



Routledge Studies in Modern History

THE INSTITUTION OF INTERNATIONAL ORDER

**FROM THE LEAGUE OF NATIONS TO THE UNITED
NATIONS**

Edited by

Simon Jackson and Alanna O'Malley



The Institution of International Order

This volume delivers a history of internationalism at the League of Nations and the United Nations (UN), with a focus on the period from the 1920s to the 1970s, when the nation-state ascended to global hegemony as a political formation. Combining global, regional and local scales of analysis, the essays presented here provide an interpretation of the two institutions – and their complex interrelationship – that is planetary in scale but also pioneeringly multi-local. Our central argument is that although the League and the UN shaped internationalism from the centre, they were themselves moulded just as powerfully by internationalisms that welled up globally, far beyond Geneva and New York City. The contributions are organized into three broad thematic sections, the first focused on the production of norms, the second on the development of expertise and the third on the global re-ordering of empire. By showing how the ruptures and continuities between the two international organizations have shaped the content and format of what we now refer to as “global governance”, the collection determinedly sets the Cold War and the emergence of the Third World into a single analytical frame alongside the crisis of empire after World War I and the geopolitics of the Great Depression. Each of these essays reveals how the League of Nations and the United Nations provided a global platform for formalizing and proliferating political ideas and how the two institutions generated new spectrums of negotiation and dissidence and re-codified norms. As an ensemble, the book shows how the League of Nations and the United Nations constructed and progressively re-fashioned the basic building blocks of international society right across the twentieth century. Developing the new international history’s view of the League and UN as dynamic, complex forces, the book demonstrates that both organizations should be understood to have played an active role, not just in mediating a world of empires and then one of nation-states, but in forging the many principles and tenets by which international society is structured.

Simon Jackson is Lecturer in Modern Middle Eastern History at the University of Birmingham, where he directs the Centre for Modern & Contemporary History. He is completing a book on the political economy of French empire in Syria and Lebanon after World War I, and researching another, on the origins of the global food production system in late colonial rule. His work has appeared in *Humanity*, *Monde(s)* and the *Arab Studies Journal*.

Alanna O'Malley is Assistant Professor of History & International Relations at Leiden University. She is the author of *The Diplomacy of Decolonisation, America, Britain and the United Nations during the Congo crisis 1960–64*, which was published by Manchester University Press in 2018. She has been a Kathleen Fitzpatrick Visiting Fellow at the University of Sydney and a Fulbright Scholar at the Department of History at George Washington University. She is currently working on a new project, which examines the impact of the Global South on the United Nations 1955–1981.

Routledge Studies in Modern History

For a full list of titles in this series, please visit: <https://www.routledge.com/history/series/MODHIST>

32 The Style and Mythology of Socialism: Socialist Idealism, 1871–1914

Stefan Arvidsson

33 Capitalism and Religion in World History

Purification and Progress

Carl Mosk

34 Michael Collins and the Financing of Violent Political Struggle

Nicholas Ridley

35 Censuses and Census Takers

A Global History

Gunnar Thorvaldsen

36 America and the Postwar World: Remaking International Society, 1945–1956

David Mayers

37 Transnational Encounters between Germany and East Asia since 1900

Joanne Miyang Cho

38 The Institution of International Order

From the League of Nations to the United Nations

Edited by Simon Jackson and Alanna O'Malley

39 The Limits of Westernization

American and East Asian Intellectuals Create Modernity, 1860–1960

Jon Thares Davidann

40 Liberalism in Pre-revolutionary Russia

State, Nation, Empire

Susanna Rabow-Edling

The Institution of International Order

From the League of Nations to the
United Nations

Edited by
Simon Jackson and Alanna O'Malley

First published 2018
by Routledge
2 Park Square, Milton Park, Abingdon, Oxon OX14 4RN

and by Routledge
711 Third Avenue, New York, NY 10017

Routledge is an imprint of the Taylor & Francis Group, an informa business

© 2018 selection and editorial matter, Simon Jackson and Alanna O'Malley;
individual chapters, the contributors

The right of Simon Jackson and Alanna O'Malley to be identified as the
authors of the editorial material, and of the authors for their individual
chapters, has been asserted in accordance with sections 77 and 78 of the
Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988.

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reprinted or reproduced or
utilised in any form or by any electronic, mechanical, or other means, now
known or hereafter invented, including photocopying and recording, or in any
information storage or retrieval system, without permission in writing from
the publishers.

Trademark notice: Product or corporate names may be trademarks or
registered trademarks, and are used only for identification and explanation
without intent to infringe.

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

Library of Congress Cataloging in Publication Data

Names: Jackson, Simon (Simon M. W.), editor. | O'Malley, Alanna, editor.

Title: The institution of international order : from the League of Nations to
the United Nations / edited by Simon Jackson & Alanna O'Malley.

Description: Abingdon, Oxon ; New York, NY : Routledge, 2018. | Series:

Routledge studies in modern history ; 38 | Includes bibliographical references.

Identifiers: LCCN 2017052946 | ISBN 9781138091504 (hardback : alk. paper) |

ISBN 9781315108001 (ebook)

Subjects: LCSH: International organization--History--20th century. | League of
Nations--History. | United Nations--History.

Classification: LCC JZ1318 .I5563 2018 | DDC 341.22--dc23

LC record available at <https://lcn.loc.gov/2017052946>

ISBN: 978-1-138-09150-4 (hbk)

ISBN: 978-1-315-10800-1 (ebk)

Typeset in Sabon
by Taylor & Francis Books

Contents

<i>List of contributors</i>	vii
<i>Acknowledgements</i>	viii
<i>Foreword: From the League of Nations to the United Nations</i>	ix
SUSAN PEDERSEN	
Rocking on its hinges? The League of Nations, the United Nations and the new history of internationalism in the twentieth century	1
SIMON JACKSON AND ALANNA O'MALLEY	
1 "He tampers with the source of life itself who tampers with freedom": Personhood, the state, and the international community in the thought of Charles Malik	22
ANDREW ARSAN	
2 From the Tigris to the Amazon: Peripheral expertise, impossible cooperation and economic multilateralism at the League of Nations, 1920–1946	59
JOSÉ ANTONIO SÁNCHEZ ROMÁN	
3 Pan-American exceptionalism: Regional international law as a challenge to international institutions	65
MATS INGULSTAD AND LUCAS LIXINSKI	
4 Jewish memory and the human right to petition, 1933–1953	90
NATHAN A. KURZ	
5 The power of the refugees: The 1971 East Pakistan Crisis and the origins of the UN's engagement with humanitarian aid	111
FLORIAN HANNIG	

vi *Contents*

6	“Women’s point of view was apt to be forgotten”: The Liaison Committee of International Women’s Organizations’ campaign for an International Women’s Convention, 1920–1953	136
	NOVA ROBINSON	
7	The League of Nations and the transformation of representation: Sectarianism, consociationalism, and the Middle East	163
	SARAH SHIELDS	
8	Reimagining the post-war international order: The world federalism of Ozaki Yukio and Kagawa Toyohiko	183
	KONRAD M. LAWSON	
9	Internationalism and empire: The question of “native labour” in the Portuguese Empire (1919–1962)	206
	MIGUEL BANDEIRA JERÓNIMO AND JOSÉ PEDRO MONTEIRO	
	Epilogue	234
	RYAN IRWIN	
	<i>Index</i>	242

Contributors

Andrew Arsan (University of Cambridge)

Miguel Bandeira Jerónimo (University of Coimbra)

Mats Ingulstad (Norwegian University of Science and Technology)

Ryan Irwin (University at Albany-SUNY)

Nathan A. Kurz (University of London, Birkbeck College)

Florian Hannig (University of Gießen)

Simon Jackson (University of Birmingham)

Konrad M. Lawson (University of St. Andrews)

Lucas Lixinski (UNSW Sydney)

José Pedro Monteiro (University of Coimbra)

Alanna O'Malley (Leiden University)

Susan Pedersen (Columbia University)

Nova Robinson (Seattle University)

José Antonio Sánchez Román (Universidad Complutense de Madrid)

Sarah Shields (University of North Carolina)

Acknowledgements

First and foremost, the editors would like to thank the scholars whose remarkable work constitutes this book. They stayed with us patiently and graciously through a long journey. We are also deeply grateful to Susan Pedersen and Ryan Irwin not only for the framing contributions that book-end the volume, but also for their wise and sustaining advice in bringing the project to fruition. The book began life at a memorable conference held at the European University Institute (EUI) in Florence in 2013, which was generously funded by the Max Weber Programme for Postdoctoral Studies, the Department for History and Civilization and the Robert Schuman Centre for Advanced Studies. Natasha Wheatley was a wonderful co-organizer of that conference and A. Dirk Moses generously encouraged our initial steps towards publication. As we developed the book we benefited from the opportunity to present our introduction to a workshop on “Internationalism and Empire: Rethinking the politics of the twentieth century”, organized by Miguel Bandeira Jerónimo and José Pedro Monteiro at the Institute of Social Sciences, University of Lisbon, in 2015, where comments from Sandrine Kott, Vanessa Ogle, Susan Pedersen, Meredith Terretta and Corinna Unger proved especially helpful. Several colleagues also bolstered and improved the editorial process: Adam Bower and Camilla Macdonald refined our engagement with International Relations as a discipline, and Margarita Fajardo contributed her expertise on the history of Latin America. We are particularly thankful to Peter Agree at University of Pennsylvania Press for going above and beyond, to the two anonymous peer reviewers for their detailed and valuable criticism of each chapter, and to Rob Langham, our editor at Routledge, for patiently shepherding the book to publication alongside the team there. Our thanks to Guy Kirkham-Smith for helping to compile the index. Finally, Alanna would like to thank her husband Joris for continued support in realizing this book; Simon would like to acknowledge the Leverhulme Trust’s Early Career Fellowship scheme for its financial support in the period 2014–17, and would like to thank his partner Isabelle for her vital encouragement and support.

Foreword: From the League of Nations to the United Nations

Susan Pedersen

The structures of international organizations reflect their founders' visions of the world. When Sir Maurice Hankey, Secretary to the British War Cabinet and to the Paris Peace Conference, was offered the post of first Secretary-General of the League of Nations, he sat down to sketch a plan for the new organization's Secretariat. Hankey conceived of the League as a permanent successor to the conference he had managed, with a governing Council composed of the major statesmen from the great powers. The Secretariat would thus be divided into discrete national bureaus – a British section, a French section, an American section, an Italian section, a Japanese section, in time a German section – each staffed by civil servants seconded from the member state. Yes, there would be a permanent staff of translators and typists and clerks, but they would provide only technical support for what was essentially a standing conference of the world's great powers.

But would those powers cooperate? As American support for the League faltered and Anglo-French tensions worsened, Hankey grew “very sceptical” about the whole plan. He asked Lord Esher, once his mentor on the Committee of Imperial Defence, whether he should accept the post at all. Esher warned him off. The League's Secretary General might “build a huge megaphone, through which he will blow across the continents and the oceans”, but “power to influence great events does not reside in megaphones but in the still small voice that whispers in the ear of the Wilsons and the Lloyd Georges of this world”. The League was at once too public and too powerless – a weak reed when weighed against the British Empire's global capacity.¹ Hankey's thoughts ran in the same groove. Concluding that “the British Empire is worth a thousand Leagues of Nations”, he turned the Secretary-Generalship down.² The prospect of the League as a great-power conference exited with him.

When the Foreign Office official Sir Eric Drummond inherited the post instead, he proceeded along quite different lines. Drummond was a meticulous and pragmatic soul, but he had his moment of vision. Sketching out his plan for the League Secretariat in the summer of 1919, Drummond broke with Hankey's great-power-centred structure. The institution would be organized by function and not by nation, with Secretariat sections supporting each area of work – legal, political, disarmament, press, mandates, health, economics, and others – entrusted to the

League by the Covenant. Those sections would be staffed, moreover, not by civil servants seconded from national bureaucracies but by a genuinely international officialdom owing loyalty to the League alone. The Council would still be dominated by the great powers; many states would place spies in the Secretariat or press their nationals to put loyalty to country first. But a principle had been established. "The international" was more than a space of negotiation and diplomacy: it was an interest in and of itself, commanding loyalty and asserting norms above the claims of any individual state.

Drummond's uncharacteristic boldness was lucky for internationalism, but it was lucky for international history as well. For if much scholarship about international organizations has adopted what we might call Hankey's point of view, chronicling their failings when faced by states determined to assert their will, Drummond's bureaucracy – and still more the meticulous records it kept – made possible a history of a different kind. As the nationalist ideals of the "Wilsonian Moment" went down to defeat or grew tarnished, those officials sought to build norms and regimes that might give states a more modest but lasting interest in collaboration. Cooperation on such "technical" or ostensibly "non-political" matters as communications or transit or epidemic diseases could be less fraught than negotiations over borders or reparations or statehood, but it too could render settlements more secure and hatreds less virulent.

Over the past decade, a wave of scholarship has brought many of those forgotten efforts to light. The League and the ILO have been at the centre of that story, their archives the source base for new studies of programmes to manage economic relations, reform imperial administration, set standards for public health services or labour practices, or regulate the traffics in refugees, sex workers, or dangerous drugs. Bureaucrats occupy centre stage and sometimes even emerge as the heroes of that new historiography – the crucial middlemen between newly vocal publics mobilized behind particular causes and the statesmen controlling resources and power. Men (and the occasional woman) like the British economist Arthur Salter, the Swiss political scientist William Rappard, the Polish epidemiologist Ludwig Rajchman, the Norwegian diplomat Erik Colban, the Japanese internationalist Inazō Nitobe and the British social reformer Rachel Crowdy, often overlooked in national historiographies, now attract scrutiny as architects of important, and sometimes enduring, global practices, institutions and norms.³

Flanking those international officials, however, were a host of experts, lobbies, and reforming organizations of all kinds. As officials like Crowdy and Rajchman discovered, humanitarian organizations would undertake missions that governments would not; scholars would donate their time if offered an audience; civic organizations would enlist "public opinion" behind good causes; rich American foundations would help pay the bills. British anti-slavery activist J.H. Harris, the explorer and humanitarian Fridtjof Nansen, the Danish missionary Karen Jeppe, and the child welfare advocate Eglantyne Jebb all turned to the League to legitimize their causes, but their passion and commitment lent credibility to the League as well. On one issue after another, historians find individuals

moving between the roles of activist, official, expert and even statesman – and sometimes inhabiting several at the same time.⁴

A historiography written out of these archives and with these individuals in mind is prone less to deride international institutions for their shortcomings than to find it remarkable that, in an era of “nation-empires” shakily balanced between war exhaustion and renewed bellicosity, they nonetheless could cite some achievements. Nansen passports, famine relief, minorities treaties and labour conventions may have been inadequate to the problems at hand; states may have carped and cavilled at even the most minor incursions on their sovereignty – and, in the 1930s, have turned away from many forms of cooperation entirely. And yet, with the benefit of hindsight, we can still see how direct the links are between those interwar efforts and the postwar institutions of international governance clustered around the United Nations, the European Union, the Bretton Woods institutions and the International Court of Justice. The recovery of that interwar history is the precondition for the kind of new histories we find in this volume; it is the basis on which a narrative of continuity, even a genealogy of our neoliberal present, can be written.

Of course, there is always risk that a history aimed at recovery can become celebratory or an argument for the significance of the liberal internationalist project imply that it was the only game in town. Historians writing during the Cold War never made that mistake, for the catastrophes unleashed by fascism were too recent, and the communist alternative too evident, for those ideologies’ competitive appeal to be lost to view.⁵ But if the new literature on the League emerged well after those projects’ defeat, a sharp awareness of the persistence of global inequality and poverty checked triumphalism. Instead, renewed attention to the history of international organization occurred alongside, and in critical conversation with, European history’s “imperial turn”, driving historians to take seriously the ways in which internationalism – like humanitarianism, like capitalism – was profoundly shaped by imperial interests and ideologies.⁶ Canonical historical moments like the Paris Peace Conference, the Weimar crisis, or the Cold War, once seen through the lenses of East-West competition or class conflict, were reinterpreted through an empire-centred geopolitical frame.⁷ Efforts to abate human suffering or to establish international norms on issues ranging from labour standards to women’s rights to human rights were scrutinized for the ways in which they often implicitly identified Western practices with “civilization” or rationalized poverty or deprivation as “backwardness”.⁸

In crafting those critical analyses, however, historians were often resurrecting arguments made long before. As Robert Vitalis, Susan Pennybacker, Leslie James and Penny von Eschen have shown, W.E.B. DuBois and the brilliant group of African-American scholars gathered at Howard University between the wars, and George Padmore and the network of Pan-Africanist intellectuals in London, had already articulated a trenchant critique of the racism underlying the liberal refurbishment of empire.⁹ Those critics had tried, but mostly failed, to influence the League as well: indeed, if we can find in its archives much evidence of official collaboration with established (read, Western) humanitarian

organizations, they also document instance after instance in which officials evaded or rebuffed claims for representation or justice from non-whites. The request DuBois brought to Geneva for a coloured representative on the Mandates Commission was turned down; documentation of atrocities against populations under mandate were judged “not receivable” or buried in the files; painfully crafted petitions for political rights were denied on the grounds that the Covenant had defined subject populations as “not yet able to stand by themselves under the strenuous conditions of the modern world”.¹⁰ In San Francisco as in Paris, Marika Sherwood writes, calls for a swift dismantling of the European empires were pushed aside. Meredith Terretta and Roland Burke, delving into the United Nations archives, found that a still larger mountain of petitions and appeals received – at least initially – little reply.¹¹

Clearly, “internationalism”, whether in its Genevan or Manhattan dress, looked very different if one were sitting in Indonesia or East Africa – as it also did (so the Japanese, Soviets and Germans asserted between the wars) from the vantage point of Tokyo or Moscow or Berlin. Other internationalisms were born of that discontent, sometimes making a competitive bid for clients. Japan tried – with some success – to pose as at once an anti-colonial power and the leader of an Asian sphere; both Weimar and Nazi Germany, irritated at the loss of the German colonies, lent support to anti-colonial movements; under the banner of anti-imperialism, the Soviet Union held sway over an empire of its own.¹² But colonial nationalists did not embark on their struggle simply to fall under another hegemon; some were concerned too that autonomy might bring isolation and poverty. As Frederick Cooper reminds us, some newly independent states tried to band together in regional federations or alliances;¹³ populations that found new states no more solicitous of their rights or autonomy than their former colonial masters appealed – as “minorities” in the interwar “new states” had before them – to the international community for redress and relief. Critics of the League or the United Nations did not, in other words, give up on internationalism: instead, they challenged themselves, and the world, to recast it. And in this we can read a challenge to historians as well. It is not enough to acknowledge and analyse Western internationalism’s imperial entanglements. We need also to recover the alternative visions generated in multiple localities and the alternative alliances formed without the West at their centre.

What might that multi-local history of internationalism look like? The essays collected here suggest some answers. This volume grows out of a conference titled “From the League of Nations to the United Nations”, held at the European University Institute in Florence in the spring of 2013. Its organizers were graduate students and postdoctoral fellows; most contributors too were in the early stage of their careers. For them, the international history that had emerged in the last decade was not “new”. It was the established work in the field, a canon to which they turned their critical eye. Most came to that task, moreover, not as Europeanists but from fields – Latin American history, African history, East Asian history, Middle Eastern history – in which it is inconceivable to leave empire out and in which the rupture of 1945 may seem less significant than the

continuities across the late colonial period. They began, in other words, not from the standpoint of Geneva or Brussels, but rather from Buenos Aires or Tokyo or Aleppo, asking not how international officials and institutions addressed those outside the West but rather how internationalism was conceived and negotiated by those non-Western actors themselves. What changes, when the optic is shifted?

Certainly, no parsimonious claim about the character of liberal internationalism can arise from such a move. Instead, appropriately, we are reminded that the impact of international interventions will vary by local context. Thus, while the League has often been accused of underestimating colonized peoples' national feeling and capacity for statehood, Sarah Shields argues that, in some post-Ottoman areas, League processes actually foisted national definitions on populations that had hitherto defined themselves in more complex ways. Likewise, Miguel Bandeira Jerónimo and José Pedro Monteiro point out that in a country like Portugal, insecure about its imperial standing and often charged with inhumane practices, reform campaigns provided local reformers with powerful allies and arguments to deploy against their own conservative opponents. Local contexts could change the meaning, and sometimes even trump the authority, of international texts and institutions.

But shifting the optic doesn't only help us to see how ostensibly universal norms were remade through local practice. We also discover international campaigns or institutions born in the so-called "periphery" as well. Thus, José Antonio Sánchez Román shows how Latin American economists worked to craft an alliance among less-developed nations able to challenge an interwar orthodoxy around deflation and tax rules for multinationals, while Nova Robinson recovers a mainly "Eastern" women's alliance working to expand membership of the League's women's committees beyond the West.¹⁴ Yet, if these actors sought to build a truer or more broadly inclusive internationalism, in other cases regional alliances were openly preferred. Latin American states considered the Pan-American Union a more effective vehicle for their interests than the League, Mats Ingulstad and Lucas Lixinski tell us; Konrad Lawson tracks how Japanese internationalists exiting the League imagined and sought to build new federations and alliances. Just as empires compete as well as collude in an imperial world, so international institutions sometimes struggle for advantage, their reach and effectiveness contingent on their capacity to accommodate or restrain a host of local initiatives or needs.

The view from without thus reveals a rich landscape of competing visions and structures. And yet, the institutions of the liberal internationalist project – that is, the League and the United Nations – still appear to have been, and to remain, uniquely privileged sites for activism. State-based and inclusive as they are, necessarily becoming universal as colonial territories gained independence, they were and are more susceptible to shifting geopolitical pressures or even programmatic reinvention than economic organizations like the IMF or the G-7 – as demonstrated by Florian Hannig's essay on the UN's evolving role in providing humanitarian aid. Surely Robinson's main actor, the activist Nour Hamada,

sought membership on the League's commission on women because she believed in the League's capacity for democratic renewal and reform; likewise, the Jewish organizations studied by Nathan Kurz tried to embed the individual right of petition in United Nations regimes and the Lebanese statesman and philosopher Charles Malik and the African-American political scientist Ralph Bunche spent so much of their lives working within those regimes, because they thought United Nations bodies could be structured to provide some recourse against despotic power. True, we cannot marshal all these "deeply quixotic" actors – to borrow Andrew Arsan's phrase – behind a single banner or cause. But then, such a move would hardly be true to the history of internationalism or produce a better international history.

Notes

- 1 Churchill Archives Center, HNKY 4/11, Esher to Hankey, 19 Feb. 1919. This episode is covered, and much of the correspondence reprinted, in Stephen Roskill, *Hankey: Man of Secrets, volume 2, 1919–31* (London: Collins, 1972), 64–80 passim.
- 2 HNKY 1/5, Diary, 18 Apr. 1919, and HNKY 4/11, Hankey to Cecil, 18 Apr. 1919.
- 3 For the tip of a large iceberg see, e.g., for economic cooperation, Patricia Clavin, *Securing the World Economy: The Reinvention of the League of Nations, 1920–1946* (Oxford University Press, 2013) and Yann Decorzant, *La Société des Nations et la naissance d'une conception de la régulation économique internationale* (Brussels: Peter Lang, 2011); for the effort to create standards of imperial administration, Susan Pedersen, *The Guardians: The League of Nations and the Crisis of Empire* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015); for international public health, Iris Borowy, *Coming to Terms with World Health: The League of Nations Health Organization, 1921–1946* (Frankfurt: Peter Lang, 2009); for labor standards, Sandrine Kott and Joelle Droux, eds., *Globalizing Social Rights: The League of Nations and Beyond* (ILO, 2013); for refugee work, Claudena Skran, *Refugees in Interwar Europe: the Emergence of a Regime* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995); for trafficking (in the absence of a single study), Magaly Rodriguez Garcia, "The League of Nations and the Moral Recruitment of Women," *International Review of Social History* 57 (2012): 97–128, and Barbara Metzger, "Towards an International Human Rights Regime in the Interwar Years: The League of Nations Combat of the Traffic in Women and Children in the Interwar Years," in *Beyond Sovereignty: Britain, Empire and Transnationalism, c. 1880–1950*, ed. Kevin Grant et al. (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), 54–79; for intellectual cooperation, Daniel Laqua, "Transnational Intellectual Cooperation, the League of Nations, and the Problem of Order," *Journal of Global History* 6 (2011): 223–47; and for the way international organizations grew on earlier transnational efforts and set the stage for later European developments, Isabella Löhr and Roland Wenzlhuemer, eds., *The Nation State and Beyond: Governing Globalization Processes in the Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries* (Heidelberg: Springer, 2013) and Johan Schot and Wolfram Kaiser, *Writing the Rules for Europe: Experts, Cartels, International Organizations* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014).
- 4 For popular internationalism, see especially Glenda Sluga, *Internationalism in the Age of Nationalism* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2013); Anne-Isabelle Richard, "Competition and Complementarity: Civil Society Networks and the Question of Decentralizing the League of Nations," *Journal of Global History* 7, no. 2 (2012): 233–56; and Thomas R. Davies, "Internationalism in a Divided World: The Experience of the International Federation of League of Nations Societies," *Peace & Change* 37, no. 2 (April 2012): 227–52. For expertise, see especially Schot

and Kaiser, above; for the role of American foundations, Katharina Rietzler, "Before the Cultural Cold Wars: American Philanthropy and Cultural Diplomacy in the Inter-war Years," *Historical Research* 84, no. 223 (2011): 148–64. Historians have noted the symbiotic and sometimes fractious relationship between humanitarian organizations, expert bodies, and international organizations in the development of refugee work, child welfare, restrictions on drug and sex trafficking, and a number of other issues, but the anti-slavery case is especially illuminating, for which see, Suzanne Miers, *Slavery in the Twentieth Century: The Evolution of a Global Problem* (Walnut Creek, CA: Altamira Press, 2003); Kevin Grant, "Human Rights and Sovereign Abolitions of Slavery, c. 1885–1950," in *Beyond Sovereignty: Britain, Empire and Transnationalism, c. 1880–1950*, ed. Kevin Grant, Philippa Levine and Frank Trentmann (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), 80–102; and Emmanuelle Sibeud, "Entre geste impériale et cause internationale: défendre les indigènes à Genève dans les années 1920," *Monde(s): histoire, espaces, relations*, 6 (Nov. 2014): 23–43.

- 5 Note, for example, Arno Mayer's classic *Political Origins of the New Diplomacy, 1917–1918* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1959) [reprinted in 1964 under the title *Wilson versus Lenin*], which reads the diplomacy of the chaotic period at the end of the war as a struggle between communism and liberal democracy, or Charles Maier's landmark study of interwar stabilization, *Recasting Bourgeois Europe: Stabilization in France, Germany and Italy in the Decade after World War I* (Princeton University Press, 1975), which argues that elites moved in corporatist directions in the 1920s to defang left-wing and right-wing mass movements.
- 6 Mark Mazower's work has been especially important in recovering the imperial aims and context of twentieth-century European and international projects – a theme that links his works on twentieth-century Europe (*Dark Continent: Europe's Twentieth Century* (New York: Vintage, 2000) and *Hitler's Empire: How the Nazis Ruled Europe* (New York: Penguin, 2008) and his studies of international institutions, *No Enchanted Palace: The End of Empire and the Ideological Origins of the United Nations* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009) and *Governing the World: The History of an Idea, 1815 to the Present* (New York: Penguin Books, 2013).
- 7 Thus, a "Wilsonian moment" interpreted by Arno Mayer as a prophylactic against Bolshevism is reinterpreted by Erez Manela in *The Wilsonian Moment: Self-determination and the International Origins of Anti-colonial Nationalism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007) as primarily an effort to manage national movements and limit imperial destabilization; similarly, Adam Tooze's analysis of German economic strategy between the wars, *The Wages of Destruction: The Making and Breaking of the Nazi Economy* (London: Allen Lane, 2006), stresses the primacy of geopolitical concerns over the class interests emphasized by Maier. Odd Arne Westad brought that imperial framework to the Cold War itself in *The Global Cold War: Third World Interventions and the Making of Our Times* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005).
- 8 This critical approach has been particularly fruitfully employed by feminist scholars and by historians of international law. For the problematic history of Western feminists' imperial entanglements, a subject that has now a large literature, see notably Mrinalini Sinha's brilliant *Specters of Mother India: The Global Restructuring of an Empire* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2006); and for the imperial foundations of international law, Antony Anghie, *Imperialism, Sovereignty and the Making of International Law* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004) and Luis Rodríguez-Piñero, *Indigenous Peoples, Postcolonialism and International Law: The ILO Regime (1919–1989)* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005).
- 9 For the Howard School, see especially Robert Vitalis, *White World Order, Black Power Politics: The Birth of American International Relations* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2015); for Padmore and anti-imperial networks, Minkah Makalani, *In the Cause of Freedom: Radical Black Internationalism from Harlem to London*,

- 1917–1939 (Durham, NC: North Carolina University Press, 2014), Leslie James, *George Padmore and Decolonization from Below: Pan-Africanism, the Cold War, and the End of Empire* (London: Palgrave, 2014), and Susan Pennybacker, *From Scottsboro to Munich: Race and Political Culture in 1930s Britain* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009); and for the anti-colonial campaigns of the NAACP, Penny von Eschen, *Race against Empire: Black Americans and Anticolonialism, 1937–1957* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1997).
- 10 Petitions in the League archives from a host of locales and groups are now receiving much-needed attention. For a summary of the petition process and a survey of the numbers and issues involved, see Pedersen, *Guardians*, ch. 3, and Balakrishnan Rajagopal, *International Law from Below: Development, Social Movements, and Third World Resistance* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 50–72. Middle Eastern petitioners were particularly vocal and persistent, for which see, Hussein D. Alkhazragi, “Un petit prince à la SDN: La lutte du roi Hussein du Hedjaz pour l’indépendance des provinces arabes de l’Empire Ottoman,” *Relations internationales* 146 (2011–2): 7–23; Natasha Wheatley, “Mandatory Interpretation: Legal Hermeneutics and the New International Order in Arab and Jewish Petitions to the League of Nations,” *Past & Present* 227 (2015): 205–48; Simon Jackson, “Diaspora Politics and Developmental Empire: the Syro-Lebanese at the League of Nations,” *Arab Studies Journal* 21, no. 1 (2013): 166–90; and Friedhelm Hoffmann, *Die Syro-Palästinensische Delegation am Völkerbund und Šakīb Arslān in Genf, 1921–1936/46* (Berlin: Lit, 2007). Jonathan Derrick has done much to recover the work of a generation of local African activists in *Africa’s “Agitators”: Militant Anti-Colonialism in Africa and the West, 1918–1939* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2008); Meredith Terretta is carrying this work forward in a new project on “cause lawyering” in Africa in the post-1945 period.
 - 11 For San Francisco, see Marika Sherwood, “‘There is No New Deal for the Blackman in San Francisco’: African Attempts to Influence the Founding Conference of the United Nations, April–July 1945,” *The International Journal of African Historical Studies*, 29, no. 1 (1996): 71–94; for anti-colonial petitions under the United Nations, see Meredith Terretta, “‘We Had Been Fooled into Thinking the UN Watches over the Entire World’: Human Rights, UN Trust Territories, and Africa’s Decolonization,” *Human Rights Quarterly* 34, no. 2 (2012): 329–60, and Roland Burke, *Decolonization and the Evolution of International Human Rights* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2010).
 - 12 For Japan’s complex relationship to the League on the one hand and anti-colonial movements on the other, see Cemil Aydin, *The Politics of Anti-Westernism in Asia: Visions of World Order in Pan-Islamic and Pan-Asian Thought* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007), and Thomas Burkman, *Japan and the League of Nations: Empire and World Order, 1914–38* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2008); and for the peculiar and enabling role played by interwar Germany in fostering anti-colonial movements, Kris Manjapra, *Age of Entanglement: German and Indian Intellectuals across Empire* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2014).
 - 13 Frederick Cooper, *Citizenship between Empire and Nation: Remaking France and French Africa, 1945–60* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2014).
 - 14 Tomoko Akami, notably, has uncovered how East Asian health initiatives paved the way for global conventions; see Akami, “A Quest to be Global: The League of Nations Health Organization and Inter-Colonial Regional Governing Agendas of the Far Eastern Association of Tropical Medicine, 1910–25,” *The International History Review* 38, no. 1 (2016): 1–23.

Rocking on its hinges? The League of Nations, the United Nations and the new history of internationalism in the twentieth century

Simon Jackson and Alanna O'Malley

When the last remaining servants of the League of Nations (LON), led by Sean Lester, its final Secretary General, arrived at the San Francisco conference in the summer of 1945, belatedly invited by the United States government, they were “given no role and only seats in the last row of the gallery”. Amidst “much evocation of new orders and new worlds”, the main players at the conference scrupulously made “as little mention as possible of the organisation that had gone before”.¹ This act of diplomatic theatre symbolized a wider rupture with the past, ensuring that the nascent United Nations (UN) would not be tarnished by association with its purportedly “failed” predecessor. San Francisco, gleaming on the Pacific, was separated by a wide continent and another ocean from war-ravaged Europe, and particularly from the LON’s cavernous, empty headquarters in Geneva: the founding of the UN was meant to be a hinge, pivoting the world into a new era full of promise.²

In certain respects, it was – and it did. Differences between the League and the UN were pronounced from the outset. The UN, and especially its General Assembly, was fundamentally more representative of peoples and nations than had been the “League of Empires”, to employ Susan Pedersen’s apt term; and it grew far more so as decolonization, in complex partnership with the Cold War, swelled the ranks of the member states.³ The UN also *lacked* certain powers that the League had enjoyed, most noticeably as a result of the introduction of the veto-system in the Security Council. But despite these major changes the UN also quietly assimilated – often in ways artfully hidden from the global public’s view – many of the LON’s organizations and experts. It built on their work in a range of “technical” (though still eminently political) areas, from healthcare to social and economic development policies, through institutions such as the reformed World Health Organization and the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC).⁴

Historians have long chronicled the UN’s rise from the ashes of World War II, yielding a spectrum of conclusions from the laudatory and teleological to the critical and disaggregating.⁵ Across that spectrum, however, many of them have shared a view of the League as a salutary failure, the indispensable political counterpoint and analytical premise of the UN’s rise. This failure is habitually sketched in a brisk opening panorama peopled with Klemens von Metternich,

2 *Simon Jackson and Alanna O'Malley*

Lenin, Woodrow Wilson, Aristide Briand and Adolf Hitler, before the author turns to a portrait of the post-1945 dawn.⁶ Karl Polanyi wrote, for example, that:

In vain did Geneva look toward the restoration of such a [balance of power] system in an enlarged and improved Concert of Europe called the League of Nations; in vain were facilities for consultation and joint action provided in the Covenant of the League, for the essential precondition of independent power units was now lacking.⁷

Only in the last decade have historians gone back to the LON, asking not why it failed – and by implication why the UN “succeeded”, or might yet succeed – but *how* the League worked, and what legacies its machinery, its personnel and its global audience inspired.⁸ This book’s contributors advance through the breaches in older historiography engineered by those scholars and our debt to them is manifest. But by pooling expertise on a variety of themes, periods and geographies we can offer a view of the League and the UN from a far wider variety of standpoints and across a broader chronology than any single historian might hope to. The overall effect is not merely to supplement the new international history of the League and the UN with a bestiary of additional case studies, but to globalize it methodologically, offering what Susan Pedersen in her foreword to this volume calls a “multi-local” grasp of liberal internationalism at work around the world.

We deliver this across the approximate period from the 1920s to the 1970s, the long moment of the rise of the nation-state as a dominant political form worldwide, while also dropping periodically back into the late nineteenth century in order to appraise the legacies of the “first age of globalization” and note the influence of the burgeoning, self-consciously “new internationalism” characteristic of that era.⁹ Ranging primarily, then, from the “Wilsonian Moment” at the close of World War I to the conjuncture of the Helsinki Accords and the twin rise of human rights and neo-liberalism in the 1970s, the book nuances and contextualizes the hallowed rupture of “Year Zero”, 1945, rather than dwelling exclusively on and singularizing that moment.¹⁰ As a whole the essays thereby provide both a panorama of the two institutions across the twentieth century and a core focus on the continuities and disjunctures between the League and UN. At the level of the institutions themselves, one result is to respond to Andrew Webster’s inviting comment on a key recent monograph on the League that:

it would have been intriguing to track at greater length some of the currents running from [the] League to United Nations. The precedents, procedures, and indeed very people involved with the governance of mandates did not disappear with the end of the League itself. On the contrary they explicitly informed what came next.¹¹

More widely, the result of the book’s chronology is a significant nuancing of the naturalized binaries historians have piled onto that broad-shouldered year,

1945: empire versus the nation-state, (anti)-Fascism versus the Cold War, racial-civilizational hierarchy versus developmental-economic hierarchy and group-based rights claims versus individual rights claims.¹² In this way we contribute to a wider debate on the periodization of the twentieth century stimulated by the growth of global histories of empire as a political formation, which often end in 1945.¹³ We also challenge other chronological patterns, such as Charles S. Maier's influential analysis of the two post-war moments of 1918 and 1945 in terms of embedded liberalism; a paradigm still entrenched in international history and international relations (IR).¹⁴

Indeed, in the neighbouring discipline of IR we hope more generally to refigure the ways in which constructivist, post-structuralist, critical and historically minded IR scholars conceive of international institutions, by providing a bridge to the new international history, one supported by a solid span of case studies. We hope thereby to foster a more sustained and mutually beneficial exchange between the fields. IR scholars of varied theoretical allegiance, from Robert Cox and Martha Finnemore to John Ikenberry and Thomas Weiss, have long analysed the ways in which institutions contribute to the construction of international norms and global orders, while debate on the nature of international organizations has regularly divided such noted structural realists as John J. Mearsheimer from such broadly liberal internationalists as Anne-Marie Slaughter.¹⁵ Exponents of more global approaches to IR, meanwhile, have increasingly deployed historical approaches to focus on bloc politics, smaller states and civil society actors, and, as in the case of Amitav Acharya for example, have emphasized the importance of non-Western theories and regional specificities.¹⁶ The essays below will nourish such approaches, helping to reframe and more thoroughly historicize views of the LON and the UN and the ways they shaped the international order. For instance, they bring into focus not just how institutions changed as bureaucracies but also how international practices relating to the end of empire, nation-building in the postcolonial world and the creation of rights regimes evolved. As part of this process, many of the chapters tease out specific visions of how institutions worked simultaneously as negotiated platforms, forums for debate and, in some cases, agents themselves. Nathan A. Kurz's incisive study of petitioning of the League and UN, for example, offers a new interpretation of the international legal system at mid-century by positioning the LON and UN athwart locally specific yet internationally resonant strands of political reason.

We thereby challenge IR scholars to far more granular historicizing of how institutions work and how they effected and continue to effect change in both state policies and broader cultures of the "international". Instead of playing off the varying schools of thought against each other, we encourage critical and positivist IR theorists alike to deliberate more historically and in more fully achieved context on the dynamic role that these organizations have played in relation to broader internationalisms across time. It is argued in many of the chapters below that internationalism was far more than the product of what the UN or LON did centrally in New York and Geneva, or

how they funnelled or shaped the sovereign power of empires and nation-states. Rather, internationalism in this volume includes regional cooperation, non-state activism, the rise of international civil society and the global dialogue between local, subaltern protagonists and the international visions of elites. As the case studies show, all of this sustained an array of different types and forms of internationalism, and thus offers plentiful resources to IR scholars who have long moved past static categories of analysis such as “development” and “modernity”. In undercutting the telos of such logics, the book furnishes, to take George Lawson’s terms, different “context[s] and narrative[s]” of internationalism, but it also sharpens and refreshes modes of enquiry based on the social scientific staples of “eventfulness and ideal-typification”.¹⁷

Across the watershed of 1945, then, the essays examine the evolution of internationalist ideas, institutions and practices at – and between – the League and UN. The essays make their arguments through empirical research on fields of internationalist activity from political strategy to economic development, from international law to practices of rights and from humanitarianism to the changing forms of empire. Changes in internationalist thought and practice are thereby appraised in contexts such as the re-constitution of political identity in the Middle East or the imperial use of forced labour. Overall, we show how the LON and UN both *shaped* and *were shaped by* global internationalisms, in the rich variety of its protagonists – liberals, socialists, fascists and communists all engaged with the League and UN through national representation and through intersecting international organizations, we should note – and the grinding tectonics of its norms.¹⁸

Crucially, the book takes this approach not just from the habitual “centres” of League and UN politics, the fetishized *lieux de mémoire* of Geneva, New York City or Bretton Woods, where the clacking of secretariat typewriters echoed against the carved wheat sheaves of prosperity foretold, but from a global, multi-local perspective.¹⁹ We do not neglect the importance of the politicians and diplomats who strode the stage in the Palais des Nations in Geneva or at the UN Headquarters in Manhattan, or ignore the administrative and technocratic bureaucracies that operated the scenery and drafted the scripts.²⁰ But our central argument is that although the LON and UN shaped internationalism from the centre, as political proscenia, technocratic clearing houses and vehicles for world ordering, they were just as powerfully moulded by internationalisms that welled up globally, far beyond the main stages of Geneva and New York City.²¹ As such, the history of internationalism at and between the League and UN must be grasped as much in Japan and Argentina, for example, as in Geneva and Manhattan. Indeed, as historians including Meredith Terretta and José Antonio Sánchez Román argue, the prisons of West Africa or the banks of the Amazon and Tigris were places just as “international”, and quite as constitutive of “internationalism”, as the smoke-filled committee rooms and champagne-oiled assemblies overlooking Lac Leman or the East River.²²

To give an example, Nova Robinson’s essay in this book, on international women’s rights from 1920–1953, opens at a typical League event – a pre-Assembly

reception in Geneva that included a keynote by Maria Vérone, a leading French advocate of women's rights, and that likely also featured the popping of champagne corks, the massed "artillery of the League of Nations".²³ But crucially, Robinson also weaves into her account the campaigns of the General Oriental Feminist Alliance, a regional Arab women's organization based in Syria, and appraises the January 1931 gathering, in Lahore, of the All Asian Women's Conference. By bringing the delegates at Lahore into analytical conversation with the delegates who saw Vérone at her Swiss podium, Robinson shows how the internationalist "spirit of Geneva" was partly made in the Punjab. In doing so she also warns international historians against reproducing, in the balance of their research, those hierarchies and exclusions that structured the cast and made the stars of the cacophonous, long-running performances in Geneva and New York City.²⁴ Likewise, Konrad Lawson's study of the visions for world federalism conjured in the ruins of defeat by Japanese politician-writers Ozaki Yukio and Kagawa Toyohiko shows how the global re-ordering that took place after 1945 must be grasped not just at San Francisco or Bretton Woods. Instead, Lawson shows how the discussions and disappointments of San Francisco, for example, reverberated in East Asia, and catalyzed the transformation of older social and geopolitical ideas for use in Japanese post-war society.

As noted above and as the geographical and archival diversity of these examples suggests, the strength of a collective volume lies in its ability to "allow various specialists to enter into a broader dialogue while addressing specific, common themes".²⁵ Methodologically, meanwhile, the wider scope of a collective analysis allows for a blend of the insights of de-centred ethnography, lately exemplified by Lori Allen's work on human rights practices in Palestine, with wide-angled views on the spatially expansive institutional cultures of internationalism, as in the work of Anne-Isabelle Richard, Helen McCarthy and Glenda Sluga on the associational infrastructure of the League, and finally with political studies of the dynamics in play on the central stages of Geneva and Manhattan.²⁶

Accordingly, the essays that follow together construct a multi-scalar, dialogical, and fine-grained historical analysis of the role of international organisations as they shaped and were shaped by internationalism across the twentieth century. They present an exceptionally wide – though not comprehensive – ensemble of actors, stretching across class hierarchies and racialized geographies, and they show how the interactions of those actors tested the limits of the League and UN as international institutions, and developed internationalism as a variegated, global practice.

For international historians and students of international relations the consequences of this argument are significant, since they mandate a critical re-engagement with area studies, global history and social history, and with a variety of sources far beyond the holdings of the international organizations themselves. For if the appeal of the League and UN archives has consisted in their apparent convocation of the world's opinions and petitions under one roof, and perhaps in their translation of that polyglot clamour into English and French, the idea that the overlapping internationalism of the two international

organizations welled up at the margins quite as much as it was made at the centre challenges the epistemological hegemony of those documents.²⁷ As Terretta has aptly noted of the new wave of human rights histories – in a manner applicable to the wider historiography on internationalism and international institutions – they have generally excluded

the narrative accounts of grassroots activists in favour of official state documents, UN resolutions, or the letters, speeches, and writings of elected office-holders, UN representatives, and colonial administrators ... But how far can we go ... without contextualizing the particular settings in which human rights discourses were invoked?²⁸

In the case of international organizations such as the League and the UN, meeting this challenge will require international historians to travel further, learn more languages and above all to collaborate more systematically in order to capture the meanings and practices of internationalism at the LON and the UN.²⁹ This volume takes a step in that direction.

Efforts to institutionalize the management of the world order have a history as old as the exercise of imperial power. Moreover, the narrower process of institutionalization has frequently been accompanied by the attempts of legislators, national states and varyingly mediated global publics to systematize and contest the wider objectives and meaning of internationalism as a social and cultural force field.³⁰ From the Magna Carta to the Diet of Worms, and from the Hague Conventions on International Law of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries to the geopolitical clearing houses built at the Congresses of Vienna and Berlin, collective strategies to create and govern a system of international relations, and to develop legally binding agreements in order to realize a specific vision of world order, have underpinned a variety of systems of what we now refer to as global governance.³¹ In the litany of institutions that have shaped international relations and their interpenetrated norms and cultures, however, the League and the UN are distinguished, as Glenda Sluga has lately noted, by their emergence within global wars of unprecedented scale and destructiveness.³² The League slowly took shape in the years around 1920, following the defeat of the Central Powers in World War I, while the United Nations came into being, as we saw above, during the post-World War II moment around 1945, an extension of the alliance that had defeated the Axis Powers. But while both institutions were forged during wartime, each developed its own visions for how to manage peacetime relations, facilitate social progress and resolve international security dilemmas, due in part to the wider context and deeper roots of their respective eras. Nathan A. Kurz's essay in this volume, for example, on Jewish NGOs in the late 1940s, shows how numerous protagonists at the UN, many of whom had worked for or in contact with the League, set out to create, interpret, and disseminate various narratives of its operation in the 1930s so as to justify specific policies after 1945. We must therefore acknowledge both institutions as distinct regimes of global governance, specific centres of their respective internationalist

force fields, the character of which is legitimately open to historical interpretation in isolation. But as Kurz's work neatly illustrates, we must *also* see the LON and UN as a single, interpenetrated, and temporally layered whole, whose empirical global history is indispensable to that work of exegesis and is only now being written.³³

Based on the famous "Fourteen Points" outlined in January 1918 by the American President Woodrow Wilson, the League of Nations came into being as an instrument with which to manage international security crises, and crucially, to keep the power of Germany and other aggressor states in check following World War I. Wilson presented his "Fourteen Points" as a series of edicts about how the imperial world system would be reformed, and how relations between states would henceforth be managed; its often vague premises were elaborated, mitigated and reworked at the Paris Peace Conferences in 1919. The Covenant of the League was its governing charter and statement of purpose, and was drawn up by Wilson and his advisors in contentious collaboration with the victorious allied powers, dominated by Great Britain and France. It was an effort to realize many of the Wilsonian principles, setting out policies supposed to prevent another world war. The Covenant therefore proposed a series of security measures, including disarmament and the use of arbitration to settle international disputes.³⁴ It also contained a list of treaties on a variety of related technical and social issues, from drug and human trafficking to global health initiatives and labour conditions, and two geopolitical management systems that acted to "adjudicate relations of sovereignty": protection of minorities, mainly in Eastern Europe and the Balkans, and administration of former subjects of the Central Powers in the Mandated territories, scattered through the Middle East, Africa and the Pacific.³⁵

The League's birth in the mirrored delivery room of Versailles meant that it was dominated by the victors: of its fifty or so member states, Germany joined only in 1926 and left again seven years later, the USA never joined at all and the Soviet Union joined only in 1934. Despite this, the League was never simply a tool of Britain and France. Having survived its formal abandonment by the USA (informal American involvement continued, notably on trade), it became an ungovernable theatre for international publicity and norm-making in the 1920s. Increasingly, especially in the 1930s, it also became a factory of influential technocratic knowledge production, as in the case of the economic and financial activities lately documented by Patricia Clavin and Jamie Martin.³⁶ Overall, as Susan Pedersen has convincingly argued, what was most important about the League was its role as a public platform, managed by an international bureaucracy of technicians and experts, on which individuals, other international organizations and nations-in-the-making or groups possessed of qualified sovereignty could air their views and petitions and find an audience.

Turning to the UN, as preparations began in earnest for a new international organization even before World War II concluded, policy-makers on both sides of the Atlantic were keen – as noted above – to avoid any association with the tarnished image of the League. The United Nations was received in San

Francisco with fanfare from the war-weary international public, and was greeted especially enthusiastically in the Global South, where it appeared initially as a crowbar to pry open the imperial system. From its inception therefore, the new organization did not just protect the interests of the Western powers (though those powers worked hard in that direction), but again became an important platform and a mechanism through which the international visions of other actors were amplified and heard. Advocates for decolonization, civil rights activists and a range of other groups objecting to imperial practices tried to make use of the UN platform. One such example was the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), led by American sociologist and activist W.E.B. Du Bois, who seized upon the organization as a means by which to pursue his agenda for civil rights.³⁷ The San Francisco planners' announcement of a new era of universal ideals was music to the ears of the beleaguered societies still living under imperial or mandated rule, to the nationalist aspirations of their future leaders under the colonial yoke, but also to the international anti-colonial movement that would radically impact the UN in the 1960s and 1970s. At the same time, the more truly representative structure of the new organization was lauded as a platform for discourses about rights, the universalizing of human rights and the deconstruction of the racist, imperialist liberal international order.

As the organization developed through the 1950s and 1960s it was particularly shaped by the visions and ambitions of anti-colonial actors who sought to implement and realize the principles enshrined in the Charter by creating, through the UN, mechanisms, tools and policies designed to end colonial empire and imperialism through formal means. The successes of the decolonization process can thus be partly attributed to the role of newly-independent states lobbying in the chambers of the Security Council and the General Assembly for a shift in norms of imperial politics, and to their invigoration of the unrealized potential of the Charter.³⁸ During these same years, the visionary Secretary-General Dag Hammarskjöld adopted an interventionist approach to international politics, empowering his office with the support of the anti-colonial lobby and driving the anti-colonial agenda forward.³⁹ In the process, he helped to activate the agency of the UN, positioning it as a peacekeeping organization, a neutral arbiter between states and as a monitor of peace settlements – from the Suez Canal in 1956 to the Partial Nuclear Test Ban Treaty in 1963.

Building on these achievements, through the 1970s and the 1980s the UN developed as much more than a “Parliament of Man” paralyzed by the hard realities of Cold War politics. From asserting the rights of states to control their natural resources, to efforts to reshape the international economic order, through to the development of human rights and the expansion of forms of developmental practice through the 1970s and the 1980s, internationalism became increasingly various and visible.⁴⁰ The end of the Cold War and the resurgence of interest in the UN as a means of managing international conflicts led to the humanitarian interventions of the 1990s in Bosnia, Rwanda and Kosovo. Out of these experiences, both positive and negative, emerged

the doctrine of “Responsibility to Protect,” which, though increasingly critiqued, continues to help define how the international community approaches questions of intervention, protection of citizens and conflict resolution. The UN remains at the centre of a wide array of debates on how to manage international relations, development, humanitarianism, social and economic equality, environmental problems and international security dilemmas.

In sum, both the League and the United Nations operated not as unified actors, but rather as “platforms” for both formalizing and splintering political ideas and international norms, and as laboratories and toolkits of legal and technical procedures. Those procedures were used to generate new types of dissidence locally, with which to then return to the fray on the “platforms” of Geneva and New York City.⁴¹

How, then, did the League and the UN effect change – and in relation to which forms of global internationalism – during the shift from a world of empires to one of nation-states? Although the chapters that follow inter-connect in a rich variety of ways, we have placed them into three broad thematic sections, the first focused on the production of norms, the second on the development of expertise and the third on the global re-ordering of empire through the League and UN. In each section the emphases on the differences and inter-connections between the League and the UN, and on a multi-local and global perspective, remain constant.

In the opening section, both institutions are viewed as arenas in which new international norms were produced through the connection of global, multi-local networks with the increasingly representative national memberships of the League and UN. Building on Susan Pedersen’s sustained focus on the League as a generator of new international norms, three chapters trace the patterns of local interaction with the League and UN that shaped norm construction in the crucial realms of human rights and national economic and political sovereignty. Both institutions, the chapters show, served to collate and broker norms, gradually codifying these shifts into recognized but non-binding international norms, or in some cases into international law. Nevertheless, as Aurélie Élisa Gfeller has lately emphasized, even norms produced within hierarchical and Eurocentric international organizations are marked by “specific, locally rooted dynamics” and by the efforts of a globally diverse set of “norm entrepreneurs”.⁴²

Illustrating this interplay of global, multi-local dynamics and the collating work of the League and UN, Andrew Arsan contextualizes the role of the Lebanese diplomat and scholar Charles Malik in shaping human rights norms. Malik is seen in numerous accounts as a figure of the UN “centre” *par excellence*, carved out alongside the likes of René Cassin as a founding father of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948.⁴³ While acknowledging Malik’s central role in the committees of the early UN, Arsan shows how his allegiance to Heideggerian thought and his long steeping in the traditions of Lebanese national particularism mean we must see neither Malik, nor the norms of human rights he helped elaborate, as examples of “conventional” post-1945 internationalism, even to the degree postulated in the revisionist

accounts, such as Samuel Moyn's, that have lately downplayed the salience of human rights in the 1940s.⁴⁴ Instead, Arsan argues we must recognize the irreconcilably tangled multiplicity and specificity that informed Malik's critique of the sovereign nation state as the basis of internationalism. In doing so we may better come to terms with the powerful Middle Eastern and League-era influences on the elaboration of the universalist UN human rights regime.

José Antonio Sánchez Román, meanwhile, focusing on norms of economic sovereignty, outlines the emergence, well before the fabled era of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) in the 1940s, of a "new, unevenly and intermittently unified global periphery", including Brazil, Romania and Iran, in the League's technical economic meetings of the 1920s.⁴⁵ By focusing on the politics of fluvial trade, shipping and the international taxation of imperial big business in the 1920s, Román shows that while norms of economic sovereignty crystallized at League meetings in Geneva, Brussels and Barcelona, they did so in part through the creation of new connections between, for example, Brazil, Iran and British Mandate Iraq on river navigation, or between Argentina and South Africa on monetary policy.⁴⁶ Drawing on several Argentinian and Brazilian archives, and marrying business history with global intellectual history to remarkable effect, Román also shows how Latin American jurists, such as the Venezuelan Federico Álvarez Feo, fought against the recycling at the League of nineteenth-century imperial legal practices of extraterritoriality and against influential business lobbies' use of a "free trade" economic vulgate to camouflage their monopoly power. As Feo proclaimed, arguing that the League committee for double taxation should investigate foreign utility companies gouging citizens of Latin American states: "the law of supply and demand does not work in many South American countries." Feo's assertion, Román demonstrates, was an early instance of the wider and longer-term Latin American attempt to refuse the concept of "backwardness" between roughly 1920 and 1980, and to work through the League and UN to reshape economic sovereignty accordingly.

The illumination provided by a "de-centred" Latin American perspective on the international order recurs in Mats Ingulstad's and Lucas Lixinski's chapter on Pan-Americanism at the League and UN. They show how the international politics of empire and decolonization, as they emerged in Geneva and subsequently in New York, were powerfully affected not just by the European empires' self-preservation instincts, as influentially described by Mark Mazower, but by norms of regional and hemispheric internationalism with roots in the Latin-American nineteenth century. Latin-American states' experience with the Monroe Doctrine, which underpinned the hegemony of the United States in the Western Hemisphere, informed their approach to both the League Covenant and the UN Charter. Article 51 and Chapter VIII (on regional arrangements) of the latter were particularly influenced by Latin American perspectives.⁴⁷ As Jesús-María Yepes, a Colombian jurist and successively a delegate to the LON Assembly, the wartime Pan-American conferences and the 1945 San Francisco conference put it: