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'Some change of feeling and purpose': The League of Nations Union, emotions, and world citizenship in Britain, 1919–1939

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Abstract

Many voluntary associations during the interwar years promoted international understanding in the hope of avoiding another global war. The League of Nations Unions in Britain lobbied the government to advocate for the newly founded League of Nations, whilst also seeking to convince and educate a wider public, promoting a 'world citizenship' that crossed national boundaries. Children and young people were a key constituency for the LNU's promotional efforts as they would be the ones to take its agenda forward in the future. To create world citizenship among this younger generation, the LNU argued that 'new knowledge' alone was insufficient; a 'change of feeling and purpose' was also required. This article focuses on the 'change of feeling and purpose', the emotional terrain of the LNU's vision of world citizenship, with an emphasis on international friendship, hope and fear. Drawing on selected exemplars from the LNU's Education Committee publications, school magazines, and memoirs and oral histories, it explores ways in this emotional terrain was envisaged by adults in the LNU, and was experienced and articulated by young people themselves.

Keywords

Citizenship, internationalism, peace, children and young people, League of Nations

Introduction

During the interwar years, the League of Nations Union (LNU) promoted the League of Nations and advocated international understanding with the aim of avoiding a repeat of the First World War. With a peak of over 400,000 paid-up members in 1931, it was one of the largest voluntary associations in interwar Britain. Although one of many organisations internationally to pursue such goals,

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it gained a reputation for being among the most active of the League of Nations Societies in member states (Beales, 1931: 322; McCarthy, 2011: 4). Founded in 1919, the LNU lobbied governments and targeted the general public through promotional and educational activity. Children and young people were a key constituency for the LNU's efforts as they would be the ones to take its agenda forward in the future. The LNU aimed to create 'a sense of world citizenship' among them which would honour existing ties to the nation state but also emphasise ties to a broader international sphere. Children and young people were engaged in this project through activities which could be international, national and local in focus and remit, or a mix of these (Mills, 2022; Mills and Waite, 2017), and which could encompass a sense of action in the present and projection to the future (Nolas et al., 2017). World citizenship for the LNU (1927) was to rest on 'new knowledge', and, importantly, also on a 'change of feeling and purpose' (pp. 12, 14–15). This comment seemingly distinguishes between knowledge and feeling, perhaps reflecting wider tensions between emotionalism and intellectualism within the wider LNU (McCarthy, 2011), whilst acknowledging both as vital components of world citizenship for the young as the internationalists of the LNU envisaged it. Of the two, emotions have to date received limited sustained attention, and are the focus of this article.

A sense of world citizenship for the young was created by adults connected with the LNU and young people themselves. The leaders, committees and sub-committees of the LNU shaped messaging which emanated from headquarters in London, a form of template, as will be discussed later. Adults at the local level, those who engaged with young people directly as visiting speakers and as teachers, also shaped the message. Young people were far from passive recipients. They shaped the emotional terrain of the LNU, as imagined recipients, as active members and supporters who filtered and reflected back messaging and perhaps created messaging of their own. There is a dialogic interplay between the texts issued for young people, and the texts that young people created themselves. Through these dynamic processes, both the LNU as an organisation and young people themselves could be seen as creators of a sense of world citizenship.

This article builds on previous scholarship on the LNU and education (Elliott, 1977; McCarthy, 2011; Wright, 2020), to focus on prominent, and interconnected, components of the emotional terrain of the LNU's version of world citizenship: international friendship, hope and fear. A close analysis of examples from the LNU's publications and records, and accounts by junior members both at the time and in retrospect, shows that these emotional components of world citizenship operated and intersected in complex ways. I foreground important, though sometimes overlooked, emotional components of citizenship education. In so doing I seek to contribute to educational histories, specifically those which look beyond timetabled lessons and the classroom, and to our understanding of some of the ways in which international organisations in this period could operate and connect with people at a micro-level.

The League of Nations Union and world citizenship

The League of Nations Union sought both to lobby governments and to inform and enthuse the British public. From headquarters in Grosvenor Square, London, and through local adult and junior branches, it promoted the importance of international friendship and goodwill. It provided information about the League of Nations itself, specifically its efforts to address major social and economic problems, and to tackle disputes through arbitration. The LNU aimed to reach out to people of any religious or political opinion. It gained a large and diverse support-base, and prominent allies among local civic dignitaries and liberal and left-wing political elites. Membership declined from the mid-1930s as an increasingly hostile and volatile international climate, and the rise of

totalitarian ideologies, revealed the limits of the League's mechanisms for arbitration and promoting international understanding (Birn, 1981; McCarthy, 2011).

The educational imperative behind the LNU's goals is clear (Wright, 2020), and much of the LNU's outreach work with the young was channelled through its education committee. The LNU's own lobbying activities, and the moral pressure exerted through successive League of Nations assembly resolutions advocating teaching the young in member states about the League and the importance of international understanding, facilitated considerable reach. By 1932 all but a handful of local education authorities in England and Wales reported offering some form of what contemporaries termed League of Nations teaching. In practice, however, regularity and intensity varied (Board of Education, 1932), whilst critics noted a danger of imposing political propaganda on a captive audience in schools (Wright, 2020). League of Nations teaching was provided through timetabled lessons, assemblies and other gatherings, and extra-curricular means, the latter particularly through junior branches (Elliott, 1977; McCarthy, 2011). Junior branches, mostly based in secondary schools but with some organised on an area basis, offered lectures and debates, model assemblies, pageants, plays, exhibitions, fundraising and direct contact with international counterparts through correspondence and travel overseas (Wright, 2020). Contemporaries noted the potential for affect to dominate in some junior branch activities, from large, excitable junior branch events (LNU, 1924: 4), to League of Nations-inflected Armistice Day gathering in a school hall (Board of Education, 1932: 9). By late 1938, however, delicate diplomatic conditions made even some of the longest standing enthusiasts uneasy about any association with LNU lobbying; the Education Committee was reconstituted as a semi-independent body, the Council for Education in World Citizenship, in July 1939 (Heater, 1984).

For the LNU (1933b), a form of citizenship that crossed national boundaries was required for a 'co-operative world' and sustainable peace (p. 25). This co-operative world described an existing, even natural, state of affairs, and also an ideal not yet attained but worth striving for. It was framed as an outcome of the evolution of human societies, and technological change, both of which resulted in increasing connection between people in different countries. It was also deemed a vision of a human future, difficult to achieve with multiple obstacles to overcome, but necessary if future conflict on a global scale was to be avoided (LNU, 1931). Despite frequent references to world citizenship, the LNU rarely offered an explicit definition. From its texts however it is possible to derive a sense of a shared morality, of desirable attitudes and behaviours expected of world citizens, such as 'a positive desire for international justice and a sense of world loyalty', and the recognition of 'a moral obligation towards every other being in the world, irrespective of colour, race or creed' (LNU, 1937b: 29–30, 1936: 14). The ideological basis of this moral obligation was not defined in these texts. Many within the wider milieu of the LNU would have assumed it to be Christian (McCarthy, 2011), though a secularist minority equally sought to frame its moral vision (Wright, 2017).

The LNU's world citizenship was rooted in its liberal internationalism. Framed by the victors of the First World War, and a primarily male, educated, elite among them, the LNU's liberal internationalism was never monolithic, but contributed to a distinctive and recognisable intellectual and emotional milieu, and provided the flexibility needed to attract a large and broad base of support. Advocacy of an interconnected and peaceful international political and legal order would be maintained through processes of collective security and arbitration organised through institutions like the League of Nations. The LNU claimed to supplement, and not to challenge or undermine, existing national and imperial loyalties. It envisaged a hierarchy of nation states and races and cultures, exemplified by the League of Nations mandate system (Clavin, 2011: 5–6; Gorman, 2005; McCarthy, 2011: 132–54). The LNU adopted a pacificistic stance, recognising that avoiding major

conflict might require the controlled use of armed forces in situations where international regulations were contravened and arbitration had failed. A vocal minority of fully pacifist members however argued against military intervention under any circumstances (Ceadel, 1980: 3–5). The LNU's internationalism contrasted with more radical versions such as those offered by communists and fascists, and other contemporary visions such as a purely pacifist world order, or a world-state which superseded existing nation states. Its all-encompassing vision of world citizenship (with liberal internationalist underpinnings) could claim to promote loyalty and unite people across national borders, while glossing over and neutralising hierarchies, and ideological differences in attitudes to war and peace. From a later vantage point, the potential for contemporaries navigating such complex territory to experience tensions and competing demands seems evident. It does not necessarily follow that a sense of tension and competing demands was experienced by those living through all of this at the time.

Investigating the emotional terrain of world citizenship

Creating young world citizens for the LNU, as noted already, involved both 'new knowledge' and a 'change of feeling and purpose', which meant changing hearts and minds. Exploring the emotional components of world citizenship potentially sits uneasily with analyses of citizenship that focus on knowledge and dispassionate discussion as a basis for a communal life and political action. Habermas (1989, 2023), for example, emphasises deliberative politics in the public sphere, with emotive responses seen as leading to problematic and dangerous actions. Yet, as Bourke (2003: 124) has argued, 'emotions . . . align individuals with communities'; in this case the community of liberal internationalists associated with the LNU, and the community of world citizens. Recent analyses have recognised the role of affect in creating and maintaining communities. The League of Nations itself, according to Ilaria Scaglia, used emotions to promote itself and its work, developing an emotional style based on connections and elevated purpose, and dignity and friendship (Scaglia, 2019: 51–82). Ute Frevert and Kerstin Pahl note the importance of emotions in modern politics more generally, with multiple institutions inviting people to 'feel political', and suggesting when and where certain emotions should, or should not, be performed (Frevert and Pahl, 2022). At the same time, with reference to young people in particular, affect has been noted as an important dimension of their civic and political participation and one which requires exploration (Nolas et al., 2017). These insights have resonance for the LNU and its promotion of world citizenship among the young. World citizenship lacked some of the legal and constitutional frameworks and familiar symbols of nation-state citizenship. Achieving a sense of affinity with an imagined community of others, most of whom would never meet, and with distant, supra-national institutions, arguably required intensive emotional work.

The sources examined emanate from or refer to the milieu of LNU Education Committee and junior branch activity outlined above. They reflect the perspectives of committee members (often both LNU enthusiasts and educationalists themselves), those it commissioned texts from, and young people themselves, particularly those of secondary school age as this age group dominated among junior branch members. The Education Committee issued guidance and teaching aids aimed at teachers and educational authorities and periodicals and texts for young people. It published texts for particular occasions of symbolic importance such as the Armistice Day messages it commissioned each year from 1929 from renowned politicians, religious leaders and educators, all men (see also Wright, 2021). These were intended to be read out at school-based commemorative events each November at which pupils and teachers would gather to mark the signing of the armistice at the end of the First World War. Young people's perspectives were occasionally reported in the LNU's publications, but more frequently at the time in reports on junior branch or other

LNU-related activity in school magazines, and retrospectively in oral histories and memoirs. These varied sources were produced with expectations of audience, form, and content in mind. Armistice Day messages took on norms and motifs of the LNU, and of wider practices of inter-war years armistice commemoration (Gregory, 1994). Pupils writing in school magazines envisaged a readership that is less obvious than one might at first imagine – mainly other pupils, teachers and alumni of the school, but also potentially parents, and readers in public libraries and other schools that received copies. In school magazines, LNU conventions overlapped with a broader set of conventions related to expected content and tone which often combined 'adult' tropes of committee and associational reporting with irreverence and humour. In oral histories of pacifism and internationalism and memoirs connected with local LNU movements, emotions of the time are remembered in more or less detail, and reported back through the lens of knowledge and experiences gained since and the norms of the time of composition (Summerfield, 2019).

The key components of the LNU's emotional terrain examined here – international friendship, hope and fear – permeate multiple texts composed by adults in the movement, and young people themselves. If other emotions or 'emotionally-laden concepts' were mentioned, these three were the most prominent in the texts considered, and indeed were prominent in the wider emotional community of liberal-internationalism of the LNU. It does not take a huge leap of the imagination to perceive ties to an international sphere and bonds of international friendship as an emotional foundation for the attitudes and behaviours, the qualities, of world citizenship noted above. Hope does not connect as clearly with the attitudes and attributes of the LNU's world citizenship, but, as will be discussed below, the language of hope was frequently connected with both the League of Nations and young people as those who would promote international connections and work for a peaceable world in the future. At face value, an association between fear and the attributes of world citizenship is less evident still. Yet fear of war was a significant element of the broader social and cultural context of interwar Britain (Overy, 2010: 175–218). The League of Nations itself, and the LNU, emerged directly out of the First World War, further cementing this event as a reference point for what was to be avoided. Personal and social memories of the First World War, and portrayals of it in print and audio-visual media (Trott, 2017), influenced the emotional community of the LNU and the emotional terrain around world citizenship that young people encountered in the interwar years.

The process of creating and navigating this emotional terrain and the emotional community of the LNU could be conceptualised in different ways. In some respects, what we see in the texts examined could be interpreted as the imposition of a top-down 'emotional regime' (Reddy, 2001), reflecting dominant norms of the time and place and in particular the LNU's milieu, or even as 'emotional indoctrination' (Mahamud, 2016). As the LNU was a voluntary association, opportunities for overt imposition were constrained. This is not to deny the potential for soft disciplinary power within the LNU milieu to facilitate emotional formation in accordance with LNU norms. Young people were informed of what they should and should not feel, the emotions and associated behaviours that they should or should not display, within the context of the emotional community of the LNU (Olsen, 2020: 644–645).

However, we should not overstate the extent to which currents created by adult others simply swept children along. Overall, the texts examined suggest a dynamic process whereby young people and adults alike anticipated the young fitting in with a bigger emotional project, but a project that they would adapt, perhaps subtly, take into the future, and make their own. Taking this dynamism into account, it is useful to think with the notion of an emotional template. An emotional template offers a loose outline of a mood or feeling which links an individual and an institution or organisation. It incorporates behaviour, symbols, tropes, images: importantly though the resources on offer can be engaged with in different ways and adapted by individuals (Frevert and Pahl, 2022).

Some of the texts examined work on emotions explicitly, with adult authors detailing what or how to feel in the context of the emotional community of the LNU, or creating an atmosphere that encouraged particular modes of feeling (Olsen, 2020; Scaglia, 2019: 61). In other texts, young people reflected on, reflected back, and presented their version of these messages, articulating their version of the emotional terrain of world citizenship. The voices and perspectives of the adults of the LNU and its young people interact with and speak to one another. In an attempt to convey a sense of the dialogue involved in the creation and operation of an emotional template, I move in the discussion below between texts produced by adults and young people.

It is only possible to investigate emotions that were made visible, and for something to be visible it had to follow recognisable conventions of narrative and genre (Bourke, 2003). Social memories and cultural outputs of the interwar years, textual conventions, and the emotional landscape of the LNU all shaped the expression of emotions in the sources examined. Our later understanding of the presentation of emotions, moreover, rests on interpretive possibilities. We can read or hear words about hope, fear, sympathy, comradeship and sense something familiar, seemingly connecting with emotions expressed 80–100 years ago. Yet, if as Clifford Geertz (1973: 81) suggests, emotions are 'cultural artefacts', their expression is bound by contexts of time and space. A sense of understanding, of familiarity, might be illusory. For all these reasons I am not claiming direct access to people's actual emotions in the past, to know what they felt. Instead I explore how the emotional terrain of world citizenship for young people in connection with the LNU was written about and expressed, how emotions were articulated and described. It is possible to reconstruct to some extent the emotional template and emotional terrain, but not emotions, feelings, themselves.

International friendship, hope, and fear

Navigating the emotional terrain of world citizenship, three areas predominate: hope, fear and international friendship. Only one of these, fear, is itself a primary emotion. Fear in connection with the LNU encompasses associated affective territory linked to hatred and horror of war. Hope is not itself an emotion but 'an affect-laden phenomenon' (TenHouten, 2023: 76). Friendship is similarly not an emotion but involves emotionally laden concepts and interactions relating to kinship and fellow-feeling. These areas of the emotional terrain of world citizenship are not discrete but connect with one another. To offer an illustration, Ena Humpage joined Walsall Youth Group (her LNU junior branch) after her father's death. She recalled his support for the LNU as an inspiration: 'Memories of my father were strong. He had hated all wars and was interested in the formation of the League of Nations Union which was to bring about friendship between nations' (Humpage, n.d.). Fear, hope, and friendship come together in condensed form in two sentences of a memoir. Although the following discussion takes hope, fear and international friendship one at a time, it also acknowledges the ways in which they were connected and operated together.

International friendship

A sense of world citizenship was, for the LNU, to be built on bonds of international friendship. This was a recurrent theme in the LNU's annual Armistice Day messages for young people, commissioned from 1929 each November from prominent politicians, educators and religious leaders in Britain. These were intended for reading during communal gatherings in the school, occasions on which pupils were deemed receptive to emotional influences (Board of Education, 1932: 9). Most Armistice Day messages referenced bonds of international friendship in broad terms, noting links between nations, envisaging 'a friendly world with a growing spirit of comradeship between all peoples' (LNU, 1933a). A contrast could be drawn between the actions of governments and the

tendencies demonstrated by individuals. General Smuts, renowned as former South African Prime Minister and international statesman, decribed in his 1937 Armistice Day Message (LNU, 1937a) friction 'in high places', but at the same time the 'peoples of the world . . . coming together', and 'sympathy and understanding on the merely human level'. Young people here were, implicitly, encouraged to identify and emulate positive connections between people on the ground. Similar rhetoric was utilised by young people, who noted connections and understanding between countries and between individuals. Those who took on leading roles within junior branches explained their aims, with one noting the intention to 'bring friendly relations between nations' (*Central Foundation Girls School Magazine*, February 1934: 13). Yet friendly relations were also thought to rest on a sense of individual connection. Victor Newcomb, for example, who supported the LNU when young, noted 'a gut feeling of sympathy with people' (Newcomb, 1986).

Alongside these generalised concepts of international friendship, whether pitched at the level of connections between nations, or connections between individuals, the importance of direct and concrete encounters between young people of different countries was recognised. Direct encounters were thought to develop a desire to be a citizen of the world, and the ability to manage one's own emotions and behaviours in a way that would further this aim. The LNU wanted young world citizens to 'feel' internationalism (Scaglia, 2019: 63); in this view travel abroad and meeting with counterparts overseas were a means of 'cementing international friendships' (*League News*, June 1936: 7), albeit one available only to a minority. The relatively few young people engaged with the LNU who were able to undertake international travel rehearsed and expanded on such ideas. A student who attended the LNU's junior summer school in Geneva in 1936 reflected on the presence of a small number of international students – a Pole, two Germans (one for Hitler, one, a practising Jew, against), a Hindu – alongside the majority of British participants. 'In conversation with these different people', they wrote, 'it was possible to obtain an accurate insight into their character, convictions, and points of view, to a degree which would be impossible under other circumstances' (*The Perriam*, Christmas Term 1936: 8). A girl from Manchester in 1932 reported on an international camp in Kiel-Schonhagen in Germany that she had attended as part of a school group. She associated the experience of contact between individuals and the sharing of common experiences – lessons and excursions, evenings of singing, dancing and playing together – with 'a strong bond of friendship which links our two nations'. Other similar camps, she suggested, should be held because 'it is in the friendly relations between young people of all nations that the greatest hope of world peace lies' (*Magazine of Manchester High School for Girls*, December 1932: 3–4). Encounters seem to have been meaningful on a personal level for the individuals who wrote about them, whilst also contributing in their view to broader aims of international community building and peace.

Sustained close contact within international others, then, was deemed important in developing understanding, and appropriate modes of connecting. Such contacts could involve travel overseas, as in the examples just noted, or contact with people of international origin within Britain. In his 1938 Armistice Day address, Archbishop William Temple encouraged young people to connect with others who they might meet, seemingly referencing the increased number of people who were refugees or otherwise displaced in Britain at this time. 'Try to make friends now with people of other nations who live in your neighbourhood. They may be lonely and rather lost', he suggested, using a direct mode of address unusual in these Armistice Day texts. The benefits of such contacts, again, were framed both as increased understanding of other individuals and their views, and as a practical step towards longer-term goals: 'you will have done something real to increase goodwill and so to establish peace' (LNU, 1938). Encounters with others, with differences, could also happen through learning at school. William Temple exhorted his intended audience as follows: 'As you read the history of your own and other countries, try to take the standpoint of the others as well

as of your own . . . try to appreciate the enrichment of life that is open to us all through the fact that other people are different from ourselves' (LNU, 1938). The repeated use of the word 'try' was a deliberate, direct mode of exhortation, a rhetorical strategy, but one which suggests that understanding others and appreciating differences might not come easily and would require awareness and effort.

The cause of international friendship involved not only an effort to understand difference, but also in some contexts a deliberate performance and celebration of difference. LNU branch or junior branch activities involved British people in performing music and dances of different nations, dressing up in national costumes in exhibitions and pageants, acting out characteristics of the different nation state delegates in their model assemblies. Professor Zimmern (1932) dismissed such activities as 'fancy dress internationalism' (p. 17), arguing that they failed to facilitate a deep understanding of an internationalised world. Performative events could, however, arguably offer something more than critics such as Zimmern gave them credit for; a cultural script, a means of reading and understanding the post-First World War international world and connections between people within it (McCarthy, 2010). In this view, dressing up and entertainment offered a route to understanding the views of others and valuing varied perspectives.

Hope

Notwithstanding a lack of immediate reference to hope among the attitudes and attributes in definitions of liberal internationalist world citizenship, emotional terrain around hope was navigated and exploited in order to develop the change of feeling and purpose that the LNU envisaged. The League of Nations project generally was perceived as hopeful, and this was projected onto internationalist and League-related organisations like the LNU. The League of Nations as a symbol of hope was a common motif in LNU texts; one of the two films the LNU produced about the League, for example, was entitled *The Star of Hope*. Investment in hope took on a future-related orientation when young people were addressed in publications or encouraged to support the League and take on the responsibilities of world citizenship. It would fall to them to take the internationalist agenda forward. A rhetoric of the young as the future could be productive, and flexible. It could mobilise investment of resources and effort. It could also achieve a level of consensus across political and ideological divides (King, 2016). A rhetoric of children as 'future-makers' (Spyrou, 2020) was mobilised by adults to fulfil their agendas, and also seized on by children themselves. Yet the emotional terrain around hope was fragile. As TenHouten (2023) suggests, to hope requires optimism and sanguinity; this can lead to focussing on the positive to the extent that difficult realities might be ignored. Some hopes will, almost inevitably, not be fulfilled.

An atmosphere of hope around the League project generally and the LNU in particular was picked up by those who became involved in the interwar years, and remembered later. According to Sly (1990), 'there was a lot of idealism about it and a great deal of hope about it'. Another interviewee referenced a 'zeitgeist' of support among young people for the League of Nations: 'No one . . . wouldn't have known about the League of Nations and the hope . . . that the League of Nations was going to abolish war' (Anon, 1999). This interviewee projected knowledge and feelings that she might well have observed among her contacts to young people more generally. How accurate this projection was is impossible to determine.

Texts aimed at young people could link and the future. General Smuts composed the LNU's Armistice Day messages in 1931 and 1937. In the first of these, he suggested a connection between hope for the future, a world community, and a generic category of 'youth': 'We do desire to build a nobler world. And that vision of a better future does especially appeal to youth' (LNU, 1931). His message from 1937 is striking for its emotive language, and charged with Christian symbolism:

> In the Covenant [of the League of Nations] we have our revelation: there is a great light has risen above the horizon of history. Let it never set again . . . Let youth see to it that this light of the future is not quenched in the reaction of our times (LNU, 1937a).

The hint of a possibility of failure, of what might happen without the service and efforts of young world citizens, was common in exhortations to hope within LNU texts.

Appeals to hope for the future referenced wrongs of the past. Young LNU enthusiasts writing in school magazines summarised, sometimes seemingly verbatim, the content of talks that they attended. Lord Allan of Hurtwood, a Labour Party Member of Parliament and then peer in the House of Lords, known for his pacifism, spoke to pupils at Westminster School in London in October 1937. He was quoted as saying: ‘We must show our faith in the League. If the younger generation gave up hope, what chance could there be of peace considering what the older generation had done?’ (*The Westminsterian*, November 1937: 109). Authors of reports like this rarely commented on whether they approved or disapproved of this sort of messaging. We glean, however, that they were receptive enough to it to consider it worth recording with care, and reporting in the school magazine, making it accessible not just to sympathisers but to the wider readership of this publication. Individuals looking back on engagement when young with the LNU and its milieu in the interwar years, in a parallel way, noted past challenges and projected hope into the future too. With reference to the challenges of the Second World War an anonymous interviewee commented: ‘Oh well, I hope another generation doesn’t have to meet it’ (Anon, 1999). The tone of voice and a sigh in the recording seem to convey a weight of sentiment at this point – although reminded of Clifford Geertz’ arguments noted above I am wary of assuming too much. Hope here rests on knowledge of alternative possibilities, and sadness. Expanding on TenHouten’s (2023) line of argument, if hope can end up in disappointment, it can also emanate from disappointments and difficulties and the desire to avoid repeating them.

Hope, then, emerges as a renewable resource. This was noted by young LNU enthusiasts. Prior’s Field School junior sent money to LNU headquarters in 1939 as ‘a sign that we hope that such help can still be given in these difficult days’ (*Prior’s Field Magazine*, Christmas 1939: 25–26). This report suggests that these girls were searching for hope under challenging circumstances. It also suggests, potentially, an assumption that an older generation who might be feeling disillusioned were likely to appreciate evidence of continued enthusiasm for the cause among the young. It seems that these young people were well aware that their elders saw them as hope for the future, and they could envisage what signs of their commitment in the present meant for others.

Junior branch members also projected forwards in time. Their hope for the future was an act of imagination and one focused on the goals and needs that they assumed they and others would have. A schoolboy in the context of a junior branch report in 1930 wrote: ‘[The young] hold the future in their hands, and . . . have it in their power to abolish war for ever when they become the public opinion and rulers of the earth’ (*The Leightonian*, March 1930: 278–279). It is difficult to decode the tone here. Was exaggeration intentional, for readers’ entertainment, or was there a genuine imagining of unlimited possibility? We could dismiss this as youthful exuberance. At the same time we could note the parallels in scope between the ‘earth’ here and the ‘world’ mentioned in sombre and mature tones in General Smut’s Armistice Day addresses. A few years later, the challenges of constructing a community of world citizens linked to the League were all too evident. Yet injunctions to look to a better time ahead continued. School pupils in Bicester in 1937 reported on being asked to write essays on the League of Nations of the future: ‘We had to imagine that we were going to form a new and better League of Nations and what it was going to be like’ (*The*

Bicestrian, December 1937: 8). Hoping for a better future via the creative potential of the young was, potentially, invigorating in a difficult present, possibly for pupils and adults alike.

Fear

Hopes for the future for the world citizen in the interwar years were bound up with fear, particularly fear of war and its consequences, seemingly reflecting a wider fear of war in Britain during this period (Overy, 2010: 175–218). Fear has been perceived as incapacitating, a problem to be managed. It has also been identified as a spur to action, for those that have the capacity to act, and a productive force that can be harnessed for social and political change (Bourke, 2003; Laffan and Weiss, 2012). Fear thus held some of the malleability of hope; this malleability was recognised and utilised by younger and older individuals implicated in LNU-related texts.

Some adults, when speaking to young people in the LNU context, deemed fear an obstacle to creating a peaceable world community, and young people recorded this in their reports of these talks, again typically without evaluative comment. Hugh Lyon, headmaster of one of Britain's elite public schools and LNU supporter, spoke to an annual meeting of junior branches in the Midlands region in 1934. He listed 'apathy, indifference, ignorance, prejudice, fear' as 'enemies' of the League of Nations (*The Shenstonian*, March 1934: 38–40). A contrasting group of attitudes and emotions that would be 'friends' of the League of Nations is implied but not stated. A lecturer visiting a girls' school 5 years earlier was concerned with how to cultivate effectively a desire to work for peace within a world community. Using the gendered language of the time, he argued that men's 'horror of war' was not an appropriate way to arouse a desire for peace; 'only cowards could be approached that way'. A 'universal desire for peace for its own sake' was required (*Have Mynde*, 1929: 19). The explicit discussion of the best approach to cultivating useful affective responses among the young, with the young, is notable, and unusual. Listeners were steered towards particular means of creating a peaceable international community.

For others, however, the process of creating young world citizens required an appreciation of the dangers of war and, indeed, the production of fear. The LNU's annual Armistice Day messages offered warnings, with a focus primarily on the First World War and subsequent developments. General Smuts in 1931 used stark language when describing generational differences in the experience of any future conflict: 'The older generation is rapidly passing away and is not likely to see another war in its time. But the younger generation now coming on the scene can have no such immunity'. He referenced the need to 'make the world safe against another such holocaust of youth' (LNU, 1931). Seven years later, William Temple, then Archbishop of York, emphasised developments in warfare since the end of the First World War: 'To-day, war is far more terrible than it has ever been in the destruction of women and children, the aged and sick, the treasures of art and architecture and all that we value most in life' (LNU, 1938). Although he does not state this explicitly he seems to be hinting at the destructive potential of aerial bombing and its impact on civilians, evident by this time from the Spanish Civil War. As the First World War became an increasingly distant memory, adults in the movement seemingly felt the need to present dangers for a generation who lacked personal experience of war. Armistice Day messages, however, often ended up with a note of hope, a reminder of an alternative. In 1933, for example, Lord Sankey, then Chancellor, offered an arresting image of the present-day perils faced by an international community, but also pointed out the possibility of overcoming them: 'At the moment the sea is rough and the sky dark. If the adventure fails we all shall perish together. But it need not fail' (LNU, 1933a). Just as elements of fear weave through textual references to hope, hope weaves through textual references to fear.

Retrospective comments by those involved as young people with the LNU suggest an awareness of an atmosphere of fear, whether from their connection with the LNU, their family, their

school, their friends, or a wider set of written and audio-visual texts. For some at least this translated into intense emotions. Margaret Sharp remembered as a school pupil in the 1920s 'praying every night for the war in Panama to stop'. She thought that she probably heard about the violence there at school as her headmistress was 'a League of Nations enthusiast', but could not remember the details (Sharp, 1998). The word 'horror' is repeated often in these accounts. An anonymous interviewee spoke of her response to reading about the First World War aged 10 or 11, noting 'horror that men were sent in knowing they were sent to die'. This knowledge inspired a sense that these deaths were very wrong; she implies that this led her to search for alternatives (Anon, 1999). Edrey Allott recalled 'a horror of war from an early age', which by the mid-1930s led to a sense of 'a rolling programme' which seemed to be moving inevitably to a 'vast' conflict (Allott, 1997). It is difficult to ascertain whether this sense of impending doom was a product of hindsight, or a wider culture of fear, or a mixture of both. For all these individuals, these intense fears were part of what led them to work for a peaceful international community.

Accounts from the interwar years in public-facing texts like school magazines do not directly reference subjective feelings of horror or acute danger. However, an awareness of dangers is hinted at, albeit more subtly. LNU junior branch members in London, for example, commented on a meeting with some of the adult regional leaders at an all-age LNU gathering. Unlike these adults, the younger generation represented by junior branch members would 'suffer personally in another war' (*Central Foundation Girls School Magazine*, May 1932: 5–6). The 'immunity' of elders noted by General Smuts (LNU, 1931) is seemingly referenced by these junior branch members, perhaps with a hint of unease at the potentially divergent futures of the different generations. A year later, a junior branch report from the same school referenced adult fears instead. The enthusiasm and initiative of the young was offered as a hopeful antidote: 'Those who have fears for the future of world peace would do well to come to this School and see for themselves the enthusiasm which the idea evokes in the minds of the young' (*Central Foundation Girls School Magazine*, May 1933: 8). As with the Armistice Day messages, fears were recognised, and hope of a better alternative was offered, but this time by young internationalists themselves.

Conclusion

Emotions are significant as elements of individual subjectivity, but they also operate in societal and institutional contexts and connect individuals to these contexts. They have shaped individual experiences, and have been of concern to policy-makers under multiple political regimes (Bailey, 2016: 174–175). Consideration of the emotional terrain of world citizenship within the milieu of the League of Nations Union has touched on these different possibilities. Certain emotional styles and emotional modes were devised as appropriate and informative for young people who were – the LNU hoped – to gain a sense of world citizenship. Young people, in the context of emotional terrain and the emotional expressions which are represented in the texts examined, took on, articulated, but also expanded and adjusted, the styles, modes and behaviours available in the template provided for the emotional community of world citizenship connected with the LNU. In these ways, the liberal internationalist project was activated at the micro level among a younger generation.

All this might suggest young people's ability to nuance and adapt, but perhaps limited contestation. World citizenship in its liberal internationalist form, indeed, was an addition to nation-state citizenship, but not a replacement. It looked widely but could manifest through localised activities and commitments. This was not a radical vision; it had broad enough appeal to be deemed appropriate for schools, and had prominent supporters. If there was contestation it took subtle forms and can be found in nuances of understandings of world citizenship and in nuances of approaches to

navigating its emotional terrain. Contestation of sorts can potentially be found in perceptions of the utility of mobilising hope or fear or both, in perceptions of international friendship as ties between nations or personal connections between individuals, as celebrating difference or searching for common ground. Alternatively, these apparent differences can be seen as interconnected and equally important components of the emotional world of world citizenship. Emotionally-referent statements could convey very different registers, and this is arguably another area of contestation. They ranged from generalised, abstract, perhaps even bland, statements, to descriptions of intense emotion, from calm evocation of noble feeling, to vivid images of danger, to unlimited vistas of ambition for a peaceful and interconnected world. What these differences in tone and language convey about actual feelings, though, is impossible to ascertain.

The coming of the Second World War in 1939 proved how fragile international consensus and stability was. Hopes for peace were dashed, fears of war proved to be founded, international friendships were broken or at least strained. This did not stop continued investment in the ideal of world citizenship, which emerged within the milieu of the organisations of the United Nations itself, and the voluntary associations which again grew up within nation states (Heater, 1984; Sluga, 2010). Within Britain, veterans of the LNU in the interwar years noted parallels between the LNU and its successor bodies, the United Nations Association and the Council for Education in World Citizenship. Differences were noted too, with Kathleen Gibberd (1954: 94) claiming of the latter an environment that was not emotionally-laden, with the United Nations being treated as a phenomenon rather than a crusade. Yet elements of the emotional terrain of hopes, fears and international friendship from the interwar years are recognisable in these later manifestations of world citizenship for the young.

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