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***Nationalism* and *Internationalism* Reconciled**

British Concepts for a New World Order during and after the World Wars

Antero Holmila and Pasi Ihalainen

Abstract: The carnage of World War I gave rise to liberal visions for a new world order with democratized foreign policy and informed international public opinion. Conservatives emphasized continuity in national sovereignty, while socialists focused on the interests of the working class. While British diplomacy in the construction of the League of Nations has been widely discussed, we focus on contemporary uses of *nationalism* and *internationalism* in parliamentary and press debates that are more ideological. We also examine how failed internationalist visions influenced uses of these concepts during World War II, supporting alternative organizational solutions, caution with the rhetoric of democracy and public opinion, and ways to reconcile national sovereignty with a new world organization. The United Nations was to guarantee the interests of the leading powers (including the United States), while associations with breakthroughs of democracy were avoided. *Nationalism* (patriotism) and *internationalism* were reconciled with less idealism and more pragmatism.
Keywords: Britain, internationalism, League of Nations, nationalism, Parliament, United Nations, world wars

As World War I caused autocratic dynasties to fall all over Europe, a unique moment for restructuring international relations seemed to be at hand. In most idealistic thinking, reflected not only in the rhetoric of US President Woodrow Wilson but also in plans for a league of nations drafted by British intellectuals, prewar and wartime secret policies would be replaced by openness: listening to the voice(s) of the people(s) and educating them politically would create an informed international public opinion that would end all wars. The peoples

would instead solve crises through negotiations between their (elected) representatives. Once universal suffrage and parliamentary government seemed to have become the norm in nation-states, foreign policy would be taken away from aristocratic and reactionary experts of the foreign ministries and potentially democratized at both national and international levels.[1]

Such mainly Anglophone internationalist visions began to appear frequently in public debates in 1917, echoing the ideology of the US Democratic Party and serving the interests of the British Empire as "a league of nations," as Prime Minister David Lloyd George once put it.[2] Yet, *internationalism*, a neologism that had emerged in the mid-nineteenth century,[3] remained a highly disputed concept. It had by 1918 developed into a counter-concept to nation-states and bourgeois society, referring in its radical socialist form to the future dictatorship of the international proletariat.[4]

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1. Helen McCarthy, *The British People and the League of Nations: Democracy, Citizenship and Internationalism, c. 1918–45* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2012), 16–19.

2. E. H. Carr, *The Twenty Years' Crisis, 1919–1939: An Introduction to the Study of International Relations*, with a new introduction by Michael Fox (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2001), 3, 15; Martin Ceadel, *Semi-detached Idealists: The British Peace Movement and International Relations, 1854–1945* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 4; Mark Mazower, *Governing the World: The History of an Idea, 1815 to the Present* (New York: Penguin, 2012), 128.

3. Glenda Sluga, *Internationalism in the Age of Nationalism* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2013), 4.

4. Reinhart Koselleck, "Volk, Nation, Nationalismus, Masse" [People, nation, nationalism, mass], in *Geschichtliche Grundbegriffe: Historisches Lexikon zur politisch-sozialen Sprache in Deutschland* [Basic historical concepts: Historical lexicon to politico-social language in

While recent research has discussed British diplomacy's role in constructing the League of Nations and interrelations between nationalism and internationalism as ideas and practices,[5] competing contemporary uses of *nationalism* and *internationalism* and the related semantic field in parliamentary and press debates that are more ideological have received less attention. A long-term comparison with the post–World War II conceptualizations has not been attempted either. In this article, we first analyze competing contemporary uses of *international*, *internationalism*, and *superstate* as opposed to *national*, *nationalism* (often also *patriotism* or *national interests*), and *national sovereignty* in the British Parliament and

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Germany], vol. 7, ed. Reinhart Koselleck, Werner Conze, and Otto Brunner (Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta, 1992), 141–431, here 403.

5. See, e.g., Daniel Laqua, "Preface," in *Internationalism Reconfigured: Transnational Ideas and Movements between the World Wars*, ed. Daniel Laqua (London: I. B. Tauris, 2011), xi–xvii, here xii, xv; Patricia Clavin, "Introduction: Conceptualising Internationalism between the World Wars," in Laqua, *Internationalism Reconfigured*, 1–14, here 2, 5–6. These authors are interested in international and transnational thought and action, as well as interaction between nationalism and internationalism, but provide little historical analysis of past uses of concepts. See also Glenda Sluga and Patricia Clavin, "Rethinking the History of Internationalism," in *Internationalisms: A Twentieth Century History*, ed. Patricia Clavin and Glenda Sluga (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017), 3–16, here 5–6, who survey internationalism as a political idea connected to nationalism and emphasize the contextual specificity of "internationalisms" without focusing on conceptual analysis as such. Sluga, *Internationalism*, 3–4, 9, addresses the development of internationalism as an aspect of nationalism by focusing on talk of internationalism and practices in a selection of international associations.

press in connection with the ratification of the Covenant of the League of Nations in 1919. We then examine how attempts to prevent the reoccurrence of the failure of the League of Nations and efforts to learn from that history influenced visions for the future during and after World War II and related uses of *nationalism* and *internationalism*. While our analytical focus is on the history of political discourse from a conceptual historical point of view, we also refer to broader phenomena of nationalism and internationalism as discussed in previous research.

Our focus is not on the ministries, events, or structures but rather on contemporary discourse on the international and the national as they occurred in the British Parliament—parliaments being mobilized in exceptional ways to rethink foreign policy in connection with League or United Nations membership—and in related press comments. The simultaneous analysis of parliamentary and press sources integrates two leading interconnected forums on which government foreign policy was publicly examined. Parliamentary debates contain conceptualizations of the national and international—often based on what the MPs had read in newspapers—in an exceptional situation allowing interventions in foreign policy. Leading newspapers such as *The Times*, *The Manchester Guardian*, and *The Daily Telegraph* had correspondents in Westminster, and reported and commented on these debates, providing alternative understandings and context that conceptual historians cannot find elsewhere.

While *nationalism* had already been established by the late 1910s, *internationalism* was still gaining ground and gradually widening from insinuations of far-left extremism to necessary cooperation between capitalist nation-states. By the mid-1940s, the concept became understood pragmatically: while everyday international cooperation was to be carried out in an organization of all superpowers, including the Soviet Union, *internationalism* among British socialists continued to distinguish itself from communist goals. They were no longer suspect of such goals either. A major difference between the debates of the 1910s and

of the 1940s is that the formation of the United Nations was not associated with any universal breakthrough of democracy and international public opinion like that of the League of Nations.

Anglo-American International Thought Inspired by World War I

Anglophone international thought, which had roots in prewar debates among socialists and liberals, was activated by the traumatic experiences of World War I. In Britain, these groups founded the Union of Democratic Control during the war, aiming to replace secret treaties with the "new diplomacy" of mutual negotiations and place foreign policy under democratic and parliamentary control.[6] The wartime coalition of the Conservative Party, some of the Liberal Party, and—until 1918—the Labour Party concluded that an intergovernmental forum for solving international disputes would have prevented the war.[7] The coalition looked for ways to involve the United States in European politics—first to the war and after it through "a League of Nations."[8] Such cooperation was believed to serve the interests of the Empire and continue British world supremacy,[9] which also persuaded many imperialistically oriented Conservatives to support the scheme. Decisive was that Wilson viewed the League as a way

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6. Ruth Henig, *Versailles and After 1919–1933*, 2nd ed. (London: Routledge, 1995), 14; McCarthy, *The British People*, 19; Casper Sylvest, "Interwar Internationalism, the British Labour Party, and the Historiography of International Relations," *International Studies Quarterly* 48, no. 2 (2004): 409–432, here 415.

7. Henig, *Versailles and After*, 10–11.

8. John A. Thompson, "Wilsonianism: The Dynamics of a Conflicted Concept," *International Affairs* 86, no. 1 (2010): 27–47, here 30–31.

9. Henig, *Versailles and After*, 70; Mazower, *Governing the World*, xvi.

to replace a European tradition of secret diplomacy and war with American idealism. As the United States entered the war on 6 April 1917, the establishment of a League became an Allied war aim—side by side with the destruction of Prussianism in the name of making "the world safe for democracy."[10]

Wilson saw the war as having been launched by imperialist European great powers and nationalists. In the future, the administration of international relations by a new intergovernmental organization of democratic nations would solve conflicts peacefully in the spirit of open diplomacy.[11] Yet, most of the US Senate did not endorse an organization that would possess sovereignty over the United States, the Republican counterargument being that "nationalism, not internationalism" had led to a victory or that "we will accept no indefinite internationalism as a substitute for fervent American nationalism."[12] For many Republicans, *nationalism* remained a positively charged principle, and Wilson, too, emphasized the principle of national self-determination.

As US participation appeared increasingly unlikely, British diplomats would play key

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10. Henig, *Versailles and After*, 9–10, 12–15; Peter J. Yearwood, *Guarantee of Peace: The League of Nations in British Policy 1914–1925* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 39; Norman A. Graebner and Edward M. Bennett, *The Versailles Treaty and Its Legacy: The Failure of the Wilsonian Vision* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 11–14; Mazower, *Governing the World*, 118; William G. Ross, "Constitutional Issues Involving the Controversy over American Membership in the League of Nations, 1918–1920," *American Journal of Legal History* 53, no. 1 (2013): 1–88, here 3.

11. Graebner and Bennett, *The Versailles Treaty*, 23.

12. *The Times*, 26 February 1919, 9; *The Times*, 10 March 1919, 12.

roles in forming the League as an international forum aimed at unity in diversity.[13] The Conservatives had won a major election in December 1918 and continued to cooperate with the Liberals of Lloyd George toward founding the League. Yet, according to *The Daily Telegraph*, the Covenant, which was signed after several compromises, inspired "no solemnities of any kind." Concessions such as the introduction of unanimous decisions had had to be made "to that instinct of nationhood which is the aim of the League to associate with a sense of responsibility to mankind." To some, the League constituted "the promised fulfilment of a dream of internationalism, a system in which the essential rights of nationhood would be surrendered to a great over-riding authority which . . . would stand no non-sense." To others, "such an endeavour to force the pace of man's political evolution could result in nothing but disaster." A general wish was that the organization could be developed further, nationalism and internationalism reconciled, and future wars thus prevented.[14]

British Visions on the League in Parliament and in the Press

The House of Commons debate on the Treaty of Peace Bill on 21 July 1919 constituted a unique nexus of diversified postwar foreign policy discourses.[15] The major foreign policy themes concerned (1) patriotism or nationalism versus internationalism; (2) national

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13. Carr, *The Twenty Years' Crisis*, 35; Henig, *Versailles and After*, 45–47.

14. *The Daily Telegraph* (*DT*), 30 April 1919, 10.

15. For nexus analysis in conceptual history, see Mia Halonen, Pasi Ihalainen, and Taina Saarinen, "Diverse Discourses in Time and Space: Historical, Discourse Analytical and Ethnographic Approaches to Multi-sited Language Policy Discourse," in *Language Policies in Finland and Sweden: Interdisciplinary and Multi-sited Comparisons*, ed. Mia Halonen, Pasi Ihalainen, and Taina Saarinen (Bristol: Multilingual Matters, 2015), 3–26.

sovereignty versus supranational powers, possibly including sanctions imposed by the League; and (3) notions of the League as the promoter of global democracy and international public opinion. The discourses on democracy and public opinion were typical of 1919 but no longer in focus in 1945. By analyzing the debate, we can reconstruct a variety of competing British understandings of the League, which are in turn noteworthy because of the key role that the British political elite played in the rise of a transnational internationalist discourse and in founding the League.

The ratification debates were rare occasions in that Parliament had a chance to deliberate both the principles of the future world order and the international role of Britain, having generally played a minor role in foreign policy mainly as a forum for publicity.[16] The Parliament Act 1911 had concentrated power in the lower house, however, and the Representation of the People Act 1918 had restored some of the representative institution's legitimacy deteriorated by the war.[17] The House of Lords had little substance to add to this issue other than comparisons with nineteenth-century peace conferences—which were logical, given structural continuity.[18] Deliberation mattered, as the Commons had been

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16. Pasi Ihalainen and Satu Matikainen, "The British Parliament and Foreign Policy in the 20th Century: Towards Increasing Parliamentarisation?" *Parliamentary History* 35, no. 1 (2016): 1−14; cf. Peter G. Richards, *Parliament and Foreign Affairs* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1967), 13, 164.

17. Pasi Ihalainen, *The Springs of Democracy: National and Transnational Debates on Constitutional Reform in the British, German, Swedish and Finnish Parliaments in an Age of War and Revolution, 1917–1919* (Helsinki: Finnish Literature Society, 2017).

18. House of Lords Debates (HL Deb), 3 and 24 July 1919, vol. 35; Paul Kennedy, *The Parliament of Man: The Past, Present, and Future of the United Nations* (New York:

"elected largely for that purpose," that is, for postwar reconstruction, including international relations.[19] All parties appeared overwhelmingly supportive of the League, which, according to *The Daily Telegraph*, gave rise to "the highest hopes for a better regulation of the world's affairs," though "a few reservations and misgivings" were also brought up.[20]

There was no doubt an atmosphere of idealistic optimism. According to Sir Donald Maclean, the Leader of the Opposition, the President of the parliamentary Liberal Party, and a free church activist, the Covenant would launch a new type of international politics to the extent that future historians would say, "In the beginning was the League of Nations." The League made the sacrifices in the war worthwhile, potentially lifting "the whole life of humanity one step forward towards the achievement of the ideal that one day judgment between man and man shall run down like many waters and righteousness—international righteousness—as a mighty stream."[21] J. R. Clynes (Labour) rather viewed the League in secular terms as an instrument for considering differences that offered "to mankind the greatest hope of avoiding of future conflict which has ever been afforded to it."[22]

Lloyd George's government presented the Covenant as serving British interests. Lord Robert Cecil (coalition Conservative), a pacifist who had served the Red Cross and contributed significantly to the League's planning, defended it as an experiment that provided

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Random House, 2006), 8.

19. *DT*, 3 February 1919, 8.

20. *DT*, 23 July 1919, 8; see Kennedy, *The Parliament of Man*, 9.

21. House of Commons Debates (HC Deb), 21 July 1919, vol. 118, cols. 957−958. The quote is from Amos 5:24.

22. Ibid., col. 961.

a way out of constant crises and destructive wars.[23] Stephen Walsh (coalition Labour) envisioned a transition to an entirely new epoch, when the horrors of the war would be replaced by plans to prevent ones in the future. Any further prioritization of national interests would entail the repetition of such conflicts.[24] The governmental version of British foreign policy was linked to war experiences and willingness to reform the international system as a way of postwar reconstruction—a lot like British suffrage had been reformed two years previously.

Nationalism versus Internationalism

Some MPs conceded that national feelings had been reinforced by the war and continued to dominate political attitudes everywhere.[25] Others expressed the primacy of national interests openly: in a debate on the Aliens Restriction Bill, Charles Stanton (National Democratic and Labour Party, NDP) condemned "the pacifists" and "those people who are friends of every country but their own, whose great ideals are International Brotherhood, the League of Nations, and so on."[26] Imperialism surfaced as Frank Hilder (Conservative) praised the Treaty of Peace as "a sound British compromise" that "puts the British Empire at the highest point that it has ever reached as regards territory and world influence."[27] Such imperial "internationalism" in which Britain stood for half the globe was unattractive, for instance, to Germans and Americans.

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23. Ibid., col. 993.

24. Ibid., col. 1061.

25. Ibid., Donald Maclean, col. 954, and James Andrew Seddon, col. 982.

26. HC Deb, 15 April 1919, vol. 114, col. 2799.

27. HC Deb, 21 July 1919, vol. 118, col. 1017.

James Andrew Seddon (NDP) questioned claims that the masses supported the League, and challenged Christian arguments in its favor: if Christianity had not secured world peace in two millennia, how would the ambitious ideals of the League do it?[28] A humorous parallel between Christ or Moses and Wilson was circulating in 1919, reflecting annoyance caused by Wilson's arrogance.[29] Seddon now suggested that the League enthusiasts, like early disciples, had ignored human nature, which could not be changed simply by adopting strict ethic principles.[30] Similar views on ineradicable "human instincts" that may only be "tamed and controlled," but hardly changed, were reflected in the editorial of *The Daily Telegraph*.[31]

Cecil recognized the remaining challenges but emphasized the uniqueness of the experiment designed to redefine international relations. The League would tackle the legacy of constant warfare rising out of the interests of nation-states:

> There are many who maintain what I venture to call the jungle theory of international relations—that every nation is marching about through an impenetrable jungle, seeking how it may devour every other nation. A very ingenious and convinced supporter of that view goes so far as to say that, in his judgment, war is only intensified peace, by which, so far as I can make out, he means that all nations always, even at times of most profound peace, are really in a condition of potential war, and

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28. Ibid., cols. 981–982.

29. Mazower, *Governing the World*, 118.

30. HC Deb, 21 July 1919, vol. 118, cols. 982–983.

31. *DT*, 23 July 1919, 8.

that war is only making actual what was always potential.[32]

Holding this traditional theory of international relations would make attempts to establish peace or even guaranteeing "the existence of European civilisation" hopeless.[33] Fundamental rethinking was imperative, as "all nations are part of a larger whole."[34] Indeed, unlike the wartime understanding, patriotism was not opposite to the international cause;[35] patriotism and the suggested kind of world order were supportive of each other, as "the prosperity of every country is the prosperity of each."[36] This rising transnational concept of what we can call "nationalistic internationalism" suggested that national interests should be subordinated to international cooperation and the two amalgamated. Ideas about the interrelatedness and reconcilability of patriotism, nationalism, and internationalism had appeared before, had served the interests of the British Empire, had surfaced in Wilsonian thought, and would reemerge during World War II.[37]

On 6 September 1918, at a time when the Entente Powers still championed the common cause in the war, Theodore Roosevelt, a Republican critic of Wilson, had said in New York: "Patriotism stands in national matters as the love of family does in private life. Nationalism corresponds to the love that a man bears for the life of his children. Internationalism corresponds to the feeling he has for his neighbours generally. To substitute

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32. HC Deb, 21 July 1919, vol. 118, cols. 986–987.

33. Ibid., col. 986.

34. Ibid., col. 987.

35. *The Times*, 27 April 1916, 5; *The Times*, 19 October 1917, 5; *The Times*, 22 July 1918, 3.

36. HC Deb, 21 July 1919, vol. 118, col. 987; *DT*, 17 February 1919, 8.

37. Mazower, *Governing the World*, xiv, 48; Sluga, *Internationalism*, 2, 4.

internationalism for nationalism means to do away with patriotism."[38] In the Commons, Thomas A. Lewis (coalition Liberal) had recently pointed out that "internationalism and nationalism" were the prevailing global trends and should be viewed as complementary. Importantly, however, "internationalism, whether you look at it in the form of the League of Nations or the Socialist International" (these appearing here as opposites), did not seek to weaken "racial or nationalistic distinctions."[39] Transnational discourse on nationalistic internationalism became especially relevant, as Christian Lange, the Secretary of the Inter-Parliamentary Union and author of *Histoire de l'internationalisme*,[40] addressed the Commons just three days before the decisive debate, claiming that many had fought "for internationalism as the sole possible issue of the war, and as the sole possible basis of a better future." Lange maintained that internationalism challenged nationality in no way, instead suggesting that "nations and nationalities in their sphere have, in order to live, to seek co-operation and community with others."[41]

Instead of openly vindicating "internationalism," which might have been interpreted

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38. *The Times*, 7 September 1918, 6.

39. HC Deb, 4 June 1919, vol. 116, col. 2082.

40. Christian Lous Lange, *Histoire de l'internationalisme* [History of internationalism] (Christiana: H. Ashehoug & Co., 1919).

41. *The Manchester Guardian* (*MG*), 18 July 1919, 6. Similar points of can be found among Swedish and Finnish supporters of the League membership. They frequently associated internationalization with the ongoing democratization. Pasi Ihalainen, "Internationalization and Democratization Interconnected: The Swedish and Finnish Parliaments Debating Membership in the League of Nations in 1920," *Parliaments, Estates and Representation* 38, no. 3 (2018): 1–21, https://doi.org/10.1080/02606755.2018.1483998.

as challenging the nation-state or even expressing Marxism, Cecil preferred to talk about an "explicit recognition of the necessity of international co-operation" that would make possible a "new spirit in international relations" and "a great advance in the international life of the world," including "much more international arbitration or international justice" and the creation of "international opinion."[42] In brief, Britain should no longer prioritize "the immediate advantage of this country" at the cost of "the international co-operation which we believe is essential to the prosperity of the world."[43]

This vision by no means went unchallenged. James Myles Hogge (Liberal) questioned the realism of the League scheme for as long as Germany was not a member and wondered how revisions in the terms of peace would be reached once it was admitted. French Prime Minister Georges Clemenceau had not even mentioned the League when addressing the French Parliament on the Anglo-American guarantees. The British government, for its part, provided guarantees, which made Hogge ask whether anyone counted on the League or if it just continued "the old diplomacy of the French nation" based on client states.[44] Lloyd George assured that the French, too, believed in the experiment; they merely asked for guarantees until the League would be sufficiently established.[45] Structural problems were also brought up: Joseph Kenworthy (opposition Liberal) considered it problematic that the representatives of small nations in the League would be elected by great powers; that China, Russia, and Germany were categorized as small powers; and that the latter two remained excluded. He further suggested the election of national representatives of the League by

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42. HC Deb, 21 July 1919, vol. 118, cols. 988–992.

43. Ibid., col. 994.

44. Ibid., cols. 1013–1016; see also *DT*, 11 January 1919, 8.

45. HC Deb, 21 July 1919, vol. 118, cols. 1040–1041.

national parliaments, not governments, to inspire the peoples, which entailed democratization. As an international police force was also lacking, he argued that no "international and internal peace in this country" would be achieved with this treaty.[46] For the far right, including Sir Henry Page Croft (National Party), the League remained a mere "sham" for as long as nothing was done to intervene Bolshevist rule in Russia.[47] Many Conservatives, such as Colonel Charles Burn, also remained hopeful rather than optimistic.[48] For Sir Samuel Hoare, the League would provide "an organisation under which the new world can come into being with success" but only if the United States were involved.[49] This was generally known to be the weakest link in the scheme: without America, the British political elite would feel very lonely in the League.

National Sovereignty versus Supranational Powers

The question about the relationship between the planned supranational organization and national sovereignty remained unsettled. Parliamentary sovereignty was not seen as endangered by the League in the British Parliament, however, which differs from contemporary US concerns on violating the Constitution (as well as from British views on European integration in the late 2010s). This reflects prevalent trust in the project as designed by British diplomats to serve the interests of the Empire. *The Daily Telegraph* welcomed the League "as a sovereign power," while *The Manchester Guardian* lamented caution in

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46. Ibid., cols. 1031–1033; *MG*, 12 March 1919, 6.

47. HC Deb, 21 July 1919, vol. 118, col. 1073.

48. Ibid., cols. 1027–1028.

49. Ibid., cols. 1038–1039.

references to national sovereignty in the plans, calling for "a stronger internationalism."[50] A Liberal, even Conservative, concept of internationalism was clearly emerging in early 1919, providing an alternative to labor internationalism, not to mention its Leninist version.

Supranational powers were nevertheless debated. The Conservative Cecil assured that "for the most part there is no attempt to rely on anything like a super-State; no attempt to rely upon force to carry out a decision of the Council or the Assembly of the League."[51] In other words, military force was not in the League's toolbox. As it was unrealistic to dream about international armed forces, public opinion constituted the major weapon. Lloyd George insisted that "a public opinion in nations" was prepared to use force, recycling Wilson's view that "if the moral force of the world will not suffice, . . . the physical force of the world shall."[52]

Labour MPs did their best to reconcile League internationalism, national sovereignty, and the promotion of the working-class cause. Labour internationalism focused on the International Labour Organization (ILO), designed, on the initiative of the Paris Peace Conference, on foundations provided by prewar international networks with the purpose of curtailing communism.[53] Labour internationalism had been viewed very negatively in the Conservative press:[54] a conference in Lausanne early 1919 had been condemned as organized

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50. *DT*, 11 January 1919, 8; *MG*, 20 March 1919, 12.

51. HC Deb, 21 July 1919, vol. 118, col. 990.

52. Ibid., col. 1040; *DT*, 17 February 1919, 8.

53. Jasmien Van Daele, "Engineering Social Peace: Networks, Ideas, and the Founding of the International Labour Organization," *International Review for Social History* 50, no. 3 (2005): 435–66, here 464.

54. *The Times*, 5 June 1917, 7; *The Times*, 15 July 1918, 8.

by "the political prophets of 'Internationalism'" and "Internationalism, Bolshevism, or any other 'ism'" had also been rejected—which reflects the continuously pejorative connotations of isms.[55] One of the labor proposals had been the creation of an international lower house or a transnational assembly elected by the peoples to carry on prewar projects of proletarian internationalism.[56] Some activists went on associating internationalism with "International Socialism" and thereby challenging national governments. Most famously, the Communist International founded in Moscow in March 1919 had denounced the League as counterrevolutionary and presented itself as an alternative supranational organization.[57] This made Labour politicians careful to avoid associations with Bolshevism and to emphasize aspects of the ILO that countered the visions of world revolution.

The tripartite representation of governments, employers, and trade unions in the ILO constituted a potentially supranational structure challenging the sovereignty of governments, as it involved transnational nongovernmental organizations in negotiations.[58] George Barnes (NDP), who had been one of the negotiators in Paris, hence assured that there would be no

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55. *The Times*, 14 January 1919, 3; *The Times*, 30 January 1919, 3.

56. Martin Albers, "Between the Crisis of Democracy and World Parliament: The Development of the Inter-Parliamentary Union in the 1920s," *Journal of Global History* 7, no. 2 (2012): 189–209, here 198, 200, 204.

57. *MG*, 27 June 1919, 9; Mazower, *Governing the World*, 173–175.

58. Jasmien Van Daele, "The International Labour Organization (ILO) in Past and Present Research," *International Review for Social History* 53, no. 3 (2008): 485–511, here 485–486; Gerry Rodgers, Eddy Lee, Lee Swepston, and Jasmien Van Daele, *The International Labour Organization and the Quest for Social Justice, 1919–2009* (Geneva: International Labour Office, 2009), 12, 14.

"super-Parliament, which would issue decrees and somehow or other compel all countries to fall into line" within the ILO either. The states would rather be "under a moral obligation to submit to their competent authorities whatever is decided on at the Conferences," and should this not happen, "the League of Nations can be invoked by Labour to see that effect is given to it."[59] Supranational pressure would remain modest, entailing no more than "a complaint," "a Court of Inquiry," and, finally, "such economic pressure as the League thinks proper in the circumstances" as "States jealously guard their own rights, and we cannot, at this stage of the world's history, cut into those rights."[60] Some supranational thinking was heard in the insistence that Labour delegates should vote independently of their governments, promoting "a spirit of internationality" and enabling "Labour in this and any other country to make common cause with Labour in all countries." Yet, a sufficiently strong representation of the states was needed for the governments to feel themselves morally obliged to carry out the decisions.[61] Such revisionist socialist internationalism emerged out of a compromise between the long-term ideals of the labor movement and pressures to maintain the established social order in nation-states in the aftermath of the Bolshevik Revolution and the emergence of the League and the ILO as forums of Western internationalism.

Notions of the League as the Promoter of Democracy and International Public Opinion

In 1919, Anglophone visions of internationalism built largely on the assumption that democracy would prevail internationally once the Western democracies had won the war and nearly universal (male) suffrage was introduced. International public opinion rising from

59. HC Deb, 21 July 1919, vol. 118, cols. 971–972, 974.

60. Ibid., cols. 974–975.

61. Ibid., col. 972.

these provided the foundation on which a new world order could be built. Both themes would be considerably weaker in the aftermath of World War II.

In the British Parliament, opposition Liberals and Irish Nationalists used *democracy* mainly to challenge Lloyd George's government. Arthur Murray, who drew connections between the League's creation and constitutional development at the national level, viewed the League as the means to establish the global victory of Anglophone democratic ideals.[62] No genuine discussion on international democracy within the League emerged, however, even if the Socialist International had proposed a transnational parliamentary assembly as a means to democratize the League and many Labour MPs, radical Liberals, and Continental Social Democrats had supported the idea. Kenworthy took up discrepancies between wartime talk on "fighting to make the world safe for democracy," statements on the Entente Powers not fighting "against the German nation," promises not to "break up the German peoples," and the actual terms of peace.[63]

Many British MPs built their arguments in favor of the League on national and international public opinion, just as Wilson had appealed to the will of "the peoples of the world."[64] Awareness of the importance of (parliamentary) publicity even among bureaucrats is revealed by the British delegation in Paris emphasizing the need for the early publication of the Treaty of Versailles as "promised to the British Parliament."[65] Likewise, the Foreign

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62. Ibid., col. 1025.

63. Ibid., cols. 1030–1031.

64. *DT*, 26 February 1919, 8.

65. E. L. Woodward and Rohan Butler et al., eds., *Documents on British Foreign Policy 1919–1939: First Series, Proceedings of the Supreme Council July-October 1919.* (London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1947), 804: British Delegation to M. Dutasta, 26 August

Office planned a parliamentary question to express the British stand and to have it "telegraphed at once to American press" in order to persuade the critics of the League there,[66] which illustrates the publicity role that traditional diplomacy now awarded to Parliament.

According to Cecil, the League would maintain peace so that the majority of (a presumably pro-Anglophone) international public opinion would control policies: "The operation of public opinion will be so strong that only in cases of a very, very rare character and of a very, very restricted nature will any war take place if this provision is enforced." On behalf of the government, he assured that "between one country and another the effect of public opinion is overwhelming. There will be no country who can hope to carry through any policy unless it has behind it, . . . a larger part of the public opinion of the world."[67] Creating "an international opinion, an international conscience, an international will" was the outspoken goal of the British government.[68] According to Cecil, the entire system depended on it:

1919; see also Sir William Mitchell-Thomson, HC Deb, 10 November 1919, vol. 121, col. 22.

66. E. L. Woodward and Rohan Butler et al., eds., *Documents on British Foreign Policy 1919–1939: First Series, Vol. V: Western Europe, June 1919 - January 1920 and Viscount Grey's mission to Washington, August - December 1919* (London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1954), 1007–1008, 1010–1012: Viscount Grey (Washington) to Earl Curzon, 9 October 1919, 14 October 1919, 26 October 1919 (the date of the quote). The actual question cannot be found in the Hansard.

67. HC Deb, 21 July 1919, vol. 118, cols. 989–990.

68. *DT*, 11 January 1919, 8.

> If you do not rely upon public opinion the decision of the assemblies ceases to be of the first importance. If you have a decision in the assembly of overwhelming opinion on one side or the other it matters very little whether it is unanimous or not, because the whole course of public opinion will fasten round the great mass of the overwhelming majority.[69]

Cecil further suggested that the British should see this expected breakthrough of international opinion as identical with their national interests, the peace being "the greatest British triumph." If some British politician arouses "popular opinion" in the name of "national gain," then the government should stand firm on the side of the international cause.[70] The international public opinion created by the League would advance the British cause better than would the traditional prioritization of the nation and empire.

As we saw, the prime minister also counted on public opinion, pointing out that whoever challenged the new world order must be prepared for the use of force supported by "a public opinion in nations," that is, in Britain and the United States.[71] Labour MPs trusted publicity as well, as the League functioned, according to Clynes, "under the influences and the pressure of a more potent democratic body of opinion than has ever previously existed."[72] Many peers, including Viscount James Bryce (Liberal), echoed confidence in "the public opinion of the world," which suggests that, in 1919, the British political elite wanted to

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69. HC Deb, 21 July 1919, vol. 118, col. 992.

70. Ibid., col. 994.

71. Ibid., col. 1040.

72. Ibid., col. 960.

believe public opinion could change the world.[73] Counterarguments were nevertheless voiced: *The Daily Telegraph* considered it unwise to count on public opinion so uncritically, it having not stopped Germany or Austria during the war, for instance.[74]

Having analyzed British visions for the League of Nations in the aftermath of World War I, we now turn to key arguments expressed during World War II. What was the historical-political significance of these experiences and related debates in attempts to find new kinds of solutions for international order when it was known that the League had failed with drastic consequences? Which ideals continued to be seen as worth pursuing, which solutions needed to be rejected or rethought, and how did the results of the post–World War I attempt influence British politicians who were planning the reconstruction of the world order in the 1940s? How would nationalism and national sovereignty on the one hand and internationalism and supranational power on the other be reconciled under the new circumstances? Could the new world organization still promote democracy and build on public opinion after the experiences of the Weimar Republic, the Spanish Civil War, the Nazi regime, and, ultimately, another world war?

In recent years the planning of the United Nations during the war and even the new organization's origins, dating back to nineteenth-century British imperialistic thought, have received renewed interest.[75] Connecting the ideological continuum from the League to the UN, Mark Mazower has written that the UN was in many ways "a continuation of the earlier

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73. HL Deb, 24 July 1919, vol. 35, col. 1018.

74. *DT*, 23 July 1919, 8.

75. Daniel Plesch, *America, Hitler and the UN* (New York: I. B. Tauris, 2011); Mark Mazower, *No Enchanted Palace: The End of Empire and the Ideological Origins of the United Nations* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2009).

body," and not solely a US affair designed by US President Franklin D. Roosevelt and the Department of State, which is the current dominant view of the birth of the UN.[76] Helen McCarthy has examined international practices in the interwar British civic society and how it carried over to the wartime activities and the roles of civil servants in making the UN.[77] However, if—as Mazower claims—the birth of the UN was as much a British project as it was a US one, it makes sense to further widen the British perspective on the process including the parliamentary dimension. For example, as Caspar Sylvest has argued in relation to interwar British Labour Party internationalism, it was far more pragmatic and attuned to the realist assessments of power and use of force than the dominant historiography would have it.[78] In what follows, the same pragmatic tendency, which was not shy on the use of force, continued in the Labour views on internationalism and the UN during and immediately after the World War II.

The Failure of the League during World War II: Parliament and the Press

As World War II broke out, the matter of the League's failure was not theoretical, as it had been in the debates in the 1930s. Above all, the League's failure demonstrated the fragility of interwar internationalism in the face of strong nationalistic sentiments as embodied in Nazi Germany, as Julian Huxley wrote to *The Times*: "The fate of the League need not deter us. Its failure seems at bottom to have been due to its concentration on the purely political aspect of internationalism, to the neglect of economic and social machinery: and to its tie-up with the principle of self-determination and consequently of unrestricted nationalism." Huxley—a

76. Mazower, *No Enchanted Palace*, 14.

77. McCarthy, *The British People*.

78. Sylvest, "Interwar Internationalism."

world-famous evolutionary biologist and the first director of UNESCO in 1946—was calling for, then, a concept of internationalism that would go beyond international relations and politics: "Long-term war aims envisaging an incipient federalization of Western Europe should therefore include the setting up of international economic agencies."[79] According to another article—importantly written after the US entry to the war, when British writing on internationalism turned from Europe to the United States—shared a similar premise: "The new internationalism will have to be economic and not—like the League of Nations—primarily political."[80] Thus, the concept of internationalism as put forward in the press appeared as something more than political or international affairs. Above all, economic nationalism caused by the global depression at the turn of the decade and the outbreak of World War II highlighted the economic aspect of internationalism.

In Parliament, all wartime debates about the new world order served a dual function: on the one hand, the failures of the League were considered a history lesson writ large, while on the other, the goal of establishing a new and more functional system of international order dominated the debate. Key to the functional international order was the question of force. As Hugh Dalton (Labour), one of the main critics of Chamberlain's appeasement and of Labour's pacifism neatly encapsulated some key terms of the debate: "In planning that new Europe we must learn from the past. . . . One reason why the League of Nations failed was that it was not armed, and if in the future an international society—or even a regional society within Europe—is to succeed it must be armed overwhelmingly against aggression."[81] In similar tones, Geoffrey Mander (Liberal) added that the League "would have to be conducted

79. *The Times*, 21 September 1939, 6.

80. *The Times*, 19 December 1942, 3.

81. HC Deb, 30 November 1939, vol. 355, col. 302.

on the lines of collective force."[82]

While it had become clear that the (European) international order had failed, this failure put into the spotlight a question of what type of collective system of states would be the best guarantor for peace, and to what extent the postwar planning should be directed toward creating such system. Dalton hoped—in line with Labour internationalism—that the government would "apply themselves to a scheme for a federal Europe after the war."[83] Federalism as a manifestation of internationalism was not present in 1919 but rose during the 1920s and 1930s.[84] The importance of federalism here is that it was linked to the question of national sovereignty. As Henry Strauss reminded, federal Europe was not something that the League of Nations had advocated. Rather, the League was "a complete and absolute contrast with those [federalist] ideas."[85] The League system did not require any loss of national sovereignty, whereas "federal Europe" would have required the states to relinquish some of their sovereignty. Responding to the king's speech, which traditionally opens new parliamentary session, Richard Law (Conservative) argued in the Commons debate: "There has been such a shrinking in the European society that the continuance of independent national States, with their whole sovereignty intact, has become impossible."[86] *The Economist*, taking a much more conservative line, viewed internationalism differently. Its

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82. Ibid., col. 318.

83. Ibid., cols. 299–300.

84. Daniel Gorman, *The Emergence of International Society in the 1920s* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), esp. chaps. 8–9; Desmond Dinan, *Europe Recast: A History of European Union* (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner, 2004), 3–4.

85. HC Deb, 30 November 1939, vol. 355, cols. 363–364.

86. Ibid., cols. 392–393.

definition of internationalism was based on reciprocity as opposed to loss of sovereignty: "What is needed now, from Right and Left alike, is not less patriotism but more. The Italian, Mazzini, was right; true internationalism is based upon the apt and free contribution of each national community." Nazi Germany was an illustration "where nationalism can lead," while new international cooperation could only work "by the frank alliance of all the nations, each with its own contribution from its own history, experience, thought, deed, theory and practice."[87]

These early wartime debates in Britain were conducted at a moment when states all over Europe were collapsing, so it is no wonder that all type of schemas were pondered. While the United States remained outside of what they viewed—like Wilson in 1919—as old-fashioned European power politics, the fate of postwar European order rested again on the shoulders of the British Empire. In this context, the Atlantic Charter as "the statement of peace aims [*sic*]" was crucial. The press pointed to the most important symbolic issue of the meeting: *The Manchester Guardian* wrote how, in contrast to 1918, Roosevelt's role in the meeting (he was the one who initiated it) gave "the world every reason for believing that the new order will have behind it the moral and material power of the United States."[88] The Charter consisted of eight points according to which a postwar world order was to be restructured. However, there was also a degree of pessimism, which was historically conditioned. Wilson's rhetoric after World War I had irritated many in Europe as well as in the United States. In Parliament, Earl Winterton (Conservative) recalled the basic facts. Above all, the main issue was that the United States was not even at war in August 1941. Next, turning his eyes back to 1918, he added that no matter what Wilson had said, he still

87. *The Economist*, 7 November 1942, 562.

88. *MG*, 15 August 1941, 4; see also *The Times*, 15 August 1941, 4.

had to carry the American people with him. And no matter what the president would say or do, the same basic issue was still the key factor: the Senate could repeat history and not ratify any treaties Roosevelt was going to sign. Winterton carried on, arguing that a US walkout from the League "was one of the misfortunes of the last war which we must never repeat, because it did more harm to Anglo-American relations than anything else in our time."[89] However, even if in the literature about the birth of the UN, the Atlantic Charter is seen as a foundational document, a statement of principles on which the UN was built, contemporaries viewed it differently. Primarily, it was not a manifestation of internationalism or new global world order. Instead, it was, as *The Times* put it, a joint pledge "to the final destruction of the Nazi tyranny."[90]

From the League of Nations to the United Nations

As the war went on and the Allied victory became increasingly clear, the terms of planning for postwar international security changed. In 1943 and 1944, the future of the international organization was being drafted at increasing speed. First in Moscow in late 1943, the Big Four agreed to establish an international organization aimed to maintain international peace and security. Less than a year later, the structure was designed at Dumbarton Oaks and finalized in 1945 in San Francisco. Above all, the question was about forging a new body that would not be based on Wilsonian ideals per se but rather remedy the most glaring omission of the League: to guarantee postwar cooperation of the world's most powerful nations.[91] In

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89. HC Deb, 9 September 1941, vol. 374, col. 118.

90. *The Times*, 25 August 1941, 5.

91. For the planning process, see Stephen C. Schlesinger, *Act of Creation: The Founding of the United Nations—A Story of Superpowers, Secret Agents, Wartime Allies and Enemies,*

Parliament, Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs Anthony Eden (Conservative) did not emphasize the importance of collective security per se. Instead, as much as being the tool for peace and collective security, the new organization would be the glue that kept the victorious powers together. He argued, clearly with the World War I experience in mind:

> When the immediate common effort needed for victory is over it is hard to hold the same unity in the years that follow. That is a lesson of which we are only too well aware, and the importance of this declaration is in the emphasis it lays on the decision of our Governments to continue our co-operation and our collaboration after the war.[92]

In addition, the question of Big Three cooperation was also characterized as the only possible way to guarantee the sufficient collective force to maintain peace and security. *The Times* cited the argument of George C. Grey's (Liberal), who "hoped we were going to try to build up again a system of collective security and to get away from power politics, but in the early years of new internationalism it was vital that we should not only have a policy but a power to carry it out."[93] The essence of the arguments of both Grey and Labour was in the

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and Their Quest for a Peaceful World (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 2003); Townsend Hoopes and Douglas Brinkley, *FDR and the Creation of the U.N.* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2000); Robert C. Hilderbrand, *Dumbarton Oaks: The Origins of the United Nations and the Search for Postwar Security* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2001); Plesch, *America, Hitler and the UN*.

92. HC Deb, 11 November 1943, vol., 393, cols. 1325–1326.

93. *The Times*, 24 February 1944, 8.

word "but." In other words, the first part of the concept of new internationalism was the ideal type ("to get away from power politics"), while the second part laid out the praxis ("power to carry it out"). Finally, the emphasis on the Big Three's cooperation also meant that, unlike the League, which was structured on equality basis, the UN was going to be the pinnacle of great power politics that sought to guarantee the interests of the leading powers far more explicitly than the League did.[94] That was the real lesson from the League that the British, US, and Soviet governments were keen to put into practice, and the politics of history certainly vindicated their approach. Writing to *The Times*, a letter to the editor endorsed the summit diplomacy and power politics from the premise of history:

> Behind . . . the open diplomacy, and the self-determination of peoples, power politics reigned supreme as before, the only difference being that the man in the street did not realize it until too late . . . there must be many who . . . welcome the fresh air of Teheran diplomacy and hope that it will drive away the cobwebs of false internationalism.[95]

The extent to which the need to maintain a great power alliance at any cost drove the policy making was illustrated by *The Manchester Guardian*, which discussed at some length the results of the San Francisco conference under a telling headline: "National Sovereignty and the New League: Trend Away from Internationalism." Insofar as internationalism meant collaboration between all states, small and big, it was evident in the spirit of the League that such a concept of internationalism was not to operate within international relations. Since

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94. See also Mazower, *Governing the World*, 208–209.

95. *The Times*, 29 December 1944, 5.

public debate rarely defined or discussed the idea of internationalism explicitly, *The Manchester Guardian* is worth quoting at some length, as it offers a glimpse into the thinking about internationalism at the time when the new organization—supposedly the pinnacle of internationalism since fifty nations had ratified the Charter—was being delivered. Under the subheading "away from internationalism," the paper cited the US journalist E. B. White, who had argued in the *New Yorker*:

> It is an awkward paradox that the first stirrings of internationalism seem to tend towards rather than away from nationalism. Almost everything you see and hear in San Francisco is an affirmation of the absolute State, a denial of world community—the flags, the martial music, the uniforms, the secret parley, the delicate balance, the firm position, and the diplomatic retreat. . . . Under all this is the steady throbbing of the engines: sovereignty, sovereignty, sovereignty.[96]

Such an argument was not new but, as Mazower has pointed out, had its roots in nineteenth-century imperialism.[97] However, given the dominant interpretation about the UN as a pinnacle of internationalism, it is perhaps surprising that such continuum was so openly recognized at the time when the UN was being built. As we will see, the issues of internationalism, nationalism, and national sovereignty were at the heart of Parliament's ratifying debate too.

British Debate on Ratifying the United Nations Charter

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96. *MG*, 14 May 1945, 6.

97. Mazower, *No Enchanted Palace*, 13–14.

Like in July 1919, when the Commons debated the Treaty of Peace and the League of Nations, the debate on ratifying the Charter of the United Nations in August 1945 was momentous. The issues that the MPs found significant in 1945 were mostly similar to those in 1919. The themes of nationalism versus internationalism and the issue of sovereignty versus supranational powers emerged especially in the debates, although the context was different. Essentially, the uses of the atomic bomb had shaped contemporary views on internationalism. Most importantly, the peace treaty was kept separate from the question of a new international organization, and the dropping of the atomic bombs only weeks before cast a shadow of gloom over the whole terms of the debate. As *The Economist* had noted, "the debate . . . on the ratification . . . was overshadowed by the problem of the atomic bomb."[98] If there had been much optimism in 1919 regarding building a better world, there was, in contrast, more pessimism in the air in 1945, as Prime Minister Clement Attlee (Labour) put it in his opening statement: "We are now faced with a naked choice between world co-operation and world destruction."[99] Yet, "world co-operation" was nothing more than a rhetorical embellishment, for, in practice, world cooperation meant the Big Three collaboration, as we will see.

As far as press coverage was concerned, the UN Charter was primarily justified based on great power interests and the lessons of history. As *The Times* noted, the League "was masked by the legal phraseology of the Covenant and by the unthinking enthusiasm of some of its supporters. The new Charter is more frankly political and therefore more realistic."[100] On the one hand, when thinking about the visions for a new international system, there was an element of continuity in the sense that, despite the failure of the League, virtually all MPs

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98. *The Economist*, 25 August 1945, 256.

99. HC Deb, 22 August 1945, vol. 413, col. 670.

100. *The Times*, 23 August 1945, 5.

believed that international relations had to be conducted on an institutionalized form, which would be based on interactions and, if necessary, compromise, between many different actors and various interests. The UN was to function as the main conduit of international relations. On the other hand, it was recognized that the new system, if it was to be effective, could not be based on the equality of nations, something of which the League was accused. The essential point, which *The Manchester Guardian* noted when discussing E. H. Carr's latest study *Nationalism and After*,[101] was that, in the new era of postwar foreign politics, if one was to battle the evils of nationalism, which were attributed to the "ruthless philosophy of German mind," then "economic reconstruction must be an essential part of any scheme for the peace of the world, and Britain must adapt herself to a new distribution of power."[102]

Collective security was to be found under the umbrella of the Big Three cooperation, so the praxis of international order was essentially bound up with the continuation of the wartime alliance, as Attlee purported in his opening statement: "This Charter now comes to us ratified by Russia and by America, as the Covenant of the League did not. . . . This Charter not only crowns the successful union in war of the Allies, but promises to continue the union in peace of those whose absence undermined the strength of the old League."[103] The realism that was embodied in the Charter was further illustrated by Sir David Gammans (Conservative), who argued that the "Charter is in effect an acknowledgment that the future of mankind depends on whether or not three great Powers can get on together."[104]

The paradox of the UN system was that while it sought to provide for the basis of

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101. E. H. Carr, *Nationalism and After* (London: Macmillan, 1945).

102. *MG*, 15 March 1945, 4.

103. HC Deb, 22 August 1945, vol. 413, col. 694.

104. Ibid., col. 734.

continued Big Three cooperation, the new emerging world order was also based on a deadlocked system that was created by the veto, and the MPs had no illusions about it. In fact, as William Beveridge (Liberal) had argued after the Yalta conference, the veto arrangement spelled the doom to the real power of the new organization. In April 1945, Beveridge was casting a Cold War international system in which the most vital questions were dealt with outside the UN when he argued that "real provision for security falls outside this world organisation for peace."[105] Expressing a sense of gloom over the future of international collaboration, Benn Levy (Labour) pointed out that the UN was "an old-fashioned alliance of great Powers" who in San Francisco had promised "to love each other . . . but to obey nobody."[106] Thus, it is fair to say that the MPs, across all political parties, recognized from the outset that the UN was a tool for great power politics rather than a symbol of a new era of international relations.

Nationalism versus Internationalism

In 1945, the question on nationalism versus internationalism was closely linked to the question on the visions for the post–World War II international system. As far as the wartime planning for the new international organization was concerned, both the British and US planners had worked from the premise that national interests had to be preserved in the UN system.[107] The ratification debate did not carry explicit references to nationalism, but British

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105. HC Deb, 17 April 1945, vol. 410; see also Evan Durbin (Labour), HC Deb, 22 August 1945, vol. 413, col. 707.

106. HC Deb, 22 August 1945, vol. 413, col. 730.

107. Neil Smith, *American Empire: Roosevelt's Geographer and the Prelude to Globalization* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003), 375–376; Gladwyn Jebb,

national interests can be seen in the arguments to defend the British Empire within the new emerging world order led by the United States, which was at least in principle determined to dismantle the British Empire. To ensure that the new international system would preserve the Empire, former Secretary of State for the Colonies Oliver Stanley (Conservative) raised the question directly to his successor, George Hall (Labour). While Stanley mentioned that the UN Charter provisions held that "the mandates cannot be altered without the consent of the present mandatory Power," he was after the confirmation "that His Majesty's Government have no intention of relinquishing their mandates for those territories which they now hold."[108] Attlee's reply was unequivocal: the UN did not threaten the Empire. In his view, the matter was "really settled."[109]

Moreover, Attlee had, in fact, dealt with this question in his opening statement on the debate. The trusteeship system, as the British had ensured in San Francisco, had no powers to "take any decision as to the future of such territories," meaning that the trusteeship council could not decide which areas were put under the system. Most importantly, Attlee noted, "by passing this Motion," the House was not "entering into any commitment," which meant that all MPs could rest assured that ratifying the Charter did not amount to dismantling the Empire.[110] Such sentiments had already been expressed in 1941 in connection with the debate on the Atlantic Charter, which posed an immediate problem for the British Empire, since its

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"Founding the UN: Principles and Objects," in *The United Kingdom—The United Nations*, ed. Erik Jensen and Thomas Fisher (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 1990), 25; Neil Briscoe, *Britain and UN Peacekeeping 1948–67* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), 17.

108. HC Deb, 23 August 1945, vol. 413, col. 933.

109. Ibid., col. 940.

110. HC Deb, 22 August 1945, vol. 413, col. 669.

third point highlighted the right of "all peoples to choose the form of government under which they will live."[111] Then, in 1941, as in 1945, the government's attitude was the same, even though Attlee's Labour government had replaced Winston Churchill's coalition. As Churchill had said, the Atlantic Charter did not

> qualify in any way the various statements of policy which have been made from time to time about the development of constitutional government in India, Burma or other parts of the British Empire . . . . At the Atlantic meeting, we had in mind, primarily, the restoration of the sovereignty, self-government and national life of the States and nations of Europe now under the Nazi yoke.[112]

According to Robert Boothby (Conservative), the world could learn from the British Empire "how small units of humanity can combine together on a basis of freedom and self-government for their mutual benefit, without any loss of status."[113]

If the question over empire illustrated the limits of international collaboration in Parliament, so did the question over the control of the atomic bomb, which hijacked the overall direction of the debate. While the MPs initially supported the idea to internationalize control over the bomb, the problem was, as *The Economist* argued, that the only international body that could control it was the Security Council, which was "not a real international authority but the body made up of the representatives of the Great Powers." Furthermore, the

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111. *A Decade of American Foreign Policy Basic Documents, 1941–1949* (Washington, DC: Department of State, 1985), 3.

112. HC Deb, 9 September 1941, vol. 374, cols. 68–69.

113. HC Deb, 23 August 1945, vol. 413, col. 904.

article showed how "real internationalisation" of the atomic bomb was impossible, since it would require "internationally controlled plants situated in international territory and working under instructions of an international body which did not share its secrets with any national Government."[114] Thus, what we can observe is a very realistic assessment of great power politics at the crucial moment when Cold War realities were starting to be clearly visible.

Insofar as the end of World War II was a "transformative moment" in international relations or a move toward greater international collaboration and multilateral foreign policies, the end of the war and the question over the atomic bomb showed, too, that national sovereignty was the basis of the international system that the setting up of the UN did not shake, as Eden claimed later in 1945. The concept of internationalism in the ratification debate was linked to the question of controlling the atomic bomb. As such, only Raymond Blackburn (Labour), a newly elected MP from Birmingham, used it. In his maiden speech, he argued that the world would have to achieve "a far higher degree of internationalism than was envisaged at San Francisco" through "the internationalisation of atomic power." The internationalization of atomic power, so the argument went, was the road toward greater international cooperation, and it rested on two main principles, internationalized research and production, as well as international inspection of the territory in which atomic research took place—the themes in which *The Economist* had found a pious hope. As Blackburn constructed it, he wanted Britain to lead the way, but not in the same way as in 1919:

> We must stand forth clearly before the nations and say that the least degree of internationalism compatible with our future rests on the two principles I have mentioned. We must not let it be said, as Lord Keynes said of the settlement of

114. *The Economist*, 25 August 1945, 257.

Versailles, that it was the best settlement which the demands of the mob and the characters of the chief actors combined to effect.[115]

As far as the internationalization of atomic research was concerned, however, the calls in Parliament led to no real results. Following the Anglo-American negotiations in Washington in November 1945, open internationalization of the atomic research obviously would not take place.[116] The only solution to attain the type of international cooperation that many MPs had—although implicitly—called for in the ratification debate was to relinquish a degree of national sovereignty. As Eden charged in the first full dress debate on foreign policy since the Labour government had taken office, the UN should review the Charter "in the light of the discoveries about atomic energy which were not before us when the Charter was drawn up" and that "nothing showed more clearly the hold that nationalism has upon us all than the decision of that Conference to retain the power of veto." Clearly, then, the veto was an instrument of nationalism that hindered the true international foreign policy, and if the world were to be a safe place in an era of atomic power, the requirement was, as the former foreign secretary continued, "that we all abate our present ideas of sovereignty." When Willie Gallacher (Labour) commented that Eden's own side of the House remained silent on the point, Eden replied: "I am not making a party point. We have got somehow to take the sting out of nationalism. We cannot hope to do so at once, but we ought to start working for it now,

115. HC Deb, 23 August 1945, vol. 413, cols. 908–911.

116. On these negotiations, see Matti Roitto, *Dissenting Visions: The Executive, Parliament and the Problematic Anglo-American Atomic Collaboration in the Changes of British Atomic Foreign Policy 1945–6* (Jyväskylä: University of Jyväskylä, 2015), 185–206.

and that, I submit, should be the first duty of the United Nations."[117]

For Liberals, nationalism stood out as "antagonistic nationalism," which, in the words of Clement Davies (Liberal), had led "to disruption, jealousy and, ultimately, to war. Men ought to be able to appeal to the common man everywhere to surrender this national sovereignty and to do away also with all the barriers which divide us."[118] Thomas Pert (Labour) for his part argued that "a socialist foreign policy" was needed and that such approach would "make the United Nations Organisation real and effective. We must foster the spirit of internationalism. We must remove the fundamental causes of war—causes which are political, economic, and psychological. This Government have made a great start in the domestic field. Now we must look forward towards a Socialist Europe, and a Socialist World."[119] What Pert actually meant for "socialist internationalism" was not revealed at any greater length, except that he called to end the "continuity of foreign policy," which was built on Anglo-American collaboration at the exclusion of the USSR.

The Question of National Sovereignty

The control of the atomic bomb was not the only theme linked to the question of national sovereignty. The matter was also debated vis-à-vis the emerging UN system, and it attracted the MPs' attention both pro and contra. In the Commons debate, Minister of Education Ellen Wilkinson (Labour) referred to Jan Smuts's post–World War I pamphlet *The League of*

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117. HC Deb, 22 November 1945, vol. 416, col. 613.

118. Ibid., col. 635.

119. Ibid., col. 691.

Nations: A Practical Suggestion[120] as the guiding spirit in the post–World War II system. Smuts had suggested that a practical world government was needed and (in Wilkinson's words) "nothing less than that should be the aim of British foreign policy to-day." Indeed, she wanted "maximum infringement of sovereignty within which we will try to make ourselves as comfortable as we can on the basis of the balance of power." Thus, in principle, the idea of losing a portion of national sovereignty was accepted by many Labour MPs, like the newcomer William Warbey, who argued that "absolute national sovereignty is now an outdated factor in international affairs."[121] Also, according to the extreme left view, as represented by Konni Zilliacus (Labour), the necessities of reconstruction run above national sovereignty:

> I am glad we have abandoned the principle of non-interference in the internal affairs of European countries, because I think the job of reconstruction cannot be hindered by the claims of sovereignty. There is only one way that I can see by which we can achieve the ideal [to end all wars] we all desire and that is, to submit ourselves throughout the world to one Sovereign just as we do within the borders of a state.[122]

According to Boothby, no less than the future of humanity depended on the willingness to relinquish some of the national sovereignty:

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120. Jan Christiaan Smuts, *The League of Nations: A Practical Suggestion* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1918).

121. HC Deb, 23 August 1945, vol. 413, col. 898.

122. Ibid., cols. 885–886.

> Will human beings be able to make the terrific sustained mental and moral effort required to modify, to the necessary extent, the concept of national sovereignty—a concept which has been establishing an increasing domination over their minds and emotions ever since the eighteenth century? Upon the answer to this question, the fate of our species, I think, very probably depends.[123]

Thus, the question of national sovereignty was directly linked to the fate of humanity. All these comments on the need to relinquish some national sovereignty shared a certain type of using history that typically harked back to World War I, sometimes even further back in time. The League was seen as a little too utopian but essentially virtuous endeavor that had fallen victim to tigers who were invited to tea with the vicar, as Boothby put it. Still, no machinery would help nations give up national sovereignty. What was needed was "a complete re-orientation of the attitudes of nations."[124]

The idea of losing some national sovereignty was also in principle shared by Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs Ernest Bevin (Labour), who reminded that the League history proved how difficult it continued to be to build a "world State." But, illustrating the government view on sovereignty, he also maintained that veto power was necessary because of the "realisation of the facts." In other words, the League experience had shown the futility of seeking a collective security structure that would supersede national sovereignty. Yet, it should be noted that while the question of national sovereignty was thus dealt with in 1945, the issue reappeared only few years later when the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) in 1948 was signed. As it was, the UN upheld a theory that placed people in their

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123. Ibid., col. 903.

124. Ibid., col. 911.

individual and collective dimensions at the heart of the declaration, claiming dominance over the claims of sovereign states.[125]

Finally, like in 1919, some faith was put in the idea that public opinion could be a positive factor in international relations in 1945, although the volume of such discussion was much more modest than it had been in 1919. Attlee and Bevin represented continued optimism. The prime minister himself recalled how it was "very easy to underestimate the value of public opinion and of open discussions which lead public opinion."[126] The foreign secretary argued: "It is not Governments alone that must act. There must be behind it Parliaments, and what is more important, organised public opinion, to see that it is made to work."[127] However, such optimism verged on wishful thinking, hardly reminiscent of existing realities or even the lessons of the League. Warbey's comment is the most illustrative of the fact: "The growth and pressure of public opinion, which, I believe, will become an increasingly significant factor in this field . . . under the impact of the atomic bomb human minds are beginning to undergo these processes of rapid, and even revolutionary, development."[128]

Such comments clearly illustrate the hope that something good would come from the atomic bomb. However, Zilliacus was perhaps more in tune with the stark realities when he

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125. On the UDHR and Britain, see A. W. Brian Simpson, *Human Rights and the End of Empire: Britain and the Genesis of the European Convention* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001). On the struggles over the UDHR, see also David Mayers, *America and the Postwar World: Remaking International Society, 1945–1956* (London: Routledge, 2018).

126. HC Deb, 22 August 1945, vol. 413, col. 664.

127. HC Deb, 23 August 1945, vol. 413, col. 948.

128. Ibid., col. 899.

noted: "The Covenant . . . was regarded by large sections of public opinion as a deep disappointment and as a very poor and unsatisfactory proposition, but the Charter of to-day is only the Covenant writ large." Linking public opinion and sovereignty, he went on to note that "owing to the degree to which States have clung to their independence . . . the danger is that . . . we shall have Governments succumbing to the temptation, either of saying that they will not do a thing for fear of offending certain sections of public opinion, or of not doing a thing because they do not want to do it."[129]

Conclusion

The findings of this analysis generally agree with what has been argued about British official views on international organizations in the late 1910s and early 1940s. Yet, they add a long-term perspective pointing at continuities and breaks, and demonstrating the evolvement of meanings assigned to *nationalism* and *internationalism*. This diversity of the use of concepts rose from historical experiences, changing contemporary contexts and the contested nature of the interrelated "isms" in the more openly ideological parliamentary context. Whenever *nationalism* and *internationalism* were discussed Parliament, ideological views and evaluations came to the open.

Internationalism tended to be defined in highly ideological terms in 1919. Some Liberal and Conservative parliamentarians presented optimistic visions of an entirely new kind of world controlled by international public opinion and supported by new democratic constitutions. National interests were to be subordinated to international cooperation and *nationalism* and *internationalism* amalgamated. Skepticism about the realism of the plans for the League was also widespread after it became clear that no supranational military forces

129. Ibid., cols. 875–876.

would be created and after the US Senate rejected membership because of its restrictions on national sovereignty.

The strengthening international cooperation within the League was often represented as supportive of the interests of the Empire, which made it easier to reconcile with *nationalism* (or rather, *patriotism* or *imperialism*, as far as the British debates are concerned). The transnational concept of nationalistic internationalism among the advocates of the League denied the contradiction between the two "isms": *nationalism* was understood as an instinct and *internationalism* as inevitable. As Glenda Sluga has also concluded, the new international world order was based on the principle of nationality as well as on the League of Nations.[130] Openly nationalistic politicians on the right and the left continued to oppose internationalist discourse, though emphasis on national interests remained rather modest under the spirit of official optimism and trust in public opinion. Socialist internationalism was guided by the tradition of prioritizing the everyday interests of the working class and limited by the radical internationalist challenge of the Communist International. The latter made labor internationalism suspect and Labour MPs cautious in their advocacy of supranational institutions and democratic reforms.

Unlike in 1919, internationalism during and after World War II was a far less ideologically loaded concept. Instead, the British parliamentarians conceptualized internationalism pragmatically, the collaboration between the Big Three offering the main conduit through which international cooperation was operationalized. Based on the League experience, the MPs avoided the use of the rhetoric of democracy and public opinion, and searched for creative ways to reconcile national interests and sovereignty with a new world organization.

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130. Sluga, *Internationalism*, 5, 44.

Overall, the concept of internationalism remained vague but was not quite as contested as in 1919. Discussion on it was limited during the war; *internationalism* was generally associated with the victory over Nazism by the emerging UN, which (at least rhetorically) included Soviet "internationalism" as well. The emergence of the atomic bomb especially supported caution in expectations for *internationalism*. The international system would still be conditioned by great power politics and internationalism subordinated more distinctly than in the late 1910s to national interests. Idealistic conceptions of internationalism had been taken over by pragmatic attitudes. The same pragmatism could be seen in talk on *nationalism*, too. While it was typically deplored as a scourge of war, it nevertheless had a dual existence. Like in 1919, *nationalism* and *internationalism* were reconciled. The MPs realized that one could not get rid of *nationalism*, so the best way to harness its positive and negative impulses was through the international organization the United Nations. Thus, *nationalism* and *internationalism* were not seen as competing concepts but continued to mutually feed from and sustain one another.

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