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The “moral basis” of reconstruction? Humanitarianism, Intellectual Relief and the League of Nations, 1918-1925.¹

Article 247 of the Treaty of Versailles committed Germany to furnish “the University of Louvain [with] manuscripts, incunabula, printed books, maps and objects of collection corresponding in number and value to those destroyed in the burning by Germany of the Library of Louvain.”² The obligation that Germany restore books to a Belgian university library – destroyed during the invasion of August 1914 – was a public acknowledgement that Belgian, and by extension allied, intellectual life, would continue as before the war; it presupposed the values of western civilization had triumphed in the recently-ended conflict.

The restitution of books to Louvain was highly symbolic, but far from an isolated act of cultural reconstruction in the aftermath of the Great War. In the immediate post-war years, myriad projects emerged to save both intellectuals and scholarly activity in central and Eastern Europe. European intellectual life faced a significant and often existential challenge following the conflict; the collapse of empires led to, at its most extreme, civil war, famine, and displacement, as it did in Russia following the Bolshevik Revolution. In the successor states of central and eastern Europe, the destruction wrought by the recently-ended world war was exacerbated by economic collapse which brought famine and disease to many countries

¹ I would like to thank Daniel Laqua, Elisabeth Piller, Katharina Rietzler, Ciarán Wallace and the anonymous reviewers for *Modern Intellectual History* for their comments on previous drafts of this article.

² Article 247, The Treaty of Versailles, http://avalon.law.yale.edu/subject_menus/versailles_menu.asp. John Horne and Alan Kramer, *German Atrocities 1914: a History of Denial* (New Haven, 2001), 387.

in the early 1920s. Transnational agencies quickly mounted humanitarian interventions to feed, clothe, and provide medical assistance to those affected.³

While the story of humanitarian responses to the post-war crises has been well documented by historians in recent years, it is less well known that post-war relief also had a distinct and important intellectual dimension. Non-governmental agencies sent books, laboratory equipment, and periodicals to stricken countries in order to ensure that their intellectual life stayed afloat, while international agencies also sent money and supplies to scholars and writers who found themselves in exile in the early 1920s. Intellectual relief of this nature emerged during the war and reflected its perception as a cultural conflict involving the mass mobilization of scholars to support their respective nations' cause which led to the common juxtaposition of allied western civilization against German *Kultur*.⁴ After the war, the scope of intellectual relief expanded to address the vast humanitarian crisis gripping Europe. While its agents frequently utilised the language of civilization (and its opposite, barbarism), post-war intellectual relief belonged to the broader humanitarian drive to arrest the spread of

³ Bruno Cabanes, *The Great War and the Origins of Humanitarianism 1918-1924* (Cambridge, 2014); 189-247; Bertrand Patenaude, *The Big Show in Bololand: the American Relief Expedition to Soviet Russia in the Famine of 1921* (Stanford, CA., 2002); Chiara Tessaris, "The War relief work of the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee in Poland and Lithuania, 1915-18", *East European Jewish Affairs*, 40/2 (2010), 127-144; Christopher Blackburn: "The Rebirth of Poland: American Humanitarianism after the Great War", *Studia Historyczne*, 4/228 (2014), 522-539; Julia F. Irwin, "Taming Total War: Great War-Era American Humanitarianism and its Legacies", *Diplomatic History*, 38/4 (2014), 763-775; Tammy M. Proctor, "An American Enterprise: British Participation in US Food Relief Programmes (1914-1923)", *First World War Studies*, 5/1 (2014), 29-42; Georgina Brewis, *A Social History of Student Volunteering: Britain and Beyond, 1880-1980* (New York, 2014), 52; Emily Baughan, "The Imperial War Relief Fund and the All British Appeal: Commonwealth, Conflict and Conservatism within the British Humanitarian Movement, 1920-25", *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 40/5 (2012), 845-61.

⁴ Wolfgang J. Mommsen, "German artists, writers, and intellectuals, and the meaning of war 1914-1918" in John Horne, ed., *State Society and Mobilization in Europe during the First World War* (Cambridge, 1997), 21-38; Fritz K. Ringer, *The Decline of the German Mandarins: The German Academic Community, 1890-1933* (Cambridge, MA., 1969), 180-190; Alan Kramer, *Dynamic of Destruction: Culture and Mass Killing in the First World War* (Oxford, 2007), 159-164; John Horne and Alan Kramer, *German Atrocities 1914*, 280-2; Martha Hanna, *The Mobilization of Intellect: French Scholars and Writers during the Great War* (Cambridge, MA, 1996), 78-85; Jörg Nagler, "From Culture to Kultur. Changing American Perceptions of Imperial Germany, 1870-1914," in David E. Barclay and Elisabeth Glaser-Schmidt eds., *Transatlantic Images and Perceptions: Germany and America Since 1776* (Cambridge, 1997).

Bolshevism and support the post-war, democratic order in central and eastern Europe. Intellectual relief was also a forum for national rivalries; on the one hand, nations like Hungary could claim the imperative of intellectual relief to demonstrate their travails following the war and its peace settlement and thus agitate for treaty revision. On the other hand, national antipathies – such as those between victorious allies and vanquished states – often inhibited the granting of relief.

This article will explore the origins and forms of intellectual relief in the immediate post-war period before paying particular attention to the intellectual work of the League of Nations and its Committee on Intellectual Cooperation (CIC, founded in 1922). The League is important to this discussion as it gave permanent institutional structures for intellectual cooperation which were born in the period of Europe's humanitarian and intellectual crises. While the League did not have the resources to sponsor large-scale humanitarian interventions in the scholarly field, relief was a central concern that informed how the League developed its intellectual cooperation agenda, both in terms of activities and structures, from 1922.

This article also points the way forward to a phenomenon that became much more prominent in the later twentieth century, and which remains important today, that of intellectual exile and suffering during and after major conflicts.⁵ Post-war intellectual relief forms an important and instructive precedent to international attempts to rescue intellectuals fleeing from totalitarianism in the 1930s.⁶ It also provides an

⁵ Jean-Michel Palmier, *Weimar in Exile: the Antifascist Emigration in Europe and America* (London: Verso, 2006); Sally Crawford, Katharina Ulmschneider and Jaś Elsner eds., *Ark of Civilization: Refugee Scholars and Oxford University, 1930-1945* (Oxford, 2017); Stuart Jeffries, *Grand Hotel Abyss: the Lives of the Frankfurt School* (London, 2016); Lewis Coser, *Refugee Scholars in America: Their Impact and their Experience* (New Haven, 1984); Donald Fleming and Bernard Bailyn eds., *The Intellectual Migration: Europe and America, 1930-1960* (Cambridge, MA., 1969).

⁶ Stephen Duggan and Betty Drury, *The Rescue of Science and Learning: the Story of the Emergency Committee in Aid of Displaced Foreign Scholars* (New York, 1948), 3-4.

important precedent for the reconstruction of intellectual life that took place in Europe following the Second World War.⁷

The article will first examine the emergence of intellectual relief. It will then discuss the foundation and workings of the CIC, before turning its attention to two related themes in the operation of the CIC: intellectual relief in different territories and enquiries into the health of intellectual life in various countries. It will demonstrate that intellectual life was seen as requiring specific aid in the aftermath of war, explore how arguments for intellectual relief were constructed, and analyse how relief was organised. While it claimed to stand for a universal good in the face of Bolshevism, intellectual relief also perpetuated the divisions of wartime, notably with respect to Germany.

The First World War left nine million combatants dead, killed a similar number of civilians in Europe, and brought about the collapse of four empires. It also profoundly influenced European intellectual life in three main ways. First, the conflict led to a “lost generation” of young scholars who died in the conflict, evidenced by the numerous memorials which emerged at schools and universities across Europe after the war.⁸ Second, organised intellect – often seen as serving the interests of all humanity and thus being above national interests – was mobilized to serve the interests of nations at war, whether it be historians or philosophers producing propaganda, sociologists organising the war economy, or, more ominously, chemists producing poison gases for the battlefield. Third, a consequence of all of this was that the international community of intellect, which had grown in size in the decades prior to 1914, was split in two

⁷ John Krige, *American Hegemony and the Postwar Reconstruction of Science in Europe* (Cambridge, MA, 2006).

⁸ Tomás Irish, “Fractured Families: Educated Elites in Britain and France and the Challenge of the Great War”, *Historical Journal* 57/2 (2014), 509-30; Jay Winter, *The Great War and the British people* (London, 1985) 92-9; Jean-François Sirinelli, *Génération intellectuelle: khâgneux et normaliens dans l'entre-deux-guerres* (Paris, 1988), 26-30.

during the war, with former colleagues recast as enemies.⁹ This fracture in the organization of intellectual life continued into the post-war years and could be seen in the ‘boycott’ of German scientists who were prevented from joining newly formed scholarly associations which emerged after the war.¹⁰

In a famous and resonant polemic in 1919, the French poet Paul Valéry wrote that “we civilizations now know that we are mortal”, much like civilizations of antiquity which had disappeared long ago and taken their vast resources of learning with them. For evidence of the decline of civilization, Valéry cited the example of wartime application of science to conflict which led him to question whether “knowledge and duty” were themselves suspect.¹¹ In the same year, the French pacifist intellectual Romain Rolland produced a manifesto signed by 140 scholars and writers across the world which criticised the engagement of intellectuals in wartime and called on them to renounce wartime attitudes.¹² Narratives presaging the decline of civilization became common among scholars in the war’s aftermath and famously featured in the work of Oswald Spengler, among others.¹³ The “crisis of civilization” was an intellectual reaction to the events of the Great War and wider developments in scholarship, literature, and the arts, many of which predated the conflict but seemed to be confirmed by it.¹⁴ In that respect the crisis was largely an imagined, intangible phenomenon.

⁹ For more on the many ways in which academic life was transformed by the First World War, see Tomás Irish, *The University at War 1914-25: Britain, France and the United States* (Basingstoke, 2015), and the essays in Tomás Irish and Marie-Eve Chagnon eds., *The Academic World in the Era of the Great War* (London, 2018).

¹⁰ Daniel Kevles, “‘Into Hostile Political Camps’: The Reorganization of International Science in World War I”, *Isis* 62/1 (1971), 47-60; A.G. Cock, “Chauvinism and Internationalism in Science: The International Research Council. 1919-1926”, *Notes and Records of the Royal Society of London* 37/2 (1983), 249-88.

¹¹ Paul Valéry, “The Spiritual Crisis”, *The Athenaeum*, 11 April 1919, 182.

¹² Romain Rolland, *Quinze ans de combat (1919-1934)* (Paris, 1935), 7-9.

¹³ Jan Ifversen, “The Crisis of European Civilisation after 1918”, in Menno Spiering and Michael Wintle eds., *Ideas of Europe since 1914: the Legacy of the First World War* (Basingstoke, 2002), 14-31, at 14.

¹⁴ Arnold J. Toynbee, *The World after the Peace Conference* (London, 1926), 87-89.

However, the post-war threats to intellectual life in central and Eastern Europe proved a tangible, real-world crisis which gave substance to the imagined one.

Intellectual Relief in post-war Europe

The plight of displaced and starving intellectuals first emerged as a problem during the First World War and came to be seen as a distinct part of the wider humanitarian crisis that gripped Europe during and after the conflict. Intellectual relief can be defined in two related ways. First, and most pressing, it was an extension of general humanitarian relief, ensuring that intellectuals and intellectual workers were able to eat, clothe themselves, and generally maintain good health. In other words, this can be understood as the provision of general relief to people engaged in intellectual pursuits. Second, intellectual relief can also be understood as the provision of specialist equipment, up-to-date books and periodicals to people involved in intellectual pursuits. This article is primarily concerned with the latter as it was the concern of the League of Nations' work on behalf of intellectuals. However, that can only be understood through a wider discussion of intellectual relief and humanitarianism after 1918.

The First World War saw a number of large-scale humanitarian interventions, spanning the early years of the conflict and continuing into the mid-1920s. Branden Little has argued that the core dates for humanitarian interventions in this period are 1914-1924, which extends beyond the “paradigmatic” end date of the war in 1918.¹⁵ Recent scholarship focusing on the “wars after the war” – the continuation of violence in central and eastern Europe after 1918 – has also challenged the traditional timeframes

¹⁵ Branden Little, “An Explosion of New Endeavours: Global Humanitarian Responses to Industrialised Warfare in the First World War Era”, *First World War Studies*, 5/1 (2014), 1.

of the war, and has argued that a “greater war”, continued until 1923.¹⁶ These humanitarian responses can be seen as one of the many consequences of the war that continued beyond the conflict’s formal cessation and extend its chronology.

The First World War did much to change the way in which humanitarianism was practiced and understood. Keith David Watenpaugh has argued that “modern humanitarianism” was born in the period of the Great War. This was understood as the “permanent, transnational, institutional, neutral, and secular regime for understanding and addressing the root causes of human suffering”, unlike its sentimental, episodic and Christian nineteenth century predecessor.¹⁷ Bruno Cabanes has argued that the humanitarian responses to the war inaugurated the international recognition of many rights for the first time, such as the right to aid for victims of famine and disease and the right to identity papers and safe travel for stateless people.¹⁸ During and after the war, humanitarian responses were organised either through the formation of new charitable organisations, such as the American Relief Administration (ARA) or the Imperial War Relief Fund (IWRP), or through the commitment of existing foundations to help address the humanitarian crises. Many of these organisations operated with the assistance and support of their respective states of origin and also required the cooperation of the states in which they operated. For example, the ARA was founded in February 1919 following an Executive Order by Woodrow Wilson with a \$100 million appropriation from the United States Congress, and was responsible for the supply of 768,000 tons of food, clothing, and other supplies to Russia between 1921

¹⁶ John Horne and Robert Gerwarth, *War in Peace: Paramilitary Violence in Europe after the Great War* (Oxford, 2013), Robert Gerwarth, *The Vanquished: Why the First World War Failed to End, 1917-1923* (London, 2016).

¹⁷ Keith David Watenpaugh, *Bread from Stones: the Middle East and the Making of Modern Humanitarianism* (Oakland, 2015), 4-5; Watenpaugh, “The League of Nations’ Rescue of Armenian Genocide Survivors and the Making of Modern Humanitarianism, 1920-1927”, *American Historical Review*, 115/5 (2010), 1319.

¹⁸ Cabanes, *The Great War and the Origins of Humanitarianism*, 300-301.

and 1923 when famine threatened 25 million people.¹⁹ As Julia F. Irwin has noted, humanitarianism was far from neutral or purely altruistic; it was often used as a tool of statecraft and for propaganda purposes.²⁰

While, in a general sense, the primary aim of humanitarianism was always to feed, clothe, and provide medical aid to those in need, the outbreak of the war in 1914 and its earliest humanitarian responses bore a distinct intellectual component. Professors and students from Belgian universities were quickly housed at institutions across Britain, France and North America and funds were raised for their upkeep.²¹ The American Joint Relief Committee, established in November 1914 specifically to aid European Jews imperilled by the war, also provided funds for the upkeep of educational institutions during the war, before expanding its scope after the war to include “rabbis, writers, teachers and spiritual leaders.”²² While elements of intellectual relief can be seen during the conflict, its scale and scope expanded dramatically following the war.

With famine afflicting large parts of central and Eastern Europe, the ARA set up what it called “intelligentsia kitchens” in Austria and Poland in 1921, which were solely for the use of those deemed “intellectuals.”²³ In Austria, these kitchens served the needs of Austrian university professors and writers, as it was felt that following the steep rise in the cost of living there, “the section which will be hardest hit is the middle class and especially the intellectual group, since their incomes and earnings are far from keeping pace with the progress of depreciation and consequent increase in price of all commodities.”²⁴ In Poland, intelligentsia kitchens catered to the large body of Russian

¹⁹ Cabanes, *The Great War and the Origins of Humanitarianism*, 189-239.

²⁰ Irwin, “Taming Total War”, 763, 767.

²¹ Grace Osler to George Dock, 17 November 1914, Osler Library, Montreal, Grace Revere Osler papers 326/1.5; Edwin B. Frost, letter to *Science*, New Series, 40/1032 (1914), 522; *Book of Belgium’s Gratitude* (London, 1916).

²² Joseph C. Hyman, *Twenty Five Years of American Aid to Jews Overseas* (New York, 1939), 21-22.

²³ “Extension of Assistance to the Intellectual Classes”, *A.R.A. Bulletin*, 2/12 (1921), 28-31.

²⁴ “Notes on Relief”, *A.R.A. Bulletin*, 21/2 (1922), 36.

intellectuals who had fled Russia following the Bolshevik Revolution.²⁵ In Russia itself, specific funds were dedicated to the relief of intellectuals, which primarily meant the provision of food: \$50,000 per month from the Commonwealth Fund of New York from March 1922, \$230,000 from the Laura Spelman Rockefeller Memorial Fund in December 1922, and a further \$600,000 from the Rockefeller Foundation in February 1923.²⁶ This work was supported by other agencies such as the Commonwealth Fund and the Russian Red Cross.

In most, but not all cases, relief of intellectuals and professors was seen as distinct from student relief, which was often organised separately. For example, the Society of Friends opened kitchens for students in Germany before their work was taken over by the European Student Relief (ESR) arm of the World Student Christian Federation in 1921. Between 1920 and 1925 the ESR raised £500,000 from 42 countries which was, in turn, spent on projects in 21 countries.²⁷ By 1923 the ESR estimated that it had fed 25,000 students.²⁸ The ARA, working in conjunction with the YMCA and the World Student Christian Federation, also had its own schemes that focused specifically on feeding students which, by the start of April 1921, reached 23,360 students in seven countries.²⁹ The London-based Imperial War Relief Fund established a Universities' Committee in 1920 to deal with intellectual relief, which aimed to send one British pound in cash or gifts-in-kind (but not books or periodicals) to those in need for each of the 60,000 students in Great Britain and Ireland. In its first year it raised £32,465 in cash and goods.³⁰ The Universities' Committee was keen to distinguish

²⁵ "American Service to the Intellectual Classes", *A.R.A. Bulletin*, 2/9 (1921), 32

²⁶ Patenaude, *Big Show in Bololand*, 179.

²⁷ Brewis, *A Social History of Student Volunteering*, 54.

²⁸ European Student Relief report, League of Nations Archives, United Nations Library, Geneva (LNA) 13C, dossier 23815, document 24805x (R1049).

²⁹ "Student Feeding in European Universities", *A.R.A. Bulletin*, 2/13 (1921), 31-35.

³⁰ "Universities Committee: the Work of the Past Year and the Future Outlook", October 1921, LNA, 13C doss. 14297, doc. 25341x. For more on the work of the Universities' Committee and student relief more generally, see Brewis, *A Social History of Student Volunteering*, 51-63.

between aid directed towards students, on the one hand, and university professors on the other; in November 1921 it noted that the appeal on behalf of students had been much more successful but that “men distinguished in letters and science” also needed urgent aid.³¹

The Carnegie Endowment for International Peace (CEIP) also considered the issue of intellectual relief in the immediate post-war years. In 1922, the director of the Endowment’s Division of Intercourse and Education, Nicholas Murray Butler, stated that “the plight of the intellectuals in Central and Eastern Europe that has so often been brought to our attention grows worse instead of better and yet we are helpless to aid and no other agency is able or disposed to do anything whatsoever.”³² A special appropriation of \$500,000 was set aside by the Endowment’s Division of Intercourse and Education at the end of the war for the reconstruction of the devastated regions of Belgium, France, Serbia and Russia. This money was mostly spent on exemplary and symbolic relief projects such as the rebuilding of the university library at Louvain in Belgium and the construction of new libraries in Rheims and Belgrade.³³ The Rockefeller Foundation was also active in intellectual relief but limited itself to the medical sciences; it provided both literature and scientific equipment to “countries with low exchange and difficult economic conditions” such as Austria, France, Hungary, Germany, and much of continental Europe.³⁴

³¹ Letter to the Graduate Members of Great Britain and Ireland’, Beveridge Papers, London School of Economics archives, LSE/Beveridge/7/90/156.

³² Butler to Henry Pritchett, 4 April 1922, Columbia University Rare Books and Manuscripts Library, Columbia University, New York, Carnegie Corporation, III.A.Grant Files.72, Folder 9.

³³ *Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, Year Book 1921* (Washington D.C.: 1921), 35-42.

³⁴ The full list of countries in receipt of scientific literature was: Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, Finland, France, Germany, Hungary, Italy, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Russia, Switzerland, Turkey and Yugoslavia. *The Rockefeller Foundation, Annual Report, 1924* (New York, 1924), 325.

The Russian Revolution and ensuing civil war also created a significant problem of displaced people.³⁵ The Bolshevik government viewed intellectuals with great suspicion, as the majority of Russian intellectuals were opposed to the October Revolution, a situation that became more pronounced following the Kronstadt uprising of 1921. Deportations took place in 1922 and led to the arrival of many émigré scholars in Western Europe.³⁶ The Swiss writer Gonzague de Reynold, who was known for his Catholic and Swiss-nationalist views, as well as being a member of the League's Committee on Intellectual Cooperation, called the emigration of Russian scholars "one of the saddest and most tragic spectacles to be seen in Europe since the end of the war ... Since the flight of the Israelites, in history there has never been such an uprooting of intellectual life of a people."³⁷ By 1923, Russian émigré scholars had established themselves in cities across Europe. They were especially numerous in Paris, Prague, Berlin and Belgrade and the French, Czechoslovak and German governments all provided funds to ensure their wellbeing.³⁸ The support of the Czechoslovak government for exiled Russian scholars was explicitly anti-Bolshevik in its motivations.³⁹ In Paris, an émigré intellectual group was set up to maintain links with other exiled scholars as well as to begin resuming their traditional university functions while in exile. A significant number of exiled Russian scholars initially settled in Berlin

³⁵ Martyn Housden, "White Russians Crossing the Black Sea: Fridtjof Nansen, Constantinople and the First Modern Repatriation of Refugees Displaced by Civil Conflict, 1922-23", *The Slavonic and East European Review* 88/3 (2010), 495-524; Cabanes, *The Great War and the Origins of Humanitarianism*, 140-8.

³⁶ Sheila Fitzpatrick, *The Cultural Front: Power and Culture in Revolutionary Russia* (Ithaca, NY., 1992), 37-51; Stuart Finkel, *On the Ideological Front: The Russian Intelligentsia and the Making of the Soviet Public Sphere* (New Haven, 2006), 13-38.

³⁷ Gonzague de Reynold, *La vie intellectuelle dans les divers pays: Russie. Rapport sur la situation et l'organisation des intellectuels Russes hors de Russie* (Geneva, c1923), 5, in Gilbert Murray Papers, Bodleian Library Oxford, MS Murray 352.

³⁸ De Reynold, *La vie intellectuelle.*, 7; "Les intellectuels russes à l'étranger", *le Figaro*, 12 September 1923, 4. See Marc Raeff, *Russia Abroad: a Cultural History of the Russian Emigration, 1919-1939* (Oxford, 1990), 61-67.

³⁹ Raeff, *Russia Abroad*, 61.

with the aid of a \$10,000 donation from the American Joint Distribution Committee, which was administered by the League's High Commission for Refugees.⁴⁰ Following the hyperinflation of 1923, Russian exiles in Berlin moved elsewhere, often to Paris or Prague.⁴¹

Beyond the focus on feeding individuals involved in intellectual work, aid later came to focus on the practice of intellectual work itself; it shifted from nutritional sustenance to scholarly sustenance. This forms a second major axis to intellectual relief; it aimed to support and maintain the practitioners of intellectual pursuits, recognising that this required the provision of specialist literature and equipment. A British Committee for Aiding Men of Letters and Science in Russia was formed in 1921 following a report written by H.G. Wells, who had visited Russia in the previous year and reported on the perilous state of intellectual life there.⁴² The committee compiled a list of books needed by workers in Russia and appealed to British scientific workers to send them to Russia via the committee, to save the "flower of mental life."⁴³ Aside from its work providing food, medicine and clothes for those in need, the ARA also distributed 25,000 textbooks, foreign scientific books and journals to the "depleted libraries of the higher schools."⁴⁴ In Boston, a group called "Friends of Russian Scientists" was established in 1922 under the organization of the scholar of Russian literature, H.W.L. Dana. It encouraged people to send aid packages through the ARA to distressed academics in Petrograd. Speaking of this initiative, Herbert Hoover said that "there is no question of the need of the Russian intellectuals – they as a class have

⁴⁰ Report by Fridtjof Nansen, High Commissioner for Refugees, LNA C-103-1924, 10 March 1924, 6.

⁴¹ Robert C. Williams, *Culture in Exile: Russian Emigrés in Germany, 1881-1941* (Ithaca, NY., 1972), 111, 130-131.

⁴² *The Athenaeum*, 27 October 1920, 574.

⁴³ *The Athenaeum*, 7 January 1921, 25.

⁴⁴ UNESCO Archives, Paris, Intellectual Cooperation Papers, C.I.3.

suffered more than any other class in the Russian debacle.”⁴⁵ Another committee, calling itself the “American Committee to Aid Russian Scientists with Scientific Literature” reported that up to November 1922 nine tons of scientific literature had been sent to Russia, with 40 universities, 23 learned societies, and 120 private individuals participating.⁴⁶ In 1922, the National Research Council in America sent duplicates of scientific texts published since 1914 to Russia using ARA distribution networks. By its reckoning, no American scientific publications had reached Russia since January 1915 and, by 1922, Russian scientists were unable to afford them.⁴⁷

By 1922, when the League of Nations’ Committee on Intellectual Cooperation was established, two clear thrusts had emerged to intellectual relief. First was the provision of food and medicine to intellectuals which was differentiated from other forms of relief. Second was the sending of relevant academic literature to needy individuals and institutions in countries that had been cut off from the international community of scholarship during the war and who, in the post-war years, faced economic hardships that meant they could not purchase these materials themselves. All of this occurred in response to the humanitarian crisis that gripped central and Eastern Europe following the war, and was exacerbated by the Bolshevik Revolution and the exile of intellectuals across Europe.

The Meanings of Intellectual Relief

One might still question why, in the midst of a great humanitarian crisis, intellectuals and intellectual life were singled out as a distinct focus for aid. In certain cases, the need for intellectual relief was particularly resonant owing to the intellectual reputation

⁴⁵ “Relief for Russian Men”, *Science* 56/1449 (1922), 389.

⁴⁶ “Aid to Russian Scientists”, *Science* 56/1453 (1922), 504-5.

⁴⁷ “Notes on Relief Operations”, *A.R.A. Bulletin*, 2/21 (1922), 35.

and history of certain sites, such as Vienna. In a report written for the League of Nations in 1922, Gonzague de Reynold made the case for aid to Austrian intellectuals by arguing that, before the war, Vienna could “undoubtedly be considered one of the four or five great centres of European civilization.”⁴⁸ An appeal by the Universities’ Committee of the Imperial War Relief Fund on behalf of university lecturers in Austria made a similar argument, claiming that “men who are famous throughout the civilized world ... are finding very great difficulty in carrying on their work.”⁴⁹

While certain sites evidently benefited from well-established reputations as centres of learning, a number of more general trends may be seen to underpin intellectual relief. First, relief was anti-Bolshevik, and part of the wider process of political stabilization that followed the war.⁵⁰ The victor nations of the war were fearful that the new states in central and eastern Europe – such as Germany, Austria, Hungary, or Poland – could be overrun by Bolshevism, and this fear briefly became manifest following Bela Kun’s short-lived takeover in Hungary in March 1919, while the Paris Peace Conference was on-going.⁵¹ At the peace conference, the British Prime Minister David Lloyd George identified the new enemy as Bolshevism rather than Germany, and stories of Bolshevik atrocities – some real, others not – quickly began to make their way to western Europe.⁵² At the peace conference, the American Secretary of State, Robert Lansing, linked aid with staving off Bolshevism, remarking that “full stomachs

⁴⁸ “Statement by M. de Reynold on the Condition of Intellectual Life in Austria”, LNA, 13C, doss. 23024, doc. 23024 (R1046).

⁴⁹ “Letter to the Graduate Members of Great Britain and Ireland”, November 1921, Beveridge Papers, LSE/Beveridge/7/90/156.

⁵⁰ Charles S. Maier, *The Recasting of Bourgeois Europe: Stabilization in France, Germany, and Italy in the Decade after World War One* (Princeton, NJ., 1975), 6.

⁵¹ Zoltan Peterecz, *Jeremiah Smith Jr. and Hungary 1924-1926: The United States, the League of Nations, and the Financial Reconstruction of Hungary* (Berlin, 2013), 81.

⁵² John Horne and Robert Gerwarth, “Bolshevism as Fantasy: Fear of Revolution and Counter-Revolutionary Violence, 1917-1923” in Horne and Gerwarth eds., *War in Peace: Paramilitary Violence in Europe after the Great War* (Oxford, 2012), 42-43.

mean no Bolsheviks.”⁵³ President Wilson said something similar, arguing that Bolshevism “cannot be stopped by force, but it can be stopped by food.”⁵⁴ In this way, intellectual relief was part of the wider anti-Bolshevik humanitarian effort that followed the war.

Bolshevism was, in this period, often presented as a threat to western civilization, and in this way it could be seen as an extension of the wider discourses about the crisis of civilization that followed the war. Writing in 1926, the historian Arnold J. Toynbee saw the problem in exactly these terms, arguing that “the struggle in Russia since 1917 has been waged not so much between the two Western forces of Capital and Labour as between Russia herself and Western civilization.”⁵⁵ Certainly, many justifications for providing intellectual relief, as will be demonstrated below, use the language of “civilization” versus “barbarism”, which had been in common use during the war to justify the allied effort against Germany and was now transferred to Bolshevism as a new post-war enemy.⁵⁶ Seeing intellectual relief as an anti-Bolshevik, reactive phenomenon, helps to explain attempts to feed and house Russian intellectuals who had been forced to leave Russia following the revolution, but it does not satisfactorily differentiate intellectual aid from more general humanitarian aid in the period, nor does it wholly explain the widespread phenomenon of intellectual relief beyond Russia.

Intellectual relief was primarily - with the notable exception of Russia - aimed at the new states that were set up following the end of the war. These states were all democracies, established to be (notionally) in keeping with the Wilsonian rhetoric of self-determination. Wilson’s ideas underpinned American entry into the war and were

⁵³ John M. Thompson, *Russia, Bolshevism and the Versailles Peace* (Princeton, 1966), 222.

⁵⁴ Blackburn, “The Rebirth of Poland”, 528.

⁵⁵ Toynbee, *The World After the Peace Conference*, 71.

⁵⁶ Gerwarth and Horne, “Bolshevism as Fantasy”, 42.

adopted by the allies in the final stages of the war, ultimately conditioning the post-war order following the collapse of the German, Russian, Habsburg and Ottoman Empires.⁵⁷ In the “successor” states to the Habsburg Empire, sovereignty was assigned to the people based on national, ethnic and racial characteristics. This was a messy process, especially in central, eastern, and southeastern Europe, which was the meeting point of the former Russian, German, Habsburg and Ottoman Empires. The creation of post-war democracies was complicated by the juxtaposition of two irreconcilable ideas: the rights of the individual and the rights of the group (self-determination).⁵⁸ This created the rather contradictory situation where supporters of democracy were could also be strong advocates of population transfers to ensure ethnic homogeneity within national populations.⁵⁹ When Lord Bryce published his two-volume work on *Modern Democracies* in 1921, he claimed that democracy had by then been accepted as “the normal and natural form of government”, but noted that the term itself had lost a clear, uncontested meaning, having become “encrusted with all sorts of associations.”⁶⁰

But what role did intellectual life have to play in the establishment and maintenance of post-war democracies? Some writers claimed that intellectual life was an important component of a functioning democracy. The postwar president of the successor state of Czechoslovakia, Thomas Masaryk, made the connection between democracy, public opinion, and intellect in his 1925 memoir about the war period (published in English in 1927).⁶¹ In the aftermath of the war, Masaryk and other Czech leaders pursued a policy of cultural diplomacy that emphasized the ‘western-ness’ of

⁵⁷ Erez Manela, *The Wilsonian Moment: Self-Determination and the International Origins of Anticolonial Nationalism* (Oxford, 2007).

⁵⁸ Shannon Monaghan, *Protecting Democracy from Dissent: Population Engineering in Western Europe 1918-1926* (London, 2017), 1-4.

⁵⁹ Eric D. Weitz: ‘From the Vienna to the Paris System: Internatational Politics and the Entangled Histories of Human Rights, Forced Deportations, and Civilizing Missions’, *American Historical Review* 113.5 (2008), 1316.

⁶⁰ James Bryce, *Modern Democracies*, vol. 1 (London, 1921), viii, 4.

⁶¹ Monaghan, *Protecting Democracy from Dissent*, 15-18.

the new Czechoslovak state. Most pertinently, this narrative claimed that the Czech people were traditional lovers of democracy (who had been oppressed under the Habsburg empire) and that Czechoslovakia was a true democracy, especially as neighbouring states became more and more authoritarian. As part of this cultural diplomacy, Masaryk developed an image of himself as the “nation’s educator”.⁶²

In his war memoir, Masaryk argued that the intelligentsia played an important role in democracies, especially “the publicists in their ranks”. He noted that their members had frequently made a stand against “absolutism and theocracy.”⁶³ Education, especially national education, was important in new states which had formerly come under the control of a “foreign” government, as was the case with former Habsburg territories (Masaryk argued that Czechoslovakia needed to “de-Austrianize” itself).⁶⁴ In 1921, Bryce maintained that there was an important place for education in modern democracies; “in times when class strife is threatened there is a special need for thinkers and speakers able to rise above class interests and class prejudices.”⁶⁵ Education, in particular that found at universities, was essential to this process. However, while Bryce claimed that “the education of the citizens is indispensable to a democratic government”, it needed to be mixed with practical experience of the democratic process.⁶⁶ In a general sense, education and intellectual life were portrayed as important in creating good citizens in a democracy.

There was also a more specific way in which intellectual life could bolster democracy. Masaryk argued that democracies and new states needed educated experts

⁶² Andrea Orzoff, *The Battle for the Castle: the Myth of Czechoslovakia in Europe, 1914-1948* (Oxford, 2009), 57-58, at 58.

⁶³ Thomas Masaryk, *The Making of a State: Memories and Observations 1914-1918* (London, 1927), 398-399.

⁶⁴ Masaryk, *The Making of a State*, 397.

⁶⁵ Bryce, *Modern Democracies*, vol 1, 87.

⁶⁶ Bryce, *Modern Democracies*, vol 1, 88-89.

to assist in the work of government and administration. They would not dominate government, but should be mixed with experienced politicians boasting a “practical capacity for dealing with parties, parliament and the government.”⁶⁷ An unnamed director of the ARA put this bluntly in a piece published in the *A.R.A. Bulletin* in November 1920. Referring to the deprivation being experienced by intellectuals and universities in Poland, Czechoslovakia, Austria and Hungary, the article argued that “upon the brains of this intellectual class depends the future of these countries ... Sooner or later these new nations must appeal to their intellectuals for aid in the restoration of industry, education, and public affairs.” Moreover, it claimed (like Bryce) that these intellectuals were politically conservative or, at the least, neutral: “In the denominated countries, the intellectual class is neither radical at the left nor reactionary at the right, but represents the sanest viewpoint and capacity remaining in these countries, and therefore invaluable for the solution of their present and future problems.”⁶⁸ The Carnegie Endowment for International Peace contributed \$50,000 to the American Central Committee for Russian Relief (whose head was the former president of Harvard University, Charles W. Eliot) “for the relief of refugees from Russia and the Near East”. This was recognised as a necessity because the “future reconstruction of a Russian republic” would depend upon the contributions of “teachers, professional men and educated business people”, all of whom had been labelled as “bourgeois” by the Bolsheviks.⁶⁹ While the terms “intellectual”, “intelligentsia”, and “intellectual class” were frequently used (often interchangeably), the figures being referred to usually encompassed university academics (as distinct

⁶⁷ Masaryk, *The Making of a State*, 399.

⁶⁸ A Director of the American Relief Administration, “The Situation of the Intellectual Class in Central Europe”, *A.R.A. Bulletin*, 2/3 (1920), 36.

⁶⁹ *Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, Year Book 1921* (Washington D.C.: 1921), 43-44.

from students) and was sometimes expanded to include professionals such as doctors, lawyers, engineers, architects, artists and musicians, and clergymen.⁷⁰

Intellectual relief was, on occasion, justified as a means of achieving reconciliation with the former enemy, although this was still controversial. Many international agencies were reluctant to deal with former enemy states, with Germany coming in for particular opprobrium as the state seen to have both started the war and committed its worst excesses. Moreover, German intellectuals had written strident defences of the conduct of the German army in 1914, and many scholars in allied countries (especially France) were loath to simply return to normal once the war ended in 1918. This meant that German scholars were excluded from many international scholarly organisations – mirroring Germany’s exclusion from the League of Nations – in the immediate post-war years. However, other ex-enemy states, such as Austria, were less tainted by wartime narratives about the origins of the war and atrocities committed during it and thus they did not suffer from the same stigma.

The Anglo-American University Library for Central Europe (AAULCE) was established in 1920 to provide English language material for academics in central Europe who, owing to rising exchange rates and costs of living, could no longer afford academic material published since 1914, meaning that “intellectual workers are deprived of indispensable tools.” The founders of the AAULCE saw it as an opportunity for “reconciling the intellectual world.” Unlike the League’s Committee on Intellectual Cooperation or the American Relief Administration, the AAULCE was explicitly concerned with post-war reconciliation between former enemies. “The reconciliation amongst the peoples can only come through the cultivation of mind and spirit, and it is clear that the great teachers of the world, by the free interchange of ideas, must be the

⁷⁰ “The Situation of the Intellectual Class in Central Europe”, *A.R.A. Bulletin*, 2/3 (1920), 40.

leaders in such an endeavour.” In the spring of 1920, Prof. Everett Skillings toured eleven university cities in central Europe, talking to academics and students, and helping to establish eight libraries for the AAULCE at Berlin, Budapest, Frankfurt, Göttingen, Krakow, Munich, Prague and Vienna. From these libraries, needy individuals or institutions could borrow the relevant material or have it sent to them. However, it was not only the case that these university cities sought academic literature; they also wanted to re-establish international connections which had existed prior to the war and had been severed because of it.⁷¹

The League of Nations and the Committee on Intellectual Cooperation

There has been resurgence of interest in the League of Nations in recent years meaning that the League’s intellectual work, neglected for a long time, has attracted much more attention.⁷² Historians have noted the importance of the League’s intellectual work as a precursor to UNESCO, or have used it as a means of analysing other themes such as global order more generally or the careers of notable individuals who were involved in it.⁷³ Problematically, the League never clearly defined “intellectual cooperation” and

⁷¹ “The Anglo-American University Library for Central Europe”, October 1920, LSE/Beveridge/VII/90/96/1-4. See also Heather Ellis, “Men of Science: The British Association, Masculinity and the First World War”, in Chagnon and Irish eds., *The Academic World in the Era of the Great War*, 56-58.

⁷² Susan Pedersen, “Back to the League of Nations”, *American Historical Review* 112/4 (2007), 1091-1117, at 1092. Notable examples of reassessments of the League include: Zara Steiner, *The Lights that Failed: European International History, 1919 – 1933* (Oxford, 2005); Steiner, *The Triumph of the Dark: European International History, 1933-1939* (Oxford, 2011); Mark Mazower, *Governing the World: the History of an Idea* (London, 2012); Cabanes, *The Great War and the Origins of Humanitarianism*, Patricia Clavin, *Securing the World Economy: the Reinvention of the League of Nations* (Oxford, 2013); Laqua ed., *Internationalism Reconfigured*; Susan Pedersen, *The Guardians: the League of Nations and the Crisis of Empire* (Oxford, 2015); Jay Winter and Antoine Prost, *René Cassin and Human Rights: from the Great War to the Universal Declaration* (Cambridge, 2013).

⁷³ Jo-Anne Pemberton, “The Changing Shape of Intellectual Co-operation: From the League of Nations to UNESCO”, *Australian Journal of Politics and History* 58 /1, 34-50; Jean-Jacques Renoliet, *L’UNESCO oubliée: la Société des nations et la coopération intellectuelle, 1919-1946* (Paris, 1999); Laqua, “Transnational Intellectual Cooperation, the League of Nations, and the Problem of Order”, *Journal of Global History* 6/2 (2011), 223-47; Laqua, *The Age of Internationalism and Belgium, 1880-1930: Peace, Progress and Prestige* (Manchester, 2013), 194-198; Jimena Canales, “Einstein, Bergson, and the Experiment that Failed: Intellectual Cooperation at the League of Nations”, *MLN* 120/5 (2005), 1168-91; Daniel Gorman, *The Emergence of International Society in the 1920s* (Cambridge, 2012),

this was complicated by the term's resonances in different languages. Speaking in 1930, the Oxford classicist Gilbert Murray noted that the term "intellectual cooperation" sounded "absurd" in English but was "all right in French or Italian."⁷⁴ In the same year, the American historian Waldo G. Leland observed that "international intellectual co-operation is a cumbersome term of fifteen syllables that has become popular since the World War, although it describes activities and processes that have existed from the most remote times."⁷⁵ By this estimation, intellectual cooperation was not new, however, what *was* new in the 1920s was its frequent invocation as part of the broader process of preserving peace and the permanent structures created by the League through which this could be managed.⁷⁶

In the years immediately following the end of the war, with intellectual life in crisis in many European states, a number of proposals were put to the League of Nations urging it to create a body dealing with intellectual work. The Belgian internationalists Henri la Fontaine and Paul Otlet of the Union of International Associations successfully lobbied the League to fund some of their activities after the war and lobbied for the creation of a permanent body to deal with intellectual work.⁷⁷ Similar proposals emanated from France, with Julien Luchaire, the inspector of public education in France and an expert in Italian literature, arguing for the establishment of a body to both promote international scientific progress and to ensure that national education was

203-208, Corinne A. Pernet, "Twists, Turns, and Dead Alleys: The League of Nations and Intellectual Cooperation in Times of War.", *Journal of Modern European History*, 12/3 (2014), 342-358.; Pernet, "'The Spirit of Harmony' and the Politics of (Latin American) History at the League of Nations", in Alan McPherson and Yannick Wehrli eds., *Beyond Geopolitics: New Histories of Latin America at the League of Nations* (Albuquerque, NM., 2015), 135-153.

⁷⁴ Gilbert Murray, "Intellectual Cooperation", BBC Broadcast, 5 March 1930, Bodleian Library, Oxford, MS Murray 277/97.

⁷⁵ Waldo G. Leland, "Some Aspects of International Intellectual Co-operation since the World War", *Advocate of Peace Through Justice* 92/2 (1930), 112-123, at 112.

⁷⁶ Daniel Laqua, 'Activism in the 'Students' League of Nations': International Student Politics and the Confédération Internationale des étudiants, 1919-1939', *English Historical Review*, 132/556 (2017), 619-620.

⁷⁷ Laqua, *The Age of Internationalism*, 194, Renoliet, *l'UNESCO oubliée*, 13.

geared towards the promotion of peace. Another proposal, emphasising international reconciliation through mutual understanding, was received from Austria.⁷⁸ In September 1921 the League's Council approved a memorandum by Sir Eric Drummond, its Secretary-General, which argued that the League could not succeed in any of its aims without paying special attention to issues of education and intellectual work.⁷⁹

The Committee on Intellectual Cooperation was formally established by the League's Council in January 1922. The body was intended to be a small organisation of twelve members which would deal with matters relating to intellectual life, education and science and to which the League's Council could refer specific issues.⁸⁰ Both its origins and initial structure bore the imprint of competing national desires. The French historian and politician Gabriel Hanotaux had initially suggested that membership of the CIC be restricted to those from victor or neutral countries in the recent war, with seats on the committee being reserved for specific countries who would then nominate representatives. However, following pressure from the League's Secretariat, it was decided that selection should ultimately rest with the League's Council, and could include representatives of non-member states.⁸¹ Hanotaux later wrote that members of the CIC were "appointed in consideration of their personal ability and their reputation in learned circles, and without any discrimination as to nationality."⁸² In other words, membership was based on (an undefined) cultural authority, allowing the CIC an

⁷⁸ Renoliet, *l'UNESCO oubliée*, 17.

⁷⁹ "The Desirability of Creating a Technical Organisation for Intellectual Work: Memorandum by the Secretary-General", 5 September, 1921. Bibliothèque de documentation internationale contemporaine, Paris, 4 Delta 1056.

⁸⁰ Renoliet, *l'UNESCO oubliée*, 18.

⁸¹ Renoliet, *l'UNESCO oubliée*, 25.

⁸² Cited in Daniel Laqua, "Transnational intellectual cooperation", 224.

opportunity to be a tool of cultural reconciliation, as members from former enemy states could be appointed.

Twelve individuals were appointed to the committee in May 1922; many of them had international reputations and they straddled a range of disciplines from the humanities to the sciences. Membership was primarily drawn from European states and the committee boasted eminent names such as the French philosopher Henri Bergson, the British classicist Gilbert Murray, the Polish/French physicist, Marie Curie, and the German physicist Albert Einstein. Representatives from beyond Europe included A. de Castro (Brazil), D.N. Bannerjee (India), and the astronomer George Ellery Hale (United States).⁸³ The CIC was far from a harmonious body; national rivalries and suspicions clouded its interactions. Bergson, who was the committee's chair, had been virulently anti-German during the First World War, whereas it was claimed that Bannerjee felt isolated as he was the only non-French speaker and as India had historically been "treated unfairly by the British."⁸⁴

Hale's inclusion was important as the US was not a member of the League and this opened the way to greater international cooperation. This was also true of the selection of Albert Einstein. The inclusion of a member from an ex-enemy state, Germany, was made easier by the fact that Einstein had been a prominent pacifist during the First World War and was a physicist whose fame was truly international.⁸⁵ Einstein's inclusion suggested that the CIC was desirous of promoting reconciliation with former enemy states. However, this would prove problematic, as will be

⁸³ The other members of the CIC in 1922 were Jules Destrée (Belgium), Gonzague de Reynold (Switzerland), Kristine Bonnevie (Norway), F. Ruffini (Italy), and L. de Torres Quevedo (Spain). 'League's Intellectual Committee', *The Times*, 25 July 1923, 11.

⁸⁴ Inazo Nitobe to Gilbert Murray, 4 August 1923, MS Murray 265/145.

⁸⁵ Danielle Wunsch. "Einstein et la Commission internationale de coopération intellectuelle / Einstein and the International commission for intellectual cooperation", *Revue d'histoire des sciences*, 57/2 (2004), 512-514.

demonstrated below. The report of the CIC's first meeting in August 1922 – which neither Einstein nor Hale could attend – dealt with pre-agreed areas for attention, such as bibliography and scientific and university co-operation. It also noted with some caution the potential for its work to sprawl beyond the capability of the committee to deal with it, especially as the committee only met once a year for five days in Geneva.⁸⁶

Despite the desire to rein in its scope, two new issues had emerged as a priority by the time of the CIC's first meeting in August 1922, and these took prominence in the official report: a “general enquiry into the conditions of intellectual life” and “assistance to nations whose intellectual life is in danger.” The report noted the threat posed to civilization and warned that many universities were in danger of closing their doors. It concluded with the ominous warning that “rarely does any great civilization die out suddenly; it more often disappears gradually through the progressive and more or less rapid extinction of its centres of learning. This was the case with the ancient civilization of the Roman Empire; and it may also be the case with our own civilization if we take no heed.”⁸⁷

“Abandoned, isolated, and starved” – The League and Intellectual Relief

From the moment of its establishment, the CIC had great moral authority. Soon after its first meeting in August 1922, it began receiving requests for assistance from individuals, governments, and non-state agencies, such as European Student Relief.⁸⁸ In response to the latter, the CIC attempted to secure textbooks and laboratory equipment and, working with the ESR's distribution network, had them sent to

⁸⁶ LNA C-559-1922-XII, 3.

⁸⁷ LNA C-559-1922-XII, 4.

⁸⁸ Conrad Hoffmann to Inazo Nitobe, 12 October 1922; Grete Ebel to Nitobe, 16 November 1922, LNA, 13C, doss. 23815, doc. 24805x (R1049).

Russia.⁸⁹ The CIC also supplied money to the ESR to buy books requested by Russian universities.⁹⁰ A wide range of materials was required, from laboratory equipment to periodicals to books, (usually those published after 1914) demonstrating the cataclysmic impact of the war on the movement of ideas.⁹¹

At its second session in August 1922, the CIC identified Austria and Poland as being in desperate need of intellectual assistance. It asked two of its members, Gonzague de Reynold and Marie Curie to report back on the state of intellectual life in each country. De Reynold's report was submitted to the League's Council in September 1922. It noted the historic importance of Austria as an intellectual centre; that inflation meant that the Austrian government was unable to subsidise universities as it had before the war; that some university libraries had been unable to buy books from abroad since 1917 and that writers could neither afford to publish nor sell their books. He warned that "intellectual life is threatened with extinction through being abandoned, isolated and starved."⁹² De Reynold argued that the League could play an important role in Austria, synchronizing the work of other agencies without great expense. Saving the intellectual life of Austria was "the sure basis, because [it is] a moral basis, of her economic reconstruction."⁹³ De Reynold recommended that the CIC issue an international appeal to universities, learned societies and libraries, drawing their attention to the situation in Austria and urging institutions to send publications to them.

Marie Curie's report on the condition of Polish intellectual life painted a slightly different picture: intellectual life had been suppressed by various governing powers

⁸⁹ Hoffmann to Nitobe, 29 November 1922, LNA, 13C, doss. 23815, doc. 24805x (R1049).

⁹⁰ Conrad Hoffmann to K.S. Stafford, 24 January, 1923, LNA, 13C, doss. 23815, doc. 24805x (R1049).

⁹¹ See, for example, the needs of the Crimean University. Letter of L. Vishnevsky 26 July 1922, LNA, 13C, doss. 23815, doc. 24805x (R1049).

⁹² "Statement by M. de Reynold, Rapporteur of the Committee on Intellectual Cooperation, on the Condition of Intellectual life in Austria", *League of Nations Official Journal*, (December 1922), 1522.

⁹³ "Report on the conditions of intellectual life in Austria, approved by the Council on September 13th, 1922", LNA, 13C, doss. 23024, doc. 23024 (R1046).

over the preceding two centuries and, in the aftermath of the war, the immediate economic crisis was also taking its toll. Curie noted that the situation in Poland was not as severe as that in Austria, but argued that Austria was traditionally better resourced, having had a vibrant and internationalised intellectual life before 1914, which was not the case in Poland. However, Curie argued that “in the case of Poland there is no necessity for financial assistance or intervention as in the case of Austria.” Instead, she recommended that a commission of enquiry be appointed to undertake a more detailed study of conditions there.⁹⁴

In November 1922, the CIC acted on de Reynold’s report and published an international appeal for the intellectual aid of Austria.⁹⁵ Using emotive language, it opened with the assertion that “no greater danger can threaten a civilization than the successive destruction of its homes of learning.”⁹⁶ It urged universities and learned societies around the world to send publications to their Austrian counterparts, to arrange professorial and student exchanges with Austria, to send food to Austria, and to enable Austrian scholars to take holidays abroad.⁹⁷ In total, the CIC sent out 903 copies of the appeal to learned societies, academies, and universities across the world, from Europe to North and South America, Asia and Australia. The appeal was disseminated in either French or English, with 416 copies being distributed to institutions (primarily those in Britain, North America or the British Empire) in English and the remainder (487) in French.⁹⁸ Privately, the League’s Secretary-General, Eric Drummond, cautioned that

⁹⁴ “Provisional memorandum on the conditions of intellectual life in Poland submitted to the council by the Committee on Intellectual Co-operation and approved by the Council on September 13th, 1922”, LNA, 13C, doss. 23024, doc. 23502 (R1046).

⁹⁵ “Appeal on Behalf of the League of Nations for Aid to Austrian Intellectual Workers”, *Science* 56/1461 (1922), 743.

⁹⁶ “Appeal on Behalf of the League of Nations for Aid to Austrian Intellectual Workers”, 743.

⁹⁷ “Appeal on Behalf of the League of Nations for Aid to Austrian Intellectual Workers”, 744.

⁹⁸ LNA, 13C, doss. 24014, doc. 24014 (R1050).

“we must be careful about committing ourself [sic] to helping intellectual work in one particular country.”⁹⁹

The appeal for the intellectual relief of Austria mirrored the economic and financial intervention undertaken by the League in the same period. Economic relief and intellectual relief went hand-in-hand. The League had a close relationship with the successor states who were the living embodiment of the post-war settlement and of the idea of self-determination. By 1922, Austria was in the midst of an economic crisis which led to a financial intervention by the League’s Economic and Financial Organisation (EFO). The EFO coordinated the raising of an international loan as the League had no stabilization funds of its own; however, in the words of Patricia Clavin, “its ability to marshal evidence and to disseminate it to the wider network of governmental and financial institutions was central to the rescue.”¹⁰⁰ The CIC’s intervention of 1922 can be seen in similar terms; it did not have the financial resources to organize a widespread relief effort in Austria but it did have both a moral authority and a well-developed global communications network enabling the dissemination of its message, which enabled it to effectively publicise the necessity for Austria’s intellectual relief. Books received would be communicated to relief agencies to be, in turn, sent to Austria, or they would be sent directly to designated local Austrian institutions.¹⁰¹

Inazo Nitobe, under-secretary general with responsibility for the CIC, received letters from around the world from universities and learned societies detailing the books that were available for exchange. These were then communicated to Alfred Dopsch, the CIC’s correspondent in Vienna, before an exchange of books was effected between the

⁹⁹ Memorandum by the Secretary-General, 24 October 1922, LNA, R1046, 13C-24013x-23024.

¹⁰⁰ Clavin, *Securing the World Economy*, 29; Patricia Clavin, “The Austrian hunger crisis and the genesis of international organization after the First World War”, *International Affairs* 90/2 (2014), 266.

¹⁰¹ Memorandum by the Secretary-General, 28 December 1922, LNA, R1050, 13C-24014-23815.

institutions concerned.¹⁰² The CIC also forwarded some requests for books to other international agencies, such as the Universities Library for Central Europe, the Institute of International Education, and the European Centre for the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. Ultimately, the CIC hoped that national committees of intellectual cooperation – answering to the international committee in Geneva – would take care of this work in the future.¹⁰³ Other forms of assistance were also received: Kyushu Imperial University in Japan sent cash “in aid of our Austrian colleagues.”¹⁰⁴ The CIC’s project was possible because of the moral authority of the League and also because of the international reputations of the individual members of the CIC, such as Murray, Curie, and Bergson. They were uniquely positioned to appeal to an educated international audience.

The wide publicity given to the League’s project for intellectual relief meant petitions soon arrived at the CIC from other countries experiencing intellectual deprivation, such as Hungary. Following the publication of the League’s commitment to intellectual relief in September 1922, which coincided with Hungarian entry into the League of Nations, Hungarian institutions began to contact the CIC, presenting lists of books and equipment that they required.¹⁰⁵ In the Hungarian case, appealing for intellectual relief was a means of highlighting the severity of the terms imposed on them under the Treaty of Trianon of 1920 which shrunk Hungary to one third of its pre-war size, made it pay significant reparations for war damage, and resulted in three million ethnic Hungarians finding themselves living in new states.¹⁰⁶ Following the

¹⁰² For example, see the LNA, 13C, doss. 24014, doc. 25514 (R1050).

¹⁰³ “Report submitted by the Secretary on the Assistance to be rendered to Countries where the Continuance of Intellectual Life is particularly endangered”, LNA, C-570-M-224-1923-XII, 59-60.

¹⁰⁴ Mano to the Secretariat, 3 May 1923, LNA, 13C, doss. 24014, doc. 28928 (R1050).

¹⁰⁵ Murray to Halecki, 17 October 1922, See also the appeal by the Budapest Observatory of 26 September 1922. LNA, 13C, doss. 23815, doc. 24372 (R1049).

¹⁰⁶ Peterecz, *Jeremiah Smith Jr. and Hungary, 1924-1926*, 82-83.

ratification of Trianon, revisionism became Hungary's "civic religion." Cultural diplomacy was an important means through which Hungary sought to make its case for treaty revision and it emphasised Hungary's cultural superiority in Eastern Europe (as well as the western origins of their culture).¹⁰⁷ In this way, appealing to the CIC fit a broader revisionist agenda for Hungary.

One consequence of the redistribution of lands of the former Habsburg Empire was that a number of universities and libraries came under the control of Czechoslovakia and Romania. Hungarian critics of the Treaty of Trianon claimed that it had resulted in Hungary losing 745 public and scientific libraries, or four million volumes (of a pre-war total of 9.5 million).¹⁰⁸ Notably, Kolozsvár University and its Hungarian professors had been driven into exile and been forced to re-found their university in Szeged in 1921.¹⁰⁹ In 1922, a committee was founded, under the presidency of Count Albert Apponyi, to "ensure the scientific work of the Hungarian universities". Apponyi had been responsible for a 1907 law that ensured the dominance of the Hungarian language in Hungarian education.¹¹⁰ The committee argued that Hungarian culture was "our sole weapon and source of strength [and] the only safeguard of our future." The committee raised funds domestically for the purchase of books and scientific equipment and issued appeals internationally to the League as well as to the Rockefeller Foundation and the German *Notgemeinschaft der Deutschen Wissenschaft*.¹¹¹ Hungarian appeals for aid leveraged international interest in

¹⁰⁷ Zsolt Nagy, *Great Expectations and Interwar Realities: Hungarian Cultural Diplomacy, 1918-1941* (Budapest and New York, 2017), 4-9; 50-60.

¹⁰⁸ Oliver Eotvényi, "Cultural Effects of the Treaty of Trianon", in Albert Apponyi ed., *Justice for Hungary: Review and Criticism of the Effects of the Treaty of Trianon* (London, 1928), 240.

¹⁰⁹ Rector of Szeged University to CIC, [unknown] November 1922, LNA 13C, doss. 24014, doc. 32240 (R1050).

¹¹⁰ Nagy, *Great Expectations and Interwar Realities*, 38.

¹¹¹ "Report on the Three Years' Activities of the Committee founded to ensure the Scientific Work of the Hungarian Universities (July 1922 – June 1925)", LNA, 13C, doss. 38975, doc. 41427 (R1075).

intellectual relief and the precedent of the League's appeal on behalf of Austria, but made it clear that Hungary's plight was a consequence of the post-war settlement.

By 1923, a League-sponsored report, written by the Polish historian Oskar Halecki, noted the impoverished state of intellectual life in Hungary. He claimed that Hungary was facing "a disaster as complete as that which followed her defeat on Mohács field", a reference to the defeat of the Hungarians at the hands of the Ottoman Empire in 1526.¹¹² In September 1924, following another letter by Apponyi to the CIC, the League's Council approved the publication of an appeal on behalf of Hungary which was similar to the Austrian document issued almost two years previously. However, this appeal was different in two fundamental respects. First, it was written in more sober language than the Austrian document; gone were the apocalyptic references to the death of civilization. Instead it noted that Hungary was "nearly ruined by the war" but was improving due to the League of Nations sponsored loan, finally agreed after a contentious period of negotiation between Hungary, its neighbours and their allies in the League in March 1924.¹¹³ Rather than trying to act as an intermediary as it had with Austria, the CIC asked "universities, academies and learned societies of the whole world to send their publications to the Hungarian universities, academies and learned societies, and to organize exchanges with them." The appeal asked that all donations be sent directly to the Hungarian legation in their respective countries.¹¹⁴ However, the CIC still received many letters from universities around the world, offering to send books to Hungary.¹¹⁵

¹¹² Halecki, *Enquiry into the Conditions of Intellectual Work, Second Series. Intellectual Life in Various Countries. Hungary* (n.p, c1923), 6. MS Murray 352.

¹¹³ Peterecz, *Jeremiah Smith Jr. and Hungary, 1924-1926*, 95-98, Clavin, *Securing the World Economy*, 30, Apponyi to Bergson, 22 September 1924, LNA, 13C, doss. 38975, doc. 39204 (R1075).

¹¹⁴ "An appeal", 5 November 1924, LNA, C-621-M-220-1924-XII.

¹¹⁵ LNA, 13C, doss. 38975, doc. 41420 (R1075)

By 1925, the immediate crisis in Europe was passing. The economies in central Europe were stabilizing owing (in part) to the financial interventions of the League and the existential threat to intellectual life had passed. Apponyi's Hungarian committee felt that the international response meant Hungary had "passed the stage of relief."¹¹⁶ Moral and economic intervention demonstrated the potential for ambitious programmes in the future, as well as for the CIC to be a forum for national grievances. The Romanian delegation to the League claimed that the "the reconstruction of Austria and Hungary through the collective efforts of all the other countries is one of the finest pages in the history of the League of Nations." It wondered whether the methods adopted in the economic reconstruction of Europe might be applied to the intellectual reconstruction of countries "which urgently need it", through the provision of an international loan for intellectual purposes.¹¹⁷ While the proposal was approved by the League's Assembly, it did not meet a favourable response at the EFO.¹¹⁸

The CIC's interventions on behalf of Austria, Hungary, and Japan – an appeal was also issued on behalf of the Tokyo Imperial University whose library (and its 740,000 volumes), were destroyed following an earthquake in September 1923 – were all made to support League member states.¹¹⁹ In each case, it was difficult to quantify their success as the CIC facilitated exchanges rather than executing them; moreover, they did not keep cumulative records of the outcome of these appeals for intellectual relief. The CIC was more concerned with developing mechanisms to ensure a decentralized and smooth exchange of publications between states in central and eastern Europe should the need arise in the future. Crucial in this process was the

¹¹⁶ "Report on the Three Years' Activities", LNA, 13C, doss. 38975 doc. 41427 (R1075).

¹¹⁷ Proposal by the Romanian delegation, September 1924. LNA, 13C, doss. 38845, doc. 38845 (R1075).

¹¹⁸ LNA, 13C, doss. 38845, doc. 42054 (R1075). see also Laqua, "Internationalisme ou affirmation de la nation?", 56-57.

¹¹⁹ LNA, 13C, doss. 31006, doc. 32411 (R1059)

foundation of national committees of intellectual cooperation.¹²⁰ The League had a particular interest in ensuring that the successor states of central and eastern Europe would be sustainable, as these were the living embodiment of the doctrine of self-determination. Intellectual vitality was simultaneously an economic and cultural problem, and economic stabilization allowed for the nations to begin purchasing academic literature from abroad once more. However, the question of intellectual intervention was more problematic when it came to non-member states such as Germany.

The limits of intellectual relief: Germany

Germany was, like Austria and Hungary, a vanquished state in the recently ended war, but it held a different place in the victors' imagination. Not only was Germany seen as the primary aggressor in the events leading to the outbreak of war in 1914 (with this being given legal status in Article 231 of the Treaty of Versailles), German scholars and intellectuals had issued truculent defences of their nation's behaviour, specifically denying that it had committed atrocities in Belgium. This meant that at the cessation of the war, Germany was frozen out of the League of Nations and many other international bodies. In the natural sciences, a "boycott" of German science would not be lifted until after Germany's admission to the League in 1926.¹²¹ Germany's place in the international order was, in Daniel Laqua's words, "a key challenge for intellectual cooperation."¹²²

¹²⁰ Committee of Intellectual Co-operation, minutes of the third session, Paris, December 5th to December 8th, 1923, LNA, C-3-M-3-1924-X-II, 35-44.

¹²¹ Cock, "Chauvinism and Internationalism in Science", 249-288, Brigitte Schroeder-Gudehus, "Challenge to Transnational Loyalties: International Scientific Organizations after the First World War", *Science Studies*, 3/2 (1973), 93-118.

¹²² Laqua, "Transnational Intellectual Cooperation", 234.

At the height of the crisis in Austria, Germany was suffering from similar, if not worse, problems arising from spiralling inflation. Writing in *Foreign Affairs* in December 1922, Karl Kautsky reported that German “artists and writers” were “literally starving. And they are starving not only physically; they are finding it more and more impossible to satisfy their intellectual hunger, to purchase books, instruments and other scientific means of support.”¹²³ German academics began to organize themselves to ensure that national scientific life remained as strong as possible in the circumstances. In 1920 the *Notgemeinschaft der Deutschen Wissenschaft* was founded with the support of all German universities, academies, technical schools and scientific institutes, to give financial assistance to struggling libraries and to coordinate university research.¹²⁴ From 1922, with the onset of hyperinflation, the *Notgemeinschaft* also began drawing the attention of international audiences to the critical situation in German universities. This raising of awareness of the plight of German universities and intellectuals was broadly successful and assistance was received from a number of international bodies, such as the ESR and the Universities’ Committee of the Imperial War Relief Fund, which began to undermine the international intellectual isolation of Germany by former belligerents.¹²⁵ However, the League of Nations was an exception to this.

The CIC had a contradictory attitude towards non-member states. On the one hand, it viewed its work as a means to involve countries such as the United States, in the work of the League. Albert Einstein was appointed to the first CIC committee as an “acceptable” German as his wartime pacifism saved him from the opprobrium which

¹²³ Karl Kautsky, “Germany Since the War”, *Foreign Affairs* 1/2 (1922), 113.

¹²⁴ Katharina Rietzler, “Philanthropy, Peace Research, and Revisionist Politics: Rockefeller and Carnegie Support for the Study of International Relations in Weimar Germany”, *GHI Bulletin Supplement*, 5 (2008), 66.

¹²⁵ Elisabeth Piller, “‘Can the science of the world allow this?’ - German Academic Distress, Foreign Aid and the Cultural Demobilization of the Academic World, 1919 – 25”, in Chagnon and Irish eds., *The Academic World in the Era of the Great War*, 189-212.

other German scholars received in allied countries. However, in March 1923, as the Franco-Belgian occupation of the Ruhr entered its third month, Einstein wrote to the committee to resign his position, citing the League's reluctance to aid Germany.¹²⁶ The CIC's attitude towards Germany also upset members like Gilbert Murray. In March 1924 he wrote a strident letter to *The Times* criticizing the committee and in a letter to Sir Eric Drummond, he described Germany's non-inclusion in the CIC's appeal for intellectual aid as "an absolute disgrace to the League" and "a scandal."¹²⁷

Across the academic world, the French and Belgians are usually seen to have perpetuated the exclusion of Germany with the greatest vigour. This partly explains the attitude of the CIC which was chaired by the French philosopher Henri Bergson, who was known for his rhetorical belligerence towards Germany during the war. Bergson wrote privately in 1924 that "in current circumstances, this complete cooperation [with Germany] is not possible."¹²⁸ However, this hostility was reciprocated on the German side. Friedrich Schmidt-Ott, the president of the *Notgemeinschaft*, viewed the work of the CIC with profound misgivings, not only because of a general suspicion of the League of Nations as constituting a league of victor states, but also as Schmidt-Ott claimed to remember the hostile rhetoric, during and immediately after the war, of two CIC members, Bergson and George Ellery Hale. This made the *Notgemeinschaft* reluctant to deal with the CIC. The League's Secretary-General, Drummond, claimed that Gonzague de Reynold had made a number of approaches to the *Notgemeinschaft* to solicit their help in setting up a national committee on intellectual cooperation, with each attempt coming to nothing.¹²⁹ De Reynold also sought their assistance in

¹²⁶ Einstein to the CIC committee, 21 March 1923, MS Murray 265/118.

¹²⁷ Murray to Drummond, 3 March 1924, MS Murray 266/17, Murray, "League and Germany", *The Times*, 5 March 1924, 10. See Laqua, "Transnational Intellectual Cooperation", 234-235.

¹²⁸ Cited in letter of Nitobe to Murray, 7 April 1924, MS Murray 266/30.

¹²⁹ Drummond to Murray, 8 March 1924, MS Murray 266/20.

composing a report on the nature of intellectual life in Germany and in this he eventually had some success.¹³⁰ De Reynold wrote that “it is obvious that intellectual cooperation in Germany does not depend upon the Intellectual Cooperation committee alone.”¹³¹ However, the CIC’s reluctance to make an appeal on behalf of Germany, as it had with Austria and Hungary, went against its claims (best expressed in the Austrian appeal) to be motivated by safeguarding civilization, especially as German scholars presented Germany’s plight as a matter of world importance, given Germany’s pre-war eminence as a nation that excelled in academic research.¹³² In this context, the CIC reflected, rather than changed, the international order, and demonstrated the persistence of national animosities born of the war.

The Institutionalisation of Intellectual Relief

The CIC’s meeting of August 1922 had argued that intellectual life needed saving in certain instances and that a general enquiry into the state of intellectual life was required across Europe and the world to identify other countries where civilization was threatened. The appeal issued in favour of Austria had underlined the need for a wider enquiry. It elicited responses from many countries who claimed that their intellectual life was also imperilled. In Bucharest, the *Academia Romana* highlighted the privations suffered by Romania in the war where libraries were left disorganized, laboratories had been pillaged during wartime occupation, and the post-war slump meant that the Romanian government could not afford to address the needs of academic institutions.¹³³

¹³⁰ Committee of Intellectual Cooperation, Minutes of the Second Session, Geneva, July 26th to August 2nd, 1923, LNA, C-570-M-224-1923-x-ii, 9.

¹³¹ Gonzague de Reynold, “The League and Germany”, March 1924, UNESCO archives, A.I.35.

¹³² Piller, “Can the science of the world allow this?”, 195-6.

¹³³ Letter on behalf of Academia Romana to Helene Vacaresco, LNA, 13C, doss. 23815, doc. 24535 (R1049).

It called for an immediate enquiry to analyse intellectual life from the Black to the Aegean seas.

The Austrian appeal also revealed the extent of intellectual relief being led by other agencies and the risk of duplicating relief activities. In June 1923, Maxwell Garnett of the League of Nations Union in Britain wrote to the CIC, criticizing them for being one body in a crowded field rather than taking a coordinating role.¹³⁴ Following the CIC's appeal on behalf of Austria, the Universities' Committee of the Imperial War Relief Fund wrote of their disappointment to learn that such an appeal had been issued without their knowledge as they had been undertaking the same type of work for two years.¹³⁵ A similar letter was received from the Anglo-American Universities Library for Central Europe, who worked with the Universities Committee.¹³⁶

By the end of 1922, the CIC began to expand its activities based on both of these issues. First, it recognized that central and eastern Europe were particularly badly impacted by intellectual deprivation and sought to set up a permanent scheme of mutual assistance involving the donation or exchange of books and other materials. This scheme would be effected through the national committees on intellectual cooperation, which all member states were encouraged to form to gather information, identify national intellectual needs, and then communicate them either to other national committees or the CIC.¹³⁷ In this way, it was hoped that future intellectual relief would be structured and formalised rather than the result of *ad hoc* action.

¹³⁴ Garnett to CIC, 25 June 1923, LNA, 13C, doss. 14297, doc. 29542 (R1032).

¹³⁵ Eleanora Iredale to Nitobe, 10 January 1923, LNA, 13C, doss.14297, doc. 25541 (R1032)

¹³⁶ B.M. Headicar to Halecki, 9 January 1923, LNA, 13C, doss. 23815, doc. 24097 (R1049).

¹³⁷ Report by René Viviani, "Intellectual Cooperation: Scheme for furthering Intellectual exchanges in Central and Eastern Europe", January 1923, LNA, C-112-1923 and report by Gabriel Hanotaux, "Work by the Committee on Intellectual Cooperation", 1923, LNA, C-573-(1)-1923-XII, Annex II to C-L-20-1924-XII.

In December 1922, the CIC drew up a questionnaire about the nature and organization of intellectual life to be circulated to national governments across the world. The hope was that this would provide an insight into the nature of intellectual life and identify countries in need of immediate assistance.¹³⁸ The questionnaire was primarily concerned with state control of education, the types of institutions present in each country, and the extent of international cooperation. In this way it assumed that intellectual life was primarily embodied by institutions under direct state oversight, which was not the case in countries like Britain. At the same time, the CIC also employed scholars to publish reports on intellectual life in different countries, based on these reports. Published between 1923 and 1924 in a series called *Enquiry into the Conditions of Intellectual Work in Various Countries*.¹³⁹ These reports were primarily focused on higher education and the sciences, and presented detailed tables detailing the number of students in higher education, the number of universities and scientific institutions in a given country, while also presenting a historical narrative summarising the intellectual development of each country. They included League members and non-members – such as the United States and Germany – alike.¹⁴⁰

Cumulatively these initiatives sought to take stock of intellectual life following the war and to formalise the mechanisms of intellectual relief. The preoccupation with higher education and the organisation of scientific research tells much about how the CIC understood intellectual life and its scope. By 1925, with the stabilization of economies in central Europe and the signing of the Locarno treaties which paved the way for German entry into the League, the immediate crisis was seen to have passed

¹³⁸ Memorandum by Secretary-General, 11 December 1922, LNA, 13C, doss. 23024, doc. 25168 (R1046).

¹³⁹ See LNA 13C dossier 29604 (R1057, R1058) for full details on these reports.

¹⁴⁰ Bizarrely, they did not include Great Britain as the manuscript submitted for publication was lost in Geneva. LNA, 13C, doss. 23024, doc. 25753 (R1046).

and the enquiries ended quietly. However, the published accounts left a permanent record of the state of intellectual life in Europe and beyond which could be a practical aid to facilitating future intervention by the League and other international organisations.

The mechanisms of intellectual relief were further solidified in the summer of 1924 when the French government made an offer to the CIC to establish and fund an International Institute for Intellectual Cooperation (IIIC) in Paris. The offer was formally accepted by the Council of the League of Nations in December 1924.¹⁴¹ The first director of the IIIC was the aforementioned French writer, Julien Luchaire,¹⁴² One of the IIIC's roles was to work with national committees on intellectual cooperation to enable clear communication between nations and the League, especially in instances where assistance was required. By 1924, eighteen countries had established national committees. Of these, only one, Brazil, was outside Europe, and many were successor states.¹⁴³ By 1937, this number had grown to thirty-eight nations, of whom fourteen were situated beyond Europe.¹⁴⁴ The establishment of the Institute, in tandem with the national committees on intellectual cooperation, constituted a greater institutionalization of mechanisms to provide intellectual relief in the future, both by identifying crises of intellectual displacement and intellectual starvation and creating structures to effect an efficient response. In this way, the League's early work on intellectual relief structured the emergence of permanent institutions that emerged thereafter. This is of particular note when considering that the IIIC would later be

¹⁴¹ Agreement regarding establishment of International Institution for Intellectual Cooperation, 8 December 1924, MS Murray 266/100.

¹⁴² Organic statute of the Institute for Intellectual Cooperation, 1924, MS Murray 266/102-105.

¹⁴³ These were: Austria, Belgium, Brazil, Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, Estonia, Finland, France, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Netherlands, Poland, Romania, Yugoslavia, Switzerland. MS Murray 266/122-123.

¹⁴⁴ The non-European nations were: Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Chile, China, Cuba, India, Iran, Japan, Mexico, Salvador, South Africa, Syria, and the United States. *National Committees on Intellectual Cooperation* (Geneva, 1937), 3-4.

reborn as UNESCO after the Second World War. The establishment of the IIC also posed difficult questions about the influence of individual nations, such as France, which both hosted and provided the bulk of the funding for the new body. It demonstrated that intellectual cooperation would continue to be leveraged by individual states for the promotion of their national prestige.¹⁴⁵

Conclusion

The Locarno treaties of 1925 paved the way for Germany to enter the League of Nations in 1926 and ushered in a period of reconciliation, international cooperation, and optimism. However, in what Zara Steiner calls “the Hinge Years”, the League was fatally undermined by the onset of the Great Depression, the Manchuria Crisis, and the failure of the Disarmament Conference.¹⁴⁶ By 1933, Hitler had taken power and Germany had withdrawn from the League of Nations. Beginning in the same year, he began his assault on intellectual freedoms and a new wave of intellectual exile began, with Jewish (and other) scholars from Nazi controlled territories seeking refuge in Britain, North America, and elsewhere.¹⁴⁷ The story of intellectual exile in the 1930s – and the great transnational relief organizations – are much better known than the fledgling attempts of the early 1920s. The events of the 1930s are, however, part of the same transformation that was born of the First World War, namely, the preoccupation with the international relief of organised intellectual life.

Post First World War intellectual relief was a response to the upheavals of war which led to famine, epidemics, economic chaos and the mass displacement of people. International relief of intellectuals emerged in the war and became a distinct and

¹⁴⁵ Laqua, “Internationalisme ou affirmation de la nation?”, 55.

¹⁴⁶ Steiner, *The Lights that Failed*, 800-816.

¹⁴⁷ Palmier, *Weimar in Exile*.

significant arm of international humanitarianism in its aftermath, organised and justified in a different manner to other humanitarian interventions. Intellectual relief was justified by aid-givers as a means of safeguarding centuries-old cultures and, by association, upholding democracy in successor states against the threat of Bolshevism. For the recipients, appealing to international organisations such as the CIC could be a means of articulating national grievances about the post-war settlement to international audiences, as in the Hungarian case. For the League of Nations, intellectual relief was an essential precursor to its mission to inculcate intellectual cooperation between member states with a view to easing national antipathies following the war. The organisation of intellectual relief also demonstrated the speed with which the CIC acquired a moral authority, enabling it to draw appeals and requests from around the world, even when it did not have the funds to make good on them.

After the optimism of the nineteenth century, with international and global connections made possible by telegraph, steam-propelled travel, the professionalization of disciplines, the growth in the number of universities, and the formation of a huge number of national and international journals and associations, twentieth century intellectual life was threatened by war and its many consequences. Intellectuals in exile, de Reynold wrote, carried the flame of learning with them when it was threatened at home; it was the duty of the civilized world to “help them to maintain that flame.”¹⁴⁸ His words would prove prescient just over a decade later.

¹⁴⁸ De Reynold, *La vie intellectuelle*, 24.