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RESEARCH ARTICLE

An anarchical society (of fascist states): Theorising illiberal solidarism†

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Abstract
While scholars within the English School have increasingly approached the traditionally liberal concept of solidarism in a normatively agnostic fashion, the idea of an 'illiberal solidarism' and historical manifestations thereof remain underexplored. One notable case in point surrounds the peculiar body of Italian interwar international thought, herein referred to as 'international Fascism'. By discerning a synchronic outline of international Fascism, alongside the manner by which this project mutated and ultimately failed as it transformed from a vision theorised in the abstract to a practical initiative under the auspices of the Fascist regime, this article offers historical and theoretical insights into the realisability of illiberal forms of solidarism. Combining this historical account with theoretical insights derived from Reus-Smit's study on international order under conditions of cultural diversity, this article argues that the realisation of some form of solidarism necessitates the acceptance of a substantive pluralist component. Yet messianic illiberal visions that endeavour to retain the states-system, while simultaneously asserting the superiority of one community or a highly exclusionary vision of the 'good life', ostensibly lack the capacity to reconcile the contradictions inherent in efforts to universalise such projects.

Keywords: International Society; Fascism; English School; Solidarism; Internationalism; Society of States

Introduction

In December 1934 a motley assemblage of European fascists coalesced in Montreux to attend a conference organised by the Italian-led *Comitati d'Azione per l'Universalità di Roma* (Action Committees for the Universality of Rome, CAUR).[1] The apparent aim of the Montreux Conference was to inaugurate a Fascist International as a precursor to the eventual realisation of a reinvigorated Europe. The immediate intellectual origins of this project are located in a current of international thought that emerged within Fascist Italy during the 1920s, henceforth referred to as 'international Fascism'.[2] Propounded most prominently by the 'indefatigable propagandist', Asvero Gravelli, this internationalist imaginary conceived fascism as the ecumenical force through which to rejuvenate a terminally decadent Western civilisation.[3]

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[1]Following the historiography, 'fascism' is used to refer to the ideology as a generic phenomenon, while 'Fascism' pertains to the specific Italian regime or ideology.

[2]This article adopts Kallis's terminology. International Fascism denotes an identifiable international imaginary professed by key figures within interwar Italy. Aristotle A. Kallis, 'From CAUR to EUR: Italian fascism, the "myth of Rome" and the pursuit of international primacy', *Patterns of Prejudice*, 50:4–5 (2016), pp. 359–77.

[3]Roger Griffin, 'Europe for the Europeans: Fascist myths of the European new order 1922–1992', in Matthew Feldman (ed.), *A Fascist Century: Essays by Roger Griffin* (Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), pp. 132–80 (p. 143).

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This historical episode perhaps appears odd. Indeed, the concept of fascist internationalism presents as an ostensibly illogical idea, a 'contradiction in terms'.[4] Nevertheless, a burgeoning literature within fascist studies, transnational history, and cognate fields has addressed the enigma of fascist internationalism without prematurely dismissing it as a propagandistic sham. As Madeleine Herren notes, fascist internationalism 'remains at once a highly contested notion and an emerging field of research'.[5] Yet among historians of international thought and International Relations (IR) generally, research into fascist internationalism has been somewhat limited, while engagement with Gravelli and the efforts of CAUR have remained primarily confined to fascist studies.[6]

Perhaps the salient question at this juncture is: why ought IR revisit Italian ideas of a fascist Europe? As this article contends, this body of international thought highlights pertinent questions for the English School and its concept of solidarism. Indeed, Gravelli envisioned a radical illiberal project to collectively realise a purportedly just and pacific international order in and through a society of sovereign states. It is this idea of solidarity or 'moral cohesion' within an international society, albeit one grounded in progressive liberal and cosmopolitan values, which underpins the central English School concept of solidarism.[7]

Recent efforts have highlighted the plurality of forms in which solidarism can manifest. Foremost among such scholars, Barry Buzan has endeavoured to challenge the ideological reductionism inherent in classic interpretations.[8] While Buzan's normatively agnostic definition is of value, and indeed this article develops on such a reconfiguration, his enquiry is primarily confined to an abstract social structural level. The English School has, however, often understood the term as not merely a conceptual descriptor against which to measure developments within the society of states, but a moral ideal.[9] Stated differently, scholars have utilised solidarism to denote both a vision *for* international society, and a potentially existent reality; that is, a description *of* international society.

By discussing the hypothetical of a fascist or communist society of states, Buzan's primary focus is on the descriptive use of the concept. His conceptual reconfiguration is naturally less concerned with investigating actual historical instances of those efforts to realise such a society; that is, the process through which radical illiberal projects for international society are to be enacted, the feasibility thereof, and indeed the coherence or otherwise of illiberal forms of solidarism. Disaggregating solidarism in this manner therefore provides the opportunity to consider pertinent conceptual issues for the English School. Is the prospect of a solidarist international society, despite efforts to discern illiberal variants *à la* Buzan, nevertheless a peculiarly liberal or cosmopolitan phenomenon? What challenges confront the actualisation of illiberal forms of solidarism? By discerning not only a synchronic account of Gravelli's thought, but also the manner by which the project to export fascism mutated as it transformed from an abstract vision to an initiative affiliated with the Fascist regime, this case offers historical and theoretical insights into the coherence and realisability of different forms of solidarism.

[4]Walter Laqueur, *Fascism: Past, Present, Future* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 1996), p. 218.

[5]Madeleine Herren, 'Fascist internationalism', in Glenda Sluga and Patricia Clavin (eds), *Internationalisms: A Twentieth-Century History* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2016), pp. 191–212 (p. 195).

[6]See, for example, Marco Moraes, 'Competing internationalisms at the league of nations secretariat, 1933–1940', in Haakon A. Ikonomou and Karen Gram-Skjoldager (eds), *The League of Nations: Perspectives from the Present* (Aarhus, Denmark: Aarhus University Press, 2019), pp. 51–61; Jens Steffek, 'Fascist internationalism', *Millennium*, 44:1 (2015), pp. 3–22.

[7]Molly Cochran, 'Normative theory in the English School', in Cornelia Navari and Daniel M. Green (eds), *Guide to the English School in International Relations* (Chichester, UK: Wiley-Blackwell, 2014), pp. 185–203 (p. 190).

[8]Barry Buzan, *From International to World Society? English School Theory and the Social Structure of Globalisation* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2004).

[9]See, for example, Hidemi Suganami, 'The argument of the English School', in Andrew Linklater and Hidemi Suganami (eds), *The English School of International Relations: A Contemporary Reassessment* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2006), pp. 43–80 (pp. 71–2).

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In this respect, this article contends a fascist society of states imagined in the style of Gravelli was (perhaps intuitively) futile, lest the envisaged system was to be coercively imposed. This is not, however, to suggest that illiberal solidarism is intrinsically unrealisable and therefore the concept is, by default, inherently liberal or cosmopolitan. By utilising insights derived from Christian Reus-Smit's study on international order under conditions of cultural diversity,[10] it is argued that the realisation of an illiberal solidarism necessitates an acceptance of a substantive pluralist component. Yet messianic illiberal visions that endeavour to retain the states-system, while simultaneously asserting the superiority of one exclusive community or vision of the 'good life', ostensibly lack the capacity to reconcile, through dialogue and debate, the contradictions inherent in efforts to universalise such projects.

This article proceeds in four parts. The first section engages with extant conceptions of solidarism. Despite efforts to reconceive solidarism in a normatively agnostic manner, research into the coherence and practical realisability of illiberal manifestations remains underexplored. In turn, this section redresses such issues by capturing some of the underlying difficulties in managing political and cultural difference within a solidarist international society.

Sections two and three shift from the conceptual towards the discussion of Italian efforts to export facism. Section two focuses on outlining international Fascism as espoused by Gravelli, wherein establishing that this form of fascist internationalism constituted a solidarist vision for international society. While such intellectuals as Ugo Spirito and Arnaldo Volpicelli propounded a similar vision,[11] it was nevertheless Gravelli's ideas that emerged as the pre-eminent version within Italy and are hence the focus of discussion within this section. Part three alters from an investigation of this imaginary to consider how efforts towards the exportation of fascism developed as the project morphed from an imagined vision theorised in the abstract, to an institutionalised initiative under the aegis of the Fascist regime. The internal contradictions inherent in the project, compounded by the ascension of Nazi Germany, represented key forces inhibiting Italian efforts to mobilise sympathetic support in pursuit of some mythic solidarist, yet fascistised, international society. Finally, the concluding section returns to the contribution of this article for the English School and the history of international thought.

Revisiting solidarism

Hedley Bull originally proposed that the core premise of solidarism 'is that of solidarity, or potential solidarity, of the states comprising international society, with respect to the enforcement of the law'.[12] Yet onto this liberal ideal of collective security, Bull introduced a cosmopolitan dimension. Within a solidarist international society, individuals, rather than states, would become the primary referent of international law. It is this cosmopolitan connotation that has become the core of a similar, yet debatably distinct, conception of solidarism, one centred on the intrinsic unity of humankind and the collective defence of universal human rights.[13]

Juxtaposed against solidarism, Bull introduced the notion of pluralism: the view that states are either unable to develop, or are yet to exhibit, such solidarity by nature of their conflicting

[10]Christian Reus-Smit, *On Cultural Diversity: International Theory in a World of Difference* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2018); Andrew Phillips and Christian Reus-Smit (eds), *Culture and Order in World Politics* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2020).

[11]On the political thought of Spirito and Volpicelli, see A. James Gregor, *Mussolini's Intellectuals: Fascist Social and Political Thought* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2005).

[12]Hedley Bull, 'The Grotian conception of international society', in Herbert Butterfield and Martin Wight (eds), *Diplomatic Investigations: Essays in the Theory of International Politics* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1968), pp. 51–73 (p. 52).

[13]See *inter alia* Nicholas J. Wheeler, *Saving Strangers: Humanitarian Intervention in International Society* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2000); Nicholas J. Wheeler and Timothy Dunne, 'Hedley Bull's pluralism of the intellect and solidarism of the will', *International Affairs*, 72:1 (1996), pp. 91–107.

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conceptions of justice. Thus, international society is to merely be based on procedural norms, rules, and institutions to ensure 'certain minimum purposes', namely the maintenance of interstate order.[14] As Buzan summarises, pluralism is a 'practical ethics in which justice is framed as a concern with order under conditions of cultural and political diversity'.[15]

Despite the differences between pluralism and these varying conceptions of solidarism, both are nevertheless similar in rejecting those programmes agitating for the transformation of international society into a 'universal empire or cosmopolitan society'.[16] Both pluralism and solidarism thus retain the idea of a society of independent sovereign states as its constitutional normative principle. Despite its cosmopolitan connotation,

> solidarism … does not claim to transcend organised particularity. It is a theory of international society which accepts states and concedes their role as the principal containers of collective identity … [While] affirming difference, solidarism [also] sets limits to practices sanctioned by sovereignty.[17]

Towards a plurality of solidarisms

There is evidently a progressivism imparted onto solidarism, one exacerbated by pluralist scholars who have often presented the concept as a naive or premature cosmopolitanism.[18] Nevertheless, what is problematic is not the prevalence of normative activism for or against liberal-cosmopolitan solidarism, as this remains a key attribute of English School theorising.[19] Instead, it is the restrictive moral content that has been ascribed to the concept. This has inadvertently marginalised alternative configurations of international order. If pluralism denotes a compromise between a multiplicity of conceptions of justice, then it appears counterintuitive to then ascribe solidarism with but a single interpretation of justice. Unless the prospect for morally ambiguous or abhorrent international societies are to be marginalised from historical analysis and normative debate, proponents and detractors of solidarism must recognise that what is being discussed is 'a particular type of solidarist international society, and not solidarism *per se*'.[20]

In this respect, the concepts of the English School have traditionally evidenced – at minimum – a normative preoccupation with certain progressive developments, or – in the extreme – an implicit teleology designating those configurations of international order that have (and those which are therefore implied not to have) immanent potential.

Notably, scholars have increasingly reinterpreted the concept in a normatively agnostic fashion.[21] Buzan has provided the most sustained engagement with this revision. For Buzan, solidarism does not require interhuman transnational solidarities nor a progressive agenda.[22] Rather, it pertains to the degree of ideological homogeneity within an international society and the extent to which it exhibits rules, norms, and institutions that are more ambitious than mere coexistence.

[14]Bull, 'The Grotian conception', p. 52.

[15]Barry Buzan, *An Introduction to the English School of International Relations* (Cambridge, UK: Polity Press, 2014), p. 91.

[16]Bull, 'The Grotian conception', p. 53.

[17]Timothy Dunne, *Inventing International Society: A History of the English School* (Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave Macmillan, 1998), p. 175.

[18]See, for example, Robert Jackson, *The Global Covenant: Human Conduct in a World of States* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2000).

[19]Christian Reus-Smit, 'Imagining society: Constructivism and the English School', *British Journal of Politics and International* Relations, 4:3 (2002), pp. 487–509.

[20]Buzan, *From International to World Society*, p. 158.

[21]Alex J. Bellamy, 'Conclusion: Whither international society?', in Alex J. Bellamy (ed.), *International Society and its Critics* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2005), pp. 283–95; Buzan, *From International to World Society*; Andrew Hurrell, *On Global Order: Power, Values, and the Constitution of International Society* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2007), p. 59; Carsten Holbraad, *Internationalism and Nationalism in European Political Thought* (New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003).

[22]Buzan, *From International to World Society*, pp. 139–43.

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While offering the hypothetical scenario of a highly cohesive fascist or communist international society, Buzan's primary purpose in reconceiving solidarism in the plural is to construct a social structural rendering of the international realm; that is, to discern its 'various domains and sectors' and the relationship between them.[23] Buzan is therefore somewhat less concerned with solidarism as it pertains to international thought or a project for restructuring international order.

Yet within the English School, scholars have utilised solidarism to denote both a moral ideal or a vision *for* international society, and a potentially existent reality; that is, a description *of* international society. These two conceptions are by no means mutually incompatible. The attainability of some form of solidarist international society is contingent on its constituent states promoting a solidarist agenda. The Holy Alliance is emblematic, with Andrew Hurrell describing its interventionist practice in defence of dynastic legitimacy as a form of 'conservative or reactionary … state solidarism'.[24] Similarly, as James Mayall observes, liberal-cosmopolitan solidarism is founded on the 'view that humanity is one', and the objective of 'diplomacy is to *translate* this latent or immanent solidarity of interests and values into *reality*'.[25]

Disaggregating the concept in this manner directs attention towards pertinent questions of how an ostensibly solidarist vision for international society is to be enacted and, in turn, the coherence and realisability (or otherwise) of certain illiberal variants.

Illiberal solidarism and the management of difference

Ascribing the label of solidarism to an entire international society, such as the contemporary international order or even a region therein, obfuscates salient points of internal contestation. Yet this need not entirely detract from its use. As frequent references to the contemporary 'liberal' order imply, one can still deduce the coalescence of certain rules, norms, and institutions which extend further than a minimalistic or pluralist society of coexistence.[26] Nonetheless, it is precisely the contestations within international orders – and how salient points of political, cultural, and ideological difference are managed – that is of paramount concern to this discussion.

In this respect, Reus-Smit's notion of a 'diversity regime' offers a useful means to conceptualise one of the key challenges besetting various forms of solidarism, not least fascist variants in particular. These regimes are conceived as integral to sustaining international order, whether manifesting in the form of an empire, a suzerain states-system, or an international society of sovereign states. As Reus-Smit notes, diversity regimes are comprised of 'institutional norms and practices that define legitimate units of political authority, authorize certain forms of cultural difference, and relate the two'.[27] Importantly, these regimes are, Reus-Smit postulates, confronted by two overarching challenges that induce change, namely alterations in the distribution of power and claims for cultural recognition contrary to the extant order.[28]

For English School pluralists, difference within international society has traditionally been managed through an institutional and normative configuration that emphasises coexistence, such as through the maintenance of a balance of power and norms of non-intervention and sovereign equality.[29] By contrast, solidarism often implies an emphasis on universal values and a

[23]Timothy Dunne, 'System, state and society: How does it all hang together?', *Millennium*, 34:1 (2005), pp. 157–70 (p. 158).

[24]Hurrell, *On Global Order*, p. 59.

[25]James Mayall, *World Politics: Progress and its Limits* (Cambridge, UK: Polity Press, 2000), p. 14, emphasis added.

[26]Hurrell, *On Global Order*, ch. 3; G. John Ikenberry, 'The liberal international order and its discontents', *Millennium*, 38:3 (2010), pp. 509–21.

[27]Christian Reus-Smit, 'Cultural diversity and international order', *International Organization*, 71:4 (2017), pp. 851–85 (p. 851).

[28]Reus-Smit, 'Cultural diversity', p. 878.

[29]Evidently, the comparatively pluralistic framework within Europe historically coexisted with a 'civilising' pattern in Western relations with the extra-European world. See Edward Keene, *Beyond the Anarchical Society: Grotius, Colonialism and Order in World Politics* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2002).

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projection of some conception of the 'good life' onto the international level. It is here that the classic tension emerges between the particular and the universal.

This is not to suggest that the pluralist-solidarist dichotomy is absolute. As Reus-Smit highlights, once it is recognised that 'identity politics is constitutive of both the membership and institutional architecture of international society', then it becomes ontologically problematic to construct a mutually exclusive pluralist-solidarist dichotomy.[30] Stated differently, international orders or visions thereof inherently 'incorporate and prescribe procedural and substantive values of governance'.[31] Indeed, abstract discussion of a pluralist society of states often reflects a sort of 'Westphalian myth'.[32] Yet 1648 did not inaugurate a pluralist ethic of religious tolerance within European international society (not least globally). Rather, it conferred legitimate membership within international order as contingent on the practice of certain Christian denominations.[33] In this respect, pluralism intrinsically involves dimensions of both political, ideological, and cultural inclusiveness and exclusiveness.

While pluralism and solidarism can therefore be placed on a spectrum, there nevertheless does appear a qualitative difference between the two in terms of the substantive, collective, and purposive values of the latter. Simply, a solidarist international society or a vision thereof extends considerably further than the construction of a mere 'practical association'.[34] In turn, it is precisely the character of these substantive, and often universal, values that feasibly present challenges to their realisation. As Reus-Smit contends, diversity regimes are Janus-faced. While institutionalising and legitimating certain forms of cultural recognition, they simultaneously 'produce social and political hierarchies' that are inherently imbued with the 'potential for alienation, humiliation, stigmatization, and, in turn, political resistance and mobilization'.[35] Logically, this appears to be an issue particularly acute for solidarism in general, and illiberal variants especially. Unless the norms and values professed attract sufficient consensus among diverse actors, or are otherwise successfully imposed by hegemonic means, then it is probable that neither the necessary solidarity will be forthcoming nor tacit support sustainable.

International Fascism and the Italian effort to externalise the fascist creed represent a useful case through which to elaborate the point. While the internationalism professed by Gravelli amounted to, as the following section argues, an illiberal solidarism, it is the trajectory and ultimate demise of this project that exposes the abundant challenges and internal contradictions confronting such a form of solidarism. The case of international Fascism is perhaps an extreme example, and one would intuitively assume its failure in retrospect. Nevertheless, it offers a valuable entry through which to reflect on the concept of illiberal solidarism as a *scholarly construct* and demonstrate the inherent challenges besetting certain forms of illiberal solidarism as a *practical project*.

The case of fascist internationalism is not entirely novel within the English School. In an insightful contribution that adds historical substance to Buzan's hypothetical society of fascist states, Laust Schouenborg argues that IR scholars ought to consider how the Axis powers exhibited a form of solidarity in their attempt to establish an alternative 'principle of legitimacy' within international society, a principle predicated on 'the idea of the regeneration of regional civilisations … defined in racial terms'.[36] While noting certain points of contention between the fascist powers, Schouenborg's identification of a common 'principle of legitimacy' seems to imply a

[30]Reus-Smit, 'Imagining society', p. 503.

[31]Ibid.

[32]Andreas Osiander, 'Sovereignty, international relations, and the Westphalian myth', *International Organization*, 55:2 (2001), pp. 251–87.

[33]Reus-Smit, *On Cultural Diversity*, p. 199.

[34]Alex J. Bellamy, 'Conclusion', p. 291.

[35]Reus-Smit, *On Cultural Diversity*, p. 218.

[36]Laust Schouenborg, 'Exploring Westphalia's blind spots: Exceptionalism meets the English School', *Geopolitics*, 17:1 (2012), pp. 130–52 (p. 139).

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somewhat static quality to Italian conceptions of a fascist Europe and a perhaps overemphasis on the degree of consensus among Italy and Germany (not least Japan) as to the configuration and nature of this order, thereby obscuring the dynamic changes which attended such ideas, the practical efforts towards actualisation, and the mimetic rivalry that commonly divided Italian proponents from their German allies. While following Schouenborg's positive injunction to recognise the order-building projects espoused by fascist states, the account proffered here focuses instead on the contestations *within* fascist visions for international order and the consequent challenges this presented to the realisation of an anarchical society of fascist states.

Imagining international fascism

The concern of the present section is not with the mere existence of an illiberal utopian project, but one that retains the moral value and perpetuity of the states-system. In order to initially establish the solidarist character of international Fascism, the following section introduces the international thought of Gravelli. By then highlighting the structural similarities between Gravelli's idea of international Fascism and classic conceptions of solidarism, this case provides a foundation on which to subsequently discuss the contradictions internal to the project as it practically evolved.

If the fascist minimum constitutes a 'palingenetic form of populist ultra-nationalism',[37] then the proposition of an internationalist imaginary presents as a seemingly illogical notion. Indeed, during the 1920s, the Italian regime officially adopted the position that fascism was a national phenomenon.[38] Fascism was, Mussolini proclaimed, 'not for export'.[39] Despite the lack of an official policy, fascism nevertheless retained a definitively international dimension. Movements not only imitated the Italian example but also commonly exhibited a form of solidarity, understanding fascism as a transnational phenomenon.[40] For Oswald Mosley, the leader of the British Union of Fascists (BUF), fascism was a 'world-wide movement', an idea precipitated within each country by a social and political 'crisis'.[41] Simply, fascism was often 'perceived as a generic phenomenon'.[42]

Asvero Gravelli: An international thinker

It is within this context that an intellectual current emerged within Italy during the 1920s that aimed to translate this latent solidarity into a coherent pan-European programme, with Asvero Gravelli emerging as the pre-eminent proponent of international Fascism. As an original member of the *Fasci Italiani di Combattimento*, Gravelli was an authoritative figure among the hierarchs of the Italian regime. By 1929, Gravelli became preoccupied not solely with the revolution in Italy, but the decadence afflicting the entirety of Europe, and thus the necessity to externalise the fascist creed. Towards this end, Gravelli published several influential treatises, including *Verso l'internazionale fascista* (*Toward the Fascist International*, 1932); *La marche de Rome et l'Europe* (*The March of Rome and Europe*, 1932); *Europa con noi!* (*Europe with Us!*, 1933); and *Panfascismo*

[37]Roger Griffin, *The Nature of Fascism* (London, UK: Routledge, 1991), p. 26.

[38]On formative debates on the exportation of fascism, see Luca de Caprariis, '"Fascism for export"? The rise and eclipse of the Fasci Italiani all'Estero', *Journal of Contemporary History*, 35:2 (2000), pp. 151–83; Emilio Gentile, 'I Fasci Italiani All'Estero: The "foreign policy" of the Fascist Party', in Stein Ugelvik Larsen (ed.), *Fascism Outside Europe: The European Impulse against Domestic Conditions in the Diffusion of Global Fascism* (New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 2001), pp. 95–115.

[39]Quoted in de Caprariis, 'Fascism for export', p. 169.

[40]Salvatore Garau, 'The internalisation of Italian fascism in the face of German national socialism, and its impact on the British Union of Fascists', *Politics, Religion & Ideology*, 15:1 (2014), pp. 45–63 (p. 47).

[41]Oswald Mosley, 'On to fascist revolution', *Blackshirt* (1 February 1933), p. 1.

[42]Arnd Bauerkämper, 'A new consensus? Recent research on fascism in Europe, 1918–1945', *History Compass*, 4:3 (2006), pp. 536–66 (p. 553).

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(*Pan-Fascism*, 1935). In addition, Gravelli founded two key platforms in which European proponents for the internationalisation of fascism were to coalesce, namely the journal, *Antieuropa* (*Anti-Europe*), and its supplementary newspaper, *Ottobre* (*October*).[43]

The peculiarity of Gravelli's response to modernity was in its externalisation of certain established fascistised ideals – namely corporativism, Catholicism, and youth – onto a pan-European frame. It was under the ideological aegis of liberal-capitalist modernity, in conjunction with the pernicious influence of Bolshevism, that Europe had purportedly descended into a sort of Spenglerian decline. Gravelli's response amounted to a Sorelian myth for an alternative modernity on a continental scale – a vision for civilisational palingenesis via the diffusion of fascism.[44] In this respect, Gravelli's apparent anti-Europeanism, as manifested in the title *Antieuropa*, should not be construed as a rejection of transnational affinities nor obligations.[45] As Gravelli posited in May 1930, anti-Europeanism is not an absolute moral objection, but a 'provisional historical position' *vis-à-vis* a continent 'afflicted by a spiritual … [and] material crisis'.[46]

Yet international Fascism was not 'merely a movement of reaction, of counter-reformation, of anti-democracy, or anti-liberalism'.[47] It was not solely a crusade against liberal and socialist alternatives for international society. Instead, it professed an opposing and rather abhorrent form of solidarism. As Gravelli claimed, history had not culminated in the universality of 'democracy and liberalism', for these were but 'temporary stages' to be superseded by the fascist epoch.[48] Somewhat ironically, it was only through a fascistised pan-European movement that the continent was to 'regain an equilibrium of ideas and spirit', the 'precondition for a new Europe'.[49] To comprehend the nature of this internationalist imaginary, it is necessary to elaborate on two key features: the cardinal principle of youth and the allegedly anti-imperial and culturally diverse nature of the project.

At its core, Gravelli's programme was a proposition for a European youth movement. The cult of youth and the values that it embodied – faith, vigour, and virility – were integral ideological tropes of Italian Fascism.[50] Influenced by Arnaldo Mussolini, the brother of Benito and the founding figure of the School of Fascist Mysticism, the cult of youth became infused with an international dimension.[51] For Arnaldo, fascism was in a global war 'for the justice of all', and thus it could not 'fail to have a universal character'.[52] It was the revolutionary qualities of youth that were, Arnaldo reasoned, lacking not only in the materialist ideologies of liberalism and socialism, but within the generation of fascists who had participated in the 'March on Rome', a generation contaminated by the vestiges of the liberal epoch.[53] While the fascist revolution had been instigated within Italy, its diffusion was to be enacted by a radical vanguard of European youth. Proponents of international Fascism were, Gravelli declared, 'anticipating and preparing the union of the young forces of the West'.[54]

[43]Griffin, 'Europe for the Europeans', p. 143.

[44]See Asvero Gravelli, 'Towards a fascist Europe', in Roger Griffin (ed.), *Fascism* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 1995), pp. 66–7.

[45]Philip Morgan, *Fascism in Europe, 1919–1945* (Oxon, UK: Routledge, 2003), p. 168.

[46]Gravelli, 'Towards a fascist Europe', p. 66.

[47]Ibid.

[48]Ibid.

[49]Ibid.

[50]Bruno Wanrooij, 'The rise and fall of Italian fascism as a generational revolt', *Journal of Contemporary History*, 22:3 (1987), pp. 401–18.

[51]Michael Arthur Ledeen, *Universal Fascism: The Theory and Practice of the Fascist International, 1928–1936* (New York, NY: Howard Fertig, 1972), pp. 20–1.

[52]Quoted in Michael Arthur Ledeen, 'Italian fascism and youth', *Journal of Contemporary History*, 4:3 (1969), pp. 137–54 (p. 141).

[53]Ibid., p. 140.

[54]Ledeen, *Universal Fascism*, p. 79.

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In accordance with this emphasis on youth, Gravelli conceived fascism as the inheritor to Giuseppe Mazzini's 'Young Europe'. Mazzini envisioned a new generation of Italians who would confront the decaying Habsburg Empire and, in achieving self-determination, establish a dynamic republic, a 'Young Italy'.[55] An alliance of similarly 'young' nations would thereafter act as a vanguard for a 'new pact of European fraternity' superseding the gerontocratic international order.[56] As Gravelli described, 'Fascism is the gravedigger of old Europe.'[57] Towards this end, Gravelli proposed the establishment of a transnational bloc of fascist movements.

This International was to propagate domestic reform founded on the 'granite foundations' of fascism as a precondition to realising the imagined order.[58] This pan-European project would present an alternative vision to the Comintern, the abortive 1929 French proposal for a European Federal Union, and the federative Pan-Europa movement of Count Coudenhove-Kalergi.[59] While some similarities between this fascist discourse and Pan-Europa were undoubtedly present, with Coudenhove-Kalergi emphasising a common Nietzschean 'Will to Power' and in fact labelling Gravelli a 'secret disciple', the latter was evidently more hesitant.[60] Indeed, Gravelli eschewed the proposition of some type of supranational authority, opting instead for the diffusion of fascism within each individual state.[61] It was a programme for ideological homogeneity within an anarchical society, a perverted inversion of the democratic peace thesis, or – to use the terminology of corporativist internationalist Arnaldo Volpicelli – 'a synthesis and a simultaneous coexistence of international and national order'.[62] Simply, a fascistised international society was conceived as a morally superior substitute to some form of supranational government. As Michael A. Ledeen notes, this programme did not require movements to concede 'their national integrity', but merely collaborate in a 'common search' for the fascist 'expression of national genius'.[63]

Key within this imaginary was the totalitarian corporate State, a purported means of promoting social justice and resolving class conflict.[64] Yet Gravelli's vision was not solely a technocratic programme for revolutionising the institutions of the state. Fascism would reinstate a prevailing *nomos*, reversing the seemingly nihilistic existence of the modern epoch. The primary purpose of such institutional change was therefore to enact a spiritual revivification of the national community, to create a 'New Man', a *uomo fascista* (fascist man).[65] As Gravelli claimed, '[i]t is not enough to change the institutions … the men and their mentality must be changed.'[66] For Gravelli, 'revolutions are … spiritual facts, before being economic, social, and political facts'.[67]

[55]Ledeen, 'Italian fascism', p. 137.

[56]Quoted in Marco Duranti, 'European integration, human rights, and romantic internationalism', in Nicholas Doumanis (ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of European History, 1914–1945* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2016), pp. 440–58 (p. 446).

[57]Quoted in ibid.

[58]Gravelli, 'Towards a fascist Europe', pp. 66–7.

[59]Kallis, 'From CAUR to EUR', p. 367.

[60]See Dino Cofrancesco, 'Ideas of the fascist government and party on Europe', in Walter Lipgens (ed.), *Documents on the History of European Integration, Vol. 1: Continental Plans for European Union, 1939–1945* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1985), pp. 179–99 (p. 179); Dina Gusejnova, *European Elites and Ideas of Empire, 1917–1957* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2016), p. 81.

[61]Duranti, 'European integration', p. 446.

[62]Quoted in Jens Steffek and Francesca Antonini, 'Toward Eurafrica! Fascism, corporativism, and Italy's colonial expansion', in Ian Hall (ed.), *Radicals and Reactionaries in Twentieth-Century International Thought* (Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), pp. 145–69 (p. 150).

[63]Ledeen, *Universal Fascism*, p. 89.

[64]Aristotle A. Kallis, *The Third Rome, 1922–43: The Making of the Fascist Capital* (Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), p. 229.

[65]On the myth of the 'new man', see Jorge Dagnino, 'The myth of the new man in Italian fascist ideology', *Fascism*, 5:2 (2016), pp. 130–48.

[66]Quoted in Ledeen, *Universal Fascism*, pp. 81–2.

[67]Quoted in ibid., p. 82.

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In turn, Gravelli reasoned fascism was to 'create the spiritual basis that permits mutual understanding' between states and thereby provide the foundation for an orderly European peace, 'a new pact of European fraternity'.[68]

Combined with this reinterpreted Mazzinian scheme was a second dimension defining the character of international Fascism, namely 'a universal, Christian, yet tolerant doctrine'.[69] It is important to clarify that this 'toleration' was extremely contingent. Political and cultural toleration was afforded to fascist-oriented movements and limited to the geographical and perceived civilisational boundary of Europe, with Gravelli even enlisting as a volunteer in the Italian conquest of Abyssinia. Simply, civilisational stratification, not least the colour line, remained salient. Nevertheless, Gravelli's proposal was somewhat peculiar in its ostensible defence for the cultural and political diversity of fascist movements *within* Europe.

For Gravelli, fascism was an international phenomenon, yet distinctly national in its permutations. The members of the International would not simply imitate the Italian model, but develop variations according to national particularities. By espousing a fascist ecumenicism, Gravelli reconciled the conceptual contradiction inherent within his notion of an 'International of Nationalisms'.[70] This pluralism manifested in the vehement opposition exhibited by *Antieuropa* and *Ottobre* towards German National Socialism. *Antieuropa* notably published a 1933 edition focused on the issue of biological racism, wherein its contributors criticised Hitler and juxtaposed the barbaric paganism, biological determinism, and anti-Semitism of Nazism with the cultural, humanistic, and religious dimensions purportedly integral to Italian Fascism.[71] For Gravelli, the notion of a homogeneous race was fictitious and the supremacy of the purported Aryan race anathema to a Fascist International.[72] As Gravelli proclaimed, proponents of international Fascism were 'the protestants of the racist religion'.[73] It should be recognised, however, that one of the key rationales behind Fascist opposition to 'Nordic racial superiority' was not due to some absolute moral repulsion, but precisely because the 'Latin race [was argued] to be at least equal to the Nordic'.[74]

This conception of relative pluralism was supplemented by a form of qualified anti-imperialism, at least as it pertained to Europe. This involved a confirmation of the political independence of each member within the proposed International and a stated aversion for regional dominance. Gravelli's Mazzinian vision undoubtedly conceived Italy as the spiritual leader of fascism and thus indispensable for the construction of a 'Young Europe'. Yet this did not imply that the International was to merely function as a proxy for Italian statecraft. In July 1933, it was noted in *Ottobre* that the 'International and its sections … solemnly affirmed' its 'absolute independence' from all participating governments.[75] While paternalistic, Gravelli nevertheless conceived the movement not simply as an Italian imperial project, but as one based on a mutual solidarity and a collective mission towards the actualisation of a culturally tolerant, yet fascistised, European international society.

International Fascism was radically at odds with a minimalistic or pluralist vision for international order. Nor did it propound a post-Westphalian form of 'doctrinal imperialism'.[76] Rather, the ideological zeal and radical implications for international society contained within Gravelli's thought retained a certain similarity to internationalist projects of a liberal-cosmopolitan solidarist variety, such as those embodied in a Kantian perpetual peace or a Wilsonian system of collective security.

[68]Quoted in Duranti, 'European integration', p. 446.

[69]Ledeen, *Universal Fascism*, p. 114.

[70]Kallis, *The Third Rome*, p. 229.

[71]Ledeen, *Universal Fascism*, p. 101.

[72]Ibid., p. 102.

[73]Quoted in ibid.

[74]Garau, 'The internalisation of Italian fascism', p. 53.

[75]Ledeen, *Universal Fascism*, p. 85.

[76]See Martin Wight, 'An anatomy of international thought', *Review of International Studies*, 13:3 (1987), pp. 221–7.

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While liberal internationalism is a vast repository of international thought, thinkers within this tradition have tended to stipulate not only forms of appropriate conduct as to mitigate discord and maintain order, but an ideal that international society ought to collectively pursue certain purposive and substantive goals, whether that be in terms of some civilising mission, a Responsibility to Protect populations against mass atrocity crimes, or attaining some elusive state of perpetual peace.[77] This comparison is not to imply an ideological similarity, not least moral equivalency, between international Fascism and contemporary forms of liberal internationalism. Rather, it is to merely indicate this Gravellian imaginary and its liberal solidarist counterparts are structurally similar to the extent that the former too was animated by an endeavour to pursue a more cohesive and peaceful international order underpinned by some (evidently abhorrent) interpretation of justice and progress.

Labelling Gravelli's internationalism as a type of solidarism could perhaps be critiqued by those insisting that the latter is premised on the idea of an inherent unity of humankind. As Michael C. Williams states, the primary 'virtue of the solidarist approach' is its contribution to the 'normative theorizing [of] a progressive agenda'.[78] Yet all scholarly interpretations of solidarism are inherently arbitrary. Neither pluralism nor solidarism denote the international thought of a particular philosopher, statesperson, or jurist. While both concepts were originally constructed by reflecting on the ideas of classic international thinkers, pluralism nevertheless is not a mere synonym for the ideas of, for example, Vattel, in the same manner that solidarism cannot be relegated to the ruminations of Grotius. Solidarism is merely a conceptual construct to describe patterns of thought and presently existent or potentially immanent phenomenon.

To apply the description to Gravelli is to therefore follow what already appears implicit in the English School canon and rather explicit in recent scholarship, namely that solidarism is an inherently plural concept. As Carsten Holbraad summarised (albeit in a somewhat homogenising fashion), interwar fascism could be viewed as 'expressing not only a … virulent type of nationalism, but, particularly in its hostility to both revolutionary and democratic forms of Marxism and its program for reorganizing Europe along racial and hierarchical lines, also a novel and radical form of conservative internationalism of a solidarist kind'.[79] Understanding solidarism in a normatively agnostic manner is to merely recognise that variants of liberal-cosmopolitan solidarism are, to adjust Carr's maxim, but a particular vision for organising interstate relations, based on a particular interpretation of justice, at a particular historical juncture.[80]

This point aside, the intention of this article is to not simply highlight the ideological mutability of solidarism. By conceptually disaggregating the concept into its visionary and empirically descriptive uses, the following section endeavours to elucidate the manner by which international Fascism morphed from a solidarist vision theorised in the abstract to a practical effort towards realisation. In turn, it captures the internal contradictions inherent to such a project and the limitations besetting radically illiberal variants of solidarism.

Realising a fascist international

By the end of the 1920s, official attitudes regarding ideological exportability were rapidly changing. In 1928, Mussolini offered a foreword to the internationalist treatise, *The Universal Aspects of Fascism*, a text intended to 'urgently' persuade British intellectuals of the moral value and

[77]See, for example, G. John Ikenberry, 'Liberal internationalism and cultural diversity', in Andrew Phillips and Christian Reus-Smit (eds), *Culture and Order in World Politics* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2020), pp. 137–58.

[78]John Williams, 'The international society-world society distinction', in Navari and Green (eds), *Guide to the English School in International Relations*, pp. 127–42 (p. 137).

[79]Holbraad, *Internationalism and Nationalism*, p. 13.

[80]E. H. Carr, *The Twenty Years' Crisis, 1919–1939: An Introduction to the Study of International Relations* (2nd edn, London: Macmillan Press, 1946), p. 87.

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universality of fascism.[81] Of particular note, Mussolini provided authorisation for the so-called Volta Conference under the leadership of the Royal Academy of Italy. In November 1932, a disparate group of the European right congregated in Rome to discuss the trajectory of Europe.[82] A prominent theme emerged among participating fascists: an ambition for a continental spiritual revivification based on the diffusion of fascism. Somewhat predictably, such themes were not equally professed by non-fascist participants and the representatives of the National Socialist German Workers' Party, namely Alfred Rosenberg and Herman Göring. Nevertheless, '[t]he Volta Congress had indicated that', as Ledeen notes, 'the terrain had been prepared for a movement of European youth.'[83]

With Gravelli's initiatives acquiring domestic and international traction, what had previously been considered heresy became a foundation for official policy. Mussolini subsequently claimed he had not uttered the idiom, 'Fascism is not for export', a phrase supposedly 'too banal' for the Duce.[84] Yet despite Mussolini's apparent confirmation of Gravelli's proposal, the discursive underpinnings of the project remained contested and malleable. In fact, it was – at least in part – the emergence of a multitude of initiatives propagating for the universalisation of fascism that prompted a reassertion of authority over the project through the establishment of CAUR in 1933.[85]

From its inception, the ideological framework of CAUR increasingly displaced international Fascism with the interrelated rubric of Roman *Universalità*. Gravelli undoubtedly glorified Roman heritage and the myth of Rome,[86] yet he also placed considerable emphasis on the collaborative enterprise of a Fascist International.[87] By contrast, *Universalità* was a considerably more expansive discourse, one that positioned Rome as a transtemporal 'millenarian spiritual force' for progress and the harbinger of Western civilisation.[88] While Gravelli's imaginary can therefore be subsumed within this framework, *Universalità* was not necessarily reducible to international Fascism. As Aristotle A. Kallis observes, *Universalità* 'remained a permanent point of reference for Fascist discourse, underpinning and effectively subsuming the other competing international imaginaries'.[89] While this civilising 'myth of Rome' was utilised by liberal Italy as justification for colonial expansion, it was during the fascist era that it acquired particular prominence, especially through the intellectual output and initiatives of a radical faction of fascist youth.[90] Disillusioned by the pragmatic compromises of the Fascist regime during the 1920s, an amorphous movement of Italian youth, one influenced by the ideas of Arnaldo, promulgated a universalist imaginary to escape from the stultified domestic revolution.[91] While less critical of the *Duce*, other notable figures, such as Camillo Pellizzi, Giuseppe Bottai, and the journal, *Critica Fascista*, would similarly emerge as authoritative voices of *Universalità*.[92] Such proponents presented Fascist Italy – in a manner similar to Gravelli – as the natural inheritor of the civilisational force that had provided the world with Roman law, Catholicism, and the Renaissance. In

[81]James Strachey Barnes, *The Universal Aspects of Fascism* (London, UK: Williams and Northgate, 1928), p. 239.

[82]As Rota highlights, the original list of those who 'agreed to participate … was an impressive collection of some of the most influential European politicians of the interwar period', including Winston Churchill, Lloyd George, Louis Barthou, and Paul Hymans. Emanuel Rota, '"We will never leave": The *Reale Accademia d'Italia* and the invention of a fascist Africanism', *Fascism*, 2:2 (2013), pp. 161–82 (p. 166).

[83]Ledeen, *Universal Fascism*, p. 83.

[84]Ibid., p. 62.

[85]Griffin, 'Europe for the Europeans', p. 145.

[86]For example, Gravelli edited a 1939 publication on the recreation of the Roman lifestyle. See Philip V. Cannistraro, 'Mussolini's cultural revolution: Fascist or nationalist?', *Journal of Contemporary History*, 7:3–4 (1972), pp. 115–39 (p. 127).

[87]Kallis, *The Third Rome*, p. 228.

[88]Kallis, 'From CAUR to EUR', p. 362.

[89]Ibid.

[90]Ledeen, *Universal Fascism*. See also Romke Visser, 'Fascist doctrine and the cult of the *romanità*', *Journal of Contemporary History*, 27:1 (1992), pp. 5–22.

[91]Ledeen, *Universal Fascism*, pp. 18–25.

[92]Kallis, 'From CAUR to EUR', p. 365.

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accordance with this mythic lineage, fascism, through a revived and hegemonic Italy, was to become the spiritual force for the revivification of Western civilisation.[93]

While the discourse of Roman *Universalità* had progressively solidified as an official ideological trope by 1932,[94] the primary impetus for the establishment of CAUR was not simply the culmination of Gravelli's initiatives. Nor was it principally the product of the interrelated and concurrent youth protest. Rather, Hitler's appointment as chancellor on 30 January 1933 catalysed the official adoption of a 'universalist-internationalist' programme.[95] As the following argues, this both led to the increasing gravitation towards a comparatively more parochial creed in defence of Italian claims to hegemony, while betraying the inherent contradictions contained within the project.

Conspicuous by its absence: Navigating Nazi Germany

A limited number of universalist proponents reacted with exuberance, interpreting the ascension of Hitler as evidence of the inexorable diffusion of fascism.[96] Claudio Baldoli notes that despite Gravelli's concerns over biological racism, he did not entirely exclude Germany from his envisioned Fascist International prior to 1935, even commending Hitler's acquisition of power as the potential prelude to an Italo-German alliance against France in pursuit of an allegedly common civilisational mission.[97]

Yet the predominant response rapidly became one of opposition and disdain at the perverted racialist ideology of Nazism.[98] Indeed, Mussolini attacked the biological racism of National Socialism as ahistorical and utopian.[99] Yet Mussolini and other proponents of universalism prophetically recognised in Nazism an alternative ideological pole, one that threatened Italian hegemony over the fascist ideology. Even the ardent anti-Semites and subsequent admirers of Nazism, Roberto Farinacci and Giovanni Preziosi, vehemently criticised the biological determinism of National Socialism, revealing for some the importance of political necessity, as opposed to ideological conviction.[100] By 1935, Gravelli too had become increasingly opposed to the Third Reich due to the escalating 'fear of German leadership'.[101] As Gravelli noted, 'opinions exist within Germany which seek to suggest that Berlin wants to replace Rome as the centre of Western civilisation'.[102] In turn, Gravelli came to differentiate between a 'Protestant' and 'Roman' fascism.[103]

Within this context, Mussolini aimed to reaffirm Italian Fascism as the paradigmatic model, not least in order to retain his pre-eminent status as the Pope of fascism.[104] As Salvatore Garau notes, this would involve an ambitious prerogative for Italy to assume 'a pivotal role in both culture and politics in the Western world'.[105] Undoubtedly, traditional strategic considerations remained

[93]Ledeen, *Universal Fascism*, pp. xv–xvi.

[94]Kallis, *The Third Rome*, p. 228.

[95]Ibid.

[96]Aristotle A. Kallis, 'The "fascist effect": On the dynamics of political hybridization in inter-war Europe', in Antonio Costa Pinto and Aristotle A. Kallis (eds), *Rethinking Fascism and Dictatorship in Europe* (London, UK: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), pp. 13–41 (pp. 26–7).

[97]Claudia Baldoli, 'Italian Fascism in Britain: The *Fasci Italiana all'Estero*, the Italian Communities, and Fascist Sympathisers during Grandi Era (1932–1939)' (PhD dissertation, London School of Economics and Political Science, 2002), p. 74.

[98]Kallis, 'From CAUR to EUR', p. 369.

[99]Ruth Ben-Ghiat, *Fascist Modernities: Italy, 1922–1945* (Berkley, CA: University of California, 2001), p. 148. See also Emil Ludwig, *Talks with Mussolini* (London, UK: G. Allen & Unwin, 1932).

[100]See Garau, 'The internalisation of Italian fascism', p. 53; Stanley G. Payne, *A History of Fascism, 1914–1945* (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 1996), p. 232.

[101]Baldoli, 'Italian Fascism in Britain', p. 74.

[102]Quoted in ibid., p. 75.

[103]Ibid., p. 210.

[104]Garau, 'The internalisation of Italian fascism', p. 50.

[105]Ibid.

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relevant. Paramount in this regard was an ambition to prevent the *Anschluss*, a concern that became particularly acute following the assassination of Austrian Chancellor Engelbert Dollfuss.[106]

Provided this ideological and geopolitical context, the combination of international Fascism and the 'myth of Rome' became an 'expedient proposition' for the Duce.[107] The Gravellian imaginary, focused as it was on transnational cooperation and the practical export of fascism, was to be increasingly combined with the hegemonic ambitions associated with the concept of *Universalità*. While Gravelli's efforts continued, he would subsequently become disillusioned by CAUR, having been effectively excluded from the organisation.[108]

The confluence of conceptual and strategic premises that CAUR embodied manifested through the vision of its leader, Eugenio Coselschi. For the latter, fascism was 'a global force of both spiritual and political renewal, one rooted in the (revived) traditions of ancient Rome'.[109] As with other universalist and internationalist theorists, Coselschi's programme derived from a disdain at the purported degeneracy of an 'old Europe', the 'Europe of 1789'.[110] Under threat from the maladies of liberal-capitalist modernity and the menace of Bolshevik 'materialism and slavery', Coselschi reasoned that the revivification of Western civilisation necessitated the identification of a 'unitary' principle, one located in the civilisational genius of Rome.[111] As the founding manifesto of CAUR claimed, Rome is the 'fulcrum of Europe's spiritual unity', the key to the formation of a 'new Europe'.[112] Fascist Italy, as the inheritor to Rome, was to again emerge as the spiritual vanguard of civilisation. By interpreting fascism through this prism, it was thus conceived as an 'international, pan-European and indeed ecumenical-universalist … force'.[113]

Yet this solidaristic mission for civilisational palingenesis and its rejection of the liberal order functioned equally as a pragmatic reaffirmation of Italian hegemony *vis-à-vis* Nazi Germany. In this respect, CAUR promoted the internationalisation of fascism. Yet all such initiatives were oriented towards Italian hegemonic ambitions. For instance, considerable financial assistance was provided to the Austrian *Heimwehr* in an attempt to provide a bulwark against German influence.[114] Similarly, CAUR was to operate as the 'primary conduit for political pilgrimages to Rome'.[115] For some foreign fascists, this sycophantic deference to Mussolini was instrumentally used to acquire Italian financial subsidies. Yet for other pilgrims, there was a personal sense that this homage to Rome was a 'profound spiritual experience'.[116] In addition, associates of CAUR were despatched internationally to propagate fascism under the paternalistic rubric of universality.[117]

It was, however, the Montreux Conference in December 1934 that exemplified the admixture of ideological premises. After the inauguration of CAUR, Coselschi initiated a process of identifying and extending conference invitations to European and extra-continental fascists. A total of 29 movements were identified as fascist in nature, from which 14 organisations deriving from 12 European countries would attend.[118] Notably, German National Socialists were not invited on the

[106]Arnd Bauerkämper, 'Ambiguities of transnationalism: Fascism in Europe between pan-Europeanism and ultra-nationalism, 1919–39', *German Historical Institute Bulletin*, 29:2 (2007), pp. 43–67 (p. 56).

[107]Kallis, 'From CAUR to EUR', p. 369.

[108]Ledeen, *Universal Fascism*, pp. 127–8.

[109]Kallis, 'From CAUR to EUR', p. 368.

[110]Quoted in Mircea Platon, 'The Iron Guard and the "modern states": Iron Guard leaders Vasile Marin and Ion I. Moța, and the "new European order"', *Fascism*, 1:2 (2012), pp. 65–90 (p. 80).

[111]Ibid.

[112]Kallis, 'From CAUR to EUR', p. 371.

[113]Ibid., p. 368.

[114]Alan Cassels, *Ideology and International Relations in the Modern World* (Oxon, UK: Routledge, 1996), p. 158.

[115]Kallis, *The Third Rome*, p. 238.

[116]Ibid., pp. 236–7.

[117]See, for example, Jordan Kuck, 'Renewed Latvia: A case study of the transnational fascism model', *Fascism*, 2:2 (2013), pp. 183–204.

[118]Payne, *A History of Fascism*, p. 229; Kallis, 'From CAUR to EUR', pp. 370–1.

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dubious basis that the conference aimed to assist non-state movements.[119] Despite this supposed rationale, coded anti-German rhetoric and the explicit rejection of virulent (intra-European) racism were dominant themes of discussion.[120]

During the conference, efforts were directed towards deriving a common denominator of fascism and the requisites for membership in the proposed International.[121] As with Gravelli, Coselschi argued that fascism retained a universal core, yet its permutations differed based on national particularities.[122] 'The method will be different in different countries', Mussolini proclaimed, 'but the spirit will be the same.'[123] CAUR ostensibly espoused a sense of European cultural tolerance, albeit by infusing a more extreme paternalism. As Coselschi proclaimed, under his directorship, he was to be 'the most severe and jealous guardian of the national sentiment of each' member.[124] Accordingly, the 1935 statute of CAUR stipulated it would establish the 'spiritual alliances' that would offer the world 'political restoration and civic and social salvation', while ensuring that the 'traditions, characteristics and needs of the respective countries' remain 'intact and inviolable'.[125] Yet this tolerance was radically circumscribed by Italian hegemonic ambitions. While Coselschi posited all parties or movements who professed a certain 'spirit oriented towards the … political, economic, and social renovation' of Europe were able to participate in the initiatives of CAUR, political conditionalities were also attached.[126] Membership in the International was to be contingent on an acceptance of Coselschi's ideological minimum, a recognition of Italian cultural pre-eminence, and an offering of fealty to the supposed genius of Mussolini.[127]

In summary, from the inauguration of CAUR until the Montreux Conference, the project infused an ideologically and geopolitically informed Germanophobia; a relatively genuine, albeit extremely paternalistic, pan-European solidarity for the internationalisation of fascism; and an increasingly imperial ambition for Italian cultural and political hegemony. In essence, the conceptual premises underpinning CAUR were grounded in a myth for a pacific European international society underpinned by a Fascist International and the internationalisation of the corporate State. The project towards this end was to be 'an international union of national Fascist movements, not a single, monolithic, worldwide crusade'.[128] Yet, in contrast to Gravelli's utopian vision for a fascist and somewhat egalitarian Europe, CAUR diverged by conceiving its mission in an unambiguously imperial and overtly paternalistic manner. As Coselschi stated, '[o]ne cannot dominate forever unless by virtue of an immortal idea, and the force of an inextinguishable civilization … [T]his eternal civilizing and animating mission forms a single unity with the stones, the streets, and the piazzas of Rome.'[129] Thus, the boundary between imperial ambition and pan-European solidarity was to become increasingly porous in the initial stage of CAUR.

The decline of CAUR

The adoption of Roman *Universalità* as the ideological centrepiece of a Fascist International inexorably created apprehension among several movements, epitomising the difficulties inherent in

[119]Platon, 'The Iron Guard', p. 78–9.

[120]Naturally, the Montreux Conference was condemned within German circles, such as Rosenberg's newspaper, *Volkischer Beobachter*. Hans Fredrik Dahl, *Quisling: A Study in Treachery*, trans. Anne-Marie Stanton-Ife (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1999), p. 113.

[121]Salvatore Garau, 'Between "spirit" and "science": The emergence of Italian fascist antisemitism through the 1920s and 1930s', *Holocaust Studies*, 15:1–2 (2009), pp. 37–58 (p. 48).

[122]Kallis, 'From CAUR to EUR', pp. 369–70.

[123]Quoted in Alan Cassels, *Mussolini's Early Diplomacy* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1970), p. 380.

[124]Ledeen, *Universal Fascism*, p. 116.

[125]Kallis, 'From CAUR to EUR', p. 370.

[126]Quoted in Ledeen, *Universal Fascism*, p. 115.

[127]Ibid., pp. 109–10; Morgan, *Fascism in Europe*, pp. 170–1.

[128]Michael A. Ledeen, 'The evolution of Italian fascist antisemitism', *Jewish Social Studies*, 37:1 (1975), pp. 3–17 (p. 7).

[129]Quoted in Ledeen, *Universal Fascism*, p. 109.

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translating this form of solidarism from vision to reality. Vidkun Quisling, the founder of the Norwegian *Nasjonal Samling*, objected to the exclusive centrality posited for a Mediterranean Roman tradition. A project such as that discussed at Montreux required the input of 'Nordic civilization'.[130] In turn, he voiced a comparable concern about the exclusion of German National Socialism, contending that 'Hitler is … as much an exponent of Fascism as Benito Mussolini!'.[131]

Similarly, despite initially gravitating towards the model of Italian Fascism and advocating for internationalisation, Oswald Mosley rejected an invitation to attend the conference. Mosley claimed that the discourse of Roman universality was alien to British traditions and would appear as such before the British electorate.[132] In the case of the Spanish *Falange*, the issue was even more fundamental. Its leader, José Antonio Primo de Rivera, declined to attend the conference, claiming that the *Falange* was 'not a fascist movement'.[133] While retaining 'certain similarities with fascism in the essential points that possess universal validity', Primo de Rivera reasserted its distinctive and 'peculiar qualities'.[134] Accordingly, Primo de Rivera despatched Ernest Gimenez Caballero to commend the initiative and simultaneously reiterate the unique character of the *Falange*.[135] Evidently, the discourse of Roman *Universalità* only exacerbated the problems inherent to the project.

Above all, it was the supposed 'Jewish Question' that emerged as the foremost matter of contention. During his address at Montreux, Ion Moța, a prominent figure of the Romanian Iron Guard, asserted that the alleged domination by the Jews could only be resolved through a commensurate anti-Semitic international front.[136] Moța's comments precipitated a divisive debate, with factions mobilising behind dichotomous positions. For example, the representative of the Danish National Socialists, Fritz Clausen, condoned Moța's statement, describing the Jews as the embodiment of bourgeois materialism and thus the enemies of fascism.[137] By portraying the Jews as a race transcending national boundaries, Clausen reasoned the 'Jewish Problem' required an international response. Alternatively, another faction formed among those who opposed anti-Semitism, alongside others objecting based on the irrelevance of the 'Jewish Problem' within their respective state. For instance, the representative for the Greek National Socialist Party, George Mercouris, opposed attempts to adopt a definitive statement on the matter by ascribing to the principles of CAUR, namely a tolerance for national particularities.[138] Yet as this division exemplified, Nazi anti-Semitism, whether based on biological racism or otherwise, was becoming increasingly influential. As Garau notes, while Germany 'was physically absent from the conference, it was ideologically … present'.[139]

The concern over an alien doctrine of Roman *Universalità* and the 'Jewish Question' undoubtedly epitomised the difficulty of translating whatever latent solidarity existed into practical results. The final resolution at Montreux emphasised norms of state sovereignty, the moral value of national integrity, and the viewpoint that issues of 'citizenship, race, and religion' were subject to national particularities.[140] Attempts by Coselschi and other dignitaries to mediate such differences therefore

[130]Ledeen, *Universal Fascism*, p. 118; Dahl, *Quisling*, p. 112.

[131]'International: Pax Romanizing', *Time* (31 December 1934), p. 16.

[132]Claudia Baldoli, 'Anglo-Italian fascist solidarity?: The shift from Italophilia to naziphilia in the BUF', in Julie V. Gottlieb and Thomas O. Linehan (eds), *The Culture of Fascism: Visions of the Far Right in Britain* (London, UK: I. B. Tauris, 2004), pp. 147–61 (p. 156).

[133]José Antonio Primo de Rivera, 'José Antonio's statement regarding the international fascist congress (December 18, 1934)', in Charles F. pell (ed.), *Mediterranean Fascism, 1919–1945* (New York, NY: Harper & Row, 1970), pp. 278–9 (p. 278).

[134]Ibid.

[135]Matteo Albanese and Pablo del Hierro, *Transnational Fascism in the Twentieth Century: Spain, Italy and the Global Neo-Fascist Network* (London, UK: Bloomsbury, 2016), p. 32.

[136]Platon, 'The Iron Guard', p. 78.

[137]Ledeen, *Universal Fascism*, p. 120.

[138]Ibid., p. 119.

[139]Garau, 'The internalisation of Italian fascism', p. 54.

[140]Ledeen, *Universal Fascism*, p. 121.

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diluted the project, leading to a somewhat 'vague, non-binding resolution'.[141] Nevertheless, it was because of such compromises that the delegates at Montreux reaffirmed their commitment to the project. The conference concluded with the establishment of a permanent executive committee comprising an international cross-section of representatives. Similarly, an official statute for CAUR was approved on 21 April 1935, aligning with the annual commemoration of the supposed founding of Rome.[142] Importantly, however, the resulting statute captured the internal tensions within the movement, combining

> a discourse of voluntary peaceful cooperation among 'young' European forces and a … more hegemonic subtext that exalted the '*new* Rome' and the '*Mussolinian* thought' as motors of pan-European cultural and political regeneration.[143]

Despite the partial success of Coselschi's qualified pluralism, the internal fractures already apparent only escalated in parallel with Germany's meteoric ascension. Various fascist leaders had already approached the Nazis in 1933, and by 1935 it was evident a considerable number of movements previously within Italy's hegemonic orbit were gravitating towards Germany.[144] In turn, Italian members of CAUR became increasingly suspicious of certain figures within the executive committee.[145] Ultimately, organisations hitherto committed to CAUR either discontinued their participation after realigning with Germany, as in the case of the Dutch National Socialist Movement, or were excommunicated as a result, exemplified by the cessation of Italian relations with the *Nasjonal Samling*.[146] Even the Iron Guard, an organisation that had avidly promoted the Italian project, reoriented towards Nazi Germany by the mid-1930s. While pilgrimages to Rome continued, Germany received an increasing number of ideological sympathisers, eventually surpassing Italy as the transnational centre of the revolutionary right.[147]

While the project was progressively collapsing from without, its ultimate demise would come from within as an inadvertent product of Germany's ascension. The diplomatic isolation of Italy following the Italo-Abyssinian War in October 1935 and Mussolini's intervention into the Spanish Civil War precipitated a rapprochement with Germany, culminating in the Axis alliance. In addition, anxieties over race relations became particularly acute following the colonisation of Abyssinia, precipitating the introduction of stringent racial legislation to reaffirm Italian supremacy. This was an ominous harbinger for the 1938 anti-Semitic laws.[148] While the historiography traditionally dismissed this shift towards anti-Semitism as a mere by-product of Italo-German rapprochement, it should not be interpreted solely as such.[149] Rather, anti-Semitism (although not necessarily based on biological racism) became the natural progression of the crusade for national palingenesis. The Jews, reinterpreted as the embodiment of liberal Italy and the bourgeois spirit, thus became the paramount obstacle confronting the fascist mission to create a 'homogenous nation and indeed a New Man'.[150] Notably too, both Garau and Kallis suggest

[141]Bauerkämper, 'Ambiguities of transnationalism', p. 57.

[142]Kallis, *The Third Rome*, p. 232.

[143]Ibid.

[144]Arnd Bauerkämper, 'Interwar fascism in Europe and beyond: Toward a transnational radical right', in Martin Durham and Margaret Power (eds), *New Perspectives on the Transnational Right* (New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), pp. 39–66 (pp. 50–1).

[145]Kallis, 'From CAUR to EUR', p. 372.

[146]Garau, 'Between "spirit" and "science"', p. 49; Kallis, 'From CAUR to EUR', p. 372.

[147]Kallis, *The Third Rome*, pp. 239–40.

[148]Aristotle A. Kallis, 'Fascism and the Jews: From the internationalisation to a "fascist anti-Semitism"', *Holocaust Studies*, 15:1–2 (2009), pp. 15–34 (p. 23).

[149]For an overview of the 'imitation paradigm', see Olindo De Napoli, 'The origin of the racist laws under fascism: A problem of historiography', *Journal of Modern Italian Studies*, 17:1 (2012), pp. 106–22.

[150]Franklin Adler, 'Why Mussolini turned on the Jews', *Patterns of Prejudice*, 39:3 (2005), pp. 285–300 (p. 285).

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Mussolini's reorientation also constituted a pragmatic acquiescence to the virulent racism of foreign fascist movements and a means to reclaim Italy's international position.[151]

This dual shift towards anti-Semitism and Italo-German rapprochement undermined a key rationale underpinning CAUR, namely its opposition to Nazism. As Ledeen observes, it became impossible 'to present Italian fascism as an ideological alternative to German National Socialism'.[152] In fact, the Italian ambassador to Berlin, Bernardo Attolico, petitioned against the initiatives of CAUR to appease Germany. Coselschi reluctantly conceded, thereafter refocusing CAUR towards the distribution of anti-Soviet propaganda.[153] With this fundamental reorientation in purpose and the failure to actualise whatever latent solidarity existed between European fascists, CAUR declined into a state of internal atrophy. This decay was compounded by the appointment of Galeazzo Ciano as Foreign Secretary in 1936, a prominent champion of the Italo-German alliance and sceptic of CAUR. A diminished version of the organisation was subsequently subsumed under the Ministry of Popular Culture, while Ciano simultaneously limited the access that Coselschi had maintained with Mussolini.[154] This decline continued until its official disbandment in the immediate aftermath of Germany's invasion of Poland.

Despite gravitating towards Germany, Italian conceptions of international order crucially remained somewhat at odds with the Nazi vision of a 'New Order'. Indeed, while Gravelli's sycophantic support of Mussolini allowed him to reconcile the shift towards anti-Semitism and Italo-German rapprochement, the alliance was only viewed positively on the contingency that 'Italy's primacy was [to be] respected.'[155] Furthermore, rather than simply acquiescing to German National Socialism, the sense of political impotence *vis-à-vis* a dynamic Nazi model would precipitate an increased reliance on the discourse of Roman *Universalità* among Italian proponents.[156] With the political and ideological dominance of Germany among the European fascist milieu, Italy reoriented its ambitions towards extra-European audiences, particularly in Latin America.[157] Yet with the collapse of whatever semblance of Gravelli's internationalist project remained, this reinvigorated reliance of the 'myth of Rome' functioned 'more as a defensive [and increasingly desperate] counterpoise to National Socialism than as a positive rallying platform for the internationalisation' of fascism.[158]

Repeated catastrophic defeats during the Second World War, alongside the increasing visibility of an emerging German imperium, only further fermented a sense of impotence and a dependency on the myth of Italian cultural pre-eminence, with proponents attempting to frame Italy as the 'contemporary Greece to Germany's new Rome'.[159] Italian propaganda came to emphasise the differences between Italian and German visions of the postwar order, the former conceived as acting in a 'positive role, more attentive to the needs of local populations, than the exploitative Germans'.[160] This reflected a desperate ambition to reassert whatever semblance of autonomy Italy retained *vis-à-vis* its German ally. Nevertheless, it also demonstrated fundamental differences which continued to pervade Italo-German conceptions of international order and the

[151]Garau, 'Between "spirit" and "science"', p. 49; Kallis, 'Fascism and the Jews', p. 26.

[152]Ledeen, *Universal Fascism*, p. 134.

[153]Arnd Bauerkämper, 'Transnational fascism: Cross-border relations between regimes and movements in Europe, 1922–1939', *East Central Europe*, 37:2–3 (2010), pp. 214–46 (pp. 231–4).

[154]Kallis, 'From CAUR to EUR', pp. 372–3.

[155]Baldoli, 'Italian Fascism in Britain', p. 197.

[156]Kallis, *The Third Rome*, p. 234.

[157]Kallis, 'From CAUR to EUR', pp. 373–5.

[158]Kallis, *The Third Rome*, p. 234.

[159]Benjamin G. Martin, *The Nazi-Fascist New Order for European Culture* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2016), p. 11.

[160]David D. Roberts, *Fascist Interactions: Proposals for a New Approach to Fascism and its Era, 1919–1945* (New York, NY: Berghahn, 2016), pp. 146–7.

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essentially hierarchical imperial nature in which Europe – and matters of ideological, political, and cultural difference – were to be organised under the Third Reich.[161]

In summary, Italian proponents of fascist internationalism professed a pan-European imaginary, yet the specific vision of the 'good life' and the respective particularities of each fascist movement inevitably created salient points of tension. While a certain degree of solidarity was undoubtedly present, it did not translate into sustained, tangible results. The envisioned order and its implicit diversity regime, imbued as it was with the promotion of an increasingly Romanised image of fascism and a paternalistic view of Italian civilisational genius, created apprehension among other movements.

It is at this juncture that the obvious divergence between illiberal fascist and other variants of solidarism become abundantly evident. Indeed, democratic forms of solidarism, integral to the contemporary international order, are predicated on the view that enhancing the inclusivity of international society provides the foundation for more legitimate and sustainable norms and institutions.[162] In this respect, pluralism is not simply a negative practical association, but a positive and necessary 'institutional framework' through which 'a more legitimate and morally more ambitious political community … [can] emerge'.[163] By contrast, despite Gravelli's espousal of a highly qualified degree of pluralism, fascist variants of solidarism – among both Italian internationalists and those fascist movements they endeavoured to attract – professed the superiority of their respective and particular communities and an attendant vision of the international 'good life'. This is not to suggest illiberal forms of solidarism are an impossibility. Filippo Costa Buranelli has recently discussed the emergence of 'authoritarian state-centric solidarity' within the context of contemporary Central Asia.[164] Importantly, however, this form of illiberal solidarism is not in fundamental opposition to the pluralistic foundations of international order, but rather aims 'to preserve the principles of sovereignty, non-interference, and non-intervention'.[165]

Alternatively, the revolutionary character and national parochialisms of interwar fascist internationalists appeared to prohibit such a relationship with pluralism. When a system approximating a fascistised order actually materialised during the Second World War, it was not the anarchical society of fascist states embodied in the pre-1933 Gravellian discourse of international Fascism, but rather – to use Martin Wight's phrase – the 'doctrinal imperialism' of Nazi Germany.[166] Hitler's envisaged international order was predicated on a revolutionary 'creed of racial hierarchy',[167] one necessitating the enforcement of 'uniformity' by 'transforming' international society 'into a universal satellite state-system', prior to then absorbing it into a universal empire.[168] The most rudimentary degree of pluralism, and indeed even the anarchical constitutional configuration of international society, were seemingly antithetical to the 'New Order'. It was not to be realised through consensus, but imperial imposition. Accordingly, the resulting order and its highly stratified diversity regime made, as Roger Griffin notes, the imperialism of Napoleon or even Ancient Rome appear 'positively liberal and federal in comparison'.[169]

[161]On the 'New Order', see Mark Mazower, *Hitler's Empire: Nazi Rule in Occupied Europe* (London, UK: Penguin, 2009).

[162]Thanks are offered to the anonymous reviewer for this incisive comment.

[163]Hurrell, *On Global Order*, p. 48.

[164]Filippo Costa Buranelli, 'Authoritarianism as an institution? The case of Central Asia', *International Studies Quarterly*, 64:4 (2020), pp. 1005–16 (p. 1005).

[165]Ibid., p. 1007.

[166]Wight, 'An anatomy of international thought'.

[167]Martin Wight, *Power Politics*, eds Hedley Bull and Carsten Holbraad (London, UK: Royal Institute of International Affairs, 1978), p. 86.

[168]Wight, 'An anatomy', p. 226.

[169]Griffin, 'Europe for the Europeans', p. 152.

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Conclusion

As Buranelli highlights, despite recent efforts to reconceive solidarism in the plural, forms of illiberal solidarism 'remain underexplored'.[170] This article has been animated by a similar impetus. Disaggregating solidarism into its visionary and empirically descriptive uses has provided the opportunity to consider pertinent conceptual and empirical issues for the English School. Is a solidarist international society in actuality a liberal-cosmopolitan phenomenon? What challenges confront the realisation of illiberal forms of solidarism?

By utilising insights derived from Reus-Smit's study on international order under conditions of cultural diversity and demonstrating the practical limitations confronting efforts to realise international Fascism, this article argues the actualisation of an illiberal solidarism necessitates an acceptance of a substantive pluralist component. Yet messianic illiberal visions that endeavour to retain the states-system, while simultaneously asserting the superiority of one community or vision of the 'good life', ostensibly lack the capacity to reconcile, through dialogue and debate, the contradictions inherent in efforts to universalise such projects. While other challenges certainly beset the idea of a fascist Europe, not least those derived from the material inferiority of Italy relative to the other great powers, the relationship between fascist internationalism and the management of diversity nevertheless presents as among the foremost limitations that inhibited its proponents from offering a viable alternative for the ordering of international politics.

Three further implications follow. Firstly, scholars have increasingly observed a division within the English School between what Mark Bevir and Ian Hall have recently labelled 'interpretivist' and 'structuralist' factions.[171] The former, particularly dominant within the classic English School, prioritises 'historicism and hermeneutics', normative and historical international theory, and 'a focus on the thought and behaviour of practitioners'.[172] By contrast, the structuralist faction, exemplified by Buzan's efforts to reconvene the English School, is to a considerable degree indebted to 'modernist' social sciences.[173] This article has, however, navigated a via media. The explicit focus on the realm of international thought herein has been combined with Buzan's normatively agnostic rendition of solidarism and Reus-Smitian constructivism to offer a theoretically and historically grounded interpretation of certain challenges confronting illiberal visions for international society. In this context, both factions appear complimentary.

Secondly, even if a consensual form of fascist solidarism was perhaps an inevitable failure, this should not induce a complacency towards contemporary right-wing manifestations of internationalism. With the challenge a resurgent New Right (NR) presents to an increasingly fragmented international order, from the transnational activism of the Identitarian movement to the alt-Right, IR ought to more seriously consider its 'theoretical perspective[s]' on international politics, the practical efforts towards propagating their ideas, and the implications thereof for international society.[174] As Jean-François Drolet and Michael C. Williams note, '[t]he international theory of the NR is not simply descriptive or explanatory: it is a form of political action, and for those parts of the Right interested in ideology, … [it offers] a systematic and historically

[170] Buranelli, 'Authoritarianism as an institution', p. 1005.

[171] Mark Bevir and Ian Hall, 'Interpreting the English School: History, science and philosophy', *Journal of International Political Theory*, 16:2 (2020), pp. 120–32.

[172] Ibid., p. 121.

[173] Ibid. See also Barry Buzan, 'The English School: An underexploited resource in IR', *Review of International Studies*, 27:3 (2001), pp. 471–88.

[174] Jean-François Drolet and Michael C. Williams, 'Radical conservatism and global order: International theory and the new right', *International Theory*, 10:3 (2018), pp. 285–313 (pp. 285–6). For recent efforts in this direction, see Pablo de Orellana and Nicholas Michelsen, 'Reactionary internationalism: The philosophy of the new right', *Review of International Studies*, 45:5 (2019), pp. 748–67; Rita Abrahamsen, Jean-François Drolet, Alexandra Gheciu, Karin Narita, Srdjan Vucetic, and Michael Williams, 'Confronting the international political sociology of the new right', *International Political Sociology*, 14:1 (2020), pp. 94–107.

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resonant set of ideas' grounded in the political thought of, for example, Martin Heidegger, Carl Schmitt, Oswald Spengler, and Julius Evola.[175]

Thirdly, this piece adds to a rapidly expanding literature within the history of international thought and IR that has highlighted a vast array of racial, imperial, and otherwise repugnant visions for world order espoused by Western international thinkers. In particular, the international thought of Gravelli provides a hitherto neglected case of fascist internationalism within the history of international thought, one that compliments a fledgling number of contributions. Indeed, Jens Steffek has critiqued the oft-axiomatic tendency within IR to associate international organisations with liberal internationalism.[176] By reflecting on the international thought of Italian diplomat and corporatist scholar, Giuseppe de Michelis, Steffek highlights how select fascists espoused a Mitranian form of technocratic internationalism.[177] Elsewhere, Marco Moraes has similarly challenged the idea of an absolutist dichotomy between 'liberal functionalist internationalism' and 'fascist internationalist plans for world corporatism' by investigating the international thought and practice of Joseph Avenol, the second Secretary General of the League of Nations.[178] The idea of international Fascism considered herein was one that relied less on a technocratic vision of international organisation per de Michelis. Rather, this imaginary invoked the myth of a conglomerate of youthful fascist movements, the alleged inheritor to Mazzini's 'Young Europe', who were to individually achieve their respective spiritual and national revolutions as the pretext to the collective inauguration of a utopian international order. As Duncan Bell observes, the history of international thought has, with limited exception, been conspicuously absent of research into 'radical and reactionary forms of internationalism, from Communist through to Nazi'.[179]

This case therefore introduces the history of international thought to a previously unexplored international thinker, while imploring further enquiry into the abhorrent and often quite odd realm of fascist international thought. As this account has relied on extant scholarship within fascist studies, further research is warranted regarding Gravelli and similar figures in order to discern the specific debates they were engaged in, alongside prospective interconnections between their international thought and other currents of internationalism percolating the age.

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[175]Drolet and Williams, 'Radical conservatism', p. 288.

[176]Steffek, 'Fascist internationalism', pp. 3–22.

[177]Ibid.

[178]Moraes, 'Competing internationalisms', p. 56.

[179]Duncan Bell, 'Writing the world (remix)', in Brian C. Schmidt and Nicolas Guilhot (eds), *Historiographical Investigations in International Relations* (London, UK: Palgrave Macmillan, 2019), pp. 15–50 (p. 20).

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