *The Disarmament Deadlock* (London: George Routledge and Sons, 1934), xii.
[181] *Ibid*, 127. Wheeler-Bennett noted his gratitude to Currey in another study. See J.W. Wheeler-Bennett, *Hindenburg: The Wooden Titan* (London: Macmillan and Co., 1936), x-xi. Interestingly, books gifted by Currey appear in St Antony's Library; these were potentially first given to Wheeler-Bennett before being included in his substantial bequest to the college. See C.S. Nicholls, *The History of St Antony's College, Oxford, 1950-2000* (Basingstoke: Macmillan Press, 2000), 245.
[182] Currey, *Woman at the Abyssinian War*, 21.
[183] Douglas Jerrold, 'The Perils of Interference', *British-Italian Bulletin*, 8 February 1936, 4.
[184] Charles Petrie to Leo Amery, 20 October 1935, GBR/0014/AMEL 1/5/4, Churchill Archives Centre, Churchill College, Cambridge.

deleterious to international stability and an affront to international justice. Unless the sanctions were removed, argued Petrie, Italy would not 'participate in any discussions regarding the general international situation'.[185]

Such arguments may be positioned within a broader discourse about peaceful change and the grievances of the 'have-not' powers, a theme equally present in the above RIIA publications. As previously noted, discussion of peaceful change manifested variously. Indeed, the pragmatic decision to appease Italy and secure Mussolini's support against Hitler was not uncommon among British international thinkers, including within Chatham House. Yet, Currey's variant on this theme was not underpinned by a reluctant acquiescence to appease Italy or a purely strategic calculus vis-à-vis Germany. Rather, she evinced a positive sympathy towards the Italian regime.

In Currey's case, one may also detect a somewhat tortured effort to reconcile sympathy for Italian grievances, the principles of the League, and the inability of the British to accept the veracity of the former: 'I had tried again and again to explain why my country had felt it to be its duty to act in this way, but the logical Italian mind found it hard to follow the arguments I put forward'.[186] As Currey similarly commented on the autobiography of her counterpart, 'many people will disagree with Major Barnes's review of the British and Italian policy and actions during the Abyssinian crisis, but the important fact remains that he is able to set out quite clearly what the Italians thought and felt, and why they acted as they did'.[187] In the pages of the popular periodical *Nineteenth Century and After*, Currey suggested that opinion elsewhere in the world tended to dismiss British claims about defending the Covenant; these were but a façade for myopic, imperial interests. She differed. In Currey's estimation, British opposition to Italy's campaign was for most, including the LNU, 'genuinely inspired by loyalty to the Covenant'. This honest if misguided stance had, however, failed to appreciate 'the lives and fates of the unfortunate peasants in Abyssinia'.[188] As she concluded,

> The League… should play a great part in maintaining peace, but could there be a more bitter and ironical comment on the way in which League affairs have been conducted than to be told that its future safety depends on compelling Italy to abandon the helpless people whom she has sworn to protect?[189]

In this regard, a subtle divergence appears between Currey's views on the League and those espoused by other sympathisers linked to the London Group. For many British far-right thinkers, anti-League scepticism or outright conspiratorial vitriol predated the Italo-Abyssinian War. As Barnes argued, the organisation 'will be the cause of war, rather than of peace' if made 'sterile in the futile aim of maintaining, for the sake of an illusory peace, static conditions in a world which is necessarily dynamic'.[190] In fact, he once argued that Noel-Baker and Lord Cecil were emblematic of a 'sentimental pacifism', one embodying a 'mentality which is outside reality' and thus of 'deadly

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[185] Charles Petrie, 'The Position in the Mediterranean', *Nineteenth Century and After* (July 1936): 20.
[186] Currey, *Woman at the Abyssinian War*, 146.
[187] Muriel Currey, review of *Half a Life Left*, by James Strachey Barnes, *International Affairs* 17, no. 4 (1938): 548-9.
[188] Currey, 'On the Tigre Front', 348.
[189] *Ibid*, 349.
[190] Barnes, *Universal Aspects*, 157-8.

significance'.[191] In his post-war memoirs, Petrie commented on the positive contribution of the League's technical functions, but ultimately concluded that, in the security realm, it was a failure from the offset.[192] During the 1930s, he suggested that the Holy Alliance faltered because it tried to uphold an anachronistic status quo, a fate which would befall the League were it not substantively reformed.[193] Accordingly, the organisation's 'over-zealous supporters', such as Gilbert Murray and Lords Cecil and Davies, 'would do well to realize that the choice is not between the present League and a reformed League, but between the latter and no League at all'.[194] Jerrold likewise lampooned the League and those whom he decried as 'Pacifists' during a 1932 speech at Chatham House, in response to which audience members expressed their reservations over his construction of an unrecognisable pacifist strawman.[195] With debate over sanctions ascending to the fore, the vehemence with which British far-right commentators chastised the League only escalated. Jerrold's *They that Take the Sword* was described in *Foreign Affairs* as '[a]n outspoken challenge to many postwar assumptions', evincing a particular hostility towards the League.[196] Alternatively, Fuller's *The First of the League Wars* amounted to an even more visceral attack, veering into antisemitic diatribes against the supposed 'occult powers' conspiring against fascism.[197]

While Currey suggested in 1941 that the League's earlier inaction over Japanese aggression in Manchuria constituted the beginning of its failure, it is difficult to infer from extant remnants how her views on the organisation evolved during the late 1930s.[198] Despite Currey's divergence from the vocal opposition expressed by the LNU towards Mussolini's Abyssinian campaign, what is notable in her defence of Italy is a conspicuous effort to avoid overly tarnishing the League,[199] a contrast to her far-right counterparts. In fact, while Currey came to recognise that the League had failed, even during the Second World War she remained beholden to the potential of international organisation. By August 1941, sceptical of overly legalistic schemes of international cooperation, Currey applauded Lord Cecil's rejection of international federalism.[200] In its place, the internationalist-minded Currey favourably anticipated the creation of a post-war organisation akin to the League.[201]

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[191] Barnes, *Half a Life Left*, 297.
[192] Petrie, *A Historian*, 110-11.
[193] Petrie, 'Foreign Affairs', *English Review* (January 1934): 93.
[194] *Ibid*, 91.
[195] Jerrold, 'Pacifism', RIIA/8/229, CHA.
[196] Review of *They that Take the Sword: The Future of the League of Nations*, by Douglas Jerrold, *Foreign Affairs* 15, no. 1 (1936): 204.
[197] Fuller, *League Wars*.
[198] Muriel Currey to Robert Cecil, 31 August 1941, MS 51187, Western Manuscripts, British Library.
[199] See, e.g., Currey, 'On the Tigre Front', 341.
[200] On Cecil's critique of Streit to which Currey refers, see Robert Cecil, *A Great Experiment: An Autobiography* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1941), 347-8. Federalist propositions, including Streit's *Union Now*, garnered ire from others on the Italophilic and fascistic right, including Lord Lloyd and Villari. See Lord Lloyd to Douglas Jerrold, 9 February 1940, GBR/0014/GLLD 20/10, Churchill Archives Centre; Luigi Villari, 'Foundations of a Durable Peace', *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 210 (1940): 89-97.
[201] Muriel Currey to Robert Cecil, 31 August 1941, MS 51187, Western Manuscripts, British Library.

During the mid-1930s, then, Currey viewed the imposition of sanctions as but a distraction and the Italo-Abyssinian War a colonial matter, not an international question under the League's purview. As Currey suggested in one *International Affairs* review, the reaction against Italy had temporarily 'obscured' other pertinent concerns, from the status of minority rights to calls for the revision of Versailles.[202] In effect, Currey sought to reconcile appeasement with the League mantra by reframing Italian expansion primarily as a *mission civilisatrice*—rather than a question of geopolitical significance—and emphasising its peripheral relevance compared to ostensibly more important concerns. In *A Woman at the Abyssinian War*, Currey relayed one exchange that she had with several Italian soldiers about the League. The discussion ended with a cautionary note: 'the nations of Europe were mad to quarrel in view of the many dangers which threatened Western civilization'.[203]

While Currey's form of pro-League appeasement departed from her far-right counterparts, it was aligned in its Mediterranean orientation. Currey and her associates held a broad anti-war stance; however, the positive sympathy they expressed towards Italy often did not extend to Nazi Germany. This attribute also demarcates Currey's thinking on appeasement from the utopian strand of fascist internationalism typifying Mosley's worldview, which entailed close Anglo-German cooperation.[204] In contrast, Currey belonged to a clique of fascist sympathisers who not only accepted a vital distinction between German Nazism and Italian fascism, but commonly approached the former with scepticism or, in some cases, a lingering Germanophobia cemented by their wartime experience.[205] For some contemporaries, this came as a surprise, for there appeared negligible difference between Italian fascism and German Nazism. As one reviewer remarked in *International Affairs*,

> it is rather surprising to find that Sir Charles Petrie's almost reverential attitude to Signor Mussolini is by no means extended to Herr Hitler, of whom, indeed, he appears to disapprove. Yet to the plain man there is little to choose between the political methods of the two dictators.[206]

This anti-Nazi stance reflects, at least in part, debates within Italy during the early 1930s regarding fascist universality. As already discussed in Chapter V, the rise of an alternative ideological pole in Germany added impetus to Italian efforts geared towards exporting the fascist revolution. These Italophiles highlighted several qualities dividing Italian fascism from German Nazism. The latter was a cruder phenomenon, not only because of Germany's

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[202] Muriel Currey, review of *L'Italia e i problemi internazionali*, by Latinus (pseud.), *International Affairs* 15, no. 6 (1936): 949.

[203] Currey, *Woman at the Abyssinian War*, 213.

[204] Mosley, 'World Alternative'. However, there were clear overlaps between BUF international thought and how several Italophiles interpreted world affairs. As one fascist remarked regarding Petrie's regular *English Review* commentary on international affairs: 'Petrie… must command our respect if not our entire agreement'. J.A.M., 'The English Review', *Action*, 20 February 1937, 12.

[205] See, e.g., Richard Griffiths, 'Anti-Fascism and the Post-War British Establishment', in *Varieties of Anti-Fascism: Britain in the Inter-War Period*, eds. Nigel Copsey and Andrzej Olechnowicz (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 253-4.

[206] Bywater, review of *The Dangerous Sea*; *Lords of the Inland Sea*; and *Italia, Francia, Inghilterra nel Mediterraneo*, 813-4.

distinctive cultural traits, but because the regime had not yet embraced corporatism.[207] The profoundly religious Barnes also prioritised the Catholic dimensions of fascism relative to its Nazi counterpart, albeit his critical disposition towards Germany increasingly came to be tempered by admiration in the later stages of the Second World War.[208] For Barnes, fascist Italy, Francoist Spain, and the Portuguese *Estado Novo* all embodied a form of clerico-fascism animated towards the protection and rejuvenation of Catholicism.[209] Unlike Barnes, Goad never reconciled with Nazism, yet he did betray a comparable emphasis on the alleged 'Christian principle' at the core of this Mediterranean brand of fascism. While sharing superficial similarities, the pagan Nazis were therefore 'not really fascist'.[210] Meanwhile, as noted in Chapter V, Petrie coupled this religiosity with another cause, namely monarchism, whereby juxtaposing national socialism and fascism by reference to the crown's traditional role.[211] In effect, the conservative disposition of such figures as Petrie and Jerrold led them to ardently support fascist Italy, as well as Franco's efforts during the Spanish Civil War, as defenders of a radically illiberal, monarchical, and Christian Europe.[212] As Petrie remarked in the *English Review,* 'Franco and his forces are fighting for Christian civilization against barbarism'.[213] The same could not be said of Nazism. As Petrie elsewhere argued, Italian fascism stands for 'family' and 'religion'; it belonged within the 'main stream of the great European tradition'. By contrast, Petrie mustered the spectre of 'Prussianism', a familiar one in interwar British political and international thought, in order to deride the militaristic Nazi state and conceptions of racial eugenics as but a 'new form' of an 'old' creed, one embodying a 'cynicism and ruthless egotism' that was deplorable in its methods.[214] Fascism and Nazism were similar in 'their authoritarianism, and in their opposition to Communism and to Liberalism, but there the resemblance ends'.[215]

In a similar vein, Currey constructed contrasts between the two movements, framing Nazism not simply as the Germanic permutation of a generic fascist model, but as a creed to be abhorred. As outlined in *Fascist Week*, Currey jettisoned the view that antisemitism and fascism were symbiotic. She defended Italy against such charges, arguing that Jews suffered no discrimination, for even the 'Chief Rabbi was a Fascist'.[216] While this article aligned with others then appearing in BUF mediums, Currey remained aloof from Germany even as the party pursued an

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[207] See, e.g., Charles Petrie, *Lords of the Inland Sea: A Study of the Mediterranean Powers* (London: Lovat Dickson Limited, 1937), 61-2.
[208] Baldoli and Fleming, *British Fascist*, 13-6.
[209] See, e.g., Jackson, 'Fascist Revolution', 197, 200.
[210] Goad, W*hat Is Fascism?*, 29, 35.
[211] Baldoli and Fleming, *British Fascist*, 3.
[212] On far-right British support for Franco's nationalists, see Bressler, 'Crusade against Bolshevism', 79-84. As an aside, Jerrold is perhaps most known for helping escort Franco from the Canary Islands to Spain, aiding the outbreak of civil war.
[213] Charles Petrie, 'Foreign Affairs', *English Review* (September 1936): 249.
[214] Charles Petrie, 'Fascism and the Nazis', *Saturday Review*, 20 May 1933, 479-80. See also Villis, *British Catholics*, 149. As Dietz highlights, even before Nazi barbarism entered the intellectual horizon of British observers, Barnes sought to dispel any association between fascism and the old menace of Prussian militarism. Dietz, *Neo-Tories*, 122.
[215] Petrie, *Lords of the Inland Sea*, 62.
[216] 'Laski v. Yeats-Brown', *Fascist Week*, 27 April—3 May 1934, 5.

increasingly antisemitic, Naziphilic reorientation during the mid-1930s.[217] Indeed, Currey's writings appear bereft of the Jewish conspiracies that one may find in BUF discourse or Barnes' increasingly extreme antisemitism.

Conforming to this anti-German and pro-Italian position, Currey expressed concern over Nazi revisionism, admonishing in 1935 the 'cruel and unscrupulous plot' against Austria.[218] There was, Currey added, 'no lack of money [that the Nazis were unwilling to expend] for revolution and outrages'.[219] Currey alleged that she had even reproached the Counsellor of the Italian embassy in Washington over Italy's acquiescence to the *Anschluss*, albeit she came to appreciate that few practicable alternatives were available.[220] Villari also spoke of the threat posed by Nazi designs on Austria before Chatham House,[221] while Petrie shared a deep concern over German foreign policy, including over a feared *Anschluss*, an act that he believed would be not only contrary to Italian national interests, but foreclose his monarchical dreams of a Habsburg restoration.[222] Such anti-Nazi sentiments also contributed to Petrie's opposition against sanctions over Abyssinia, lest their imposition draw Italy and Germany closer together.[223]

Juxtaposed against her debunking of the so-called 'Mussolini myth', Currey therefore *emphasised* Nazi barbarism. In one exemplary comment, Currey made a stark contrast whilst en route to the imminent Italo-Abyssinian War: no soldier mentioned 'the glorification of war for its own sake', a point that 'those who profess to see no difference between National-Socialism and Fascism [should] ponder'.[224] Petrie expressed a comparable sentiment: 'To-day, Italy and Germany are both armed to the teeth, but the outlook of their citizens is in marked contrast: at heart the Italian will never be a militarist, while the German will never be anything else.'[225] Interestingly, this contrast was shared by at least some at Chatham House.[226] As King-Hall, the institute's earliest chronicler, remarked in a letter to Villari in June 1939:

> I've just been lunching with a Nazi. I wish you had been under the table and heard him on Italy! How you people can get mixed up with those toughs passes any comprehension. It looks as if we shall have war in September I fear.[227]

While Currey's disdain at Nazism is palpable, it is difficult to gauge her views on Germany in the second half of the 1930s as the fear of war loomed. The same may not be said for her compatriots. Yeats-Brown actively promoted the appeasement of Germany, himself eager to avoid war and 'obsessed by a fear of Bolshevism', as one

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[217] Baldoli, 'Anglo-Italian Fascist Solidarity?'
[218] Muriel Currey, 'Where Three Frontiers Meet', *English Review* (November 1935): 590.
[219] *Ibid*, 586.
[220] Muriel Currey to Robert Cecil, 31 August 1941, MS 51187, Western Manuscripts, British Library.
[221] Villari, 'Italian Foreign Policy', 329.
[222] Dietz, *Neo-Tories*, 195.
[223] Baldoli, *Exporting Fascism*, 105.
[224] Currey, *Woman at the Abyssinian War*, 24.
[225] Petrie, *Lords of the Inland Sea*, 62.
[226] See, e.g., L.S. Amery, *The Forward View* (London: Geoffrey Bles, 1935), 137, 141-8. Amery even despatched a copy of this book to Grandi, suggesting it be forwarded onto Mussolini. Baldoli, *Exporting Fascism*, 117.
[227] Stephen King-Hall to Luigi Villari, 12 June 1939, KV 2/3028, TNA.

International Affairs reviewer derisively remarked.[228] For Woolbert, writing in *Foreign Affairs*, Yeats-Brown's popular book, *European Jungle*, betrayed the author's penchant to 'believe the worst of… Soviet Russia and the best of Nazism and Fascism'.[229] While the book in question cautioned Britain to prepare for resistance against the revisionist powers if required, it also extolled the need to afford Germany reasonable 'living room' and warned against stumbling into a war intended to 'make the world safe for Stalin or international Jewry'.[230] Petrie likewise sought to placate Italy and expressed support for Chamberlain's appeasement policy. Reflecting on the European situation against the backdrop of the Spanish Civil War, he observed that the Soviets, rather than Germany, posed the 'real threat' to peace.[231] On one occasion, Petrie even accused Toynbee of promoting war against Germany after the latter's strong opposition to government policy caused controversy within Chatham House.[232] For the likes of Petrie and Yeats-Brown, as Baldoli and Fleming have noted, 'they did not altogether reject Hitler, because they perceived him… as an alternative to Bolshevism'.[233]

Barnes also advocated American isolationism and embraced Chamberlain's policy.[234] While travelling the US at the behest of Italian authorities from 1937, he became affiliated with the Catholic periodical *Social Justice*, edited by notorious radio priest, antisemite, and isolationist, Father Charles Coughlin. The latter hired Barnes on the recommendation of Mosley no less.[235] During this stint, Barnes published widely, presented a series of speeches via radio, and spoke before such venues as the Italy-America Society and the Washington branch of the English-Speaking Union.[236] He even lectured on the subject of 'Italy at Home and Abroad' during one of the regular luncheons organised by the Foreign Policy Association in New York; the event itself was presided over by Raymond Leslie Buell, author of the best-selling 1925 textbook *International Relations*; former Harvard instructor in comparative colonial administration; as well as the association's research director and president.[237] The tone and contents of such

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[228] W.H. Johnston, review of *The Eleventh Hour*, Vincent Sheean; and *European Jungle*, Francis Yeats-Brown, *International Affairs* 18, no. 5 (1939): 701-2.
[229] Robert Gale Woolbert, review of *European Jungle*, by Francis Yeats-Brown, *Foreign Affairs* 19, no. 1 (1940): 252.
[230] Yeats-Brown, *European Jungle*, 267, 354.
[231] Petrie, 'Foreign Affairs', *English Review* (September 1936): 249.
[232] Robert H. Keyserlingk, *Austria in World War II: An Anglo-American Dilemma* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1988), 236; Christian Haase, 'In Search of a European Settlement: Chatham House and British-German Relations, 1920-55', *European History Quarterly* 37, no. 3 (2007): 378.
[233] Baldoli and Fleming, *British Fascist*, 3. The qualified anti-Nazi sentiments of Petrie, Currey, and Goad were not shared uniformly across High Tories. Some within the wider *English Review* circle greatly admired Nazi Germany.
[234] See, e.g., Baldoli and Fleming, *British Fascist*, 9.
[235] Donald Warren, *Radio Priest: Charles Coughlin, the Father of Hate Radio* (New York: Free Press, 1996), 116. In 1938, Barnes visited his second cousin, former New Party member John Strachey, on Ellis Island after the latter was denied US entry due to his communist sympathies. Critics seized on the State Department's double standard: permitting a lecture tour by a fascist ideologue while revoking the visa of a communist. 'Bail Plea Refused for John Strachey', *New York Times*, 15 October 1938, 20; 'State Department Excludes Strachey as Communist', *Scholastic*, 5 November 1938, 16.
[236] See, e.g., 'Today on the Radio', *New York Times*, 27 January 1938, 37; 'Suviches to Hear Lecture on Italy', *Washington Post*, 17 January 1938, 10; 'Union to Honor Maj. J.S. Barnes', *Washington Post*, 3 February 1938, 14; 'English Speaking Union to Hold Tea Tomorrow', *Washington Post*, 14 November 1938, 10.
[237] 'Trade on Austria with Italy is Seen', *New York Times*, 27 March 1938, 22.

lectures were, to quote one British official, 'ill-received' and 'strangely pro-Fascist & pro-German'.[238] Indeed, at the aforementioned Foreign Policy Association presentation, Barnes' position was at stark odds with his co-speakers, namely the *New York Herald Tribune* journalist and later famed war correspondent Sonia Tomara and the exiled Italian literary professor G.A. Borgese. While the latter two focused on the *realpolitik* motivations behind Mussolini's acquiescence to the *Anschluss*, Barnes countered that 'Mussolini's only price was peace'.[239] Mussolini was cast in the adoring role of peace prophet; as Barnes titled one of his speeches before the Italy-America Society: 'The Munich Conference and Il Duce's Move for Peace'.[240] While plaudits for the Munich agreement were nothing exceptional within mainstream international thought, Barnes' treatment proved to be blindly pro-fascist, conspiratorial, and—notwithstanding his dismissal of the so-called 'Jewish peril' during the 1920s[241]—virulently antisemitic. Rather than interpreting the onset of the Second World War as instigated by German aggression, Barnes viewed it as an unfortunate tragedy caused by the gerontocratic Anglo-French powers and the corrupting influence of Jewish financial machinations, the latter of whom sought the downfall of fascism, Christendom, and Western civilisation as such.[242] He thus lamented that Britain was 'slaving it with the Jews (and presently also with Bolsheviks)'.[243]

Expectedly, Villari and Pellizzi also peddled the regime's revisionist line. As war in Europe loomed, Villari was stationed in the Washington Embassy. He used his American posting to propagate at various venues, including Columbia University and the University of Virginia's Institute of Public Affairs.[244] As late as July 1940, Villari published in the *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* on the supposed foundations for a 'durable peace'. Comparing contemporary Europe to the religious conflicts of Christendom, Villari outlined several preconditions for change: the cultivation of politico-ideological tolerance; strict non-interference in other civilised states, including the prevention of economic boycott or derisive press campaigns; the placation of economic grievances held by the 'less wealthy' (revisionist) powers; the reduction in the number, or at least economic autonomy, of minor states; and the formation of a great power managerial system akin to the Four-Power Pact.[245]

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[238] See the response to Percy Loraine, telegram, 14 June 1940, FO 371/24965, TNA.

[239] 'Trade on Austria with Italy is Seen', *New York Times*, 27 March 1938, 22.

[240] 'Italy American Society Meets', *Washington Post*, 16 November 1938, 18. Interestingly, political scientist and white supremacist Lothrop Stoddard attended.

[241] Linehan, *British Fascism*, 194.

[242] Jackson, 'Fascist Revolution', 196-8, 204.

[243] James Strachey Barnes to Lord Lloyd, 31 December 1939, GBR/0014/GLLD 19/16, Churchill Archives Centre.

[244] See, e.g., 'Italian Intrigues in America', *Times*, 15 October 1940, 3; 'Campus Notes', *Columbia Spectator*, 17 April 1940, 4; 'Institute of Cooperation for World Peace and Collective Security: Institute of Public Affairs University of Virgina, July 4—17, 1937', *World Affairs* 100, no. 3 (1937): 160-2; Luigi Villari, 'The Economic Aspects of Colonial Policy', typescript, 9 July 1938, Box 43, Papers of the University of Virginia Institute of Public Affairs. Villari's 1938 Virginia lecture, 'Colonial Policy in its International and Economic Aspects', was likely shaped—albeit loosely—by a paper delivered at the same event by the internationalist William Arnold-Forster, titled 'Peaceful Change; with Special Reference to the Colonial Question'. Marjorie McLachlan to Luigi Villari, 12 April 1938, Box 103, Papers of the University of Virginia Institute of Public Affairs.

[245] Villari, 'Foundations of a Durable Peace'.

Wartime Thinking and Post-War Reception

> I was not influenced by any special regard for the *beaux yeux* of Mussolini—though I confess to a personal liking for the man—or any special affection for Italy.[246]
>
> — Charles Petrie (1972)

> If one were asked what was Mussolini's most prominent characteristic, apart from his genius, the answer must be his encyclopaedic knowledge…[247]
>
> — Charles Petrie (1934)

In retrospect, Petrie's post-war attempts to nonchalantly distance himself from his exuberant, even sycophantic, embrace of Mussolini is comical. Yet it is also telling of the profound consequences that the Second World War had on such thinkers. As world war materialised, several of Currey's close affiliates eventually abandoned appeasement, albeit with the exception of her Italian counterparts, Pellizzi and Villari, alongside the treasonous Barnes. Yeats-Brown, for example, cautiously reneged on his anti-war position and while still eager to find a negotiated settlement, he was confronted by the reality of German expansionism after the capture of Prague.[248] As he remarked, '[a]ppeasement was a sane and Christian policy: it is no discredit to him [Chamberlain] that it has for the moment failed'.[249] This reflected a more general trend within the heterogeneous anti-war movement. As Ceadel observes, the absorption of Prague made apparent the fallacy of appeasement, and with France's subsequent collapse, 'only the most optimistic or gullible could expect a satisfactory negotiated peace'.[250]

For some Italophiles, Mussolini's increasingly close alignment with Nazi Germany caused apprehension; it was, as Petrie bluntly phrased it to Grandi, a 'suicidal policy'.[251] Petrie later argued that he and others had sought to avoid this outcome, he having personally counselled Mussolini to this effect.[252] Yet as Petrie grimly concluded, 'the task became hopeless, and I abandoned it in despair' following Italy's invasion of Albania in April 1939.[253] In fact, in the pages of the wartime *International Affairs Review Supplement*, Petrie made his altered opinion abundantly clear: 'the interests of the Fascist régime rather than those of Italy have gradually become the chief consideration of those responsible for the conduct of Italian foreign policy… Signor Mussolini got into bad company with Herr Hitler,

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[246] Petrie, *A Historian*, 139.
[247] Petrie, 'Mussolini', 98.
[248] Pugh, *'Hurrah for the Blackshirts!'*, 283-4; Richard Griffiths, *What Did You Do During the War? The Last Throes of the British Pro-Nazi Right, 1940-45* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2017), 256-8.
[249] Yeats-Brown, *European Jungle*, 211.
[250] Ceadel, *Semi-Detached Idealists*, 376-7. Some, of course, abandoned appeasement later than others. The aforementioned Arthur Bryant released his antisemitic, pro-Nazi tract *Unfinished Victory* in February 1940. According to Dietz, the 'book became an embarrassment to Bryant himself, and he attempted to purchase as many copies as possible in order to destroy them'. Dietz, *Neo-Tories*, 205.
[251] Cited in Baldoli, *Exporting Fascism*, 172.
[252] Petrie, *A Historian*, 138.
[253] *Ibid*, 140. See also Dietz, *Neo-Tories*, 201.

and after his success in Abyssinia his appetite grew for what it fed on'.[254] With that said, and as the war against Germany set-in, Petrie held onto a brief hope that the forces of the European far right across Spain, Portugal, Italy, and elsewhere—true believers in Christianity, tradition, and monarchy—could be mustered against the Pagan alignment between Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union. Petrie outlined this vision for British propaganda in a memo to Chamberlain in late September 1939, and while the latter passed on Petrie's memo to the Foreign Office as a courtesy, it was ultimately rejected.[255]

Currey's activities and associations suggest that she followed a similar trajectory. Currey and Goad remained in close connection during and after the war; the former was even appointed as Goad's literary executor following his death in 1956.[256] Likewise, she and Goad continued a close relationship with Yeats-Brown until his death in late 1944. In fact, in the winter of 1940-1, Currey was intensely involved in a book about the initial stages of the war that Yeats-Brown was contracted to produce.[257] Currey's contribution appears substantive. Nevertheless, she was relegated to the book's acknowledgments section and commended for her assistance.[258]

While accepting the actuality of conflict with the Axis and holding steadfast in their loyalty to Britain, Italy nevertheless 'remained an ideal second country', and for Currey, Goad, and Petrie, 'they regretted that events such as Ethiopia, the League's sanctions and the Spanish Civil War had allegedly dragged Mussolini toward an unwanted alliance with Germany'.[259] As late as May 1945, for example, Goad conveyed his reservations during a discussion at Chatham House over British interwar foreign policy regarding Italy. Pursuant to Goad's defence, British restrictions on Italian exports, and thus the denial of Italy's ability to accrue foreign currency, partially helped to fuel expansionism abroad.[260] Evidently, Goad remained sympathetic towards Italian grievances. Indeed, he elsewhere expressed his 'sympathy with and understanding of the sufferings of the great [Italian] people', while alleging that Italy's dismal military performance was partly due to a scant willingness to 'fight on behalf of German barbarism which threatens to subjugate all civilized Europe including Italy herself'. As Goad added: 'All Englishmen regret that Italy so bound herself… to Germany that she could not refuse to fight when called on by her ally'.[261] Goad continued to place importance on what he once referred to at Chatham House as the 'Christian ethic and the fundamental Natural Law underlying European civilisation', from which Nazi Germany stood beyond the pale. In

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[254] Charles Petrie, review of *A Concise History of Italy from Prehistoric Times to Our Own Day*, by Luigi Salvatorelli; *La triplice alleanza: Storia diplomatica, 1877-1912*, by Luigi Salvatorelli; and *L'Italia di fronte al conflitto*, by Galeazzo Ciano, *International Affairs Review Supplement* 19, no. 1 (1940): 54-5.
[255] Dietz, *Neo-Tories*, 206.
[256] Griffiths, *Fellow Travellers*, 17.
[257] Wrench, *Francis Yeats-Brown*, 244.
[258] Francis Yeats-Brown, *Britain at War: The Army, from September 1939 to December 1940* (London: Hutchinson & Co., 1941), 7.
[259] Baldoli, *Exporting Fascism*, 180. From 1948, Goad settled in Fiesole, near Florence, where he passed at 77. 'Mr. H.E. Goad', *Times*, 28 May 1956, 14.
[260] Allen George Barnard Fisher, 'The Interdependence of Security and Economic Development', 31 May 1945, RIIA/8/1120, CHA.
[261] Harold E. Goad, 'The Sufferings of Italy', *Times*, 9 January 1941, 5.

Goad's opinion, these religio-civilisational attributes ought to be emphasised in wartime propaganda, rather than democracy.[262] Whilst pitching a question at Chatham House in November 1941, for example, Goad contended that this 'religious idea' should undergird BBC propaganda as a means to stir Italian opposition to Hitler and ferment intra-Axis divisions.[263] While on opposing sides, Goad remained adamant that Italy was naturally closer to Britain than Nazi Germany. Moreover, following Italy's entry into the Second World War, Goad would still publicly defend aspects of Italian corporatism, as he did during a speech at Chatham House by C.W. Guillebaud in September 1940.[264] While the force of Goad's Italophilia moves him beyond the mainstream, it should be captioned that this aforementioned perception of Germany and Italy as unnatural allies was not unusual in British international thought, at least prior to Italy's entry into the war. As opined in one anonymous report linked to Chatham Houses' World Order study group, 'there are so many political and sentimental contrasts that one may really speak of an antagonism or antipathy [in Italy] towards Germany'.[265]

It is difficult to gauge Currey's views on Italy during and immediately after the war. Yet it is interesting to note that as late as September 1944, she continued to believe there much value in Italian-style corporatism. As much is revealed in a letter that she penned to her cousin, Tory Reformer Quintin Hogg. While Currey applauded Hogg's *The Time We Live In*, she raised questions about the post-war organisation of British industry, particularly on how the voice of not only workers and employers could be addressed, but that of the consumer. Currey, in what she recognised to be a potentially provocative note, recounted Italy's guild and corporative structures, remarking 'that there is something in this form of organisation which might be adapted to British conditions after the war'.[266] Yet Currey also appears somewhat critical of the fascist regime. Her translation of Pietro Badoglio's apologia, *Italy in the Second World War,* is illuminating. The fascist general, apprehensive about entering the war and dismayed by Italy's performance, was integral in the eventual overthrow of Mussolini and the ensuing armistice.[267] Rather than explaining Italy's descent into war as the product of German machinations per Goad or any innate national interest and ideological sympathy for siding with Germany, Badoglio placed considerable fault on Mussolini's hubris.[268]

The qualified nature of their sympathy aside, such Italophiles' interwar advocacy caused apprehension in some quarters. In one letter to Goad following the invasion of Sicily in July 1943, Yeats-Brown noted his regret for

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[262] Barbara Ward, 'Christian Co-Operation and the Future', 2 July 1942, 10, RIIA/8/838, CHA. See also 'What We Are Fighting For', *Bath Weekly Chronicle and Herald*, 20 December 1941, 11.
[263] John Scott Lidgett, 'The Place of Religion in the Present Struggle', 25 November 1941, 7, RIIA/8/775, CHA.
[264] C.W. Guillebaud, 'Hitler's New Economic Order for Europe', 3 September 1940, RIIA/8/656, CHA.
[265] Typescript of untitled report, n.d., MS. 15363/178, Archive of David Astor.
[266] Muriel Currey to Quintin Hogg, 2 September 1944, GBR/0014/HLSM 2/9/42, Churchill Archives Centre. Hogg would become Lord Chancellor in the 1970s and 1980s.
[267] For other post-war translations by Currey, see Ugo Spirito, 'Contemporary Italian Thought', trans. Muriel Currey, *Life and Letters* 62, no. 144 (1949): 112-5; Carlo Suigo, *In the Land of Mao Tse-Tung*, ed. Clifford Witting, trans. Muriel Currey (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1953); Carlo de Bellegarde, *African Escape*, trans. Muriel Currey (London: William Kimber, 1957).
[268] Pietro Badoglio, *Italy in the Second World War: Memories and Documents*, trans. Muriel Currey (London: Oxford University Press, 1948), 8.

not having participated. The Allies 'must need people badly who know the people and the language'. However, he questioned whether his services would be called upon: 'You and I and Muriel are suspected of being Fascists'.[269] This sentiment was fuelled by Yeats-Brown's abortive candidature to the Foreign Office as Rome Press Attache. Despite having the support of the right-wing Lord Lloyd, then chairman of the British Council,[270] Yeats-Brown failed to gain the position, officials believing—at least in his estimation—that he was overly sympathetic to fascism.[271] In late 1939, Barnes too expressed an inquisitive disbelief after being denied by the British Council for a position as Assistant Director with the British Institute of Florence.[272] Petrie likewise shared his annoyance in his post-war retrospective. In Petrie's recollection, the government of Greece requested his services to counter Axis propaganda, as did Lord Lloyd in the Spanish context. For a brief period, Petrie also assisted with BBC wartime broadcasting to Latin America. Yet despite his patriotic willingness, the former enterprises came to nought; meanwhile, the BBC position abruptly ended. While Petrie would come to help the Ministry of Information and later act as a wartime lecturer on diplomatic history to British forces,[273] he arrived at the conclusion that, at least initially, 'someone high up in Establishment circles must have exercised a veto'.[274] As Petrie reasoned, his call for a 'more tolerant policy towards Italy' was 'not unnaturally subject to… misconception, some of it deliberate'.[275]

Hesitancy to place such figures in official positions was not entirely without reason. Goad did not hesitate in supporting the fascist regime in his capacity as interwar Director of the British Institute of Florence. While Goad suggested that it was precisely such sympathy which allowed the organisation to continue operating after the deterioration of Anglo-Italian relations in the second half of the 1930s,[276] his flagrant sympathies inspired alarm amongst some within the British Council, eventually leading to his retirement of the directorship in May 1939, notwithstanding his support from the aforementioned Lord Lloyd.[277] Goad's efforts to shape wartime policy also faltered against the strength of his Italophilia. In October 1941, for instance, Goad contacted Pierson Dixon at the

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[269] Cited in Wrench, *Francis Yeats-Brown*, 255-6.

[270] Lord Lloyd to Francis Yeats-Brown, 20 June 1939, GBR/0014/GLLD 19/11, Churchill Archives Centre. Lord Lloyd is a recurrent personality in this dissertation. As former Governor of Bombay, Higher Commission in Egypt, and later Chairman of the British Council, Lloyd was a high-profile individual within the elite of the British foreign policy establishment. Curiously, during the early 1930s, some High Tories promoted Lord Lloyd as a prospective Prime Minister—or even dictator—to replace Baldwin, despite Lloyd's own reservations towards seeking leadership. See Dietz, *Neo-Tories*, 143-53.

[271] Dietz, *Neo-Tories*, 200-1.

[272] E.M.B. Ingram to James Strachey Barnes, 24 December 1939, GBR/0014/GLLD 19/16, Churchill Archives Centre. Barnes asked T.S. Eliot to lodge a reference on his behalf. Eliot obliged, but also confidentially contacted Chief Diplomatic Adviser to His Majesty's Government Robert Vansittart to ensure that any decision-makers were cognisant of Barnes' staunch fascist sympathies, information Eliot felt compelled to share in order to quell his conscience. Valerie Eliot and John Haffenden, eds., *The Letters of T.S. Eliot, Volume 9: 1939-1941* (London: Faber and Faber, 2021), 16-7.

[273] Dietz, *Neo-Tories*, 206.

[274] Petrie, *A Historian*, 167-8.

[275] *Ibid*, 140.

[276] Goad, *History of the British Institute of Florence*, 43.

[277] 'British Institute of Florence', *Times*, 2 May 1939, 13; Colacicco, '*Il fascismo e gli* Italian Studies', 12; Colacicco, 'British Institute', 323.

Foreign Office, subsequently despatching a memorandum outlining policy advice regarding Italy. Dixon politely responded, yet in actuality he believed the document to be a recantation at odds with the 'wild and utopian ideas' that Goad expressed during their initial conversation.[278]

Moreover, if Barnes was passed over at the British Council based on factors beyond the meritocratic, subsequent developments would demonstrate the validity of any such hesitations on the part of authorities. Indeed, Barnes' Italophilia was profound, penetrating the core of his identity and, in many respects, superseding his Englishness. Born in British India in 1890, after the death of his mother, Winifred Strachey, he was raised by his grandparents, spending most of his childhood in Italy. 'This turn of events', he later concluded, 'may be considered the determining factor in my life'.[279] He would spend vast potions of his adult life in Italy and later married an Italian woman. With Italy's entry into the war, it is perhaps unsurprising that Barnes effectively defected, infamously serving as a radio propagandist from 1940 onwards with the Ministry of Popular Culture, in which capacity he continued to support the puppet Salò Republic. Such actions led Allied authorities to pursue his arrest into the post-war period, albeit without success.[280] In London, Barnes' treasonous conduct would already cause his expulsion from Chatham House in 1941.[281] Labelled 'Strictly Confidential', the RIIA minutes record a decision to quietly jettison Barnes from the institute. The Election Committee advised the Council to reject Barnes' subscription as to ensure 'that his membership would then automatically lapse', allowing for his removal from its membership list.[282]

Notably, though, neither Currey, Goad, nor Petrie were rendered pariahs in the post-war period.[283] Throughout the Second World War and into the immediate post-war era, Goad returned to London where he resumed the odd speaking role at several venues and frequented presentations at Chatham House. He even published some book reviews in *International Affairs* and remained an institutional member until his death.[284] Scattered remnants similarly indicate that Currey remained somewhat active within the institute. She appeared at the annual RIIA dinner in June 1939.[285] Thereafter, as revealed by sporadic comments recorded in presentation typescripts, Currey continued to attend lectures throughout the 1940s. As late as 1948, Currey provided 'technical assistance' to Wheeler-Bennett's Churchillian account, *Munich: Prologue to Tragedy*,[286] while fragmentary evidence

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[278] Memorandum regarding policy advice from Harold E. Goad, 23 October 1941, FO 371/29923, TNA.
[279] James Strachey Barnes, *Half a Life* (London: Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1933), 3.
[280] See the reports pertaining to Barnes, WO 204/12841, TNA; '50 Quisling Britons Marked for Trial', *Daily Mail*, 2 December 1944, 1. On Barnes' stint as a wartime propagandist-turned-fugitive, see Baldoli and Fleming, *British Fascist*, 23-4; Bradshaw and Smith, 'Ezra Pound', 678-91.
[281] Minutes of 240th Meeting of the Council, 14 May 1941, 111b, CHA.
[282] *Ibid.*
[283] Yeats-Brown died before the war's close. His *Martial India* was posthumously reviewed in *International Affairs*. See J. Coatsman, review of *Martial India: The Story of Two Million Volunteers*, by Francis Yeats-Brown, *International Affairs* 21, no. 4 (1945): 554-5.
[284] See, e.g., Goad, review of *History as the Story of Liberty*; Harold E. Goad, review of *An Italian Diary*, by Flora Stark, *International Affairs* 22, no. 2 (1946): 300-1.
[285] 'Dinners', *Daily Telegraph*, 30 June 1939, 19.
[286] J.W. Wheeler-Bennett, *Munich: Prologue to Tragedy* (London: Macmillan, 1948), viii.

suggests that she also had a rapport with Muriel Grindrod, the then head of Chatham House's Italian section and, between 1956 and 1962, *International Affairs* editor.[287]

More than others, Petrie—alongside his close friend, Jerrold—had a popular revival. As Love remarks, 'historians might be forgiven for assuming… that Jerrold's and Petrie's association with Fascist thought and appeasement would have prevented them from influencing Conservative politics in the 1940s.'[288] Instead, Petrie—the Chamberlainite appeaser turned wartime Churchillian crusader—subsequently became chairman of the 1900 Club in 1946, which had been a stronghold of high-profile British Conservatives throughout the mid-twentieth century; indeed, it was at the club that Neville Chamberlain, then Chancellor of the Exchequer, declared the end of sanctions against Italy in June 1936.[289] Petrie and Jerrold joined forces in May 1945 to transform the Conservative magazine *Home and Empire* into a revived *English Review*, appending the adjective *New* onto its title.[290] They solicited support and contributions from an array of thinkers in the mid-1940s and early 1950s, such as Liddell Hart and the fascist-sympathising Bryant.[291] As editors, though, they sought to distance themselves from their interwar fascist dalliance, promoting instead a 'middle-way' Conservatism marked by anticommunism, Catholicism, and distributism.[292] As Jerrold qualified in one letter, the *New English Review* 'certainly will not be in any sense an extreme Right Wing journal'.[293]

The two continued to engage with questions of international import and controversy, while their publications frequently appeared in the review section of *International Affairs* and *Foreign Affairs*. Their scholarly reception was, however, increasingly less cordial. The most notable incident occurred in 1954 with the release of Jerrold's *The Lie About the West*. Against the backdrop of the Cold War and racialised fears of a revolt against the West, Jerrold waged a defence of imperialism in the 'Western Christian tradition' and a conservative rebuke against Toynbee's critical attitude towards European colonialism.[294] Reviewing for *Foreign Affairs*, Henry L. Roberts believed the book amounted to a 'vigorous attack' on Toynbee.[295] The noted historian and international theorist Martin Wight was particularly damning: Jerrold's book was a 'propagandist history with a prodigious capacity for

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[287] Currey was also a contributor to the 1948 *Oxford Junior Encyclopaedia*. On Grindrod, see Katharina Rietzler, 'Editors Past and Present: Margaret Cleeve', *International Affairs Blog*, 14 February 2023, https://medium.com/international-affairs-blog/editors-past-and-present-margaret-cleeve-3f6b735e0dfc.
[288] Love, '"Real Toryism" or Christian Democracy?', 553.
[289] *Ibid*, 559; 'Ducks & Sanctions', *Time*, 22 June 1936, 22.
[290] Love, 'Periodical Press', 1034.
[291] See, e.g., Basil Liddell Hart, 'The German Generals', typescript, *New English Review* (February 1946), 9/24/36, BHLHP; Charles Petrie to Arthur Bryant, 30 January 1945, E/3, Arthur Bryant Papers.
[292] Love, '"Real Toryism" or Christian Democracy?', 560.
[293] Douglas Jerrold to Quintin Hogg, 10 January 1945, GBR/0014/HLSM 2/9/124, Churchill Archives Centre.
[294] Douglas Jerrold, *The Lie About the West: A Response to Professor Toynbee's Challenge* (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1954), 84-5.
[295] Henry L. Roberts, review of *The Lie About the West: A Response to Professor Toynbee's Challenge*, by Douglas Jerrold, *Foreign Affairs* 33, no. 3 (1955): 512.

misrepresentation'.[296] Of Petrie's *Diplomatic History, 1713-1933*, Wight similarly judged the book to be 'perspicuous and readable', albeit failing to meet scholarly standards. Not only did Petrie's prejudices and apologetics distort his interpretation of recent developments, but the book was bereft of footnotes. As Wight concluded: 'Historians, writing above the text-book level, have no right to expect to be taken seriously if they do not give their sources.'[297] While the American IR scholar Quincy Wright could still include Petrie's *Earlier Diplomatic History, 1492-1713* and its sequel as worthy of note in his 1955 textbook, others evidently veered towards Wight's assessment.[298] Woolbert's *Foreign Affairs* review arrived at a comparable conclusion: 'A readable summary for the layman but inadequately annotated and documented for the serious student.'[299] It was not simply or even primarily that Petrie and his companions were reformed apologists, but perhaps more so that their output was increasingly viewed to be at odds with evolving scholarly standards in international history and what passed for the study of international politics. Indeed, Wight found Petrie's bibliography bizarre in its placement of 'major secondary' scholarship side-by-side with 'unimportant' books; emblematic of the latter category was, in Wight's estimation, the output of two popular, fascist sympathising historians, Jerrold and Bryant.[300]

While I have discussed Pellizzi's wartime reception in the prior chapter, it is interesting to note that his propagandistic efforts as NFIC president would bar him from returning to UCL after the war, albeit he would eventually be readmitted as Professor of Sociology at the University of Florence in 1950, a position that the disillusioned fascist retained until 1973.[301] Villari's post-war reception within Anglophone political science and IR was undoubtedly the least flattering, in this case a direct product of his unmitigated defence of fascism. Unlike Petrie, for instance, who came to accept the faults of the fascist regimes and the complicitly of their leaders in the advent of war,[302] Villari offered no such recantation. In 1949, Villari was described by Woolbert as a 'well-known apologist' and his *Affari esteri 1943-1945* as an attempt, 'without documentation, to recount the diplomatic achievements of Mussolini's puppet Republic'.[303] In 1956, Villari authored another pro-fascist book, *Italian Foreign Policy under Mussolini*. This apologia was aptly captured by one reviewer in the *Political Science Quarterly* (*PSQ*) as a devout regurgitation of the 'trite' idea that America, France, and Britain had diverted Mussolini from his desired policies and forced him towards Germany.[304] An *International Affairs* review noted Villari's 'fantastic

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[296] Martin Wight, review of *The Lie About the West: A Response to Professor Toynbee's Challenge*, by Douglas Jerrold, *International Affairs* 30, no. 3 (1954): 352-3.

[297] Martin Wight, review of *Diplomatic History, 1713-1933*, by Charles Petrie, *International Affairs* 23, no. 4 (1947): 574-5. Other histories authored by Petrie were critiqued on similar grounds. See, e.g., Helen F. Grant, review of *The Spanish Royal House*, by Charles Petrie, *International Affairs* 34, no. 4 (1958): 538-9.

[298] Wright, *Study of International Relations*, 35.

[299] Robert Gale Woolbert, review of *Diplomatic History, 1713-1933*, by Charles Petrie, *Foreign Affairs* 26, no. 1 (1947): 219.

[300] Wight, review of *Diplomatic History, 1713-1933*, 575.

[301] Salvati, '*Teoria e uso della propaganda nella guerra fascista*', 220-1.

[302] Love, "'Real Toryism'' or Christian Democracy?', 562.

[303] Robert Gale Woolbert, review of *Affari esteri 1943-1945*, by Luigi Villari, *Foreign Affairs* 27, no. 3 (1949): 513.

[304] Michael T. Florinsky, review of *Italian Foreign Policy under Mussolini*, by Luigi Villari, *Political Science Quarterly* 72, no. 2 (1957): 305-6. This book makes a curious appearance in the reference list of one article by political scientists

misrepresentations', while Henry L. Roberts, reviewing for *Foreign Affairs*, called the book a 'singularly repellent defense of Mussolini's foreign policy'.[305] By 1959, with the release of Villari's *The Liberation of Italy*, his dated views would not even warrant review within respectable circles (although, volumes of *APSR* and *PSQ* would still include adverts for the book). Any such praise for Villari's later books were consigned to bona fide neo-fascists or those peddling historical 'revisionism'. It is not surprising, then, that *The Liberation of Italy* once appeared on the reading list of the World Union of National Socialists.[306]

Conclusion

Among other intriguing exploits before her death in 1974, Currey served during the First World War, campaigned for peace, travelled incessantly, befriended Mussolini, and stoically survived a deadly train accident.[307] Some may have initially pictured Currey as a dour harridan garbed in black(shirt). She conformed to no such caricature. Currey was extremely politically active, but she was a rather jovial figure, one who held ardent and questionable beliefs, yet did not take herself too seriously. Her character aside, my primary focus is not biographical, but the contextualisation of her international thought and the reception thereof.

This chapter, in turn, offers insight into a neglected aspect in the entangled history of international fascism and the then-porous field of IR. My intent is neither to recognise Currey as a profound thinker within the canon nor her thought as uniquely peculiar. One may note the case of Olivia Rossetti Agresti, a British-born Italophile.[308] Agresti had been an anarchist before serving as a translator to the Italian delegation in Geneva, thereafter evolving into a staunch fascist admirer with whom Currey was reportedly a close friend. It is therefore not simply the odd contents of Currey's thought that is intriguing. Rather, it is the professional positions she held and her reception within the emerging field that render the history of her thought significant. Currey's activities, especially via her RIIA affiliations, present a novel case of the interaction between the far right and IR's early history. Moreover, as Rietzler has argued, interwar think tanks afford an avenue through which to explore the history of women's international thinking and the gendered dynamics of their intellectual labour.[309] While the history of women's international thought and its elision from IR's disciplinary history has garnered recent attention, there remains a

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J. David Singer and Melvin Small, which was used to help compile a dataset on formal alliances. See 'Formal Alliances, 1815-1939: A Quantitative Description', *Journal of Peace Research* 3, no. 1 (1966): 1-31. This dataset is continually updated and is one of several which makeup the Correlates of War project.

[305] K. Duff, review of *Italian Foreign Policy Under Mussolini*, by Luigi Villari, *International Affairs* 33, no. 1 (1957): 111-2; Henry L. Roberts, review of *Italian Foreign Policy under Mussolini*, by Luigi Villari, *Foreign Affairs* 34, no. 4 (1956): 681.

[306] 'Books from NS Publications', *WUNS Bulletin*, July—September 1972, MS Reel 102, The American Radicalism Collection, Part 2: The Religious and Radical Right, Michigan State University, available online via the Political Extremism and Radicalism Collection, Gale Primary Sources.

[307] Regarding the train crash, see Muriel Currey, 'The Wreck of the Riviera Express', *Wren*, May 1924, LBYE.5/377.1, IWM Collections.

[308] Leon Surette, introduction to *'I Cease Not to Yowl': Ezra Pound's Letters to Olivia Rossetti Agresti*, eds. Demetres P. Tryphonopoulos and Leon Surette (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1998).

[309] Rietzler, 'Think Tanks and Women's Intellectual Labor'.

comparative absence of scholarship on far-right women in this context. In this sense, recovering Currey's thought contributes to redressing a double erasure within the history of the field: the gendered elision of women's international thinking therein and the concurrent amnesia surrounding creeds since deemed unpalatable.

Chapter VII.
Conclusion

Fascists, Disciplinary History, and Beyond

As argued throughout this dissertation, several of the more intellectually inclined proponents of fascism operating within Britain were not merely ruminating on the international from a conspiratorial abyss. Some engaged with debates, thinkers, and institutions that have since been recognised as important to IR's formative evolution. As Griffin has fruitfully observed, the content of fascist thought ought not be treated as an aberration, 'some Kraken-like monster surfacing in the sea of early twentieth-century modernity'.[1] Fascist political thought was syncretic, evolving from and amalgamating discordant thinkers and intellectual currents. Fascist *international* thought was no exception. In interwar Britain, fascist international thought reflected and drew upon broader wider debates amongst contemporary experts on international politics.

Naturally, one could scarcely describe such fascists as Mosley or Thomson as part of any emergent academic discipline. Some may have been familiar with thinkers, ideas, or debates that have been recognised as part of IR's early history; however, the engagement of such fascists was from the position of an undeniable outsider or occasional spectator, not a sustained interlocutor or academic colleague. Yet, as demonstrated in the foregoing chapters, this was not uniform. While scholars have observed the porousness typifying IR's early boundaries, it is notable that the interwar decades through to the 1940s witnessed numerous unexplored instances where factions of the extreme right interacted with debates, thinkers, and institutional fora affiliated with an emergent field of expertise on the international within Britain. In fact, beyond representing a target for admonition and scorn, certain far-right thinkers had a direct impact on this field, whether by virtue of their contribution to the practical questions and debates occupying thinkers and journals, or via their professional roles and 'intellectual labour'. Simply, extreme right thinkers not only borrowed from interwar experts, but some were deeply active in early IR forums and debates.

Historiographical Implications

What are the broader implications of the foregoing claim for IR? Three contributions ensue. The first two are of a historiographical nature, while the third centres on the contemporary import of this history. I will first turn towards the former, emphasising how this dissertation complicates (I) prevailing conceptions of interwar international thought and the field's history, and (II) the content and nature of fascist international thought.

Resituating Fascism in the Landscape of Interwar International Thought

Writing disciplinary history constitutes a type of 'meta-practical analysis'.[2] As Bell underlines: 'Disciplinary mythologies perform various legitimating functions, classifying some positions as the product of intellectual

[1] Griffin, 'Fascination of Fascism', 207.

[2] John G. Gunnell, 'The Matter with History and Making History Matter', in *Historiographical Investigations in International Relations*, eds. Brian C. Schmidt and Nicolas Guilhot (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2019), 204.

progress, others as consigned forever to the proverbial dustbin of history.'[3] Conversely, disciplinary history encompasses immanent potential to dislodge fictitious accounts and claims to scholarly authority grounded in myth. Recent literature has made forays in this direction as it regards realist IR theory, challenging narratives that afford it undue authority. After all, it was Carr—not his antagonists—who advocated appeasement. Retrospectively dismissing the latter as mere 'idealists' is thus an 'extreme disservice',[4] not least because some prominent 'classical realists' betrayed an ambivalence vis-à-vis fascist revisionism, a stark contrast to the supposed naivety of 'idealism'.[5] As Carr later admitted, he did not view Hitler as a serious threat until 1938: 'No doubt I was very blind.'[6] Furthermore, Matthew Specter has identified a lineage in realist thought that can be traced via a trans-Atlantic interaction involving, among other influences, Schmitt and strands of German *Geopolitik*.[7] Most recently, Kristensen and Wæver's study of the ISC reveals how select fascist thinkers utilised the 'realist' label for rhetorical heft. In this sense, the authors 'offer realists seeking a first debate pedigree some grounding, [although] it comes at a price: that they were appeasers and allies with fascists'.[8] Above all, much revisionist literature has focused on correcting the mythologised and Eurocentric narratives plaguing IR's self-understanding of its history, as often repeated via introductory textbooks and the lecture theatre. Voices and places elided from disciplinary histories have been recovered, while less palatable features of the field's nascent history, hitherto whitewashed or placed out of frame, have been repositioned front and centre. Yet besides ad hoc comments (Kristensen and Wæver's recent article a notable exception), there has been no sustained effort to question how fascists may have engaged with what then constituted an emerging field of study.

The sheer number of intersections and interactions between extreme right actors and the early twentieth-century study of international politics is notable. Admittedly, some of these intersections are rather anodyne. Note, for example, Martin Wight's citing of W.E.D. Allen's 1940 history, *The Ukraine*.[9] There is no evidence that Wight had any knowledge of the latter's fascist links and, notwithstanding Allen's eclectic professions and fascist connections, much of his scholarship was considered sound in any case, especially on the Caucasus. Such peripheral instances aside, the episodes recovered here suggest a more complex picture.

For Ashworth, '[a] common anachronism… is to read the whole inter-war period against the backdrop of the rise of fascism' and the failure of collective security.[10] One must likewise avoid reading commentary on fascism against the backdrop of the Second World War and the Holocaust. '[H]indsight', Griffin cautions, 'can be a

[3] Bell, 'Writing the World (Remix)', 18.
[4] Ashworth, 'Idealists', 292.
[5] Ashworth, 'Realist-Idealist Great Debate', 42.
[6] Carr, 'An Autobiography', xix.
[7] Matthew Specter, *The Atlantic Realists: Empire and International Political Thought between Germany and the United States* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2022).
[8] Kristensen and Wæver, 'Realism-Idealism Debate', 577.
[9] See Martin Wight, *History and International Relations*, ed. David S. Yost (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2023), Chapters 11 and 12.
[10] Ashworth, *International Relations and the Labour Party*, 95.

particularly distorting lens in historiography'.[11] The interwar period was one wherein fascism was neither entirely clear in its meaning, nor subject to connotations of genocidal violence that understandably colour post-war interpretations. Defending fascism was not yet taboo within political science and the emergent study of international politics. As Stöckmann emphasises, the latter was characterised by an extremely close 'relationship between political ideas and practice'; the questions posed dealt with practical issues of international concern, while the proffered answers were intended to influence public opinion and shape policy.[12] Notwithstanding some tantalising snippets regarding Italian and German emissaries, Stöckmann's brilliant treatment of the field is bereft of the Anglophone extreme right. I am inclined to agree with his assessment that IR's architects tended not to be, borrowing from Mark Lilla, 'philotyrannical intellectuals'.[13] Yet several cross-cutting currents of fascistic thinking did stream through the formative field, trickling into various debates and filtering into the thought of noted individuals.

Alongside the case of Currey and her compatriots explored in Part II, one may point towards the output of *Foreign Affairs*, a point alluded to throughout this dissertation. The journal carried ad hoc articles by such high-profile fascists as Gentile, Grandi, Bottai, and Luigi Federzoni.[14] *PSQ* likewise published a 1927 article by prominent Italian statistician Corrado Gini on 'The Scientific Basis of Fascism'.[15] In effect, fascist thinkers and sympathisers not only contemplated popular international questions, but were privy to many of the mediums and forums where mainstream thinkers reckoned with the same questions. Such intersections transcended the Anglosphere, as the input of continental fascist thinkers, including Villari and Pellizzi, reveals. 'Unfortunately, there is scarcely any historiography on the study of IR outside Britain and the US, least of all on the inter-war period', argues Stöckmann, an omission that subsequent research by him and others have done much to redress.[16] While this dissertation centres on the British scene, the transnational nature of fascism and interwar IR alike inevitably blurs the frame, spotlighting not only the limitations of my geographic scope, but the ideological *and* national diversity of the field's early history. The study of international politics as it developed within Italian think tanks and universities whilst under fascist totalitarianism was not entirely divorced from the Anglophone field nor, for that matter, from currents of far-right international thought within Britain. Indeed, in the pages of *Rassegna di politica internazionale*, the journal of the leading Italian international affairs think tank, one encounters not only Italian fascists citing figures of the British extreme right, but articles composed by the latter.[17]

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[11] Griffin, *Modernism and Fascism*, 284-5.
[12] Stöckmann, *Architects*, 294.
[13] *Ibid*, 306.
[14] See Giovanni Gentile, 'The Philosophic Basis of Fascism', *Foreign Affairs* 6, no. 2 (1928): 290-304; Dino Grandi, 'The Foreign Policy of the Duce', *Foreign Affairs* 12, no. 4 (1934): 553-66; Giuseppe Bottai, 'Corporate State and N.R.A.', *Foreign Affairs* 13, no. 4 (1935): 612-24; Luigi Federzoni, 'Hegemony in the Mediterranean', *Foreign Affairs* 14, no. 3 (1936): 387-97.
[15] Corrado Gini, 'The Scientific Basis of Fascism', *Political Science Quarterly* 42, no. 1 (1927): 99-115.
[16] Jan Stöckmann, 'Nationalism and Internationalism in the Study of International Relations, 1900-1939', *History Compass* 15, no. 2 (2017): 5. See also Acharya and Buzan, *Global International Relations*.
[17] See, e.g., Luigi Villari, '*Critici Anglo-Sassoni della societa' delle nazioni*'. *Rassegna di politica internazionale* (February 1936): 133-5; Giona, 'Think Tanks', 84.

What I have presented in this dissertation is not *the* history of fascist engagement with the field, nor is it by any measure an effort to argue that fascists were themselves architects of this field. Instead, I have sought to achieve a more modest recounting of important questions, themes, and episodes in the interwar study of international politics by focusing on a particular thread, one that casts the early academic discipline of IR as part of a wider and more ideologically heterogeneous field of expertise. Accordingly, this dissertation poses a novel challenge to the disciplinary myth of the 'First Great Debate' and the since heavily qualified Aberystwyth origins story that once dominated historical recollections. To return to Guilhot's quote: 'IR theory has emerged as a much more complex—and maybe less known—discipline than previously thought, connected to a constellation of adjacent scholarly fields, ideological formations, and institutional landscapes'.[18] While those who occupy this dissertation's attention were less preoccupied with explicit theory-building—a feature not unusual even amongst interwar IR academics—the cases explored present novel examples of the interaction between the fledgling field; oft-associated institutional landscapes, in particular Chatham House; and an ideological formation, namely fascism, typically absent from existing histories.

Returning to the History of Fascist International Thought

By discerning commonalities, differences, and interactions between fascists operating within interwar Britain and others engaged with the emergent study of international politics, this dissertation also carries implications for how scholars within historical IR understand fascist international thought. The latter cannot be reduced to a twentieth-century Darwinian redux or a biologized debasement of realism. Of course, similarities are discernible. After all, fascists often deployed the term 'realism' to add rhetorical heft to their arguments. Yet the existence of direct points of exchange between canonical realists and fascist thinkers suggests that such comparisons occasionally extend beyond superficial similarities. Note, for example, Pellizzi's reading of *Conditions*. Historian Justus D. Doenecke has also noted 'certain motifs' within Lawrence Dennis' thought that are shared with Nicholas J. Spykman, Niebuhr, and Morgenthau, such as the inevitability of conflict and an opposition to liberal crusading.[19] Such ostensible overlaps may be illustrated via the readings of Yale law professor Edwin Borchard.[20] Alongside Arnold Wolfer's *Britain and France Between Two Wars* and Carr's *The Twenty Years' Crisis*, Borchard—a staunch non-interventionist—found Dennis' thinking of particular interest too.[21] In general, though, equating fascism with a more extreme variant of realism proves to be a poor analogue. While similarities abound, stark and indeed fundamental differences often divide the two.

A brief return to the philosophy of history is demonstrative. One may intuitively assume an affinity between the declinist foreboding of fascists and the quasi-cyclical conception of time often embodied in the thought of

[18] Guilhot, 'Introduction', 6.
[19] Doenecke, 'The Isolationist as Collectivist', 202.
[20] On Borchard, see Talbot Imlay, 'Hans Morgenthau, Peaceful Change, and the Origins of American Realism', *Modern Intellectual History* 21, no. 4 (2024): 897-920.
[21] Justus D. Doenecke, 'Edwin M. Borchard, John Bassett Moore, and Opposition to American Intervention in World War II', *Journal of Libertarian Studies* 6, no. 1 (1982): 31.

twentieth-century realists. While an absolutist belief in cyclical time was not uniform among prominent realists—John H. Herz's post-war 'productive pessimism' a case in point—references to repetitive patterns of tragedy were commonplace for mid-twentieth-century realists.[22] To quote Wight, '[i]nternational politics is the realm of recurrence and repetition'.[23] Yet notable fascist thinkers deviated from realism on this point. Mosley believed that fundamental international change could be willed. Realists within the IR canon—whether leaning towards the political left or right—were typically conservative in disposition, eschewing revolutionary schemes for world politics or, at most, conceding the necessity yet irreducible unattainability of world government. Mosley's pessimistic assessment of liberal-capitalist modernity was coupled with a utopian optimism that emphasised the transformative potential of modern science and rational organisation as foundations on which to alter the states-system. This utopian faith was absent in the realist canon, the former diverging acutely from the scepticism found most prominently in Morgenthau's *Scientific Man vs. Power Politics*.[24] Even the modicum of optimism implicit within Carr's desired utopian-realist dialectic or Herz's productive pessimism was temperate. As Joseph MacKay and Christopher David Laroche observe, 'realists question whether fundamental international change is possible at all'.[25] This was not the case with Mosley. While he later claimed that '[i]t was Spengler's profound understanding of Caesarism which first attracted' him to *The Decline of the West*, Mosley's synthesis of a Shavian vitalism and belief in the potentiality of science led him towards a different prognosis.[26] This outlook developed further in the post-war period, adding to his interpretation of Nietzsche, Shaw, and Spengler a reading of Goethe's *Faust* and a sizeable dose of Greek philosophy and tragedy, among other influences.[27] However, even by the 1930s, one can detect its central directionality.[28] History was subject to patterns of decline, yet this need not be an inevitability, for a higher stage of civilisation could be achieved. '[W]ith the aid of science, and with the inspiration of the modern mind', fascism would transcend 'the eternally recurring Caesarist movement'.[29]

In some respects, this line of thinking was closer to Toynbee's comparative analysis of world history, rather than realist cyclicality. During the interwar period, Toynbee evinced, as with Mosley, an organic conception of civilisational health, a cyclical reading of *prior* history, and a pessimistic appraisal of the present 'Time of Troubles', albeit he diagnosed the causes and symptoms of the latter differently. Toynbee, notwithstanding his gloomy outlook, similarly dispensed with Spengler's fatalistic foreboding. Such similarities were not entirely lost among fascists. Fuller, for example, branded Toynbee's world history a 'monumental analysis' in April 1944, one soberer than that offered by Spengler.[30] W.E.D. Allen observed a certain affection for Toynbee's world history, due to exactly such

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[22] Tim Stevens, '*Exeunt Omnes*? Survival, Pessimism and Time in the Work of John H. Herz', *Millennium* 46, no. 3 (2018): 283-302.
[23] Wight, 'Why is there No International Theory?', 46.
[24] Hans J. Morgenthau, *Scientific Man vs. Power Politics* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1946).
[25] MacKay and LaRoche, 'Reactionary International Theory', 236.
[26] Mosley, *My Life*, 323.
[27] Skidelsky, *Oswald Mosley*, Chapter 25.
[28] Thurlow, *Fascism in Britain*, 117-8.
[29] Mosley, 'Philosophy of Fascism', 46.
[30] J.F.C. Fuller, *Thunderbolts* (London: Skeffington & Son, 1946), 65.

commonalities. Allen positively contrasted the first three volumes of Toynbee's *A Study of History* against H.A.L. Fisher's *A History of Europe*, viewing the former as a 'profound contribution', one which 'will retain its value for a century'.[31] Yet in Allen's estimation, Toynbee's history was produced by a Janus-faced author. He was a thinker marked by, on the one hand, the shrewd discernment of the 'cold scientist' who embraced, as with Spengler, a form of 'apocalyptic vision' and, on the other, the fancies of the 'fashionable Liberal propagandist who is Director of the Institute of International Affairs'.[32] It was Toynbee's 'Liberal heart' which detracted from his laudable study, yet Allen quipped that the scholar's 'monkish fanaticism for objective fact will have ticketed Liberalism in the museum of history before the world… is asked to pass judgement on his thirteenth and final volume'.[33]

These commonalities did not stem from Toynbee somehow influencing Mosley. While Mosley later 'gained something' from Toynbee's idea of a civilisation-sustaining 'response' to the 'challenges' of decline, his acquaintance with the latter's *A Study of History* did not seem to occur until after the Second World War.[34] Instead, the overlap lies in their shared reading of Spengler and reactions thereto. Toynbee's conception of history was already concocted prior to reading Spengler.[35] Yet what is notable is that both Mosley and Toynbee jettisoned Spengler's fatalism, embracing the prospect of civilisational rejuvenation through an anti-rationalist, elite-led creative impetus. Toynbee's drew directly on Bergson, whereas Mosley absorbed Bergsonian ideas indirectly via Shaw's closely related evolutionary thinking.[36] Despite clear divergences—particularly in their views on liberal democracy and science—Mosley and Toynbee shared a belief that civilisation was in a state of profound crisis, yet its decline was not preordained. A Shavian or Bergsonian creativity could still perpetuate the Faustian civilisation.

Other micro-cases of similarity or intellectual borrowing recur throughout this dissertation, albeit manifesting differently depending on the thinker and issue examined. For instance, Mosley drew on a Hobsonite critique of empire and war, Currey on liberal notions of a public mind and the League's pacifying potential, and Pellizzi on Carr's wartime thinking. Neither my tracing of the varied roots from which fascist international thought developed, nor my comparisons with mainstream thinkers, should be construed as rhetorical chicanery intended to tarnish liberal or social democratic strands of international thought, historical or contemporary. This sort of

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[31] Drennan (pseud.), 'Critique of a Liberal Historian', 227.
[32] *Ibid*, 228, 230.
[33] *Ibid*, 228.
[34] Skidelsky, *Oswald Mosley*, 554-5. An early reference to Toynbee may be found in Mosley, *The Alternative*, 308.
[35] Krishan Kumar, 'The Return of Civilization—and of Arnold Toynbee?', *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 56, no. 4 (2014): 829. For an excellent comparison between Spengler and Toynbee, see James Joll, 'Two Prophets of the Twentieth Century: Spengler and Toynbee', *Review of International Studies* 11, no. 2 (1985): 91-104. The extreme right-wing reception of Toynbee's world history is an interesting subject in itself. For example, as suggested by New Zealand white supremacist Kerry Bolton, Francis Parker Yockey—neo-fascist ideologue and one-time supporter of Mosley's post-war Union Movement—believed Toynbee's cyclic world history to be a poor derivative and flagrant plagiarism of Spengler. Kerry R. Bolton, *Yockey: A Fascist Odyssey* (London: Arktos, 2018), 243.
[36] On the varied influences upon Toynbee's thinking, see Ian Hall, '"Time of Troubles": Arnold J. Toynbee's Twentieth Century', *International Affairs* 90, no. 1 (2014): 23-36.

polemical premise makes for poor scholarship; *Liberal Fascism* by conservative columnist Jonah Goldberg is demonstrative.[37] To clarify the obvious in the foregoing comparison, Toynbee was no pseudo-fascist. While most progressive thinkers were less partial to the anti-rationalist 'quackery' of Spengler's cyclical history—as Leonard Woolf described the notion[38]—even the outlying Toynbee abhorred the extremes of nationalism. The 'worship of a local sovereign state' was not a solution to the West's creative loss, but a manifestation thereof.[39] Recourse to similar intellectual resources does not make Toynbee fascist-adjacent, in the same fashion that, to offer a farcical yet illustrative comparison, Mosley's use of an early iteration of the offence-defence theory does not render contemporary neorealists somehow ideologically suspect. My intent, therefore, is to instead present a more complex picture of both interwar Anglophone discourse on international affairs and fascist rumination on the international.

Synoptic generalisations about fascist international thought are difficult, given its vast 'speciation'.[40] Interwar fascists and post-war extremists speculated on a multiplicity of issues: appeasement, war, empire, international organisations, demography, federalism, and nuclear weapons, among others. For some philo-fascists, such as Currey, existing international institutions could serve a collective end without entailing a deeper challenge to the fabric of international society. Others proffered more profound worldmaking projects envisaging the fundamental transformation of regional and international order. From Mosley's majestic peace to federalist and Eurafrican visions, this milieu is a repository of the peculiar and abhorrent. The claim that fascists expounded no 'elaborate conceptions of world order', merely 'a critical attitude toward the existing international system', is untenable.[41] Notwithstanding historical evidence to the contrary and historiographical openings within fascist studies, this body of thought remains underexamined in historical IR. Indeed, while IR scholars have increasingly explored anticolonial, imperial, and racialised forms of worldmaking, enquiry into fascist imaginaries has received less attention.[42]

A closer interrogation of fascist views on the international and their historical engagement with the formative field challenges the discipline to reconsider not only *who was engaged in the production of international thought*, but also *who propounded what ideas*, highlighting the degree to which ideas transcended ideological creeds and how diverse syntheses transpired as fascist thinkers endeavoured to diagnose and remedy the prevailing sense of crisis

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[37] Jonah Goldberg, *Liberal Fascism: The Secret History of the Left from Mussolini to the Politics of Meaning* (London: Penguin, 2009). For a scathing review, see Roger Griffin, 'An Academic Book — Not!', History News Network, accessed 20 September 2023, https://historynewsnetwork.org/article/122473.

[38] Wayne K. Chapman, 'Spengler's *The Decline of the West* and Intellectual Quackery: Checking the Climate with Leonard Woolf and W. B. Yeats', in *Virginia Woolf and the Natural World: Selected Papers of the Twentieth Annual International Conference on Virginia Woolf*, eds. Kristin Czarnecki and Carrie Rohman (Clemson: Clemson University Digital Press, 2011).

[39] Cited in Hall, *Martin Wight*, 70.

[40] Griffin, *Fascism: An Introduction*, 64.

[41] Sebastian Conrad and Dominic Sachsenmaier, 'Introduction: Competing Visions of World Order: Global Moments and Movements, 1880s-1930s', in *Competing Visions of World Order: Global Moments and Movements, 1880s-1930s*, eds. Sebastian Conrad and Dominic Sachsenmaier (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), 7.

[42] See, in particular, Getachew, *Worldmaking after Empire*; Bell, *Dreamworlds of Race*.

or respond to topical international questions. Whether it was the influence of Edwardian discourse of Greater Britain and Hobsonite thinking upon Mosley, or the ideas that Pellizzi harnessed from Burnham and Carr, such thinkers betrayed an acute propensity towards synthesis and a familiarity with a range of intellectual resources from which their thinking evolved. This complicates how IR has positioned fascism within twentieth-century Anglophone international thought and the rigidity with which ideas are ascribed to delimited traditions. Varied visions of international organisation, dreamworlds of perpetual peace, and qualified critiques of the liberal-imperial order typified not only the divergent worldmaking projects of socialist, liberal, and subaltern thinkers, but fascists too.

The Permeable Fourth Wall: A Postscript

The historical nature of the foregoing contributions may raise questions about this dissertation's broader implications. Hedley Bull suggested that interwar 'idealists' produced questionable scholarship, useful only insofar as it reveals the 'preoccupations and presuppositions' of the period.[43] One might draw a similar conclusion regarding the endangered *homo fascistus*. It is perhaps not readily apparent what contemporary insights are recoverable from a repository of abhorrent, conspiracy-laden thought, not least its interaction with the early study of international politics. While the charge of scholastic antiquarianism is increasingly distant, it remains partly true that research into the history of international thought and disciplinary history is received by an audience 'from a sub-field… rather than from International Relations theory as such'.[44] While I am sympathetic to claims about the inherent value of historical scholarship, theorists are not unjustified to question how the recovery and often tedious contextualisation of thought complements their enquiries.[45] As Vitalis sardonically asked: 'How does this matter for theory?'[46]

This dissertation highlights a deceptively banal truism: the field has never been hermetically sealed from the 'real world' of international politics. Countless intersections—historical and contemporary—link academic IR, policymakers, and international institutions; this is obvious. Interactions between the extreme right and the discipline are surely less so. Of course, fascist thinkers were largely excommunicated from Anglophone academe after the Second World War. As Drolet and Williams highlight, militant anti-communist conservatives—Burnham, Stefan Possony, Gerhart Niemeyer, and Robert Strausz-Hupé—remained within the post-war discipline.[47] Unrepentant fascists, by contrast, are harder to find. While sporadic wartime articles or reviews by fascist-leaning thinkers appear, it is exceptionally difficult to locate such individuals publishing in political science or IR journals after the 1940s.[48]

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[43] Hedley Bull, 'The Theory of International Politics 1919-1969', in *The Aberystwyth Papers: International Politics, 1919-1969*, ed. Brian Porter (London: Oxford University Press, 1972), 34.
[44] Brown, 'Political Thought', 228.
[45] Keene, 'International Intellectual History', 351.
[46] Vitalis, *White World Order*, 23. See also Gerard Holden, 'Who Contextualizes the Contextualizers? Disciplinary History and the Discourse about IR Discourse', *Review of International Studies* 28, no. 2 (2002): 253-4.
[47] Drolet and Williams, 'Radical Right, Realism, and the Politics of Conservatism'.
[48] Fuller stands as an exceptional case in this regard. See, e.g., J.F.C. Fuller, review of *A Key to Victory: A Study in War Planning*, by Clive Garsia, *International Affairs Review Supplement* 19, no. 2 (1940): 117. Reviews of Fuller's *Machine Warfare* (1942), *Watchwords* (1944), *Thunderbolts* (1946), *Armaments and History* (1946), and *The Decisive Battles of the Western World and Their Influence Upon History* (1957) also appeared in *International Affairs*.

Though fascist texts once featured in journal book reviews, even a cursory survey points towards a gradual eclipse. As late as 1950, Henry L. Roberts reviewed Pellizzi's *Una rivoluzione mancata* in *Foreign Affairs*.[49] Yet apart from rare exceptions, such books increasingly ceased to be treated as warranting scholarly review.

While a fuller account of fascism's disciplinary delegitimisation lies beyond this dissertation's, three overlapping factors can be tentatively identified. The first involves the widespread belief in fascism's moral bankruptcy, cemented by the Axis' catastrophic defeat and a reckoning with the atrocities of the Holocaust. Fascism ceased to be viewed as a novel political experiment worthy of debate, but as the epitome of evil.

Second, any remaining space for the fascistic right was only further reduced in tandem with the post-war professionalisation and rise of a more coherent *academic* discipline, though this process unfolded differently—and at varying speeds—on either side of the Atlantic. Many extremist thinkers who engaged with the study of international politics within interwar Britain were political agitators, publicists, and popular historians. Few were academics.

Third, such factors were compounded by the broader, gradual delegitimisation of racism in the late twentieth century. As Sabaratnam notes, 'race was a central focus of the Anglo-American discipline of IR, but receded from mainstream view for several decades until the 1990s as overt racism became less socially acceptable'.[50] This is not to suggest that racism within IR and cognate social sciences vanished. As noted, Drolet and Williams reveal that post-war realists within American academe were integral in sidelining militant conservative voices and their illiberal, reactionary, and overtly racialised views from the evolving discipline.[51] This should remind readers that *explicitly* illiberal views persisted within the field for decades, their delegitimisation part of a gradual—yet conscious—process. Moreover, as John M. Hobson argues, even as the 'manifest Eurocentric-institutionalism' and pre-Boisian prominence of racial science declined after 1945, in its stead came a 'subliminal Eurocentric-institutional intolerance'. The explicit language of 'civilisation, barbarism, savagery and imperialism' was supplanted by whitewashed, anodyne alternatives: American hegemony, rogue states, core and periphery, failed states, and modernisation theory, among others.[52] Some ideologues of the more intellectually-astute European New Right couch their illiberal alternative to multiculturalism in the superficially respectable language of 'ethnopluralism' and the 'right to difference'. Yet any pretence to subliminal racism is readily subverted by the manifest racial fears rampart in such discourse. Indeed, this strand of thought is typified by a primordial nationalism, exemplified by conspiratorial fears of a looming 'Great Replacement' or white genocide. Expectedly, such views find negligible space in academic IR. Collectively, these factors underscore the widening gap between the extreme right and post-war IR.

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[49] Henry L. Roberts, review of *Una rivoluzione mancata*, by Camillo Pellizzi, *Foreign Affairs* 29, no. 1 (1950): 155.
[50] Meera Sabaratnam, 'Is IR Theory White? Racialised Subject-Positioning in Three Canonical Text', *Millennium* 49, no. 1 (2020): 5.
[51] Drolet and Williams, 'Radical Right, Realism, and the Politics of Conservatism'.
[52] John M. Hobson, 'Re-embedding the Global Colour Line within Post-1945 International Theory', in *Race and Racism in International Relations: Confronting the Global Colour Line*, eds. Alexander Anievas, et al. (Abingdon: Routledge, 2014), 82-3.

Sporadic exceptions, of course, exist. An early post-war example occurred in 1952, when the Columbia's Graduate Public Law and Government Society organised a symposium in commemoration of the newly established Institute of War and Peace Studies. Speakers included William T.R. Fox, the institute's director, alongside Saul K. Padover and Eduard Heimann, both affiliated with the New School for Social Research.[53] The fourth panellist was the since-disgraced fascist intellectual Lawrence Dennis.[54] Shortly before, Dennis had also been invited to speak at the American Political Science Association. The controversial journalist and gossip columnist Walter Winchell condemned the invitation:

> How come Lawrence Dennis is invited to speak before one of the most learned societies in the U.S.?... Doesn't the American Political Science Ass'n (mostly college profs) know that this Dennis is the leading intellectual Fascist in the United States—and that he was one of the 33 defendants in that Washington mass sedition-conspiracy case? [*sic*].[55]

Dennis was also a friend and intellectual interlocutor of IR scholar Frederick L. Schuman. The two shared many letters after the war, and the latter was a long-term subscriber to Dennis' foreign affairs newsletter.[56] Though at odds during the 1930s—Schuman a prophetic critic of Nazi Germany, Dennis a staunch anti-interventionist—the two later opposed the 'messianic militarism' of American Cold War foreign policy.[57] In a 1951 issue of the *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, Schuman called Dennis' appeal for a reversion to American isolationism 'intellectually respectable'.[58] In a later volume, Schuman grouped Dennis with Borchard, Walter Lippmann, Morgenthau, Kennan, and Harry Elmer Barnes (discussed further below), all of whom advocated a less idealistic, supposedly more pragmatic Hamiltonian or Jeffersonian foreign policy.[59] By 1969, Schuman was the sole

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[53] See Theodore Price to Lawrence Dennis, 11 January 1952, 1.9, LDP; Theodore Price to Lawrence Dennis, 1 February 1952, 1.9, LDP.

[54] The invitation elicited a minor controversy in the pages of the *Columbia Daily Spectator*. See David F. Parker, 'Objects to Forum Speaker', *Columbia Daily Spectator*, 3 March 1952, 2; Robert H. Resnick, 'Liberals Should Hear All Sides', *Columbia Daily Spectator*, 4 March 1952, 2; Theodore Price, 'Defends Dennis', *Columbia Daily Spectator*, 5 March 1952, 2. One may be curious whether Kenneth Waltz, then undertaking a PhD under Fox's supervision, was present. However, as Waltz was completing military service, he was not in attendance, only returning to New York in late 1952.

[55] Walter Winchell, 'Notes of a Newspaperman', *Danville Commercial Appeal*, 27 February 1950, 18.

[56] Dennis' subscription records confirm as much.

[57] Frederick L. Schuman to Lawrence Dennis, 26 November 1972, 5.8, LDP. See also Doenecke, 'Lawrence Dennis', 278. During the war, Schuman had withdrawn from a debate with Dennis at the Spinoza Institute. In the lead-up to another event involving the two, alongside Professor Max Lerner, Dennis pondered whether Schuman would withdraw again and the extent to which the IR scholar may be subject to external 'pressure' from 'Interventionists and especially the Jews'. Lawrence Dennis to George Kingsley Zipf, 7 March 1941, 5.42, LDP.

[58] Frederick L. Schuman, review of *America's Second Crusade*, by William Henry Chamberlain, *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 273 (1951): 205.

[59] Frederick L. Schuman, 'International Ideals and the National Interest', *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 280 (1952): 27-36.

reputable figure to review Dennis' *Operational Thinking for Survival*, to which Schuman relayed that he was 'pleased and… hope[d]' Dennis was too by this modest effort to expand the book's readership.[60]

A more recent and curious case surrounds the 2007 Routledge volume on Schmitt's international thought, edited by IR professors Louisa Odysseos and Fabio Petito, which contained a commissioned chapter by the doyen of the New Right, Alain de Benoist.[61] New Zealand white supremacist Kerry Bolton has also made forays into Indian IR journals. Bolton published multiple pieces in *World Affairs*, alongside one expressly Eurasianist article—a Russian strand of neo-imperialist geopolitics—in the Indian Council on World Affairs' flagship journal, *India Quarterly*.[62] Other strange cases appear on the disciplinary periphery. One such case is the 'Theory Talks' interview with Alexander Dugin, the foremost Eurasianist. The interview was conducted not least by Michael Millerman, a regularly contributor to New Right outlets.[63] The website sought to publish 'cutting-edge specialists' and provide a 'comprehensive view of the field and its most important protagonists'.[64] Other interviewees include Cynthia Enloe, Michael Doyle, Beate Jahn, Peter Katzenstein, and Alexander Wendt; placing Dugin alongside such thinkers is not only strange, but damaging. Fareed Zakaria's 2025 interview with Dugin on his CNN show, *GPS*, may be viewed similarly,[65] or indeed John J. Mearsheimer's recent debate with Dugin. The latter stands as an unusual engagement between a leading voice of the Russian far right and one of IR's most high-profile scholars.[66] Whether Dennis, Bolton, or Dugin, affording academic or scholarly platforms to such persons risks amplifying their voices and lends a façade of legitimacy to abhorrent views.

One may also stumble across the odd instance of IR scholars who have dabbled in a common pastime of the extreme right: Holocaust denialism. For example, after receiving a PhD in IR from the University of Southern California in 1978, Abdullah Mohammad Sindi held academic posts in Saudia Arabia and California. By the late

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[60] Frederick L. Schuman to Lawrence Dennis, 11 December 1969, 5.8, LDP; Frederick L. Schuman, review of *Operational Thinking for Survival*, by Lawrence Dennis, *The Nation*, 8 December 1969, 641-2.

[61] Alain de Benoist, 'Global Terrorism and the State of Permanent Exception: The Significance of Carl Schmitt's Thought Today', in *The International Political Thought of Carl Schmitt: Terror, Liberal War and the Crisis of Global Order*, eds. Louiza Odysseos and Fabio Petito (London: Routledge, 2007).

[62] See Kerry R. Bolton, 'An ANZAC1-Indo-Russian Alliance?: Geopolitical Alternatives for New Zealand and Australia', *India Quarterly* 66, no. 2 (2010): 183-201; Kerry R. Bolton, 'Western Duplicity and Middle East Crises', *World Affairs* 19, no. 2 (2015): 72-85.

[63] On Millerman, see Joseph Brean, 'Naive Philosopher or Far-Right Propagandist? U of T Awards PhD to Translator of Sanctioned Russian Neo-Fascist', *National Post*, 2 November 2018, https://nationalpost.com/news/toronto/university-of-toronto-controversially-awards-doctorate-translator-of-sanctioned-russian-neo-fascist.

[64] 'About & Contact', Theory Talks, accessed 11 October 2023, http://www.theory-talks.org/p/about.html.

[65] 'On GPS: Russian Philosopher: "Putinism has Won in the US"', CNN, 30 March 2025, https://edition.cnn.com/2025/03/30/world/video/gps0330-putin-russia-ukraine-dugin. While Zakaria's show is 'beyond' the discipline, as an individual trained in IR and political science at Harvard and having published peer-reviewed scholarship, he stands in a liminal space between political scientist, journalist, and the more amorphous category of public intellectual.

[66] 'Exclusive: John Mearsheimer vs Alexander Dugin: All You Need to Know About China, Russia, and the US', Thinkers Forum, 9 December 2024, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Iv02AsNATAg.

1990s, Sindi had changed course, becoming a vocal voice among Muslim Holocaust deniers, one occasionally cited by the extreme right.[67] Above all, though, it is the curious case of Harry Elmer Barnes that is demonstrative of this murky overlap.

Barnes was a respected, if controversial, historian, sociologist, and criminologist in the early to mid-twentieth century.[68] As referred to in *Foreign Affairs*, Barnes was among 'America's most prolific writers on the social sciences'.[69] Before 1923, he taught in the Department of History and International Relations at Clark University, after which he relocated to Smith College as a professor of economics and sociology.[70] Barnes was also intricately involved in the newly retitled *Foreign Affairs* and its forerunner. He was contributing editor of the latter's first edition, and subsequently replaced Stanley Hall as co-editor between 1920 and 1922, in which capacity he collaborated alongside the journal's founder, Professor George H. Blakeslee. Over the interwar period, Barnes penned several studies on international affairs, including *World Politics and Modern Civilization*,[71] which helped to solidify his reputation as a notable international thinker. Interestingly, Barnes even contributed to a 1946 volume on *Twentieth Century Political Thought*, alongside such IR luminaries as Morgenthau and Pitman B. Potter.[72]

During the interwar period, Barnes emerged—alongside Sidney Bradshaw Fay—as a key figure challenging the notion of sole German culpability for the First World War, popularising this view among the American public.[73] This position drew its share of criticism.[74] A review in the RIIA journal described Barnes' 'strange' scholarship as

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[67] Stephen E. Atkins, *Holocaust Denial as an International Movement* (Westport: Praeger, 2009), 214-5.

[68] Interestingly, Barnes co-edited a 1940 volume on social theory that included a contribution by Talcott Parsons and an appendix compiled by then PhD student C. Wright Mills. Harry Elmer Barnes, et al., eds., *Contemporary Social Theory* (New York: D. Appleton-Century Company, 1940).

[69] Robert Gale Woolbert, *Foreign Affairs Bibliography: A Selected and Annotated List of Books on International Relations, 1932-1942* (New York: Council on Foreign Relations, 1945), 34.

[70] 'Historical News', *American Historical Review* 29, no. 1 (1923): 189.

[71] Reviews of this study were mixed. Langer wrote it embodied a 'keen analysis'. Alternatively, in an especially scathing assessment in *APSR*, the book was deemed unoriginal, plagued by unsubstantiated generalisations, and derivative of Parker Thomas Moon's 1925 *Syllabus of International Relations*. It warranted 'a review only as an example of the sort of writing which had better have been left unprinted'. See, respectively, William L. Langer, review of *World Politics in Modern Civilization: The Contributions of Nationalism, Capitalism, Imperialism, and Militarism to Human Culture and International Anarchy*, by Harry Elmer Barnes, *Foreign Affairs* 8, no. 4 (1930): 669; M.W. Royse, review of *World Politics in Modern Civilization: The Contributions of Nationalism, Capitalism, Imperialism, and Militarism to Human Culture and International Anarchy*, by Harry Elmer Barnes, *American Political Science Review* 24, no. 4 (1930): 1034-5.

[72] Joseph S. Roucek, ed., *Twentieth Century Political Thought* (New York: Philosophical Library, 1946).

[73] David Kaufman, 'The "One Guilty Nation" Myth: Edith Durham, R.W. Seton-Watson and a Footnote in the History of the Outbreak of the First World War', *Journal of Balkan and Near Eastern Studies* 25, no. 3 (2023): 299. D.C. Watt, 'Restrictions on Research: The Fifty-Year Rule and British Foreign Policy', *International Affairs* 41, no. 1 (1965): 92-3.

[74] See, e.g., H.A. Wyndham, *The Genesis of the World War: An Introduction to the Problem of War Guilt*, by Harry Elmer Barnes, *Journal of the Royal Institute of International Affairs* 5, no. 6 (1926): 306; Arthur I. Andrews, review of *History and Social Intelligence*, by Harry Elmer Barnes; and *The Genesis of the World War: An Introduction to the Problem of War Guilt*, by Harry Elmer Barnes, *American Political Science Review* 21, no. 1 (1927): 191-4.

'mainly [consisting] of propaganda in favour of the complete innocence of Germany… as contrasted with the bedevilments of the *Entente*'. This stance, alongside Barnes' skewed sourcing and repeated factual errors, lead the reviewer to admit he 'lacked the patience to read the whole book'.[75]

In critiquing American empire and Wilson's intervention, Barnes embraced a 'devil's theory' of war—shared by his contemporary Charles A. Beard—in which malign elites instigated conflict. During the Second World War, Barnes turned his critique towards the Roosevelt administration and pro-intervention voices, including the Carnegie Endowment and internationalist thinkers such as Nicholas Murray Butler and James T. Shotwell.[76] Barnes subsequently became central to a school of so-called Second World War 'revisionists'. Yet for Barnes, historical revisionism became intertwined with Holocaust denialism.

As early as 1922, Barnes wrote in the *Journal of International Relations* that '[t]he place of the Jews in international affairs has been, in one form or another, an international problem for the last three thousand years.'[77] Surprisingly, Barnes' formative output did not betray the rank antisemitism nor biological racism expected of the historian-turned-conspiratorial crank. He lamented the early twentieth-century 'recrudescence of Anti-Semitism' in Europe. In the 1920s, he likewise condemned Stoddard's 'fanciful and obsolete dogmas', alongside the Aryan 'fallacy' and 'racial egoism' fermented by Athur de Gobineau and Houston Stewart Chamberlain.[78] Though Barnes rejected Nazi-style biological racism, his conspiratorial arguments gradually moved him beyond respected academic circles.[79] Conversely, Barnes' 'scholarship' consecrated his status as an idol amongst sections of the extreme right. Barnes' *Perpetual War for Perpetual Peace* became a canonical volume, his revisionism a self-professed inspiration for the Institute of Historical Review—a deceptively titled bastion of Holocaust denialism—and his namesake has even been granted the dubious honour of heading the leading journal of this pseudo-historical field, *The Barnes Review*. Created in 1994 by conspiracist Willis Carto, the outlet claims its purpose is, borrowing from Barnes, 'to bring history into accord with the facts'.[80] For followers, this is a mission for 'the survival of civilization', a bid to curb

[75] C.A. Macartney, review of *World Politics in Modern Civilisation: The Contributions of Nationalism, Capitalism, Imperialism, and Militarism to Human Culture and International Anarchy*, by Harry Elmer Barnes, *Journal of the Royal Institute of International Affairs* 9, no. 4 (1930): 541-2.
[76] See, e.g., Harry Elmer Barnes to Lawrence Dennis, n.d., 2.13, LDP.
[77] Harry Elmer Barnes, review of *Zionism and World Politics: A Study in History and Social Psychology*, by Horace Meyer Kallen, *Journal of International Relations* 12, no. 3 (1922): 423-5.
[78] See, respectively, Harry Elmer Barnes, review of *Racial Realities in Europe*, by Lothrop Stoddard, *Foreign Affairs* 3, no. 2 (1924): 341; Harry E. Barnes, review of *The Outline of History*, by H.G. Wells, *Journal of International Relations* 11, no. 4 (1921): 625.
[79] On Barnes' Holocaust denialism, see Atkins, *Holocaust Denial*, 146-7. While citations to Barnes' scholarship may be found amongst early post-war IR texts, such as Quincy Wright's *The Study of International Relations*, later mentions are largely confined to fleeting references to his First World War revisionism; see, e.g., Stephen van Evera, 'Why Cooperation Failed in 1914', *World Politics* 38, no. 1 (1985): 95; Keir A. Lieber, 'The New History of World War I and What It Means for International Relations Theory', *International Security* 32, no. 2 (2007): 157.
[80] 'About Us', The Barnes Review, accessed 19 September 2023, https://barnesreview.org/about-us/.

manipulations of historical fact and forestall an Orwellian dystopia.[81] Towards this end, these revisionists laud Barnes' theories on the world wars, while his forebodings of civilisational decline are believed to hold insights for the present. In this reading, civilisational collapse occurs 'for reasons as simple as free trade, the quest for precious metals, usury, debt slavery, greed and the pursuit of freedom'.[82]

Amongst disciplinary historians, Barnes' place in the field—and simultaneous status as a Holocaust denier—is curiously acknowledged, and only then as a brief aside, by Vitalis. What is interesting to note, however, is that Barnes' two worlds were not without overlap. In a particularly distasteful review for the *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, Barnes attacked the 1949 book *Napoléon* by Pieter Geyl, a Dutch historian and former Buchenwald internee. Barnes accused Geyl of holding 'extremely bitter and jaundiced' views on the Nazis, despite them having, Barnes erroneously added, 'freely permitted' Geyl to compose the book whilst interned. Barnes quipped that such a luxury would not have been granted to a 'prominent Nazi historian captured by the Russians, the English, the French, or the Americans'.[83] In another *Annals* review, Barnes mocked a book for its 'highly traditional' account of the Second World War. With a dose of conspiracism in his tone, Barnes claimed the authors merely regurgitated the 'official line' and lacked 'the slightest inkling of the real truth behind Pearl Harbor'.[84] As late as 1962, Barnes offered a largely favourable *Annals* review of A.J.P. Taylor's infamous *The Origins of the Second World War*, which cast Hitler as but an opportunistic statesman. There, Barnes admonished Lewis B. Namier's Churchillian account of the war for relying on the 'unreliable material produced at Nuremberg' and described a broader 'historical blackout' amongst mainstream historians.[85]

The release of Barnes' *Perpetual War for Perpetual Peace* did not remain unnoticed in political science journals. Advertisements for the volume were printed in the *American Historical Review*, *APSR*, *Foreign Affairs*, *PSQ*, and the *Annals*. Overwhelmingly, though, the book's reception was less-than-welcoming. In *Foreign Affairs*, Henry L. Roberts branded it a series of '[c]ritical, indeed hostile, essays'.[86] Bernard C. Cohen opened his *APSR* review by simply

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[81] *Ibid.* On the journal, see also 'Barnes Review/Foundation for Economic Liberty, Inc.', Southern Poverty Law Center, accessed 18 February 2025, https://www.splcenter.org/fighting-hate/extremist-files/group/barnes-reviewfoundation-economic-liberty-inc.

[82] 'The Barnes Review Book Club', The Barnes Review, accessed 10 August 2024, http://www.barnesreview.org/TBR_2018_Catalog.pdf.

[83] Harry Elmer Barnes, review of *Napoléon: For and Against*, by Pieter Geyl, *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 265, no. 1 (1949): 197. For the response to Barnes' review, see Pieter Geyl, 'Letter to the Editor', *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 266, no. 1 (1949): 246-7.

[84] Harry Elmer Barnes, review of *Since 1900: A History of the United Sates in Our Times*, by Oscar Theodore Barck Jr. and Nelson Manfred Blake, *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 258, no. 1 (1948): 152.

[85] Harry Elmer Barnes, review of *The Origins of the Second World War*, by A.J.P Taylor, *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 341, no. 1 (1962): 123-5.

[86] Henry L. Roberts, review of *Perpetual War for Perpetual Peace: A Critical Examination of the Foreign Policy of Franklin Delano Roosevelt and Its Aftermath*, edited by Harry Elmer Barnes, *Foreign Affairs* 32, no. 4 (1954): 673.

stating: '[t]his is an unpleasant book to read'.[87] Frank M. Russell, unconvinced by the revisionist line, criticised its 'clouds of invective and streams of abuse', claiming its main aim was to 'uncover conspirators and reveal conspiracies'.[88] In *PSQ*, the historian Julius W. Pratt adopted a more modest tone, yet he perceptively added that Barnes' conspiratorial ascription of 'dishonest motives or blighted intelligence' to the so-called 'court historians' was more appropriate to a 'theological controversy'. He found such argumentation 'strangely out of place in twentieth-century social science'.[89] Samuel Grover Rich Jr., founder of the University of Utah's IR programme, admitted the volume constituted a 'treasurehouse of information documenting the revisionist viewpoint'.[90] Yet he expressed scepticism towards Barnes' invectives against mainstream historiographical opinion, adding that his 'extremism' does him no favours in persuading readers of the veracity of the revisionist interpretation.[91]

While Barnes' case is odd, comparable examples are exceedingly infrequent. This dissertation opened with Walter J. Shepard, then a political scientist at Ohio State University. Shepard urged escape from fascism via the selective appropriation from the new continental regimes. More recently, Randall Schweller, also Professor of Political Science at Ohio State University, has repeatedly defended the first Trump administration's foreign policy.[92] While one may understandably disagree with Schweller, his arguments are not beyond the pale. Schweller's *vindication of the foreign policy* of a populist nationalist is a far cry from Shepard's *ableist, elitist, and anti-democratic* tendencies. The differences between these departmental colleagues, a century apart, are of such a magnitude as to make the comparison facetious. This is precisely the point: space for anti-democratic and extreme right voices has been sharply reduced over post-war decades.

With that said, we should be cautious not to accept a self-congratulatory or purely benign disciplinary picture. Scholars have shown that IR theory and the discipline's remain plagued by its gendered, Eurocentric, imperial, and racialised origins. Sabaratnam, for example, argues that White subject positions are naturalised in contemporary IR discourse, which 'tend to normalise and render invisible Whiteness and White supremacy'.[93] While highly fruitful, my focus is not on white supremacy as a broader *structural phenomenon* within IR's discursive constructs.

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[87] Bernard C. Cohen, review of *Perpetual War for Perpetual Peace: A Critical Examination of the Foreign Policy of Franklin Delano Roosevelt and Its Aftermath*, edited by Harry Elmer Barnes, *American Political Science Review* 48, no. 4 (1954): 1193-4.

[88] Frank M. Russell, review of *Perpetual War for Perpetual Peace: A Critical Examination of the Foreign Policy of Franklin Delano Roosevelt and Its Aftermath*, edited by Harry Elmer Barnes, *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 292 (1954): 157-8.

[89] Julius W. Pratt, review of *Perpetual War for Perpetual Peace: A Critical Examination of the Foreign Policy of Franklin Delano Roosevelt and Its Aftermath*, edited by Harry Elmer Barnes, *Political Science Quarterly* 70, no. 1 (1955): 136.

[90] S. Grover Rich Jr., review of *Perpetual War for Perpetual Peace: A Critical Examination of the Foreign Policy of Franklin Delano Roosevelt and Its Aftermath*, edited by Harry Elmer Barnes, *Western Political Quarterly* 7, no. 1 (1954): 108.

[91] *Ibid.*

[92] See Zack Beauchamp, 'The Case for Trump's Foreign Policy, According to a Leading International Relations Scholar', *Vox*, 11 January 2018, https://www.vox.com/world/2018/1/11/16875344/trump-foreign-policy-randall-schweller.

[93] Sabaratnam, 'Is IR Theory White?', 7. See also Errol A. Henderson, 'Hidden in Plain Sight: Racism in International Relations Theory', *Cambridge Review of International Affairs* 26, no. 1 (2013): 71-92.

Rather, it is on right-wing extremists and white supremacist *actors*. On this latter metric, IR's recent history is on more respectable grounds. Yet even with an actor-centric conception of white supremacy, IR's relationship with right-wing extremism, however inadvertent, has not been entirely sanguine. Thinkers, institutions, and debates in the post-war discipline have become sporadically intertwined with the thinking of far-right actors, from white supremacists to conspiracy theorists. This continues into the twenty-first century. Accordingly, and notwithstanding the above, the main issue I raise below is not the risk of IR scholars affording space to extremist views and thus the need to 'no platform' such actors. Rather, I focus on the extra-disciplinary *reception* of the discipline among malign actors. I identify two modes of reception, typified by logics of either co-optation or critique.

Before unpacking these two forms of reception, a caveat is required. Though this section focuses on *extra*-disciplinary reception, it will be important to remain cognisant of *internal* disciplinary changes against the backdrop of a second Trump administration and the conscious in-roads into higher education sought by factions of what has recently been branded the 'global Right'.[94] While New Right and other far-right discourses tend not to filter into IR courses and high-profile journals, efforts are underway to build an intellectual counter-weight to the perceived liberal bias of mainstream academe, with such right-wing institutions as the Budapest-based Ludovika University of Public Service and the Institute of Social Sciences, Economics, and Politics in Lyon offering courses in areas such as international relations, military sciences, and public administration.[95] It should also be borne in mind that some thinkers who have expressed far-right views hold advanced degrees in IR and political science from traditional, elite universities. Tomislav Sunić, a notable figure amongst white nationalists and the New Right, holds a PhD in political science from University of California, Santa Barbara, while Richard Hanania, a high-profile right-wing commentator linked to Project 2025, earned a PhD in political science from University of California, Los Angeles and is a former research fellow at Columbia University's Saltzman Institute of War and Peace Studies.

Co-optation: Beyond Disciplinary History

In 1935, the *Blackshirt* carried an article questioning whether, if war was to recur, Bertrand Russell would undertake a 'man's job in the trenches instead of cluttering up an English gaol with the incubus of his sprawling "conscience"'.[96] On another occasion, it attacked *We Did Not Fight*, an edited volume authored by 'well-known pacifists' including Angell and Russell.[97] Others mocked Russell's alleged turnabout: advocating peace and disarmament, while calling for Germany's containment.[98] Despite such criticism, Mosley later initiated a brief correspondence with Russell in December 1961 regarding the Soviet threat, European federation, and the nuclear age. After a fleeting exchange, Russell responded in the utmost definitive terms, reaffirming that all his prior efforts were 'devoted to an active opposition to cruel bigotry, compulsive violence, and the sadistic persecution which has characterised the

[94] Rita Abrahamsen, et al., *World of the Right: Radical Conservatism and Global Order* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2024).
[95] *Ibid*, 124-42.
[96] A.K. Chesterton, 'On With the Dance: Dithering into War', *Blackshirt*, 4 October 1935, 3.
[97] 'Boasting of Their Shame', *Blackshirt*, 22 November 1935, 3.
[98] John Beckett, 'Pacifism Does Not Always Mean Peace', *Blackshirt*, 11 January 1935, 3.

philosophy and practice of fascism'.[99] Mosley and Russell inhabited distinct 'emotional universes', precluding all prospects of association.[100]

While Russell rebuffed Mosley's overtures, the latter evidently believed there to be some value in conversing on international affairs with the famed public intellectual. Though this post-war exchange was unusual in its directness, it illustrates a broader pattern of intellectual reception and its underlying motive. Simply, the reception of IR scholars, disciplinary controversies, and even contemporary theories have, in select instances, filtered into radical and extreme right discourse, with such actors seeking to co-opt the authority that accompanies expert scholarship on the international. This logic of co-optation constitutes the first of the aforementioned modes of extra-disciplinary reception.

Lawrence Dennis' post-war engagement with political science reflects a similar pattern. Dennis positioned himself within a self-styled tradition of 'revisionism', subsuming such figures as the esteemed historian Charles A. Beard, himself a notable interwar international thinker, and the more questionable Harry Elmer Barnes. Dennis also drew on canonical IR thinkers. He made a number of references to Morgenthau in his post-war newsletter, revealing particular sympathy towards Morgenthau's *In Defense of the National Interest*, a study which Dennis commended for its 'brilliant argumentation in support of many of the ideas' that he had already 'been preaching for some time'.[101] In 1969, Dennis even asked Morgenthau to review his latest book. Calling Morgenthau a fellow 'revisionist thinker', Dennis sought to leverage the IR scholar's authority to promote the book.[102] More broadly, Dennis found some degree of common cause with Morgenthau, Butterfield, Toynbee, and George Kennan in opposing the moralistic excesses of liberal crusading.[103] While Dennis may have styled himself as an intellectual equal of and, in some respects, fellow traveller with such thinkers, his efforts made negligible impact on the Cold War evolution of Anglo-American IR. To the extent that one stumbles across positive appraisals of Dennis from the vantage point of the present, it is amongst right-wing libertarian circles and the white nationalist fringes—not from political science and IR.[104]

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[99] Correspondence between Oswald Mosley and Bertrand Russell, 22 January 1962, OMN/B/2/4/18, Oswald Mosley Papers.
[100] *Ibid.*
[101] Lawrence Dennis, *The Appeal to Reason*, 7 July 1951, 4, 13.7, LDP.
[102] Lawrence Dennis to Hans J. Morgenthau, 5 July 1969, 4.25, LDP. It is unclear whether Morgenthau responded, though it is apparent he was aware of who Dennis was, namely the spokesperson for 'American fascism'. Hans J. Morgenthau, review of *Man and the State: Modern Political Ideas*, by William Ebenstein, *American Political Science Review* 41, no. 6 (1947): 1209-10.
[103] See Lawrence Dennis, 'We're Preparing for the Worst Kind of War—A Religious War', typescript, n.d., 6.22, LDP, as well as, *inter alia*, *The Appeal to Reason* dated 24 March 1951, 6 October 1951, and 2 November 1963. Dennis had a friendly relationship with Kennan after meeting in the Soviet Union in 1936, which was reportedly maintained into the Second World War. 'The Reminiscences of Lawrence Dennis', 54-6, Oral History Archives.
[104] Amongst libertarian circles, see, e.g., Justin Raimondo, 'Tale of a "Seditionist"', *Chronicles*, May 2000, https://chroniclesmagazine.org/reactionary-radicals/tale-of-a-seditionist/; Justin Raimondo, 'The Subversion of Lawrence Dennis', *Taki's Magazine*, 26 September 2007,

A more recent episode surrounds the controversy over Mearsheimer and Stephen M. Walts' *Israel Lobby*, which drew the uninvited endorsement of David Duke, notorious conspiracy theorist and former Grand Wizard of the Ku Klux Klan, alongside laudatory reviews and references by other strange characters.[105] Mearsheimer has also attracted attention from the far right for meeting Victor Orbán in 2022 and praise over his critique of NATO expansion. Notorious far-right pundit Jack Posobiec expressed admiration for the IR professor, declaring to his more than two million Twitter followers upon the invasion of Ukraine that 'Mearsheimer was right', and on another occasion even directing his followers to a newly 'dropped' Mearsheimer interview.[106] References to Mearsheimer also appear in a range of the more intellectually oriented, yet no less dubious, New Right outlets.[107] In discerning this chequered reception, I am obviously not suggesting that Mearsheimer is somehow in cahoots with far-right forces nor that he is in any sense sympathetic towards their wider cause. To offer but one stark contrast, Mearsheimer, unlike New Right ideologues, expressly rejects any such apprehension over changing demographic patterns within the US, a far cry from those espousing fears over a so-called 'Great Replacement'.[108] Instead, I seek to highlight how the far right has read and sought to harness Mearsheimer's arguments and authority.

The 2020 *Security Dialogue* controversy (#SdScandal) represents another example of appropriation. The episode was sparked after the publication of a peer-reviewed article by Alison Howell and Melanie Richter-

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https://www.takimag.com/article/the_subversion_of_lawrence_dennis/. For reference to Dennis amongst white nationalist outlets, see, *inter alia*, John Bennett, 'Orwell's "1984": Was Orwell Right?', *Journal of Historical Review* 6, no. 1 (1985): 9-21; Margot Metroland, 'Lawrence Dennis: 1893-1977', Counter-Currents, 25 December 2015, https://counter-currents.com/2015/12/lawrence-dennis-1893-1977/; Renegade Tribune, 'Michael Collins Piper: Lawrence Dennis — Hitler's Leading Voice in the USA', 20 June 2020, http://www.renegadetribune.com/michael-collins-piper-lawrence-dennis-hitlers-leading-voice-in-the-usa/. With that said, further research is needed on Dennis' prospective influence (as well as the readily traceable influence of Harry Elmer Barnes) on New Left international thought, a topic hitherto given scant attention. Cf. Justus D. Doenecke, 'William Appleman Williams and the Anti-Interventionist Tradition', *Diplomatic History* 25, no. 2 (2001): 283-91. As Beard once wrote in reply to Dennis: 'If I were younger and had better eyes and more hours in the day, I should subscribe for the Appeal [i.e., Dennis' newsletter] but at 73 plus I have to forego such pleasures.' Charles Beard to Lawrence Dennis, 22 February 1948, 2.18, LDP.

[105] John J. Mearsheimer and Stephen M. Walt, *The Israel Lobby and U.S. Foreign Policy* (London: Penguin, 2007); Eliot A. Cohen, 'Yes, It's Anti-Semitic', *Washington Post*, 4 April 2006, https://www.washingtonpost.com/archive/opinions/2006/04/05/yes-its-anti-semitic/e7de5f13-60d5-4567-9090-8d24c8237801/. For an illustrative example of Mearsheimer and Walt's reception amongst the far right, see Kevin MacDonald, 'The Israel Lobby: A Case Study in Jewish Influence', *Occidental Quarterly* 7, no. 3 (2007): 33-58.

[106] Jack Posobiec (@JackPosobiec), 'Mearsheimer was right', Twitter post, 24 February 2022, https://x.com/jackposobiec/status/1496837284988997643?s=46&t=MNFQMM6JBbEZIXaTFK-VOQ; Jack Posobiec (@JackPosobiec), 'New Mearsheimer just dropped', Twitter post, 1 December 2022, https://x.com/jackposobiec/status/1598317534184411136?s=46&t=MNFQMM6JBbEZIXaTFK-VOQ.

[107] See, e.g., Jared Taylor, 'The Worst Ideas in History', American Renaissance, 15 July 2022, https://www.amren.com/videos/2022/07/the-worst-ideas-in-history/; Kenneth Schmidt, 'American Isolationism: A Valid Alternative?', Arktos, 8 May 2023, https://arktos.com/2023/05/08/american-isolationism-a-valid-alternative/.

[108] Lex Fridman, 'John Mearsheimer Disagreement with Donald Trump on Immigration | Lex Fridman Podcast Clips', Lex Clips, 22 November 2023, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u4KR5dBh5OM.

Montpetit, arguing that securitisation theory is predicated on 'white supremacist' foundations.[109] Whether or not one agrees with the counter-points raised by Barry Buzan and Ole Wæver, the pioneers of securitisation theory, I would be remiss not to add that the latter's public rebuke held the inadvertent potential to be hijacked for nefarious ends—as it was.[110] Their defence carried, as Wæver himself acknowledged, a 'catch-22'.[111] Quoting Jarrod Hayes: 'the other "side" [i.e., those critical of the original article] has been infiltrated by a range of non-academics—fascists, racists, misogynists, and general misanthropes. My thoughts here do not concern them. They should crawl back into their cesspits.'[112] While I wholeheartedly endorse Hayes' takedown, my attention is unfortunately on said cesspits and the implications of this peculiar extra-disciplinary reception. Howell and Richter-Montpetit have suggested that Buzan and Wæver's critique of what they dubbed 'deepfake methodology' has since been used—contrary, I should reiterate, to their intent—'as a dog whistle for white supremacists and for those seeking to intellectualize backlash against so-called "grievance studies"'.[113] This includes the right-wing online magazine *Quillette*, a bastion of the 'Intellectual Dark Web' (to whom Wæver—initially unaware of its ideological positioning—provided comment), and James Lindsay, a leading figure in the 'Sokal Squared' affair and vocal promoter of white genocide and LGBTQ+ grooming conspiracies.[114]

Another case appears in the thought of the aforementioned Dugin. As former head of Moscow State University's Department of Sociology, Dugin has shown familiarity with such theories as neorealism, liberalism, world-systems analysis, and the English School. In fact, the online Eurasianist platform Geopolitika.ru—self-identified with the Dugin-linked Centre for Geopolitical Expertise and Centre for Conservative Studies—published a series of pieces by Dugin and others on IR theory, covering such topics as neoliberal IR theory, the English School, Waltzian neorealism, offensive realism, hegemonic stability theory, Morgenthau's international thought, theories of globalisation, and the relationship between realism and geopolitical thought. In one piece from Arktos—the premier English-language publisher of identitarian, New Right, and Eurasianist books—Dugin namedrops

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[109] See, respectively, Ole Wæver and Barry Buzan, 'Racism, Reading and Responsibility: Securitization Theory, Systemic Racism in Security Studies and Methodologies for Excavating Foundational Flaws in Theories Online', Centre for Resolution of International Conflicts, 2020, https://cric.ku.dk/publications/racismreply/Racism_response_WebDoc_15May2020.pdf; Alison Howell and Melanie Richter-Montpetit, 'Is Securitization Theory Racist? Civilizationism, Methodological Whiteness, and Antiblack Thought in the Copenhagen School', *Security Dialogue* 51, no. 1 (2020): 3-22.

[110] See, e.g., Sumantra Maitra, 'The Power of Denunciation in Political Science', James G. Martin Center for Academic Renewal, 28 August 2020, https://www.jamesgmartin.center/2020/08/the-power-of-denunciation-in-political-science/.

[111] Drude Morthorst Rasmussen, 'Peace Researcher Ole Wæver Accused of Racism: "I've Never Felt So Bad About My Life as an Academic"', *University Post*, 15 May 2020, https://uniavisen.dk/en/prominent-peace-researcher-accused-of-racism-ive-never-felt-so-bad-about-my-life-as-an-academic/.

[112] Jarrod Hayes, 'It Isn't Just About Wæver and Buzan', The Duck of Minerva, 27 May 2020, https://www.duckofminerva.com/2020/05/it-isnt-just-about-waever-and-buzan.html.

[113] Alison Howell and Melanie Richter-Montpetit, 'Upholding Disciplinary Whiteness: The #*SdScandal*, Gender and International Relations' Critical Turn', *Security Dialogue* 54, no. 4 (2023): 322-3.

[114] *Ibid*; Kathrine Jebsen Moore, 'Meet Critical Theorists' Latest Target: Critical Theorists', *Quillette*, 5 June 2020, https://quillette.com/2020/06/05/meet-critical-theorists-latest-target-critical-theorists/.

Morgenthau, Carr, and Kennan, while outlining what he views to be the Hobbesian fundamentals of realism: an innately flawed human nature, the balance of power, and the irreducible risk of war among sovereign states responsible to no higher authority.[115]

Moreover, Dugin has adapted the scholarship of John Hobson and Stephen Hobden for alternate ends, emphasising critical IR's anti-hegemonialism and what he calls 'Hobson's challenge' against Eurocentrism.[116] As Dugin conjectured, 'IR is undoubtedly an imperious authoritarian discourse of Western civilization'.[117] It is, in effect, 'a Western scientific discipline, and as such it has a prescriptive, normative vector. It not only studies the West's dominance, it also produces… and propagandizes it'.[118] While not overly concerned with IR's theoretical debates (or scholarly standards), Dugin nevertheless instrumentalises theoretical snippets as one basis, among others, for defending his counter-hegemonic strategy and vision for world politics, as encapsulated in his 'Theory of a Multipolar World' and 'Fourth Political Theory'. Indeed, '[t]he project of a non-Eurocentric theory of IR leads', in this view, 'directly to the Theory of the Multipolar World'.[119]

Beyond Dugin, the reception of Samuel Huntington's 'Clash of Civilisations' (CoC) thesis remains the most notable case of far-right co-optation. As Jeffrey Haynes notes, far-right parties and extremist groups reveal a common and 'strikingly Huntingtonian' analysis.[120] However, such comparative statements lack specificity—failing not only to distinguish the neoconservative Huntington from the New Right, but also to consider through whom and how his thesis has been received, interpreted, and diffused among far-right thinkers. Huntington and Bernard Lewis' CoC thesis saturates far-right discourse—though whether many repeating such rhetoric are cognisant of its origins is questionable. Closer scrutiny reveals how intellectual leaders in some far-right segments have *explicitly* and *selectively* appropriated Huntington's ideas. Some identitarian thinkers have even condemned Huntington's thesis as a neoconservative, imperialist manifesto defending American hegemony, and disparaged its procrustean amalgamation of the US and Western Europe under the banner of Western civilisation.[121] Alain de Benoist similarly

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[115] Alexander Dugin, 'Realism in International Relations', Arktos, 27 November 2023, https://arktos.com/2023/11/27/realism-in-international-relations/.

[116] Michael Millerman, 'Theory Talk #66: Alexander Dugin on Eurasianism, the Geopolitics of Land and Sea, and a Russian Theory of Multipolarity', Theory Talks, 7 December 2014, https://www.files.ethz.ch/isn/186232/Theory%20Talk66_Dugin.pdf.

[117] *Ibid.*

[118] *Ibid.* See also Dugin's presentation at Fudan University on IR as a 'Western discipline' in 'International Relations and Geopolitics. Lecture 1 – Theories, Paradigms, Concepts, Schools, Debates', accessed 23 August 2024, https://www.geopolitika.ru/en/article/international-relations-and-geopolitics-lecture-1-theories-paradigms-concepts-schools.

[119] Anonymous (presumably Alexander Dugin), 'Counter-Hegemony', trans. Jafe Arnold, Geopolitika.ru, 4 April 2017, https://www.geopolitika.ru/en/article/counter-hegemony.

[120] Jeffrey Haynes, 'From Huntington to Trump: Twenty-Five Years of the "Clash of Civilizations"', *Review of Faith & International Affairs* 17, no. 1 (2019): 15-6.

[121] José Pedro Zúquete, *The Identitarians: The Movement against Globalism and Islam in Europe* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2018), 163-5.

claimed that the New Right 'refuses to subscribe to the theses of… Huntington'.[122] The far-right *Nouvelle Revue d'Histoire* cast Huntington as a mediocre Spengler, though it conceded he managed to display some 'original and vigorous intuitions—especially coming from an American'.[123] Others, however, have lauded its supposedly prophetic core. The white nationalist webzine Counter-Currents released a piece commemorating the 25th anniversary of Huntington's book.[124] In prophesying a bipolar struggle between a Eurasian bloc and the maritime 'Atlanticist' powers, Dugin similarly contends that his multipolarity theory 'seriously and axiomatically adopts… Huntington's thesis about the plurality of civilizations'.[125] Dugin suggests his thinking is underpinned by realism's emphasis on the virtues of absolute sovereignty and the perniciousness of anarchy, transposed onto Huntington's civilisational ontology. His unit of analysis is thus the 'state-civilisation', rather than the nation-state. This is coupled with what he consciously calls a civilisational 'idealism'. Juxtaposed against a universalising liberal ideology and an atomistic conception of the state grounded in a rationalist theory of the social contract, each civilisational unit coheres around distinct values and ideals.[126] Likewise, the late identitarian Guillaume Faye claimed that the '21st century will be a *Spenglerian* one and will involve clashes between the different civilisations and races, as inherently understood by… Huntington'.[127] None of this is to mention Huntington's later commentary on the 'denationalizing of elites', immigration, and identity politics, which has found a receptive audience in some far-right outlets.[128] Indeed, Richard Spencer has expressed his fondness for Huntington's *Who Are We?*[129]

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[122] Alain de Benoist, 'Alain de Benoist Answers Tamir Bar-On', *Journal for the Study of Radicalism* 8, no. 1 (2014): 155. Cf. Tamir Bar-On, 'Fascism to the Nouvelle Droite: The Dream of Pan-European Empire', *Journal of Contemporary European Studies* 16, no. 3 (2008): 330.

[123] Cited Zúquete, *Identitarians*, 165.

[124] Mark Gullick, 'Huntington at 25: *The Clash of Civilizations*', Counter-Currents, 16 February 2022, https://counter-currents.com/2022/02/huntington-at-25/.

[125] Millerman, 'Theory Talk #66'. See also Marlène Laruelle, 'Aleksandr Dugin: A Russian Version of the European Radical Right?', Occasional Paper No. 294, Kennan Institute, Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, 2006, https://www.wilsoncenter.org/publication/aleksandr-dugin-russian-version-the-european-radical-right-2006.

[126] Dugin, 'Realism in International Relations'.

[127] Guillaume Faye, '"Septentrion", or the End of the American Dream', Arktos, 5 June 2023, https://arktos.com/2023/06/05/septentrion-or-the-end-of-the-american-dream/ (emphasis in original).

[128] See, e.g., Doug Huntington, 'The 1990s & Contemporary Pro-White Metapolitics', Counter-Currents, 29 January 2018, https://counter-currents.com/2018/01/the-1990s-and-contemporary-pro-white-metapolitics/; Laura Slot, '"Dead Souls": 20 Years Since Samuel P. Huntington's Famous Essay', Arktos, 19 February 2024, https://arktos.com/2024/02/19/dead-souls-20-years-since-samuel-p-huntingtons-famous-essay/. Cf. John Attarian, 'Huntington and the Clueless Right', *Occidental Quarterly* 4, no. 3 (2004): 45-66. Laura Slot has an IR background, having read for an MA in the History of International Relations at Utrecht University and published her dissertation on Bertrand Russell's international thought.

[129] Josh Harkinson, 'Meet the White Nationalist Trying to Ride the Trump Train to Lasting Power', 27 October 2016, *Mother Jones*, https://www.motherjones.com/politics/2016/10/richard-spencer-trump-alt-right-white-nationalist/.

While one should avoid equating Huntington's CoC with New Right international thought ('It is likely wishful thinking to say that Huntington was truly /our guy/ [*sic*]',[130] remarked one far-right commentator), this does not to entirely absolve Huntington of responsibility for the harmful appropriations of his thesis. For Specter, Morgenthau's realism was so prone to misconstrual as to render the author partly responsible for subsequent misreadings.[131] Huntington's thesis epitomises this sensibility, albeit in a rather different context: it was not simply misread, but its contents were highly amenable to the white supremacist and civilisational imaginaries of New Right thinkers as to all but ensure its appropriation. While this stands as a particularly acute case, Huntington does exemplify how scholarly arguments may be seized upon by far-right actors.

These examples offer a deep and ideally extensive overview of this mode of reception. Yet they are by no measure exhaustive. From applause for Kennan's dubious beliefs on race and multiculturalism to the admiration among so-called historical revisionists for Charles A. Beard's left-wing realism, further cases may be unearthed.[132] Of course, inadvertent co-optation is not confined to far-right extremism. Political scientists have always required attentiveness to how their ideas—or the broader discourse they may contribute to—can be distorted or misappropriated. As Richard Devetak observed in the aftermath of the Iraq War: 'While so many controversial wars are waged under the banner of liberal ideals associated with Kant, the Enlightenment and cosmopolitanism, critical international theory will need to ensure that its arguments are not co-opted by or aligned with such war-mongering'.[133] More recently, scholars have lamented the prospective damage caused by Mearsheimer's commentary on the Russia-Ukraine War, not only inadvertently developing a possible justificatory defence for Russian propaganda,[134] but also for arguably tarnishing the realist tradition.[135] As it pertains to far-right extremism, an attentiveness to the perviousness of the disciplinary fourth wall raises key implications for scholars in two principal

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[130] Huntington, 'Contemporary Pro-White Metapolitics'.

[131] Specter, *Atlantic Realists*, 146.

[132] See, e.g., Cooper Sterling, review of *The Kennan Diaries*, edited by Frank Costigliola, Occidental Observer, 3 March 2014, https://www.theoccidentalobserver.net/2014/03/03/the-sensible-realism-of-a-bygone-generation-george-kennans-attitudes-on-race-eugenics-and-multiculturalism-part-1/; Antonius J. Patrick (pseud.), 'American Foreign Policy from 1932-1940: A Study in Responsibilities', *Barnes Review* 26, no. 2 (2020): 34-43.

[133] Richard Devetak, 'Between Kant and Pufendorf: Humanitarian Intervention, Statist Anti-cosmopolitanism and Critical International Theory', *Review of International Studies* 33, Special Issue: Critical International Theory After 25 Years (2007): 152.

[134] See MFA Russia (@mfa_russia), '"Why the Ukraine Crisis Is the West's Fault" article by John J. Mearsheimer (@ForeignAffairs, 2014). The US & its European allies share most of the responsibility for the crisis. The taproot of the trouble is NATO enlargement', Twitter post, 28 February 2022, https://twitter.com/mfa_russia/status/1498336076229976076?lang=en. See also Jochen Kleinschmidt, 'Small Grants from Great Powers: Academic Integrity vs. Information Warfare', E-International Relations, 11 February 2024, https://www.e-ir.info/2024/02/11/small-grants-from-great-powers-academic-integrity-vs-information-warfare/.

[135] See, e.g., Filip Kostelka, 'John Mearsheimer's Lecture on Ukraine: Why He is Wrong and What are the Consequences', EUIdeas, 11 July 2022, https://euideas.eui.eu/2022/07/11/john-mearsheimers-lecture-on-ukraine-why-he-is-wrong-and-what-are-the-consequences/; Matthew Specter, 'Realism after Ukraine: A Critique of Geopolitical Reason from Monroe to Mearsheimer', *Analyse & Kritik* 44, no. 2 (2022): 243-67.

areas of study: (I) historical enquiry into the content and evolution of far-right international thought, and (II) the production of critical theory.

The likelihood of co-optation and inadvertent amplification is arguably higher in the context of research into the international thought of far-right extremists relative to some subject areas. How, then, can one excavate extremist international thought without unintentionally amplifying such discourse? This problem already afflicts fascist studies. As early as 1969, for example, the Bulletin of the National Rennaisance Party listed scholarship by several forerunners to the empathetic approach—Ernst Nolte, Walter Laqueur, Stanley Payne, and the progenitor of methodological empathy himself, George Mosse—amongst its 'vital books for nationalists'.[136] By analysing and synthesising vast amounts of material, one's research may inadvertently offer a neatly packaged product, one of possible value to less palatable characters. For instance, a 1984 article by Mosleyite fascist Robert Row—published in the *Journal of Historical Review*, a leading Holocaust denial outlet—adoringly casts Mosley as 'the man of synthesis'.[137] While acknowledging Richard Thurlow as a critic, Row quotes the historian, who likewise emphasises the role of synthesis in Mosley's thinking, as to add authority to his positive depiction.[138]

Of course, scholars may make their normative stance clear—explicitly or otherwise. While I seek to uphold scholarly standards, my disdain for the extreme right is surely apparent (after all, I devote an entire section to the 'Immense Fallacy of Fascist Peace'). Thurlow's stance is similarly transparent. Yet inserting critique or imbuing research with a normative subtext may fully diminish its utility among extremists. The following passage from Counter-Currents demonstrates this and warrants quoting at length:

> [Roger] Griffin's work is very important… it illustrates how we relatively powerless groupuscules can leverage the interest shown in us by the "custodians of democracy," by utilizing their research in assisting us in achieving our own objectives. Given their concern with virtually *any* forms of dissident opinion… they must analyze "fascist" behavior in a sincere manner, and publish their findings in publicly accessible journals, all in an attempt to promote *their* unattainable utopian goals of "equality" and "social justice." While we of course need to make our own analyses, and not solely depend on that of our opponents, their work can and should be exploited for our own purposes.[139]

A similar dynamic appears in the far-right's use of varying strands of critical theory. Though often derisive of critical scholarship—particularly feminism or critical race theory—identitarian and New Right thinkers have

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[136] 'Vital Books for Nationalists', *National Renaissance Bulletin* 20, no. 1-3 (1969): 9-10, MS 76.6/Hall Hoag 142, Hall-Hoag Collection of Dissenting and Extremist Printed Propaganda: Anti-Jewish, Racist Organizations, John Hay Library, Brown University, available online via the Political Extremism and Radicalism Collection, Gale Primary Sources.

[137] Robert Row, 'Sir Oswald Mosley: Briton, Fascist, European', *Journal of Historical Review* 5, no. 2-4 (1984): 139-67.

[138] *Ibid.*

[139] Ted Sallis, 'From Slime Mould to Rhizome', Counter-Currents, 8 November 2011, https://counter-currents.com/2011/11/from-slime-mould-to-rhizome/.

nevertheless adeptly harnessed insights from Antonio Gramsci and the Frankfurt School to advance their metapolitical crusade.[140] As Nicholas Michelsen argues,

> [c]ontemporary reactionaries have read their Deleuze, their Gramsci, their Derrida and Foucault, and they are cognisant of the discursive logic and rhetorical power of… concepts of exclusion, identity, precarity, marginality, hegemony, the avant-guard, victimhood and indigeneity.[141]

In this sense, as Rita Abrahamsen et al. note, 'one might provocatively suggest' that the New Right embraces Robert Cox's famous dictum: 'theory is always *for* someone and *for* some purpose'.[142] Given the right-wing Gramscianism pervading New Right thought, I would endorse this conclusion. Indeed, in a more literal sense, Dugin directly cites Cox on one occasion:

> [Cox] says that today the entire system of international relations is built in the service of hegemony. Everything they tell us about the relations between states… is pure propaganda for the hegemony of the oligarchic world elite. To a large extent, this construction is based on the axis of the intelligentsia that opts for hegemony.[143]

There is no ready-made panacea for this conundrum of extra-disciplinary appropriation, especially given the sheer unpredictability of it all. The popularity and undertones of Huntington's thesis rendered it highly conducive to co-optation. By contrast, Dugin's turn to Hobson's postcolonial critique of Eurocentrism is less foreseeable and harder to guard against. My intent, then, is not to provoke a 'chilling effect' driven by fear of unintentionally offering intellectual sustenance to far-right foes. After all, the hijacking of one's scholarship remains rare. Still, attentiveness to these dynamics may help one in the crafting and presentation of research as to mitigate against the prospect of inadvertent co-optation.

Observing a similar co-optation process, Michelsen has called for dispensing with the 'critical theory' label and recognising the limits of axiomatically linking it to progressive moral virtues. While this argument should be

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[140] Tamir Bar-On, *Where Have All the Fascists Gone?* (London: Routledge, 2007); Tamir Bar-On, 'The French New Right's Quest for Alternative Modernity', *Fascism* 1, no. 1 (2012): 18-52; Jean-François Drolet and Michael C. Williams, 'From Critique to Reaction: The New Right, Critical Theory and International Relations', *Journal of International Political Theory* 18, no. 1 (2022): 23-45. As Umberto Eco remarked: 'The very fact that the Italian right, in order to show its open-mindedness, recently broadened its syllabus to include works by De Maistre, Guenon, and Gramsci, is a blatant proof of syncretism.' Umberto Eco, 'Ur-Fascism', *New York Review*, 22 June 1995, https://www.nybooks.com/articles/1995/06/22/ur-fascism/.

[141] Nicholas Michelsen, 'What is a Minor International Theory? On the Limits of "Critical International Relations"', *Journal of International Political Theory* 17, no. 3 (2021): 503.

[142] Rita Abrahamsen, et al., 'Confronting the International Political Sociology of the New Right', *International Political Sociology* 14, no. 1 (2020): 102-3; Robert W. Cox, 'Social Forces, States and World Orders: Beyond International Relations Theory', *Millennium* 10, no. 2 (1981): 128 (emphasis in original).

[143] Alexander Dugin, 'The Counter-Hegemony', Geopolitika, 7 February 2022, https://www.geopolitika.ru/en/counter-hegemony-alexander-dugin.

taken seriously by critical theorists—indeed, his emphasis on the normative agnosticism of critical theoretical tools is particularly informative—recent scholarship by Michelsen, as well as his co-author Pablo de Orellana, nonetheless offers an interesting case of some of the potential and somewhat hidden methodological dangers accompanying *historical* research into far-right international thought. For example, Michelsen rightly notes that New Right thinkers target what they perceive as hegemonic discourse—gender studies, critical race theory, postcolonialism, or liberalism—as well as the 'material conditions which structure this [academic] setting' and reproduce it.[144] However, aside from Dugin, it is less clear that they have explicitly 'borrow[ed] intellectual resources from various (once or still) minor theoretical traditions [i.e., critical theory] in IR'.[145] While New Right thinkers harness Deleuze, Gramsci, and other prominent names in social theory, one would be hard-pressed to find references to, for example, Richard Ashley, Robert Cox, Beate Jahn, or Andrew Linklater. As Michelsen himself observes, critical IR—as it developed from the late 1980s—was 'born out of new conceptual and methodological tools drawn from *adjacent disciplines*'.[146] In this sense, adjacent disciplines have shaped both critical IR and New Right alike, but critical IR itself has fortunately, contra Michelsen, carried scant weight amongst far-right thinkers.

A similar slippage occurs in de Orellana and Michelsen's claim that the 'particularist internationalism' of the New Right, underpinned by a form of 'communitarian pluralism', shares commonalities with earlier IR thinkers in the style of Butterfield, Morgenthau, Wight, and Bull, though they note these scholars diverged by upholding 'liberal political values' domestically.[147] As with de Orellana and Michelsen, I believe that there need not be any moral or intellectual qualms in describing New Right thought as exhibiting a form of internationalism. Internationalism is an ideologically agnostic concept in the humanities and social sciences, and one I use regularly throughout this dissertation. Yet to observe an affinity between New Right thinkers, classical realism, and the architects of the English School is to seemingly link such bodies of thought. This interpretation is historically debatable and carries a risk, however infinitesimal the possibility, of providing New Right thinkers a comparison to draw on, affording space for the latter to make claim to the authority that attends scholarship which either posits such a connection (i.e., de Orellana and Michelsen) or the literature that their thought is alleged to share an affinity with (i.e., classical realism and the English School). Skinner cautioned that 'we must learn to do our own thinking for ourselves'.[148] In studying far-right international thought, we must not inadvertently think on their behalf or allow our thinking to be conducive to misuse.

There is nothing inherently faulty with comparing far-right international thought to various strands of thinking within and beyond IR's disciplinary history. This dissertation contains many such comparisons. However, comparisons must be historically grounded and tempered by qualifiers extending beyond binary claims of

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[144] Michelsen, 'Minor International Theory', 495.
[145] *Ibid*, 502.
[146] *Ibid*, 490 (emphasis added).
[147] Pablo de Orellana and Nicholas Michelsen, 'Reactionary Internationalism: The Philosophy of the New Right', *Review of International Studies* 45, no. 5 (2019): 762-3.
[148] Skinner, 'Meaning and Understanding', 52.

commonality in international thought and divergence in political thought; that is, shared communitarianism internationally, but discordant views over liberal democracy domestically. Contextualist methods, particularly reception theory, may prove useful in recovering instances of direct intellectual engagement and avoiding mere assertions of superficial similarity. For example, it may be worthwhile asking if there is evidence that any New Right thinkers have read Morgenthau or Bull. This would not only strengthen such a comparison, but mitigate the risk of inadvertent co-optation insofar as one is not constructing such links, but simply unearthing connections which already exist. In fact, there is some irony in my critique to the extent that, at least in one offhand footnote, de Benoist *does* construct a positive comparison between Schmitt's anti-universalist tendencies and the 'distant heirs of Grotius'—Wight and Bull—whom he describes as 'defenders of great power equilibrium'.[149]

If IR is to study and oppose the extreme right effectively, the latter of which I implore in this chapter's final section, then an appreciation of the continued permeability of the disciplinary fourth wall and its attendant dilemmas are necessary. While understanding dynamics of extra-disciplinary reception, imparting normative opposition into scholarship, and utilising contextualist methods may help to mitigate the risk of co-optation, no universal remedy exists. Inevitably, less palatable figures will encounter research that, for whatever reason, resonates with them. To quote MacKay: 'I guess I might just invite… [readers to] join me and others in some reflexive, methodological discomfort here.'[150]

Critique: IR, Culture Wars, and the Paranoid Style of Politics

> Sir Norman Angell is a Pacifist… an intellectual and a very clever man, so when I saw a report of his speech at the League of Nations Union General Council Meeting the other day, I looked eagerly to see what arguments this knight of the platform would put forward in support of the view that all wars were wrong.[151]
>
> — J.A. MacNab

Understanding the intersection between IR and the far right reveals a second mode of extra-disciplinary reception, one more common yet equally difficult to grapple with. Far-right actors may target scholars or institutions not to co-opt their arguments and authority, but to direct vitriol at them or cast such persons and bodies as pawns in their conspiratorial thinking. This was a common tactic among interwar fascists, as shown throughout this dissertation. One need only consider the BUF press quotation above or recall Laski's mistreatment. Yet an array of other deranged attacks, misleading critiques, and bizarre cases can be identified during the later part of the twentieth century and into the new millennium.

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[149] Alain de Benoist, '*The Populist Moment*, Chapter 11, Part 4 "Multitudes" Against the People on the Theses of Michael Hardt & Antonio Negri', Counter-Currents, 24 January 2023, https://counter-currents.com/2023/01/the-populist-moment-chapter-11-part-4/.

[150] Quoted from correspondence.

[151] J.A. MacNab, ed., 'Behind the News', *Action*, 30 January 1937, 16.

The *Security Dialogue* controversy illustrates both the dynamic of co-optation and the logic of critique. The offending article has been harnessed to attack the veracity of critical race theory, so-called 'grievance studies', and, by implication, antiracist politics. A similar case arose with a 2022 *APSR* article in which Ross Mittiga explored 'under what conditions authoritarian climate governance may be considered legitimate'.[152] Mittiga concludes that 'political legitimacy may require adopting a more authoritarian approach' to address the climate crisis—an outcome he is eager to avoid.[153] The article gained online traction after high-profile American podcaster Joe Rogan retweeted a critical post by the aforementioned James Lindsay, eventually prompting coverage in the *Washington Post* and *Wall Street Journal*.[154] With greater virality, unfounded allegations swirled that the article supported ecofascist policies. While there is no evidence that any far-right ecofascists embraced the article, its controversial argument has been wielded to lampoon climate activists as undemocratic by libertarian think tanks, such as the Foundation for Economic Education and the Heartland Institute; conservative outlets including the *Federalist*, Fox News, and the Claremont Institute; alongside—to quote Mittiga himself—'an array of often hysterical ultra-conservative blogs'.[155]

Aspects of Dugin's writings—particularly his shoddy critique of liberal IR—also exemplify this logic of critique, while simultaneously revealing the limits of his grasp of IR theory. Despite beginning from the reasonable proposition that liberal IR understands human nature as a malleable *tabula rasa* per Locke, Dugin rapidly proceeds onto flimsy assertions. First, Dugin—apparently echoing unnamed sources—equates liberalism with a naïve faith in progress. Wedded to an outdated realist-idealist binary, Dugin shows no familiarity with revisionist disciplinary historiography nor the actual thinking of IR's early liberal figures. Second, Dugin's conceptualisation of 'Liberals in international relations' is extremely nebulous. Admittedly, he occasionally jibes at the proposition that 'democracies

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[152] Ross Mittiga, 'Political Legitimacy, Authoritarianism, and Climate Change', *American Political Science Review* 116, no. 3 (2022): 998.

[153] *Ibid*, 1009.

[154] Daniel W. Drezner, 'Anatomy of a Political Theory Controversy', *Washington Post*, 5 January 2022, https://www.washingtonpost.com/outlook/2022/01/05/anatomy-political-theory-controversy/; 'Notable & Quotable: Authoritarianism', *Wall Street Journal*, 7 January 2022, https://www.wsj.com/articles/notable-quotable-authoritarianism-climate-change-political-science-danger-11641579426. My thanks to Mittiga for sharing additional context about his article's reception.

[155] See, respectively, Jon Miltimore, "'Authoritarianism" May Be Necessary to Fight Climate Change, Cambridge Study Argues', Foundation for Economic Education, 5 January 2022, https://fee.org/articles/authoritarianism-may-be-necessary-to-fight-climate-change-cambridge-study-argues/; H. Sterling Burnett, 'Alarmists Embrace Authoritarianism, Ignore Lessons of History', Heartland Institute, 6 January 2022, https://heartland.org/opinion/alarmists-embrace-authoritarianism-ignore-lessons-of-history/; Justin Haskins, 'More Members of the Ruling Class Want to Use Covid-Style Tyranny to "Fight Climate Change"', Federalist, 13 January 2022, https://thefederalist.com/2022/01/13/more-members-of-the-ruling-class-want-to-use-covid-style-tyranny-to-fight-climate-change/; Andrew Mark Miller, 'Cambridge Peer-Reviewed Study Suggests "Authoritarianism" Might be Necessary to Fight Climate Change', Fox News, 6 January 2022, https://www.foxnews.com/politics/cambridge-peer-reviewed-study-suggests-authoritarianism-neccessary-fight-climate-change; Steven F. Hayward, 'Who Broke Climate Science?', *Claremont Review of Books* 22, no. 1 (2021—2), https://claremontreviewofbooks.com/who-broke-climate-science/; Ross Mittiga, 'Peer-reviewed Articles', accessed 11 October 2023, https://web.archive.org/web/20240304182857/https://www.rossmittiga.com/publications.html.

do not fight each other'—a phrase littered across scholarship on the democratic peace thesis.[156] Yet it is often unclear who or what he is referring to when writing of 'Liberals in international relations'. Is it specific strands of liberal IR theory, such as Michael Doyle's democratic peace thesis, Andrew Moravcsik's new liberalism, or John Ikenberry's Liberal Leviathan? Alternatively, is he referring to liberal international thought broadly; that is, the way in which 'liberal' opinion on world politics manifests within and *beyond* academe? This may be implied when, in one lecture slide, Dugin places Richard Cobden, Woodrow Wilson, and Angell under the banner of 'Liberalism in IR'.[157] Or is Dugin merely referring to a loose ideology (perhaps of his imagining), as implied when suggesting that '[g]ender theory and posthumanism' are outgrowths of liberalism.[158] In any case, the picture only becomes fuzzier when he alleges that, pursuant to this liberal image of world politics, 'liberal states should gradually die out, giving way to a world government'.[159] Indeed, he even suggests that neoliberal IR scholars, including Joseph Nye and Robert Keohane, assert 'the need for the creation of supranational structures up to the level of world government'.[160] While this may describe a miniscule group of world federalists, it fundamentally misrepresents the thought held by most liberal statespersons or diplomats, not least is it a far cry from the position of serious liberal IR theorists who advocate no such world state.[161] If this was not enough, Dugin is flatly incorrect in his assertion that Waltz is a supporter of the democratic peace thesis.[162] As Waltz once remarked: 'If the democratic peace thesis is right, structural realist theory is wrong.'[163] Dugin's depiction of liberal IR is, in the end, a strawman pieced together by a conspiratorial mindset and definitional sloppiness.

Another structurally similar form of extra-disciplinary reception involves far-right conspiracy theories. While literature has underscored the role of Chatham House and the CFR in IR's formative history,[164] such institutions have also been subjected to peculiar speculation by conspiratorial conservatives and the extreme right who have linked these bodies to the machinations of a nefarious global elite.[165] As one pamphlet claimed, the RIIA and CFR were but updated means to achieve Masonic control.[166] The author believed to have found confirmation

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156 Alexander Dugin, 'A Review of the Basic Theories of International Relations', Geopolitika.ru, last modified 11 November 2015, https://www.geopolitika.ru/en/1295-a-review-of-the-basic-theories-of-international-relations.html; Dugin, 'Realism in International Relations'.

157 Dugin, 'International Relations and Geopolitics'.

158 Dugin, 'Realism in International Relations'.

159 *Ibid.*

160 Dugin, 'Review of the Basic Theories of International Relations'.

161 Thomas G. Weiss, 'What Happened to the Idea of World Government', *International Studies Quarterly* 53, no. 2 (2009): 253-71.

162 Alexander Dugin, *Putin Vs Putin: Vladimir Putin Viewed from the Right* (London: Arktos, 2014), 326.

163 Kenneth N. Waltz, 'Structural Realism after the Cold War', *International Security* 25, no. 1 (2000): 13.

164 See David M. McCourt, 'Revisiting the Council on Foreign Relations Study Group on International Theory, 1953-54', *International History Review* 42, no. 3 (2020): 557-64.

165 See, e.g., James Perloff, *The Shadows of Power: The Council on Foreign Relations and the American Decline* (Appleton: Western Islands, 1988).

166 Anonymous, *A Prophecy?* (K.R.P. Publications, n.d.), 38, Fascist and Anti-Fascist Booklets, Searchlight Archive, University of Northampton, available online via the Political Extremism and Radicalism Collection, Gale Primary Sources.

of this opinion in a 1931 *Pacific Affairs* article by Toynbee: 'I will merely repeat that we are at present working, discreetly but with all our might, to wrest this mysterious political force called sovereignty out of the clutches of the local national states of the world'.[167] While conspiracies about Chatham House and its American counterpart were later popularised by Milnerite apologist Carroll Quigley—former professor of history and international affairs at Georgetown University and himself the subject of conspiracy theorists[168]—the pedigree of such fantasies can be traced to their circulation by far-right actors during the Cold War and interwar decades.[169]

Five insights emerge from this mode of extra-disciplinary reception. The first relates to its contemporary relevance: studying far-right international discourse divulges insight into the content, evolution, and diffusion of conspiracy theories and raises pertinent questions about the challenges besetting the authority of scholars and international experts. Such fantastical conspiracies are, after all, not inconsequential, representing instead an increasingly pervasive discourse seeping into the mainstream, one necessitating IR's attention. The views of entrepreneur-turned-presidential candidate Vivek Ramaswamy are a case in point, amounting to what Van Jackson has labelled an 'edgelord foreign policy' underpinned by 'conspiracy theory bullshit' and a 'modern reactionary imagination'.[170] Historians of international thought may find the pedigree of contemporary conspiracy theories in seemingly bygone ideas once popular in earlier strands of thought; the siege mentality of the Great Replacement, for instance, finding its historical parallel in the anxieties of such thinkers as Stoddard and Alfred Thayer Mahan.[171] Moreover, to the extent that conspiracy theorists have framed individuals and institutions within IR's disciplinary history as among their elusive enemies—including the CFR, Chatham House, or even individual scholars—such interconnections present a curious historical avenue to explore, and an exemplar of how conspiratorial thinking undermines the popular legitimacy of international institutions and expertise. As revealed by the #SdScandal or Mittiga's supposed ecofascism, processes of extra-disciplinary reception extend beyond the truly fantastical conspiracies to a range of ad hoc issues, whereby far-right voices have taken aim at varied controversies, thinkers, and texts within contemporary IR and political science to promote their agenda.

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[167] Cited in *ibid*. The anonymous author slightly altered, and miscited, Toynbee's quote. Interestingly, this passage is also quoted in the conspiratorial screeds of Eric D. Butler, founder of the far-right Australian League of Rights. Eric D. Butler, *The World-Government Plot Exposed: International Finance and the Second World War* (n.p., 1940), https://alor.org/Storage/Library/PDF/Butler%20ED%20-%20World_Government_Plot_Exposed.pdf. On one memorable occasion in 1972, Butler was torn down on the Australian Broadcasting Corporation's *Monday Conference* by political scientist and IR scholar at Monash University Max Teichmann.

[168] Carroll Quigley, *The Anglo-American Establishment: From Rhodes to Cliveden* (San Pedro: Books in Focus, 1981); Robert I. Rotberg, 'Did Cecil Rhodes Really Try to Control the World?', *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 42, no. 3 (2014): 551-67.

[169] See, e.g., John Beckett, 'Government's Amazing Muddle: Bankers Bemused with Symbols', *Blackshirt*, 15 February 1935, 3; 'What is the Council on Foreign Relations and the Trilateral Commission?', in *Duck Book*, n.d., 20.5, Radical Right Collection, Hoover Institution Library & Archives, Stanford; Gary Allen and Larry Abraham, *None Dare Call it Conspiracy* (Cutchogue: Buccaneer Books, 1971).

[170] Van Jackson, 'Vivek Ramaswamy's Edgelord Foreign Policy', *The Nation*, 23 August 2023, https://www.thenation.com/article/politics/vivek-ramaswamy-foreign-policy/.

[171] See, e.g., Ashworth, 'Warriors, Pacifists and Empires', 287.

The second insight regards methodology: how should scholars approach extremist thinkers holding conspiratorial views? It should be cautioned that the oft-obscure individuals expounding such notional conspiracies are typically not intellectuals. It is reasonable to incorporate figures akin to Dennis, Mosley, or de Benoist under the label of international thinker and thus within the remit of international intellectual history. Fuller, after all, regarded himself as 'a student of war *and* of international politics'.[172] By contrast, the *average* white supremacist subscribing to the absurdities of QAnon often retain only the most rudimentary political thought and inchoate views. Nonetheless, these conspiracies need not be a scholarly taboo nor viewed with inordinate derision by historians more disposed to the study of canonical texts, a point illustrated by Guilhot's ongoing enquiry into the place of conspiracy theories within European political thought.[173] Moreover, it must be acknowledged that the implicit boundary I construct above, marking the 'fascist intellectual' from the average conspiracy theorist, is itself highly porous. Fuller is considered a doyen of mechanised warfare and a mainstay in strategic studies. Yet he was not above fanciful conspiracies about the 'occult powers' controlling the League.[174] From Mosley's antisemitic diatribes against alleged Jewish warmongering or identitarian notions of a Great Replacement, conspiracism and the paranoid style are mainstays of far-right international thought.

Third, as when studying instances of far-right *co-optation* from the academy, one should pursue a similarly nuanced approach to examples of far-right *critique*. Michelsen's suggestion, for example, that de Benoist's *The New Right's Manifesto for the Year 2000* aimed to challenge 'the oppressive implications of major international theories, especially Liberalism', stands as a cautionary case.[175] While this may be a semantic quibble over the meaning of 'major international theories', it is worth specifying that de Benoist presents a vehement critique of liberal *international thought*, not necessarily *liberal IR theory*. While I do not doubt that he would have qualms regarding liberal IR theorists, it is not entirely clear that de Benoist has read his Ikenberry or Nye.

Fourth, the critical reception of scholarship by far-right actors raises important questions about the positionality and safety of the scholar. Researchers studying far-right extremism occasionally confront harassment and online doxing. If IR scholars are to engage more with this research area, and if one is attuned to the reality that malign actors may read one's scholarship (or that the act of data collection could lead to one's interaction with such actors), then it will be necessary for IR departments to adjust their practices accordingly. It is essential to question what practical safety measures may be adopted to limit the likelihood of online harassment and how departments can facilitate relevant training. Historians of international thought and IR scholars more broadly may take a cue from efforts elsewhere, such as Vox-Pol's collaborative Researcher Security, Safety, and Resilience project.[176]

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[172] Fuller, *Towards Armageddon*, vii (emphasis added).
[173] See, e.g., Nicolas Guilhot, 'Bad Information', *Boston Review*, 23 August 2021, https://bostonreview.net/articles/bad-information/.
[174] Fuller, *League Wars*.
[175] Michelsen, 'Minor International Theory', 502.
[176] See Elizabeth Pearson, et al., 'Online Extremism and Terrorism Researchers' Security, Safety, and Resilience: Findings from the Field', Vox-Pol, 2023, https://www.voxpol.eu/download/report/Online-Extremism-and-Terrorism-Researchers-Security-Safety-Resilience.pdf.

Furthermore, for those IR departments less attuned to the exploration of political extremism, there may be a need to more explicitly address serious and occasionally odd ethical questions that attend such topics—evaluating potential harms and risks, upholding institutional safeguarding responsibilities, or developing guidelines around the acquisition and meaning of informed consent. As Christian Fuchs captures in his brilliant title, 'Dear Mr. Neo-Nazi, can you please give me your informed consent so that I can quote your fascist tweet?', there are a raft of challenges in how *we*, as researchers, engage with the extreme right.[177]

Finally, and following closely on the prior, attentiveness to how far-right factions have critiqued experts on world politics—both past and present—as well as the way in which such experts historically responded to the far right, carries *normative* implications, or at least a hopeful rally point, for the discipline. Bull summarised the zeitgeist of interwar IR as centred around a 'belief in progress': it was 'their responsibility as students of international relations… to assist this march of progress', to confront the 'ignorance' and 'sinister interests' which hampered such ends.[178] Revisionist historiography has challenged this caricature, emphasising the imperial, gendered, Eurocentric, and racialised nature of interwar IR. Notwithstanding its lamentable inclinations, the field occupied an important role in challenging fascism via such figures as Angell, Brailsford, and Noel-Baker, among others. It was not solely the case that before the Cold War, '[t]he management of imperial relations and of the "color line" was the main focus of the discipline'.[179] My intent here is not to construct a post-revisionist meta-narrative of IR and certainly not an anti-revisionist one. After all, the international thought of many white British thinkers within IR's early history obfuscated the racial violence that attended European imperialism, a system of rule which the Trinidadian Marxist and Pan-Africanist George Padmore called 'colonial fascism'.[180] Moreover, for many thinkers the fight against fascism was not by its nature a fight against empire, but only a certain form of empire (and not even fascist empire as such). In October 1939, for example, Wheeler-Bennett presented before the Chicago Council on Foreign Relations regarding the war. One member of the audience posed the provocative comment: 'You said Britain is fighting to end aggression. Nothing has been said about re-establishing the sovereignty of Ethiopia.'[181] Wheeler-Bennett's obfuscatory response, himself a staunch opponent of Nazism, reveals the limits of this popular strand of anti-fascism:

> Italy is still neutral… I should hesitate to express an opinion on this point. We are fighting to end aggression. That, I think, is clear and evident from every statement and every angle…

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[177] Christian Fuchs, '"Dear Mr. Neo-Nazi, Can You Please Give Me Your Informed Consent So that I can Quote Your Fascist Tweet?": Questions of Social Media Research Ethics in Online Ideology Critique', in *The Routledge Companion to Media and Activism*, ed. Graham Meikle (Abingdon: Routledge, 2018).

[178] Bull, 'Theory of International Politics', 34.

[179] Guilhot, 'Introduction', 3.

[180] George Padmore, *How Britain Rules Africa* (London: Wishart Books, 1936), 129-30.

[181] Speech entitled 'As We See It' by John W. Wheeler-Bennett at the Chicago Council on Foreign Relations, typescript, 5 October 1939, F14, Sir John Wheeler-Bennett Collection.

> Whether the Ethiopian question is settled as a result of this war or not, I am afraid I must leave to the peace conference.[182]

While disciplinary sins cannot be absolved, one attribute worth unearthing and modernising is an explicit opposition to right-wing extremism. Stated differently, scholars ought to more actively recognise the complex role that early IR thinkers had in confronting far-right extremism, albeit in a not unproblematic manner, and the positive function that the discipline could feasibly have in the present. In Ashworth's doctoral dissertation, he signed of his acknowledgments with a note of gratitude to the discipline's forebearers: 'This thesis is gratefully dedicated to all those who fought fascism during those critical decades'.[183] This is a sentiment with which I would agree.

In this sense, research into fascist international thought, alongside its intersections with the academy, may be animated by a form of 'motivational presentism',[184] one amenable to current concerns about an ascendant far right. As Drolet and Williams highlight, New Right international theory 'is not simply descriptive… it is a form of political action, and for those parts of the Right interested in ideology, a systematic and historically resonant set of ideas is available.'[185] Provided the disjunct between the advance of the far right and IR's limited albeit gradually expanding scholarship on the subject, it is imperative that the subfield of the history of international thought accept the injunction proffered by Drolet and Williams and similarly engage such issues. Specifically, there is a need to systematically analyse the diverse conceptions of the international espoused by far-right forces, expose their antecedents, and (for those inclined) actively rebuke their politics. As MacKay and LaRoche opine in a not dissimilar context: 'A field that does not understand it in theory is ill equipped to understand and confront it in practice.'[186] Complementing cognate scholarship,[187] some publications within IR have already emerged on the international political sociology, reactionary internationalism, and right-wing Gramscianism of the New Right, alongside other manifestations of far-right populism and its challenge to international order.[188] In a similar vein, research into the international dimension of extreme right thought holds not only intrinsic historical value, but contemporary import. To borrow Devetak's terminology, this pursuit may serve as a type of critical international theory in 'historical

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[182] *Ibid.*

[183] Lucian M. Ashworth, 'The Liberal Rationalist Solution to the Problem of War in International Relations: Progress, Human Freedom and Rationality in the Peace Theories of Norman Angell and David Mitrany' (PhD diss., Dalhousie University, 1994), x.

[184] Naomi Oreskes, 'Why I Am a Presentist', *Science in Context* 26, no. 4 (2013): 595-609.

[185] Jean-François Drolet and Michael C. Williams, 'Radical Conservatism and Global Order: International Theory and the New Right', *International Theory* 10, no. 3 (2018): 288.

[186] MacKay and LaRoche, 'Reactionary International Theory', 241.

[187] See especially A. James McAdams and Alejandro Castrillon, eds., *Contemporary Far-Right Thinkers and the Future of Liberal Democracy* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2022).

[188] Jean-François Drolet and Michael C. Williams, 'The View from MARS: US Paleoconservatism and Ideological Challenges to the Liberal World Order', *International Journal* 74, no. 1 (2019): 15-31; Drolet and Williams, 'From Critique to Reaction'; de Orellana and Michelsen, 'Reactionary Internationalism'; Abrahamsen, et al., 'International Political Sociology of the New Right'; Jelena Subotic, 'Antisemitism in the Global Populist International', *British Journal of Politics and International Relations* 24, no. 3 (2022): 458–74.

mode'.[189] Armitage too calls upon intellectual historians to admit and thus embrace the motivational presentism which may underlie research.[190] Within historical IR, a related 'perspectival presentism'[191]—that is, a prioritisation of the present and an engagement with history to address how the present came to be—is already a standard feature. Accordingly, it need not be out of the ordinary were scholars to express contemporary motivations for studying the extreme right. As David Motadel emphasises, historians have regularly deployed their expert knowledge in the public sphere to inform discourse, correct historical misconceptions, or challenge popular myths and the political manipulation of history.[192]

A presentist motivation clearly need not imply a return to the reductionist interwar accounts of left-wing intellectuals. Anti-fascist attitudes were frequent, with political science and international affairs journals forming, at least in part, a mimetic front in the battle of ideologies. Unsurprisingly, then, '[t]he political instrumentalisation of intellectual history' was commonplace, its *reductio ad absurdum* realised, Bell suggests, in Bertrand Russell's claim that 'Hitler is an outcome of Rousseau; Roosevelt and Churchill, of Locke'.[193] Alternatively, for some engaged with reconstructing a history of international thought, far-right extremism was entirely beyond their scope. Stawell's history is emblematic, expunging fascism from the entire gamut of international thought.[194] As Graham Evans suggests, Stawell's survey 'is more an exercise in normative political indoctrination than a history of thought'.[195] The evolution of international thought was framed in a Whiggish fashion, its contemporary incarnation construed as 'synonymous with support for the League'.[196] This was part of a broader trend: British advocates of the League coined the phrase 'international thought'; the intent was 'to denote a usable past rather than to create a critical history'.[197] This normative opposition is understandable, if not laudable. Nonetheless, such polemics contain obvious limitations if the endeavour is to decipher the actual content of, and thus combat, extremist thought.

Rather than engaging in a redux of the politicisation of intellectual history in the divergent styles of Stawell and Russell—or, for that matter, the dogmatic Marxist analysis found in John Strachey's 1934 tract, *The Menace of Fascism*—what is promoted instead is a more rigorous study of extreme right international thought and the menace

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[189] Richard Devetak, 'A Rival Enlightenment? Critical International Theory in Historical Mode', *International Theory* 6, no. 3 (2014): 417-453.

[190] David Armitage, 'Modern International Thought: Problems and Prospects', *History of European Ideas* 41, no. 1 (2015): 119.

[191] David Armitage, 'In Defense of Presentism', in *History and Human Flourishing*, ed. Darrin M. McMahon (New York: Oxford University Press, 2022).

[192] David Motadel, 'The Political Role of the Historian', *Contemporary European History* 32, no. 1 (2023): 43.

[193] Duncan Bell, 'What is Liberalism?', *Political Theory* 42, no. 6 (2014): 704.

[194] On Stawell, see Glenda Sluga, 'From F. Melian Stawell to E. Greene Balch: International and Internationalist Thinking at the Gender Margins, 1919-1947', in *Women's International Thought: A New History*, eds. Patricia Owens and Katharina Rietzler (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2021).

[195] Graham Evans, 'Some Problems with a History of Thought in International Relations', *International Relations* 4, no. 6 (1972): 717.

[196] *Ibid.*

[197] Armitage, *Foundations*, 26. See, e.g., John Galsworthy, *International Thought* (Cambridge: W. Heffer & Sons, 1923). For notable exceptions, see Russell, *Theories of International Relations*; Schuman, *International Politics*.

thereof. As one reviewer within the *Fascist Quarterly* remarked: 'Every Fascist should read as much good anti-Fascist literature as possible. You cannot answer the other man's case if you don't know it'.[198] While I am hesitant to use the adjective 'good', this statement remains applicable in the inverse.

[198] J.B., review of *The Growth of Fascism in Great Britain*, 509.

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