L.T. Hobhouse and the transformation of liberal internationalism

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Abstract. This article explores L. T. Hobhouse's transformation of liberal internationalism at the beginning of the twentieth century. It argues that Hobhouse's thought contributes to understanding dilemmas within the frame of liberal internationalism and the emergence of international functionalism. Using a philosophical approach, Hobhouse tackled international concerns throughout his life, alongside J. A. Hobson, Gilbert Murray, James Bryce, H. N. Brailsford, Norman Angell, and G. L. Dickinson. He restated a belief in human progress and association in ever-greater circles. But he noted, *contra* former hopes, that nationalism furthered democracy only briefly, and that liberal democracy remained incapable of bringing about effective international cooperation and moral universalism. In order to resolve this impasse, Hobhouse suggested substituting political with economic democracy on an international scale. The aim was to create an international functional organisation consisting of vocational and civic associations and states, which would allow individuals to entertain multiple, overlapping, and transnational loyalties. He thus anticipated proposals for global reform that became increasingly popular after the end of World War II. However, in spite of his concern with domestic social equality and his borrowing from international socialism, Hobhouse failed to qualify his internationalism with an analogous interest in equality.

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Human nature is somehow better than its own performance . . .[1]

Introduction

This article addresses L. T. Hobhouse's adaptation and transformation of liberal internationalism. Hobhouse (1864–1929) was a major figure in the justification of a new liberalism calling for social equality and international cooperation in Britain at the start of the twentieth century.[2] Hobhouse believed, as did John A. Hobson – his friend and fellow new liberal – that the problems of social inequality and imperialism

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[1] Leonard T. Hobhouse, *Social Development. Its Nature and Conditions* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1966 [orig. pub. 1924]), p. 337.
[2] Michael Freeden, *Hobhouse, Leonard Trelawny (1864–1929)* (online edition: Oxford University Press, 2004), available at: {http://www.oxforddnb.com/index/101033906/Leonard-Hobhouse}.

were intertwined. Both men were public moralists who argued on different levels of thought and contributed to public as well as academic debates. Yet Hobhouse spent most of his life in academia. He became the first chair in sociology at the London School of Economics in 1907, where he continued to blend sociology and philosophy. In the tradition of T. H. Green and J. S. Mill, Hobhouse was committed to a normative approach to science and not to value neutrality.

Hobhouse's international perspective parallels liberal internationalism's gradual transformation from moral to institutional reasoning through the nineteenth to the twentieth century.[3] His publications discuss international questions broadly and from a normative perspective. Moreover, his self-conception as a philosopher implies an intention to convince through philosophical arguments. This commitment to philosophy was to some degree shared by fellow internationalists such as Hobson, Gilbert Murray, or Alfred Zimmern, yet distinguishes Hobhouse from the younger internationalist generation of Norman Angell, or Harold J. Laski.[4] It is telling that Laski spoke of Hobhouse as 'the philosopher' and lamented that his writings are 'too full of principles in the abstract with too little institutional background'.[5] But Hobson and Hobhouse were among the first who self-consciously distinguished 'new' internationalism aiming at the creation of an international organisation, from the 'old' internationalism of non-intervention and *laissez-faire* economics. They created a tradition to which Laski and other internationalists later connected.

Although Hobhouse contributed to that tradition of internationalist thinking, he did not develop a theory addressing only international politics. He provided, above all, important reconsideration of the philosophical ideas that he inherited. He remained committed to the idea of human association in ever-greater circles and took on the liberal praise of the democratic state as well as the liberal wariness of state power and bureaucracy. But going against his forerunners, Hobhouse noted that organisation into nation-states could conflict with the overall goal of wider human association. He was more critical of the state, and of the identification of state with society. Likewise, he opposed liberal justifications of imperialism. However, he also generated constructive and original new thoughts. Hobhouse was probably at his best when he addressed the question of how effective international cooperation can be achieved in the face of both, the League of Nation's and liberal democracy's failure to do so. In the course of tackling this problem, he also reframed his internationalist aims in light of his overall philosophy. Previously, his pluralist appreciation of domestic and transnational groups had been at odds with his support of a league of states during the World War I. But he resolved this theoretical inconsistency as well as his dissatisfaction with the League and the state of liberal democracy when he ultimately proposed an international league consisting of states and transnational

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[3] Casper Sylvest, *British Liberal Internationalism, 1880–1930. Making Progress?* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2009).

[4] I do not have space to discuss the problematic evolution of idealism in international relations. For critical accounts of the term, see Lucian M. Ashworth, 'Where Are the Idealists in Interwar International Relations?', *Review of International Studies*, 32:2 (2006), pp. 291–308; Peter Wilson, 'The Myth of the "First Great Debate"', *Review of International Studies*, 24:5 (1998), pp. 1–15; Peter Wilson, 'Where we are now in the debate about the first great debate', in Brian Schmidt (ed.), *International Relations and the First Great Debate* (London: Routledge, 2012), pp. 133–51.

[5] Mark D. Howe, *Holmes-Laski Letters. The Correspondence of Mr. Justice Holmes and Harold J. Laski 1916–35* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1953), p. 391.

functional associations, such as cooperatives, churches, or trade unions. He therewith founded the approach of international functionalism, which has focused on the transformation of political community through issue-specific transnational cooperation ever since. Therein lies Hobhouse's contribution to International Relations.

This article proceeds as follows: Assuming that individuals inherit particular ideas, but have the capacity to transform them, the next section introduces the tradition of liberal internationalism that influenced Hobhouse's thought. I then try to do justice to Hobhouse by introducing some of his philosophical thought. I believe it is worth dwelling on his more philosophical contributions, because they constitute Hobhouse's unique reasoning. Moreover, they are vital for appreciating the richness of his defence of international functionalism. In sections three, four, and five, I discuss his assessment of liberal internationalism's key concepts (human progress, the state, community). Following that, I turn to Hobhouse's more journalistic works, or those written with clear political intentions.[6] In section six I introduce his anti-imperialist tendencies, and in section seven I show that his critique of the 'German' theory of the state at the end of World War I was meant as a justification of an international organisation. Finally, I show in section eight how Hobhouse came to readdress the question of international organisation again (1921–2), and why he then suggested international functional organisation. A conclusion sums up Hobhouse's international thought.

The tradition of liberal internationalism[7]

Liberal internationalism holds that cooperation between nation-states is desirable and has intrinsic worth where it furthers peace and order in international politics. It is a specialised part of liberalism, consisting of political concepts that have an international dimension or impact on international matters. While the specific definition of the state clearly affects the conception of international relations, a concept such as justice can be more broadly applied to domestic as well as international politics. However, no definition is beyond contestation. Political concepts are constantly being revised in response to socio-political or theoretical developments. This may happen unconsciously or as a response to a perceived dilemma, when the available concepts and ideas appear insufficient or incoherent.[8] Liberal internationalism's structure is therefore fluid and changing. Overlap with competing ideologies such as republicanism or socialism may occur as a result of these redefinitions or of intellectual borrowing. Such a transfer of ideas can take place when an innovating ideologist exploits a different tradition and incorporates some of its ideas. Hence, liberal internationalism is an ever-changing framework. It then becomes necessary to examine its architecture, the meaning of its core concepts, and ideological reconfigurations over time.

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6 I expect that some oppose drawing a distinction between Hobhouse's philosophical and political works given that he was a 'public moralist'. And although I agree that he reasoned the same ends at both levels of thought, I still claim that the different kinds of argument merit the difference drawn.

7 My choice of terms rightly implies that I view Michael Freeden's and Mark Bevir's methodological work on ideology and tradition as complementary and not mutually exclusive. See Michael Freeden, *Ideologies and Political Theory. A Conceptual Approach* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996); Mark Bevir, 'On Tradition', *Humanitas*, XIII: 2, pp. 28–53.

8 Ian Hall, *Dilemmas in Decline. British Intellectuals and World Politics, 1945–1975* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2012), ch. 2.

Liberal internationalism prior to Hobhouse incorporated a positive conception of patriotism, as witnessed by the writings of T. H. Green and Guiseppe Mazzini. Both shaped Hobhouse's thought at an early stage. Green and Mazzini objected to the 'cosmopolitan' loss of attachment to national and cultural bounds, instead valuing communal relationships. According to Green, communal ties are necessary for the actualisation of human energies, since an abstract concept such as 'humanity' cannot evoke positive sentiments.[9] But Green, like Mill, distinguished between a sober patriotism giving way to human cooperation, and jingoism – an aggressive exaggeration. Jingoism, Green and Mill believed, involves the irrational glorification of one's country, and includes inherent antipathy toward foreigners.[10] Patriotism, in contrast, tends to further extend human bounds. In a similar manner, Mazzini viewed patriotism as part of a 'sentimental education' taking place within a national community.[11] Educational and human progress, the assumption reads, has to start with experiences in a democratic community where every member is respected as a fellow human. Only the recognition of related people's human dignity can act as a vehicle for the acknowledgement of a stranger's humanity. The aim is, to paraphrase Immanuel Kant, respect for humanity in ever-greater circles. This Kantian formula is important in Green's thought, and had great impact on Hobhouse through Green's adoption.[12]

In line with a positive understanding of communal bounds, liberal internationalism valued the state as a sign of human progress and a first step toward the realisation of a universal human fellowship. This view reflects organisation into democratic nation-states that was evolving in nineteenth-century Europe. Liberals believed that nation-states provide opportunities for personal development and for collective self-determination in equal measure. In the face of the democratisation process, liberals transformed traditional theories of state sovereignty. Following Green, it is not force but will that unites sovereign people.[13] The state thus reflects political independence and the moral qualities of the people living within it. This does not mean that Green denied that states could act as troublesome agents in international relations.[14] But he believed that the causes of such disputes were domestic, since nothing in a proper organised state would call for conflict.[15] The state appeared as an element of order upon which a society of civilised nations could be built.[16] And even if the idea of human fellowship in ever-greater circles hinted toward the transcendence of the national community, Green and Mazzini did not anticipate a superseding of the state in the near future. Internationalism was true in its literal meaning, while the

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[9] Thomas H. Green, 'Lectures on the Principles of Political Obligation', in Paul Harris and John Morrow (eds), *Lectures on the Principles of Political Obligation and Other Writings* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), pp. 13–193, 134.

[10] Varouxakis, '"Patriotism", "Cosmopolitanism" and "Humanity" in Victorian Political Thought', *European Journal of Political Theory*, 5:2 (2006), pp. 100–18, 102.

[11] Stefano Recchia and Nadia Urbinati, 'Introduction', in Stefano Recchia and Nadia Urbinati (eds), *A Cosmopolitanism of Nations. Guiseppe Mazzini's Writings on Democracy, Nation Building, and International Relations* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009), pp. 1–30, 18.

[12] Leonard T. Hobhouse, 'Ethical Evolution. Review of "The Origin and Development of the Moral Ideas" by Edward Westermarck', *Sociological Review*, II (1909), pp. 402–5, 404.

[13] Duncan Bell, 'The Victorian Idea of a Global State', in Duncan Bell (ed.), *Victorian Visions of Global Order* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), pp. 159–83.

[14] Peter P. Nicholson, 'Philosophical Idealism and International Politics. A Reply to Dr. Savigear', *British Journal of International Studies*, 2:1 (1976), pp. 76–83, 77.

[15] Green, 'Lectures on the Principles of Political Obligation', p. 138.

[16] Duncan Bell and Casper Sylvest, 'International Society in Victorian Political Thought: T. H. Green, Herbert Spencer, and Henry Sidgwick', *Modern Intellectual History*, 3:2 (2006), pp. 207–38.

establishment of supranational institutions was envisaged for the remote future. More international order meant rather more 'state', in particular with regard to the civilisation of until that point barbarous areas.[17]

A further important principle of liberal internationalism was the doctrine of free trade. Richard Cobden first promoted commerce as peace-promoting, and morally and politically beneficial. His crusade against the aristocratic control of trade called for unrestricted middle-class commerce as a means to domestic prosperity and peaceful international coexistence. Manifold economic interconnections should reduce the likelihood of international conflicts, because conflict would bring economic drawbacks for all parties. Furthermore, international commerce was expected to function as the primary engine for domestic and international transformation and improvement.[18] Political intervention, on the other hand, implied aristocratic control over public life and international balance-of-power politics. Hence, Cobden and fellow liberal internationalists opposed political control in trade and argued for non-intervention, anti-colonialism, and disarmament. The best politics could do was nothing, and instead leave the stimulation of purposive activity and human improvement to competitive markets. In spite of this defence of *laissez-faire*, Hobson and Hobhouse remain dedicated to Cobden's internationalism and his opposition to sectional trade interests.

The passages above indicate another core principle of liberal internationalism on the eve of the twentieth century: the belief in human progress. Such an expectation is more vague than patriotism, national self-determination, or free trade, because it is not tied to a particular institution or policy. Yet this is precisely why the idea of progress was so critical. Backed by a liberal reading of history, this expectation of progress informed other elements of liberal internationalism. Patriotism or free trade appeared as means to the end of human improvement. Intellectuals attributed immense significance to this 'process of progress' – and to themselves. Public moralists perceived it as their task to analyse society and figure out which ideas contributed to societal developments and institutions; to defeat illiberal ideas and suggest rational paths for reform.[19] This logic is distinctly modern since it assumes that the causes of human development are knowable and can be reformed. Science should foster human development, and the ability of scientific doctrines to justify reforms was a feature of their success. Mill promoted such a vision of a reforming science, while Hobhouse was dedicated to it, as well. The following section will explore Hobhouse's conception of progress and the role of science in more detail.

Human progress

Hobhouse's entire political thought pivots around the notion of human improvement, which was one of the most important ideas in Victorian liberal internationalism.

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[17] Lionel Curtis, *The Commonwealth of Nations. An Inquiry into the Nature of Citizenship in the British Empire, and into the Mutual Relations of the Several Communities Thereof* (London: Macmillan, 1916).
[18] Duncan Bell, 'Empire and Imperialism', in Gareth S. Jones and Gregory Claeys (eds), *The Cambridge History of Nineteenth-Century Political Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), pp. 864–92, 870.
[19] Nadia Urbinati, 'Mazzini and the Making of the Republican Ideology', *Journal of Modern Italian Studies*, 17:2 (2012), pp. 183–204, 185.

But unlike their Victorian forerunners, Hobhouse and his contemporaries could no longer subscribe to the safe expectation of human improvement and linear liberal progress. Indeed, the belief in human progress, or rather lamenting its disappearance, distinguished Victorian thinking from its aftermath. Hobhouse's education and commencement of his publishing activity coincided with the decline of former optimism. However, instead of abandoning the traditional expectation of human progress, Hobhouse continued grappling with it, and defended it for his entire life. He at first tackled the notion through use of evolutionary theory, a choice reflecting contemporary belief in science. During the last quarter of the nineteenth century, Herbert Spencer's writings advanced biology and evolutionary theory until they became the most credible forms of scientific reasoning. Hobhouse adopted Spencer's method by grounding his political theory in empirical evidence.[20] But whereas Spencer's evolutionary narrative justified an individualist form of liberalism, Hobhouse and Hobson hoped to develop a socialised liberalism.[21] Yet I do not believe that Hobhouse employed evolutionary theory only for rhetorical ends. His lifelong occupation with the notion of human development instead indicates that the studies were vital for him as a mean to address what he perceived to be the most important philosophical question.[22]

Hobhouse's evolutionary theory is in essence an ethical doctrine, which conceptionalises humankind as the ultimate community. It opposed social Darwinism and the never-ending struggle for survival as the only evolutionary possibilities. Instead, Hobhouse distinguished between 'primitive' and 'orthogenic' evolution. The latter is a synonym for progress, aiming at humanity – or more precisely, at the creation of human self-consciousness. Humanity is thus the precondition as well as the end result of progress. In the form of human rationality, it enables progress. Naturalising Aristotle's account of rationality, Hobhouse spoke of rationality as an instinct to create harmony within an inner life of impulses, feelings, and desires.[23] Moreover, following Hobhouse, human rationality allows the establishment of social rules. He observed in 'Morals in Evolution' (1906) that human interaction was always and everywhere regulated by custom and tradition.[24] Hence, Hobhouse viewed the purposive application of social rules and the individual's acceptance of these norms as peculiarly human traits. Because these abilities are uniquely human, Hobhouse claimed that humans belong to one community, and that this community is the basis of all moral conception.

For Hobhouse, progress occurred when human rationality improves the organisation of inner as well as social life. He believed that both sides of human rationality correlate, since a happy person is likely to be a responsible member of the community. Though Hobhouse recognised humankind's unsocial traits, he still believed that rational reflection and the identification of social deficits could dismantle constraints and change human behaviour in the long run. It is precisely this superseding

[20] Michael Freeden, 'Liberal Community. An Essay in Retrieval', in Avital Simhony and David Weinstein (eds), *The New Liberalism. Reconciling Liberty and Community* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), pp. 26–48, 33.
[21] Michael Freeden, 'Biological and Evolutionary Roots of the New Liberalism in England', *Political Theory*, 4:4 (1976), pp. 471–90.
[22] Robin G. Collingwood, *An Autobiography* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2002), p. 31.
[23] Leonard T. Hobhouse, *Mind in Evolution* (London: Macmillan & Co., 1901), p. 9.
[24] Leonard T. Hobhouse, *Morals in Evolution. A Study in Comparative Ethics* (London: Chapman & Hall, 1951 [orig. pub. 1906]), p. 1.

of instincts by reason aiming at personal and social harmony that Hobhouse called progress. Although he untiringly used the concept of harmony, he still admitted that harmony can never be absolute. It is best understood as a regulative ideal and an ethical principle to evaluate human conduct. Where harmony grows, human purpose eliminates the struggle for existence. Hobhouse's account of progressive evolution opposed Darwinist justifications of the social problem and of imperialism, naturalising the struggle for markets and territory. It made a case for the subordination of politics to morals in domestic as well as in international politics. Indeed, Hobhouse believed that international relations are as much subject to moral considerations as domestic politics are. He evaluated the advancement of human rationality by its capacity to broaden normative conceptions and regulate the relations between nations. Only early morality is group morality. Advanced morality tends to be universal. This is why Hobhouse, for instance, praised the first Hague Convention (1899), which established the earliest regulations for warfare.[25]

The most important trait of Hobhouse's evolutionary account is an insistence on human self-consciousness.[26] When writing about human self-consciousness, Hobhouse called its manifestation 'human mind'. This choice of terms resembles philosophical idealism in viewing human history as the steady movement toward realisation of some religious or metaphysical principle. It parallels Hegel, but Hobhouse, for reasons that I explore later, rather concealed this commonality. He was hostile to philosophical idealism, which he perceived as a conservative form of reasoning. He repudiated the idealist's postulate that ultimate principles cannot be known, even if they shape human realities – explaining existing human constellations in vaguely known metaphysical principles puts them beyond intellectual critique. Hobhouse therefore changed his order of arguments in distinction to the idealists. He started with the empirical instead of the metaphysical in order to answer the question of whether there are signs of a purpose working within human history. His conclusions were cautiously positive. He believed in the existence of a human purpose working out its course under constraints – one may speak of a 'conditioned teleology'.[27] This does not mean that Hobhouse claimed that human development is predetermined. But he did think that humans should become conscious of their ultimate belonging to humankind, and that there is a common good for all humankind. To realise it, humans need to direct their course collectively. Hobhouse's philosophy of development is thus a vision of a self-conscious and self-directing humanity whose unity is furthered by a reforming science.[28] It restated Green's conviction that human progress consists in the widening of human association and the extension of the common good in rational terms. And it qualified Green's ethics with an insistence on human self-consciousness in the spirit of Auguste Comte. Hobhouse's philosophy of a self-conscious humanity also influenced Hobson. Hobson took over from Hobhouse

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[25] Leonard T. Hobhouse, 'The Ethical Basis of Collectivism', *International Journal of Ethics*, 8:2 (1898), pp. 137–56, 155.

[26] Michael P. Cowen and Robert W. Shenton, *Doctrines of Development* (London/New York, NY: Routledge, 1996), p. 280.

[27] Leonard T. Hobhouse, J. A. Smith and Guy C. Field, 'Symposium. The Place of Mind in Nature', *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society, Supplementary Volumes*, 6 (1926), pp. 112–41, 126.

[28] Leonard T. Hobhouse, *Development and Purpose* (Grosse Pointe, MI: Scholarly Press, 1969 [orig. pub. 1913]), p. xix; Morris Ginsberg, *The Unity of Mankind* (London: Humphrey Milford, 1935); Gregory Claeys, *Imperial Sceptics. British Critics of Empire, 1850–1920* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), p. 273.

the idea that humankind is a single community. However, when Hobhouse stated that this ultimate unity could only be recognised at the highest stage of intellectual development, his evolutionary account ended at times in rather questionable self-congratulatory patterns. This made him a likely candidate for E. H. Carr's critique of liberal internationalism in his seminal 'The Twentieth Years' Crisis, 1919–1939' (1939). Carr claimed that liberal internationalists, who he called utopians, were largely incapable of self-criticism. However, Carr did not attack Hobhouse but drew on Hobhouse's conception of intellectual development in order to disqualify liberal internationalism as an infantile approach.[29] He concealed that Hobhouse's broader vision was utopian inasmuch as it said that any advanced science has to further the unity of mankind.

Statehood

While Hobhouse inherited liberal internationalism's belief in human progress and defended it against competing ideologies or new scientific doctrines, the following section intends to show that he did not easily subscribe to a widely shared positive conception of the state. Already his early works show that his account of the state was perpetually ambivalent inasmuch as he viewed the state as an achievement as well as a problem. To some degree, that ambivalence is also a product of the liberal tradition, which involves both the appreciation of the democratic state and a discomfort with state power as against civil society.[30] But Hobhouse was more sensitive than Green or Mill in considering that liberalism's two aims – human progress (or the widening of human association) and the furtherance of popular government – might conflict.

At first it appears that Hobhouse subscribed to traditional optimism about the state. Employing again an evolutionary approach, he formulated a historical narrative that portrays the state as a liberal attainment and the most advanced form of community out of three kinds of social union. Accordingly, the smallest social unions are families, clans, and tribes. Their relationships spring from blood ties or intermarriage. When geographical expansion and warfare make more efficient organisation necessary, the hierarchical order of despotism emerges.[31] It is based on the principle of authority, which secures the forcible subjection to a single chief or class in a territory defined by the idea of sovereignty.[32] I suppose therefore that Hobhouse would have disagreed with Max Weber's claim that an absolute or feudal monarchy, despite its despotism, can claim traditional legitimacy.[33] Traditional legitimacy, in Weber's sense, is the perception that rule is acceptable, because 'it has always been

[29] Edward H. Carr, *The Twentieth Years' Crisis, 1919–1939. An Introduction to the Study of International Relations* (New York: HarperCollins, 2001), p. 5; Leonard T. Hobhouse, 'Science and Philosophy as Unifying Forces', in F. S. Marvin (ed.), *The Unity of Western Civilisation* (London: Milford, 1936 [orig pub. 1915]), pp. 162–79.

[30] Michael Freeden, *Liberalism Divided. A Study in British Political Thought 1914–1939* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1986), p. 30.

[31] Leonard T. Hobhouse, *Social Evolution and Political Theory* (New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 1922 [orig. pub. 1911]), pp. 128–43.

[32] Leonard T. Hobhouse, *The Elements of Social Justice* (London: Routledge/Thoemmes Press, 1993 [orig. pub. 1922]), p. 195; Hobhouse, *Morals in Evolution*, p. 55.

[33] Max Weber, *Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft. Grundriß einer verstehenden Soziologie* (Tübingen: Mohr, 1976), p. 124

that way'. Hobhouse, in contrast, stressed that the despotic ruler destroyed the solidarity of the natural group and imposed laws not in accordance with custom. In order to compensate for the loss of the natural solidarity, the despot needed to prove his utility and manipulate religious ideas to portray himself as ruling by divine right to gain support.[34] Ultimately, however, his rule rests on force. In Hobhouse's typology, despotic rule remains inherently unstable. It is thus only a question of time until it encounters resistance. This resistance, Hobhouse observed, mostly springs from the sentiment of nationalism. Nationalism motivates the deposition of despotism, precipitating and furthering the evolution of modern society as a social union based on the principle of citizenship. This principle of citizenship illustrates well that Hobhouse's accounts are never purely historical, but merge historical and ethical reasoning. In distinction to the former principles of social union (kinship/authority), citizenship describes not merely empirical life. It is a normative ideal in itself. Reiterating Aristotle and Green, Hobhouse defined citizenship as the right to and the realisation of personality within a community. In this light the state is an achievement, because it provides the rule of law and the best environment for common self-realisation. It is only within the state that the individual enjoys rights against arbitrary rule and has the opportunity to be virtuous through actively contributing to public life.[35] Thus Hobhouse praised the state as the 'distinctive product of a unique civilisation' arising from the struggle against authoritarianism.[36] This appreciation of the state, however, still attaches its legitimacy to the furtherance of self-government. The state had no intrinsic, only instrumental value.

The distinction between the state as the organisational expression of a democratic community and as some intrinsically valuable manifestation of human morality was not self-evident at Hobhouse's time.[37] Not only Green praised organisation into states. Those among Hobhouse's contemporaries who employed philosophical idealism, such as Gilbert Murray and Alfred Zimmern, also tended to equate the state with human morality. Hobhouse and sociological colleagues such as Robert MacIver, in contrast, were more critical. Hobhouse, however, is unique in that he formulated critical accounts of the state before World War I and the heyday of the sociological and pluralistic opposition to the state (see section seven). Already around 1900, he pointed out that individuals are members of many – at times transnational – groups.[38]

More important for Hobhouse is, however, that the state's exclusionary nature mitigates its moral and democratic achievements. He believed that our fundamental rights spring from our common human nature. The most important of these universal rights is the right to the social development of personality, which figures behind the principle of citizenship. However, this is only partially realised within the state since any state – be it the ancient city or the modern national state – provides the privilege of citizenship only to its members. Hobhouse discussed these shortcomings with regard to the ancient city-states, differing in this regard from Zimmern and Murray. The latter viewed the polis as the incarnation of the perfect democratic state

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[34] Hobhouse, *Social Evolution and Political Theory*, p. 137.
[35] Hobhouse, *Morals in Evolution*, p. 66.
[36] Leonard T. Hobhouse, *Liberalism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1945 [orig. pub. 1911]), p. 7.
[37] Jeanne Morefield, *Covenants without Swords: Idealist Liberalism and the Spirit of Empire* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2005), p. 32.
[38] Leonard T. Hobhouse, *Democracy and Reaction* (Brighton: The Harvester Press, 1972 [orig. pub. 1904]), p. 193.

and justified an internationalism based on the state as the best form of human organisation. Hobhouse, on the other side, stressed the limits of the polis,[39] where only few enjoyed the rights of citizenship and which failed to apply its ethical codes beyond its own borders. It tolerated inter-group rivalry and warfare, while the foreigner was hardly respected as a fellow human. In effect, the polis rather created additional divisions within humankind, instead of furthering the long-term goal of human unification. Criticising these shortcomings, Hobhouse argued that the distinction between citizens and foreigners violates the foreigner's moral rights. From an ethical point of view, the alien is entitled to join the community and to enjoy the same rights as citizens if he or she is capable of contributing to common good.[40] This rule of citizens over non-citizens meant, following Hobhouse, that the perfect state needs to be the inverse of the Platonic state.[41] The perfect state would allow fluctuation for and grant political rights to aliens. Hence, the self-contained political state cannot be the last word in human history: 'The state as we know it is not a solution, but a problem, not a fixed point that has been attained, but a movement.'[42]

Community

In liberal internationalism, the concepts of the state and the community often determine each other. Green, for instance, viewed the state as the guardian and expression of the communities' moral qualities.[43] But as the above section has already implied, Hobhouse weakened the link between state and community. He saw the state more as part of the communities' organisation and less as the manifestation of the communities' morality. The following section seeks to explore the notion of community in more detail, in particular because Hobhouse's thoughts on the individual, society, and the common good are vital to appreciate his later justification of international functionalism. Moreover, the notion of community is important and well-developed in Hobhouse's thought. Hobhouse provided a sophisticated reconciliation of individuality and sociability beyond traditional doctrines, which continues to remain relevant.[44] He rejected philosophical idealism given that primitive life demonstrated how communities arise due to humankind's natural sociability and do not depend on the existence of a state.[45] And in modern communities – which are tied together by a common language, culture, and history – the state is only part of the communities' organisation. Hence, the naturalness of social life was also at odds with the fiction of a society-forming contract.

[39] Morefield, *Covenants without Swords*, p. 77.

[40] Hobhouse, *Morals in Evolution*, p. 64.

[41] Hobhouse, *Social Development*, p. 308; Stefan Collini, *Liberalism and Sociology. L. T. Hobhouse and Political Argument in England 1880–1914* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979), p. 114.

[42] Hobhouse, *Social Evolution and Political Theory*, p. 150.

[43] Duncan Bell, 'The Victorian Idea of a Global State'.

[44] With regard to current debates, it is noteworthy that Hobhouse approach undermines the liberalism – communitarianism divide. For critical evaluations of this debate see Simon Caney, 'Liberalism and Communitarianism: a Misconceived Debate', *Political Studies*, 40:2 (1992), pp. 273–89; Avital Simhony and David Weinstein (eds), *The New Liberalism. Reconciling Liberty and Community*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001).

[45] He spoke of community as a form of society when there is a social life with some form of common organisation. See Leonard T. Hobhouse, 'Sociology', in Morris Ginsberg (ed.), *Sociology and Philosophy. A Centenary Collection of Essays and Articles* (London: The London School of Economics and Political Science, 1966), pp. 21–58; Hobhouse, *Social Development*, p. 51.

Hobhouse believed that humans are by nature social animals whose identities are shaped by the social environment into which they are born.[46] But he stressed that this social milieu was, at least in liberal societies, a pluralistic one. Individuals are thus by birth and association members of many groups, such as a family, a church, or a political party. Instead of assuming that one group membership comes at the expense of another, Hobhouse perceived these plural belongings not as in conflict, but rather as parts of a multi-sided development. It seems he assumed that the different social roles one performs further each other and facilitate rationality.[47] Following that logic, a person might reflect as a believer on his duties as a citizen and, shifting the point of view, as a citizen on the proper limits of religious reasoning in politics. Hence Hobhouse still thought that individuals are rational actors who can make coherent judgements, weigh competing claims, and formulate criticism.[48] Due to this capacity, the individual is free to reflect on and choose her or his alliances. Society is hence not something that dominates the individual and constrains her or his choices, it is rather a structure that emerges from individual choices and durable social relationships. Rather than being a static entity, it is instead a network, the integration of which depends on the individuals comprising it. Society and individuality are interdependent since 'the life of society is nothing but the life of individuals as they act upon another, the life of the individual in turn would be something utterly different if he could be separated from society'.[49] Hobhouse, unlike Hobson, rejected speaking of community as a distinct social entity or being a corporative actor. British pluralists such as Cole and Laski, who are united at the most general level by their critique of the state, later defended similar, positive conceptions of society.[50]

While Hobhouse conceived of society as a network of individuals, he was nonetheless convinced that these individuals relied upon each other. Individuals depend on a social environment to cultivate human faculties such as feeling, loving, and acting. Hobhouse termed the concerted development of these capacities the 'common good'. Following Hobhouse, this indicates that moral persons realise themselves in solidarity with others, such that their self-realisation becomes mutually enforcing. Their flourishing creates the common good, which is not competitive, and amounts to more than the mere sum of individual good.[51] However, distinct from Green, Hobhouse related the common good to civic associations and not to the state. At a higher stage of evolution, Hobhouse observed, civic activities increasingly take place in voluntary associations that people form based on their rational will. Following Spencer's prognosis that modern industrial societies give rise to voluntary organisations, Hobhouse suggested these as alternatives to state action.[52] This proposal is based on the observation that the state may guarantee order, but cannot contribute to the common good. The mere guarantee of order adds nothing to a person's inner life.[53] The further development of the common good depended on increasing voluntary associations.

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[46] Hobhouse, *Social Development*, p. 167; Hobhouse, *Social Evolution and Political Theory*, p. 94.
[47] Gerald Gaus, *The Modern Liberal Theory of Man* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1983), p. 37.
[48] Freeden, 'Liberal Community', p. 34.
[49] Hobhouse, *Liberalism*, pp. 125–6.
[50] Only Laski eventually admitted the corporative status of groups.
[51] David Weinstein, *Utilitarianism and the New Liberalism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), p. 71.
[52] Leonard T. Hobhouse, *The Labour Movement* (New York: Barnes & Noble, 1974 [orig. pub. 1893]).
[53] Hobhouse, *Morals in Evolution*, p. 362.

The notion of the common good also enabled Hobhouse to make a strong case for associative rights and obligations. Although he believed that humans have fundamental rights because they are human, he rejected the idea that the individual has 'natural' rights going against the community. Indeed, he venerated Green and Mazzini for their principle that rights depend on the fulfilment of social duties and qualified it with Gladstone's principle that the individual has not only duties to compatriots, but to whomever she or he interacts with or has an impact on.[54] Each group membership below or above the state thus creates its own system of rights and obligations.[55] His ideal was a society in which people are active in a multitude of civic associations, each contributing to her or his self-realisation and creating systems of rights and obligations.

Hobhouse was not unique in reconciling notions of individuality and community – many liberals were concerned with community at the turn of the century.[56] Murray and Zimmern also advocated visions of fellowship.[57] But only the new liberals, and Christian or guild socialists such as R. H. Tawney and Cole, translated these ideas into arguments for social justice. Through the vocabulary of 'functionalism', they endorsed the notion of associative rights and obligations in distinction to previous natural law reasoning. Accordingly, individuals receive rights in return for the performance of social services. The argument was, however, specified mostly in economic terms in order to justify a worker's right to a living wage in return for his contributions to the economy. The reward should be high enough to enable him to make life plans, nourish a family, and engage in civic activities.[58] On the other side, Hobhouse used functionalism in his work 'Liberalism' (1911) to dispute the legitimacy of functionless and inherited wealth.[59] Noting that 'liberty without equality is a name of noble sound and squalid result', he aimed at social equality for all individuals to possess essential goods such as housing, food, and education. He hoped, however, to attain social equality without a vast increase of state activity, which might further illiberal tendencies within society. Rather, workplace democracy should accompany the introduction of public ownership in areas that were critical to the overall economy and public infrastructure.

Two details are of importance in sorting out Hobhouse's functionalism as the major argument justifying a 'liberal socialism' prior to World War I. Firstly, elaboration of associative rights and obligations within the domestic economic sphere meant that Hobhouse had not yet approached functionalism as a means to bring about internationalism. At that point in time, functionalism justified a living wage within domestic politics. It stressed workers' legitimate claims, but without reducing them to the economic function they performed. Although some guild socialists, such as Ramiro de Maetzu, had already exploited functionalism in fascist terms and

54 Leonard T. Hobhouse, Letter to Gilbert Murray (1885), Oxford University, Bodleian Library, Gilbert Murray Papers. Letters to Gilbert Murray.

55 Ben Jackson, *Equality and the British Left. A Study in Progressive Political Thought, 1900–64* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2011), p. 40.

56 Sandra M. den Otter, '"Thinking in Communities". Late Ninetheenth-Century Liberals, Idealists and the Retrieval of Community', *Parliamentary History*, 16:1 (1997), pp. 67–84.

57 Peter Wilson, 'Gilbert Murray and International Relations: Hellenism, liberalism, and International Intellectual Cooperation as a Path to Peace', *Review of International Studies*, 37:2 (2011), pp. 881–909.

58 Leonard T. Hobhouse, 'The Right to a Living Wage', in William Temple (ed.), *The industrial unrest and the living wage, A series of lectures given at the Inter-dominantal Summer School, held at Swanwick, Derbyshire, June 28th–July 5th, 1913* (London: The Collegium, 1914), pp. 63–75.

59 Hobhouse, *Liberalism*, p. 197.

reduced the individual to the performance of useful services, Hobhouse and also Cole employed functionalism in a competing and individualistic sense.[60] Cole used functionalism as a radical-democratic doctrine that criticised parliamentary democracy and pledged the democratisation of all spheres of life, and direct participation in issue-specific legislation. This is why Hobhouse's functionalism, secondly, differed from Cole's approach. Whereas Hobhouse sought to reconcile the right to a living wage with the maintenance of effective economic performance, Cole was more radical and stressed individual rights without qualifying them through economic efficiency. He assumed that a more social economy would be a more rational economy, in any case.

Imperialism

The former sections have attempted to outline Hobhouse's rather philosophical thoughts on his renewed justification of human progress, his moral critique of the state, and his pluralistic conception of society. Hobhouse's broad but graduated evolutionary approach allowed him to establish a remarkable degree of coherence between these and other topics. Hobhouse equally attempted coherency or at least a reconciliation of doctrines in his more journalistic or political works, which often parallel his philosophy. The following two sections introduce these political works, beginning with his critique of imperialism. They intend to provide a better impression of Hobhouse's political views, which the last sections have begun to describe.

While Hobhouse's evolutionary approach enabled him to conceive of both social equality and the widening of human association as ends of human progress, both aims were less easy to reconcile in political terms. On the one hand, economic intervention and redistribution was associated with socialism and state intervention. On the other hand, internationalism was largely a doctrine of *laissez-faire* and non-intervention in the aftermath of Cobden. Thus, Hobhouse's first task was to merge socialism and internationalism, or at least anti-imperialism. In doing so, he addressed in particular the Fabian Society. Although the society had no foreign policy views previously, with the Second Boer War (1899–1902), it turned into one of the greatest socialist advocates of imperialism.[61] Being a highly costly dispute between Britain and white settlers demanding independence, the war attracted much attention.[62] At its outbreak, Hobhouse was working as a journalist for the Manchester Guardian. He became a steady critic of the war, contributing to the *Guardian*'s standing as the first newspaper taking the side of the Boers.[63] The Guardian opposed the war as an epitome of irrational jingoism, oppressing the Dutch settlers' legitimate quest for self-government in two independent republics.

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[60] In Hobhouse's thought the common good and liberal rights correlate with and check each other. For differing, fascist use of functionalism, see Marc Stears, 'Guild Socialism', in Mark Bevir (ed.), *Modern Pluralism. Anglo-American Debates Since 1880* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), pp. 40–59.

[61] The Fabian Society (1884) was one of the most important socialist advocates in Britain, supporting an elitist socialism that aimed at common ownership and bureaucratic governance.

[62] Casper Sylvest, '"Our passion for legality". International Law and Imperialism in Late Nineteenth-century Britain', *Review of International Studies*, 34:3 (2008), pp. 403–23.

[63] David Ayerst, *Guardian. Biography of a Newspaper* (London: Collins, 1971).

Hobhouse, who himself was under Fabian influence, dismissed the Fabian turn to imperialism in his article, 'The Foreign Policy of Collectivism' (1899).[64] But in defining the causes of imperialism, he argued in a quite socialist vein, incorporating economic arguments from Fabians Beatrice and Sidney Webb. As did Hobson and H. N. Brailsford, Hobhouse saw an interrelation between domestic inequality and imperialism. Accordingly, the British society's degeneration into oligarchy brought about a small elite's domination in commerce, pushing the state to acquire new markets and secure these by military means.[65] Once in place, the commercially motivated imperialism hindered domestic reforms, because required financial resources were being spent on imperial and military matters. This represents a modification of the Cobdenite critique of imperialism. But where Cobden blamed the aristocracy for pushing its interest at the expense of the common good, the new liberals identified the commercial elite as the cause of the malady.[66] However, Hobhouse feared that the Fabians in particular would welcome imperialism. A positive conception of the state and expert rule, Hobhouse asserted, may end in another justification of imperialism, stressing the right of a superior power to rule in the name of 'civilisation' and social efficiency.[67] Although he believed in principle in the 'civilising duties' of ending the slave trade and improving labour conditions, he refuted imperialism on empirical grounds. Since commercial interests drove the empire, it pursues not civilising, rather economic goals. Thus Hobhouse intended to stop Fabian arguments and win over the socialists to 'new' internationalism instead. He conceded that Cobden's advocacy of free trade was obsolete, because commercialism had proven to promote war and not peace.[68] But he appreciated Cobden's internationalism, suggesting a order promoting a 'new internationalism' beyond the state and the establishment of international institutions, instead of the 'old' internationalism of non-intervention.[69] Socialism, Hobhouse claimed, can only be progressive when it supports internationalism and Gladstone's principle that there are human rights and obligations beyond the state.

After supporting a socialist argument against imperialism, Hobhouse turned to a liberal audience in a number of essays (1901–2), which reappeared in the volume 'Democracy and Reaction' (1904). Here, Hobhouse changed his argument and discussed imperialism as a genuine liberal phenomenon. This is in line with his friendly critique of Hobson, asserting that economic causes alone cannot explain imperialism, and with his belief in the causal power of ideas.[70] The success of liberalism, Hobhouse stated, provoked misjudgement among liberals and a period of reaction against liberalism, then finding expression in the war in South Africa. Out of all misjudgements, he identified as the most mistaken a fallacy in the 'older' liberalism, that liberalism justifies imperialism as an engine of civilisation. Equating democracy and liberalism, Hobhouse countered that 'democracy is government of the people by

[64] Leonard T. Hobhouse, 'The Foreign Policy of Collectivism', *Economic Review*, 4 (1899), pp. 197–220.
[65] Hobhouse, 'The Foreign Policy of Collectivism', p. 204.
[66] David Long, 'J. A. Hobson and Idealism in International Relations', *Review of International Studies*, 17:3 (1991), pp. 285–304, 287.
[67] Hobhouse, 'The Foreign Policy of Collectivism', p. 214.
[68] He maintains this view. See also Leonard T. Hobhouse, 'Cobden's Letters', *The Manchester Guardian* (3 April 1919).
[69] Duncan Bell, 'Democracy and Empire: J. A. Hobson, Leonard Hobhouse, and the Crisis of Liberalism', in Ian Hall and Lisa Hill (eds), *British International Thinkers from Hobbes to Namier* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), pp. 181–206, 188.
[70] Leonard T. Hobhouse, 'Democracy and Empire', *The Speaker: The Liberal Review* (18 October 1902), pp. 75–6.

itself. Imperialism is government of one people by another.'[71] Imperialism was anti-thetical to liberalism and the spread of self-government. Self-government could not be induced, but relied foremost on democratic nationalism. In fighting despotic or foreign rule, nationalism, in Hobhouse's view fulfilled its evolutionary task by bring-ing about a moment were national self-determination and democratisation coin-cided.[72] He renewed his belief in the intrinsic qualities of self-government versus imperialism in his work, 'Liberalism' (1911). Here, he repudiated imperialism's civilising mission in stating *contra* Mill that even a semi-despotic, non-effective, native government is preferable to an oligarchy of white men.[73] In this line of argu-ment, he clearly viewed democracy and imperialism as incompatible.

Supporters of an imperial federation such as John Robert Seeley, James Bryce, or J. A. Froude, nevertheless, thought that the federal principle could reconcile imperialism and democracy.[74] But their reference to an imperial federation denoted different proposals of different democratic qualities. Hobson advocated a 'sane' imperialism to reconcile imperialism and internationalism. While internationalism meant having a global outlook, imperialism could serve those international ends by controlling dependencies for their own sake and for the sake of the human race.[75] Yet Hobhouse, an occasional advocate of imperial federalism, continued to insist on colonial self-government.[76] Federalism, Hobhouse thought, offers the advantage of reconciling democracy with large-scale rule when one accepts representation instead of direct participation.[77] An imperial federation as a loose collection of autonomous parts that joined the federation voluntarily may thus be an engine for bringing about a desired democratic order beyond the state. From an international point of view, a federation's greatest advantage would be regulation of international interdependence and peaceful resolution of international disputes through inter-national rules.[78] Hobhouse did not perceive such a step to be the radical end of international anarchy, simply because he did not equate the absence of an interna-tional sovereign with anarchy.[79] Analogous to primitive societies, he claimed that law can rest on custom even in the absence of a monopoly of power.[80] An imperial federation would thus be an improvement on the existing international normativity, consisting of custom, and – after the Geneva conventions – jurisdiction in selected areas.[81] In this line of argument debating international federation, he thus considered democracy and imperialism as compatible, but only if a federation is based on

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[71] Hobhouse, *Democracy and Reaction*, p. 147.
[72] Leonard T. Hobhouse, 'Democracy and Nationality', *The Speaker: The Liberal Review*, 5:119 (1902), pp. 415–6; Nadia Urbinati, 'The Legacy of Kant: Guiseppe Mazzini's Cosmopolitanism of Nations', in Christopher A. Bayly and Eugenio F. Biagini (eds), *Guiseppe Mazzini and the Globalisation of Democratic Nationalism 1820–1920* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008) pp. 11–36, 22.
[73] Hobhouse, *Liberalism*, p. 235.
[74] Duncan Bell, *The Idea of Greater Britain. Empire and the Future of World Order, 1860–1900* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2007). p. 12.
[75] Claeys, *Imperial Sceptics*, p. 243.
[76] Leonard T. Hobhouse, 'Democracy and Imperialism', *The Speaker: The Liberal Review*, 5:120 (1902), pp. 443–4.
[77] Leonard T. Hobhouse, 'Democracy and Liberty', *The Speaker: The Liberal Review*, 5:118 (1902), pp. 388–9.
[78] Bell, 'Democracy and Empire', p. 189.
[79] Hobhouse, *Democracy and Reaction*, p. 195.
[80] Casper Sylvest, 'Continuity and Change in British Liberal Internationalism, c. 1990–1930', *Review of International Studies*, 31:2 (2005), pp. 263–83, 271.
[81] Hobhouse, 'The Ethical Basis of Collectivism', p. 155.

democratic rule in each of its parts. A democrat, as Hobhouse put in reiterating Cobden, 'cannot be a democrat for his own country alone', and needs to apply the same principles abroad.[82]

World War I and the state dispute

When Hobhouse interpreted the Second Boer War as an awakening of illiberal forces, he already identified Germany as a reactionary power.[83] He seized on the idea again in 1914 to explain the outbreak of World War I, which was hardly possible to explain in liberal terms. Hobhouse and many other progressives responded to the dilemma by employing the term Prussianism and by developing theories of a German *Sonderweg*.[84] Hobhouse spread this narrative in 'The world in conflict' (1915), 'Questions of War and Peace' (1916), and in many unsigned leaders appearing in the Manchester Guardian during the war.[85] In sum, he claimed that Germany stood outside of the realm of liberalism since the nineteenth century and developed its own, illiberal theory of the state in the aftermath of Hegel.[86] Hegel's philosophy thus became a reflection of and justification for the aggressive nationalism causing the war. Hobhouse was by no means original in developing this narrative. His anti-German attitude is characteristic for the intellectual mood of the day. Angell, Bryce, Hobson, and Zimmern all employed a dichotomy of Germanness, *Kultur*, autocracy, bureaucracy, state discipline, militarism, and international anarchy on the one side, and liberalism, civilisation, democracy, and international morality on the other side.[87] They thereby contributed to the construction of the war as a 'war of ideas' between competing philosophies and theories of the state.

Hobhouse complemented his journalistic opposition to the German theory of the state with criticism of the idealistic theory of the state in his philosophical polemic, 'The Metaphysical Theory of the State' (1918). Here he differs slightly from younger internationalists such as Norman Angell or G. L. Dickinson. Whereas the latter made rhetorical attacks on the so-called German theory of the state and its result – international anarchy – as a means to illustrate the necessity of their international reform proposals, Hobhouse contested the German theory in detail to justify legitimacy of an international league in philosophical terms. He attacked in particular Bernard Bosanquet's adaptation of German ideas in 'The Philosophical Theory of the State' (1899) and 'Social and International Ideals' (1917). Hobhouse rejected Bosanquet's philosophical idealism as conservative 'German' doctrine. It has been

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[82] Hobhouse, *Liberalism*, p. 236.

[83] Hobhouse, *Democracy and Reaction*, p. 83.

[84] Ayerst, *Guardian*, p. 378; Peter Hoeres, 'Die Ursachen der deutschen Gewaltpolitik in britischer Sicht. Eine frühe Sonderwegsdebatte', in Frank Becker, Thomas Großboelting, Armin Owzar, and Rudolf Schlögl (eds), *Politische Gewalt in der Moderne. Festschrift für Hans-Ulrich Thamer* (Muenster: Aschendorff Verlag, 2003), pp. 193–211.

[85] Leonard T. Hobhouse, *The World in Conflict* (London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1915); Leonard T. Hobhouse, *Questions of War and Peace* (London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1916).

[86] Hobhouse, *The World in Conflict*, p. 100.

[87] John A. Hobson, *Democracy after the War* (London: George Allan & Unwin, 1917); Norman Angell, *Prussianism and its Destruction* (London: William Heinemann, 1914); Alfred Zimmern, *Nationality & Government With Other WarTime Essays* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1918); Viscount Bryce, 'Opening Address', in Viscout Bryce (ed.), *The International Crisis. The Theory of the State. Volume 2* (London: Oxford University Press, 1916), pp. 1–8.

claimed that Hobhouse dismissed Bosanquet's theory too easily, in spite of ideol-ogical overlap. I agree but suggest reading Hobhouse's book as an intentionally strong formulated contestation. Although the war enhanced Hobhouse's critical attitude toward the principle of the state, he had advocated state discipline as necessity to fight Germany during the war.[88] With his 'Metaphysical Theory', Hobhouse formu-lated a late testimony tying to his earlier pluralism and overshadowing his short-lived support for Prussian methods such as conscription and state control over the economy during the war.

The monograph questions Bosanquet's claim that the state has a unique moral quality and is, in Rousseau's terms, a manifestation of the general will. Accordingly, the individual is only a moral subject when he or she acts within and in accordance with the state. Put differently by Hobhouse, Bosanquet's theory states that the state is constitutive for the individual's morality, that the individual's morality depends on the state's existence, and that the individual is only free when his or her will coincides with the will of the state.[89] The ideal is then that citizens consider themselves only as parts of a single political body. Hobhouse, like Cole and Laski during the heydays of pluralism, strongly disagreed with all these claims, beginning with the state's moral pre-eminence. For Hobhouse, the individual is an autonomous moral subject inde-pendent of belonging to a state, or any other form of human association.[90] From this, he proceeds that the state has neither any unique moral quality, nor is the ulti-mate human community. It is just one 'element in the society of mankind', which transcends the state internationally and domestically. Cole argued in a similar vein, using the term 'functional' to denote voluntary non-state associations diffusing the state.[91] Hobhouse, Laski, Cole, and MacIver all portrayed the state as one associa-tion performing specific functions, among others. The state loses any moral supre-macy because it is but one side of a pluralistic society constituted by the interactions of various individuals.[92] And like any association or individual, pluralists as well as internationalists such as Norman Angell claimed, the state is subject to moral considerations.

The dethroning of the state and re-establishment of the individual as an autono-mous moral agent is vital to counter Bosanquet in two regards. The first aspect con-cerns the question of political obligation under wartime conditions, and the nature of war itself. Bosanquet pushed his arguments to an extreme, dissociating himself from his teacher Green in his discussion of war. Although he disapproved of war, in Green's language as an expression of the lack of statehood, he acknowledged the 'moral function' of war by being the opportunity through which the individual can fight for his moral and moral life within the state.[93] For Hobhouse, Bosanquet claimed that the individual has to serve the state, and Hobhouse with Green sought

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[88] Harold Smith, 'World War I and British Left Wing Intellectuals. The Case of Leonard T. Hobhouse', *Albion: A Quarterly Journal Concerned with British Studies*, 5:4 (1973), pp. 261–73.

[89] Leonard T. Hobhouse, *The Metaphysical Theory of the State. A Criticism* (London: Routledge/ Thoemmes Press, 1993 [orig. pub. 1918]), p. 59.

[90] Hobhouse, *Metaphysical Theory of the State*, p. 119.

[91] Cecil D. Burns, Bertrand Russell and G.D.H. Cole, 'Symposium. The Nature of the State in View of its External Relations', *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society*, 16 (1915–1916), pp. 290–325.

[92] Freeden, 'Liberal Community', p. 34.

[93] Nicholson, 'Philosophical Idealism and International Politics', p. 80; Bernard Bosanquet, 'Patriotism and the Perfect State. In. The International Crisis in its Ethical and Psychological Aspects', *Lectures delivered in February and March 1915* (London: Humphrey/Milford Oxford University Press, 1915), pp. 132–54, 145.

to question this.[94] Green regarded war as fundamentally wrong and a violation of the individual's right to live, bringing about questions of political obligation and even personal guilt. Hobhouse thus alluded to Green's discussion in asking whether the individual soldier is guilty of murder. Green had concluded that individual soldiers are not morally responsible because they act under the authority of the state, and are threatened with death in cases of disobedience.[95] In contrast, Hobhouse stated that 'every individual supporting the state in its action must be rightly regarded as assuming a personal responsibility in so doing'.[96] And even though he weakened the charge by acknowledging difficulties in fixing individual liability in a system of diffused responsibility, some of his contemporaries read the book as an accusation against the soldiers who fought during the war.[97]

The second point of disagreement between Bosanquet and Hobhouse asks about the appropriate moment for establishment of international organisation. Bosanquet objected to any organisation beyond the state as domination.[98] Following his argument, the individual is only free in a state when his will coincides with the general will. But a congruence of wills depends on a certain sociocultural homogeneity that is absent at an international level. Such a great variety of individuals and nations, he argued, makes it impossible to assume one common human will legitimating an international organisation, or even to speak of humanity as a corporative agent.[99] Free development is only possible within different communities; at least until a moral entity justifying common organisation becomes concrete. Hobhouse rejected these concerns, because they blur what he viewed as the main problem: 'moral anarchy' in international relations. Tying in to the stoic's cosmopolitanism, Hobhouse demanded expression of the moral unity of humankind through a league of states a priori of socioeconomic coherence. Thus, he equalled international organisation with moral advancement, without considering possible drawbacks for domestic democracy.

However, the league Hobhouse suggested in 1918 consists only of states. It appears progressive in its advocacy of some supranational authority limiting the authority of the state. The war obviously illustrated that neither organisation into states nor international commerce are sufficient means to guarantee peaceful international organisation.[100] Yet apart from this 'new' international spirit aimed at the establishment of international institutions, Hobhouse's suggestion is fairly conservative in that it admits only states as members. He contested Bosanquet's opposition to international organisation by pointing out society's pluralistic nature independent of the state, but failed to formulate an international reform proposal reflecting this ontology. The reason for this could be, as Casper Sylvest observed, that Hobhouse and his contemporaries operated using pluralism and internationalism as distinct principles of liberal ideology, but without reconciling them.[101] Pluralism in the

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[94] Michael Freeden, *Liberalism Divided*, p. 37.
[95] Green, 'Lectures on the Principles of Political Obligation', p. 124.
[96] Hobhouse, *Metaphysical Theory of the State*, p. 110.
[97] A. E. Taylor, 'Review. The Metaphysical Theory of the State by L. T. Hobhouse', *Mind: A Quarterly Review of Philosophy*, 29:113 (1920), pp. 91–105, 104.
[98] Bosanquet, 'Patriotism and the Perfect State', p. 137.
[99] Bernard Bosanquet, *Social and International Ideals. Being Studies in Patriotism* (London: Macmillan, 1968).
[100] Hobhouse, *Questions of War and Peace*, p. 191.
[101] Casper Sylvest, 'Beyond the State? Pluralism and Internationalism in Early Twentieth-Century Britain', *International Relations*, 21:1 (2007), pp. 67–85, 80.

British context is above all a critical attitude toward the state, and of its authority and finality. Internationalism, on the other hand, is based in the existence of distinct states. Hobhouse's critique ends somewhat paradoxically with dissolving the state internally, while suggesting an international order grounded in states, and of questioning the state's corporate identity while demanding its subjection to moral and legal laws.[102] Hobhouse probably did not perceive the paradox because he opposed – despite strong rhetoric – overly nationalistic interpretations of the state rather than the state as such. Ultimately, 'The Metaphysical Theory' called for liberal states as constituent members of an international society.[103]

International functional organisation

Although an international organisation based on states, the League of Nations, was founded after the war's end, Hobhouse addressed the question of international organisation again when he was involved in outlining practical application of his moral framework 'The Rational Good' (1921) in 'The Elements of Social Justice' (1922). At the edge of his philosophical and political writings, the latter monograph culminates into a new outline for international organisation that differs sharply from his previous proposal.[104] Similar to Cole's vision in 'Social Theory' (1920), Hobhouse now suggested a transnational league of states and functional organisations, with the latter denoting civic and vocational associations.[105] Emphasising that most social interests and activities are border-crossing, Hobhouse borrowed from international and guild socialism the idea that these interests deserve their own organisation: 'most of the interests of mankind transcend state boundaries, and to give to such interests international organization is a sound element in the ''Guild'' idea. The miners of the world, the metal-workers, the textile operatives, the agriculturists, have their common interests ... [T]he Socialist ideal has always comprised an ''International'' representing all the manual workers of the world'.[106] Functional organisation should thus jointly introduce industrial democracy and international governance in Hobhouse's and Cole's proposals. In effect, administration would not follow territorial lines and concentrate on issues and occupational fields. But whereas Cole supported international functionalism as an extension of the democratic ideals that developed in the domestic realm, Hobhouse was more internationally minded. He hoped that such a network of transnational association would create various cross-connections so that people who 'are opposed in one relation find themselves co-operating in another'.[107] The aim was to mitigate the national antagonism that drove state activities. For that purpose, Hobhouse suggested placing states at the same level as functional associations in a 'guild congress'. This congress, heading all associations, would retain authority for reconciling divergent interests while the state would have the same function, reconciling the interests between functional associations, at a lower level. Hobhouse thereby assigned those functions to the guild congress that in Bosanquet's theory only the state is entitled to perform. It thus becomes

[102] Freeden, *Liberalism Divided*, p. 364.
[103] Hobhouse, *Metaphysical Theory of the State*, p. 137; Freeden, *Liberalism Divided*, p. 42.
[104] Hobhouse, *Social Evolution and Political Theory*.
[105] G.D.H. Cole, *Social Theory* (Tylers Greenhill/High Wycombe: University Microfilms, 1920).
[106] Hobhouse, *Elements of Social Justice*, p. 202.
[107] Ibid., pp. 202–3.

obvious that Hobhouse intended to diffuse the powers of the state. But one should note that he nowhere implied transnational vocational associations as a means to improve working conditions or the standard of living on an international scale. The reference to international socialism is only an instrument to confirm liberal internationalism.[108]

In the face of this new proposal, one has to ask what had led to Hobhouse's change of mind. Most importantly, I believe, was that Hobhouse realised it was very unlikely that liberal internationalism could live up to its promises in the way one had previously expected. His intention to provide another 'avenue to effective internationalism' is obvious in his review of James Bryce's 'Modern Democracies' (1921), predating 'Elements of Justice'.[109] Eventually, World War I proved that nationalism was Janus-faced, promoting first freedom and self-government, and then international aggression and militarism.[110] In opposition to Mazzini's hopes, adjustment of different national claims remained a problem. Nations and great powers in particular cooperated only in the face of a common enemy and remained unwilling to enter voluntarily a union that impaired their right to defend their territory. Thus, the League lacked supranational powers. Its acknowledgement of state sovereignty did not bring nations closer together but solidified anarchical relations between states. Indeed, Hobhouse opposed the League from the beginning. His criticism resembles the one of Brailsford. Both questioned the democratic quality of the League and criticised its failure to tackle the problems of international conflict and social inequality. Beginning with his critique of imperialism, Hobhouse remained convinced that both were interwoven, since 'class ascendency is the support of militarism, which is also the means of maintaining it, and the "close state" provides the reasons for maintaining national jealousies and enables class interests to figure as the common good'.[111] But the League left this problem unaddressed and did nothing to regain the peace promoting function of transnational commerce.

Moreover, Hobhouse became disillusioned with liberal democracy. Hobhouse had opposed guild socialism earlier. In contrast to Cole he had accepted the representative system. But after the war, Hobhouse became more sceptical – he shared the pessimism Bryce expressed in 'Modern Democracies'.[112] Hobhouse's choice of vocational democracy thus arose not only from empirical observation on the existence of transnational interests, but also from his dissatisfaction with domestic democracy. Accordingly, parliamentary democracy had failed to bring about the expected rationalisation of humankind and government. The complexity of modern life, the poor condition of the press, and a lack of political interest hindered the 'ordinary man' from making well-informed choices at the ballot box. Being both ill-informed and uninterested in politics, such men overcame neither their narrow

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[108] The observation questions whether the term liberal socialism is adequate to describe Hobhouse and other internationalists. One should expect that a (international) socialist is concerned with equality on an international scale. Hobhouse opposed the exploitation of the colonies, but did not use the notion of equality much to make sense of international relations. For the term liberal socialism as a heuristic tool to analyse inter-war see internationalists see Lucian Ashworth, 'The Poverty of Paradigms: Subcultures, Trading Zones and the Case of Liberal Socialism in Interwar International Relations', *International Relations*, 26:1 (2012), pp. 35–59.

[109] Leonard T. Hobhouse, 'Democracy and Civilisation', *Sociological Review*, XIII (1921), pp. 125–35, 135.

[110] Hobhouse, *World in Conflict*, p. 63.

[111] Hobhouse, *Social Development*, p. 300.

[112] Hobhouse, 'Democracy and Civilisation', p. 126.

patriotism, nor class boundaries. They rather appreciated the sovereignty of their state, without realising that it was a relic from an authoritarian conception of kinship.[113] In effect, liberal democracy was insufficient to provide an avenue to internationalism: 'Sovereign democracy as one among many sovereigns may be as pugnacious or cynical as sovereign aristocracy.'[114] Democracy appeared to have brought about some liberty, not much equality, and even less human fellowship.

Hobhouse's international functional organisation thus offers resolutions to liberal dilemmas. One purpose was to improve domestic democracy without expert rule or vast bureaucracies.[115] More or less abandoning the belief that people are by nature political animals, he wanted to politicise them in areas where they are likely to behave reasonably. He assumed that people had a real interest in and adequate knowledge of their vocational concerns, and would make better decisions within these communities.[116] Moreover, Hobhouse self-consciously addressed the dilemma of liberal internationalism, which based its expectation of international cooperation on the success of liberal democracy. Tying in to his vocabulary of functionalism, Hobhouse intended to resolve the problem by shifting the democratic principle from the territorial to the vocational realm.

Separating nationality and democracy is quite radical when one considers that J. S. Mill had argued that nationalism is essential to make democracy successful – and that Hobhouse himself supported national self-determination. Hobhouse now made the counterclaim that democracy can only be successful when it is divided from the sentiment of nationality. Still, his proposal stands in Mill's and the left-liberal tradition, given that it somewhat qualified Mill's proposal of worker-managed firms with an added international dimension. Transnational vocational and civic associations, Hobhouse argued, might ensure effective transnational cooperation und help build up a world community. In introducing vocation as a community-building element, he also responded to Bosanquet's contestation that some common perspective is necessary for effective international organisation.

I thus suggest that Hobhouse's international functionalism is both: his philosophies' normative result and a response to a series of perceived liberal dilemmas. His defence in 'Elements of Social Justice' implies that Hobhouse conceived of it as a normative aim in line with his overall philosophy. Moreover, in suggesting international functional organisation Hobhouse linked back to his earlier critique of the state and a preference for voluntary association. But he broadened the vocabulary of functionalism, which was at its core the consideration of associational rights and obligations. Functionalism then not only justified social equality in the domestic

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[113] Hobhouse, *The Elements of Social Justice*, p. 195; Casper Sylvest, 'James Bryce and the Two Faces of Nationalism', in Ian Hall and Lisa Hill (eds), *British International Thinkers from Hobbes to Namier* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), pp. 161–79.

[114] Hobhouse, 'Democracy and Civilization', p 129.

[115] Philip P. Poirier, 'Introduction', in Philip P. Poirier (ed.), *The Labour Movement* (New York, NY: Barnes and Nobles, 1974), pp. vii–xxiv.

[116] As Cole did, Hobhouse admitted that his proposal necessitated a high degree of public administration to coordinate self-governing associations. However, he seemed to assume that administration is tolerable when it comes with some kind of economic democracy. A 'functional organisation' promised to reconcile bureaucracy and democracy in producing a decentralised public administration that is not beyond, but expressive of civic activism and public control. See also James Meadowcroft, 'The New Liberal Conception of the State', in Avital Simhony and David Weinstein (eds), *Reconciling Liberty and Community* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), pp. 115–36, 123.

sphere, but also became an approach to make sense of international society. Translating Hobhouse's pluralistic conception of society into a suggestion for international institutions is in this sense more successful than Hobhouse's earlier demand of a league of states. Indeed, it again makes a strong case for multiple overlapping group memberships as desirable expressions of a person's social life. This fits quite well with Hobhouse's overall philosophy, and Hobhouse's philosophy enhances the normative force of international functionalism.

Conclusion

This article has explored Hobhouse's international thought. I have argued that the principles that most influenced Hobhouse's normative commitments were the belief in moral universalism and Green's idea of human association in ever-greater circles. Yet I tried to discern shifts in his thought as well. Although he was always more sceptical toward the state and national self-determination than his forerunners, Hobhouse supported nationalism's opposition against international domination. His support of the Boers during the Second Boer War illustrate this advocacy of democratic nationalism. It appears he assumed that nationalism is necessary to bring about democracy, even though he noted that nationalism's furtherance of democracy was only short-lived. However, Hobhouse realised after the end of the World War I that liberal internationalism had come to an impasse. On the one side, the existing international organisation, the League of Nations, had been a failure, and, on the other side, liberal democracy failed to bring about internationalism. Hobhouse, who had against his own philosophy and pluralistic conception of society briefly supported a league of states, tried to resolve this dilemma. Borrowing from international and guild socialism, Hobhouse suggested shifting the democratic principle from the territorial to the vocational. Against earlier beliefs in democratic nationalism, he argued that the only way to improve domestic democracy was the introduction of workplace-related decision-making. Moreover, he thought that vocational and civic association could be an engine for international functional association, enabling the individual to entertain loyalties to various transnational groups. Returning to his pluralistic conception of society and appreciation of multiple, overlapping group memberships, Hobhouse hoped that a cooperating transnational society would further effectuate international cooperation and reduce the likelihood of international conflict.[117]

Compared to the beliefs that Hobhouse inherited, this represents a far-reaching transformation of liberal internationalism. It abandoned a positive conception of the state, nationalism, liberal democracy, and uncontrolled, 'peace-promoting' commerce. In Hobhouse's international functionalism, commerce would regain its peace-promoting function, but only in association with economic democracy. However, in spite of its borrowing from international socialism, Hobhouse's transformation of liberal internationalism did not seek a connection between internationalism and

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[117] More recently, Toni Erskine reconciled communitarians' views on embedded selves with the cosmopolitan appreciation of various transnational or non-territorial group memberships. I believe that such a position is largely compatible with the moral views formulated by Hobhouse. On embedded cosmopolitanism see Toni Erskine, *Embedded Cosmopolitanism Duties to Strangers and Enemies in a World of 'Dislocated Communities'* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009).

international equality. This borrowing was an instrument to save liberal interna-
tionalism and not the symptom of a conversion. Hobhouse did not equate liberalism
internationally with social equality, as he had done it in domestic affairs. Only
Hobhouse's PhD student David Mitrany's refinement of functionalism created a
link between functionalism and international welfare policies. In the tradition of
Hobhouse's insight that liberty without equality remains meaningless, Mitrany was
interested in 'food and freedom' on an international scale, and endorsed issue-specific
international projects for the satisfaction of basic needs.[118] Functionalism's enduring
and widely appreciated concern with weakening national loyalties allowing a world
community to become conceivable, however, can be traced back to Hobhouse's
writings. But whereas Mitrany and later classical realists were concerned first of all
with rendering nationalism redundant, Hobhouse also tied this concern to the reform
of democracy.[119]

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[118] David Mitrany, *Food and Freedom* (London: The Batchworth Press, 1954).
[119] David Mitrany, *The Progress of International Government* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1933);
William E. Scheuerman, 'The (Classical) Realist Vision of Global Reform', *International Theory*, 2:2
(2010), pp. 246–82.