Internationalism as an Organisational Practice: The League of Nations Secretary-General, 1918-1946

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Abstract

This thesis analyses the development of the League of Nations secretary-generalship as an independent office through the perspective of internationalism, making two key arguments. First, that the secretary-generalship is unjustly overlooked in International Relations: it was crucial for international organisational development, leading (and to a considerable extent creating) the first international civil service, meant to represent the international organisation rather than states. Second, that analysing that office through internationalism, a concept regarding which scholarship often overlooks practice in favour of intellectual history, enriches our understanding of the office and international organisation. It grounds internationalism in organisational practice, analysing it in three dimensions; *practice* itself (how secretaries-general sought to shape their office through bureaucratic and diplomatic precedents); *politics* (how that practice related to political strategies); and *authority* (how they sought to legitimise their practices and politics by mediating between law and power).

The thesis draws on primary and secondary research, bringing into International Relations historical scholarship insights about the nature and multiplicity of internationalisms, charting the practice of the League's secretary-generalship from its creation in 1918-1919, through the administrations of its secretaries-general (Eric Drummond (1919-1933), Joseph Avenol (1933-1940), and Sean Lester (1940-1946)), to the transfer of its duties to the UN in 1945-1946. It analyses each official's practice, politics, and how they perceived their office's claim to authority in different ways, representing distinct internationalisms. This shows that, contrary to traditional narratives, the secretary-generalship was an independent, innovative, and precedent-setting institution. Studying it through the lens of internationalism reveals the interwar period as a time of tension not between nationalism and internationalism, but between competing internationalisms. Analysing how these internationalisms inter-related through practice within an institution

contributes to our understanding of diplomatic practice as a constitutive process of international development, and of the multiplicity of internationalisms animating international relations, historically and today.

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Abbreviations used for archival sources:

BL: British Library (London)
DKZ: Deutsche Kongress-Zentrale Archives (Hoover Institution, Stanford University)
FO: Foreign Office Series at The National Archives (Kew, London)
LNA: League of Nations Archives (United Nations, Geneva)
LNOJ: *League of Nations Official Journal* (Bodleian Law Library, University of Oxford)
UNA: United Nations Archives (United Nations, New York)
TNA: The National Archives (Kew, London)

Abbreviations used in the text:

BIS: Bank of International Settlements
CID: Committee of Imperial Defence
DKZ: Deutsche Kongress-Zentrale ('German Central of Congresses')
ECOSOC: The Economic and Social Council of the United Nations
EFO: The Economic and Financial Organisation of the League of Nations secretariat
FAO: The Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations
ICPC: International Criminal Police Commission
ILO: International Labour Organisation
IRK: Internationale Rechtskammer ('International Law Chamber')
IR: International Relations
League: League of Nations
UIA: Union of International Associations
UN: United Nations

Drafting notes:

Translations, when an English version of a text is available, are indicated as such in the footnotes and/or bibliography. All other translations (i.e. when there is no such indication) have been made by me, as the original source text, whether primary or secondary, has not to my knowledge been translated into or published in English.

When quoting primary or secondary sources, I have kept names of persons or places as they are originally spelled/capitalised in those sources, while updating them in my own drafting. For instance, for technical reasons some older texts, including contemporaneous League documents, omit the accent in Azcárate: when quoting from those documents, therefore, I also omit the accent, while including it in my own drafting.

Although this thesis uses British spelling, in quotations and publication titles I retain the original spelling. To maintain consistency with the majority of sources used in the thesis and to avoid confusion for the reader, I use, throughout the thesis, the American style of double quotes (") for quotations and single quotes (') for quotes within quotations. I only insert punctuation inside a quotation where the punctuation is in the original source.

List of main officials discussed, with relevant professional roles:

Thanassis Aghnides (1889-1984): Greek diplomat, Member of League's Political Section (1922-1930), Director of League's Disarmament Section (1930-1939), League Under Secretary-General for General Affairs (1939-1944), Greek Ambassador to London (1942-1947), Chairman of UN Advisory Commission on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (1946-1963), Chairman of UN International Civil Service Advisory Board (1949-1959).

Joseph Avenol (1879-1952): French economist and civil servant, Deputy Secretary-General of the League under Drummond (1923-1933), second League Secretary-General (1933-1940).

Pablo de Azcárate y Florez (1890-1971): Spanish diplomat, Member of League's Administrative and Minorities Section (1922-1930), Director thereof (1930-1933), Deputy League Secretary-General (1933-1936), Republican Spain's Ambassador to London (1936-1939), Principal Secretary of the UN's Palestine Conciliation Commission (1948-1949).

Dame Rachel Crowdy (1884-1964): British nurse and social reformer, Principal Commandant of Allied Voluntary Aid Detachments in France and Belgium (1914-1919), Chief of the Social Questions Section and the Department of Opium Traffic of the League of Nations (1919-1931), adviser to the Ministry of Information (1939-1946).

Sir Eric Drummond, 7th Earl of Perth (1876-1951): British civil servant, politician and diplomat, first League Secretary-General (1919–1933), British Ambassador to r (1933–1939), deputy leader of the Liberal Party in the House of Lords (1947-1951).

Sir Maurice Hankey, 1st Baron Hankey (1877-1963): British civil servant, Secretary to the Committee of Imperial Defence (1912-1938), Cabinet Secretary (1916-1938), Clerk of the Privy Council (1923-1938), Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster (1940-1941).

Sean Lester (1888-1959): Irish diplomat and journalist, Ireland's Representative to the League (1929-1933), League of Nations High Commissioner of Danzig (1933-1937), League Deputy Secretary-General (1937-1940), third and last League Secretary-General (1940-1946).

Jean Monnet (1888-1979): French political economist, diplomat, and businessman, first Deputy Secretary-General of the League of Nations (1919-1923), advisor to the Allied governments (1940-1945), head of France's Plan Commission (1946-1952), President of the High Authority of the European Coal and Steel Community (1952-1955).

Albert Thomas (1878-1932): French journalist, Socialist politician, Minister of Armaments during World War I, first ILO Director-General (1919-1932).

Once we had the world backwards and forwards:
-it was so small it fit in two clasped hands,
so simple that a smile did to describe it,
so common, like old truths echoing in prayers.

History didn't greet us with triumphal fanfares:
-it flung dirty sand into our eyes.
Ahead of us lay long roads leading nowhere.
poisoned wells and bitter bread.

Our wartime loot is knowledge of the world,
-it is so large it fits in two clasped hands,
so hard that a smile does to describe it,
so strange, like old truths echoing in prayers.

Wisława Szymborska[1]

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1 Szymborska: 2016, p.3.

1. INTRODUCTION

"Our wartime loot is knowledge of the world"[2]
Wisława Szymborska

1.1 *Research Project and Argument*

In July 1940 Sean Lester had a problem. From his office in the Palais des Nations in Geneva, Lester, the Deputy Secretary-General of the League of Nations, had recently seen France fall and German armies approach the Swiss border. His boss, Secretary-General Joseph Avenol, a French economist and civil servant, had over the course of the previous months dismissed most of the staff of the League secretariat and had grown despondent about the progress of the war and convinced that a German victory was near. Avenol, alternating daily between depression and excitement, now enthused about the birth of a 'new Europe', an integrated continent, revitalised economically and socially, which excluded the 'Anglo-Saxon world' (i.e. Britain and the United States) from its affairs. This had in fact been a proposal he had mooted at an economic conference a few years earlier, but which had found little support and had ultimately been shot down by precisely those Anglo-Saxons. As Lester observed during the summer of 1940, "[*n*]ow the Germans had taken it up"[3]. By this point Avenol was, in fact, making approaches to the newly installed Vichy regime in the hope of deepening political and diplomatic ties between it and the League of Nations, as a way of working with the Axis to build a new international society from the ruins of the old one. In the Palais, the few remaining high officials of the League secretariat, horrified by Avenol's moves,

[2] Szymborska: 2016, p.3.
[3] Lester Diary (17/7/1940), LNA – Lester Papers.

were clustering around Lester to try to resist the dismantling – or worse – of the organisation. Avenol was aware of his officials' opposition and throughout that summer pressured Lester to resign, believing that with the Irishman out of the way he would be able to realise his plans. On 17 July Lester wrote in his diary that Avenol had once again approached him, offering "like a juicy carrot before a donkey's nose unlimited holiday with full pay and a chance to get to Ireland before it is too late. What a temptation! […] I must, naturally, hang on. I am, I think, the core of the resistance"[4].

How had it come to this? How is it that in those dark months in mid-1940 the League secretariat, which had been created in 1919 as the first international civil service in history, the very embodiment of internationalism, had become caught between these two poles? And what does this contribute to our understanding of international relations that we have been missing so far?

The 1940 crisis is an appropriate starting point for this thesis as it highlights many of the key themes it will discuss: the role of individual leadership in executive roles in international organisations; how officials working within institutional structures shape those structures through practice; how different conceptions of what an international organisation should be often lead to different practices with concrete results in international relations. This crisis also highlights some of the gaps in the discipline of International Relations ("**IR**") which this thesis seeks to address, by analysing the historical development of an innovative international institution – the secretary-generalship of the League of Nations – in order to draw out broader lessons for the study of international politics, organisations, diplomacy, and law.

This thesis analyses the League secretary-generalship through the perspective of *internationalism*, arguing that this brings benefits both to the study of international organisations

4 Lester Diary (17/7/1940), LNA – Lester Papers.

and to the study of internationalism. It offers a definition of internationalism not as an abstract intellectual movement, as often done in the literature, but instead as an *organisational practice*, related to the degree of institutional autonomy and independence with which the League secretaries-general worked and developed their office. It studies the practice of the three secretaries-general of the League (Eric Drummond (1919-1933), Joseph Avenol (1933-1940), and Sean Lester (1940-1946)) by analysing the way they sought to build and shape their offices and construct precedents in international administration and diplomacy through their practical actions. It thus treats them not only as international civil servants but as important bureaucratic entrepreneurs, creating and developing a new international actor, and as political agents, expanding our understanding of international organisational development and of the nature and possibilities of internationalism.

In doing this, this thesis offers two main arguments. First, that the League secretary-generalship is an unjustly overlooked case in IR and international history: often dismissed as either a (national) political office hiding behind an international front or as a toothless administrative institution, it was in fact a pioneering innovation in international relations, crucial for international organisational development: it led (and to a considerable extent created) the first international civil service, where officials were meant to represent the international organisation rather than their states. Throughout its 27-year existence, it generated precedents in international administration and diplomacy which have shaped organisations since. In order to understand how this developed, this thesis argues, we need to examine the practical role of its individual officeholders. They developed in their practice, this thesis will show, a form of organisational creativity, a 'bureaucratic entrepreneurship', as a product of both individual initiative and adaptation to pressures external (from states) and internal (from within the organisation). The thesis therefore illustrates this argument by examining how the League's secretaries-general created and expanded

their office's internationalist mandate and scope of practice, through an interplay of bureaucratic means and diplomatic action.

Second, that it is particularly helpful to study this institutional development through the prism of internationalism, and that this concept should be seen as an organisational practice, a fruit of how officials sought to mediate between the norms and laws which they sought to uphold and the power and political pressures they worked amidst (and through). Too often in IR scholarship internationalism is treated as a form of intellectual history, an ideology, or a 'movement'; this thesis argues that it should rather be seen as an organisational practice, with three main dimensions; practice itself (how secretaries-general exercised their duties and sought to shape their office through bureaucratic and diplomatic precedents); politics (how this practice was related to certain political strategies); and authority (where they sought to draw their legitimacy from, to legitimise their practices and politics by mediating between law and power within the organisation's work). These are outlined in detail further below, but here we highlight that applying the notion of internationalism to the study of an office created to lead the first international bureaucracy in history is a unique case opportunity to understand how international organisations can develop a measure of independence and autonomy.

This approach offers innovative insights not only to the particular study of the League, but also of internationalisms and international organisations more broadly, questioning long held assumptions in IR. Returning to the 1940 crisis which introduced this chapter, most scholars who have studied the League secretariat in any detail (admittedly a small – if fast growing – group) have presented Avenol as an aberration in its history, arguing that he was an outlier in a fundamentally internationalist body, a nationalist miscast as an international civil servant, a collaborationist French chauvinist who betrayed the League's internationalist ethos. This thesis argues that that view misses a crucial nuance, and that Avenol was not anti-internationalist; in his way, he was very much an internationalist, but his view of what 'internationalism' should be was

different in fundamental ways from that of his predecessor and of most of his League colleagues. Internationalism, this case study will show, is not a unitary concept serving a single political ideology, but a multi-faceted one that can be used in different political directions. Conceiving of internationalism as an organisational practice by international actors helps us see how different internationalisms (basically different conceptions of international order) can co-exist and compete within organisations. This thesis shows, in a systematic way, that even the highest and notionally most international offices in international bureaucracies are *political* institutions. And, like any other political institution, they do not operate independently, on auto-pilot; however deeply etched a core set of organisational values they might have, these institutions are led and operated by individual officials, who create, reshape, reaffirm, and destroy institutional practices. In the highest office of the League of Nations bureaucracy, such operation was animated by contrasting and conflicting notions of internationalism. Therefore, studying how the secretaries-general, embedded in structures and constrained by the parameters of their office, exercised bureaucratic entrepreneurship provides a nuanced picture of internationalism as an organisational practice, showing how it operates within institutions as a combination of political strategy and bureaucratic creativity.

The rest of this Introduction outlines this argument in more detail, highlighting its relevance for IR, international history, and contemporary politics (section 1.2 below), offering a summary of its main arguments (section 1.3) and an outline of its chapters (section 1.4).

1.2 *Relevance*

Here we outline the relevance of this research project to three inter-related areas of study; the League and international organisations; internationalism; and contemporary international relations.

The relevance of the League secretariat and secretary-generalship

This thesis offers a practical and methodological innovation, in that it grounds its study of internationalism not on ideology but on the concrete practices of a crucial international institution, the office of the Secretary-General of the League of Nations. This is a body which has been or too long overlooked in IR, and also in history.

As we will see in chapter 2, there is little IR scholarship analysing the League in any detail, much less its secretariat. In international history these areas were also neglected until very recently, but even the new wave of historians studying the League in recent years has mostly neglected the secretary-generalship. According to League expert Susan Pedersen, "a new history of the League Secretariat is much needed, especially now that the personnel files are all open"[5]. Similarly, IR scholar Ole Jacob Sending has noted that "for students of international politics, an important and yet seriously understudied case […] is the emergence of the international civil servant"[6]. The works which have analysed it in great detail, mostly from the 1940s and 1950s, do not use IR frameworks or discuss the concept of internationalism in any depth[7]. In the broader literature on international organisations, although the United Nations ("**UN**") secretariat has been the subject of considerable literature, most of it does not study it using IR academic frameworks[8] and, most significantly, does not relate it to the League experience[9]. This neglect is partly explained by a strong desire, emerging from the time of the creation of the UN, to dissociate the 1945 international organisations from the supposedly 'failed' experiment of the League, thus portraying the UN universe as a fresh start, untainted by its predecessor's collapse[10]. In reality, as I argue in chapter

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5 Pedersen: 2015(i), fn.13, p.425.
6 Sending: 2014, p.338.
7 E.g. Ranshofen-Wertheimer(ii): 1945, Walters: 1952.
8 Reinalda and Verbeck: 2014, p.597.
9 E.g. Bailey: 1964; Gordenker: 1967, 2005; Chesterman: 2007.
10 Barros: 1969, p.257; Pedersen: 2015(i), p.397.

6, for the study of bureaucratic politics the similarities between the two institutions far outweigh the differences: the secretary-generalship did not change much between the League and the UN, many key League secretariat officials moved over to the UN, and important political and legal constraints encountered by UN secretaries-general are better understood in light of the League precedent.

Despite it being today mostly forgotten, or dismissed as an ineffectual bureaucracy, the creation of the League's secretariat (and the secretary-generalship at its core) as an *international* civil service was a wholly innovative development in the practice of international relations. Here was a form of institutionalised multilateralism, where for the first time in diplomatic history officials were not representing countries but rather the international organisation. It is surprising that, as seen in Chapter 2 below, studies of the UN's secretariat very rarely analyse the League's – and yet, that is where this service started and, for the 26 years between 1919 and 1945, the main place where it existed. Before the League, multilateral conferences such as the meetings of the Concert of Europe or the Hague Peace Conferences did sometimes have 'staffs', but these were very much representatives of their states of origin. Similarly, the proto-international organisations of the 19th century[11] – the international public unions and bureaux – had very small administrative offices and their staffs were not really multinational: the officials of the Universal Postal Union, for instance, were all Swiss former postal officials; those of the Paris-based International Health Office were all French[12]; the Inter-American Institution (later the Pan-American Union) had from 1902 a small international staff, but its scope was very limited jurisdictionally and geographically, and it only performed administrative and clerical functions[13].

11 For a thorough overview of international organisational development in the 19th century and its impact on 20th-century organisations, see Reinalda: 2009.

12 Ranshofen-Wertheimer(ii): 1945, p.78.

13 Weiss: 1975, p.35.

With the establishment of the international organisations in 1919, particularly the League and the International Labour Organisation ("**ILO**"), a permanent international secretariat was for the first time created which aimed to serve international society, provide administrative and diplomatic support to international negotiations, coordinate transnational action and document those negotiations and agreements[14]. This development happened often as much by creating new structures as it did by re-organising the management structures of existing international institutions: as Dunbabin noted, "if late 19th-century international relations displayed a tendency to create self-standing international technical bodies [,] Article 24 of the [*League*] Covenant represented something of a takeover bid"[15], as it subsumed the international bureaux under the League umbrella. What these developments, both through new creations and bureaucratic re-arranging, instituted was a broad platform of international authority which was new and prefigured the proliferation of international organisations in the mid-20th century.

In legal and political terms, the development of the League secretariat thus represented an early form of a 'global administrative space', whereby an entity which had if not a supranational at least an international structure and staff was entrusted with certain operational and administrative tasks in international relations. The autonomy of the secretariat to conduct such tasks, therefore (the extent to which it can act as an agent in its own right, representing the organisation rather than member states, "capable of handling at least some collective tasks in an *ex ante* coordinated manner"[16]), can be seen as indicative of the independence of the organisation more broadly[17].

In other words, the independent secretariat is the *international* element of the international organisation – a very significant development in diplomatic practice in its own right. This is the

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14 Jessup: 1955, p. 55, Pedersen: 2015(i), p.46.
15 Dunbabin: 1993, p.435.
16 Rittberger: 1983, pp.167-168.
17 Ruggie: 1993, p.23.

link between the conception of 'internationalism' as an organisational practice and the work of the League secretariat as an independent body. Many statements made and rules codified at the time stressed the secretariat's international nature. But just what 'international' meant was largely left undefined, which ensured this matter would remain a source of tension throughout the League's existence. In practice, secretariat officials continuously redefined that meaning both directly, through public pronouncements or rules, and indirectly, through administrative reforms, legal initiatives, and diplomatic practice. This thesis, therefore, charts and analyses these interpretations of international duty through the practice of the officials at the very top of the League bureaucracy.

For context, like the UN today, the League system had three limbs: an executive arm (the secretariat), a bicameral 'legislative' arm (the Council and the Assembly, akin to the Security Council and the General Assembly), and a judiciary (the Permanent Court of International Justice, precursor to the International Court of Justice). The secretariat, at least in theory independent from member states, was divided along functional sections (Health, Legal, Disarmament, Information, Economics, etc.) and presided over by the Secretary-General[18]. This thesis focuses on the secretaries-general because they played a key role in establishing the broader secretariat as an international civil service, as we will see in chapter 3, but also through the development of their office influenced the direction of the League's 'international' mandate throughout the organisation's experience, as we will see in chapters 4 to 6. As such, this office is a uniquely suitable case study for our argument about internationalisms.

As we will see in chapter 2, the past few years have seen a wave of studies on particular aspects or sections of the League secretariat (for instance, on the impact of the Economic section

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18 This thesis focuses on the office of the Secretary-General, not on the secretariat as a whole, and the two terms, 'secretariat' and 'secretary-generalship', are not interchangeable: one stands for the entire executive apparatus of the League, which at its peak in the late 1920s employed around 700 people; the other is the small office of the chief executive which oversaw this mechanism and liaised with member states on behalf of it.

on the evolution of the global economy[19], or the influence of the Mandates section on independence movements[20]). This scholarship has largely ignored focusing on the secretary-generalship, often dismissing it as not independent enough to be of interest for the study of international bodies. An implied argument in many of these works is that the separate sections were innovative and independent because they were 'technical' in work, internationally staffed, and therefore not as directly linked to member states, whereas the secretary-generalship was positioned and worked too closely to states, especially to the Council, to be considered as international and autonomous as the 'technical' sections.

This thesis argues that, on the contrary, the fact that the Secretary-General had to be so close to member states and to the Council is precisely what makes this office such an interesting case for the study of *internationalism in practice*. In comparison to the secretary-generalship, the more 'technical' sections were somewhat insulated from the harshest power politics and national interest struggles of the Council, due to both their structural distance from it and to the fact that many, such as the Health and Social Questions sections, had at least partly independent sources of funding (from charities, foundations, or private individuals). Certainly, the functional sections were often subject to state pressure, and in no way had their work cut out for them. But elements like structural isolation and financial independence provided, to varying degrees, an institutional buffer between their work and the most powerful member states. The Secretary-General's office, in contrast, had no such insulation; most of his work dealt directly with member states, participating in Council meetings, and working with the great powers in questions of international peace and security. This does not make that office less interesting from the point of view of internationalism: it makes it more so. The Secretary-General, in addition to administrative and managerial work overseeing the League and to external activities in international diplomacy and mediation, served as the interface

[19] Clavin: 2013.
[20] Pedersen: 2015.

between member states and the international organisation. Indeed, part of the reason why the technical sections were somewhat insulated from power politics is because the Secretary-General's office, due to its location at the crossroads of international organisation and national politics, provided that buffer. Therefore, while some of the technical sections were allowed relatively more freedom in their internationalism, the Secretary-General had to carve out a space for international action within much tighter constraints, a smaller budget, and much more direct oversight by states. The parameters of his bureaucratic entrepreneurship were thus very different from that of the sections, in ways that make his office a fascinating nodule between the national and the international.

Moreover, because of this crossroads position on the 'border' between national and international politics, the Secretary-General's actions were buffeted by forms of internationalism coming from 'above' (from member states) as well as from 'below' (from the different secretariat sections). While studying only one section provides an in-depth analysis of that section's brand of internationalism, studying the secretary-generalship 'widens the bandwidth' of the analysis of internationalism in the organisation, vertically and horizontally. There were very different kinds of internationalist pressures emanating from different sections and from different states, which the Secretary-General had to mediate between. These negotiations were expressed in various areas of organisational practice, from staffing choices to budget allocations to operational decisions, and they generated, as we will see in chapters 3 to 6, some of the deepest debates about the meaning of internationalism within international organisation.

The relevance of internationalism as an organisational practice

This thesis also innovates with regard to the study of internationalism, in two ways: first, in arguing for an analysis of internationalism as a multiple not a unitary concept, with many

internationalisms competing within an organisation, it shows that, contrary to traditional IR narratives, liberalism does not have a monopoly on internationalism and internationalism can and often does serve non-liberal political ends; second, in treating internationalism not only as an intellectual project or an ideology, as most of the literature does, but as an organisational practice, this thesis shows how internationalism is manifested concretely on the ground of international organisations, through the administrative and diplomatic acts of officials. Here we examine each of these two points in turn.

Concerning the first point, the multiplicity of internationalisms, the thesis seeks to offer a corrective to the mainstream IR view of internationalism as a single political movement, usually liberal in outlook. This has led to a public misconception of what 'internationalism' is, by conflating it with liberal internationalism, leading us to see the interwar period as a time of tension between internationalism (embodied in the League and other international organisations) and nationalism (e.g. the rising revisionist states, isolationism and protectionism in the liberal democracies). This dichotomy also affects our vision of the current international system: as this is being written, in early 2020, it is clear that (regardless of whether or not the regularly made parallels with the 1930s are warranted) the established post-1945 liberal international order is being threatened from within and without. All too often, this analysis, especially by liberals, has framed the debate as 'nationalism versus internationalism': the general line has changed little since *The Economist*'s famous editorial of July 2016, which declared, in the aftermath of the Brexit referendum in Britain and the rise of far-right populists across Europe and North America, that 'the new political divide' was no longer between left and right, progressives or conservatives, but rather between 'nationalists and globalists'[21].

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[21] *The Economist*, Leader (30/7/2016).

This thesis argues that this dichotomy reveals a liberal blind spot: internationalism, today and historically, has not only (perhaps not even mainly) come in the liberal variety. Rather, there have been different varieties of internationalism, many not adverse to nationalism but combining it with internationalism in ways which contemporary liberalism struggles to recognise. Liberal internationalism is only one variant of a complex and multi-faceted process: internationalism often has other facets. As we will see in chapter 5, even National-Socialism in Germany and Fascism in Italy, movements traditionally seen as hyper-nationalist, developed strong internationalist tendencies in ideology and in practice throughout the 1930s and early 1940s. As will be seen, some IR scholars working on international order and the interwar period have offered theoretical frameworks which could be quite receptive to this multiplicity of internationalisms, but not a great deal of work has been done yet to advance the area from the perspective of international organisations. Recent historical insights on internationalism, which this thesis also draws on, can contribute to bringing greater nuance to IR scholarship and help make this advance.

This refines our thinking about international organisation in significant ways. By breaking the hard division between nationalism and internationalism, for instance, it shows how global order can be shaped by nationalist movements and apply 'internationalisms' in non-liberal directions. By distinguishing it more clearly against different types of internationalism, it also improves our understanding of liberal internationalism itself, bringing more nuance to the mechanisms of the liberal order. Last, it also refines our understanding of international bureaucracies, multilateral diplomacy, and institutions, by showing how internationalism as a process within them can serve many political ends, and how individuals within them can and do have significant influence, through their practice, in shaping those processes and ends.

When it comes to the study of international organisation, this blind spot has led us to forget that in the interwar period, as international institutions were proliferating and becoming formalised at an unprecedented rate, not all internationalisms that they embodied were liberal. To cast the

interwar period as a time of tension between nationalism and internationalism is an oversimplification. Exploring this variety in greater detail offers a more nuanced and realistic understanding of international organisation projects in the interwar period and today. As we will see in chapter 2, contemporary IR literature on international organisations, internationalism, and the interwar period could be combined with the approach of this thesis in productive ways. This is another move this thesis offers which has not yet been made.

This brings us to the second main point that this thesis proposes. Concerning *how* to study these internationalisms, it also innovates in treating them as organisational practices. In chapter 2 we will see the different ways in which 'internationalism' has been defined in the IR literature and how they have largely ignored the role of practice and institutional development: much too often internationalism is treated as an intellectual project, or as a very high level political movement, rather than as a practical reality, a set of policies, choices, administrative, diplomatic, and political which create and sustain institutions. Internationalism is something people *do*. Certainly, not just anyone, and not anywhere; but by studying the practice of certain officials who were influential in organisational design and work, we can see how their interpretations of internationalism were translated into practical ways of organising an institution and conducting activities of diplomacy and politics through it. As seen, in the context of the League the practice of internationalism was directly related to the independent role of the secretariat – this status, as will be discussed in chapter 3, was not an accident; it was a product of deliberate policy choices and diplomatic strategies in 1919-1920, and they were frequently readapted, challenged, as states and officials sought to encroach upon the principle of secretariat independence.

When analysing these practices, this thesis breaks down the notion of internationalism-as-an-organisational-practice into three interrelated dimensions: *practice*, *politics*, and *authority*. These three elements help to show how internationalism operates both at a high level of political strategy and at a practical, everyday level of institutional work and commitment. The manner in

which these different elements inter-relate reveals much not only about the political and diplomatic style of the officials being studied, but about how certain types of internationalism fit within organisations. Below we outline these three elements in more detail.

Practice. This is how the work is actually done, the 'small-p' practice; how officials seek to exercise their duties and thereby shape their office. It involves questions such as how the organisation is structured; how staffing choices are made; recruitment processes and employment terms; salaries and budget allocations; what is the flow of work like (e.g. upwards or downwards?); how the hierarchy of the officialdom is structured, etc.. In the case of the Secretary-General, it also involves questions of how does he interpret his mandate; where does he see his jurisdiction emanating from; how does he liaise with member states and secretariat officials; does he use his office to be an autonomous agent or only act on behalf of states etc.? All these questions, some larger and some seemingly more mundane, create a pattern of administrative behaviour that is decisive for an organisation, both by setting the tone of its internationalism and by concrete steps which affect the organisation's work and its officials.

Politics. This is both an acknowledgement that the practice discussed in the point above is inherently political, and an attempt to identify what kind of politics it represents. The bureaucratic creativity process of the Secretary-General did not occur in a political vacuum, despite what some officeholders ostensibly argued. The secretary-generalship was not a form of apolitical technocracy (if such a thing exists); it was and is inherently political and must be understood in conjunction with broader internationalist politics of the period, as this thesis does in the case of each Secretary-General. This thesis therefore also analyses, in addition to the processes and practices by which individuals shape institutional development, the broader political context with which certain practices are related. This enlightens us as to the broader projects (or implications of the projects) of secretaries-general, and also helps us better understand how certain League actions would or could influence international politics.

Authority. Practice and politics alone are not enough in making an official's work meaningful, in the sense of having an impact or a significance in international relations. A degree of buy-in is necessary on the part of the organisation's stakeholders (in the League secretariat's case, the member states, parties to disputes, and, gradually increasing throughout the 1920s and 1930s, public opinion) in order for effective implementation of the practices and policies above. The secretary-generalship has always been an office largely devoid of hard power, with few resources or enforcement mechanisms relative to a head of state, or even a minister in a national government; it must, therefore, rely heavily on authority, which it drew from the perception by relevant parties of the legitimacy of the office's values and practices[22]. Different secretaries-general, however, diverged about the sources of that legitimacy and authority, and about to whom their international loyalty was owed: to say that it was owed 'to the international organisation' does not really answer the question – is that the Council, the Assembly, the Covenant, international law? And what happens when these mandates clash? The debate about the authority of the organisational practice, therefore, relates to the question of specific sources of jurisprudence for the practice: how they mediated between the demands of power and the principles of law in the international system; where their authority and legitimacy came from; and to whom their duty was owed. Fundamentally, it asks what it means to 'act internationally'.

These three elements within an organisation function in a continuous loop of institutional development: they depend on each other and, to the extent that one is successful, this success feeds back into the others and helps officials develop their practice further. In our case, as we will see, League secretaries-general sought to implement practices in certain ways (with different political implications and consequences) through a combination of administrative measures and

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[22] Authority and power are different. Hurd, for instance, defined authority as power plus legitimacy of having influence over setting how things should be done. (Hurd: 1999, p.403), but I argue that this still leaves the two largely combined. Instead, I argue that authority is the power gained through legitimacy: that is, legitimacy does not operate on its own, and even an office without power can develop authority if it has high enough legitimacy.

diplomatic work, and through the degree to which these institutional innovations were accepted by member states, the officeholders were able to expand their vision of internationalism further, implement bolder practices, thus shaping the organisation and expanding their office's field of practice. This system, I will argue, allowed the secretary-generalship, especially under Drummond, its first occupant, to accumulate a kind of 'international common law' body of precedents, in turn feeding back into his office's mandate, allowing for a gradual expansion of the scope of action of the office[23].

Furthermore, analysing the international organisational practices of different secretaries-general comparatively, as this thesis does, helps illustrate the dynamic interplay between these three elements of practice, politics, and authority. Different secretaries-general had often conflicting interpretations of what their sources of authority were, leading to very different practices and with radically different political implications, as we will see. And this, in turn, will again highlight the value of studying the League's secretary-general in particular in light of the concept of internationalism-as-organisational-practice, since that office's authority was derived precisely from being the head of an (at least notionally) impartial, independent international civil service. In consequence, examining how officeholders interpreted their mandates differently, and contextualising those interpretations within broader internationalisms tells us much about diplomatic practice as a constitutive process of international development and the multiplicity of internationalisms animating international relations, then and today.

[23] The idea of precedent-building by the Secretary-General is discussed in further detail by Oscar Schachter, who was Dag Hammarskjöld's legal adviser at the UN in the 1950s (Schachter: 1962, p.2). The Hammarskjöld-Drummond comparison is further discussed in chapter 7 of this thesis.

The relevance of this thesis to contemporary politics

Historically focused though this thesis is, the impetus behind it has come as much from an interest in the past as from a concern about the present. When I started this research project, in 2015, the scholarships on internationalism and on the League had started developing ties, with some notable works published. In the past four years, however, the amount of research on these topics has exploded, as a glimpse at the Bibliography shows. This is probably in part illustrative of a cyclical interest in a neglected past, especially given the centenary of the League's founding this year. But part of it is certainly related to the present international political moment. From the electoral success of nationalist and populist parties around the world to the suddenly perceived fragility of international institutions like the UN or the European Union, there is a popular perception that today's politics echo those of the 1920s and 1930s.

Comparisons between these two periods are perhaps too facile and possibly even dangerous, like the current overuse of the label 'fascist' (discussed further in chapter 5). This, however, should not blind us to the very real challenges that the liberal world order is facing today, threats both 'within' (from, say, the election of Donald Trump, an actively anti-liberal internationalist US president to the UK's withdrawal from the European Union) and 'without' (e.g. the rise of China's internationalist plans, such as the Belt and Road Initiative, or Russia's increasingly aggressive military presence in Eastern Europe). These challenges to the 'liberal world order' have been discussed elsewhere[24], but here I would like to highlight one specific benefit this thesis brings to this debate. It will show that it is an unwarranted assumption to think that all internationalism is liberal, and it will highlight how – when we treat internationalism as organisational practice – different internationalisms can subvert institutions from within.

[24] See e.g. Ikenberry: 2018, Luce: 2017.

The assumption of permanent liberalism owes much to post-Cold War liberal triumphalism in the West, captured by Francis Fukuyama's 'end of history' thesis[25] that the future promised a largely unchallenged liberal road. This is what Timothy Snyder has called the 'politics of inevitability' – the notion that progress is inevitable, that structural forces, once pushed, go on forever on inertia, and that any challenges to them only relate to incremental, superficial values. "The politics of inevitability", Snyder writes, "is the idea that there are no ideas"[26]. When it comes to internationalism in particular, this trend is also visible. After the defeat or disappearance of fascism and then of communism as competing internationalisms, liberal internationalism seemed like a natural stand-in, indeed the only remaining one, for 'internationalism'. The only challenges to internationalism, wrote commentators after the financial crisis of 2008 and the electoral earthquakes of 2016, came from nationalism. And we have projected that back onto the past, redefining the interwar period, for instance, as a time of conflict between nationalism and internationalism, and painting the League as *the* internationalist body, gradually destroyed by nationalist forces. In this thesis I seek to show that the nationalist threat was also expressed through competing internationalisms, different variants of organisational practice which were fundamentally opposed to the kind of liberal internationalism that the League Covenant represented, decreasing the organisation's authority. Forgetting this is a way of applying the politics of inevitability to internationalism: more internationalism is inevitably good, liberal, democratic, and peaceful. This view fundamentally neglects the inherently political nature and the multiplicity of internationalisms.

Recently, some publications have begun to suggest the notion of a "coming illiberal era"[27] in the face of the "the twilight of the liberal world order"[28]. A July 2018 *New Statesman* article,

[25] Fukuyama: 1989.
[26] Snyder: 2018, p.15.
[27] Boyle: 2016, p.35.
[28] Kagan: 2017.

for instance, argued that populists throughout the West are uniting in a "new Illiberal International"[29], and a December 2018 *Financial Times* editorial spoke of a coming "nationalist International"[30]. This idea – that an internationalism can develop among non-liberal, and even nationalist, political movements, has been gaining traction in recent months, given developments across the West, from Hungary to the United States to Brazil. This thesis argues that this idea of a 'nationalist international' is not new – indeed, it was a key feature of interwar international relations, especially in the 1930s and early1940s. It is our liberal blind spot that makes us forget this nuance, and think that what is happening today is unprecedented. This blind spot is true as much of IR today as of most historical scholarship of the interwar period (until recently, as we will see): as historian Ilaria Scaglia wrote, "[*t*]he mid-1930s have been widely examined in the history of nationalism, but have received little attention in terms of their importance to the development of internationalism worldwide"[31].

In turn, applying a richer interpretation of internationalism to the League secretary-generalship, encompassing practice within organisations as well as broader political strategies, I argue for the importance of examining the foundations upon which different internationalisms are based, examining their claims to legitimacy, sources of authority, and their different understandings of how to mediate between power and norms. This exercise reveals a great deal about their nature, as well as about the fact that competing internationalisms can infiltrate liberal organisations and, through practice, seek to change them from within (of course, it is also possible that the same process, only in an inverse direction, can happen with non-liberal organisations, but a basically liberal one is our focus in this thesis).

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[29] Lloyd: 2018, p.31.
[30] Rachman: 2018.
[31] Scaglia: 2015, p.109.

Recent studies have shown, for instance, how China has sought to take advantage of American neglect of international institutions to obtain a greater role in their leadership bodies. At the UN, China has made public statements at the General Assembly positioning itself as "a staunch advocate of a multilateral rules-based world order"[32] in direct response to Trump's tirades against 'global cosmopolitanism'. At the same time, it has increased its membership contributions, surpassing Japan in December 2018 to become the second biggest contributor to the overall UN budget, increasing its share from 7.9% in 2016 to 12% (in the same period Japan's contribution fell from 9.7% to 8.6%, while the US has remained the biggest contributor at 22%)[33]. In peacekeeping operations, which the US under Trump has criticised and promised to lower its contributions, China has increased its share from 10.2% to 15.2% in 2018 alone, also becoming the second largest contributor[34]. Additionally, China has in the past two years been reforming its internal selection process for international civil servants with a view to increasing its personnel share at UN bodies[35]. Under President Xi Jinping, China has also sought to reframe basic UN principles from within, such as pressuring the Human Rights Council, especially its members dependent on investment from China's Belt-and-Road Initiative, to turn away from human rights and elaborate firmer protections for state sovereignty; 'states' rights'[36]. At the same time, Trump withdrew the US from the Council in 2018. Strategies like these, coupled with Xi Jinping's recent calls for China to take "an active part in leading the reform of the global governance system"[37], to deepen its involvement in Interpol, and its use of the investments from the Belt-and-Road Initiative itself as a political tool have led some commentators to argue that it is using international

32 King: 2018.
33 *Nikkei Asian News*: 2018.
34 *The Straits Times*: 2018.
35 Liu: 2018.
36 Maizland: 2019.
37 Lee: 2019.

organisations to legitimise authoritarianism, warning of the coming of "a UN with Chinese characteristics"[38].

Indeed, over the past decade China has mounted a concerted diplomatic effort to increase its presence at the top echelons of UN agencies – something the FT's international trade commentator has characterised as a bid for "world supremacy, one dull UN agency at a time"[39]. Together with a mass effort to increase Chinese entry-level posts throughout the UN system, in 2013 China got the head of the UN Industrial Development Organisation; in the 2014 the head of the International Telecommunications Union (reappointed in 2018); in 2015, the head of the International Civil Aviation Organisation; and in 2019 the head of the Food and Agriculture Organisation ("**FAO**"). European and American diplomats have complained that these elections were won, among other things, after Chinese promises to write off debt for countries voting for its candidates[40]. In 2020 a US State Department official reportedly said that the FAO election was a wake-up call for Washington that (despite the current administration's dislike of multinational institutions), the personnel and leadership of international organisations are of crucial strategic importance for foreign policy. This has contributed to a recent reengagement by the US in this area, as evidenced in the fight between the US and China over the election of the new head of the World Intellectual Property Organisation in early 2020, won by the US-backed Singaporean candidate (intellectual property being one of the key areas of current US-China tension)[41]. Nevertheless, currently (as of early 2020) China is the only country to lead more than one UN specialised agency, heading four out of the fifteen specialised agencies (the four listed above), and concerns have been raised about the degree of political independence the Chinese officials have from their government[42].

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38 Ibid..
39 Beatti: 2020.
40 Ibid..
41 Manson et al.: 2020.
42 Lynch and Gramer: 2020.

Ostensibly, this Chinese strategy is coupled with a broader goal to 'depoliticise' these institutions. Their initiatives are often clothed in the language of 'apolitical' technical and economic development, arguing that the UN and other international organisations should focus on these rather than on 'political' issues. And similar calls for international organisation reform are coming from within the West: one of the key criticisms of defenders of Britain's exit from the EU, for instance, is the notion that the EU should be simply an apolitical 'economic development' organisation, but it has morphed into a 'political and legal' organisation. Another example is the political adviser Steve Bannon's attempts to frame nationalist policies as 'economic nationalism', whereby politics is seemingly excluded, a kind of 'non-normative international development'. In addition to the explicit advocacy of alternative, non-liberal internationalisms, what these examples have in common is the use of technocratic language to defend a particular view of politics in the realm of international organisation. As I argue throughout this thesis, however, such language is often used to hide political agendas, and the notion of an apolitical international organisation is impossible. They are by their nature political bodies: the question, much like with internationalism more broadly, is which politics they represent.

In short, the definition of internationalism I propose in this thesis, as well as the particular case study to which I apply it, offers important correctives to common narratives of international politics and also provides us with tools, concepts, and methodologies with which to better understand them. In this way it aims to show the value of historical research to IR.

1.3 *Summary of Argument*

To sum up, this thesis has two main purposes; one critical and one constructive. The *critical* purpose aims to correct the liberal blind spot discussed above by presenting and analysing internationalism in the interwar period as a multiple, not a unitary, phenomenon, and examining

how some of those internationalisms filtered through the League of Nations secretariat, from its creation in 1918-1919 to its dismantling in 1946. Outlining and analysing the diplomatic and administrative processes in the League secretariat in the interwar period, culminating in the crisis of the late 1930s, helps us understand crucial dynamics of internationalism in that decade better than only studying it from the more traditional perspective of national policy-making, with the usual appeasement/containment or protectionist/multilateralist dichotomies. Placing the focus of analysis on the League secretariat allows us to go beyond the nationalism/internationalism division altogether to study different types of internationalism, and how they related. We can thus see that the secretariat was a microcosm of internationalisms, embodying at different times and in different parts various – often conflicting – visions of international society. Indeed, many of the debates its officials conducted were around the very definition of internationalism. As international historian Karen Gram-Skjoldager has put it, "the League secretariat […] serves as a prism though which we can grasp the broader ecosystem of social and political systems of the time"[43].

The *constructive* dimension of this thesis aims to present and advocate for a more sophisticated and nuanced interpretation of internationalism, one which encompasses the multiplicity mentioned above but moreover which is grounded in the actual practices of officials embedded in an international organisation. Over the next chapters of this thesis, as I examine the work of different secretaries-general, I develop and argue for this view of internationalism as an organisational practice, through which top level League officials developed a measure of autonomy and political agency as international actors. I do this by examining how they created, reaffirmed, or changed important elements of the 'internationalism' of the League secretariat generally and of their own offices, and how they conceived of their role in political terms. Studying the three secretaries-general, I examine their 'internal' (i.e. within the League) administrative policies and their 'external' diplomatic and political activities to analyse how they understood

[43] Gram-Skjoldager: 2016(i), p.1

internationalism, using the three elements of organisational practice outlined in the section above. This will allow me to construct an analysis of how each occupant of the office sought to create, implement, or change the office's internationalism (i.e. organisational practice), through bureaucratic entrepreneurship, institutional policy-making, and diplomatic action.

As we will see, each secretary-general had a distinct way of practicing internationalism, reflecting distinct conceptions of what their international duty meant, who it was owed to, and how it should be exercised within a concrete bureaucratic structure. The most striking contrast, as hinted above, was between Avenol on the one hand and his predecessor Drummond and his successor Lester on the other. Most of the existing literature on the League secretariat dismisses Avenol as an inept and misconceived international official, an arch-appeaser who undermined the League's principles, a miscast nationalist. However, if we assess his political actions in broader historical and political context, alongside his administrative measures and in light of recent studies of the multiplicity of internationalisms, particularly fascist internationalism, we can paint a much more complex, and darker, picture of the practice of internationalism then.

In pursuing these threads, this thesis draws on the admonition of the Polish poet Wisława Szymborska, quoted in the epigraph for this chapter, that "our wartime loot is knowledge of the world"[44]. Indeed, this research project draws on literal wartime loot in the form of three archives, reflecting three different blueprints for the international, which constitute its main primary sources. Two are international organisations created in the wake of world wars, the League of Nations itself and the UN. The third is an institution intended to plan for a very different type of postwar international organisation, had the Second World War gone a different way; the Nazi Party's Deutsche Kongress-Zentrale ('**DKZ**') – the body set up by the German government in the late 1930s to oversee international conferences, gather data on existing international organisations and

[44] Szymborska: 2016, p.3.

start planning for the Axis version of a postwar international organisation, for when they won the war. In other words, the League was the international organisation that was; the UN what it became; and the DKZ what it could have become in an alternative history. The three show very different conceptions of internationalism, which are examined throughout this thesis.

In short, this thesis aims to contribute to the scholarship in international organisation, internationalism, and diplomatic and legal history by developing a detailed analysis of the practice of internationalism, and of the different meanings of that concept, by the League secretary-generalship. By making the original move of combining the scholarship on multiple meanings of internationalism with a hitherto underexplored institution which provides a uniquely suitable case study, the thesis aims to highlight how different conceptions of internationalism can and do shape international organisations differently, leading to bureaucratic, political, and diplomatic moves in unexpected directions.

1.4 *Summary of Chapters*

Having outlined its research programme and hopefully justified its relevance, this thesis will now proceed in chapter 2, '*The Multiple Internationalisms of the League of Nations Secretariat and the Interwar Period*', which explores the conceptual and historical background of our topic and offers a critique of the existing literature. It makes a case for the added value of interpreting internationalism as an organisational practice that is inherently political – that is, the value for IR of seeing internationalism not as unitary but as multiple concept, not as an ideology but as a practice, and not as an end-goal with a set political commitment, but rather as a practice of international relations which can serve various (often conflicting) political ends. It develops in greater detail the notion of internationalism as an organisational practice and argues for how this definition can add value to the existing scholarship. It argues that although IR theory has so far

been too focused on liberal internationalism, a bias reinforced by most traditional theoretical and methodological frameworks, the approaches of some IR scholars working on internationalism do provide theoretical openings for our research project. This thesis aims to seize those openings, bringing in some of the insights of the recent historical scholarship on internationalism and the League of Nations to IR, but adapting them to construct a practical definition of internationalism. Last, this chapter outlines the thesis methodology, main sources, and its expected contribution.

Chapters 3 to 6 combine empirical and conceptual analysis, drawing on secondary literature in IR and international history and on original archival research at the League archives in Geneva, the UN archives in New York, the Cecil Papers at the British Library in London, the Foreign Office Papers at The National Archives in London, the League official papers collection at the University of Oxford, and the DKZ archives at the Hoover Institution at Stanford University. Analysing each officeholder's view of the institution of the secretariat and the meaning of internationalism, and their practice throughout the entire lifetime of the League, these chapters trace how Drummond created certain norms of international service, which were challenged by Avenol in a changing international scenario, and later rescued by Lester, who preserved and transferred them to the UN. Each chapter aims to apply our notion of internationalism to different stages of the development of the League secretary-generalship, analysing its practical evolution in relation to intellectual projects of internationalism and to practical applications of this concept in other relevant international organisations and movements of the period.

Chapter 3, '*Bureaucratic Entrepreneurship: Hankey, Drummond, and the Creation of the League Secretariat, 1918-1919*', analyses the creation of the international secretariat at the Paris peace conference, comparing different projects for the League secretariat generally and the office of secretary-general in particular. It highlights how different plans for the League departed in various ways from previous diplomatic practice and would have led to radically different results for international organisation. It therefore situates these different blueprints for the secretariat as

competing conceptions of international organisation. It argues that the move away from Wilsonian 'grand projects' and towards a more discrete international bureaucracy in 1919, rather than representing a downgrade of the League in international relations as usually seen actually heralded the rising role of the secretariat as an independent international actor. It then offers a genealogy of the League secretariat in the context of early 20th century British civil service innovations, notably the Committee of Imperial Defence and the Cabinet Office, analysing the work of British civil servant Sir Maurice Hankey, and how Drummond sought to transpose Hankey's secretariat model to the League. It shows how, at this early stage, the development of the secretariat in general was directly related to the bureaucratic activities of the Secretary-General.

Chapter 4, '*The Drummond Years, 1919-1933: Between Liberal and Imperial Internationalisms*', focuses on the administration of Secretary-General Eric Drummond, analysing how he developed his own office and the secretariat in a broadly liberal direction, expanding its mandate for independent action through administrative edicts and political practice. Nevertheless, it argues, this was an uncrystallised liberalism, in that Drummond was still quite connected to the British foreign service he hailed from, and practiced a relatively conservative form of internationalism, which sometimes came into conflict with more activist officials in the secretariat. This chapter analyses the internal secretariat measures Drummond introduced, as well as his external-facing independent diplomacy, in relation to early-20th century and interwar concepts of British liberal internationalism and 'liberal imperialism'. It analyses Drummond's bureaucratic entrepreneurship in creating and leading the secretariat in its first decade and the negotiations his brand of internationalism necessitated in relation to both member states and other secretariat officials, showing that liberal internationalist structures can be used to serve different political ends. It ultimately argues that Drummond's application of the British imperial secretariat model to the League actually created an office that was both international and political – this was, in effect, a new politics.

Chapter 5, '*The Avenol Years, 1933-1940: Between Apolitical Technocracy and Fascist Internationalism*', explores how Secretary-General Joseph Avenol adopted a very different internationalist approach from Drummond, seeking to turn the League into a supposedly apolitical technocracy, ultimately one which could relate to the Axis powers. It argues that, contrary to traditional views, Avenol was not merely a 'misplaced nationalist': rather, his was a brand of internationalism which related to elements of Nazi and fascist plans for international organisation – an internationalism which was very significant in the 1930s and 1940s, but which today is largely forgotten. Doing so, it explores some of those fascist internationalist plans, arguing that fascism, rather than only the traditionally imagined nationalistic movement, was in fact extremely internationalist – only this was a very different 'internationalism' from the liberal variant. It explores different fascist conceptions of the international, especially comparing Nazi and Italian fascist plans for international organisation, and relates them to forms of apolitical technocracy and functionalist liberalism. This chapter ultimately argues that there was little in Avenol's internationalism (or, for that matter, in fascist internationalism) that was apolitical – rather, it was a very politicised way of organising the international institution, and that it fundamentally challenged the relationship between the institution, legitimacy, and authority, that had been developed in the previous decade.

Chapter 6, '*Lester, the Secretariat in Wartime, and Becoming the UN, 1940-1946*', analyses the role of Lester and other high secretariat officials in preserving the League during the war and reintroducing a measure of the liberal internationalism previously adopted by Drummond, with a distinctive new twist. It explores how Lester imagined the League – and its brand of internationalism – having a role during and after the Second World War, and how in 1944-1945 that internationalism was gradually changed into the UN brand of anti-fascist wartime internationalism. It analyses the final transfer of the League secretariat to and the adaptation of its bureaucratic model by the UN. This chapter reinterprets the traditional narrative of the UN

representing a 'break' from the League, showing the considerable input by League officials into the creation of the UN secretariat, and drawing parallels between the secretary-generalship of the two organisations. It shows how, in fact, the UN secretary-generalship was largely a continuation of the League's, and evidences how League officials contributed to the development of the UN's office. Furthermore, in what I hope will be a foundation for future research, it argues that Lester was not simply a caretaker of the secretariat, but rather a creative and significant official in his own right, who introduced important institutional, legal, and political refinements to the secretary-generalship, which were then implemented at the UN.

Last, Chapter 7, '*Conclusion: Practice, Memory, and the Fabric of Internationalism*', summarises the main arguments and findings made throughout the thesis, highlighting at a high level the value to IR of studying internationalism as an organisational practice with different facets, and of studying it in the context of the League secretary-generalship. It argues that internationalisms can and do compete within institutions, and that in order to fully understand their impact and the way they can shape international organisations and international relations it is necessary to study both the high-level political strategies served by internationalism and the ground level work of bureaucrats, diplomats, civil servants, and politicians in shaping institutions. Moreover, it argues that at the core of the debate between internationalist practices are differences concerning the authority of the office; it is therefore important that a research programme analyses such practices in the three levels this thesis considers (practice, politics, authority) – this helps us better understand how the League secretaries-general could develop their influence in and precedents for international organisational development.

2. THE MULTIPLE INTERNATIONALISMS OF THE LEAGUE OF NATIONS SECRETARIAT AND THE INTERWAR PERIOD

"What, then, is it that we have misplaced in our haste to put the twentieth century behind us?"[45]

Tony Judt

In order to apply our notion of internationalism to the study of the League's secretary-generalship, it is important to start by discussing the conceptual and theoretical framework of this research project, its place within the IR literature, and what it proposes to offer IR. This chapter aims to make that placement and justify the theoretical and conceptual underpinnings of this research programme, highlighting its originality and contribution.

At its core, this research project analyses and reinterprets different political styles and diplomatic strategies, and links them to broader trends in international institutional development. As League historian Patricia Clavin wrote, "an appreciation of the League's work needs to situate it in the *longue durée* of change in the international relations in the twentieth century, and this history locates the locus of change in the people who worked for, or encountered, the League, and the ideas that it helped disseminate about international relations"[46]. This requires us to consider both the institutional structures under question and the individuals acting within them, helping us see the organisations themselves as more than managerial-functionalist facilitators of state-led activities, but rather as political and intellectual projects in their own right, with specific initiative and political-diplomatic dynamics. By studying how key actors during the period when the

[45] Judt: 2008, p.5.
[46] Clavin: 2013, p.5.

secretary-generalship was developing conceived of their roles, assessed risks, and acted in furtherance (or harm) of their organisation's principles, we gain a richer picture of the organisation, obtaining a reinterpretation of how the office developed. In broader terms, this deepens our understanding of the relationship between international law, multilateral diplomacy, and international politics[47], and of international constitutional development as an early form of global administrative law[48]. By approaching this study with an awareness of the multiplicity of internationalisms, in turn, we can assess in more depth the assumptions and nature of those inter-relations.

This chapter discusses how internationalism has been constructed in IR and international history, and what benefits there are to IR to opening up the concept to the insights of the new historiography of internationalisms and to applying these insights to the study of the League of Nations secretary-generalship. It argues that all too often IR has been blind to non-liberal forms of internationalism, and that most of the traditional theoretical and methodological frameworks used in the study of international organisations and international law reinforce this bias. Opening up the concept to include a plurality of internationalisms helps us see internationalism not so much as a political end-goal in itself, but rather as a practice, which can take many forms and serve different political movements and ideologies. Importing into IR insights from the recent historiography of internationalism, and applying them to the study of the League secretariat, I argue, would not only be beneficial to our study of international organisation and world order, but also particularly relevant given the current state of international relations. In turn, grounding this concept in the institution-building work of practitioners embedded in a crucial international organisation helps us to construct a practical and concrete notion of internationalism and understand how it can shape institutions.

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[47] Burley: 1993.

[48] Krisch and Kingsbury: 2006.

As this is a broad research topic, which encompasses both an intellectual critique of the way internationalism has been studied and a constructive proposal of how to analyse it in practice, the overall structure of this chapter works in a gradually narrowing fashion. It begins by examining the research topic at its highest level, discussing how our conception of internationalism as a multi-faceted phenomenon can complement the existing IR literature, then moves down to a narrower level to discuss how to incorporate internationalism in the study of the League secretariat and international organisations in the interwar period; finally, it focuses on the most particular level of discussing the importance of a study of the League secretary-generalship as is proposed here.

The first part of this chapter (2.1), therefore, involves the definition(s) of the term 'internationalism'. It discusses how traditionally IR tends to see it as shorthand for liberal internationalism, whereas, in reality, in the interwar period not only was liberal internationalism not all that liberal, but even political movements seen as ultranationalist like National-Socialism and Italian Fascism[49] were in fact very internationalist. This forces us to rethink our traditional view of internationalism, changing how we see it relating to nationalism and other non-liberal internationalisms. It argues that the much of the IR scholarship that has focused on internationalism and international organisations has ignored individual-institution dynamics, focusing more on either ideas or on bigger trends of globalization than on how individual practitioners create and shape internationalism within institutions. Internationalist creativity, I argue, happens by and through individuals working within structures. There are openings in the traditional IR literature on internationalisms, that allow for new ways of thinking about internationalisms from an institutional point of view, thereby providing an opening for the current research project. This

[49] Throughout this thesis I use the term 'fascism' to encompass both the German National-Socialist movement and the Italian Fascist movement. Whenever I mean only one of them, this will be made clear in the text. Similarly, when we later explore other fascist political movements, such as in Spain or Romania, this will be made clear in the text. This is aligned with mainstream scholarship use of the term (e.g. Griffin: 2016, pp.106-107).

section, therefore, seeks to identify and evaluate gaps and potential openings in the traditional IR literature which allow me to refine this scholarship.

This brings us to the second part of this chapter (2.2), which, by focusing on the study of internationalism through the League secretariat, seeks to provide greater detail on the internationalism-as-organisational-practice framework outlined in the Introduction. In offering a critical analysis of the IR literature on the League and internationalist practice, this section argues for the originality and benefit of the methodology of this thesis – analysing competing internationalisms in the interwar period through the prism of the League bureaucracy and as an organisational practice. Combining the 'practice turn' in IR, the 'transnational turn' in international history, and the recent renaissance in League scholarship helps us to construct a more sophisticated and concrete interpretation of internationalism, one grounded in individual practice within institutions, to the benefit of our study of internationalism as well as of international organisations. In other words, if the first section of this chapter argues in broad terms for the opening up of the concept of internationalism in IR, this section applies that approach to the international office in question – that is, it deals with the conceptual framework and methodology to be used throughout this thesis at a high, *strategic* level.

Becoming still more precise, the third section (2.3) covers the methodology used in this thesis at a more applied, *tactical* level. It discusses the choice of League officials analysed, justifies the focus on the secretary-generalship, and outlines the method for combining secondary literature with primary sources (as well as the range and use made of those sources). It aims to show how the League secretary-generalship is a crucial case study for the analysis of internationalism as a practice by individuals within institutions and how, through a combination of primary and secondary sources in the study of the League and other international organisations, this thesis can provide a helpful methodological approach to IR through a multidisciplinary framework involving

international and national history, organisational development, international law, and political thought.

Last, this chapter concludes with an outline of the expected contribution of this thesis (2.4), highlighting its goals in terms of the role of internationalism as a creative enterprise within the League, the importance of an institutional interpretation of that concept, then and today, and the relevance of studying the League secretary-generalship as a contribution to IR.

2.1 *Internationalisms*

This section discusses the conceptual framing of the thesis at a high level, analysing critically the way mainstream IR scholarship has interpreted the term internationalism, identifying a gap in it, and arguing how the research project of this thesis can contribute to IR in that domain. It first analyses, in (a), the use in the literature of the concepts of 'internationalism' and 'transnationalism'. Second, in (b), it identifies the gap in IR of seeing internationalism as a practice and how this can add value to the discipline. Third, in (c), it makes a case for the importance of a research embedding alternative, non-liberal, internationalisms within organisational practice, exploring in nuance some of the complications of liberal and fascist internationalisms, arguing that this refines our understanding of the development of international institutions in both liberal and realist IR theory.

(a) *Internationalisms and transnationalism*

When discussing the nature of internationalism, we should start by noting that the very definition of that concept has long been imprecise, and no universally adopted meaning exists[50].

[50] Reinisch: 2016, p.196.

Most authors working on international organisations, even those addressing the nature of internationalism tend to employ a minimalist definition of the term, to mean a political tendency to think and/or operate beyond the borders of the nation-state, promoting a degree of diplomatic, political, or socio-economic collaboration.

This minimalist definition is the way the term has been widely used in recent studies of international organisation, the League, and interwar diplomacy. Historian Elisabetta Tollardo's 2016 work on the Italian diplomats serving in the League, for instance, is concerned with "how people negotiated between their perceived 'national' identity and internationalism, the latter term denoting an openness to international cooperation"[51]. Similarly, transnational scholar Jens Steffek states in his study of fascist internationalism that "by internationalism we mean a political doctrine that promotes economic and political collaboration across borders"[52]. Another example is Patricia Clavin's usage of the term 'transnationalism', which she identifies as having been used in IR from the 1980s and 1990s to mean "'contracts, coalitions and interactions across state boundaries' that were not directly controlled by the central policy organs of government"[53] (further below I discuss the relationship between transnationalism and internationalism).

This relatively common-sensical notion of the term 'internationalism' is a helpful starting point for our analysis and, as such, it fits with one of the central arguments of this thesis: that internationalism is not the exclusive remit of liberalism, and that a significant measure of internationalism is not incompatible with nationalistic politics. Therefore, although this minimalist use of the term involves a trade-off between conceptual precision and flexibility[54], with a measure of conceptual elasticity, this is a measure that I argue is justified – as the thesis argues, the variety of internationalist movements is precisely what has been missed out by mainstream IR. Of course,

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51 Tollardo: 2016, p.10.

52 Steffek: 2015, p.4.

53 Clavin: 2011, p.2 (quoted text from Keohane and Nye: 1981, p.xi).

54 Clavin: 2005, Reinisch: 2016, p.196.

no concept can be stretched infinitely, lest it lose its meaning, but as throughout this thesis I examine precisely the various ways in which the independent, 'internationalist' element of international organisations has been set up and developed, I would argue this measure of conceptual elasticity is justified.

This is, however, only a starting point for us to begin our study of internationalism without the preconception of it being inherently liberal (which I discuss further below): as we move deeper into our analysis, this minimalist conception is quite vague for the study of a particular organisation. Tollardo stresses an 'openness to international cooperation', and Steffek 'collaboration', but how exactly does this openness and collaboration occur? They are put in place by specific policies and decisions – that is, by *practice*. This is why I stress the importance of studying internationalism not as a vague trend or a broad conception, but rather as a concrete practice. I develop this point further below and in sections 2.2 and 2.3, but here it is important to note that while a minimalist interpretation of internationalism is welcome as a preventative measure against the liberal monopolisation of the term, I also argue that, however minimalist in terms of content, that interpretation needs to be grounded in the study of practitioners, and thereby expanded upon.

Regarding how we go about obtaining knowledge about internationalism, conceptually and practically, this thesis must acknowledge upfront its debt to the 'transnational wave' of international historiography, which has been particularly active over the past decade in interwar and international organisation studies. This approach, advocated by historians such as Patricia Clavin, Glenda Sluga, and Susan Pedersen, argues that the initial point of view for analysis – the perspective from which we seek out to gather knowledge – should not be the level of the state (and from there to 'move up' to the international realm), but rather it should start from the perspective of the space of inter-state interaction itself, and from there analyse the nature and character of the interactions and the state units – whether that space is an international organisation, an NGO, a

diplomatic negotiation, a treaty etc.. In her watershed 2005 article 'Defining Transnationalism'[55], Clavin proposes that in order to better understand international relations, even the study of 'inter-*national'* relations is too 'national', by taking the nation-state as the observation point. Instead, she argues for a *transnational* perspective, which puts the primary focus on the zone of inter-relation, the space and dynamics of relations proper.

This conceptual approach also helps us shed preconceived notions of the delineation of topics, allowing us to observe and analyse hitherto hidden connections and inter-dynamics: instead of the standard periodisation of traditional national (and inter-national) historiographies, "transnational history allows us to consider the processes by which change is facilitated on a different timescale"[56]. Clavin's 2005 essay with Wessels[57] and her 2013 book *Securing the World Economy*[58] on the League's Economic and Finance Organisation ("**EFO**"), exemplify this transnational epistemology, illustrating how helpful such an approach is to the study of international organisations. Analysing international institutions from a strictly national or inter-national perspective often ends up portraying them as epiphenomenal to state policy, without any soul or 'lived reality' of their own: "[*h*]istorians have found it notoriously difficult to discern a distinctive League voice in any aspect of the League's work", Clavin writes, "[*b*]ut this is partly because they have been listening in the wrong place. It is possible to discern a League perspective in the one aspect of its separate elements […] that was made up entirely of League personnel: the secretariat"[59]. That is, the scholarly pay-off increases considerably when we approach international organisations from an internationalist intellectual framework, allowing us to pose new questions and examine new actors. In this thesis, this initial epistemological position is how we have come

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55 Clavin: 2005.

56 Ibid., p.428.

57 Clavin and Wessels: 2005.

58 Clavin: 2013. See also Clavin: 2014 for a practical application of this analytical framework, tracing the EFO's origins in the early 1920s Austrian Hunger Crisis.

59 Clavin and Wessels: 2005, p.474.

to study internationalisms from the perspective of the League secretariat officials we have chosen, and it also leads directly to the methodology adopted (discussed in sections 2.2 and 2.3 below).

It is worth noting that further linguistic and conceptual subdivisions could be made, relating, for instance, to differences between internationalism, transnationalism, multi-nationalism, supranationalism, globalism etc.. As a general rule, and for the sake of clarity, when it comes to nomenclature and language, this thesis treats 'internationalism' in the sense that Clavin advocated the use of 'transnationalism': that is, an ontological focus on international collaboration and an epistemological focus on the space of that interaction, which creates an unit of international agency onto itself (in the case of this thesis, the League secretariat and its secretary-generalship). This is in line with the linguistic usage in the most recent scholarship on this area, such as Clavin and Sluga's 2017 edited volume *Internationalisms: A Twentieth-Century History*[60]. Throughout this and the following chapters, this thesis will also discuss some of these subdivisions to the extent that they help us understand nuances and differences in the various types of political approaches we explore.

Having established this conceptual framework, one of the central theoretical critiques of this thesis is not that 'internationalism' as a term is used too broadly, but rather that it is used too restrictively, to denote only one variant of this phenomenon, the liberal one. The rest of this section is devoted to arguing this point in further detail (the second key critique of this thesis, that the study of internationalism is not often enough grounded in practice, is addressed in sections 2.2 and 2.3 below).

This shortcut is a liberal blind spot: faced with forms of internationalism that do not fit the traditional liberal mould, scholars have tended to dismiss them as non-internationalist, or even as nationalist. Aside from the journalistic tendency prevalent since 2016, exemplified in the famous

[60] Sluga and Clavin: 2017, p.9.

'globalists v. nationalists' *The Economist* editorial discussed above, such a simplistic dichotomy can also be found in studies of international relations, organisations, and law. An example is the 2017 book by Yale law scholars Oona Hathaway and Scott Shapiro about the 1928 Kellogg-Briand Pact, *The Internationalists: How a Radical Plan to Outlaw War Remade the World*. The authors set up two opposing camps in international legal history: 'interventionists', who "argued that war was a legitimate method for enforcing rights in the absence of a world government"[61] against 'internationalists', who "maintained the war was a barbaric way to resolve disputes and that the best way to resolve controversies was through international institutions"[62]. Without defining these terms in any further detail, they go on to argue that the 'internationalists' were against war and advocated what would become the Kellogg-Briand Pact in face of a world order in which international organisations such as the League were hopelessly controlled by self-interested governments. In the traditional liberal vein, the authors miss the point that, as I have argued elsewhere in a review of that book, "not all of those against war were internationalists, and not all internationalists were against war"[63]. By focusing only on one strand of internationalism, liberal internationalism (and, in fact, only one strand of liberal internationalism; the anti-war strand), they misidentify both anti-war activists as internationalists (whereas many of them were not necessarily internationalist) and the thinkers they term 'interventionists' as anti-internationalist (when in reality most of these thinkers – and they lump together figures as diverse as Hugo Grotius, Carl Schmitt, and Sayyd Qutb – thought very seriously about international politics, albeit not necessarily in a way that would be immediately recognised by present-day liberalism).

This liberal blind spot keeps us from seeing that internationalist movements and articulations often do not take liberal forms, but are not anti-internationalist because of that. Indeed, we can even counter the crucial test for 'internationalist' proposed by Hathaway and Shapiro, which is

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61 Hathaway and Shapiro: 2017, p.xx.
62 Ibid., p.xxi.
63 Moraes: 2017, p.93.

being anti-war. Internationalists of many variants are not necessarily pacifists, and may well be warmongers. International historian Sandrine Kott, for instance, makes a powerful case for the fact that war itself is a fundamentally internationalist phenomenon, both by definition and by the by-products of international organisation that it often engenders. She points out that "[*b*]y nature wars are international and they also produce a special kind of internationalism aiming not only at organising the war itself but also at planning peace. The international organisations born in the twentieth century are a result of this wartime internationalism but, because they are meant to preserve peace, scholars have generally overlooked the role they played during the wars themselves" [64]. In consequence, in her study of the ILO during the Second World War, Kott argues that we should "look at the war not only as a period of international crisis but as a time of 'peculiar internationalism' during which, faced with the emergence of a new world order, the ILO had to redefine its mission"[65]. In a similar vein, in chapter 3 of this thesis I will analyse how the League secretariat structure was a direct product of bureaucratic models evolved in wartime and in direct response to the needs of the war effort.

Beyond this rather simplistic example of the mis-use of 'internationalism', offered here as an illustration of a broader popular trend, it is important to engage with the ways scholarly IR research has used the term. Doing so, we can see that even though the focus in serious IR scholarship has traditionally been on liberal international internationalism, recent scholars have constructed the term and approached the study of international organisations in ways which do leave theoretical doors open for the present thesis, both in terms of studying the interaction between different internationalism and of studying the concept through a bureaucratic/practical approach. Below we analyse ways in which the literature seems receptive to this, how the gap has not been addressed, outlining how this thesis seeks to fill that gap.

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64 Kott: 2014, p.359.

65 Ibid..

(b) *A gap in IR: Internationalisms as a new way to think about power and institutions*

This thesis argues that studying internationalism as a practice by top officials of a crucial international organisation provides innovative insights into the nature of that concept. In this section I analyse some of the main IR thinkers who have considered internationalism and show how this thesis can provide original conceptual insight to the discipline.

First (b.1), we approach the literature by critically analysing some of those thinkers and showing the ways in which a gap exists in IR scholarship concerning the multiplicity of internationalisms, the relationship between internationalism and nationalism, and the lived reality of practitioners. By failing to take into account practice by individuals and bureaucratic structural development, most of these thinkers have neglected the concrete ways in which internationalisms can combine, inter-relate, or challenge each other in the world. Second (b.2), we show how these gaps might be filled by discussing some of the recent historical work on multiple internationalisms, especially fascist internationalism, arguing that they have used practice as a starting point to highlight different political flavours in internationalist history. Third (b.3), we dig deeper into the theoretical consequences of this combination, which leads us to not only dissociate internationalism from liberalism but moreover to return to certain basic assumptions of interwar and midcentury IR that sketched out possible avenues for a nuanced analysis of the relationship between power and law and internationalism (particularly illustrated by the work of John Herz on National Socialist international law). This will help us show how much of internationalist practice ultimately comes down to the relationship between power and authority, how they can be different interactions, how they translate into different practices of international organisation, and how they can interact and compete with each other within an organisation – the processes, essentially, which I analyse throughout this thesis.

(b.1) *Gaps in the IR literature: Multiple internationalisms and practice*

We must start by identifying some of the key IR thinkers who have linked international organisation and order with the concept of internationalism and engage critically with their work, proposals, and assumptions, seeking to analyse how they conceived of internationalism as plural concepts within organisations, what they have left out, and how this thesis can address that gap.

An early IR contribution to the idea that internationalism does not belong only to liberalism and that different internationalisms can affect international order was made by Fred Halliday in his 1988 article 'Three Concepts of Internationalism'. In it he identifies three ways of conceiving internationalism (which he defines as "the idea that we both are and should be part of a broader community than the nation and the state"[66]): liberal, hegemonic (what he argues is what used to be called 'imperialism'), and revolutionary (be it Marxist, republican, Islamist etc.). Halliday's main concern is the *motivating ideology* behind those brands of internationalism – his definitional focus on what constitutes the 'idea of a community' is indicative of this. In this sense, his proposal is foremost ideational rather than grounded in practice, as I propose here, but it does merit analysis because of his exploration of the *creative power* of internationalism. He noted that, "while often phrased in unhelpfully facile terms, the idea of internationalism raises issues of considerable analytical and normative value. It is, for all its deficiencies, a standing rejection of the world of states complacent in their sovereignty, inflated with pride and national conceit and prone to war and hatred"[67]. This, as well as his three brands of internationalism, provide an early indication of the welcome that the approach of this thesis would receive in IR.

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[66] Halliday: 1988, p.187.
[67] Ibid., p.189.

But it also shows what is missing that this thesis can provide. Besides the practice and the concrete institutional aspect, which we discuss further below, Halliday's framework does not explore the possibility of combining internationalism and nationalism – a combination which was a very relevant political dynamic in the interwar period (as it is today). As a general rule Halliday still opposes nationalism and internationalism, identifying internationalism with 'broader', "cosmopolitan interests and values"[68], as though it and nationalism were mutually exclusive[69]. If we examine his underlying assumptions regarding the internal dynamics of internationalism, especially of imperialist internationalism, we can see that there is an opening here for the possibility of these two terms being combined. He hints at this possibility when he notes that, from the perspective of the imperial metropolis, imperialism is usually seen as desirable, commenting that "[*f*]or those who benefit from it, hegemonic internationalism is not, of course, incompatible with nationalism but is an extension of it"[70]. That is, at least for the metropolitan centre, imperialism combines both nationalism and internationalism, with the latter being an outward projection of the former[71].

This thesis pulls this thread further, arguing that in the early 20th century not only were nationalism and internationalism mixed within imperialism, but furthermore that in practice imperialist administrative needs often inspired (and directly created) international organisational structures. This was particularly the case with aspects of the British Empire's bureaucratic infrastructure and the early institutional development of the League secretariat, as we will discuss in chapters 3 and 4. Halliday's intervention therefore provides an early example in IR of the conceptual broadening of internationalism, opening up the possibility of multiple internationalisms

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68 Ibid., p.198.

69 Ibid., p.190-191.

70 Ibid., p.194.

71 This could be taken a step further to argue that one of the ways in which internationalism is distinct from, say, cosmopolitanism is that it tempers universalism with an appreciation or at least acknowledgement of the objective importance of the nation-state and of nationalism as a political force (Holbraad: 2003, p.3) – though, as Holbraad argues and as we will see in practice throughout this thesis, different strands of internationalism combined with nationalism in different ways.

and the hinting at combining nationalism and internationalism, but remains ideational in focus. By examining how some of these combinations were developed and challenged in practice, this thesis can add both an extra dimension to Halliday's proposal (the practical one) and more depth of analysis (as through examining the practice we can see how concepts were often combined or inter-related).

The value added by studying practitioners is also demonstrated if we examine Or Rosenboim's recent work on the development of globalism in the Anglo-American world. Her 2017 book *The Emergence of Globalism* provides a deep exploration of intellectual projects for a type of internationalism. Again, however, the limitations of the liberal monopoly and of the ideational focus are evident. For instance, here 'globalism' is used as a term very close to a form of 'liberal internationalism gone global', and the range of ideas discussed is decidedly on the liberal side, especially given the geographic focus of the work. Furthermore, as Rosenboim's subtitle reveals, she studies 'visions of world order in Britain and the United States, 1939-1950': her focus is on ideas, placing the creative space of globalism in these intellectual projects. Hers is a study of thinkers, writers, scholars such as David Mitrany, Raymond Aron, and Lionel Robbins – some of whom did hold public posts at times, but were primarily intellectuals rather than practitioners. Although Rosenboim's work is helpful to this thesis in that it provides the intellectual context in which certain practices were being developed (and will be discussed further in chapters 4 and 6), it leaves out the creative impact of practitioners, and the work of the League of Nations altogether. In reality, I argue, some of the most profound creative processes of internationalism during the interwar period emerged from bureaucratic practice. It is more difficult to chart this bureaucratic creative emergence as a clearly defined project than it is to chart the idea of intellectuals, since practitioners leave many fewer statements or publications about their ambitions than intellectuals (and, often in the case of officials involved in diplomacy and the League, they had to be very discrete about any such grand projects), so that researchers have to interpret their constructions

through what practical work they did. As this thesis argues, in the case of the League's secretary-generalship, there is more than enough such evidence, both on the internal administrative side of the League as on the external political and diplomatic work of officials, to justify our argument for internationalism as a product of organisational practice.

In contrast, the consideration of practice in the context of internationalism in IR owes a debt to Cornelia Navari's 2000 book *Internationalism and the State in the 20th Century*, which charts the growth of international organisations, international interdependence, and institutional complexity throughout the century. Importantly for us, Navari treats internationalism not as a unitary thing, but as a multi-faceted process, one based on three dimensions: trend, aspiration, and policy. The first dimension, internationalism as a trend, operates at a very high level in international relations, featuring "deep changes in society and social power, as well as economic developments"[72] from the mid-19th century onwards, led by growing economic, technological, and political integration – something akin to globalisation. This is helpful to our thesis to the extent it helps us understand the need to manage a world of growing complexity, but its high-level nature does not engage with the detail of bureaucratic creativity which I argue for here[73]. Navari's second conception of internationalism, as an aspiration, is helpful to us in that it suggests a broad political and social project which could serve different political movements: "as an aspiration, it [*internationalism*] was judged by different political and social theories which established a range of (sometimes conflicting) criteria for what it meant to be an internationalist"[74].This informs our understanding of the concept in the sense that, in itself, it can become a process towards different political ends, which will feed into our analysis of the politics of internationalism throughout the thesis, but again this is still very high level and conceptual, rather than practical.

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72 Navari: 2000, p.3.

73 See Geyer and Paulmann: 2001 for wide-ranging analyses of different aspects of internationalism-as-a-trend in various fields in the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

74 Navari: 2000, p.3.

Navari's third conception of internationalism, however, approximates what this thesis proposes. This is internationalism as the product of a political process. That is, despite the 'trend' dimension of internationalism, she stresses that "[*i*]nternationalism was not simply produced, it was also chosen, and it was chosen by governments with specific political objectives in mind. Those political objectives form part of the story and deserve attention"[75]. In this sense, Navari introduces the important nuance of 'internationalism-as-policy': that is, not only as a phenomenon akin to a natural force, which happens independent of state decision-making. Rather, internationalism must be seen as a policy choice, a deliberate decision by political actors to interact in a certain way. This is an important departure from the previous two conceptions: by adding the element of choice, Navari opens the door for the examination of practice. At the end, she still focuses more on such practice in the context of national, inter-national foreign policy, whereas I want to take it a step further and examine these choices in the context of the international practitioners embedded within an international organisation – that is, their international organisational practice[76].

Crucially, therefore, Navari argued that within internationalism there is also the "pursuit of a diversity of ends"[77], and warns that "we do not have to look far to see the conflict among these different internationalisms. They are reproduced in the quarrels about whether distributive justice, or human rights, or alliances and the trimming and hauling of power to maintain international stability, are the foundation principles of diplomacy"[78]. In this, Navari's contribution to the theoretical underpinning of this thesis is very important: she draws attention to the multiplicity of internationalisms and their possible conflict. Although she does not go into great detail in how

75 Ibid..

76 There are works which focus on internationalism as a practice from the perspective of states (e.g. Herren: 2000 explores internationalism as a key element in the foreign policy of Belgium, Switzerland, and the USA in the late 19th and early 20th centuries), but fewer which do so from the perspective of international organisational practice.

77 Navari: 2000, p.360.

78 Ibid., p.361.

different international organisations might contain different internationalisms within themselves, her identification of internationalism as a process, a policy, and an aspiration that can serve multiple political ends will very helpfully inform the construction of internationalism throughout this thesis. Indeed, as we will discuss, much of the conflict within the League secretariat between different interpretations of internationalism comes down to differences of what the role of the League as an organisation should be: as a 'natural' reflection of trends, as a specific diplomatic policy tool, or as an aspirational project for international development.

I discuss the element of practice in the sections below, but for the purposes of this section I highlight that the unpacking of internationalism as a concept and as a process that can serve different political ends adds another important layer to our analysis; the fundamentally political nature of internationalism. Seeing how internationalist movements reflect different political goals forces us to analyse the interaction between international order and political constitutional frameworks, and the inter-relationship between power, authority, and law in mediating between them.

In this respect, G. John Ikenberry's work on international order contributes important notions to the research programme of this thesis, especially on the areas of hierarchy legitimisation and the rule of law. In his 2001 book *After Victory*, in particular, he charts the elements leading to the creation of different postwar international orders (1815, 1919, 1945, 1989) and seeks to analyse comparatively their constructive parts. He charts the ways international orders emerge as means "of coping with the new emerged symmetries of power"[79], created through grand bargains between great powers, or hegemonic imposition, or a softer form of 'constitutionalism'. Ikenberry's approach relates to this thesis in two main ways.

[79] Ikenberry: 2001, p.17.

First, in treating postwar international orders not simply as organically-developed states of affairs that emerge when a change in power distribution occurs in the international system, but rather as products of a conscious effort on the part of states to institute or uphold new ways of inter-relating, it highlights the diplomatic work and political bargaining inherent to the creation of international organisations. Institutions of international order, therefore, are a form of political strategy. And we can see "variations in the character of order as evidence of the extent to which institutional strategies of order building are advanced and successfully pursued by the leading postwar state"[80]. In this thesis, I argue that internationalisms could serve as a concept equivalent to Ikenberry's constructed 'international orders'. And, much like Halliday spoke of 'hegemonic' and 'liberal' internationalisms, Ikenberry talked of 'hegemonic' and 'constitutional' international orders. And as Navari stressed the constructed, unnatural aspect of internationalisms, so does Ikenberry emphasise the deliberate, creative effort and strategic planning that goes into major postwar international reorderings. Particularly relevant to us here is his comparison between the organising principle of hegemonic and constitutional orders (respectively, hierarchy and the rule of law)[81] – this will, as we will show in the empirical chapters below, inform our understanding of fascist and liberal internationalisms.

The second element of Ikenberry's approach that is significantly valuable to this thesis is his detailed analysis of the constitutional order and its relationship to institution-building. He argues that institution building is a form of investment by leading states into the international order that offers several strategic and tactical advantages: it is cheaper to exercise power and inter-relate through constitutional mechanisms; institutions can lock in certain strategic advantages for states even if power dynamics change over time (e.g. permanent membership of the UN Security Council); institutions can "extend the stream of benefits and advantages [*that strategic positions*

80 Ibid., p.19.
81 Ibid., p.24.

offer] into the future"[82]; and rules are sticky and may continue to influence international behaviour even if the originating state's power declines[83]. Crucially for us is the relationship between leading states and institutions over time, and how institutional agency can evolve from that relationship: Ikenberry assesses how "institutions can become embedded in the wider political order, where through the process of feedback and increasing returns to institutions states find that the costs of changing those institutions can grow over time, thereby increasing the shaping and constraining role of institutions"[84]. Ikenberry applied this approach further in his 2012 study of the rise of the United States in the 20th century, *Liberal Leviathan*, in which, drawing on the strategic advantages outlined above, he argues that the 1919 Wilsonian institutional project, including the League, was not the commonly derided naïve utopia, but rather a practical political strategy to institutionalise a particular type of international order[85]. Although Ikenberry focuses on the liberal internationalist project, his approach to internationalism as a political strategy presents the possibility of "various 'waves' or 'layers' of international order [*which can*] coexist within the contemporary international system"[86], thus indirectly leading us to an analysis of how concrete organisations can be sites of competition between different orders.

Helpful though these elements of Ikenberry's work are to this thesis, they still leave out the work of practitioners within international organisations: his focus is on high-level forces that shape the bargaining outcomes of institutions, rather than on the ground-level bureaucratic creativity of officials. This thesis argues that such creativity is a central element in international organisational development, and that studying it offers considerable insights: particularly by allowing us to assess how, in practice, differing 'ordering principles' (e.g. hegemony/hierarchy vs. constitutionality/rule of law) are often mixed, inter-related, or in competition in a bid to influence organisational policy.

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82 Ibid., p.55.
83 Ibid..
84 Ibid., p.56.
85 Ikenberry: 2012, pp.17-22.
86 Ibid., p.22.

It is not so much that these IR scholars analysed above are wrong per se – and their work has informed my research project considerably – bur rather that, given the blind spots and gaps I have identified, there is a need for a different approach to internationalism in IR, one that considers it from the perspective of international practitioners working in an organisation, offering insight about the actual real-life practice of institutions and the meaning of internationalism in concrete terms. This in turn will bring insights not only about the multiplicity of internationalisms but also about how they fundamentally question longstanding theoretical IR assumptions about the relationship between power, authority, legitimacy, and law.

Therefore, next we examine the recent historiography on the multiplicity of internationalisms to see how it can contribute to IR, after which we will turn to how this combination can help sharpen our theoretical IR study.

(b.2) *Adding internationalisms and organisational agency*

Addressing the liberal blind spot has been a central preoccupation of the 'transnational wave' of historical studies discussed above: one of its key ontological moves was to reveal that throughout history there have been not one but multiple internationalisms, reflecting different visions of how international society does or should operate. This development began with the argument that internationalism and nationalism are not polar opposites; rather, they often inter-relate. Sluga's 2013 *Internationalism in the Age of Nationalism* was one of the earliest works to have "deconstructed the binary"[87] between nationalism and internationalism. Sluga's aim was "to restore internationalism to the history of nations and nationalism"[88]. She showed how practitioners of international relations, even those working within international institutions, often do not see internationalism and nationalism as opposites but as complementary. As Antic et al. noted, Sluga's

87 Antic et al.: 2016, p.363.
88 Sluga: 2013, p.8.

work "highlighted that twentieth-century liberal internationalism's promoters and lynchpins rarely saw it as an idealistic opportunity to overcome national identities, but, on the contrary, considered international initiatives and projects as pragmatic and upheld by nationalism, nation-states and national institutions"[89]. As this thesis will show, many of the officials working at the League secretariat, including Drummond, saw no opposition between League internationalism and a kind of 'good nationalism' (usually, if not always, of a patriotic, liberal, democratic kind).

Sluga's approach is valuable for this thesis in that it highlights, at a basic level, the modern creation of internationalism as inextricably linked to nationalism: they appear as "complementary developments and shared characteristics of the two phenomena and suggests approaching internationalism as yet another sort of 'invented tradition' in line with deconstructivist understandings of nationalism"[90]. Similarly, Clavin has argued for a revision of the binary, claiming that "the 'nation' does not stand in opposition to transnationalism as a border-crossing understanding of the term implies, but rather is an essential element in shaping the phenomenon. […] [*New transnational studies*] speak to the emergence of the new emphasis on continuities of global history that stretch across the period from 1929 to 1973, challenge the caesura of the Second World War and dispute a narrative which characterises the 1930s as a period of ultra-nationalism in which no spirit of internationalism could survive"[91]. An applied example of this approach is Tollardo's 2016 study of Italians in the League secretariat, which examines "the depth and variety of interaction between nationalism and internationalism" [92] and argues that, in that case, "internationalism reinforced nationalism. Italy used the League of Nations […] as a means for legitimising itself on the international stage and as a way to internationalise its national interests. […] Internationalism legitimised Italian nationalism as well as reinforcing Fascist colonial

89 Antic et al,: 2016, p.363.
90 Auberer et al.: 2017, p.3.
91 Clavin: 2011, p.3.
92 Tollardo: 2016, p.268.

aims"[93]. And vice-versa: "nationalism reinforced internationalism. The League needed Italy as a member state in order to increase its prestige and legitimise its existence [*it would not have been credible only with Britain and France and small nations, especially after Germany left*]"[94].

These steps are essential initial steps in setting the framework of this thesis, through breaking the division between internationalism and nationalism. Drawing on this, the next theoretical breakthrough this thesis relies on is the insight that there can be, and are, different types of internationalism, including nationalist, even fascist, ones. This is a particularly relevant lesson for international relations in the interwar period, a time usually portrayed as divided between weak, ineffectual (liberal) internationalism, and rising, revisionist nationalism. In fact, as Jessica Reinisch, director of Birkbeck's recently founded Centre for the Study of Internationalism, has put it, "the history of internationalism is far from an exclusive 'tale of transnational do-gooding' in the Western liberal mould. Communist, fascist and Catholic internationalisms, among others, need to be examined in the same context in which they wrestled with each other for ground and influence"[95]. Or, as historian of fascism Benjamin Martin recently wrote, "[*t*]he interwar period saw not merely a contest between internationalism and nationalism, but rather a struggle among competing visions of international order, each of which was hegemonic in ambition"[96].

Although these works discuss contrasting internationalisms as broad strategies, they do not analyse how they relate concretely within institutions – for this we need the study of practice and of bureaucratic entrepreneurs which this thesis offers. Still, for the theoretical purposes of this thesis, the acknowledgement of the contest between different internationalisms is key, and it is worth exploring it conceptually in some detail here. As Mark Mazower noted in his 2012 history of global governance, *Governing the World*, the interwar period was a 'battle of ideologies'

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93 Ibid..
94 Ibid., p.268.
95 Reinisch: 2016, p.201.
96 Martin: 2016, p.267.

between three internationalisms – liberal, socialist, and fascist[97]. These three broad divisions provide a helpful framework for our discussion here.

The liberal variant, the one we most commonly associate with internationalism nowadays, is also the one most usually associated with the League. From its Wilsonian conception, scholars have painted the League as the liberal internationalist project par excellence, the practical application of a linear development of liberal thought, from Jeremy Bentham's *A Plan for an Universal and Perpetual Peace* (1789) to Kant's *Perpetual Peace* (1795) to Giuseppe Mazzini's notion of universal peace through positive nationalism – the latter, in particular, was a direct inspiration for the national self-determination elements of Woodrow Wilson's Fourteen Points[98].

This liberal internationalism of the League, however, was not without its contradictions. Tollardo makes the point clear that this brand of internationalism was liberal in that it "can be recognised in the promotion of certain policies, from free trade to open governance [...] the commitment to international cooperation"[99], also in that it was "bourgeois and anti-communist and, unlike proletarian internationalism, with which it coexisted, it did not oppose nationalism but embraced the concept of the nation"[100]. But she also notes that it was not only liberal-democratic: "[*i*]t represented not just the values of liberal democracies but also those of liberal imperialism"[101]. Liberal imperialism was a particularly strong strand of internationalism in League circles, especially in interwar Britain, and this view influenced the very creation of the League secretariat (further discussed in chapter 3) and the work of Drummond as Secretary-General (discussed in chapter 4).

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97 Mazower: 2012, p.154.
98 Ibid., p.155.
99 Tollardo: 2016, p.9.
100 Ibid..
101 Ibid..

Although this interplay between imperialism, nationalism, and internationalism (with its tensions and unexpected consequences) has recently begun to be studied in the context of the specialised sections of the League secretariat, it has not yet been examined in the context of the secretary-generalship. Susan Pedersen's 2015 book *The Guardians*, for example, chronicled the work of the Mandates section, charged with administering those territories taken over from the losing countries after the First World War. In it, she observes how, though the section had been at least partly intended to sustain British and French imperialism, and had effectively given them more colonies, it developed a measure of autonomy and agency of its own both in Geneva and out in the field, and ended up contributing to self-determination movements in the territories under its trusteeship.

This thesis, in its analysis of Drummond, aims to fill that gap. That a top official of the League did not see great tension between being a British imperialist on the one hand and an internationalist official on the other reveals much about the nature of internationalism, and of how international officials operate in practice. Sources of influence on Drummond's creation of the international secretariat, as we will see, came not only from states in the Paris peace conference, but also from the ideas of a group of highly placed British civil servants who called themselves the 'Round Table'. The Round Table movement, a liberal imperialist group of associations throughout the British empire, grouped people like civil servants, diplomats, politicians, lawyers, and intellectuals in Britain and the Dominions who advocated for closer integration within the empire, free trade, and a move towards an international imperial federation, which they saw as an 'empire of law'. This group was a strong advocate for the establishment of the League of Nations at Paris, several of the British officials at the conference were members, and they were actually proponents of the notion that it should be headed by an international secretariat. This begins to call into question the very value of terms like 'liberal' (or 'fascist') as applied to the International – in

the national sphere they are well defined, but as we move up to the international level, such boundaries often become blurry, and require further analysis.

In contrast, the second brand of interwar internationalism that Mazower identified, communist internationalism, was in direct conflict with the League: "the revolution from its inception positioned itself as the true heir to nineteenth-century labor internationalism, and denounced the League of Nations as nothing more than a continuation of the old Metternichian counter-revolution"[102]. Differently from nationalism, communism was seen from its inception as an international movement: from the formation of the First International in 1864 to the creation of the Comintern in 1919 (which was, in effect, the Third International – the Second having lasted between 1889 and 1916), communist and socialist parties positioned themselves as internationalists by definition and opposed the focus on nationhood and state sovereignty of the League of Nations Covenant. Communist Russia, and from its formation in 1922 the Soviet Union, opposed the League and did not join until September 1934, once Hitler's rise presented them with a common threat. Given this distance, and the fact that the League was largely anti-communist and never flirted with communist internationalism in the way it did with appeasement of the fascists (indeed, the Soviet Union was the only country to ever be expelled from the League, over its invasion of Finland in 1939, as will be discussed in chapter 5), this thesis will not explore at length the influence of communist internationalism on the League secretariat. We will include it in our analysis as it appears, but our main focus will be on the first and third variants of internationalism which Mazower identified – liberal and fascist internationalisms.

Regarding fascist internationalism, it is worth dwelling on it in more detail in this chapter and in the thesis at large for several reasons. First, being the most counter-intuitive of the three key interwar internationalisms (liberal internationalism is commonly associated with internationalism;

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[102] Mazower: 2012, p.175.

communism was always seen as an internationalist project), fascist internationalism is particularly apt as a case study for our argument concerning the multiplicity of internationalisms and the mutual relationship between nationalism and internationalism. Second, many elements of fascist internationalism made it quite compatible, in practical organisational terms, with elements of liberal internationalism, and to an extent similar theoretical lenses may be applied to both – these parallels are unexpected and worth analysing in more detail. Third, and perhaps most importantly, there were individuals in the League secretariat who, during the 1930s, were interested in aspects of fascist internationalist projects – Secretary-General Joseph Avenol being one of them. The conflict between him and other high officials in the late 1930s was reflective of this, and some of the projects that he put forward for League reform in that period were not incompatible with fascist projects for international organisation. These points are detailed further in chapter 5, but given the importance of fascist internationalism to our argument, and its scholarly obscurity relative to liberal internationalism, it is worth outlining a brief analysis of it here. Then, when we get to chapter 5, we will be better equipped to assess the debates in the League secretariat in the 1930s over different sources of authority and whether Avenol's plans should be seen as ordinary appeasement, or as something more systematic, part of a broader vision for international order.

Traditionally fascist internationalism was seen as an oxymoron[103]: Walter Lacquer famously dismissed the beyond-borders elements of fascist regimes as propaganda, "merely a camouflage and a sham"[104]. Over the past couple of decades, however, fascism studies have undergone an 'international turn', with scholars taking the internationality of fascist movements seriously. Part of the reason for the shift has been the breaking of the boundaries between nationalism and internationalism, as discussed above. But another, possibly more important, reason comes from the development of fascism historiography itself, especially historian Roger Griffin's work on the

[103] Bauernkämper and Rossolinski: 2017, p.1.
[104] Lacquer: 1997, p.218.

'modernity' aspects of fascism. Contrary to what most historians and political scientists saw in fascism, especially in Nazism – the anti-modernity project – Griffin set out to "look for meaningful affinities between modernism and fascism"[105]. He effectively came up with a new definition for fascism, an 'ideological minimum threshold' which has helped scholars conducting comparative research on the regimes in Germany, Italy, Spain, Romania, Hungary etc. and which has in recent decades become the 'new consensus' in fascism studies[106]. That definition argues for seeing fascism as 'palingenetic populist ultranationalism'; a political attempt to harness forces of modernity that led to anomie, disengagement, nausea, along with technology, socio-economic development, political utopianism, to create an all-encompassing new order, supposed to usher in a new society and a new man[107].

Griffin notes that "[*t*]he mainspring of all modernism is that the nexus of forces known as modernity is constantly undermining traditional forms of existential security and understanding of the human place in the cosmos"[108] and that in this *analytical* sense the fascist conception of modernity was modernist. Furthermore, in a *normative* sense, fascism can also be seen as a form of 'political modernism' in that fascist states were "seeking regeneration and palingenesis in every aspect of cultural, social, economic, military, imperialist, and in the case of the Third Reich, racial policies"[109]. Griffin's reconceptualisation of fascism "allowed taxonomies of fascist movements and regimes to accommodate variations and even disagreements on key issues such as anti-Semitism or religion without losing sight of other, truly fundamental similarities between them"[110], which in turn "explains how the vision of a fascist new order came to be identified with the idea of creative destruction – the need to destroy the perceived forces of 'decadence', to shatter the

105 Griffin: 2016, p.106.
106 Kallis: 2003, Iordachi, 2009.
107 Griffin: 2007.
108 Griffin: 2016, p.121.
109 Ibid., p.125.
110 Kallis: 2017, p.40.

vestiges of the old world, to cleanse and purify society and in many cases the 'national community', before embarking on the construction of the new order itself"[111].

This definitional move encouraged historians to observe how fascism was internationalist, or transnational, in the interwar period and during the Second World War. Bauernkämper and Rossolinski, in their 2017 edited volume *Fascism Without Borders: Transnational Connections and Cooperation Between Movements and Regimes in Europe from 1918 to 1945*, note three key elements of that internationality. First, basic fascism elements crossed borders, even if local regimes maintained or introduced certain distinct elements; second, fascism was seen and promoted as an international phenomenon by adherents and enemies alike; third, fascism can be studied through an internationalist perspective, analysing regimes comparatively through their "transfers, exchanges, and even entanglements"[112]. Consequentially, "despite its undisputedly strong and inherent ultranationalism, fascism needs to be understood as a transnational political and social practice, inspired by a set of similar national convictions"[113]. Recent works have studied, for instance, cross-border fascist projects for health cooperation[114] and social policy and development[115].

Particularly relevant to this thesis are Nazi and Italian fascist projects for international order, which historians have begun to explore and which reveal the wide variety of fascist plans for and actual international organisations. These show that, far from antagonistic to international organisation, fascist regimes actually had sophisticated plans for international institutions and for postwar international order more broadly – only with very different principles and concepts (i.e. based on a different internationalism) to the League and the other 1919 organisations.

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[111] Ibid., p.41.
[112] Bauernkämper and Rossolinski: 2017, p.2.
[113] Ibid., p.2.
[114] Brydan: 2016.
[115] Patel and Reichardt: 2016.

In the Nazi sphere, in particular, two institutions with an international organisation focus are relevant for discussion in this thesis: the *Deutsche Kongress-Zentrale* (German Congresses Central, known under its German acronym, "**DKZ**") and the *Internationale Rechtskammer* (International Law Chamber, "**IRK**"). These are analysed in detail in chapter 5, and here I discuss how their historiography relates to my research project and contributes to our analysis of internationalism as organisational practice.

The DKZ was a body set up by the Nazi Party before the Second World War to centralise information about international conferences and participation therein, but whose activities expanded after the outbreak of war to include collecting and processing information about existing international organisations and starting to prepare plans for a postwar international organisation, along the general mould of the League, for when the Axis won the war. It looted and catalogued information from international bodies located in countries occupied by Germany and sent it back to Berlin for analysis. As historian Madeleine Herren, one of the few scholars to have long studied fascist internationalism, put it, the "German plan of a fascist League of Nations was realized in a draft of a new [*DKZ-published*] handbook of international associations, now with a fascist focus"[116].

Similarly interesting, but with a legal focus, the IRK was set up in 1941 with Reich Minister Hans Frank, the Nazi general governor of Poland, as president. It was meant to foster collaboration and debate among fascist jurists on matters of international law and organisation. Its multilingual journal, the *Archiv für das Recht der Internationalen Organisationen* ('Archive of International Organisations Law'), published between 1940 and 1943, scrutinized the design and functioning of international institutions. Although the IRK argued that host states had supervisory duties over international organisations (thus removing an important measure of their independence), it did

116 Herren: 2016, p.353.

argue – ambiguously – that those "hosting states had an obligation to support *and control* international organizations"[117]. This ambiguity towards the state-international relationship was a mainstay of Nazi legal theory, as we will discuss below. Interestingly, in terms of institutional set-up, the League system provided, despite all the hatred that the Nazis had for it, the standard for an international organisation: Herren notes that "[*a*]lthough resolutely antagonized, the League of Nations and its mandate system therefore remained the ultimate point of reference in fascist thinking in terms of status and organizational features of international organizations"[118].

Studying these organisations highlights the parallels in terms of institutional design and functionality between the League and fascist organisations, and the contrasts in terms of the bases for the legitimacy and authority of international organisations. Indeed, a key element of fascist internationalism was the process through which debates about authority or legitimacy were subsumed into a perceived need for functional cooperation. For instance, as historian Benjamin Martin wrote, "[*t*]he activities of the IRK focused on streamlining pan-European cooperation in fields like international private law, commercial law, and administrative law in a manner that served the creation of an integrated European political and economic space to be dominated by Nazi Germany"[119]. That is, its focus was not so much on theoretical debates about law – as, say, the *Institut du Droit International*[120] – but rather on harmonising functional aspects of international interactions.

The interest in functionalist approaches to fascist international order was not exclusive to the Nazis. In Italy, it was expressed in proposals for corporatist international organisation, such as Giuseppe de Michelis's 1935 book *World Reorganisation on Corporative Lines*[121], one of the

[117] Ibid., p.52. Emphasis added.
[118] Ibid., p.52.
[119] Martin: 2018, p.871.
[120] For which see Koskenniemi: 2004.
[121] Michelis: 1935.

earliest and most influential such proposals. Corporatist internationalism was a branch of fascism bent on 'organising the world' functionally along rationalist lines, arguing for the applications of the Fascist corporatist socio-economic model onto international relations. As Steffek notes, this was a particularly avant-garde and bureaucratic wing of fascism, largely populated by social planners centred around the Scuola di Scienze Corporative in Pisa, who "belonged to a modernist camp within Italy's fascist movement that Paolo Ungari called 'rationalizing fascism' [*fascismo rationalizzatore*], as opposed to the rivalling 'adventurous fascism' [*fascismo avventuriero*]"[122]. Their starting point was that "[*t*]he interdependencies in the global market required international cooperation to address the uneven distribution of labour, natural resources and capital across the globe. Only sustained international efforts at triangulation could bring these three resources fruitfully together"[123]. This 'triangulation' was between European powers and colonial territories under the auspices of a technocratic, economically-minded international organisation not unlike a League of Nations stripped of its legalistic (in the fascist view, hypocritically moralistic[124]) dimensions. This approach is, as we will discuss in chapter 5, not dissimilar to certain liberal functionalist approaches to internationalism – a similarity which prompted Steffek to conclude that "[*t*]he lesson for International Relations theory is that blueprints for international institutions can be connected to a wide variety of political ideologies. There is no reason to believe that any tradition of political thought is necessarily and eternally committed to internationalism, while others are principally hostile to it"[125].

Scholarly interest in fascist internationalism, overlooked until very recently, has spawned studies in many areas of international history, as we will discuss in further detail in chapter 5, such

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122 Steffek: 2015, p.4.
123 Ibid., p.9.
124 Mazower: 2012, p.182.
125 Steffek: 2015, p.3. Though note that the conception of 'internationalism' revealed by this quote is still somewhat static and hinting at the liberal variety: the point here surely is that this fascist alternative is also internationalist, only not liberal.

as the work of Spanish fascist health experts in building what they dreamt of as a 'new Europe'[126], the influence of early 20th century corporatists on international economic organisation[127], the Nazification of the International Police Commission (later Interpol) during the Second World War[128], the work of Helmer Rosting, a Danish fascist who was an official of the League secretariat[129], and the DKZ and Italian proposals of the 1930s for international cooperation[130]. Works such as these have begun to shed light on how many officials did not see liberal and fascist elements of international organisation as incompatible, and have inspired this thesis in its focus on applying a similar lens to Avenol's practice throughout the 1930s.

Indeed, bringing into IR the insights of this recent historiography on the multiplicity of internationalisms does three things which add to the value of this thesis. The first is the expansion of the term to encompass non-liberal internationalisms, in itself a valuable corrective, as we have discussed above. The second is highlighting the importance of practice: many of these actions, initiatives, or combinations were led by practitioners of international relations, either before or during the war, who discovered through trial and error the compatibilities between some of these internationalist systems – with sometimes significantly negative consequences. This thesis takes this approach even further, in focusing not only on practice but on international practice, on offices manned by individuals who were constantly asking themselves what it meant to act internationally.

The third thing this does is inspire us to ask how this move can help us construct a more sophisticated approach in IR to international institutions generally, and the League of Nations secretariat in particular, which we discuss in the next part of this section.

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126 Brydan: 2016.
127 Pasetti: 2017.
128 Deflem: 2002.
129 Gram-Skjoldager: 2016(i).
130 Martin: 2016, Herren: 2002, 2017.

(b.3) *Power, law, and authority in the international: Taking the (theoretical) road not taken*

In this last part of this section, therefore, I argue for how IR theory could be improved by taking into account the existence and inter-relation of multiple internationalisms and by grounding their study in the practice of an international office. Making these two moves leads us to reassess certain basic assumptions that IR theory has long made about the nature of international organisations, norms and institutions, and the interaction between power and authority.

A valuable starting point is returning to the interwar, wartime, and midcentury work of IR theorist John Herz. Herz proposed a combination of power and norms in his work on National Socialist conceptions and practices of international law, which did not gain widespread following in IR but which has recently been picked up by Casper Sylvest as an early reconceptualisation of the foundations of international organisation. This has inspired us to look again at Herz's examination of the relationship between power and authority, how they translate into different practices of international organisation, and how they can interact and compete with each other within an organisation. This is the process I identify when I chart the different internationalisms of Drummond and Avenol and Lester in the next chapters, and as such it is valuable to outline some of its theoretical pay-offs here.

Given the existence of a variety of internationalisms, and given how international organisations can thus serve different political ends, the lines between internationalisms are not clear-cut. Nor are the lines between terms like 'liberal' or 'fascist' as applied to the international field, as we have just seen. We need a new way of conceptualising terms such as these for the international space. For some time, the manner in which mainstream IR examines international organisations and international legal structures has been dominated by rationalist approaches, especially neo-liberal institutionalism. These approaches, while providing insight about some of

the functioning mechanisms and processes of international institutions, do not offer deep enough studies into their quality, or the fundamental direction of their internationalism. As Mazower has put it, "couched in the quasi-scientific language that this literature prizes, there is much talk about rationality and burden sharing, game theory, and the logic of risk. But […] it has rather little to say about the ideological goals behind liberal internationalism in its various incarnations" [131]. Less harshly, Sylvest has noted that, while neo-liberalism has given insight into things like norms design and variation, its lack of in-depth qualitative research "has been faulted for its conservative implications, its state-centrism, its impoverished conception of politics, and its exclusion of normativity"[132] (indeed, it is important to note that even neo-liberal institutional scholars have acknowledged some of these faults, calling for a 'richer institutionalism'[133] and a more nuanced view of 'hard and soft law'[134]). However, when it comes to the school that is neo-liberalism's main competition in the study of organisations, constructivism, Sylvest also finds it insufficient for studying the fundamental bases of international law and order. Constructivism, again, leaves "unspecified its conception of politics and [*fails*] to make clear what is distinctive about legal dynamics"[135]: that is, like rationalism (albeit with a more inclusive methodology), constructivism can inform us about the *process* of internationalism, or the 'degree of internationalism' in a given system, but not about its political basis or its strategic destination (i.e. the ideologies and political ends animating it).

As a solution, Sylvest proposes an approach which in researching and drafting this thesis I have found quite helpful, one that he calls 'realist liberal institutionalism', meaning a return to a form of classical realism in its acknowledgement of power, but adding a 'normative, global' outlook with 'proto-constructivist dimensions'. That is, an approach which "avoids state-centrism,

131 Mazower: 2012, pp.vx-xvi.
132 Sylvest: 2010, p.437.
133 Abbott: 2005 (also cited in Sylvest: 2010).
134 Abbott and Snidal: 2000 (also cited in Sylvest: 2010).
135 Sylvest: 2010, p.438.

appreciates functionalist dynamics, and shares traits with legal pragmatism's approach to law can offer a deep understanding of the demand for reliable international rules in particular issue-areas *and of the political interest and conflicts involved in that production, implementation, and enforcement*"[136]. Sylvest's own work on British liberal internationalism in the early 20th century[137] is an important source for chapter 4 of this thesis, but for our current purposes I would like to pick up a call he makes to return to the work of John Herz as an early example of this approach.

Herz, a German scholar of international politics and law, left Germany in the late 1930s and eventually found exile in the United States, where he worked until his death in 2005[138]. Although one of the main figures of classical realism (he coined the term 'security dilemma'), he is today much less studied than some of his contemporaries, such as Hans Morgenthau. Most remembered for his major books *Political Realism and Political Idealism* (1951) and *International Politics in the Atomic Age* (1959), his earlier work on international law, especially Nazi international law (which was, in fact, the subject of his first book, from 1938), is today much less known[139]. In those works, mainly from the late 1930s and 1940s, Herz tried to conceptualise Nazi views on international law into a bigger world view concerning the relationship between power and norms – a 'fascist internationalism' before this term was coined.

In chapter 5 this thesis deploys in greater detail Herz's analysis of Nazi views on international law, especially with regard to the League of Nations, but here it is important to highlight some of the main ways in which his approach and intellectual framework can provide a 'realist liberal institutionalist' way to fit the study of multiple internationalism within IR. In his

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136 Ibid.. Emphasis added.

137 Sylvest: 2009.

138 Interestingly, Herz first found work in the US in 1941, when he was hired to teach at Howard University by Ralph Bunche, then chairman of the political science department (Herz: 1984). Bunche would later become one of the key figures in the development of the UN secretariat, working in various high-level posts for over two decades, with three secretaries-general, and winning the Nobel Peace Prize in 1948 for his work in Palestine (For Bunche see especially Urquhart: 1993). Herz succeeded Bunche at Howard after Bunche left for the UN.

139 Stirk: 2006, p.289.

1939 paper 'The National Socialist Doctrine of International Law and the Problems of International Organization', Herz examined how Nazi jurists sought to combine, in theory and practice, two seemingly mutually exclusive elements: on the one hand, the racialist doctrine at the heart of Nazism, which makes an all-encompassing argument that all forms of international politics reflect the basic reality of human existence, the struggle between races; and, on the other hand, the political need for systems of international law and cooperation in the real world. He argues that, from Hitler's rise to power in 1933 onwards, "all their constructions, systems and theories have been attempts to reconcile the two tendencies: to erect a system based upon the recognition of international law and to safeguard the principles and dogmas of the racial theory of law"[140]. Trying to square this circle, Nazi jurists made theoretical concessions – for instance, there is no international jurisdiction by institutions, but there can be technical international organisations; or, there is no universal law, but international arbitration and mediation can be used for dispute resolution. Through such compromises they sought a 'minimalist', technocratic framework of international law (or they did so at least before the start of the Second World War – writing in 1939, Herz thought that these attempts at compromise were only 'transitory', and that implementing their racial policies during the war would gradually lead the Nazis to no longer feel the need to compromise politically and "then, and only then, we shall have a doctrine consistent both within itself and with general National Socialist Weltanschauung"[141]).

The extent to which the Nazi regime sought to legitimise itself internationally and thereby gain a measure of authority beyond mere hard power shows how the practice of international law and internationalism are not simply apolitical creations of the international ether, but are the fruit of political power negotiations – and even power politics makes concessions to norms and institutions. Herz developed these ideas further in his 1942 article 'Power Politics and World

[140] Herz: 1939, p.540.
[141] Ibid., p.554.

Organization', in which he argues for collective security mechanisms to be introduced in a postwar international order, not out of a liberal ideological impetus, but as the most sensible and rational apparatus for security in the modern world. Drawing on the realist balance-of-power realisation that "the world is no longer large enough to harbor several self-contained powers", he argues that "the growing interdependence of the nations of the world led to the contrary of what 'internationalists' [*i.e. liberal internationalists*] had hoped the result would be: instead of making peace and world order, it brought a struggle of powers to dominate the world in order to better secure the world"[142]. Therefore, and since the then-current legal system of 'negative obligations' was insufficient and the liberal view of world government too utopian, Herz argued for an effective mechanism of collective security: "Organized collective use of force, or the threat of its application, would be made the instrument for preventing or suppressing its individual application"[143]. In this he combines liberal elements, such as a sense of progressive historical evolution, into a realist framework, but with a fundamentally rationalist justification: "Turning from power politics to collective security [...] means the adoption of a more rational system of international relations, just as balance-of-power politics at one time meant a comparatively rational system based on the elimination of certain power-alien elements in favor of *raison d'état*"[144].

It was in this sense that Sylvest made his call for IR scholars to return to Herz's work as a useful way of conceptualising international organisation, taking into account both the realities of power and the realities of norms and institutions. Both aspects form the historical and political context in which international (and, for the purposes of this thesis, internationalist) interactions occur. In his 2010 article 'Realism and International Law: The Challenge of John Herz', Sylvest argues that IR has traditionally been so consumed with process-only approaches to international organisation that it has forgotten the importance of contextualising the processes within which that

142 Herz: 1942, p.1041.
143 Ibid., p.1047.
144 Ibid., p.1049.

organisation happens. Thus Herz's approach, aligning strategic preoccupations of state power with a serious appreciation for ethical considerations, and the institutional context (cultural, ideological, even personal) in which international law is created. It also includes an appreciation of the contingency and irrationality of politics, thus raising the need for a historical sensitivity and analysis of the actions of individuals.

Drawing on Herz's approach, therefore, means that the position towards internationalism that this thesis takes is not only providing a corrective to liberalism (in seeking to break its monopoly on internationalism and the 'inevitability' of history), but is also providing a critique to realism, in that it has failed to take account of (a) the realities of norms and institutions and how even regimes obsessed with power politics sought authority through international normative legitimacy, and (b) those broader considerations of where, how, and by whom, internationalist interactions happen. Some have argued that this kind of realism is as close to the English School's emphasis on norms and institutions as to realism[145]. Herz is certainly a realist; see his emphasis on the security dilemma, his preoccupation with anarchy, his 'sense of the fragility of the international order'[146] – even his autobiography, from 1984, is entitled 'Of Survival'. But his is a particular type of realism, of a classical realism richer, more inclusive, and more historically informed than the realisms and neorealisms that succeeded it – one which is, as Stirk argued, interesting precisely because of "the tension between that [*later*] realism and Herz's kind of realism"[147]).

Although not wishing to enter the debate about the precise nomenclature of such an approach (Sylvest's 'realist liberal institutionalism' seems apt), this thesis recognises the value of such a combination, and acknowledges the need, when studying the multi-faceted phenomenon of internationalism, to explore the history, intellectual context, combination of thought and practice

145 E.g. Little: 2003.
146 Stirk: 2005, p.295.
147 Ibid., p.306.

of the actual practitioners of internationalism. This thesis therefore pursues an approach that is constructivist in that it aims to take into account the richer institutionalist context in which a form of internationalism develops in an international organisation, but at the same time also seeks to identify the broader power relations involved in shaping the political end-goals of that internationalism.

This thesis, indeed, argues that these two elements – power politics and norms – were combined in the practice of internationalism within the League of Nations, especially of its secretary-generalship, because that office was meant to, on the one hand, lead and represent the international civil service of the League, and, on the other hand, work closely with and through member states, especially the big powers in the Council. Given this unique position, which I discuss in greater detail in the next two sections, the secretary-generalship is a particularly advantageous case study for analysing how power and authority inter-relate through the organisation, how different institutional practices sought to achieve the legitimacy of authority in different ways, and how these different approaches interacted, clashed, and competed within the secretariat.

In short, given the gap in the IR literature concerning internationalism, the variety and theoretical richness of the concept of internationalism, and the depth of theoretical benefits an analysis of it promises, we feel this thesis is justified in applying it to the League in order to understand how it was expressed in concrete practices. Having presented the theoretical background to this thesis, therefore, we now turn to the methodology, at both a strategic (2.2 below) and an applied (2.3) level.

2.2 *Methodology (Strategy): Internationalism, the Transnational Turn in League Scholarship, and the League Secretariat as Institutionalised Internationalism*

In this section, I argue, at a higher, strategic, level of methodology, why it is insightful to study internationalism through the prism of the League secretariat, and the secretary-generalship in particular, and how this can help us broaden our way of approaching internationalism in IR. First we examine the proposed methodology in terms of international organisations and practice (a), and, second, we analyse critically the scholarship on the League secretariat, identifying the significant gap that still exists concerning works that focus on the secretary-generalship as a forum of internationalist practice, particularly on the Avenol administration (b).

(a) *International organisation and practice*

As seen, IR scholars who have studied internationalism have approached it as ideology (Halliday), political answers to socio-economic issues (Navari), strategic choices (Ikenberry), or intellectual history (Rosenboim). None of these, however, focuses in any detail on the *practitioner* dimension: that is, on the creation and development of internationalism by those charged with making it happen. These officials, often dismissed as bureaucrats, have historically played a key role in shaping the meaning of internationalism within international organisations. Especially at the League secretariat which, as noted, was the first international civil service but left the definition of 'international' open, this role was crucial – particularly the role of the Secretary-General, who had the responsibility to create, promote, and enforce that definition. Their appearance as 'bureaucrats' was in fact very helpful; it was a power-hiding cloak: considered mere functionaries, they were left largely free to shape the meaning(s) of their practice.

Therefore, what I propose for the methodology of this thesis is something close to Barnett and Finnemore's research into how international agencies are set up as bureaucracies[148]. Therein officials derive autonomy and authority from legal delegation by states, or from a sense of moral imperative (e.g. Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees), or claims to expertise (e.g. International Monetary Fund). Through that authority, they exercise power via diffusion of meanings and norms and policy-making. These processes also develop in international organisations the pathologies of bureaucracies (already identified by Max Weber in the late 19th century, such as irrationality of rationalisation, bureaucratic universalism, normalisation of deviance, insulation etc.)[149].

This 'practice turn' approach is a valuable foundation, but this thesis also seeks to go beyond it in two areas. First, in showing how the bureaucrats keep shaping internationalist practice after they set up the agencies: indeed, as we will see, the history of the League secretariat is one of continuous bureaucratic creation and recreation. Second, it treats secretariat officials not only as bureaucrats *qua* bureaucrats, but also as representatives or illustrations of broader political internationalist trends. This is not a study about how bureaucrats isolate themselves in an organisation, but about how the organisation is a microcosm of internationalisms existing in the outside world, and how individuals in power positions responded creatively to that. This bureaucratic-practitioner type of study has rarely been made in historical cases.

Here, the work of Adler and Pouliot on the role of practice as a creative force within institutions, and the inter-relationship between different practices, is especially helpful. In their 2011 article 'International Practices', they argue that "[*w*]orld politics can be conceived as structured by practices, which give meaning to international action, make possible strategic interaction, and are reproduced, changed, and reinforced by international action and

[148] Barnett and Finnemore: 1999, 2004.
[149] Barnett and Finnemore: 2004, pp.172-173.

interaction"[150]. They define practices as 'competent performances': "practices are socially meaningful patterns of action, which, in being performed more or less competently, simultaneously embody, act out, and possibly reify background knowledge and discourse in and on the material world"[151]. This thesis explores such practice by an office just after it was created, and as it was still defining itself, and questioning that definition, in relation to an identity of internationalism, thus questioning how the practice of secretaries-general gave meaning to and shaped the office. This definition of practice is especially important when we focus on an office that, by its nature and legal remit, defined itself largely through its practice; the explicit mandate of the League Secretary-General, as we will see in chapters 3 and 4, was always very narrow and vague. This, combined with the needs of secretaries-general to remain discrete and self-effacing given the sensitivity of their work, meant that their office evolved largely through 'practice as competent performance'.

Additionally, this thesis analyses a practice not as a static phenomenon, but as it evolved throughout the nearly three decades of the League's existence. In the context of the practice evolution, Adler and Pouliot note that, "[*w*]hen studying international practices from a historical perspective, one has to look back to the generative relationships that made them possible, as well as the sociopolitical processes that allowed their diffusion"[152], which this thesis does by beginning chapter 3 with the creation of the office, and considering at different times the political and institutional atmosphere in which that office worked, allowing us to better understand its potentialities and constraints. Furthermore, this awareness helps us conceptualise the relationship between power and practice: while the secretary-generalship had little 'hard' power, its

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150 Adler and Pouliot: 2011, p.1.
151 Ibid., p.5.
152 Ibid., p.29.

officeholders, especially Drummond, managed to acquire a measure of power and influence through practice.

This kind of study, with its systematic analysis of practice, has rarely been applied to the League, and not to my knowledge to the secretary-generalship. Indeed, Adler and Pouliot use the term ‘international practices’ at a much broader level than this thesis does, defining them as “socially organized activities that pertain to world politics, broadly defined”[153] and suggest that “defining what counts as international practice and what does not is best left to practitioners themselves in their actual performance of world politics”[154]. While this might be a good idea in the context in which they are writing – the nomenclature differences between terms such as global, international, transnational etc. – for the purposes of this thesis it is very important to analyse what is an international practice. I do that by referring to the multiple meanings of ‘internationalism’ discussed above, and trying to identify connections between the practice of officials and the ‘international’ nature of those practices (i.e. their type of internationalism).

In this context, but broadening our lens to the level of the social space of the practices in question, the role of diplomacy as a formative process of international society is key. As Sending et al. put it, “[*d*]iplomacy is not reducible to an epiphenomenon of systemic imperatives, as in neorealism or, to a lesser extent, the English School. Instead, diplomacy is a socially emergent phenomenon and as such it produces effects of its own on world politics” [155]. Such was the case of the League’s internationalist practice. And, within that diplomacy, especially in the literature on international organisations, the role of individuals has often been neglected: as Rodogno et al. advocate in *The Routledge Handbook of International Organization*, we need to “investigate how and whether these individuals managed to shape the politics of the organisation on certain

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153 Ibid., p.6.
154 Ibid..
155 Sending et al.: 2015, pp.16-17.

issues"[156], as this thesis aims to do. For this, Herren suggests that we not only focus on the organisations themselves, but that we take "the sources their archives generate as a starting point for a methodological approach escaping the nation-state lens"[157], which this thesis does. Similarly, Kott argues that "international organizations can serve as 'observation posts', as social spaces which allow historians to trace border-crossing processes of human interaction, networking, exchange and circulation, as well as global conflicts and tensions" [158] – this is the aim of this thesis in contextualising the practice of secretaries-general in the context of broader internationalisms.

Such contextualisation, Herren argues, creates "an awareness that a global history of international organizations is still missing, and that institutional platforms and personal networks created by international organizations produced their own historicity that was separate from being merely a result or a special case of combined national histories"[159]. Doing this for the 1930s is crucial: "[*d*]ue to the impending upheaval of World War II, today's scholars are uneasy in discussing the twenty-first century's understanding of international organizations within the delicate timeframe of the 1930s. Challenging the connection between peace and international organization is, however, one of the crucial changes in this field" [160].

(b) *The gap in League secretary-generalship in internationalism studies*

Calls like these reinforce the validity of our high-level methodology of studying internationalism through the prism of high officials of the League secretariat. It is all the more relevant as, from the perspective of League scholarship, the secretary-generalship has remained

156 Rodogno et al.: 2013, p.97.
157 Auberer et al.: 2017, p.2.
158 Ibid..
159 Herren:2014, p.6.
160 Ibid..

underexamined – there is a clear need for research on that office which applies the practice turn approach discussed above alongside a theoretical and practical study of internationalism.

Research on the League secretariat has come in three waves: *first*, contemporaneous, or near-contemporaneous studies, often by former officials, were plentiful in the 1940s and 1950s; *second*, between the 1970s and 1990s there emerged a series of historical works on the League, and on the secretary-generalship as a political actor (mostly focusing on the UN, but some addressed the League); and, *third* and most significant to this thesis, the past decade has seen a renaissance in League studies, analysing various aspects of the secretariat from a transnational perspective. This last wave has been intermingled with the 'transnational turn' in historical studies examined above, and recent works on 20th century internationalism have retrieved the League as a case study. Nevertheless, there is still a significant gap concerning the secretary-generalship, especially when it comes to Avenol's administration in the 1930s. A brief overview of these waves helps pinpoint this gap.

The first wave, written mainly while the League was alive, or at least in living memory, flourished in the interwar and immediate postwar period, before the literature on international organisations became dominated by the UN[161] and offers valuable first-hand insights into the League. For instance, Francis Walters's 1952 *History of the League of Nations* is still the most complete single history of the League (including the secretariat[162] and early relations with the UN[163]), especially relevant as Walters was Deputy Secretary-General under Avenol[164]. An earlier work, quite helpful as an overview of the League's constitutional establishment in the 1920s, is Felix Morley's 1932 *The Society of Nations* – although limited in timeframe, it offers a detailed

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161 Pedersen in 2007 mentioned a bibliography of the League maintained by Indiana University with over 3,000 volumes, "a majority of which were published before 1950" (Pedersen: 2007, p.1091).

162 Walters: 1952, pp.75-80, 169-202, 556-560,801-810.

163 Ibid., pp.811-815.

164 For finding information on League officials and their connections to League bodies, an invaluable resource is Heidelberg University's *League of Nations Search Engine (LONSEA)*, available at www.lonsea.de.

description of the secretariat setting-up[165] and its executive functions[166]. Another valuable source of contemporaneous material, particularly on international officials, is Suzanne Basdevant's 1931 *Les Fonctionnaires Internationaux*[167] ('The International Civil Servants') – Basdevant (later Bastid) was a noted international jurist and judge at the International Court of Justice: this book, originally her law doctorate at the University of Paris, analyses international officials' legal status, as does Martin Hill's 1947 *Immunities and Privileges of International Officials*[168]. Hill's, a thorough overview of the diplomatic status granted League officials (and those of the UN's early years), provides valuable analyses of the formal independence accorded to the secretariat (an essential constituent of diplomatic practice). From the same period comes Egon Ranshofen-Wertheimer's 1945 *The International Secretariat*[169], which remains the most detailed and authoritative volume on the subject[170], covering every area of its activities. Both Hill and Ranshofen-Wertheimer were longtime high League officials (Hill between 1927-1946 and Ranshofen-Wertheimer between 1930-1940), thus offering a perspective that, although potentially biased due to their experience, provides unique insider knowledge into an organisation not known for transparency[171]. A precedent for Ranshofen-Wertheimer's work is a 1944 Chatham House booklet by a group of former League officials, *The International Secretariat of the Future*[172], which summarises the League secretariat structure – these books provided important and near-contemporaneous information throughout the research of this thesis.

As the League receded from memory and the UN expanded its activities in the 1960s and 1970s, a new crop of works went back to the League to try to uncover lessons which could be

165 Morley: 1932, pp.261-304.
166 Ibid., pp.305-337.
167 Basdevant: 1931.
168 Hill: 1947.
169 Ranshofen-Wertheimer(ii): 1945.
170 Pedersen: 2015(i), fn.13, p.425.
171 Gordenker: 2005, p.47.
172 Royal Institute of International Affairs: 1944.

applied to the UN. These constitute the only detailed analyses of the League secretary-generalship available, notably the works by James Barros of the University of Toronto and by the international lawyer Arthur Rovine. Barros produced political biographies of Drummond and Avenol: his 1979 *Office Without Power*, analyses Drummond's organisational innovation and leadership style, advocating his quiet behind-the-scenes diplomacy as the model for an efficient international official (arguing it is more generalisable and therefore more prescriptive than what he calls the 'Hammarskjöld model'[173]: "what the world needs is not secretaries-general who are publicly active but secretaries-general with discretion who are active behind the scenes and yet maintain the trust and confidence of [*member states, especially in the Security Council*]. By doing so they might develop some influence"[174]). Barros's 1969 *Betrayal From Within*, in turn, assesses Avenol quite negatively, stressing his biased diplomacy and rightist politics in the mid-1930s[175], while also briefly analysing Sean Lester's work[176] (on Lester, Douglas Gageby's 1999 *The Last Secretary-General*[177] is an invaluable resource – more journalistic than academic, but especially welcome given the rarity of works on Lester). Rovine's work follows the same model, with one notable advantage: his 1970 *The First Fifty Years: The Secretary-General in World Politics, 1920-1970* is the only work in the entire literature treating the League and UN secretaries-general with the same level of detail and a sense of continuity. He comes to the opposite conclusion to Barros, strongly supporting "an expansion of the capabilities and prerogatives of the Office as an essential element among the institutions required for the development of a rational world order system"[178]. Rovine's stated aim ("to make available a record of political activity for historians of international

173 Barros: 1979, pp.383-402.
174 Ibid., p.401.
175 Barros: 1969, pp.259-265.
176 Ibid., pp.211-234.
177 Gageby: 1999.
178 Rovine: 1970, p.9.

organization, and sufficient data for theoreticians to construct conceptual frameworks"[179]) is something later League scholars should be grateful for and which has inspired this thesis.

These works, however, offer no relationship between the practice of the secretaries-general and the notion of internationalism(s). My argument, as we will see in chapters 4 and 5, differs from Barros and Rovine in that they still followed the national/international and political/technical dichotomies. Barros, for instance, noting that the secretariat was still largely staffed by nationality, that Drummond remained close to the Foreign Office throughout his League tenure, and that his practice was widely accepted, concludes that Drummond was not really an internationalist, and that the notion of the secretariat as an international civil service is a 'myth'[180]. Similarly, Rovine, in his analysis of Avenol, argues that he was so political, so right-wing, so sympathetic to the fascists, that he could not possibly have been an internationalist; rather, he argues, Avenol pursued "what he viewed as correct French foreign policy"[181]. A crucial argument of this thesis is that, by introducing the notion of multiple internationalisms into the study of these officials, we can achieve more nuance in our assessment of their practice. Therefore, I argue, Drummond and Avenol indeed remained close to their governments, and both were indeed political (if in different ways), but this did not preclude them from also being internationalists. Indeed, they represented and worked at a combination of nationalism and internationalism, liberal imperialism, and fascist internationalism. This nuance does not discredit their practice as a worthy subject of study; on the contrary, it makes it all the more interesting.

In constructing this nuance, I draw largely on the third wave of League scholarship. This wave, starting in the mid-2000s and led by the transnationalism scholars such as Susan Pedersen

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179 Ibid., p.11.

180 Barros: 1979, p.60. Barros still credits Drummond and the secretariat with considerable institutional innovations in international relations – he criticises the idea that they were truly international: rather, he argued that they represented an in-between space between national governments and the international sphere.

181 Rovine: 1970, p.137.

at Columbia and Patricia Clavin at Oxford, has brought about a renaissance in League studies, analysing it with broader historical lenses and a more systematic methodology and analytical framework. Pedersen's 2007 essay 'Back to the League of Nations'[182] marked a watershed by outlining work being done on the League and highlighting the relevance of that research to the post-Cold War world: from new sovereignty claims to minorities protection systems to international administration (such as of Danzig or the Saar), many of the topics the League had dealt with, which had fallen into obscurity, were suddenly topical. This wave has thus changed the question usually posed in League studies: "in contrast to a postwar historiography inclined to view the League from the standpoint of 1933 or 1939, the relevant question now is not 'why the League failed' but rather the more properly historical question of what it did and meant over its twenty-five-year existence"[183]. This means focusing not only on the most studied branches of the League's work (peacekeeping and the managing of sovereignty relations), but especially on the so-called 'technical' work of the secretariat, such as economic cooperation, medical and hygiene coordination, the international mandates system, legal organisation etc.: the supposedly apolitical mechanisms for international collaboration on transnational problems. The crucial point is that to call these 'technical' bodies is a misnomer: they served very political functions, either directly (e.g. international administration) or through indirect 'functionalist' approaches (e.g. economic cooperation). In either case, League officials were 'institutional entrepreneurs'[184], seeking to operationalise and expand their mandates beyond the technical towards the political, thereby having a significant international impact[185].

182 Pedersen: 2007.

183 Ibid., p.1092.

184 Ibid., p.1108.

185 Indeed, calling these bodies 'technical' was often a strategic choice: "[*t*]he key to understanding the often seemingly abstruse functioning and structure of the League was that its rules and procedures were deliberately kept ambiguous in order to provide the flexibility to pursue political negotiations by a variety of means, frequently under the guise of 'technical' or functional discussions" (Clavin: 2005, p.491).

Although the secretary-generalship straddles the branches mentioned above, not only the 'technical', the concept of institutional entrepreneurship also applies to it; especially as it was the office overseeing the entire mechanism. Given that, in the years in which the League was setting up its structure (and throughout its history) the Secretary-General played a crucial role in defining that structure, it is an office all the more important here even then in later-stage, more established organisations. Here, applying to the League Claude's helpful visualisation of the UN as two institutions[186] (the 'First UN' comprising the internal bureaucracy, the secretariat and related hierarchies and the 'Second UN' as the collectivity of member-states, which uses the First UN structure to assist its deliberations and actions) highlights the role of the secretary-generalship: especially in the 1920s and early 1930s, the League Secretary-General played a role not only of managing the 'First League' and aiding the 'Second', but effectively bridging that divide as member-states and international officials were learning to work through a new organisation and jostling for position within it. As we will see, internal 'First League' actions contributed to expanding the role which the secretariat could play in the 'Second League', and external constraints from member-states affected how the secretariat was built up.

In this context, two very recent works marking the centenary of the League have added to the insights available about the secretariat generally[187]. One is an edited volume, *The League of Nations – Perspectives from the Present*, which contains essays on different areas of the League's work, from employment practices in the secretariat to the architecture of the Palais des Nations. Its introduction notes how the League "was a laboratory of global governance at the time, but also that it is […] a laboratory for international historians today"[188]. In a chapter about the Secretary-

[186] Claude: 1996.

[187] Indeed, it should be noted that the field of League studies have grown considerably in recent years: between the time I started on this doctoral project, in 2015, and the submission of this thesis, in early 2020, a huge number of highly interesting works have been published on different areas of the League's work, as a cursory glance at the footnotes and the Bibliography show.

[188] Gram-Skjoldager and Ikonomou: 2019, p.14.

General, I have drawn on the research project of this thesis and argued for the combination of practice studies and internationalism studies to create a new analysis of the office[189]. The second work is an homage to Drummond, *Eric Drummond and his Legacies: The League of Nations and the Beginnings of Global Governance*[190]. Edited by a group of current and former international civil servants, this is a rich and useful resource on Drummond, especially as it draws on previously unearthed private materials. I draw on it in chapter 5, but this work still does not negate the originality of the present thesis in that the book is a more straight-forward narrative of Drummond's administrative creations, neither incorporating the concept of internationalism nor discussing his political and diplomatic work in detail. Additionally, it does not cover Avenol and Lester, which this thesis does in order to show not only how an institutional practice was established by Drummond, but how it was challenged and adapted by his successors.

Having had an appreciation for how the historiography on the League has developed, we can see how valuable it is for IR that the historical work on the secretariat becomes connected with the broader research on internationalism. This thesis aims to take that connection further, in linking the secretary-generalship's policy-making to internationalism studies in IR and international history, with the crucial turning point concerning Avenol in the 1930s, when Drummond's established practices were challenged and the flavour of the Secretary-General's internationalism changed dramatically. In this it answers a call from Herren: "[t]he increasing interest in the political value of apparently non-political and technical interventions indicates future fields of research: policy-making in international administration appears to be of increasing importance […] in a way that makes the 1930s a field of reference for times of transition beyond the rationale of chronologies"[191].

189 Moraes: 2019, p.51.
190 Mcfadyen et al.: 2019.
191 Herren:2014, p.7.

In brief, amidst all of this literature, studying the secretary-generalship in a continuous and systematic fashion has remained a blind spot. Some scholars assume that the office of the Secretary-General was only administrative, subservient to the Council powers and therefore not 'technical' enough, lacking in transnationalist bona fides. In this thesis I aim to show that, on the contrary, studying the League secretary-generalship shows us an area where the application of a key insight of recent internationalism literature (the plurality of internationalisms) is most evident, and that this opens up rich avenues for debate about the role of power and authority in international relations. It is precisely because the Secretary-General was so close to, and constrained by, the big powers (more so than some more 'technical' sections, as we will see) that his office was less insulated from the winds of internationalism blowing from those powers. This will allow us to study this office analysing the interaction not just between nationalism and internationalism, but between different internationalisms.

2.3 *Methodology (Applied) and Sources: The League Secretary-Generalship and Internationalism as an Organisational Practice*

Having established the higher-level methodology used in this thesis, we now turn to the applied dimension of that methodology and its sources. Its basic empirical approach is historical, combining primary and secondary research. At one level, it incorporates aspects of historical sociology, in analysing the inter-relation between international structure, individual agency, and historical developments in an institution's development[192]. This is appropriate in studying the evolution of an institutional practice: as Christopher Hill argued 25 years ago, "instead of decking out abstract generalisations in historical garments we should take a leaf from the historical sociologists […] by providing interpretations of *patterns of change* in the international system and

[192] Rosenberg *et al.*: 2010, p.2.

the behaviour of its actors"[193]. In this sense, this thesis follows a pattern of change across the development of the League: that is, the creation of a practice in the secretariat, whereby officials changed from representing their own nations to representing the international organisation, and proposes a new interpretation of that change, through internationalism. This echoes Adler and Pouliot's differentiation between practice and behaviour or action: *behaviour* is an activity; *action* is behaviour plus meaning; *practices* "are patterned actions that are embedded in particular organised contexts"[194].

Analysing individual practitioners embedded within institutions in order to learn about those institutions has recently become "increasingly popular in the study of international organisations […] to move past the formal structures and procedures and focus on the people populating the organisation"[195]. Evidence of this is the project *IO-BIO: Biographical Dictionary of Secretaries-General of International Organizations*, a fast-growing online resource hosted by the University of Radboud providing biographical entries on several dozen heads of international organisations[196]. Although it is outside the scope of this thesis to analyse the way IR has historically underplayed the role of individuals relative to the influence of structural forces (be they material, geographical, ideological etc.), a brief discussion of some IR approaches to the role of executive leadership in international organisations is relevant. It will help clarify our application of the broader strategic methodology discussed above to the specific case of the League secretary-generalship.

Famously, Robert Cox's 1969 'The Executive Head' starts with the assertion that "[*t*]he quality of executive leadership may prove to be the most critical single determinant of the growth in scope and authority of international organization"[197]. He begins the discussion of the head of an

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[193] Hill and Beschoff: 1994, p.9.
[194] Adler and Pouliot: 2011, p.5.
[195] Kahlert and Gram-Skjoldager: 2019, p.20.
[196] Reinalda et al., see www.ru.nl/fm/iobio.
[197] Cox: 1969, p.205. See also an expanded discussion of Cox's thesis in Cox and Jacobson:1974.

international organisation based on Ernst Haas's earlier tripartite functionalist model of executive leadership ((i) having a clear ideology and strategy for how to achieve one's goals; (ii) building an independent international bureaucracy committed to (i); and (iii) making coalitions and alliances to support goals[198]), but notes that Haas overestimated the power of initiative of an international organisation leader. Therefore, Cox sets out to build a broader framework around Haas's model, which studies those three elements but within the concentric circles of a Secretary-General's relationships to his or her staff, member-states, and the international system – that is, it introduces these three levels of *constraints* on an executive's room for action. This framework is broadly similar to what this thesis does in practice, but this thesis offers something new to it by combining the more 'mechanical' analysis of the Secretary-General's influence with the richer context of internationalism in that influence.

Cox offered a clear guide for studying the role of individuals within international organisations. This is not to say that this thesis advocates for what Cox called a "great-man theory of international organization"[199] (neither did he), but simply for an approach that recognises the impact individuals have on the process of international relations.

Where to draw the line of that impact is a contentious matter. Andrew Moravcsik's 1999 study of international executive leadership in the treaty-making process of European integration, 'Supranational Entrepreneurs and Bureaucratic Cooperation', judged Cox's approach not rigorous enough methodologically and difficult to replicate empirically[200], therefore less transferable to other institutions as a theory of leadership. Instead, Moravcsik argued for a still narrower conception of the potential of international executive leadership, in which international leaders seek out space for action within the broader strategic considerations of states. Although in the perspective of this thesis Moravcsik's framing of those considerations in game-theoretical

198 See e.g. Haas: 1964.
199 Cox: 1969, p.209.
200 Moravcsik: 1999(i), pp.269-270.

bargaining terms goes too far in seeking to isolate, abstract, and generalise[201] leadership models from a highly specific and to a large extent circumstantial process of international integration[202] (thereby, as argued above, leaving too much out in terms of the historical and political meaning of these models), his broader call to moderate the focus on individual leaders with considerations of the institutional and political (national and international) constraints within which they operate is a healthy reminder, which we heed throughout our analysis. Moreover, helpfully for our purposes, Moravcsik also stressed the entrepreneurial aspect of the executive head of international organisations – the structural creativity both internal (in setting up organisations) and external (in that case, the development of international law). The key question is how to approach the inter-relation between the individual and the structure.

As noted above, the secretary-generalship, given its position within the League structure, offers clear advantages in analysing this question. One way this thesis seeks to answer is by combining the study of the secretary-generalship with a historical analysis of internationalism, thereby grounding it and offering a distinct contribution in the way in which heads of international organisations could exercise effective leadership.

As Oran Young observed, "entrepreneurial leadership [*in international organisations*], which subsumes a variety of forms of facilitation, conciliation, mediation, and so forth, achieves results by helping parties locked into competitive-cooperative interactions to solve or circumvent a range of bargaining problems"[203]. Young argued that international leader-entrepreneurs

[201] Ibid. p.269.

[202] As discussed in section 2.2 above, this approach leaves too much out in terms of politics, history, and the content of international law. This is a point noted by Oran Young in his critique of Moravcsik; that the process of European integration not only is too different from broader, more global international organisations to be so easily generalisable, but that even within the European process not all treaty-making steps followed the rational actor profit-maximisation model, instead often following highly historically specific, circumstantial, and contingent dynamics depending on the country, region, or industry area in question (Young: 1999, p.809). Indeed, in the 20 years since Moravcsik's piece was written, we have gained more examples of processes within European integration (and disintegration) itself, such as the UK's withdrawal from the EU, which would prove very difficult to frame in the same rationalist models of 1999.

[203] Young: 1999, p.807.

"influence the process by 'helping the parties to help themselves', a role they are able to play *because they are not protagonists in the bargaining process itself*"[204] – in this last observation Young highlights (without introducing the concept) the value of studying international executive heads through the concept of internationalism. That is, that they derive a large amount of their authority from the fact (or at least the perception) that they are internationalist, servants of the organisation itself.

As discussed in the Introduction above where we introduce our practice-politics-authority framework, what power secretaries-general managed to develop was inextricably linked with the perception of their office as 'outside of the game'. And, as we will see throughout this thesis, the individuals occupying the office saw themselves in these terms. 'Internationalism as an organisational practice', in short, was the way in which the heads of this crucial international institution sought to establish and develop their office. Furthermore, by grounding this leadership-entrepreneurship in historical interpretations of internationalism, this thesis seeks to offer both a framework for theorising the executive leadership of international heads while remaining attuned to their historical context and political constraints.

This approach is all the more suitable for a study of the League, given the pioneering nature of its secretariat, the amount of innovative bureaucratic creativity it generated, and the fact that so many of its top officials went on to have long careers at the League and other international organisations. As League scholar Haakon Ikonomou has noted, "the first cohorts of international bureaucrats wielded a disproportionate amount of administrative power. Some […] would develop entire sub-fields of international governance"[205]; he therefore advises that we "need to consider historical contingencies and biographical trajectories just as carefully as we analyse institutional

[204] Ibid.. Emphasis added.
[205] Ikonomou: 2019, p.120.

structures, political procedures and administrative norms"[206]. This is the applied methodology of this thesis.

As noted, this thesis has the additional layer of doing so in a historical setting, where the study of practice or of individuals in IR has not yet developed in any great detail. Therefore, a very useful guide for my research was Marc Trachtenberg's *The Craft of International History*, which notes the importance, when writing an IR thesis, of being able to identify opposing narratives of an event, or phenomenon, and singling out points of disagreement, which one can then check against the empirical research to identify the creation of narratives and develop one's own interpretation[207]. Specifically, in doing this, our methodology involves primary and secondary research into the development of the secretariat and internationalisms in the period. Although the secondary literature, discussed in 2.1 and 2.2 above, provides important insights, this thesis relies as much on primary archival work. This has been conducted in the following archives:

(a) the *League of Nations Archives*, at the UN in Geneva, which I visited in 2016 and 2019, and which provided very helpful evidence on (i) the development of the secretariat generally, (ii) the role of individuals therein, and (iii) the relations between those individuals and member states. Particularly used for this thesis have been the following records:

- the Registry ('R') files, containing the secretariat papers;
- the Drummond Papers, the Avenol Papers, and the Lester Papers;
- the Personnel files, containing material on other individuals working in the secretariat; and

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206 Ibid..

207 Trachtenberg: 2006, pp.79-139.

- the minutes of the Directors' Meetings, held between the heads of section of the secretariat and the Secretary-General.

(b) the *UN Archives* in New York, which I visited in 2017, and which provided documentary evidence on the creation and development of the UN secretariat and administrative aspects, with special regard for the League-UN transition and the transmission of practices;

(c) *The National Archives* at Kew, London, which I visited throughout the writing of this thesis, and which provided a wealth of evidence on the establishment of the League and UN secretariats, since Britain was intimately involved in both creations, and especially on Drummond's administration at the League (since he had come from the Foreign Office, returned to it on leaving the League, and kept close contact with British officials throughout);

(d) The *Cecil Papers* at the British Library in London, which I visited throughout the writing of this thesis, and which contain valuable material on the League (Lord Cecil was a key agent in setting up the League and remained involved with it throughout its existence);

(e) The *League of Nations Official Papers* at the Bodleian Law Library at the University of Oxford, which I visited throughout the writing of this thesis, and which contain thorough records of the League's official publications (e.g. resolutions, public circulars, reports etc.); and,

(f) The *Deutsche Kongress-Zentrale Archives* at the Hoover Institution at Stanford University, which I visited in 2018, and which contain a wealth of material on the formation of the DKZ, on the data it collected on international organisations, and on new organisations that it championed.

Building on Trachtenberg's advice, there are three practical levels of analysis this thesis engages in: (i) identification and interpretation of the constitutions and mandates given to the secretaries-general in their establishment and in key operations, (ii) analysis of the interpretations of those mandates by key actors, and (iii) analysis of sources relating to those actions which indicate individuals' views on the secretariat's development and international position, in relation to broader internationalist trends.

While the three levels involve both primary and secondary sources, level (i) specifically involves legal documents constituting secretariat mandates generally and operational mandates specifically (e.g. the League Covenant, the UN Charter, staff regulations, Council and Assembly resolutions etc.); level (ii) involves a broader pool of published and archival material on the operationalisation and positioning of the secretariat's mandates (e.g. internal documents, minutes, public or internal statements, communiqués, circulars etc.); last, level (iii) involves the relationship between the documents identified in the two previous levels and the broader political context in which practices were formed. This system allows me to explore the relationship between sources of law/mandates and their operationalisation and the internationalist tendency which such work related to (that relationship constituting the key dynamic of practice), thus permitting me to establish a clearer picture of when and how certain practices began or changed.

This framework helps me outline the evolution of internationalism as an organisational practice. In order to identify actors' construction of that practice, each of the following chapters focus on one secretary-general and on the brands of internationalism they are related to. Within each chapter, one section analyses the internationalist practice of each secretary-general, with concern for both their 'internal' work (i.e. intra-League: administration, management, leadership etc.) and 'external' work (representing the League in the outside world, conducting dispute resolution, political and diplomatic activities etc.). This section is, therefore, heavily drawn from primary research. Another section in each chapter analyses the internationalist trends we can

identify in that secretary-general's practice, contextualising it and seeking connections between different internationalisms; it is, therefore, drawn from a combination of primary and secondary sources. Combined, the two sections seek to chart the creation, evolution, competition, and adaptation of different practices within the same office.

2.4 *Expected Contribution*

This thesis, therefore, aims to contribute to the IR literature on international organisation, diplomacy, law, and the interwar period by developing in further detail than has been done so far the relationship between internationalism and the independent work of the League of Nations Secretary-General. By bringing into IR insights from the recent historical scholarship into internationalism and combining them with the established IR literature, it seeks to introduce greater nuance to our study of international organisations in a practical, applied way. Moreover, it aims to offer an innovative interpretation of internationalism by treating it as an organisational practice, which is particularly relevant when studying the case of the League secretary-generalship – this not yet been done even in the recent historical scholarship on the League. This thesis also seeks to contribute to this recent League historiography, showing how the Office of the Secretary-General was a revolutionary actor in international relations, the template for the UN secretariat, and a valuable case study of international agency in its own right. In theoretical terms, the study of multiple internationalisms competing within an international organisation, the combination of internationalism and the secretary-generalship, and the study of that office as an organisational practice raise important questions for IR about the relationship between power, legitimacy, and authority.

3. BUREAUCRATIC ENTREPRENEURSHIP: HANKEY, DRUMMOND, AND THE CREATION OF THE LEAGUE SECRETARIAT, 1918-1919

"[*W*]e secretaries soon discovered that we must find ourselves what our work should be and then persuade either the Prime Minister himself or some department to refer it formally to us."[208]

Sir Maurice Hankey

A century ago, as the victors of the First World War gathered in Paris to set the terms of the peace and the basis for postwar international organisation, the structure and powers of the League secretariat and its secretary-generalship gradually emerged out of diplomatic negotiations. The provisions for its existence, structure, and legal powers are outlined in Article 6 of the League of Nations Covenant, which came into force on 10 January 1920 as Part I of the Treaty of Versailles and the associated peace treaties.

This chapter analyses those negotiations and the models and templates that fed into the creation of the secretariat. In order to fully understand the legal and political powers which the League's constitution, the Covenant, gave its top officials, and to analyse how those officials interpreted and exercised such powers, we begin the empirical part of this thesis analysing the debates and reasoning surrounding the creation of that constitution. Doing so tells us much about how the secretariat and its secretary-generalship were envisaged, why models were proposed, accepted, and discarded, and how radically different the implications to international relations of different models would be. This chapter aims to show that the ultimate construction was not

208 Hankey: 1961, p.52.

circumstantial but deliberate, reflecting an innovative vision of international organisation – one directly shaped by the practice of individuals being considered for the top role.

It makes this case in three parts. The first part (3.1) analyses early models for the secretariat, especially by British official Sir Maurice Hankey, which did not conceive of it as an international body, but rather a permanent conference. It explores the legal and political debates from which the secretary-generalship arose, showing how the shift from permanent conference to international secretariat and from 'World Chancellor' to 'Secretary-General' paved the way for the development of an international organisational bureaucracy. The second part (3.2) analyses the proposed plans for the League and the secretary-generalship once the secretariat model had been adopted. It examines the role of Eric Drummond, who went on to become the first Secretary-General, in exercising bureaucratic entrepreneurship to create a new international body through practices that were nominally technical but actually had considerable political and diplomatic influence. The third part (3.3) examines the organisational genealogy of that bureaucratic entrepreneurship within the context of the development of the 'secretariat' model in the British civil service in the early 20th century. It argues that although Hankey did not advocate an international secretariat for the League, he was instrumental in inspiring that body through his work in Whitehall: Drummond's League creation was a close adaptation of the model Hankey had developed in Britain, through the Committee of Imperial Defence, the Cabinet Office, and the interwar allied councils. Last, a coda (3.4) summarises the main arguments of this chapter.

Studying the origin of the League's secretary-generalship, which subsequently served as a model for the UN and several other organisations, helps us identify its potential and limitations, and better understand how its creators envisaged pursuing avenues for political influence. Analysing how such influence was developed within the British civil service, and comparing that to the international sphere, clarifies how a certain brand of internationalism – originating in a need for more efficient imperial administration and centralised coordination during wartime – gave rise

to a mode of bureaucratic politics that would shape the Secretary-General's office for years to come.

3.1 *Pre-International Secretariat Plans*

In hindsight, that an international organisation with officials serving it would emerge post-war feels like a given. In the past century we have seen an explosion of international organisations and international civil servants, both global and regional, so that we take their existence somewhat for granted. Yet, at the end of the First World War this was anything but: each decision taken during the Paris peace conference, including concerning the League's officialdom, was a deliberate choice, shaped by the officials negotiating it and, importantly, by those who would ultimately staff it.

Gradually, during the negotiations over the League's charter between late 1918 and 1919, the organisation's administrative scaffolding gradually emerged as a matter of debate. The League of Nations Commission, the group tasked by the allies with designing the League, discussed several drafts of the Covenant, reflecting different visions of the organisation and its secretariat, each with a particular meaning for international relations. Here we focus mainly on the provisions of the Covenant relating to the secretariat and the secretary-generalship, namely what would become Article 6 of the Covenant, and the debates surrounding them[209].

The earliest plans for the new international organisation, dating from the final months of the war, did not address the secretariat specifically: the *Phillimore Plan* of 20 March 1918 and the *House Plan* of 16 July made no reference to the League's administrative infrastructure[210]. The first mention is found in President Wilson's *First Draft* (15 August 1918), but even then it only

[209] For a broader history of the Covenant's creation, see Miller: 1928 and Walters: 1952, vol.1.
[210] Ranshofen-Wertheimer(ii): 1945, p.13.

warranted a brief mention, proposing that the League's Assembly "shall organize a Secretariat to act as their ministerial agency"[211]. Building on this, the major impetus for the formation of the secretariat came in late 1918, with two drafts by the British Empire team in the League Commission, one by General Jan Smuts of South Africa and the other by Lord Robert Cecil of Great Britain.

On 16 December, Smuts circulated to the Commission a pamphlet entitled *The League of Nations: A Practical Suggestion*, thereafter the *Smuts Plan*[212]. This, says an early scholar of the League, "came closer than any of its predecessors to the ultimate arrangement"[213] of the organisation: indeed, Smuts's proposals for the division of power between the Assembly and the Council and for the latter's composition (Britain, France, Italy, Japan, and the USA (then still expected to join) plus rotating members) are remarkably similar to what would be agreed in the Covenant. Most relevant for our purposes, Smuts was the first to advocate that the League have a secretariat with a clearly defined political mandate, expanding on Wilson's earlier mention of a 'ministerial' body to propose that "the head office organization will have to be like that of a general staff which studies and watches closely all conditions anywhere developing which might call for action or counsel on the part of the League"[214]. Interestingly, Smuts did not yet foresee the secretariat as a central institution, outlining the League's 'three branches' as being the General Conference (i.e. the Assembly), the Council, and the 'Judiciary' (later to become the Permanent Court of International Justice). Still, if Wilson was the first to put the secretariat's existence on the Commission's agenda, Smuts was the first to begin to sketch out its functions, however broadly.

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211 Quoted in Miller: 1928, p.12.
212 Ranshofen-Wertheimer(ii): 1945, p.13.
213 Morley: 1932, p.21.
214 Quoted in Ibid., p.25.

The following day, Lord Cecil circulated to the British War Cabinet in London a draft[215], thereafter the *Cecil Sketch*, which was subsequently widely circulated to the conference, with minor revisions, in early January 1919. Cecil, an enthusiastic internationalist, had been recently appointed by the Foreign Office to handle, within the British delegation to Paris, all things League-related, and eagerly engaged with emerging proposals for the organisation. Although his *Sketch*'s views of the League's overall structure still reflected the "psychology of the Congress of Vienna"[216], representing a balance-of-power model more than a collective security one, when it came to the secretariat and the secretary-generalship it was innovative. It called for a 'General Secretary' to head a 'permanent secretariat' in charge of the League's administrative work and, notably, called the great powers to choose, "if possible […] a national of some other country [*i.e. other than the great powers*]"[217] for greater impartiality. Throughout the conference, as we will see, Cecil's practical diplomacy would play a crucial role in the secretariat's emergence, and the selection of the first Secretary-General[218].

At this early stage, the *Smuts Plan* and the *Cecil Sketch* galvanised the League Commission into thinking about the secretariat as a serious part of the international organisation and, throughout early 1919, as the Commission began working in earnest, its proposals gradually developed the conception of the secretariat in further detail. Wilson's *Second Draft* (20 January 1919) made detailed reference to a 'permanent Secretariat', which would be concerned not only with "the study and systematic consideration of international questions with which the Council may have to deal, or of questions likely to lead to international complications or disputes", but also with "taking the necessary steps to establish and maintain proper liaison"[219] with member states and agencies around the world. On 27 January Cecil agreed on a draft of the Covenant with David Hunter Miller,

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[215] Ibid., p.27.
[216] Ibid., p.28.
[217] Ibid..
[218] For a detailed account of the Commission's work and of Cecil's views of the League, see Cecil: 1941.
[219] Miller: 1928, p.67.

an international lawyer from the US delegation, which, following a revision by Sir Cecil Hurst, legal adviser at the Foreign Office, became known as the *Hurst-Miller Draft*. This draft's wording is, as we can see below, very similar to that which ultimately instituted the secretariat in Article 6 of the Covenant:

Hurst-Miller Draft	Covenant
"The permanent Secretariat of the League of Nations shall be established at _, which shall constitute the capital of the League [*the city in question was still being debated*[220]]. The Secretariat shall comprise such secretaries and staff as may be required under the general direction and control of a Chancellor of the League by whom they shall be appointed"[221].	"Article 6 (1) The permanent Secretariat shall be established at the Seat of the League. The Secretariat shall comprise a Secretary General and such secretaries and staff as may be required. […] (3) The secretaries and staff of the Secretariat shall be appointed by the Secretary General with the approval of the Council. […]"

Table 1: Draft wording for the creation of the League secretariat

Following the *Hurst-Miller Draft*, there were also Italian and French drafts concerning the League and the secretariat circulated in January 1919 ahead of the Commission's first meeting, but these ultimately received scant attention[222], although for different reasons. On the one extreme, the Italian draft was not advanced enough, considering the secretariat's duties as essentially secretarial ("to prepare and coordinate the business of the Conferences, to record all decisions, and to deal with the documents concerned"[223]); while the French draft was perhaps too advanced, suggesting that among the secretariat's functions would be "everything relating to the organisation of the joint forces [*of member states*] and the eventual conduct of military operations"[224] – that is,

220 My note. For the discussions surrounding the location of the League, see Morley: 1932, pp.113-114; Walters: 1952, pp.113-128.
221 Miller: 1928, p.143.
222 Ranshofen-Wertheimer(ii): 1945, p.17.
223 Quoted in Ranshofen-Wertheimer(ii): 1945, p.15.
224 Ibid..

a proto-international army, an idea promptly rejected by the USA and Britain. Therefore, since there was agreement among the Commission members that there would be a permanent secretariat, with more than secretarial functions but not going so far as being a general staff coordinating military action, the *Hurst-Miller Draft* was an attractive midway proposal at the Commission's first meeting on 3 February 1919. As we will see, this tension at the heart of the secretariat – that it should occupy a space somewhere between a 'support staff' and a forceful power – has marked the evolution of the office ever since.

The subsequent Commission discussions, and the various plans for the secretariat generally and the secretary-generalship specifically, reflect different views of the role that an international organisation and its officials should play. One important thread to highlight is that, from this early stage, the evolving concept of the secretariat was significantly shaped by the men considered for the top role: the diplomats and officials under consideration, either through active drafting or indirectly, decisive roles in shaping the creation and the format of the position. This marks the beginning of a central dynamic analysed in this thesis: the creative role of individual officials in shaping an international structure.

To begin with, the title itself was originally different: as we can see from the Hurst-Miller wording in Table 1 above, the head of the League was initially envisaged to be the 'Chancellor' – this title was used throughout the allies' drafts in late 1918 and early 1919, and the idea was that this would be a well-renowned statesman of international stature, who would preside over the League as a kind of 'international arbitrator'. The British official Philip Noel-Baker, Cecil's assistant at the conference, wrote that it was "hoped that the 'Chancellor' would be a statesman of great international position, who should be in his own person the embodiment of the League and the guardian of the Covenant" and "that his relation to the members of the Council should be that of an equal among equals, and that his international authority would be a factor of great importance

in establishing the practical utility and the moral authority of the League"[225]. That is, not only was the 'Chancellor' meant to have an equal position to member states, but he (all the candidates considered were men) was meant to embody a degree of moral authority somewhat above states.

For a role of such magnitude, an exceptionally well-respected person was required. Cecil took the initiative in sounding out potential candidates and, over the 1918-1919 year-end holidays discussed possible picks with members of the British War Cabinet in London and of the American delegation to Paris. His thinking coalesced around Greek Prime Minister Eleftherios Venizelos, widely respected as an experienced diplomat and politician and who had been staunchly supportive of the Allies during the war (despite King Constantine's desire to remain neutral: when Constantine was forced into exile in 1917, Venizelos brought Greece into the war alongside the allies). This was a popular choice: Venizelos enjoyed Wilson's admiration (the President would call him "the biggest man [*I*] met"[226]), good relations with Britain and France, and immense fame at Paris – he was dubbed by one observer "the greatest Greek statesman since Pericles"[227]. Of special relevance to the secretary-generalship, "like any leader of a small state interested in maintaining the postwar status quo Venizelos was 'very keen' […] on the idea of the League"[228]. Cecil's choice, therefore, was enthusiastically accepted by the British and the Americans as well as by the other members of the Commission. But, to their disappointment, when Cecil approached him, Venizelos politely declined[229]: he was concerned with the fragile political situation in Greece and felt it would be irresponsible to shift his attention away from his country at that time.

Cecil moved to his next choice, but the candidate declined for much the same reasons. This was Thomas Masaryk, the recently installed President of the newly independent Czechoslovakia.

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225 Quoted in Barros: 1979, p.1.
226 MacMillan: 2001, p.349.
227 Ibid., p.347.
228 Barros: 1979, p.3
229 Cecil: 1941, p.89.

Masaryk was thought to possess many of Venizelos's diplomatic gifts, was also the widely respected leader of a small country, and had been pro-Entente during the war and pro-League after it. But he felt that, having just helped his country gain independence from Austria-Hungary, he could not abandon it to go head an international organisation[230]. Cecil and the Commission then moved to other candidates. They contemplated General Smuts, but on reflection Smuts concluded that he could have more influence remaining attached to the British Empire (indeed, he was elected Prime Minister of the Union of South Africa in September 1919) and President Wilson, who dismissed the idea arguing he would yield more power and be able to better serve the principles of the League as US President (and he still needed to have the Versailles Treaty ratified by the Senate). Eventually they turned to Cecil himself, who at his own request was removed from consideration to avoid ruffling the feathers of the French delegation – France at this point was beginning to get worried about the degree of British influence in shaping the League, especially following the success of the Anglo-American proposals for the Covenant[231].

Given the failure to secure a high-level politician for the job, on 13 February 1919 the Commission abandoned the chancellorship idea, substituting it with 'Secretary-General' in its drafts[232], thus effectively creating the title that has been in use since, first at the League and then at the UN. This, however, was not only a rhetorical move: the Commission's conception of the office was evolving, with profound effects for the development of the secretariat more broadly. Drummond, reflecting on the process years later, would joke about the circumstances of his appointment: "When they found they couldn't get the highest caliber man for the job they had second thoughts about it. […] They decided they didn't want an International Dictator"[233]. But there was more to this shift than contingency. Crucially, the American delegation to the

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[230] Barros: 1979, p.5.
[231] Ibid..
[232] Miller: 1928, p.305.
[233] Schwebel: 1951, p.4.

Commission was keen to select an English-speaking official: as Colonel House, Wilson's *de facto* negotiator in Paris, wrote to the President on 27 February, "[*h*]aving an English-speaking Secretary-General will lessen our difficulties and not put us at disadvantage as would a French or Italian Secretary-General. It would also enable us to take the Chairmanship of the Executive Council if we so desire"[234]: this effectively meant a British Secretary-General (despite France's reservations), since the Americans could not have both the secretary-generalship and the Council chairmanship.

The Commission therefore began to consider who, among the British officials available, would be suitable and, as they were scouted, the candidates themselves put forward different visions of the office – and consequentially of the League's role in international relations. From this point onwards, the League of Nations Archives contain a wealth of material concerning the plans. Most significantly, it was here that a distinct conception of the secretariat as an independent international civil service took shape, with the Secretary-General at its head. As noted in chapter 2 above, scholars like Steiner and Northedge argued that the 'downgrade' of the office from Chancellor to Secretary-General marked the end of the notion of a politically active secretariat. On the contrary: it was precisely at this point, when negotiations turned to the proposals of British civil servants about how to structure the League, that we see how a different vision of international political action evolved, one not dependent on the political reputation of a 'high-level statesman', but rather on the diplomatic skill of an independent international official.

On 13 February 1919, the same day that the Commission changed the title to 'Secretary-General', Cecil offered the position to Sir Maurice Hankey, who had been since 1916 Britain's Cabinet Secretary, the most senior British civil servant. Hankey was indeed the consummate civil servant, and the approach made to him on that day is illustrative of the direction the Commission

234 Rovine: 1970. p.23.

was heading regarding the secretariat: during the war Hankey had built up Prime Minister David Lloyd George's War Cabinet and, at Paris, Francis Walters (then in the British delegation and later a high-ranking League official) noted that Hankey "by sheer administrative efficiency had become, in fact if not in name, the Secretary General of the Peace Conference"[235]. Hankey was interested in the position, but laboured over the decision for the next two months, consulting with various British officials. On the one hand, Foreign Secretary Sir Arthur Balfour, who was in Paris for the conference, encouraged him to accept; on the other, Acting Foreign Secretary Lord Curzon, who was back in London in charge of business during Balfour's absence, advised him to decline and remain in Whitehall. Torn between the two, and following repeated reminders from an exasperated Cecil, Hankey declined on 17 April: the advice that finally swayed him came from Lloyd George himself, who apparently asked Hankey if he would rather be "Secretary to the Cabinet, the heart of a great empire, or the Secretary-General of a weak and untried international organ?"[236]. Hankey's decision was not unreasonable at the time[237], and he remained Cabinet Secretary until 1938 (his bureaucratic creations within the British government and the inter-allied war councils are discussed in section 3.3 below).

While he reflected, Hankey did seriously consider accepting the secretary-generalship, so much so that he sketched out a detailed plan for the new secretariat, the 'Sketch Plan of Organisation'[238], dubbed the *Hankey Plan*. Submitted to the Commission on 31 March 1919, this was the first detailed outline of the League's secretariat, and it is illuminating to compare it to the other drafts the Commission received. Hankey submitted the draft to Cecil, calling it "my very rough scheme of the organisation for the Secretariat of the League of Nations"[239]. The *Hankey Plan* structured the secretariat along national lines, with the representatives of national

235 Walters: 1952, p.75.
236 Quoted in Barros: 1979, p.10.
237 Pedersen: 2015(ii), at 25min.
238 'Sketch Plan of Organisation' (31/3/1919), LNA 22/271/133 and LNA 29/266/255.
239 Hankey to Cecil (31/3/1919), LNA 29/266/255

governments holding separate sections, so that each top member state would have a representing 'minister' at the secretariat. The secretariat would be divided into different 'cabinets', each assigned to a member state and staffed by national representatives seconded to the League from that state's foreign ministry. Each national section would be headed by a 'Principal Secretary' representing that country, who should "serve as liaison between the Secretary-General and their respective governments"[240]. The Secretary-General himself, assisted by a deputy and a small clerical staff, would discharge his duties in the service of those Principal Secretaries.

The secretariat proposed in the *Hankey Plan* was structured thus:

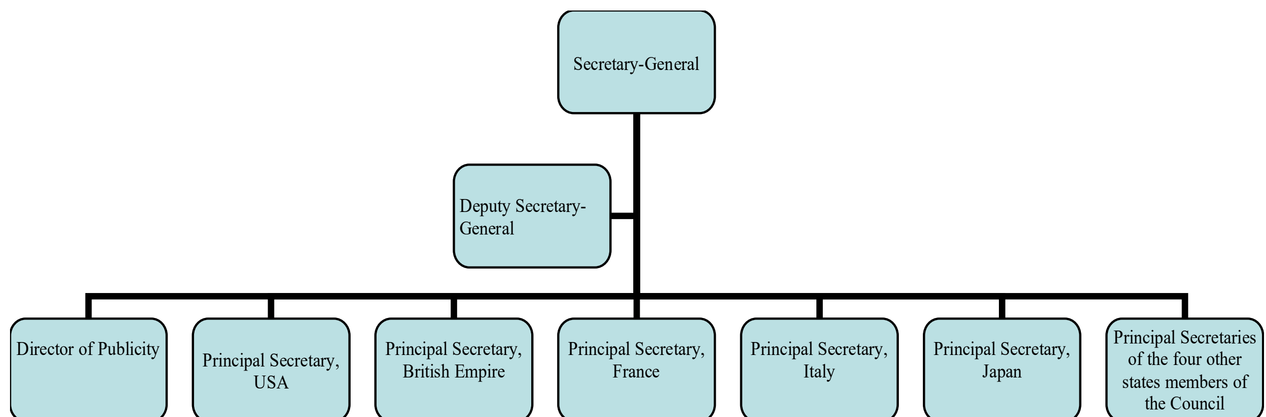

Diagram 1: The *Hankey Plan*[241]

Alongside this principal structure would sit an administrative hierarchy, whereby the Secretary-General would oversee an Assistant Secretary-General managing the more bureaucratic work of the League (treasury, registry, typists, printing, employment etc.). This would constitute the bulk of the League's permanent staff: literally, a secretarial force. This plan was largely modelled on the wartime inter-allied councils, which Hankey himself had played an important role

240 'Sketch Plan…', LNA 29/266/255, p.4.
241 Ibid., p.20.

in organising. Accordingly, like the wartime councils it stressed inter-state cooperation: the focus of agency and authority here is the state; what international officials existed were aids to state action. This model also harked back to earlier, 19th-century international arrangements: as Pedersen notes, Hankey's proposal is "how you would do it [*i.e. structure the League*] if it were an adjunct to the great power diplomacy system, like the Congress of Vienna"[242] – it shared the executive organ of the organisation (the secretariat) equally among the great powers: a clear balance-of-power structure.

Between April and May 1919, the Commission met regularly around Paris and considered Hankey's and other plans for the secretariat. In parallel, Cecil continued on his mission to find an appropriate official to head it. The week after Hankey declined, the Commission approached Sir Eric Drummond, a 44-year old Foreign Office official who had been liaison officer between the Foreign Office and the Cabinet during the war, and was now in the British delegation to Paris serving as Balfour's assistant. Drummond accepted on 24 April 1919 and was officially appointed four days later, becoming the Acting Secretary-General of the League of Nations (which he remained until the Covenant came into effect on 10 January 1920, when the post became permanent)[243]. Around this time the plans for the secretariat began to coalesce around the international civil service it would eventually become, and Drummond was an important factor behind this.

3.2 *International Secretariat Plans*

Drummond's background, personality, and diplomatic style are crucial to understanding how he shaped the office both at Paris and during his tenure, which lasted until 1933. The younger

[242] Pedersen: 2015(ii), at 27min.

[243] Drummond is the only individual named in either the League Covenant or the UN Charter - an appendix to the Covenant contained his appointment.

son of an old Scottish family, Drummond had been in the Foreign Office since 1900, "during which time he had acquired a passion for anonymity along with a scrupulous regard for the minutiae of diplomacy"[244]. Balfour had called him "the perfect private secretary"[245], and he was viewed by the negotiators in Paris as the epitome of the Foreign Office civil servant: efficient, discrete to a fault, and, as one colleague remarked, "the only man I've ever met who looked entirely natural in plus-fours"[246].

That Drummond fits a certain image of the traditional British diplomat of the time notwithstanding, it would be a mistake to dismiss him as a shy and quiet old school civil servant, as so many have done, then and since. His training and experience in Whitehall corridors had taught him "the power that can be exercised by the civil servant through his ability to advise and thus influence the policy maker"[247] – a power which he combined with an intellectual belief in internationalism to great effect, both during the war and at Paris. Already in 1915, as private secretary to then Foreign Secretary Sir Edward Grey, Drummond had drafted a memo dealing with postwar armaments reduction and international cooperation, in which he proposed an international organisation, arguing that "the best answer to those who object [*to a 'League of Peace'*] on this ground [*that all postwar peace arrangements eventually fail*] is that some war must be the last war, and that it is possible that this war may be, and worthwhile attempting to ensure that it shall be"[248]. Later in the war he served as the main point of contact between Wilson and Balfour (who had succeeded Grey in 1916), acting in a central position to help coordinate Anglo-American activities in the least years of the war. During this time Wilson and House became impressed with Drummond's efficiency and believed he shared their views for international organisation, something which came to his advantage in 1919: at Paris, as a League historian commented,

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244 Bendiner: 1975, p.133.
245 Ibid..
246 Pedersen: 2015(i), p.46.
247 Barros: 1979, p.21.
248 'Freedom of the Seas' (11/61915), TNA FO Grey Papers 800/95, pp.88-89.

“Balfour had found Wilson’s League fixation something of a bore, and turned over most of the work on that subject to Drummond, who responded enthusiastically – within the limits of his reserve – to the League”[249].

Drummond accepted the secretary-generalship and set about preparing a plan for the secretariat. Before he had finished (and in testament to the feverish atmosphere at the Commission then) three other plans emerged following Hankey’s. Although it would fall outside of the scope of this thesis to go into detail about each of these, it is worth outlining them briefly to point out how they gradually moved away from Hankey’s state-centred view, ultimately culminating in Drummond’s proposal[250]. This also shows that Drummond’s plan was not plucked out of thin air; rather, it represented an organisational model then in discussion.

The first of these, the *Salter Plan*, by the British economist Sir James Salter (a Commission member, who would later head the League’s EFO), was circulated on 10 May. It criticised the Commission’s draft Covenant for not being transnational enough, for giving too much authority and agency to member states, and for ignoring the “fundamental (mainly economic) causes of war”[251]. Salter instead proposed a structure which, although not radically different from Hankey’s division of the secretariat into national representatives, stressed multiple channels of communication between governments and established a dedicated League organisation for economic research. The second plan, circulated by the American delegation on 20 May, dubbed the *Auchinloss-Shephardson Memo*[252], innovated in calling for the secretariat to be “an international body”, whose officials “are to have no relation to their own governments and must divest themselves, as far as they humanly can, from the nationalistic way of thinking”. This

249 Bendiner: 1975, pp.133-134.

250 For an overview of this process, see Dubin: 1983.

251 ‘Note on the Organisation of the League of Nations’ (10/5/1919), LNA 25/263/111. See also Salter: 1961, p.73.

252 ‘Organization of the Secretariat of the League of Nations’ (20/5/1919), LNA 29/301/225.

suggestion was echoed[253] by James Butler of the British delegation, who on 30 May suggested that, in addition to national representatives, the secretariat should also be staffed by 'international officials' responsible to the League, not to their governments - this was the embryonic concept of the international civil service, which would soon become central to the secretariat's work. The third plan worth noting was a French proposal of 27 May, authored by Jean Monnet, who had headed the French supply organisation during the war (and would, after the Second World War, become one of the main architects of European integration). The *Monnet Memo*[254] was similar to the *Salter Plan*, in that it placed great emphasis on the need for greater economic cooperation and urged the League to establish offices to foster this. Otherwise it still characterised the secretariat's role as fundamentally channeling and recording the communications and decision of states.

Drummond drew on all of these in drafting his own plan for the secretariat, which he submitted to the Commission on 31 May[255] (and then again, following discussions with Monnet, on 9 June[256]). Drummond agreed with the emphasis Salter and Monnet had placed on technical economic cooperation, but went further along the internationalist line than them in how he suggested the secretariat to be structured. In this, he drew on the ideas by Auchinloss-Shephardson and Butler concerning the international duty of League officials. Ultimately, his plan's greatest departure from previous plans was not only, or even mainly, an intellectual one, but a functional one: he suggested that the secretariat should not be structured according to national representations, but rather by function. That is, the League's officialdom would be guided by the area of international work they were tasked with, not by a cabinet of national delegates.

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[253] 'Organisation of the League of Nations, its Functions and the Responsibility of its Officials' (30/5/1919), LNA 25/111/256.

[254] 'Memorandum on the League of Nations' (27/5/1919), LNA 29/260/255.

[255] 'Organisation of the League of Nations' (31/5/1919), TNA FO 608/242.

[256] 'Organisation of the League' (9/6/1919), LNA 29/255/255.

The *Drummond Plan* was structured thus:

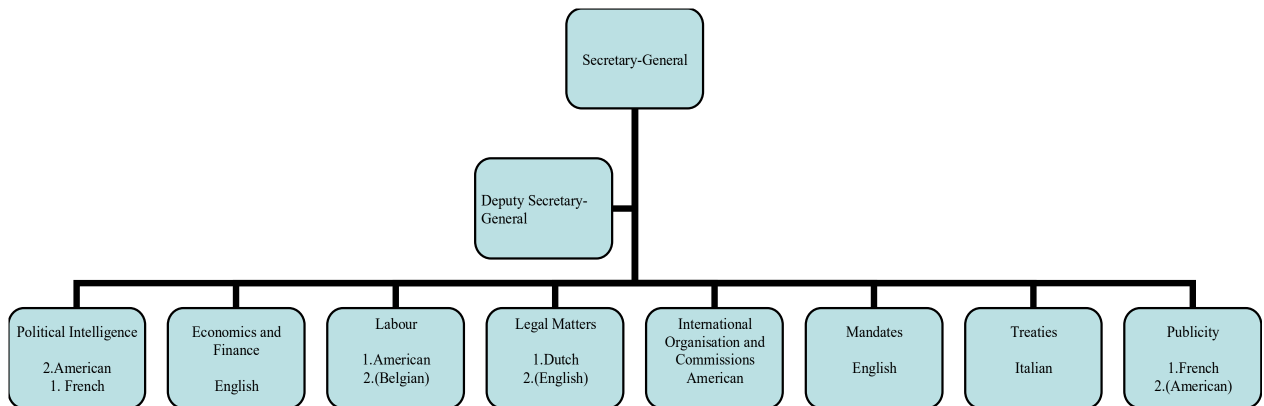

Diagram 2: The *Drummond Plan*[257]

In addition to this primary hierarchy, there was also a parallel organizational structure concerned with internal administration, whereby an Under Secretary-General oversees accountants, registrars, managers etc.. In the central hierarchy outlined above, it is important to note that there are still nationally-earmarked posts (see the nationalities mentioned underneath each position). But, crucially, the primary division in the secretariat would be by function, not country. That means that although the jobs themselves are still carved out by nationality in order to maintain a balance between the main powers of the League (something that this thesis examines further in chapter 4), the fundamental lines along which the organisation's executive body is structured relates to the jobs themselves, not the nationalities.

This indicates a different operational procedure from the concert-like international arrangement Hankey had proposed: rather than states sitting around the table discussing matters through their representatives, the first step of work in Drummond's model would be to identify the nature of a common problem (legal, political, economic etc.), assign it to a functional section, and

257 'Organisation…', TNA FO 608/242, p.18.

then deal with it *on behalf of the League*. Even if the officials heading these sections are of a certain nationality, they are not representing their countries, but rather working within a function, an area of (presumed) expertise. This distinction is subtle, and characteristically discrete, but it was revolutionary. It allowed Drummond to leverage those vague provisions of the Covenant and the suggestions by the American and British delegations concerning the international duty of officials to start forming an international civil service. In a further memo to the Commission in June 1919[258], he argued that Articles 6(1) and 6(3) of the Covenant necessitated an international officialdom in three senses: first, that its duties are international; second, that the primary allegiance of the staff should be to the organisation and not to their states; and, third, that the composition of the staff should be geographically widespread. This was a significant departure from previous precedent. As Weiss put it, "[*t*]he idea of an official subject to the authority of the Secretary-General and pledged to the interests of world community was a historical breakthrough"[259].

Crucially, these interpretations of Drummond's model as a departure towards an international civil service are not a retroactively imposed reading back through history. Participants saw it in these terms at the time: Drummond stated in 1931 that at Paris he had deliberately chosen the 'international secretariat' over the 'transgovernmental' model'[260], arguing that the latter would be "nothing more and nothing less than a permanent conference"[261], whereas he had 'cherished' the notion of "a truly international civil service – officials who would be solely the servants of the League and in no way representatives of or responsible to [*their*] Governments"[262].

[258] 'Organisation…', LNA 29/749/38.
[259] Weiss: 1975, p.36.
[260] Nomenclature in Sending: 2014, p.338.
[261] Drummond: 1931, p.228.
[262] Ibid., p.229.

Therefore, contrary to what Northedge and Steiner argued, the fact that the secretariat was headed by a middle-rank civil servant rather than a senior statesman was not a disadvantage. It is of course speculation to imagine that a statesman would have necessarily opted for a more concert-like, state-centred arrangement, but it is clear that the structure which was ultimately established was very much a civil servant's creation.

In practice, we will see, the sectional divisions changed slightly, and the procedures of the secretariat evolved as the League gained experience in the 1920s and 1930s. And, of course, the system did not always work perfectly – as we will see throughout this thesis, conflicts concerning the source of international loyalty and the separation between national and international duties were a mainstay of the League's life. Nevertheless, the general bureaucratic structure Drummond set up, the notion of functional primacy, and the fundamentally international duty of officials remained remarkably unchanged throughout the organisation's existence. In his own discrete way, Drummond had managed to establish something genuinely new in international relations, which is why Pedersen argues that "[*n*]othing the League produced was more quietly revolutionary than the international Secretariat"[263]. His creation was of a new *space of practice* in international relations; as Sending put it, "the very category of the international came to define, however loosely, the social space in which the Secretariat was to operate. The Secretariat was to represent and manage the international as a space distinct from the sum total of member states' interests, this distinctiveness being anchored in rules established to regulate state interaction"[264]. This was one of the earliest examples of the core activity which this thesis analyses; the creative power of officials working within institutions to influence the conduct of international relations. In this case, the secretariat's creation, this is even more explicit, given that the institution in question was being

[263] Pedersen: 2015(i), p.46.
[264] Sending: 2014, pp.338-339.

born, but the process whereby secretaries-general generated precedent through their practice would shape the organisation's direction from within throughout the next decades.

3.3 *A Bureaucratic Vanguard: An Organisational Genealogy of the League Secretariat*

From the creation of the secretariat and secretary-generalship we can highlight two main points of organisational development and diplomatic innovation. The first is the influence of the British civil service tradition in inspiring the creation of the secretariat as a functional body of international civil servants rather than a great power conference. The second is the importance of individual officials in shaping the process – even within the British delegation, as seen, there were multiple and contrasting views of how the secretariat should be structured. The next chapter will examine in greater detail just what the particular vision of internationalism that won out represented and how it evolved throughout Drummond's tenure. For our present purposes it is important to stress that the model that was implemented was not a monolithic vision of internationalism but rather one that was (a) fruit of recent British experience in managing its empire and the war effort and (b) Drummond's particular spin on that experience. Analysing these two elements will help us contextualise Drummond's approach within the civil service tradition he came from and better understand the political possibilities and constraints concerning the bureaucratic entrepreneurship of the League's secretary-generalship.

Between the beginning of the 20th century and the start of the First World War, the British civil service, especially its elements concerned with foreign and military affairs, had undergone an administrative revolution. This movement, of which Hankey and Drummond were part, transformed the organisational strategy of the foreign and military side of the civil service, was applied to the wartime allied committees, and was written into the structure of the League secretariat. This was a bureaucratic vanguard movement and, given its influence on the League, it

is worth understanding how it originated and what organisational principles and processes it generated.

In the early years of the century, as Britain's empire, international engagements, and political concerns increased in complexity, new forms of international administration emerged to address this complexity. One of these new forms was the rise of the 'secretariat' model, which tasked a body of politically neutral civil servants, unattached to any particular government with administering and executing policy within a particular realm of international relations, or a certain region of the world. This innovation emerged in the late 19th century in the Foreign Office and the Cabinet as a half-improvised measure to address specific international problems, at first constituting nothing more than a practice of "supplying a secretary or clerk to 'look after things' for an ad hoc committee or working group"[265].

Gradually, this practice became institutionalised as a bureaucratic model in its own right, and the concept of a 'secretariat' evolved in the beginning of the 20th century into a formalised cadre of (notionally) apolitical officials under the moniker of the Committee of Imperial Defense ("**CID**"). The CID was created in 1904 in the wake of the Boer War by Prime Minister Balfour as a subcommittee of the Cabinet, with a small group of civil servants and military officers. Following the disorganisation of the British administrative and military system during that war, the CID was meant to increase the efficiency of international decision-making by bringing together officials from different parts of the imperial machinery (the Royal Navy, the Army, the Foreign Office, the Cabinet etc.) as a 'secretariat' to advise the Prime Minister on coherent and effective foreign policy. From a modest start as a minutes- and record-keeper the CID soon emerged as a bureaucratic force in Whitehall and a significant influence in designing international strategy.

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[265] Jordan: 1971, p.28.

While a full history of the CID cannot be expounded here[266], a few points should be noted to highlight the relevance of its organisational model to the League.

First, this was a step towards what could be called the 'professionalisation of the generalist'; a formal body owing a general administrative duty over other, more specialised, organs. The officials detached to the CID, hailing from different parts of the political machinery, formed a permanent and largely coherent body. This offered a bureaucratic advantage in relation to the ever-changing ministerial posts in government. So although the CID, strictly speaking, did not make policy decisions (indeed its first Secretary, Sir George Clarke, was forced to resign in 1907 because of his explicit counsel to the Prime Minister opposing Dreadnought construction, seen as too political[267]), it became a repository of expertise, diplomatic and military information, and a powerful network of well-connected officials.

Second, the CID secretariat did have autonomy to initiate matters, such as research into issues which could become a matter of concern to the Cabinet: as its terms of reference stated, it could "consider all questions on the subject *and anticipate*"[268] what the Prime Minister might need to know in order to make policy. This power led to the CID secretariat developing a measure of bureaucratic autonomy based on its information-gathering and connective nature. Hankey, who joined the CID secretariat in 1908 and became its head in 1912, explained that as each department in government was only concerned with its own businesses, and the CID represented a permanent, notionally neutral body, the CID secretariat was able to set its own work: "[*W*]e secretaries soon discovered that we must find ourselves what our work should be and then persuade either the Prime

266 For this, see Johnson: 1960 and Jordan:1971. Jordan, in particular, offers a detailed overview of the evolution of the British civil service and its influence on international secretariats.

267 Jordan: 1971, p.30.

268 Johnson: 1960, p.31. Emphasis added.

Minister himself or some department to refer it formally to us. In practice most of the initiative was taken by the staff of the Committee"[269].

Hankey remained at the head of the CID secretariat from 1912 until his retirement in 1939. This period marked, not only in Britain but throughout much of the world, the professionalisation of, among other areas of politics and public management, foreign policy and diplomacy[270]. The CID secretariat was at the heart of this process: as a body that was not yet fully professionalised, it illustrates a transitional period between the old days of aristocratic amateurs and modern, professional bureaucrats[271].

The CID's influence grew further as the First World War increased the need for centralised coordination of political work. As Jordan notes, "to meet the total needs of total war, authority and responsibility had to be defined by the primary policy-formulating bodies and the executive agencies of the government to a greater degree than ever before had been necessary"[272]. CID members began to populate the succession of war councils which the British government created, first to coordinate the work of different government agencies, then the broader empire, then the allied war effort generally. First, the War Council, set up by Prime Minister Asquith in November 1914, was staffed largely by the same officials who sat at the CID, and had a primarily advisory role (policy-making and executory functions laid firmly with governmental ministries and agencies), which continued as the War Council was replaced by the Dardanelles Committee in 1915. In 1916, however, as David Lloyd George became Prime Minister, this group's responsibilities broadened. Reformed as the 'War Cabinet', and headed by Hankey, it now had a secretariat which became more engaged in political and strategic war efforts. From an early action in February 1916 when Hankey, networking with junior Admiralty officers, made a strong case to

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[269] Hankey: 1961, p.52, also quoted in Jordan:1971, p.32.
[270] See e.g. Anderson: 1993, pp.105-137.
[271] Jordan: 1971, p.33.
[272] Ibid..

Lloyd George for allied naval convoys, which the Prime Minister approved, the War Cabinet would become involved in wartime decision making at increasingly higher levels.

Importantly for our purposes, the War Cabinet led the coordination of the inter-allied wartime councils, such as the Wheat Executive (coordination of wheat supplies) and the Allied Maritime Transport Council (management of shipping lines), both set up in London in 1917. The Wheat Executive was headed by representatives of the allied nations, but the Maritime Council had, alongside national staffs, a small international secretariat owing its duty to the organisation rather than the states they came from; a proto-international secretariat. In addition to coordinating these bodies through the War Cabinet, Hankey headed the British delegation to the Supreme War Council (established in late 1917 to coordinate allied military and political strategy). Amidst this flurry of committees, secretariats, councils, and executives, traditional diplomats found themselves losing power and professional civil servants acquired more influence[273]. And no civil servant developed greater influence than Hankey, who sat at the crossroads of this multitude of organs and, as noted above, became the de facto secretary-general of the Paris peace conference.

How does a bureaucrat exert such influence? Through a combination of responsibilities delegated by the government and skillful administrative brinkmanship, which could be called *bureaucratic entrepreneurship*: a creative exercise in institutional design and practice, which depended on the diplomatic and political skill of officials. These officials, largely civil servants working as committee secretaries, did the ostensibly administrative work in committee, but underneath the paperwork gradually developed influential agenda-setting powers. As the Conservative politician and civil servant Leo Amery (himself a CID secretariat member who worked closely with Hankey before and during the peace conference) would later note, a committee secretary, "if he has any skill at drafting and is supported by the chairman, can usually

[273] A development lamented by some of those traditional diplomats (see e.g. Nicolson: 1965, pp.110-112).

get what he wants, or most of it, for the simple reason that no one is prepared to take the trouble to recast the document from beginning to end"[274].

Another example of such entrepreneurship was Hankey's creation of the Cabinet Office in December 1916, another offshoot of the CID secretariat[275]. The Cabinet Office's rules (drafted by Hankey) stated that it should record War Cabinet proceedings, prepare agendas for Cabinet meetings, transmit communications between departments, and perform overall administration. This sounds mundane and clerical, but in practice it positioned the Cabinet Secretary (Hankey) at the crossroads of wartime decision-making by different departments. Although the Secretary could not oppose politicians' and ministers' decisions, he could subtly influence matters through the administration of the policy making process, communications, meeting coordination etc. (in this it relates to what Bachrach and Baratz termed 'power through agenda-setting'[276]).

This entrepreneurship was also on display in the later years of the war and at Paris as Hankey and then Drummond held the pen in the League Commission negotiations. The crucial difference between them, as reflected in the organisational plans discussed above, is that Hankey believed that the League secretariat should not follow the bureaucratic entrepreneurship model which he had instituted within the British government and in the interwar allied councils. Some have suggested that the reason for this was that Hankey, having seen the influence which the British delegation had had in the interwar councils, feared that this influence would be diluted should Britain became just another member state working with an international secretariat: instead, he hoped that the League Council would become effectively a continuation of the Supreme War Council, and that Britain (and its Cabinet Office) could continue exercising its influence through bureaucratic coordination[277].

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274 Amery: 1955, p.172.
275 For a thorough history of the early Cabinet Office, see Mackintosh: 1962.
276 Bachrach and Baratz: 1962, p.948.
277 Jordan: 1971, pp.44-45.

In contrast, as seen, Drummond thought that the British secretariat model, within which he had worked for years, should be transposed onto the League as an international secretariat. That is, the primary issue of the Hankey-Drummond debate was not so much about an ideological dispute of 'national secretariat vs. international secretariat', but rather a functional and structural divergence about *to what extent* the British secretariat model should be adopted by the League (with the national/international question as a consequence thereof). Hankey believed that, in order to preserve the influence of the British model in international relations, it should not be simply transposed over to the League; rather, the League should be a continuation of the interwar councils, within which Britain could continue exercising its influence. Meanwhile, Drummond argued for a fairly direct transposition of the British model onto the League, with the neutral international secretariat mirroring the independent bureaucracy Hankey had set up domestically. This similarity was not only structural, but also functional: as we will see in the next chapter, the terms of work which Hankey had drafted for the Cabinet Office were very similar to those of the League's Secretary-General Office.

An evident difficulty in Drummond's plan is that, within a national political structure, the authority of an impartial civil service depends on there being a higher power to which it owes its duty: it is possible (though certainly not inevitable) that a national civil service can be considered 'above politics' because there exists a state, and a head of state, from which the civil service ultimately derives its jurisdiction. Even if in practice such authority is often debatable, at least theoretically it is clear where the legitimacy for that service originates. In the international sphere, however, there is no such supreme authority, so that the sources of legitimacy of the international civil service remain an open question. As the British official (and League secretariat member) Koni Zilliacus would later put it, "the Secretariat […] is no more the 'League of Nations' than the State Department in Washington is the 'United States of America'. In fact, even less so: the United States is a federal system, whereas the League is an association of independent states that maintain

their sovereignty unimpaired"[278]. Where, therefore, does the jurisdiction of the international civil service come from – the member states (and, if so, which ones – the Council, the Assembly, particular committees)? Or from the organisation's constitution or charter? Or from the international legal principles upon which that charter is based? And what happens when these different sources of jurisdiction give the secretariat contradictory instructions?

Such questions remained a source of debate throughout the League's existence, and different secretaries-general offered different answers through their practice – an analysis of their answers forms the empirical basis of the following chapters.

3.4 *Coda: The Practice, Politics, and Authority of Internationalism*

This chapter has analysed the negotiations and debates surrounding the creation of the League secretariat at the Paris peace conference, showing that the way in which it was constituted was directly influenced by the evolution of the secretary-generalship, and the plans of those who were considered to occupy it.

At a first, practical, level, it has shown that we should not take for granted that an international civil service would emerge after the war: this was a deliberate choice by officials and a product of painstaking negotiations between the victors. The actual deliberations and policy proposals are not epiphonemal to international relations, the inevitable fruit of broader structural forces: the role of individuals was crucial in the ultimate outcome. In section 3.1 we saw how initial plans would have created a concert-like arrangement, rather than an international secretariat, whereas in 3.2 we saw how Drummond's proposals championed the international secretariat model, and how the supposed 'downgrade' from Chancellor to Secretary-General was no such

[278] Quoted in Mcfadyen et al.: 2019, p.81.

thing: it in fact allowed for the development of an international bureaucratic entrepreneurship which created, through Drummond's proposals and negotiations with other officials, a genuinely new actor in international relations, one directly shaped by the practice of individuals being considered for the secretary-generalship.

At a deeper level, in section 3.3. we examined the organisational sources of the international secretariat structure and of the secretary-generalship, analysing how Hankey and Drummond imported onto the League planning bureaucratic secretariat models recently developed in the British system as a way to better manage its international network and wartime alliances. This helped us better understand the powers and constraints of the secretary-generalship, which will be examined throughout this thesis, in two ways. First, that the 'secretariat' model seemed deceptively mundane and apolitical, while exercising considerable political influence through practice, thus beginning the empirical justification of our treatment in this thesis of internationalism as an organisational practice, and calling us to assess the practice of different officeholders. Second, it raised questions about the difficult balance between power and norms that the secretary-generalship had to strike, and showed how the international model is different from the national secretariat one: the sources of authority issue did not have a clear answer, and Hankey and Drummond offered competing solutions to it.

These three elements (the role of officials in shaping the institution through practice; the political influence of the secretary-generalship and how it was exercised; and the unresolved question about sources of authority for the international secretariat) permeated the League's work throughout its existence, and constitute the three main themes the subsequent chapters of this thesis will analyse. The next chapters will explore, therefore, the different conceptions of internationalism as 'practicing internationally within an organisation' by the three secretaries-general, examining (i) how they sought to shape the office (and the League) through their practice, (ii) how they exercised political influence (and in what direction and broader political context),

and, at a deeper level of analysis, (iii) how their internationalisms addressed the question of authority, combining politics and law within the institution.

4. THE DRUMMOND YEARS, 1919-1933: BETWEEN LIBERAL AND IMPERIAL INTERNATIONALISMS

> "Members of the Secretariat would do well to consider themselves as international civil servants. They have, therefore, equal duties to all the Members of the League, their allegiance being to the League itself. [...*Otherwise*] we should lose the great trust and confidence now placed in us" [279]
>
> *Sir Eric Drummond*

This chapter analyses Drummond's practice and brand of internationalism after he set up the secretariat in 1919 and throughout his leadership of it, from 1920 to 1933. This was a crucial period in the League's history, as Drummond took the responsibility of both setting up the secretariat internally, creating the conditions for the Council and the Assembly to work, and of working as problem-solver in international disputes. Given this multifaceted position, Drummond carved out a space for action that was fundamentally new in international relations, and left a range of precedents and institutional creations that supported the League even after he left.

This chapter, therefore, critiques the traditional narrative of Drummond as *either* an apolitical international civil servant *or* a British representative at the League. His role, in fact, was more interesting than either of these options. He was a British liberal and a Foreign Office official, and his actions at the head of the League were certainly political. But those things did not preclude him from also being an internationalist. His internationalism combined elements of British liberal imperialism, Whitehall political bureaucracy, and a pioneering political agency in the international secretariat. Those who have called him 'political' (either as praise or criticism) have invariably

[279] 'Internal position of members of the Secretariat' (11/6/1928), LNA R.3427-18A/5643.

linked 'being political' to being a state representative, therefore implying that if Drummond acted politically as Secretary-General, he could not have been an internationalist. I argue that, on the contrary, during his time at the League Drummond was both: he combined liberal nationalism and internationalism and shaped, through his administrative work and diplomatic precedents, the secretary-generalship into a new kind of actor, one that was political and also international.

The first part of this chapter (4.1) explores the leadership and bureaucratic entrepreneurship initiatives taken by Drummond during his years at the head of the League, in terms of internal administrative measures (4.1.1) and political and diplomatic actions (4.1.2), after which we examine his post-League work (4.1.3). This analyses his practice in a more systematic fashion than most scholars have done and, crucially, show how he was both political and international, defining through practice a clear, if discrete, brand of internationalism.

The second part (4.2) analyses what that internationalism could be. It explores Drummond's practice and views of politics and internationalism, arguing that his practice combined the two, effectively representing a 'new politics' (4.2.1), and in relation to two other, related, perspectives; British liberal imperialism and the liberal internationalism of certain members of the secretariat. I argue against the view that Drummond was national and apolitical: first, that he was very much a British official did not preclude him from being an internationalist (4.2.2); and, second, that he went much beyond being simply a British liberal imperialist through both his own actions as Secretary-General and the construction of a secretariat predicated upon liberal internationalist principles of legitimacy and authority (4.2.3).

Last, a coda (4.3) summarises the chapter's main arguments, noting how Drummond's tenure forces us not only to reassess typical dichotomies for the study of international organisations and the interwar period (political/technical, nationalist/internationalist), but moreover helps us develop a more sophisticated view of internationalism as an organisational practice, developed as a top-

level official sought to create his own job description. In analysing the critiques levelled against the Secretary-General during this period concerning his internationalism, we also learn more about how international institutional practice is used as a balance between power and norms, and how officeholders can develop a measure of authority.

4.1 *The League Secretariat, 1919-1933*

Soon after his election, on 5 May 1919, Drummond received a letter from Hankey instructing him that "[*a*]t a meeting between M. Clemenceau, President Wilson and Mr. Lloyd George this morning, it was agreed that the Secretary-General of the League of Nations should be authorised to establish the temporary and provisional organisation of the League of Nations in London"[280]. Like the UN later on, the League had its first headquarters in London, only moving to Geneva in November 1920. This was another example of the proximity of the early secretariat to the British political infrastructure. Indeed, the way that the new international organisations had been carved out in Paris indicated that the League was, at least in parentage, the 'British organisation'. To overcome French resistance to the degree of British influence in the embryonic organisations, the British delegation struck a deal with France, whereby they divided up the leadership of the two main international organisations created: the League would be headed by a British official (Drummond) and the ILO by a French one (the socialist deputy Albert Thomas, who had served as Minister of Armaments to Clemenceau during the war). Each chief would have a deputy from the other country – Drummond had a French deputy, Jean Monnet; and Thomas a British one, Harold Butler – meant to eventually succeed their chiefs, thus alternating the nationality of the leaders between Britain and France. This system actually worked until the mid-1930s, and as we will see later in this thesis, the leadership model that Thomas implemented at the ILO was

[280] Hankey to Drummond (5/5/1919), LNA 29/266/255.

considerably different from Drummond's, with significant impact on the political-bureaucratic balance of that organisation.

At the League, Drummond began building the secretariat shortly after receiving Hankey's instructions. He did this by first consolidating the office of the Secretary-General, and then gradually expanding outward to create the specialised sections of the secretariat as envisaged in his model (discussed above). At the same time, he was trying to establish the conditions for the first meetings of the Council and the Assembly to happen. Working from temporary headquarters in a Mayfair drawing room, Drummond started out with only two assistants, men with whom he had worked during the war, Raymond Fosdick and Jean Monnet. Fosdick, who at Wilson's request acted as Under Secretary-General, was an American lawyer who had served in the US War Department during the war and as an adviser to General John J. Pershing, the US Commander-in-Chief in France, at the peace conference (and who would later be president of the Rockefeller Foundation between 1936 and 1948). Monnet, as seen, had been a core member of League Commission at Paris and was now Drummond's deputy, expected to one day succeed him. Soon they were joined by Paul Mantoux of France, Arthur Salter of Britain, Erik Colban from Norway, and Adrian van Hamel from The Netherlands.

To achieve a diplomatic balance between the big powers, Drummond soon added to this core team the Italian international lawyer Dionisio Anzilotti and the Japanese liberal politician and scholar Inazo Nitobe as two more Under Secretaries-General (another, from Germany, would be added in 1926 when Germany joined the League). The Under Secretaries-General, in contrast to the heads of section, did not have a particular function: theirs was something of an ambassadorial presence, meant to strengthen the legitimacy of the fledgling organisation in the eyes of the big powers and to smooth the secretariat's communications with those powers (essentially liaison

officers, which led to complaints from smaller states objecting to this "administrative replica of the permanent Council"[281], an issue discussed further below).

The actual functional power of the secretariat sections laid with the heads of section. The sections themselves, largely covering the areas envisaged in the Drummond Plan discussed above, started to be staffed at this point. In addition to internal administrative, treasury, and registry departments, the secretariat had the following sections: Mandates, Economic, Legal, Minorities, Communications, Political, Press and Information, Intellectual Cooperation, and Social Questions (Disarmament and Health would be added in 1920)[282]. The heads of section were mostly appointed in 1919-1920, and Drummond was keen to get the League's work started on a lean staff, with heads of section having the authority and responsibility to hire their own staff (subject to the Secretary-General's approval and considerations of balance of nationalities). This freedom of action, explored further below, gave rise to considerable debates between high secretariat officials about the precise nature of the international duty they were bound by.

Given this massive set-up task, Drummond received a minuscule budget and few directives "save to avoid treading on sensitive political toes"[283]: this, the limited funds notwithstanding, gave him the flexibility to realise his organisational vision. In an interview that May, he stated: "[*w*]e are working out plans for a truly international secretariat. Its members will have an international character of mind. They must divest themselves of national preconceptions [*and*] are not to be appointed by or to be regarded as representatives of their respective nations. […] The secretariat must show an entirely impartial aspect. There must be one guiding principle – that of securing really first-rate men and women interested heart and soul in the success of the League"[284]. The freedom awarded Drummond was largely a product of a moment of 'benign neglect' from the part

281 Gram-Skjoldager and Ikonomou: 2017, p.6.
282 'Staff and Organisation of the Secretariat' (5/1920), LNA 29/6890/1083.
283 Bendiner: 1975, p.135.
284 Quoted in Rovine: 1970, p.34.

of the governments of the big powers: as the direct participation of heads of state in Paris peace conference wound down in the summer of 1919, their focus shifted to other, more pressing matters and Drummond and his team were left relatively undisturbed to go about setting up the League.

It was in this atmosphere of relatively low political pressure by states that the Secretary-General was able to exercise his bureaucratic entrepreneurship in structuring the League. As we saw above when discussing Hankey's creations in Britain, bureaucracy flourishes in a political vacuum (which does not always have the pejorative consequences normally associated with the process of bureaucracy: it can have a profoundly creative impact on political institutions, as happened here). The early years of the Drummond administration saw a flourishing of institutions, rules, regulations, and precedents, which allowed for the bureaucratic and political development of the Secretary-General's office. This began, as we will see, through establishing the legal parameters of the office, through defining its mandate, and highlighting its international and impartial nature, and then radiated out to the secretariat more broadly, instituting the principles of the 'international secretariat'. Within a few years, this bureaucracy-building effort had created the basis for the office to be trusted by member states with international negotiation matters, and the Secretary-General in turn began, through trial and error, generating precedents which provided, from a diplomatic perspective, templates for the independent agency of his office. This has at times been described as 'gradual accumulation of functions' or 'defining by doing'[285], which is correct enough but, by giving an impression of constant improvisation, it hints at a lack of a broader strategy: a more apt comparison would be to the practical precedent-setting process in common law jurisdictions, whereby decisions do not just 'happen' but rather are rejected or reaffirmed with a view to a broader constitutional framework and its evolution. Indeed, in the case of the League's secretary-generalship, in each of these precedents an element of the three dimensions of internationalism outlined above (practice, politics, authority) was present, giving a fuller picture

[285] Mcfadyen et al.: 2019, p.80.

of the type of bureaucratic internationalism Drummond pursued. As will be seen throughout this thesis, this might not have been coherently implemented at all times, but it did create an overall fabric, a theme that supported a clear framework of institutional development.

Given this precedent-generating interplay between the in-house institutional construction and the Secretary-General's actions in international politics, it is helpful now to divide our analysis of the office's evolution between 'internal' organisational development (section 4.1.1) and 'external-facing' diplomatic and political practice (4.1.2). Nevertheless, it is important to stress that these two were complementary dimensions of institutional development; the legitimacy gained (or, as was often the case, allowances made) in one area supporting an enlargement of the Secretary-General's field of action in the other, thereby setting yet a new precedent, which in turn fed back into the office's mandate, in a bureaucratic expansion cycle.

4.1.1 *Internal and Administrative Measures: Bureaucracy-Building*

Throughout Drummond's tenure, a flurry of directives, reports, and memos within the secretariat and between it and the Council and Assembly records his attempts to shape the secretary-generalship, whose early development was intertwined with that of the secretariat at large (although the development of the entire secretariat is outside the scope of this thesis, in order to study the secretary-generalship in the early years it helps to examine how the two evolved together). The League of Nations Archives and the UK's National Archives reveal the extent of these interactions, and of how negotiations between offices helped Drummond structure the League's bureaucracy.

One of Drummond's first necessities was to establish, in practice, the internationality and independence of his own office and the secretariat. This was essential in order to construct an organisational structure that was faithful to the Covenant and to the decisions of the League

Commission. Should he be able to assert his office's independence early on he would have at least a sound basis from which to build up the secretariat. Outlining how he did this illustrates his modus operandi, combining his own initiative (demonstrating independent agency from the office and his vision for the organisation) and strategic support from member states (signaling to the League and the broader international community a degree of legitimacy of the secretariat and secretary-generalship).

He first seized the moment during the Council's Rome meeting in May 1920, in which he submitted a thorough report to the Council on his activities thus far, outlining the parameters of his office, the functions of the different sections, the degree to which sections were already staffed and working, and proposing suggestions for the further structuring of the League. He adds, almost as a reminder, that "[*t*]he Members of the Secretariat act, during their period of office, in an international capacity, and are not in any way representatives of their own country"[286]. Drummond's statements were aligned with another report on the secretariat's establishment, by Lord Balfour, then acting as Britain's representative to the Council. This, the *Balfour Report*, whose recommendations the Council approved at that same May meeting, examined the Secretary-General's early work and largely echoed Drummond's proposals. It approved his structural suggestions and restated Article 6(3) of the League Covenant[287], concerning the Secretary-General's authority to appoint his officials, noting:

"[…] *In making his appointments, he* [the Secretary-General] *has primarily to secure the best available men and women for the particular duties which have to be performed, but in doing so it is necessary to have regard to the great importance of selecting officials from various nations.* […] *Members of the Secretariat once appointed are no longer the servants of the country of which*

286 'Staff and Organisation of the Secretariat' (5/1920), LNA 29/6890/1083, p.4.

287 It is worth noting that although, strictly speaking, Article 6(3) required Council authorisation for appointments, this was usually a passive approval, since refusal would be seen as censure of the Secretary-General and was never actually exercised. In the event of potentially delicate appointments, Drummond would often discuss these with Council members informally to ensure approval (Ranshofen-Wertheimer(ii): 1945, p.49).

they are citizens, but become for the time being the servants only of the League of Nations. Their duties are not national but international"[288].

This, the *other* 'Balfour Declaration' (less famous than the 1917 one regarding Palestine), is notable for being the first formalised legitimisation by the Council of the international nature of the League's civil service[289]. On the same day, the Council also passed resolution 20/41/21, which provided, inter alias, that in order to avoid perceptions of favouritism among member states and League staff, "no member of the International Secretariat during the term of his or her appointment accept any honour or decoration (except for services rendered prior to such appointment)"[290].

Having thus secured legitimacy for the bedrock principle of internationality in the Council, Drummond also needed to gain the approval of the Assembly. An opportunity came in the First Assembly of the League, in autumn 1920, where the Fourth Committee of the Assembly would discuss staffing and recruitment matters. A brief examination of this debate provides an important insight into how the secretariat's independence related to the ambitions of big and small states, and how Drummond sought to assert the powers of his office. Concerned that the Council would have a monopoly on key positions, and that the directors would choose their own nationals for their sections, some small states tried to propose different recruitment methods to ensure fairness and a multinational staff. The New Zealand delegation took the lead in proposing competitive examinations for potential recruits. Drummond opposed this, fearing that, although it might help improve the national distribution of staff, it would remove the 'flexibility and responsiveness' in recruitment held by his own office and the heads of section[291]: that is, introducing a strictly uniform procedure would curtail the agility and room for manoeuvre with which he could negotiate with member states. Supported by France, which argued that such a uniform examination model was

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288 'Balfour Report' (5/1920), LNA 29/4434/1083, p.3.
289 Rovine: 1970, p.36.
290 Council Resolution 20/41/21 (19/5/1920), LNA 29/4434/1083.
291 Gram-Skjoldager and Ikonomou: 2017, p.7.

not practical at this early stage, Drummond counter-suggested that an impartial body be established to oversee recruitment. This in turn led to a proposal by South Africa that such a body be composed of the Secretary-General and two Council members, which would remove from Drummond's office the latitude the Covenant and the Balfour Report had given it concerning recruitment and add a precedent (indeed a policy) of member state interference into the affairs of the secretariat. The British Empire representative, opposing the South African motion, recalled the Covenant Article 6 provision, reaffirming the Secretary-General's independence on the matter. Drummond then diplomatically proposed to adapt the South African proposal, suggesting "to create within the Secretariat the special advisory body"[292] it had proposed. This compromise was accepted, and this body was created within the secretariat (i.e. not including Council members) so that Drummond effectively retained his independence in recruitment.

This is a case where the interests of the Council members and the Secretary-General's office were aligned: the former sought to retain the influence they had through permanent Council membership, the Under Secretaries-General, and the fact that the Secretary-General himself would be, for the foreseeable future, either British of French; the latter wanted to preserve his office's autonomy from state interference. As Gram-Skjoldager and Ikonomou observed, "[*c*]reating the 'black box' of an autonomous committee secured for the Secretariat the room (literally) to master the international politics inherent in its staffing practice […*and*] gave it the opportunity to mark off the Secretariat as a specified field in itself, with a definite point of entry (through the committee) based on specific criteria (selection procedures)"[293]. It also shows, however, that the Secretary-General's autonomy benefited from being on the same side as the ambitions of the Council: later, as we will see, they would sometimes clash, requiring greater diplomatic juggling from Drummond. Still, Drummond prevailed in this first encounter with opposition in the

[292] *LNOJ – Minutes of the 2nd Meeting of the 4th Committee of the 1st Assembly* (19/11/1920).
[293] Gram-Skjoldager and Ikonomou: 2017, p.8.

Assembly and, through the support of powerful states, negotiation, and the deployment of legal and bureaucratic provisions (the Covenant and the *Balfour Report*), obtained Assembly approval of the secretariat's autonomy in a crucial area of institutional construction.

This tactic of deploying legal and bureaucratic precedent would be used repeatedly in the following years, as Drummond sought to create broader institutional rules for the secretariat's independence. Thus Article 6 of the Covenant and the 'Balfour principle' of international independence were restated in the 1921 *Noblemaire Report*[294], the first thorough report on League staffing, which stressed the importance of the secretariat's international character and recommended, among other measures, the adoption of staff regulations. In consequence, the League's first *Staff Regulations*[295] were published in 1922. Their very first article states that "[*t*]he officials of the Secretariat of the League of Nations are international officials, responsible in the execution of their duties to the Secretary-General alone. They may not seek or receive instructions from any other authority" (Article 1(1)) reiterates the prohibition on accepting state honours (Article 1(2)). Furthermore, Article 2 prohibited them from accepting any post, office, or political position without the approval of the Secretary-General. These provisions would be restated in the 1926 edition of the *Staff Regulations*[296], and still appeared in the last edition, from 1945 – by then even more explicit: the first line, in addition to the aforementioned provisions, states that "[*t*]he officials of the Secretariat of the League of Nations are exclusively international officials and their duties are not national, but international. By accepting appointment, they pledge themselves to discharge their functions and to regulate their conduct with the interests of the League alone in view"[297].

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294 'Report of the Committee of Experts (Noblemaire Report)' (7/5/1921), *LNOJ – Records of the Second Assembly*, Fourth Committee Minutes.

295 'Statutes for the Personnel of the Secretariat - 1922', LNA 30/11713.

296 'Staff Regulations – 1926', LNA 30/34632, p.5.

297 'Staff Regulations – 1945', LNA 18A/2892/563, p.4.

This is not to suggest, naturally, that the secretariat was born ready-made in the early years of the League, or that the mere existence of these rules meant that practice conformed perfectly to them – indeed, if this were the case, there would be no reason for this thesis. The crucial point here is that there was great concern, in the League's infancy, to delineate the parameters of the secretariat's international nature and the Secretary-General's powers. When it comes to this office, in fact, the solid establishment of international and independent credentials was not simply a matter of principle; rather, as we will see, it was a pre-requisite for the secretary-generalship's practice. In order to have credibility to engage in international political work, such as inter-state disputes, he had to have developed a clear vision of what his office could provide states and have accumulated a 'credit of legitimacy', of buy-in from states (and his staff) for that vision. Therefore these bureaucratic exercises – obtaining confirmation from the Council and the Assembly of the international independence of the secretariat, publishing reports (essentially auditors' examinations) that restated this autonomy, instituting staff regulations etc. – all fed not only into the broader institutional construction of a new organisation, but also offered a sort of insurance policy, of banked credibility, that provided an 'authority basis' for practical diplomatic and political work. The next section (4.1.2) examines how that practical work invested this banked credibility; here we continue to examine how the administrative basis for it developed.

And develop it did. Although the general structure and core principles of the secretary-generalship and the secretariat remained largely unchanged throughout the League's history, elements of these bodies did evolve, in response to events or due to learning about organisational practice – this was, after all, a period of intense knowledge generation, given the proliferation of institutions dealing with international work in the League's orbit. For instance, initially the 'high directorate' of the secretariat (section chiefs, directors, deputies) had only temporary contracts, mostly five-year secondments from governments (Drummond himself was throughout his tenure technically on secondment from the British government). The *Balfour Report* had recommended

this, arguing that, while at their secondment's end many officials might be retained by the League, or promoted within it, regular 'infusions of new blood' were advisable to "obviate any danger of the staff of the League of Nations becoming as it were a bureaucratic caste, divided by their duties from the life of any particular community"[298]. Drummond too had feared "that members of the Secretariat, if appointed on a permanent basis, might become in course of time, detached from national opinion and from their Governments"[299]; rather, they should keep in contact with home governments, not to advocate their interests in the League but to ensure that the League remained attuned to member states[300] (ironically, no such limitation existed for the Secretary-General's tenure: Drummond had an indeterminate term). The *Noblemaire Report* departed from this, acknowledging that international structures made permanent contracts difficult, but arguing that a measure of job security and long-term planning was "indispensable for the satisfactory accomplishment of the daily task"[301], suggesting a mixture of temporary and long-term contracts: based on this the Assembly would gradually extend the number of permanent contracts, seeking stability in the upper echelons[302].

Throughout the 1920s, as the League's membership and the secretariat's workload grew, it became necessary to reaffirm the principle of international loyalty, and the top management of the secretariat sought ways to use the institutional levers at its disposal to promote that internationalism. For example, it was noticed that without job security officials were susceptible to pressure from their (national) governments – Drummond's desire that officials stay on short contracts to keep in touch with their home governments in practice meant that the League offered

298 'Balfour Report', op cit., p.4.

299 Untitled Drummond Memo (16/5/1920), LNA 29/4434/1083, p.13.

300 Barros: 1979, pp.62-63. For similar reasons, Drummond actually did not like the idea of member states having 'permanent League representatives' in Geneva: he feared this would quickly become a bubble cut off from real world problems and therefore less effective in dealing with them (Mcfadyen et al.: 2019, p.119). He also feared the development of a permanent 'corps diplomatique' in Geneva "which, apart from the Council and other organs of the League attempted to formulate League policy" (Directors' Meetings Minutes (25/6/1925), LNA).

301 'Noblemaire Report', op cit., p.7.

302 Ranshofen-Wertheimer: 1945(ii), pp.302-304.

no professional security, exposing officials to influence from states (which could dangle promotions, demotions, or dismissals once their League terms expired). To prevent this and strengthen the secretariat's independence, bureaucratic 'nudges' were adopted throughout the decade as inducements for international loyalty: for instance, a pension fund with compulsory contributions was created in 1923, and an employment tribunal in 1927[303]. Most significantly, another committee was instituted in 1929 to examine the League's administrative procedures; the 'Committee of Thirteen'. In its 1930 *Report*, a majority opinion reaffirmed the *Balfour* and *Noblemaire* reports, stating that staff should "above all remain strictly international in character"[304], and recommended permanent contracts for League staff; these would be finally introduced in October 1932, alongside set terms of office for the Secretary-General (ten years) and his deputy (eight years).

In addition to these institutional processes, Drummond also made explicit defences of the secretariat's independence, especially in the late 1920s, as it was threatened by new officials from Germany and Italy, who sought to advocate for national positions in the secretariat[305]. Italian officials, which were the third largest nationality in the secretariat during the 1920s (after Britain and France) were in an especially difficult position: from 1927, Mussolini required Italians to obtain authorisation from his government before joining the League (or any other international organisation), which obviously restricted the applicant pool; soon openly fascist officials were trying to subvert the secretariat's independence[306]. Although Drummond was hesitant to publicly reprimand or ban Italians, lest Italy withdraw from the League (and support from Britain and France against Mussolini was in no way certain at that point) he tried to institute measures to at

303 Beigbeder: 1988, p.19. For the tribunal, see also Mcfadyen et al.: 2019, p.221.

304 'Report of the Committee of Enquiry on the Organisation of the Secretariat, the International Labour Office, and the Registry of the Permanent Court of International Justice (The Committee of Thirteen)', *Records of the Eleventh Assembly*, Fourth Committee Minutes, LNA S.929, p.8.

305 Weiss: 1975, p.36.

306 Barros: 1979, p.68, Tollardo: 2016.

least minimise political subversion. For instance, in a June 1928 special circular to heads of section, following a particularly aggressive show of politics in Geneva by some Italian fascists who worked in the League, he noted:

> "*Certain recent happenings have led me to the conclusion that it is desirable to remind members of the Secretariat of their international character.* […] [M]*embers of the Secretariat would do well to consider themselves as international civil servants. They have, therefore, equal duties to all the Members of the League, their allegiance being to the League itself. They are not entitled to show any preference either to the Government or Delegation of the country to which they belong, or of any other country.* […Otherwise,] *we should lose the great trust and confidence now placed in us,* [which] *would deal, I believe, a serious blow to the League*" [307].

Instituting the Committee of Thirteen to review the secretariat's administration (and hopefully provide further reaffirmation of his management decisions) was another such action. Weiss described the Committee of Thirteen's *Report*, as making "administrative internationalism as an unquestioned organisational principle"[308].

The reality is, however, that this principle *was* being questioned. A minority opinion of the Committee of Thirteen, led by Germany (which had joined the League in 1926 as a permanent member of the Council and had a significant number of secretariat officials) and Italy, argued that Britain and France dominated the secretariat, having Drummond as Secretary-General and Joseph Avenol (the French official who had succeeded Monnet in 1923) as his deputy. This minority opinion rejected the very conception of internationalism that Drummond had tried to institute, arguing that this was really just a façade for British imperialism. Illuminatingly, the arguments of the minority's report display two key operating assumptions. First, that the secretariat was no apolitical civil service, but rather very much a political body: "[*t*]he political influence of the Secretariat, and especially of its principal officers, is, in fact, enormous and it would be a mistake to close our eyes to this fact"[309]. Second, officials could not truly act 'internationally': "[*s*]o long

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307 'Internal position of members of the Secretariat' (11/6/1928), LNA R.3427-18A/5643.

308 Weiss: 1975, p.36.

309 'Report of the Committee of Thirteen – Opinion of the Minority', LNA S.929, p.413.

as there is no Super-State, and therefore no 'international man', an international spirit can only be assured through the cooperation of men of different nationalities who represent the public opinion of their respective nationalities"[310]. Consequentially, they argued that the secretariat should not try to uphold some fictitious internationalism, but rather reflect more equally (and explicitly) the views of the governments of member states. It proposed that the Secretary-General's role be downgraded to that of chairman of a 'Governing Board' or 'Advisory Committee', constituted by officials representing their governments (an arrangement similar to the *Hankey Plan*).

In response, the majority opinion reflected the views of Britain and France (and, in 1919, of the USA) as they had established the League, arguing for the importance of what had become by the early 1930s the status quo: an international secretariat along the Drummondian mould. It made three main points. First, that an impartial international officialdom, headed by an independent executive, was indispensable to the League's efficiency; it would otherwise become a permanently deadlocked debating chamber. Second, that Britain and France might have nationals in the top positions, but they had not tried to influence the secretariat's actions: Drummond and Avenol were meant to be international officials. Third, that the existing arrangement allowed all states to bring matters to the Secretary-General on at least an expectation of impartiality and equal treatment, whereas with a big-power arrangement this would not be the case.

The German-Italian proposal did not obtain much success with the smaller member states of the League either, "who saw in the Drummond model a practical technique for augmenting their standing and relative power position"[311]. Drummond (uncharacteristically, given his usual reserve and discretion) spoke out publicly against the minority proposal, essentially arguing that it was "an attempt to secure a veto over the workings of the Secretariat, [*which would*] have transformed the international service into another political conference with a four-power directorate in

310 Ibid..
311 Rovine: 1970, p.41.

control"[312]. These arguments illustrated, as we will see later, a central debate in the League about the nature of the secretariat and the kind of internationalism which it and the Secretary-General should uphold. Like the earlier Assembly debates about recruitment procedures, this was a case of the Secretary-General availing himself of a combination of support from member states and an accumulation of legal and bureaucratic precedent to maintain his space for action. Ultimately, although the Assembly could not agree on many of the Committee of Thirteen's recommendations, there was near-consensus in rejecting the German-Italian proposal, and the secretariat retained its structure into its second decade.

In 1932, which would be his last full year in office, Drummond introduced one more administrative measure to safeguard the secretariat's international outlook; a loyalty oath for League officials. New officials entering the League's service had to swear by and sign the following declaration:

"*I solemnly undertake to exercise in all loyalty, discretion and conscience the functions that have been entrusted to me as an official of the Secretariat of the League of Nations, to discharge my functions and to regulate my conduct with the interests of the League alone in view and not to seek or receive instructions from any Government or other authority external to the Secretariat of the League of Nations*"[313].

Drummond's successor, Avenol, was required to make a similar oath, only changing "an official of the Secretariat" for "Secretary-General", before accepting the office on 9 December 1932 (he would assume the post on 1 July 1933, upon Drummond's departure).

The oath was, unsurprisingly, a source of worry in some states, in particular two powerful states with many League employees. Italy, as seen, had legislation explicitly contradicting it. The USA was also concerned (although never a League member, several Americans served in the

312 Ibid., p.42.
313 'Statutory Declaration of Loyalty to the League of Nations' (1932), LNA R5395-18A/13609.

Secretariat throughout its existence[314]): anxieties only subsided when a State Department study concluded, somewhat convolutedly, that "a declaration of loyalty was not an oath of allegiance"[315]. In any case, the declaration remained a requirement throughout the League's existence. This does not mean that all League officials were perfect international civil servants – officials from certain member states, as seen, tried to subvert their service for national purposes[316], espionage was a serious problem throughout the League's existence[317], and, as we will see, the issue of international/national loyalty would taint Avenol's administration. Ultimately, the declaration was (administrative recourses notwithstanding) largely symbolic – as Ranshofen-Wertheimer would later comment, for conscientious officials it was unnecessary; for those bent on acting as national agents it would not be an obstacle[318]. Nevertheless, as a symbol it was powerful and, given the context of its introduction, revealing of how the secretariat should function in theory.

Now we turn to how it worked in practice, examining how Drummond operationalised the bureaucratic 'space for action' he constructed into a diplomatic and political agent in international relations.

4.1.2 *Political and Diplomatic Initiatives: Hiding in Plain Sight*

In practice, Drummond was from the start trying to shape its mandate and generate precedents which would reaffirm the principles contained in the administrative measures discussed above, and build on them to construct the secretary-generalship as an agent in international politics.

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314 This arrangement was mutually beneficial to the League, which managed to keep open channels of communication and policy coordination with (and funding from) the US, and for the US government, which despite its official distance from the League, could access the valuable sources of information, diplomatic network, and political and economic access it represented (for the US-League relationship, see Lavelle: 2007).

315 Ranshofen-Wertheimer(ii): 1945, p.245.

316 Beigbeder: 1988, p.20.

317 Pedersen: 2014.

318 Ranshofen-Wertheimer(ii): 1945, p.246.

Although not all attempts succeeded, significant diplomatic innovations were introduced, preparing the ground for this new, international, actor. Here we focus on particularly the secretary-generalship's *political* role, defined by Rovine as "activities in the realm of international bargaining, particularly in cases of inter-state conflict and the capacity in such cases to influence governments and the Organisation's political decision-making bodies, the Assembly and the Council"[319]. Although Drummond, in his mandate as head of the League, also oversaw the secretariat's specialised sections, worked with the Council and the Assembly, shepherded treaty negotiations, and helped bring Germany into the League in 1926 (as a permanent Council member), here we examine his conflict resolution work as a clearer-cut illustration of his political role. Furthermore, the Secretary-General's conflict resolution work is also illustrative of the office's status in international relations: the access and trust given him by states, the positions he managed to negotiate, and the practical resolutions achieved reveal a measure of legitimacy attained by the office. Examining the vision (how the role was planned), implementation (how it was practiced), and buy-in (how it was received and supported (or not) by states) shows how these three elements shaped an internationalism distinct from states.

The traditional perception of Drummond's work in 'external facing' diplomacy, again, is that he kept such a low profile and was so focused on the job's bureaucratic aspects that he had little or no 'political role'. This image is fuelled partly by his style of quiet, personal diplomacy, behind curtains whenever possible: he rarely addressed the Assembly, the Council, or the press, and was keen to credit those bodies or the League generally, rather than his office, for any achievements. Consequentially, "the unjustified conclusion was that Sir Eric's self-effacing manner and general quietude derived from the relatively unimportant tasks assigned to the Secretariat [*whereas*] [*p*]olitics was for the League Council and Assembly"[320]. This narrative is

319 Rovine: 1970, p.51.
320 Ibid., p.52.

compounded by the fact that many of Drummond's papers relating to his time at the League were destroyed by secretariat officials during the Second World War, as they feared a German invasion of Switzerland and wanted to avoid documents falling into the wrong hands. Walters, the official who took the decision to destroy them, later explained it; "These documents I destroyed myself […] It was generally expected at the time that Switzerland was about to share the fate of [*Nazi-occupied countries*]. If such considerations look melodramatic at this distance, it is simply because people tend to forget how completely Western Europe lay open to the Nazi power, and the utter ruthlessness with which that power was exercised"[321]. Scholars thus lost much primary material on Drummond's behind-the-scenes work, but enough remains so we can, along with secondary literature, identify key precedents he generated.

There was little 'written law' in the League regulations or early resolutions on how the Secretary-General should help states solve disputes beyond Covenant Article 11(1), which stated:

"*Any war or threat of war, whether immediately affecting any of the Members of the League or not, is hereby declared a matter of concern to the whole League, and the League shall take any action that may be deemed wise and effectual to safeguard the peace of nations. In case any such emergency should arise the Secretary General shall on the request of any Member of the League forthwith summon a meeting of the Council*".

At Paris, it had been envisioned that the 'Chancellor' would be able to bring such matters to the Council directly. But as the negotiations developed, and "probably in the light of their failure to secure an important statesman"[322], the provision was changed so that the Secretary-General should do so through a member state (later the UN Charter would give the Secretary-General direct power in Article 99). In the 1921 Assembly, however, Lord Cecil, representing Britain, was able to pass a resolution stating:

"*All cases of breach of Covenant under Article 16* [war against a member state] *shall be referred to the Council as a matter of urgency at the request of any Member of the League. Further,*

321 Walters to Norman Field (29/4/1969), LNA – Drummond Papers Box 81 File 1.
322 Rovine: 1970, p.23.

if a breach of Covenant be committed, the Secretary-General shall at once give notice thereof to all the Members of the Council. Upon receipt of such a request by a Member of the League, or of such a notice by the Secretary-General, the Council will meet as soon as possible"[323].

Drummond rarely used this procedure formally; he argued that the Article 16 reference meant it could only be used in case of war[324] and would later say "I wish Article 99 [*of the UN Charter*] had been at my disposal"[325]. But it is disputable whether that really mattered: the very existence of these provisions gave the Secretary-General status as a focus point for negotiations, arguably rendering official procedural 'activation' irrelevant. Indeed, Rovine notes that "Drummond's office was the scene of many 'secret' Council sessions, and the forum for countless discussions with individual representatives of the League's political bodies"[326]. That is, Drummond often took such action, but behind the scenes. This fitted his style: as he later commented, "I don't think people are influenced by public speeches or documents. They are by private talk. The behind-the-scenes work of the Secretary-General is more important. […] [*This*] suited my temperament and previous experience. I was neither a Parliamentarian nor a politician and totally unaccustomed to making speeches in public"[327]. What this meant, essentially, was the transformation of his office into a literal space for agency; even if that agency was ultimately conducted by states, that transformation was significant in itself. He did, additionally, go beyond this.

Just what did Drummond do behind the scenes? Early on he developed a 'toolkit' of techniques and skills which he deployed and refined throughout his tenure, depending on the circumstances. Barros's three-level visualisation of it is helpful: as a foundation were techniques

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323 *LNOJ* - 1921 Assembly Resolutions (4/10/1921), p.25

324 Schwebel: 1951, p.231.

325 Ibid., p.17. Article 99 of the UN Charter states: "The Secretary-General may bring to the attention of the Security Council any matter which in his opinion may threaten the maintenance of international peace and security".

326 Rovine: 1970, p.29.

327 Quoted in Schwebel: 1951, p.5.

"that required political involvement only in a tangential way"[328], such as requests for information from member states, either public or confidential. At a higher level were techniques with more political engagement, such as "the unofficial and official confidential conversations and interviews in which schemes, proposals, requests, and ideas were proffered to see what might be the reaction of the parties and what counter-proposals might be offered"[329]. Last came more proactive actions, "initiatives undertaken by Drummond either directly or indirectly through third parties, sometimes members of the Secretariat or representatives of League members, proposing in a very concrete manner how a particular question should be handled"[330]. While the first level was quotidian work for heading the secretariat, a combination of these three can be seen in some of the international crises Drummond tried to help resolve.

His first political engagement, involving techniques at all three levels, was the Åland Islands dispute between Sweden and Finland in 1919-1921. Briefly, the Åland archipelago, lying between the two countries, had a majority Swedish-speaking population, but had long been part of Finland (which itself had at times belonged to Sweden or, since 1809, to the Russian Empire). After the 1917 Russian revolution, Finland had fought and won a war of independence against Russia, but now the Åland islanders wanted to join Sweden. Sweden, a League member, supported this; Finland, not yet a member, refused. Tensions escalated so that by 1920 there was a real threat of war and Lord Curzon, representing Britain, brought the matter to the Council. In June 1920, Sweden and Finland appeared before the Council (then still in London); the first time conflicting countries did so. Following debates and a legal investigation, it was agreed in June 1921 that the islands would remain part of Finland, but that the League would have special rights to ensure that

328 Barros: 1979, p.128.
329 Ibid..
330 Ibid..

the Ålanders' rights and wellbeing were assured – the situation remained peaceful until the Second World War.

Although for all (public) intents and purposes this matter was resolved by the Council, behind the scenes each step of the resolution bore Drummond's fingerprints. First, he had been meeting Åland representatives in his office since late 1919, and by early 1920 was offering the parties frequent and detailed suggestions for how to best solve the dispute through League mechanisms; for instance, discussing the merits of bringing it to the Council or submitting it to mediation[331]. Second, he regularly discussed possible solutions with the British Foreign Office, which in turn officially brought the matter to the Council. Third, it was Drummond who formulated the proposal for a legal commission with members from neutral countries to arbitrate the dispute; the Foreign Office accepted this and circulated a resolution plan that "was a carbon copy of Drummond's proposal though his contribution was neither acknowledged nor his name mentioned"[332]. In a very symbolic scene, it was around Drummond's dinner table that the French and British representatives agreed on the proposal which was successfully put to the parties[333].

This precedent set the stage for subsequent discrete but highly effective interventions. Not all, certainly, were as peacefully resolved as the Åland Islands, but Drummond's approach remained consistent: outlining the League's mechanisms for dispute resolution, using his office as a sounding board for what the parties would be willing to accept, obtaining good will through impartial discussions, helping the big powers in the Council negotiate, and offering concrete proposals which could be used by them or by the conflicting parties. The resolution, Drummond noted to the directors, "was better than could have been hoped"[334].

[331] Rovine: 1970, p.56.
[332] Barros: 1979, p.112.
[333] Barros: 1968, pp.302-303.
[334] Directors' Meetings Minutes (14/7/1920), LNA.

The Greek-Bulgarian Crisis also exemplifies this process. This was a brief but serious incident, which began when, following a border skirmish near the Southern Bulgarian town of Petrić in October 1925, Greek troops entered Bulgaria – the first military conflict between League members. For a moment, coming right after the success of the Locarno Treaties (in which Drummond had also played a significant, if characteristically discrete, role), there was real fear this would precipitate another Balkan war.

Ostensibly, the matter was again resolved by the Council, but Drummond again played an important behind-the-scenes role. Even before Bulgaria first appealed officially to Geneva for assistance, and before the Council met on the issue, Drummond had set up communications with the Greek and Bulgarian leaderships[335]. Through Avenol and the Greek secretariat official Thanassis Aghnides, Drummond urged Greece to exercise restraint. Upon receiving Bulgaria's appeal, he arranged a Council meeting, in which the members discussed the matter and heard from the parties. The Council then urged the parties to back down (Britain and France, in particular, pressured Greece to withdraw) and resume the *status quo ante*. Once they had complied, the Council sent a commission of inquiry to assess the situation and prepare recommendations (which included reparations from Greece, neutral border patrols, and resolution of property claims). Undoubtedly this resolution was due in large part to the great powers, and since it is a case in which the two variables (the efforts of the powers and of the Secretary-General) aligned, we cannot isolate and assess quantitatively Drummond's impact. However, it is noteworthy that (a) the conflict was resolved through League procedures, which worked like clockwork (communication to the Secretary-General, Council meeting, hearing the parties, peaceful resolution) and that (b) the Secretary-General played a central role in activating each procedural step and ensuring it worked smoothly. Thus, as Rovine commented, Drummond "maintained the reality of a political

[335] Barros: 1979, p.174.

function for the Secretary-General as mediator and aide in shaping the terms of settlement, and as a leading channel of communication between the parties […] and the international community"[336].

The next case study is a pair of early 1930s disputes in South America with which the Drummond was deeply involved: the Gran Chaco dispute between Bolivia and Paraguay, and the Leticia Trapeze dispute between Colombia and Peru. The Chaco Dispute in question was the second flare-up of this conflict, following an earlier arbitration; this (the 1928-1935 Chaco War, as it would become) was the bloodiest conflict in South America in the 20th century, and from 1932 until the end of his tenure in June 1933 Drummond tried to help the parties come to a peaceful resolution. Despite his best efforts at mediation, however, at helping the Council send commissions to investigate the situation, and at inducing a ceasefire – all the techniques he had practiced previously – neither he nor the Council were able to stop the war, which only ended in 1935, without League involvement. Despite this failure, he took part in the negotiations as an equal to the statesmen of Europe and the Americas, and his mediator role, even if ultimately unsuccessful, was widely accepted[337].

More successful was his involvement in the Leticia dispute, concerning an area which Peru had ceded to Colombia in 1922, but now (September 1932) had reoccupied. After a failed mediation by Brazil, the dispute was brought to Drummond in early 1933. Following his precedents, he quickly formed a communication network with the parties (through Sean Lester, then Ireland's representative to the League) and reminded Peru and Colombia of their Covenant obligations as League members[338]. Again he liaised between the parties and the Council, formulating several mediation proposals[339], the most innovative of which was the 'Leticia Commission'. This was an international body, under League auspices (created and authorised by

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336 Rovine: 1970, p.72.
337 Ibid., p.75.
338 Barros: 1979, p.258.
339 Walters: 1952, pp.535-540.

the Council and with a secretariat member as secretary), through which a group of 'neutral' representatives (Brazilian, Spanish, American) administered the Leticia region with Colombian troops[340]. This pioneering form of international administration was operational until 1934, when Leticia was returned to Colombia and the *status quo ante* was restored peacefully. This was a proto-peacekeeping operation (using Colombian troops, since Peru was seen as the aggressor, but the administration was under League supervision), and Drummond played a key role in devising and putting it into practice, along with Lester (who would soon join the secretariat and perform a similar job for the League in Danzig).

For sheer innovation, significance, and the precedent it would generate the Leticia resolution "was the Secretary-General's final success in the political arena"[341] (he resigned in 1932 and would leave office in June 1933). Here Drummond had played not only a mediator role, but actually instituted a new position for the League secretariat as an international administration body: the build-up of precedents had allowed him to significantly expand his scope of action. This achievement, however, was overshadowed by two other simultaneous crises: one was the Gran Chaco war mentioned above, and the other, which acquired great significance to the League, was Manchuria.

The Manchurian crisis would cloud Drummond's last years at the League. In September 1931, newly-assertive and militaristic Japan invaded China and occupied Manchuria, setting up the puppet state of Manchukuo. While the invasion itself, and the League discussions, have been analysed elsewhere[342], Drummond's role in the negotiations remains relatively unknown. And yet, he was crucial in arranging and negotiating with the (admittedly state-led) commissions that analysed and tried to mediate the crisis; the Lytton Commission and its successor from mid-1932,

340 Nasu: 2009, p.62.
341 Rovine: 1970, p.77.
342 E.g. Steiner: 2005, pp.709-748, Walters: 1952, pp.465-499.

the Committee of Nineteen. Most importantly, he played an intermediary role between Japan and China, often being one of the first actors to obtain clarity as to Japanese aims[343]. He maintained close contact with the powers involved and (though officially only as "an agency for the transmission of information between the League and various governments"[344]) became deeply involved in the negotiations. Given his knowledge of the facts and interests concerned, "most of the resolutions and proposals for settlement [*by the commissions*] were actually drafted in the secretariat at Drummond's direction, and often his personal touch was obviously present"[345]. Ultimately, negotiations failed – Japan would retain Manchuria until 1945 – but, Rovine argues, Drummond had successfully used his office as a political institution: he "was able to play a key political role, for his work, while almost completely private, was obviously important, particularly in the difficult negotiations throughout the fall and early winter of 1931"[346]. Additionally, during his work with the Lytton Commission, he brought the USA into closer cooperation with the League than it had been since Wilson's time, and the USSR was also on the way to joining[347].

Indeed, Drummond's deep engagement in Manchuria and the latitude he was allowed is evidence of his expansion of the office through his competent practice in earlier cases: as Gram-Skjoldager argues, in the Manchurian crisis "he could undertake initiatives and actions that would have been considered unacceptable in the early 1920s, systematically monitoring the rising tensions in China and proactively developing plans for how to deal with the crisis from as early as 1927"[348].

These cases illustrate a pattern of activity which emerged from the Secretary-General's office under Drummond. First, the use of his post's 'good offices' as an informal sounding-board for

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343 Rovine: 1970, pp.94-95.
344 Quoted in Barros: 1979, p.331.
345 Rovine: 1970, p.95.
346 Ibid., p.86.
347 Bendiner: 1975, p.268.
348 Gram-Skjoldager: 2016(ii), p.4.

negotiations and for discussing possible solutions was established. Usually starting by acting as a 'procedural sign-post', showing parties avenues of conflict resolution available through the League's mechanisms (Council debates, impartial investigations, international mediation, arbitration etc.), the Secretary-General would establish himself as a centre of communications between parties, and between them and the great powers. As seen, this built upon a vast body of bureaucratic precedents that Drummond had learnt from and developed, in Britain and the League: the notion of a secretariat head discreetly exercising political influence through his location in the key nodes of interaction between political players was similar to Hankey's modus operandi in Whitehall. Once Drummond had built up the League's secretary-generalship through a coherent combination of internal administrative measures and external diplomatic precedents, he could deploy a measure of credibility to exercise an international brand of dispute resolution.

Certainly, this credibility did not come free, and needed to be sustained by constant activity and effective results. But in this, on average, he was quite successful: his proposals were often put into practice and elements of them, such as investigative commissions, arbitrating panels, and, in Leticia, international administration, would later on become staple international organisation tools. States learnt they could rely on Drummond's discretion, impartiality, and good offices, and he in turn would remain out of the spotlight. While it is true that not all of the disputes he intervened in were successfully resolved, he clearly managed to establish the Secretary-General's office as a serious political institution in international affairs, often hiding in plain sight.

Drummond submitted his resignation to the Council on 23 January 1932, to take effect by mid-1933, which he hoped would be the end of the Disarmament Conference. He left on 30 June 1933, and on 1 July Joseph Avenol became the new Secretary-General. Drummond left the League praised by member states precisely for his political activities: "[*t*]he Council's characterisation of Sir Eric *as 'statesman and diplomat'* and the emphasis on his role in solving problems 'of great difficulty and delicacy' indicate the League's perception of Drummond's primary worth to the

Organisation. The Secretary-General was being lauded for his political work despite his appointment over twelve years earlier as the 'perfect private secretary'"[349]. Just what that 'politics' might have been we examine in the next section.

4.2 *Between Liberal and Imperial Internationalisms*

Section 4.1 above dissected Drummond's internationalism-as-organisational practice; this section analyses the political flavour of that internationalism, situating Drummond as a midway figure politically, between the British liberal imperialism of his background and professional experience at the Foreign Office on the one hand, and a League-based liberal internationalism on the other. To an extent, as seen, the Secretary-General position made this intermediate stance a necessity, but here I argue that, combined with his practice analysed above, Drummond's actions in creating the secretariat as a space where an independent League-derived internationalism could flourish shows that his liberal internationalism went well beyond the job's necessities, establishing solid bases in liberal sources of authority and legitimacy; international law, national representation, equality of nations (at least in theory), and public opinion.

I do this in three steps. First, in 4.2.1, I analyse the relationship between the concepts of 'political' and 'international' as traditionally applied to Drummond (that his proximity to the Foreign Office while he was Secretary-General, his post-League career, and the limitations of his 'internationalism' meant he was too much of a British official to be an internationalist). I argue that this traditional view is too simplistic in its implication that the two terms are mutually exclusive: that he was a British official did not preclude him from also being an internationalist, it was just not the minimalistic 'internationalism as the opposite of nationalism'. In fact, Drummond heralded a new politics, both 'political' and international. This was a factor both of the institutional

[349] Rovine: 1970, p.98. Emphasis added.

structure, possibilities, and limitations of this office, and of how he sought to exercise his practice within that structure.

Second, in 4.2.2 I relate elements of Drummond's internationalism to a particular kind of British liberal imperialism growing in Britain and in its Empire around the First World War and the early interwar period. Analysing the relationship between conceptions of power and authority in the move from empire to federation by, for instance, the Round Table movement, allows us to see that the intermingling of imperialism, nationalism, and internationalism within the British bureaucratic context Drummond came from facilitated the blurring of boundaries between national and international officialdom.

Third, in 4.2.3 I argue that, as well as developing his own office's politics in a distinctive internationalist direction, Drummond also fostered space in the League for a secretariat politics that was strongly liberal internationalist in its conception of legitimacy, authority, and agency. Mainly by analysing the work of some of the more activist secretariat members, especially Dame Rachel Crowdy, and identifying key debates that they had within the secretariat, and with Drummond, I show how, from a practical, institutional, and organisational position, the secretariat evolved in the 1920s into a liberal internationalist office with a measure of autonomy.

4.2.1 *The Political and the International: A New Politics?*

Perhaps unwittingly, the minority opinion of the Committee of Thirteen's report offers helpful parameters to assess the brand of internationalism with which Drummond built up the League secretariat and his office. As seen, that opinion had two operating assumptions: that (i) the work of the secretariat was inherently political, and (ii) therefore it could not be 'international'. That they considered these two benchmarks, politics and internationality, as mutually exclusive

has shaped subsequent views of the secretary-generalship, and provides an analytical framework for our study not only of Drummond here but also of Avenol in the next chapter.

Concerning Drummond, two opposing narratives exist. On the one extreme are the traditional mainstream IR and historical views, such as Steiner's and Northedge's, mentioned in chapter 2, which allowed that Drummond was perhaps *international,* in that he set up a fairly international structure in the League's service, but he was not *political*, in that he was only a bureaucrat, whose cautious and reserved nature prevented him from developing independent action: he never spoke in the Assembly, for instance, as later UN secretaries-general did. Typical views within this narrative argue that Drummond "intentionally minimized his public role"[350], concluding that "a more positive assertion on his part at crucial moments [*e.g. over Italian antics in the Secretariat, or Manchuria*] of the obligations member states owed the League by their acceptance of the Covenant might occasionally have stiffened a backbone or two"[351]. It was in this sense that Sluga argued that, in contrast to some of his more activist heads of section, Drummond "exuded no personal inclination to international leadership or international mindedness"[352]. This view usually contrasts the timid 'civil servant' Drummond with the forceful 'leader' Albert Thomas, who created an effective, overtly political, and highly independent structure at the ILO[353]: the comparison of a 'minimalist' style to a 'creative, political model'[354].

On the other extreme is Barros, who argued that, on the contrary, Drummond was very much political, but not international. The notion of the League secretariat as an international civil service was a myth, that it "would in any way be analogous to the civil service of national governments, that it would be non-political and remove itself from influencing the policy process, that

350 Steiner: 2005, p.354.
351 Scott: 1973, p.252.
352 Sluga: 2013, p.58.
353 Jenks: 1943, pp.93-94.
354 Newman: 1998, p.18.

individuals would be chosen for their intelligence or talent rather than for their nationality, and be loyal only to the world organisation was probably never envisioned by Drummond when he wrote the [*31 May 1919*] memorandum. He was too much of a realist to believe that the bureaucratic apparatus with which he was most familiar – that of the British civil service and the Foreign Office in particular – could ever really be developed by the Secretariat"[355]. When discussing the minority opinion, Barros stresses Drummond's comment in 1951 that, when it came to the first assumption (that the secretariat's work was inevitably political), "I am afraid that the judgement of the minority was entirely right"[356]; Barros considers this to be the most "damaging admission about the political nature of the Secretariat"[357]. Regarding the internationality point, Barros takes recruitment during Drummond's administration as evidence that the League secretariat was more a transgovernmental 'clearing house' than an international civil service: "the League Secretariat's higher and more important positions were reserved as political conduits between the Geneva organisation and important member states. The persons selected to fill these particular positions were chosen with this consideration uppermost in everyone's mind, rather than on the individual's intrinsic qualifications"[358]. He quotes Drummond as noting that it was important that senior secretariat officials from the great powers "keep in close touch with their governments because it was a fact that these governments exercised great influence in international politics"[359], even though they should not try to impose their government's politics on the secretariat. Furthermore, Barros points to the fact that upon his departure from the League, Drummond returned to the Foreign Office, serving as British Ambassador to Rome from 1933 to 1939.

These two extreme narratives, however, like the minority opinion, rely on a fundamentally false opposition: they conflate 'international' (i.e. 'loyal to the League') with 'non-political'.

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[355] Barros: 1979, pp.60-61.
[356] Schwebel: 1951, p.10.
[357] Barros: 1979, p.72.
[358] Ibid., p.62.
[359] Ibid., p.63.

Certainly the secretariat was always political, and its actions politicised: for the type of organisation the League was, that was inevitable. And, indeed, as we saw in chapter 3, even within a national context the secretariat model emerging in the early 20th century was in no way apolitical as Barros imagined: this 'secretariatism', domestically and internationally, a new form of politics (Barros's belief in an ideal-type civil service that is purely administrative reveals a certain realist bias, implying that 'politics' is the exclusive domain of states – this bias is also identified by Ravndal concerning Barros's analysis of Trygve Lie, the first UN Secretary-General[360]). This belief that an actor cannot behave politically other than as the tool of states oversimplifies the work of a new office which was trying to innovate in international relations by combining both political activity and internationalism.

This is not to detract from Barros's valuable historical study of the League, or from Drummond's indeed problematic precedent in taking up the ambassadorship to Italy (this has been widely considered a grave mistake: it undermines the trust given to the secretary-generalship if the departing official could use information obtained in the international organisation for the benefit of his or her country[361]). But his position requires some refinement. If the first narrative (that Drummond was international but not political) was too naïve in ignoring the political dimensions of the secretary-generalship, the second (that he was political but not international) is too cynical in not acknowledging the possibility of a new political agent that was both international and political. Both offer an oversimplified binary choice (political/national; apolitical/international), thereby following the logic of the Committee of Thirteen's minority opinion.

Examining Drummond and the secretariat through the framework of 'internationalisms', however, allows us to transpose this binary in two important ways. First, we find a very different type of notion from what Barros, perhaps idealistically, identified as something removed from

360 Ravndal: 2015, p.21.
361 Rovine: 1970, p.99.

national governments. Indeed, Drummond and other high officials were clear that they wanted ‘nationally-grounded’ people, but acting in an international role. According to Ranshofen-Wertheimer, “experience proved that members of the cosmopolitan tribe, globe trotters, and persons without a country are not ideal recruits […]. The need for an international outlook and a general philosophy of life sympathetic to the aims of the international agency must therefore not be confounded with a vague and rootless cosmopolitanism”[362]. Similarly, the international lawyer C.W. Jenks, a longtime ILO official, noted that “[*a*] lack of attachment to any one country does not constitute an international outlook. A superior indifference to the emotions and prejudices of those whose world is bounded by the frontiers of a single state does not constitute an international outlook. […] The international outlook required of the international civil servant is an awareness made instinctive by habit of the needs, emotions and prejudices of the peoples of differently circumstanced countries […] accompanied by a capacity for weighing these frequently imponderable elements in a judicial manner before reaching any decision to which they are relevant”[363].

In this sense, the minority opinion’s argument attacked a straw man: one of its assumptions was that there was no ‘international man’. But the League did not want an international man: it wanted national people, who had experience, knowledge, and contacts in their national contexts, but who, upon entering League service, would act on behalf of the League. Admittedly, this is a nuanced distinction, but it is what Drummond’s set-up depended on. It is perhaps more difficult to assess this international position for officials who were nationals of the great powers: examining if an individual is acting on behalf of the organisation when that organisation was set up largely to

[362] Ranshofen-Werheimer: 1945, p.243.
[363] Jenks: 1943, p.95.

pursue or defend the interests of those powers, mixes the variables, since their objectives are aligned[364].

There were, during Drummond's administration, early signs that issues like these might prove controversial and pose problems in practice. Some members of the high directorate saw their 'international' allegiance as deriving from sources other than the Council, which Drummond identified as the main source: in the League's early years, for instance, Jean Monnet had tried to push Drummond to take on more 'transnational' work, while Drummond insisted on only taking up cases on the back of Council mandates (the tension may have contributed to Monnet's resignation in 1923[365]). The head of the Mandates Section, William Rappard, also clashed often with Drummond concerning the sources of the secretariat's internationalism, arguing that Drummond was too cautious in trying to please Britain and France, and too narrowly dependent on Council resolutions as mandates to initiate action. In contrast, Rappard argued that the Covenant provided enough authority for the secretariat to act independently on its own initiative on behalf of the League (which was, after all, a legal entity in its own right) and indeed he set up the Mandates Section as one of the more 'independent' and proactive sections of the secretariat[366].

In this sense, the secretary-generalship can be placed as necessarily on the more conservative end of the secretariat, since it had to deal directly with and through the Council, whereas certain other sections, such as Health, or Social Problems, often enjoyed independent sources of income (mainly from charities and foundations)[367] and thereby a relatively greater degree of freedom. Indeed, Drummond had reason to be cautious: in 1922 Hankey wrote in his diary of the "dangerous tendency of the League Secretariat to arrogate to itself too much power"[368] and he and Lloyd

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[364] One solution to this would be the practice, instituted at the UN, of selecting the Secretary-General not from one of the big powers, and certainly not from Security Council members, but from smaller, largely neutral countries.

[365] Pedersen: 2017.

[366] Pedersen: 2015(i), pp.54-59.

[367] Pedersen: 2017.

[368] Quoted in Pedersen: 2015(i), p.8.

George talked of prioritising ‘conference diplomacy’ over the League (e.g. Washington 1921, Genoa 1922)[369]. This structural tension is explored further in section 4.2.3, but it is worth noting that the institutional position of the secretary-generalship also explains why the common comparison with Albert Thomas is misleading: the League and the ILO were very different organisations, with different constituent parts (the ILO had committees of employers and unions as members, in addition to states); Thomas was undoubtedly skillful at playing different constituencies and building up his own directorate[370], thereby relying on alternating sources of authority and obtaining greater diplomatic manoeuvrability, but he and Drummond struggled with radically different institutional and political constraints.

However, working within his office’s constraints, Drummond generated a remarkable body of practical administrative and diplomatic innovations, as seen in 4.1 above. His brand of internationalism showed states they could rely on his discretion and impartiality; in turn, his proposals were often realised, their elements (e.g. investigative commissions, arbitrating panels, and even international administration) later becoming international organisation staples. While not all his interventions were successful, he established the secretary-generalship as a distinct international political institution and fought hard to retain the internationality of the office. This was made easier due to the ‘permissive environment’ of the 1920s relative to the 1930s, so that these questions, although debated within the secretariat, rarely spilled over into broader conflicts with states. The major international discussion about the secretariat’s function, sparked by the Committee of Thirteen’s minority opinion, was seriously debated and ultimately resulted in the reaffirmation of Drummond’s principles of internationalism. This was a bureaucratic victory over a proposal which would have meant a state veto over the secretariat; a lasting achievement of

[369] Genoa afforded a small victory for Drummond, however, when he was asked at the last moment to send a team of translators and assistants to help the conference, as the parties found they could not quite manage by themselves. Ibid..

[370] See Schaper: 1959, pp.260-304; Phelan: 1949, pp.135-193; Rovine: 1970, p.26.

Drummond's tenure. In the next decade, however, during Avenol's administration, the undercurrent debates concerning the source of the Secretary-General's international authority would explode.

4.2.2 *British Liberal Imperialism as an Internationalism*

The argument that Drummond could be part of the British foreign policy establishment and yet be an internationalist Secretary-General is aided if we understand the intellectual and practical revolution that the notion of 'internationalism' was undergoing in that establishment at the time.

We should begin by noting how close Drummond was to the Foreign Office throughout his secretary-generalship. As mentioned, he was technically seconded to the League; he was meant to be a channel of communication with the upper levels of the British government; and throughout his tenure he worked hard to keep Britain closely engaged with the League. An example of this is a letter[371] he wrote to Balfour in 1921 ahead of a speech Balfour would give at the Imperial Conference: "I do not know whether your address to the Conference will or will not lead to any general discussion as to the policy of the Empire with regard to the League, but I hope it may, as I think you will agree that it is essential that some definite line should be taken on the subject".

He goes on to discuss British policy towards Europe and to try to convince Balfour of how important it was for Britain to remain engaged in the League:

"*I presume that, as far as Europe is concerned, British policy should concentrate on two main points, (1) peace (2) that no Power shall obtain a predominating position in Europe.*

Now, to my mind the League, and indeed even the Covenant, offers the best possible instrument for the execution of such a policy. To keep peace, and to prevent predominance by any one Power it is necessary that Great Britain should speak with a voice of great authority in Europe, while at the same time her desire is to avoid entanglement there".

[371] Drummond to Balfour (29/6/1921), LNA – Drummond Papers, Box 81 File 3.

In arguments eerily similar to the debates occurring a century later, in 2019, about British membership in the European Union, Drummond stresses how advantageous Britain's position in the League is, and how Britain benefitted from retaining a voice and a vote in the organisation:

"*Her seat at the Council of the League gives her the authoritative voice in the settlement of all European disputes, while the obligations under the Covenant, when they come to be examined, are extremely light. There is, of course, much loose talk about these obligations, but after careful examination they are, I believe, really reduced to one thing, viz., that if a Power breaks the* [obligations under the Covenant]*, Great Britain will have to break off economic relations with that Power. But even here there is a safeguard, since it is the British Government who will judge whether the Power has or has not broken those engagements*".

He adds the general importance of the League for collective security, but highlights the mutual benefits of a close Britain-League relationship:

"*Further, the actual constitution of the Council offers a guarantee against the predominance in Europe of any one Power, since if a danger of this kind arises, all the other Powers in the Council are brought together to oppose any such ambition. If these points were generally recognised, I think it would be agreed that the League would likely be an extremely useful instrument for British policy as regards Europe in the future.*

[…] *I think this is a real danger* [of countries not committing to the League after the USA did not join]*, but it can certainly be met if it is clear that England and France are really behind the League*".

Naturally, any official trying to market the organisation would highlight the benefits for the member state being addressed. However, for Britain in particular, this was a time when the arrangement of its international engagements was being reassessed, and proposals for international organisations other than the League were being floated. Analysing some of these, especially ones relating to British liberal imperialism, gives a clearer picture of the internationalisms of Drummond's bureaucratic context.

At first sight 'liberal imperialism' sounds like an oxymoron, but in Britain from the late 19th century onwards serious intellectual and political debates were taking place concerning the nature of empire, how to revitalise it, and how to better frame it in such a way as to 'help' the Dominions

progress. It, in short, sought to combine the power and structure of imperialism with the aspirations of liberalism; two internationalisms creating a third.

By 'liberal internationalism' here I mean a trend that, emerging in Europe after the Enlightenment and the French revolution, aimed at peace in international relations, and based those developments on a concept of justice[372], advocating norms, institutions, law, and socio-economic development elements of progress towards peace. By the early 20th century, it encompassed features such as a commitment to trade and political openness, to rules-based international relations, forms of security cooperation, the belief in the possibility of reform and improvement in international society and in a gradual progressive evolution towards liberal democracy[373].

Importantly, and contrary to the popular view of liberal internationalism advocating utopian ideas of world government, in Britain, as Sylvest notes, "liberal internationalism aimed at cooperation between, not the full transcendence of, states (or nations) and in order to achieve its goals it supported the development of international law, including such mechanisms as arbitration"[374]. In this sense, liberal internationalism and nationalism went together, as famously put by Tomas Masaryk: "there is no difference between national identity and internationalism, if we understand the point appropriately", by which he meant an internationalism not of "the old way as a sort of cosmopolitanism and liberalism", but instead "as an organization of nations which are capable of managing their own affairs"[375]. The problem was not nationalism per se; it was the bad management or manipulation of it internationally that caused conflict.

As British liberal Alfred Zimmern put it, "the existing political troubles of the world arise, not from passions of nations but from the policies of states, and […] it is with the adjustment of these policies, not with the sublimation of national passions, that constructive political work in the

372 Sluga: 2013, Rich: 2002, p.117.
373 Ikenberry: 2018, p.11.
374 Sylvest: 2009, p.49.
375 Quoted in Sluga: 2013, p.43.

field of foreign affairs is concerned"[376]. In consequence, "'the work of internationalism, then – or, as it would be more properly called, the work of inter-state organization – is concerned with the mutual relations of sovereign bodies, however composed, and has nothing directly to do with the relations of nations"[377]. He acknowledged that, in practice, they often did conflict, but this was when real 'nationalism' (attachment to one's nation) become confused with or manipulated into "problems of statehood and citizenship"[378]. Therefore, Zimmern criticised ideas of world government on the basis that the compromises required for such an institution would mean that liberal democratic states would lower their standards to join tyrannical states: world government would thus be dangerous[379]. Yes, there was a need for an international constitutional framework, and for better regulation of the world economy (especially as liberals realised that "the free market liberalism of the Cobdenite School had failed to prevent the outbreak of the First World War"[380]), but not world government. Zimmern wanted a League, which he envisioned "as being an extension of the old Concert of Europe"[381], based on (necessary) calculations of balance-of-power politics, but which would not preclude the more important existence of the British Commonwealth, based on justice, common values, and shared ideals[382].

Therefore, liberal internationalism was focused primarily on an international order that could be based upon a legal framework that combined individual and national rights. In consequence, it "naturalised the nation and the national within a progressive vision of an international society of nations or states developing in more peaceful and inclusive directions […] which would, in the

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376 Zimmern: 1922, p.116.
377 Ibid., p.121.
378 Ibid., p.125.
379 See for instance his criticism of John Hobson's 1915 book *Towards International Government* in Zimmern: 1918, pp.39-41.
380 Rich: 2002, p.123.
381 Ibid., p.130.
382 Indeed, after the war he went to work for the Institute for Intellectual Cooperation in Geneva, where he "hoped that through a process of mutual international understanding the nations of Europe would come to consider the resort to war as unthinkable as the nations of the British Commonwealth" (Rich: 2002, p.123).

longer term, issue in a public morality and the reconciliation of nationalism and internationalism, ensuring the entrenchment of order and justice in international politics"[383].

Projects for international organisation that would mediate between nationalisms and channel their virtues towards progress were central to liberal internationalists, from the abbé de Saint-Pierre and Kant onwards. During the First World War, such plans competed for implementation, and the early days of the League saw many thinkers and officials trying to shape it along different lines. Zimmern himself developed an idea of the League like a permanent conference rather than a supranational body, "a meeting of Governments with Governments, each Government preserving its own independence and being responsible to its own people"[384]. He actually sent a memo to Cecil as Cecil was working in the later years of the war to set up the League, and his ideas arguably contributed to the *Cecil Draft*, which, as we saw in chapter 3, proposed such a permanent conference. Indeed, Rich notes that, contrary to his later reputation as an 'interwar idealist' Zimmern actually "was from the start anxious to temper his ideals with political practicalities and an undue focus upon his later enthusiasm for international cooperation through education tends to neglect this basic element of his thought"[385].

These attempts to mediate between nationalism and internationalism also encompassed imperialism, especially in Britain. For many British internationalists of the period, as Sluga argues, "empire was imagined as a political form on which an international government built out of the structures of nation-states might be modelled"[386]. It provided, for liberal imperialists, a mediation between nationalism and internationalism "focused on law, institutions, and some form of international government, as well as the primacy of national 'sentiment'. […] a nationalist path to

383 Sylvest: 2009, p.49.
384 Zimmern: 1936, p.203.
385 Rich: 2002, p.120.
386 Sluga: 2013, p.34.

internationalism"[387]. Hence Lloyd George's description of Britain as "the only embryo League of Nations because it is based on the true principles of national freedom and political decentralisation"[388].

By the late 19th century many imperialists felt that the 'old' imperialism of Cecil Rhodes, Joseph Chamberlain, and Lord Salisbury needed to be improved and modernised. One such attempt was to reform the empire by turning it into a 'federation' or 'commonwealth' centred around the moral, cultural, and legal authority of Britain[389]. This was partly an attempt to move away from the declining aspects of empire[390], which were by then, and especially after the First World War, increasingly costly in the face of Britain's economy, and morally questionable, especially with the outbreak of the war, the rise in nationalism and calls for self-determination in the colonies (and in Europe)[391].

One such reformist group was the Round Table, a liberal imperialist society of associations which grouped civil servants, diplomats, politicians, lawyers, and intellectuals in Britain and throughout the Dominions who advocated for closer integration within the British empire, free trade, and a move towards an international imperial federation, which they saw as a constitutional 'empire of law'. This movement was inspired not only by traditional liberal internationalism, but also by a largely unquestioned confidence in Anglo-sphere white racial superiority, social Darwinism, a sense of paternalistic duty to colonised peoples, with an added constitutional framework: briefly, as Bosco puts it, "for the Round Tablers federalism was a political and constitutional form to be filled with an historical context: the British Empire"[392]. In consequence, "the Round Table developed and propagated a political ideology which would have promoted and

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387 Ibid., p.41.
388 Quoted in Ibid., p.34.
389 For these plans, see especially Bell: 2007. For early-20th century plans of 'imperial federation' see Bosco: 2017.
390 Rosenboim: 2017, p.101-102.
391 Morefield: 2014.
392 Bosco: 2017, p.3.

accompanied the transition from a British leadership of the Empire into an equal partnership among its component parts"[393] and believed that "if it were not possible to achieve that goal within the English-speaking peoples, who were the most advanced in the art of responsible and democratic government, they believed that nobody else could have succeeded"[394]; that is, they saw the empire "as the most congenial organization of States to start with, in order to create and consolidate a federal nucleus set for enlargement"[395].

Founded in 1909, the Round Table quickly became more than an intellectual club; it was a large-scale political movement, a not-secret society of powerful officials, and a proto-think tank all in one, disseminating subgroups, committees, journals, and publications in Britain and throughout the empire with the aim of lobbying towards federation. One of the ways they sought to influence policy and public opinion was the creation of organisations like the Royal Institute of International Affairs (now Chatham House) in Britain and the Council of Foreign Relations in the US.

By 1919, however, the initial enthusiasm for federation had begun to subside. This was in significant part due to the fact that in April 1917 the Imperial Conference had passed Resolution IX, which 'readjusted' imperial relations at the end of the First World War and was "based on the full recognition of the Dominions as autonomous nations of an Imperial Commonwealth and of India as an important portion of the same"[396], granting a substantial measure of self-government and international administration in domestic and foreign policy. This was evidence that the Dominions, rather than moving from colonisation straight to federation, would first become independent. In consequence, the Round Table project pivoted from imperial federation to a multi-network international system focused on three pillars; the Commonwealth, strengthening Anglo-

393 Ibid..
394 Ibid..
395 Ibid..
396 Berriedale: 1921, p.35.

American relations[397], and the League of Nations. Many Round Table members and associates played crucial roles in Lloyd George's War Cabinet and in the creation of the League, which we examined in chapter 3, such as Balfour, Cecil, Alfred Milner, and Philip Kerr.

Although Drummond himself was not a member of the Round Table, he was known to sympathise with the group's views and was a close friend to Kerr, a high-ranking British civil servant and member[398]. Kerr was Lloyd George's private secretary between 1916 and 1921 and was particularly active in the Versailles negotiations as the Prime-Minister's main foreign policy adviser, where he and Drummond worked closely together in the setting up of the League. As the debates over the different models for the League progressed, Kerr published an article in the 9 March 1919 issue of *The Round Table* journal[399] entitled 'The Practical Organisation of Peace', in which he argued, like Drummond was then suggesting, that the emerging organisation should have an 'international secretariat' whose officials "must not be national ambassadors, but civil servants under the sole direction of a non-national Chancellor; and the aim of the whole organization [...] must be to evolve a practical international sense [...] a sense of common purpose"[400].

Kerr would later say of the Paris peace conference (in a lecture published in his 1935 book *Pacifism is not Enough, nor Patriotism Either*): "The underlying idea at Paris in 1919 was that the United States, France, and the British Empire should collectively discharge through the League of Nations, which gave representation to all peoples, the ultimate stabilizing function which Great Britain alone had performed in the preceding century and in an even more liberal way"[401]. That function had to be grounded in 'world law': "international peace will come neither from terror as the Prussians think, nor from flabby sentiment as many pacifists think, but from the joint definition

[397] The shift to the US, in particular, was meant to create "a period of time during which through Anglo-American cooperation and alliance it would be possible to restore the necessary international economic and political stability to give time for federal ideas to take root" (Bosco: 2017, p.5.).

[398] Mcfadyen et al.: 2019, p.74.

[399] The *Round Table* is today the scholarly journal of the Commonwealth.

[400] Kerr: 1919, also quoted in Mcfadyen et al.: 2019, p.74.

[401] Kerr: 1935, p.255.

and enforcement of just world laws and nothing else"[402]. At the same time, this was not simple liberal internationalism – it was still quite imperialist; Kerr would write a friend in 1920 that "[*t*]he future of the world depends upon the gradual recognition, by the rest of the world, of the fundamental principles which lie at the heart of Anglo-Saxon civilization"[403].

This is not to say that Drummond necessarily subscribed to all these ideas (we do not have the evidence to say so), but rather to show a variant of liberal internationalism that was quite active in the Foreign Office at the time, which took an active role in shaping the creation of the League, and which represented an institutional structure that permitted not just overlap but cross-fertilisation of imperialism, liberalism, and internationalism. Indeed, even within liberal officials of the League secretariat such intermingling was common. Itazo Nitobe, a Japanese scholar and liberal reformer who was League Undersecretary-General and head of its Intellectual Cooperation and International Bureaux Section between 1919 and 1926, was one of the most vocal public advocates of the League as the 'world's conscience'. He also thought of "colonisation as a means to civilisation and world peace, with clear moral obligations for the colonisers"[404].

Indeed, institutionalising internationalism in concrete organisations brings unintended consequences, which further justifies the focus of this thesis on internationalism as an organisational practice. The bodies created through such institutionalisations often develop a measure of autonomy or agency of their own, or at least act as facilitators of policy in new, internationalist ways. For instance, bringing the Dominions together through the Imperial War Conference assisted in their inter-relations, in a growing sense of national identity (since they were representing their nations as quasi-independent states), and in developing practical legal, political, and diplomatic autonomy that they would then exercise in order to push their claims for

402 Quoted in Yearwood: 2009, p.43.
403 Quoted in Bosco: 2017, p.
404 Quoted in Sluga: 2013, p.58.

independence from Britain, such as voting for the aforementioned Resolution IX (in itself advocated by Canada), which gave them greater independence, which "[*ruled*] out forever the federal solution for the Empire"[405].

This process continued at the League: many of the Dominions, such as Canada, India, South Africa, Australia, and New Zealand, became members in their own right, and in the League they found a space in which they were recognised legally and could play an international role not only as parts of the British empire (although one could say that Britain only allowed this to increase the empire's voting numbers in the Assembly, it is interesting that the Dominions did not merely rubber-stamp British policy at the League; they often worked and voted independently, developing a further measure of autonomy). Officials from the Dominions could also use the League's committees and procedures, and its liberal rhetoric of equality, to oppose imperialism, or elements thereof: for instance, V.S. Srinivasa Sastri and K.S. Ranjitsinhji, moderate Indian nationalists, "took their case for greater equality for Indians within the British Empire to both imperial conferences and the League of Nations, internationalizing issues that had long been seen by Britons and colonial subjects alike as internal affairs"[406].

Therefore, we can see how, despite much of the racism, paternalism, and sense of superiority that British liberal imperialism undoubtedly represented, it also created (at times intentionally or unintentionally) institutional channels and spaces in which nationalism and internationalism could interplay, often against imperialism itself. We can also see how many British officials straddled a fine line between nationalism, imperialism, and internationalism and were forced to think about what internationalism meant in a practical organisational context. In this context, Drummond's decisions in the early 1920s come into sharper focus: not necessarily because he was a liberal imperialist himself, but because he had been deeply steeped professionally in the core of debates

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405 Bosco: 2017, p.17.
406 Gorman: 2012, p.312.

about the nature of internationalism and transnational constitutionalism and practical administration. The League secretariat, itself a space for multiple internationalisms, would be a further conduit to this interplay, as the next section will show.

4.2.3 *Institutionalising Liberal Internationalist Independence in the Secretariat*

If Drummond was caught between the imperial liberalism of the Foreign Office and the internationalism of the League secretariat, he also created within the secretariat a space in which a multitude of internationalisms could flourish. In this section, I make two arguments. First, that the secretariat's many internationalisms can be examined as organisational practices, with different visions, implementations, and degrees of acceptance. Second, that although some of the more activist liberal officials we will examine clashed or differed from Drummond, it would be over-simplistic to dismiss him as a conservative in a liberal environment: he had created and implemented the secretariat as such a cradle of internationalisms, and he oversaw and nurtured it for its first 14 years. This creative process is itself a liberal practice: the creation of a space in which officials could be relatively activist, develop substantial measures of autonomous agency (at times greater even than the secretary-generalship) and ground their authority in liberal notions of legitimacy, international law, democracy, and a historical sense of progress. We have seen in section 4.1 how, despite his office's constraints, Drummond developed considerable political and diplomatic agency; here we will see that, even if he had not, the way he created and steered the secretariat reveals a strong liberal tendency.

We do this by analysing the work of some secretariat officials, seeing how they differed from Drummond in their approach to internationalism by exploring the discussions they had over the nature, possibilities, and limitations of their international duty and by analysing how organisational

procedures of workflow and professional practices assisted in fostering liberal internationalism in the secretariat.

Despite the staffing limitations discussed above, there was a strong possibility of professional growth and independent action in the secretariat, especially in the early 1920s[407]. In this period the secretariat benefited from a 'benign neglect' from the part of member states, so that it could develop a measure of autonomy. As Gram-Skjoldager put it, "[*d*]uring the interwar years, the Secretariat continuously lacked clearly defined directions from the League's policy-making organs. […] In combination with Drummond's personal preference for pragmatism and improvising, this made the Secretariat a peculiarly agile and dynamic bureaucratic organisation that grew and changed as new and different tasks fell to it"[408]. Additionally, Drummond largely focused on his own activities in conflict resolution, "while leaving substantial room for independent policy development in areas such as the economy, finance, health and the mandate system to other League bodies and sections of the Secretariat. Just as the Secretary-General's political role was vaguely defined in the Covenant, guidelines for the organization and running of the League's Secretariat were largely absent"[409].

Beginning with work flow, we can see how certain institutional procedures and practices initiated or supported by Drummond helped create an environment of independence and autonomy. Early on he instituted a system of work processing adapted from the British civil service, which characterised the League secretariat's work for most of its existence. In this system, the work to be done follows a bottom-up direction. Matters first entered the League universe via the Registry section, which centralised and distributed mail and communications. The Registry would forward it to each appropriate section, where it would be received by a junior official, who would give it

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407 For the different waves of heads of section recruitment and how the professional structures changed over time, see Kahlert and Gram-Skjoldager: 2019.

408 Gram-Skjoldager: 2019(ii), p.236.

409 Gram-Skjoldager: 2016(ii), p.4

to the person in charge of that matter. Work problems only travel up the managerial hierarchy if they require higher authorisation, or present a problem the lower official cannot solve; then it would go up to a line manager or director, all the way up to the Secretary-General, in such a way that each official can subtract a part of the work and higher management only needs to deal with top-level material[410].

This model had its disadvantages and, as we will see in the next chapter, was challenged by Avenol. But one consequence of it is that it gave secretariat officials, however junior, a sense of autonomy and responsibility for the work. It was also fairly efficient, and helped lubricate a bureaucracy which had grown in only a few years from four men in a Mayfair drawing room to over 700 officials working around several buildings in Geneva. An illustration of the efficiency of the system is Ranshofen-Wertheimer's description of his first day at work in the Information Section, in which he observes that as soon as he arrived in his new office "a flood of files and mimeographed papers arrived, as if by magic, on a tray reserved for 'incoming mail and documents'. […] Before I had time to recover my breath the telephone began to ring. I was caught in a machine which did not release me until I left the Secretariat exactly ten years later"[411].

Other illustrations are found in the weekly 'directors meetings' held between the heads of section and the Secretary-General. In these, the minutes of which are today in the League archives, Drummond would start by introducing a problem or giving an update on some matter he had been dealing with and asking for comments. This was a relatively informal and relaxed way in which the top officials could exchange information and have a sense of the work of other sections and therefore of the League overall. It also reinforced personal responsibility and team spirit. The officials' sense of autonomy can be seen in their comments with regard to questions about the secretariat's independence – their views often went far beyond Drummond's.

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[410] Phelan: 1949, p.66.

[411] Ranshofen-Wertheimer: 1945, p.ix.

In a 1921 meeting, for instance, Joost Van Hamel, the Legal Section's director, suggested that, when the League members do not take action against a breach of the Covenant, the Secretary-General might in practice have some authority to initiate action:

"*There remains one organ which has the possibility of doing something – the Secretary-General and his staff. It may be that it was not the original intention of the Covenant to call upon the Secretary-General to be saviour of the League of Nations, and it is certain that is not responsible for the conduct of its affairs, but, if experience shows that nobody else cares enough for the idea which has been created by the Covenant, to take efficient action, that part of the crew that is left on the bridge has the practical obligation of trying to do what it can.*

My first conclusion, therefore, is that the Secretariat should not let things go adrift, but make its mind as to what has to be done, and do it".

He suggests that:

"[P]*erhaps the Secretariat could begin by making a careful study of the various problems that are troubling the world* […] *by forming a considered and impartial opinion and by elaborating, for itself to begin with, suggestions which from an objective international point of view may seem the most recommendable to be applied*".

He does not recommend doing this publicly, but simply for the secretariat to have a ready toolkit for diplomatic action in urgent cases: "It would mean […] that in every pending question the Secretariat would form for itself a well-considered plan of possible action and would then try to get the services of the League accepted"[412].

A similar kind of argument for the Secretary-General's power of initiative can be seen in an exchange initiated by William Rappard, head of the Mandates Section, in a 1921 debate concerning Drummond's powers over a particular commission of inquiry:

"*Professor Rappard put forward the view that the organisation of the Secretariat is the direct and sole responsibility of the Secretary-General* […].

Dr Van Hamel agreed with this view, and urged that it was important that the Secretary-General should maintain his freedom and authority in the matter and should not allow the view to gain currency that in his organisation he was dependent either on the Council or the Assembly. […]

412 Van Hamel memo to Drummond (20/4/1921), attached to Directors' Meetings Minutes (29/4/1921), LNA.

The Secretary-General said that […] *in his view it was true that he was responsible for the organisation. But on the other hand it is the Assembly which votes the money. The organisation depends on the funds allotted to the Secretary-General, and, therefore, the Assembly has the function of control*"[413].

This exchange is a clear example of a dynamic discussed above, whereby certain secretariat members argued that the Secretary-General could take an even greater control of the League's functions, while Drummond remained cautious given member states' ultimate power over funding allocation, and given the fact that his office was more directly overseen in practice than any other section by member states.

Still, Drummond would become defensive of the secretariat's independence from state interference. Once in 1925, objecting to Rappard's observation in a book that the 'chief members' of the secretariat from Britain, France, and Italy (the Secretary-General and Undersecretaries-General) had the task of 'faire prévaloir' ('make prevail') in the secretariat the views of their governments, Drummond stated that "[*i*]t was true that the chief nationals of the great Powers on the Secretariat had to keep in close touch with their Governments because it was a fact that these Governments exercised a great influence in international politics. It was incorrect to say that these officials should or did attempt to ensure the vistory [*sic*.] of the point of view of their Governments in the Secretariat"[414]. This defence, nevertheless, highlights the combination of national and international duties in the secretariat.

Such a combination always involved a delicate balancing act, and the channel of information role between the League and states particularly so. Early on, in 1919, Monnet was already commenting on how delicate the negotiations to find the suitable person in France were[415], and in 1921 he urged the secretariat to establish formal representatives with Council members, who

413 Directors' Meetings Minutes (23/8/1921), LNA.

414 Directors' Meetings Minutes (3/6/1925), LNA. The minutes further note that "the Deputy Secretary-General [*Avenol*] associated himself with the views of the Secretary-General".

415 Directors' Meetings Minutes (12/11/1919), LNA.

would split their time between Geneva and the capitals, to ensure the secretariat and the Council kept in close touch since the secretariat had moved from London to Geneva "to recreate the contact we were in danger of losing". He suggested that Council members appoint representatives to liaise with different government departments on League affairs[416].

Indeed, the nationality question remained a source of tension, especially between Rappard and Drummond. Drummond, tasked with staffing, had to manage the international nature of the secretariat with demands from great powers regarding job allocations. As Gram-Skjoldager notes, Drummond 'quietly earmarked' "most of the higher and more important positions for nationals of major states. These senior Secretariat officials were expected to stay in continuous contact with their home governments and national public opinions while similar activities were strongly discouraged in the Secretariat's lower echelons, where strict impartiality, confidentiality and independence from national prejudice was expected"[417] And, as a consequence, there were several 'national islands' in the secretariat where officials from the same country clustered ("[*t*]his also applied to Drummond, whose immediate assistants were British or from the Dominions"[418]). And, in a broader point, the degree to which the League secretariat was 'international' could be questioned when one considers just how overwhelmingly homogenous its (largely Western European) staff was, in terms of geographical and socio-economic background[419].

Nevertheless, several secretariat initiatives were genuinely groundbreaking in terms of rearranging the relationship between nationality and internationalism. For instance, as head of the Mandates Section, Rappard was a fervent Wilsonian in that he believed in self-determination and international alliance as twin pillars of peace. In his 1925 book on the League, *International*

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416 Directors' Meetings Minutes (5/1/1921), LNA.

417 Gram-Skjoldager: 2016(ii), p.5.

418 Ibid..

419 For this critique, see Dykmann: 2015, which analyses in detail the importance of nationality in the hiring practices of the League secretariat. For a recent critical approach to the League from the perspective of certain Latin American states, including about hiring practices, see McPherson and Wehrli: 2015.

Relations Viewed from Geneva, he wrote that the secretariat was an executive office, but it was not the 'government of the League': "the officials of the League can do no more than advise and their advice may be, and often is, disregarded"[420], while the real 'government' was the member states. However, in his practice he developed a ground-breaking level of international autonomy, whereby a League section actually held influence in overseeing the behaviour of states. He created that oversight system, which required annual reports from the mandatory powers, held annual hearings in Geneva, and (from 1923) instituted a procedure through which inhabitants of the mandates could submit petitions to the League concerning the administration of their territories. Indeed, Pedersen has shown that the Mandates Section's autonomy helped it create robust oversight systems, which in turn often helped the development of self-determination movements in the mandated territories: Rappard's work, in short, sat in the cross-section between nationalism, internationalism, liberalism, and imperialism, generating its own kind of 'imperialist internationalism' in the mandates.[421]

Rappard's more independent internationalism was remarkable, but when considering the sheer novelty of the international secretariat at the time, and the delicate balance Drummond had to maintain between the great powers and between them and the League, Gram-Skjoldager argued that "creating an international administration where staff acted on the instructions of the Secretary-General and on behalf of the organization, as defended by Drummond at the time, was in itself a major achievement[422].

Sometimes Drummond directly encouraged the heads of section to be independent as a coherent League body, as in a 1923 meeting:

"*The Secretary-General while agreeing that, technically, the Secretariat must not be held to have any policy of its own, recognised that the individual Directors did, in fact, exercise a considerable influence on opinion in League matters within their respective countries. It was essential that they*

420 Rappard: 1925, p.161.
421 See especially Pedersen: 2017.
422 Gram-Skjoldager: 2016(ii), p.5.

should all speak with the same voice, and, therefore, desirable that they should agree in advance on the line to be taken.

As regards the proper source of authority in taking decisions, two opposite theories might be stated:

The Secretary-General might be regarded as a dictator, or, on the other hand, every decision might be the result of discussions at a meeting of Directors forming in fact a Cabinet. Neither of these theories seems to him applicable. The present system – something between the two – did not seem to him to work badly"[423].

The independence of section officials, therefore, was largely tolerated, when not actively encouraged, by Drummond, and it flourished in the 1920s. In addition to Rappard, Van Hamel, and Monnet, one clear (and underexamined) example is the work of Dame Rachel Crowdy, which is worth exploring in some detail here as it shows further the inter-relations between internationalism, liberalism, and imperialism at the League. Crowdy, originally an English nurse, had been during the First World War the Principal Commandant of Allied Voluntary Aid Detachments in France and Belgium. In 1919 she became Chief of the League's Social Questions Section and the Department of Opium Traffic. The only female head of section at the League, she was not given the title director (only 'chief') and was paid less than the male heads of section (she also fought for greater gender equality in the secretariat, though by the early 1930s the three posts previously held by women had been taken by men[424], and her own contract was not renewed in 1931, which caused public outcry). Yet she developed her section into one of the most active and independently internationalist of the League.

Most of Crowdy's work focused on social and humanitarian aid in postwar Europe, preventing spread of disease in Eastern Europe, and campaigning against the traffic of women and children in Asia and Africa[425]. In contrast to Drummond, she sought to enhance her service with public campaigns on the topics being addressed, seeking to mobilise public opinion as a policy

423 Directors' Meetings Minutes (28/2/1923), LNA.
424 Gorman: 2012, p.91.
425 For Crowdy's work see e.g. Gorman: 2012, pp.60-108.

catalyst. In a 1928 article, for instance, she dissected her section's work in getting states to ratify a 1912 convention on opium traffic "How has this result been obtained? Firstly, the great force of public opinion has been utilized. No publicity had formerly been given to the question, so publicity on a wide scale was undertaken"[426]; she then details her strategy, combining public campaigning with committee negotiations at the League.

In the directors' meetings, Crowdy was often concerned that the secretariat should present to the public a united and professional appearance, and in 1926 argued for coordinated media communications by specialists:

"[She] *thought that some regulation on public speaking by members of the Secretariat was necessary. The time had passed when audiences wished to hear generalities about the League, and it was most unfortunate if, as sometimes happened, members of the Secretariat spoke about a given League subject knowing less of it than many members of the audience*"[427].

She also sought to enlarge mechanisms of global governance, for instance recommending in a 1927 report of the Advisory Committee on Traffic of Women and Children that human traffic should be an international crime, as well as for the promotion of sex education. Liaising with and diffusing information and publications to civil society groups focused on women's rights, she coordinated a large-scale public campaign. Faced with a lack of enthusiasm from governments, she commented privately that member states representatives, resistant to criticism and change while aware of the issue's international and moral importance, were akin to "proud parents, dragging their naughty children behind them, scolding them when no one was looking on and yet trying to make passers-by believe that their children were patterns of virtue"[428].

The Crowdy-led League campaigns against human trafficking campaigns of the 1920s soon became entangled with British imperialist internationalism. As a scholar noted; "The transnational

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426 Crowdy: 1928, p.351.

427 Directors' Meetings Minutes (16/12/1926), LNA. The minutes also record that Drummond replied he would rather leave that to the discretion of directors of each section to regulate as they saw fit.

428 Quoted in Gorman: 2012, p.91.

nature of the traffic in women and children meant that several departments of the British government had an interest in the League's campaign to combat the trade"[429]: some welcomed the League's work (the Home Office, for instance, wanted to learn about how groups trafficked women into Britain; the Labour Ministry, about the traffickers' ruse of 'employment exchange work'), others were cautious (the Treasury, in postwar depression, wanted to avoid extra international expenses; the Foreign Office was worried about Britain's relations with states used by traffickers, such as Siam).

Clashes between Crowdy's work against human trafficking and states often stood for a conflict between the League's liberal internationalism and imperialism, as the League sought to apply its international mandates to investigate and pursue traffickers in territories colonised by the big powers. And states reacted to Crowdy's efforts in ways which illustrated their own imperial infra-structures, as Gorman noted: "France, which favoured regulation rather than abolition, had ratified the 1921 Convention on the Traffic in Women and Children, but it exempted its colonies, protectorates, and mandates. The British position was less clear, reflecting its more disaggregated imperial system"[430]. In consequence, the British empire took a disjointed approach to the League's anti-trafficking work and to implementing the recommendations from Crowdy's 1927 report. In Britain itself, there was majority support for the League's positions, as in, for instance, Australia and New Zealand. In some territories, however, this proved controversial: some, such as Gambia or Bermuda, argued that they had too small staffs to implement the recommendations, others, like South Africa, only agreed to 'look into the matter', whereas the position on post-First World War mandates was yet more complicated. The Colonial Office, resisting League interference and adhering to "racialist beliefs about the supposedly more relaxed (read immoral) sexual cultures in colonial societies"[431] argued that the 1921 Convention and the 1927 report did not apply to

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429 Gorman: 2012, p.95.
430 Ibid., p.98.
431 Ibid., p.100.

mandates, only to 'possessions' (the word those documents used; technically the post-1919 mandates were not possessions)[432].

This is a clear illustration of how at times the League secretariat fostered an internationalism more liberal than originally intended by its creators. Crowdy was, appealing to international public opinion, making a justice-based argument, against which states made order-first arguments. As Gorman put it, "[*i*]nternational order remained their first priority. They thus conceived of internationalism in terms of foreign policy, whereas Crowdy and other international humanitarians appealed to a broader sense of cosmopolitan justice"[433]. Drummond's own practice, in contrast, looks conservative and order-based, but he was facing, as seen, institutional constraints and structural forces different from officials like Crowdy or Rappard. Examining his practice in light of both his own actions and the context of British foreign policy and intra-secretariat internationalism, we could argue that he succeeded in two ways; first, in establishing his office as an international mediator and administrator; and, second, and just as important, in creating institutional spaces where more active officials could pursue their work (and, as we will see in chapter 6 below, it also provided the space and principles for Lester to further develop the authority of the secretary-generalship itself). For all its limitations, exclusiveness, and contradictions, the brand of internationalism which Drummond represented also provided an aspirational project of inclusion and the institutional mechanisms through which change – even if unintended – could occur, in a peaceful and legally legitimate way. This process was not, and has not been, without friction, but in a freshly created international institution of this magnitude, it was a considerable achievement.

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432 Ultimately, the Colonial Office said that "it would adhere to the [*1927*] report in spirit in its protectorates and mandates and in the event left it to the administrations on the ground to decide on ratification" (Ibid., p.106).

433 Ibid., p.99.

4.3 *Coda: Creating and Exercising a New Internationalism*

This chapter has shown how the traditional views of Drummond as either an apolitical international civil servant, a timid bureaucrat, or a British representative at the League are inaccurate. His organisational practice – that is, his internationalism – combined aspects of British liberal imperialism with a League-based liberal internationalism to great practical effect. His bureaucratic entrepreneurship created through his practice a secretary-generalship role which is still, largely, the template. It pioneered a new type of internationalism, which was both political and international. Certainly, that 'international' was still very exclusive in terms of gender and geographic distribution, and from our contemporary perspective it looks (and indeed was) not very diverse at all, but in the context of its period and in comparison to other organisations of similar size and reach, it was a revolutionary act and created an institution which has developed and evolved since.

It has examined Drummond's internationalism in the three dimensions this thesis focuses on (his development of the office through practice; political dimensions and influence; and sources of legitimacy and authority). Section 4.1 explored the leadership and bureaucratic entrepreneurship initiatives taken by Drummond both internally and externally, analysing systematically how Drummond was able to combine politics and internationality in his practice and thus shape the office (and the League). Section 4.2, in turn, explored the political context from which Drummond's practice emerged, exploring how British liberal imperialism was changing in the period towards a constitutionalist internationalism, and examined how he and other secretariat officials negotiated different perspectives on the source of authority legitimising the secretariat's work. We saw how Drummond's office position constrained his internationalism in ways different to certain other League officials, but that he was still able to develop the secretary-generalship in

a broadly liberal internationalist tradition, emphasising the basic principles of the League secretariat of independence and international law, while creating a bureaucratic and diplomatic space in which other secretariat officials could develop, within certain parameters, more activist liberal internationalisms.

Studying Drummond's administration in this way, therefore, strengthens our perspective of internationalism as an organisational practice and our focus on how certain individuals sought to exercise that practice in shaping an international organisation and influencing international relations. It is, furthermore, a helpful vantage point from which to examine how different conceptions of the relationship between law and order in the international can shape concrete organisations. This will become even clearer as we move into the next case study, Avenol, and compare his practice, politics, and authority to Drummond's.

5. THE AVENOL YEARS, 1933-1940: BETWEEN TECHNOCRACY AND FASCIST INTERNATIONALISM

"The civil service in England – at least then – was the best in the world. But we are not in England."[434]

Joseph Avenol

This chapter explores the brand of internationalism which Joseph Avenol pursued during his secretary-generalship (1933-1940). As we will see, from the time he assumed office Avenol sought to portray his work as an attempt to de-politicise the League and turn it into an apolitical technocracy, minimising its role in conflict resolution and emphasising its potential as a lubricant for international economic cooperation. Ostensibly he argued that member states, especially the big powers, were to have the ultimate authority over the secretariat, which should not try to act independently from Council mandates. In fact, this chapter argues that he was a very active secretary-general, and contrary to his claims was in fact very political and internationalist. Avenol's politics and internationalism, however, were very different from Drummond's, and studying them in detail shows that, coupled with his strong appeasement policy and decade-long attempts to reform the League to bring back the revisionist powers, bear striking resemblance to elements of fascist internationalism.

This chapter, therefore, critiques the traditional portrayal of Avenol as a 'misplaced nationalist', a French civil servant miscast as an international official: rather, it shows that his brand of internationalism was popular in the period, and related to elements of Nazi and fascist

434 Interview with Stephen Schwebel (1951), LNA – Avenol Papers.

plans for international organisation, types of internationalism today largely forgotten. It criticises the notion, put forward by himself and accepted by some scholars, that he was an apolitical technocrat moving the League in a functionalist direction: on the contrary, his was a very political and strategically consistent secretary-generalship, with clear organisational practice goals which he tried to implement. Additionally, I use this as a crucial case to argue for a more holistic, political, and historically-grounded theory of international organisations: missing broader conceptions of internationalism diminishes our ability to critically discern the politics behind international institutions.

The first part of this chapter (5.1), explores the main leadership initiatives taken by Avenol during his years at the head of the League, in terms of political and diplomatic actions (5.1.1) and internal administrative measures (5.1.2), culminating in his wartime activities and resignation (5.1.3). This analyses his actions in greater detail and in more systematic fashion than most scholars have done, and shows how, far from an inept political operative, Avenol had a coherent, and largely consistent, project of international organisation, whose departure from the Drummond model does not indicate anti-internationalism, but a different internationalism.

The second part (5.2) attempts to clarify what that alternative internationalism could be. It explores Avenol's practice and views on international organisation in relation to two brands of fascist internationalism closely related to international technocracy; Italian fascist corporatist internationalism (5.2.1) and Nazi plans for international organisation (5.2.2). Not only did these ultranationalist movements have strong and considered plans for the international, but important elements of these plans were not dissimilar to the kind of technocracy that Avenol (and many others, then and since) advocated.

Last, a coda (5.2.3) summarises our main arguments and highlights how analysing the relationship of legitimacy, power, and authority in Avenol's practice and within fascist

internationalism improves our understanding of the 1930s at the League and the dynamics of competing internationalisms within secretariats. Furthermore, studying Avenol in particular helps us reassess dichotomies often used in the study of international organisations and the interwar period (political/technical, internationalist/nationalist, collaboration/resistance), thereby refining our theoretical and methodological lenses.

5.1 *The League Secretariat, 1933-1940*

The post-Drummond period coincided, in the traditional narrative, with the League's decline into inaction and irrelevance: with the Depression, member states retreated into nationalism, revisionist powers became more assertive, and the League was rendered powerless. The reality is more complex: many secretariat sections did substantial work throughout the 1930s, including the Secretary-General's office. Studies of Avenol are rarer still than of Drummond, and what literature exists draws unanimously negative conclusions: Pedersen calls him "indolent and pusillanimous"[435], Barros says that he was "the wrong man in the wrong place at the wrong time"[436], and Rovine that he "made little or no attempt to strengthen […] the influence of the Secretary-General's Office"[437]. As seen in chapters 1 and 2, Avenol is usually considered a French nationalist miscast in an internationalist office. However, analysing how Avenol sought to exercise his office, we can show that he played a significant political role throughout this delicate period, although much of it was in neglect of or opposition to the Covenant. And that much of that work was internationalist, but in a very different conception of what internationalism meant than it did under Drummond. As we did with Drummond, after briefly outlining Avenol's arrival into power, we analyse his political and diplomatic activities and his internal administrative and bureaucratic

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435 Pedersen: 2015(i), p.294.

436 Barros: 1969, p.18.

437 Rovine: 1970, p.105.

measures. By applying the lens of internationalism-as-organisational-practice we can identify important examples of internationalism in his work. He had a strong influence in his office and on the League more broadly, and exercised that influence in a relatively independent way.

Coming from a deeply conservative catholic family from Melle, Avenol graduated from Sciences Po Paris "a highly conservative young man with only the most impeccable right-wing associations"[438], strong monarchist sympathies, and solid economic and financial skills. Following an excellent performance in the civil service exams, he became an Inspector of Finances, rising steadily through the French bureaucracy, eventually managing finances of military zones during the First World War and working as financial attaché in London. Upon Monnet's resignation in 1923 as Drummond's deputy at the League, French Prime Minister (and former President) Raymond Poincaré appointed Avenol to succeed him. Avenol, not a great enthusiast for the League, actually preferred a job at the Banque de France, but Poincaré, who had been impressed with his technical expertise during the war and was keen to have a French national overseeing the League's finances, especially given the British and American influence on the political dimensions of the organisation, eventually persuaded him.

Setting aside his hesitations, as Drummond's deputy Avenol "proved himself an able administrator when no political issues were at stake"[439], helping devise financial assistance programmes in Austria, Bulgaria, Greece, Hungary, and Estonia in the 1920s. He became recognised around the secretariat as a strong economic manager and technocrat: meeting minutes record the belief of the heads of section that "M. Avenol has great experience of the work of the League and particularly the Austrian question with which he would, as Deputy Secretary-General, be specially concerned"[440]. However, according to the longstanding secretariat official (and later

438 Bendiner: 1975, p.269.
439 Ibid..
440 Directors' Meetings Minutes (21/12/1922), LNA.

Avenol's deputy) Pablo de Azcárate, "whenever he mixed into political questions there was a catastrophe"[441]; Avenol seemed at best disengaged and uninformed about the political dimensions and implications of the secretariat's work.

In fact, that Avenol was neither interested nor well informed about politics was no secret: he fundamentally believed that the international organisation should be a strictly 'technical' socio-economic affair, without independent political initiative. As early as 1923, soon after he assumed the post of Deputy Secretary-General, minutes of a directors' meeting recorded the following exchange:

> "*Monsieur Avenol said that* […] *the Secretariat* […] *had no administrative or executive powers of its own, nor had its members the duty, or the right, of initiating policy.* […Secretariat officials] *were drawn from many different countries, and each being more or less aware of his Government's point of view, they could harmonise the various elements together which led up to the decisions of the Council and the other members of the League. All power of initiative rested in the Members of the League.* […] *But was it possible for the Secretariat to work out, so to speak, of itself what might be called a policy to be followed by the League? Such a result, he concluded could be indirectly, but not directly, produced, and in consequence a meeting which should have a formal agenda, and a more or less official form, for the discussion of a League policy, would be rather dangerous.*
>
> […] *Professor Rappard, while admitting the official impersonal character of the Secretariat, set against this the position in actual fact, namely, the very real influence of members of the Secretariat upon opinion in League matters, and in particular the recognised system whereby the Council's decisions were prepared by its servants – its intelligent and responsible servants – in the Secretariat*"[442].

From this exchange, dating from his first year at the League, we can identify outlines of Avenol's conception of internationalism and how he thought it should be practiced by the secretariat. He believed that the secretariat had no role at all in initiating action, which was the remit of states, and should play a strictly executory function (as well as ironing out differences between members). As seen, one of the key innovations Drummond had introduced was precisely the initiating power of the Secretary-General: usually very discretely, he would often shape the

[441] Quoted in Bendiner: 1975, p.269.

[442] Directors' Meetings Minutes (28/2/1923), LNA. Also partly quoted in Pedersen: 2015, p.45.

Council's agenda to introduce matters, or begin holding private negotiations between parties in a dispute even before the Council had been seized on it. In public, Drummond would always give credit to the member states, as a way of maintaining his office's discretion and enhancing the authority of the Council, but in private he often initiated action. That Avenol felt it necessary to state such a clear position for the record from the start, especially in the relatively informal and 'safe' space of the weekly director's meetings, and during a period when the secretariat still benefitted from the 'benign neglect' concerning state oversight, suggests a strong attachment to it.

Indeed, his practice in the early years would be consistent with this position: as deputy he prioritised technical 'follow-through' over political or diplomatic initiative. Throughout Avenol's deputyship, given Drummond's active leadership and the relatively stable international situation, this was not particularly problematic; it was often a useful complement to Drummond's more proactive posture. But they acquired deeper significance upon Drummond's resignation. Avenol was expected, as deputy, to succeed him. Secretariat officials feared that, in the rapidly degenerating international environment of 1932-1933, to have a leader that favoured a hands-off approach to diplomacy and did not believe in a 'political' role for the secretariat would not help increase the credibility and authority of the League.

Drummond himself, in fact, who had carefully built up the office for over a decade, opposed Avenol's accession to the secretary-generalship and took uncharacteristically strong steps to try to prevent it from happening. As early as 7 January 1932, he wrote the British Foreign Secretary Sir John Simon that "[*i*]t may seem odd that I do not recommend the present Deputy Secretary-General, M. Avenol, to take my place, but I do not think *from a personal point of view* the appointment would be altogether justified, and I am convinced that the appointment of a French national would be opposed by such countries as Germany and Italy, and could therefore only do

harm to the League”[443]. There was also pressure from civil society against Avenol: the British League of Nations Union, for instance, which was particularly active in the interwar period, (and chaired, at this time, by the British scholar and liberal internationalist Gilbert Murray) argued he did not have the ‘outstanding qualities’ needed to continue Drummond’s political development of the office[444].

Drummond scrambled to find alternative candidates. An early option was Sir Alexander Cadogan, the diplomat who headed League affairs at the Foreign Office. This initially seemed like it would work, but contingency intervened. On 7 May 1932, ILO Director-General Albert Thomas died suddenly at the dinner table of a restaurant (he was alone, and was only recognised when the waiters searched his pockets and saw his name on a membership card of the French Socialist Party he had been carrying[445]). Thomas was promptly succeeded at the ILO by Harold Butler, his British deputy. Britain could not head both organisations, and France was keen to enforce their 1919 agreement on leadership exchange, so Drummond sought other avenues and tried to convince Jean Monnet to return to the League as Secretary-General. When Monnet, by then working as a banker and international economic planner in the US, Europe, and China, declined, Drummond branched out to the Dutch, the Scandinavians, and even the Americans, all in vain.

By this point, summer 1932, given the lack of agreed candidates, pressure from France, and a public statement by Italy that it would actually prefer a national of a great power (reasoning, in line with its view in the Committee of Thirteen discussed above, that at least such an official would be ‘openly’ rather than indirectly manipulated by the great powers, thus less hypocritical and easier to handle), the selection of Avenol was fixed. He was elected in September: the Assembly set his

443 Drummond to Simon (7/1/1932), BL – Cecil Papers Add. MS 51112. Also quoted in Barros: 1969, p.2. Emphasis added.
444 Rovine: 1970, p.108.
445 Schaper: 1959, p.338.

term of office at ten years and Drummond's departure for 30 June 1933. Avenol took office on 1 July 1933.

As we can see, the expectations (either optimistic of pessimistic depending on one's position towards the League) regarding Avenol's election from the part of states, the secretariat, and parts of civil society, was that his practice as Secretary-General would be a departure from Drummond's. He was expected to maintain a non-political posture, to develop less active a practice, and to be less protective of the secretariat's independence than Drummond had been (or, from Italy's perspective, less hypocritical about it). This change was welcome by a number of parties which had opposed Drummond, mainly small states and Italy and Germany: as Prentiss Gilbert, the American Consul in Geneva and unofficial League representative[446], wrote, "Avenol is much less industrious than Sir Eric, and it is felt that under his direction there would be more decentralization of authority which the representatives of a number of powers have long been anxious to bring about"[447]. In other words, even if Avenol had no great views on the political authority of the secretariat (and, as seen, he did), simply having a less energetic and creative Secretary-General was already a victory for some.

5.1.1 *Political and Diplomatic Initiatives*

Despite those expectations, Avenol assumed a position which his predecessor's practice had defined in a clearly political and creative direction. And he did so in the midst of the gravest crisis the League had faced, Manchuria, where Drummond himself had been particularly active, sending envoys, coordinating peace talks and investigative committees. From the start, therefore, Avenol was catapulted into the very political stage he thought the League had no business in, and he sought

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446 For Gilbert's work in Geneva, see Donnely: 1978, p.373.

447 Quoted in Bendiner: 1975, p.268.

to use the institutional levers at his disposal to fundamentally alter the practice patterns which Drummond had created in that space. We can see this through his action in three crises; Manchuria, Ethiopia, and Finland. As seen, Drummond had used his dispute resolution practice as a central source of legitimacy for his office, thereby attaining a measure of authority in the international sphere; that authority was decidedly political, and in consequence Avenol "inherited an office which Sir Eric had made into a key political post"[448]. Examining his diplomatic practice in these three crises will show how, contrary to his argument that he was an apolitical technocrat, Avenol was in fact very much a politically active Secretary-General – only in a different conception from Drummond regarding politics, internationalism, and how practice and principles inter-related to increase the office's authority.

Manchuria was the first crisis Avenol faced upon taking office. Despite Japan giving notice of withdrawal from the League in March 1933, secretariat officials remained engaged in peace negotiations, investigative committees, and programmes of humanitarian aid and socio-economic development in China. From July, Avenol decided to cut the League's diplomatic dispute-resolution involvement altogether, focusing only on 'technical' programmes of economic and humanitarian assistance. The shift was abrupt: according to Gilbert, the sudden cessation of political attempts to stop the war "bore no resemblance whatever to the League's attitude at the outbreak of the Manchurian affair in 1931"[449]. The underlying reason was that Avenol was not only largely unfamiliar with the political implications of technical programmes and the secretariat's positions (such as its official policy of non-recognition of 'Manchukuo'), but moreover he considered these efforts to be outside the League's scope. He saw Japanese occupation as a *fait accompli* and therefore considered technical programmes all he could do.

448 Ibid., p.270.
449 Rovine: 1970, p.119.

Behind this supposedly apolitical 'technical' focus, however, was a two-pronged political strategy, and here we see how he sought to change the Secretary-General's practice in terms of the relationship between norms and power in internationalism. Through his 'technical' shift, Avenol sought to (a) leave open the possibility of Japan returning to the League, ceasing 'controversial' diplomatic manoeuvres and avoiding anything which might offend it, and (b) avoid crossing France and Britain, then leaning towards appeasement and hesitant to act against Japan.

This resulted in a 'neutrality' policy in which he avoided any mention of Japanese aggression and cut League programmes in China with any potential political influence, however indirect. Ludwik Rajchman, for instance, was a renowned Polish epidemiologist who was widely praised as the longtime director of the Health Section. One of the more activist secretariat officials, he ran a large health policy and development programme in China, including in Manchuria. Rajchman appreciated the political implications of this 'technical' work, seeing it as "an opportunity to maintain interest in China that might help in the expansion of its trade and finances"[450], thereby strengthening the unstable Chinese central government. Avenol, pressured by Japan, which disliked Rajchman's anti-fascism, used his power over the secretariat to terminate Rajchman's China programmes in August 1934. As Gilbert wrote; "I cannot express too strongly my impression of [*Avenol's*] decided intent to denude this League endeavor […] of any political connotations which might be offensive to the Japanese or embarrassing to any important government"[451]. It should be noted that Britain and France also desired to curb in Rajchman's activism in China: a 10 July letter from the Foreign Office to Avenol supported Avenol's decision (even if noting that "[*o*]f course the opposition of the Foreign Office [*to continuing Rajchman's programmes*] might have to take a very discrete form"[452]) – the line between Avenol's own

450 Ibid., p.120.
451 Quoted in Bendiner: 1975, p.270.
452 Foreign Office to Avenol (10/7/1934), LNA – Avenol Papers.

appeasement and that of Britain and France was thus blurred from the start, and his two-pronged political strategy would only become more assertive throughout the decade.

When Japan's withdrawal notice period expired in 1935, Avenol marked the formal end of its membership with a public statement. Although lamenting that the League was losing a founding member, he did not cite any breach of the Covenant (overlooking the non-aggression provisions in articles 11 and 16, which Japan had clearly violated) and stated that Japan no longer had any 'rights or obligations' toward the League; a statement which brought protests from China, a League member under occupation, now neglected by the top official of the organisation it had joined for security. Avenol replied to Chinese protests saying that he had not meant his statement as "a certificate that [*Japan*] has fulfilled all its international obligations"[453] – this, following two years of 'neutrality' and the cancellation of diplomatic work, failed to convince the Chinese (and many secretariat officials).

In public, Avenol was pro-Covenant, describing it in 1934 as "the first and only measure of a practical nature which humanity may have for the purpose of establishing the reign of law in relations among nations [*and that*] the world must choose not between the League and some other more satisfying system of international relations, but between the League and an almost total anarchy"[454]. Through his practice, however, his attitude indicated otherwise. Frank Walters, later Avenol's deputy, wrote of Manchuria that "[*t*]he small powers, in particular, had come to doubt, not so much the efficacy of the League system, as the will of the great powers to apply it […]. They believed that […] there was in London, Paris, and Rome, a certain current of sympathy for the State which had dared to use its military preponderance to impose its own justice"[455]. Avenol's posture towards Japan was similar to this, and would be adopted again when Germany withdrew

[453] Quoted in Rovine: 1970, p.122.
[454] Quoted in Rovine: 1970, p.115.
[455] Walters: 1952, p.499.

from the League in October 1933: he "decided at this point to avoid any League moves that might further irritate the Germans and hence make their return to Geneva impossible"[456], subsequently supporting pro-German policies such as the Saar referendum, and hesitating to condemn Germany's actions in Danzig, even when they went against specific Covenant provisions and League resolutions.

Avenol's political use of his office and his two-pronged strategy (appeasement and trying to get powers that left the League to come back, even when in opposition to the Covenant) could be seen in an even clearer way in our second case; the Italo-Ethiopian ('Abyssinian') crisis. An analysis of his involvement gives a clear illustration of the focus of this thesis on internationalism as an organisational initiative: here Avenol deliberately used the institutional structure, authority, and influence of his office for a set of foreign policy goals which were in clear violation of the League Covenant, and of the Secretary-General's duty to uphold it.

For context[457], both Italy and Ethiopia were League members; following Mussolini's military incursions in December 1934 aiming to occupy Ethiopia, Ethiopian Emperor Haile Selassie appealed for League mediation. The Council discussed the matter throughout 1935, failing to persuade Italy to withdraw. Hostilities became full-blown war by October; the League, declaring Italy the aggressor, imposed limited sanctions. In December, a secret Franco-British scheme to stop the war by granting Italy vast swathes of Ethiopia, the Hoare-Laval Plan, collapsed following public outrage. Nevertheless, Italy finished conquering Ethiopia in May 1936, incorporating it into 'Italian East Africa'. Selassie, now in exile, continued asking for League help, but by mid-1936 the Assembly dropped the sanctions and even rejected a proposal to bind member states to non-recognition of the annexation. Italy occupied Ethiopia until 1941.

456 Barros: 1969, p.24.

457 For thorough analyses see Frank: 1974 and Strang: 2013. For the Italy-League relationship see Tollardo: 2016.

Throughout this crisis, Avenol acted as a behind-the-scenes mediator, ostensibly playing a role similar to Drummond's. However, it gradually became clear that Avenol was using the negotiations not in an impartial fashion, but instead to obtain confidential information for Italy[458]. He eventually dropped any pretence of upholding the Covenant and by summer 1935 was openly advocating an Italian 'mandate' for Ethiopia; this was a hyper-appeasement stance which, Barros observes, would have made Mussolini wonder "if [...] the League's Secretary-General was willing to go so far, how far would the British go?"[459]. Avenol was acting politically, but not on the League's behalf: it was in this context that Rovine argued Avenol "wished to represent what he viewed as correct French foreign policy"[460]. In this sense, not only did he not deploy his office impartially or try to uphold the legal provisions he had been elected to protect, but he actually kept the broader League system from trying: over lunch on 16 April 1936 with British Foreign Secretary Anthony Eden and France's Joseph Paul-Boncour, Eden noted that Avenol outdid Paul-Boncour "in excuses for the Italian attitude"[461], calling Ethiopia unreasonable for refusing to negotiate directly with Italy (Selassie insisted that the conflict be debated at the League; a position Eden was surprised that Avenol did not share). Eden was shocked, and asked Avenol "whether it was the view of the Secretary-General of the League of Nations that the victim of aggression was not entitled to ask that negotiations to settle his fate should take place at Geneva in the presence of the League"[462]. Avenol did not reply.

This is a clear example of Avenol using his office's diplomatic powers and authority (drawing on the trust given by member states) to assist an aggressor in breach of the Covenant, using bureaucratic agenda-setting powers to prevent the League from discussing the matter effectively, and publicly arguing against Covenant provisions and international law, in violation

458 Barros: 1969, p.57, 77.
459 Ibid., p.80.
460 Rovine: 1970, p.137.
461 Quoted in Barros: 1969, p.111.
462 Ibid..

of his oath of office. That is, from an internationalism-as-organisational-practice perspective, in the Ethiopian crisis Avenol was trying to utilise the levers of his institutional structure to pursue certain foreign policy goals which were opposed to the League's rules.

Here we can draw a clearer insight into Avenol's foreign policy, and identify a very bold practical move by a secretary-general, perhaps bolder than any move Drummond had made. Avenol sought to use the Ethiopian crisis as a way to realign the European balance of power, so that Italy (a League member) could be a more powerful player and help counterbalance Britain and Germany. In terms of principle, this strategy was, of course, to the detriment of the League's norms and of a member's sovereignty: Avenol was primarily concerned with (a) keeping Italy in the League and (b) maintaining European stability, for which he judged aggression outside Europe a tolerable price. In terms of strategy it was catastrophic: rather than realigning the European balance its effect was to strengthen the fascist bloc, show the lack of will of liberal democracies to uphold the Covenant, and highlight the weakness of the League's enforcement capabilities. Walters would observe that, following Ethiopia, "[*n*]o State could now afford to rely on its membership of the League to protect it from aggression, or even to give it any useful help in time of danger"[463].

Avenol eventually realised his mistake over Ethiopia in terms of political strategy (though not in terms of principle): in April 1936 he wrote Alexis Leger, the General Secretary of the Quai D'Orsay (the French foreign ministry) that the Ethiopian situation gave Italy leverage in the negotiations occurring then over German remilitarisation of the Rhineland. Avenol concluded by acknowledging that the "[*t*]he Ethiopian affair [*was*] a European poison"[464]. His solution, however, rather than upholding the Covenant, was another incredibly bold political, scheme: trying to convince France to align with Italy against Britain, leading to a rapprochement with Germany and,

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463 Walters: 1952, p.709.
464 Quoted in Barros: 1969, pp.108-109.

supposedly, European equilibrium[465]. This striking proposal – whereby the crisis in Ethiopia could be used to bring France closer to fascist Italy and Nazi Germany against liberal Britain – was not only bold, but, as Barros notes, equally "indicative of [*Avenol's*] inability to comprehend political realities and the power struggle then in progress"[466] between the status quo and the revisionist powers.

In pursuing this policy, admittedly, Avenol was not an outlier, given Franco-British appeasement policies and the extent of what they were willing to sacrifice in Ethiopia. But he was acting in dereliction of his duty as Secretary-General, acting against basic League principles, a position that astounded not only Eden and Leger, but many League and member state officials. The Spanish representative, Salvador de Madariaga, who had previously worked in the secretariat, was now chairing the committee trying to negotiate a peace between Italy and Ethiopia (Walter commented that "[*n*]o one knew better than he that what he was asked to do was impossible"[467]). After months of unproductive negotiations, during which he grew astounded at and frustrated by Avenol's actions[468], Madariaga informed the Council on 17 April that "the hope of bringing about a cessation of hostilities by agreement between the two parties must be finally abandoned"[469]. At that point, in any case, Italy was nearing full occupation.

Despite Avenol's best efforts Italy left the Assembly and the Council in May 1936, and in December 1937 formally withdrew from the League (and its citizens from the secretariat). The Franco-British appeasement stance certainly played a key role in the outcome of the crisis, but Avenol's performance facilitated that outcome, and showed that the Secretary-General would not seek to uphold the Covenant or practice his duties impartially. This decreased the legitimacy of his

465 Ibid..
466 Quoted in Ibid., p.110.
467 Walters: 1952, p.679.
468 Barros: 1969, p.110-112.
469 Walters: 1952, p.680.

office, thus diminishing his authority – and, with it, his ability to influence politics. In other words, he did not see that, given the constraints and capabilities of his office, the effectiveness of his political strategy was inherently tied to a *strategy of legal principle*. Indeed, in each subsequent international crisis (the Spanish Civil War, the Anschluss, Sudetenland) the Secretary-General's role decreased. A former official, visiting the secretariat in September 1937, found it "defeatist and Avenol inadequate to the situation there and more interested in his new offices [*the Palais des Nations, which had opened in 1936*] than in policy"[470].

This appearance of passivity, however, was belied by one final crisis worthy of analysis, in which Avenol played a central political role, and in which he used his institutional practice to great effect: the expulsion of the USSR from the League in late 1939.

Finland had joined the League in 1920, and the USSR in 1934 (straight as a permanent Council member). When the USSR invaded Finland in November 1939, Avenol was determined to resolve the dispute through League mechanisms and have the USSR expelled. Walters, then Deputy Secretary-General, believed "[*t*]he Finns themselves had no particular wish to see Russia expelled"[471]: they wanted to stop the war or, failing that, to obtain support for their side. Britain was similarly lukewarm about expulsion[472]. Avenol, however, a fervent anti-communist and encouraged by American diplomats that the invasion "provided an excellent opportunity to expel the Soviet Union"[473], believed that "so long as the Soviet Union is a member of the League it would be impossible for the League to function"[474]. Noting the irony that the USSR held at that time the rotating Council chairmanship, he added: "Germany, Italy, and Japan at least had the

470 Quoted in Barros: 1969, p.168.
471 Walters: 1952, p.807.
472 Barros: 1969, p.204.
473 Rovine: 1970, p.149.
474 Quoted in Barros: 1969, p.198.

minimum of moral decency to resign from the League before committing flagrant aggressions"[475] (a statement as inaccurate as it was in poor taste; only Germany had done that).

In sharp contrast to previous crises, now Avenol behaved like a skillful and dedicated Secretary-General, working the League machinery imaginatively and efficiently to apply the Covenant provisions. Since no plenary meetings were scheduled in which the matter could be discussed, he asked Argentina's representative to use an Assembly budgetary committee meeting to raise it. This ultimately proved unnecessary; Finland itself approached the League on 3 December and Avenol promptly convened the Council and Assembly for the following week. Before those meetings, he sent secretariat officials to Sweden to sound the parties' positions, agree on procedural matters, remained in touch with the Finns, and lobbied member states to secure the vote on Soviet expulsion under Article 16(4) of the Covenant (Council vote on expulsion of League members following breach of the Covenant). He believed this "would serve to increase immeasurably the prestige of the League"[476]. On 9 December, the Council met and, following the correct procedure, referred the matter to the Assembly. That same day, the Finnish representative reiterated to Under Secretary-General Thanassis Aghnides that Finland did not insist on expulsion, especially if avoiding it might help stop the war[477]. Avenol, fearing this would be an obstacle, asked the US diplomat Harold Tittmann to persuade Finland to support expulsion (Tittmann refused). Ultimately, however, Finland did not object, Avenol's lobbying was sufficient, and on 11 December the Assembly recommended that the USSR be expelled, which the Council effected on 14 December – the only country to be expelled from the League. Given the bureaucratic and procedural hurdles, Britain's position, and Finland's own stance, it is likely that this outcome would not have happened but for Avenol.

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475 Quoted in Ibid., pp.198-199.
476 Quoted in Ibid., p.168.
477 Ibid., p.203.

Subsequently, Avenol coordinated League assistance to Finland: he told Tittmann that aid from Geneva would be strictly non-military, but that "the League's Paris office […] would handle 'matters of military aid in the strictest secrecy'"[478]. Although Walters later stated that the secretariat handled no such military aid (which was in any case supplied directly by the USA, Britain, France, and Sweden), he noted Avenol's energetic activity in coordinating supplies of other kinds, writing that "[*t*]he resolution on Finland, whereby the Secretary-General was authorised to stimulate and co-ordinate the assistance which governments might be ready to give, might in other circumstance have proved an important precedent and led to substantial development of the Covenant system"[479].

The contrast with Avenol's previous behaviour is striking. In this case, as Rovine notes, he "demonstrated his capacity for very strong political action so long as it was not inconsistent with the appeasement strategy he had so long supported"[480]. Barros argues that he "showed initiative, skills, and daring"[481], leading us to wonder what could have been had he used these qualities on behalf of the League in previous crises. What we do know is that throughout this crisis Avenol acted as a very politically engaged Secretary-General: immediately seizing on a Covenant breach, trying unorthodox routes to bring it to the League, lobbying extensively to secure the vote. Afterwards he coordinated an innovative programme in assistance to Finland – something which would later become a UN secretary-generalship staple.

Unfortunately, he did all this when the League could no longer play a decisive role in international relations, and the entire affair only confirmed the impression of bias: Bendiner notes the irony that "the League had singled out the Soviet Union as the sole member ever to be expelled after having spent years in attempting to woo back into the fold other aggressors who had defied

478 Quoted in Ibid., p.205.
479 Walters: 1952, p.809.
480 Rovine: 1970, p.152.
481 Barros: 1969, p.205.

and scorned it"[482]. As for the USSR, it "greeted the 'absurd decision' with 'an ironic smile' […] and left the League to Joseph Avenol"[483]. In a final gaffe, Avenol's office sent calls for assistance to Finland to all member states, including Ethiopia. Selassie replied "expressing his unfailing support for 'the victims of aggression'"[484].

5.1.2 *Internal and Administrative Measures*

From the political measures analysed above, Avenol may seem merely like a conservative French nationalist pursuing appeasement, like so many others: shameful in retrospect, but not exceptional. However, if we also analyse his internal administrative measures, his behaviour in the crucial months of mid-1940, and his own views of international organisation, we obtain a more nuanced view of his internationalism.

To begin with, Avenol also influenced the nature and action of the secretariat through bureaucratic innovations, three of which we will analyse: administrative centralisation, emphasis on technical work, and the related abandonment in the late 1930s of his office's previous political vision and dismissal of political officials. These show how he sought to alter the internationalist practice that Drummond had developed not only through his political and diplomatic work, but also through internal bureaucratic means.

Belying expectations he would be 'less centralising', soon after taking office Avenol created a 'Central Section', directly under his office, tasked precisely with the centralisation and distribution of the secretariat's work[485]. This marked a change in civil service style, from a 'British' to a 'French' system[486]. The British secretariat system, analysed in chapters 3 and 4, is

482 Bendiner: 1975, p.397.
483 Ibid..
484 Ibid..
485 Directors' Meetings Minutes (15/9/1933), LNA.
486 Ranshofen-Wertheimer(ii): 1945, p.152.

fundamentally characterised by bottom-up workflow: the Registry, which received incoming mail (how matters officially entered the League machinery), forwarded it to the appropriate section, whose officials handled it. Only matters requiring higher clearance or expertise would be sent up to a line manager, then a head of section, moving each step all the way up to the Secretary-General, In this way, section officials, even relatively junior ones, had a significant degree of autonomy and decision-making power, and "[*a*]t each stage of the hierarchy a part of the work is liquidated […*so that*] only those requiring decision by the highest authority arrive at the top"[487]. This was the system that Drummond had implemented at the secretariat and developed in its first 14 years: by 1933, when Avenol took office, it was deeply embedded into the League's institutional structure. In contrast, the French system he tried to implement works the other way around: a central *cabinet* centralised receipt of all incoming work, which the Secretary-General's office sorted, categorised according to perceived priority, and distributed down to the heads of the relevant sections, who in turn assigned it to individual officials.

Avenol never managed to establish a fully-fledged *cabinet* system – the British system was too entrenched; it had created the very structural and procedural identity of the secretariat, and, in an illustration of how institutional practice and procedure can influence organisational agency, it had allowed for many sections to grow fairly independent from the core secretariat administration (e.g. Mandates, Health, EFO). Nevertheless, Avenol did make considerable efforts to implement it and change the secretariat's practice, and his Central Section did alter the secretariat's dynamic, in some negative and some positive ways. Its main advantage was work rationalisation: by streamlining projects, the Central Section managed to reduce overlaps and bring down expenses, measures that reviews of the League's administration, including by the aforementioned Committee of Thirteen, had recommended – indeed, Avenol's "reputation as an administrative reformer was

487 Phelan: 1949, p.66.

part of the appeal of his appointment"[488]. It also had the benefit of adding more officials from non-Anglo-Saxon countries (the British had previously far outnumbered others[489]) and, in a multinational staff, the French offered distinct advantages, adding "a tendency toward checks and balances unknown in the British system"[490] (partly because the British system relies largely on shared worldviews and assumed, implicit norms and values, so that for an international organisation operating with a multicultural staff the French system of formal hierarchy and clear responsibilities makes teamwork easier).

The disadvantages, however, were also significant. The British system, albeit assuming a common cultural outlook, rewarded initiative and a sense of responsibility. In contrast, Ranshofen-Wertheimer, who worked for a decade in the secretariat and later dissected its practice, argues that Avenol's system tended to "discourage the spirit of initiative so important for any administrative body as the most vital check against bureaucratization"[491]. In consequence, a 1942 administrative review found that with the system Avenol introduced "decisions were delayed, action was blocked, and activities slowed down […] nobody was entrusted with any initiative at all […]. It killed all interest"[492]. Ranshofen-Wertheimer concludes that officials' "spirit was broken; they became increasingly mere mechanical executors of their tasks"[493].

This bureaucratic change also had the effect of giving the Secretary-General direct control of all League matters, making him "virtually immune, at least within the Secretariat, to any questioning of his actions"[494]. As seen, a centralised system has advantages, but requires dedicated leadership from an engaged Secretary-General and frequent boosts to staff morale. Neither existed under Avenol. For instance, Drummond's weekly directors' meetings, examined in chapter 4, were

488 Clavin: 2012, p.232.
489 Ranshofen-Wertheimer(ii): 1945, pp.153-154.
490 Ibid., pp.154.
491 Ibid., pp.155.
492 Quoted in Barros: 1969, p.23.
493 Ranshofen-Wertheimer(ii): 1945, pp.156.
494 Barros: 1969, p.23.

a fixture throughout his tenure, allowing top officials to discuss the state of the League together in an informal way, thereby both encouraging transparency and a fostering a collegial atmosphere, further strengthened by the lengthy minutes taken (also a valuable record for researchers). Under Avenol, as the League archives show, the meetings became irregular in late 1933, occurring only a few times in 1934, often not attended by Avenol, and their agenda was largely administrative; from 1935 they become 'section meetings', and the minutes become short and perfunctory. This lessened the sense of bureaucratic unity in the secretariat's top levels, showed poor leadership by the Secretary-General, and weakened the institutional agency of his office, which had for so long drawn strength from its strong relationship with the heads of section. Thus "[*p*]oorly led, many Secretariat sections lost their capacity for independent behind-the-scenes activism"[495]. Ranshofen-Wertheimer notes that officials felt thoroughly dispirited, departures increased, and many more would have left than did, were it not for the ongoing economic depression, mass unemployment, and growth of nationalism in their home countries (which made former League officials not only overqualified for what jobs they could get but often perceived as suspect by their governments[496]).

These developments were not accidental. Avenol's reforms were aligned with his view of the role of the secretariat. They fitted well with his desire to 'de-politicise' it, and the deliberate political strategy behind his bureaucratic reforms was made explicit by a further administrative policy shift he introduced after the Ethiopian crisis. This was moving from political-diplomatic action (conflict-resolution, with the Council and Assembly) toward 'technical' work (socio-economic, scientific, and humanitarian).

Avenol aimed to obtain more institutional autonomy for the technical side of the secretariat, removing it from the Council's supervision, effectively turning the League into a technocratic organisation. As the League's political potentialities appeared to decrease in the late 1930s, the

[495] Pedersen: 2015(i), p.294.
[496] Ranshofen-Wertheimer(ii): 1945, pp.156.

appeal of this proposal grew. One early adherent was Australia's representative (and former Prime Minister) Stanley Bruce. Bruce did not share Avenol's dislike of the League's political work (indeed, he had lobbied successfully for Australia's election to the Council, and was, according to Walters, "the best, perhaps, of the many first-rate chairmen who presided over the Council, Conferences, or Committees of the League"[497]). But he believed, in a liberal functionalist fashion, that international conflicts could be effectively tackled at their fundamental socio-economic level, and that League sections covering these areas should be empowered[498].

In May 1939 the Council charged Bruce with leading a committee to propose League reforms in this direction. The Bruce Committee's *Report*[499], from 22 August 1939, recommended creating a Central Committee for Economic and Social Questions, steered by member states' ministers of finance, health, transport etc., which would oversee technical bodies researching solutions to common problems[500]. This was an innovative proposal for international relations: although the outbreak of the Second World War just a week later rendered it dead in the water, it would be later realised as the UN's Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC). Within the secretariat, the proposal "closely followed the views and opinions of the Secretary-General [*…marking*] the high point of Avenol's endeavour to turn the League into an organisation for economic and social cooperation in which political activities would be either eliminated entirely or reduced drastically"[501]. Walters notes that, from the background, "Avenol was the moving spirit behind the entire movement"[502].

The *Bruce Report* is discussed in further detail in section 5.2.1, but here we note that it was the culmination of Avenol's decade-long project to shift the League's emphasis from political to 'technical' matters: it was his brainchild, reflecting views on international organisation that he had

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497 Walters: 1952, p.695.
498 Cotton: 2018, p.9.
499 'The Development of International Cooperation in Economic and Social Affairs' (22/8/1939), LNA A.23.1939.
500 Walters: 1952, p.762.
501 Barros: 1969, pp.195-196.
502 Quoted in Rovine: 1970, p.147.

long held, and he steered it through negotiations and drafting: "from the very start the Bruce Committee was Avenol's show. Bruce's role remains obscure"[503]. On 6 July 1939 Avenol had circulated a briefing paper advocating reform along the lines being discussed by the Bruce Committee, arguing that "the directing bodies should be composed on 'a non-political basis', and representation should be 'functional'"[504]. These points echoed an earlier proposal by Alexander Loveday and James Salter of the EFO, and acquired over time a tripartite rationale: "to improve the League's effectiveness in economic diplomacy; subsequently, they were intended also to help the League remain productive in the absence of political success; and ultimately […] they furnished the League with a means for survival as Europe was headed into a general war"[505]. Avenol's plan was distinct from Salter's and Loveday's in that he favoured a corporatist model of economic integration, whereas the EFO officials were closer to free market liberalism. This point is discussed below in 5.2, but here it is important to stress that the Bruce Committee reforms revealed the extent to which the League was perceived to require change, by its officials and member states, and Avenol seized the opportunity to propose a radical institutional reform, which would have altered the League's nature and character.

As we close this section it is also worth highlighting that Avenol's institutional processes (the centralisation of the bureaucracy, the cancellation of 'political' activities, the move towards technocracy) were accompanied by a wave of dismissals by Avenol of top secretariat officials who he suspected of opposing his views.

In the late 1930s the secretariat underwent a drastic cutting of the staff (from around 700 in 1930 to 644 in 1938 to 540 by December 1939[506]) and deactivation of political programmes. While some of this was necessary for budgetary reasons (member state contributions were decreasing

503 Dubin: 1983, p.57.
504 Ibid., p.58.
505 Ibid., p. 59.
506 Ranshofen-Wertheimer: 1945(ii), p.373.

significantly), Avenol also used this as an opportunity to dismiss officials he saw as political threats. Some of this was encouraged by Britain and France, which were, as an American diplomat noted in 1938, "bringing pressure on the Secretary-General to 'purge' the Secretariat of officials who [*had*] leftists tendencies or who for other reasons [*were*] outspoken in their reply to the dictatorships and to recent British and French policies particularly as regards the Munich settlement"[507]. France's Marcel Hoden, for instance, a longstanding official, Avenol's Chief-of-Staff, and an outspoken critic of Munich (which Avenol had praised), was dismissed in October 1938, accused by Avenol of being part of "a small group who introduced division in the Secretariat by pursuing a policy of their own in opposition to that of the Secretary-General"[508]. Another was Ludwik Rajchman, the active head of the secretariat's Health Section, who had been in the secretariat since 1921. Rajchman had first clashed with Avenol over Manchuria, as discussed above, and was in December 1938 forced to resign: according to Avenol, it was "in the true interests of the League on the technical side as well as in general that he should leave the Secretariat"[509]. Yet another political dismissal was British Labourite Koni Zilliacus, a secretariat official since 1920. Forced to resign in August 1938, he wrote to Avenol criticising him for running the secretariat "in the name of 'realism' [*and adopting*] the prevailing moral and political standards of the chief Government Members of the League, instead of sticking to the standards imposed by the Covenant" - in consequence, "principles, treaty obligations and ideals are first thrown overboard as the only way of getting results. After that the only results the 'realists' obtain are humiliation, defeat and disaster"[510].

Many were skeptical of Avenol's justification of these dismissals as necessary cost reductions. Lord Cecil, for instance, raised objections with the Foreign Office, advising the Foreign

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507 Quoted in Barros: 1969, p.188.
508 Quoted in Ibid., p.186.
509 Quoted in Ibid. p.188.
510 Quoted in Ibid., p.174.

Secretary in October 1939 not to "regard the dicta of either Avenol or the Supervisory Commission [*which oversaw the League's budget*] as final and decisive"[511]. By that point, however, the war had deprioritised such considerations for Whitehall.

In short, we can see that, contrary to the traditional view (and his own claims of being 'apolitical'), Avenol's secretary-generalship was remarkably active politically, only not, for the most part, on behalf of the League's principles. Even his 'neutrality' stance was in fact a profoundly political position: this became explicit over the expulsion of the USSR in 1939, when Avenol showed that he could work the League very efficiently, but only in one political direction.

5.1.3 *Wartime Activities and Resignation*

Although some of his technical proposals had the potential to be successful (e.g. the socio-economic council), under the circumstances of 'de-politicisation' and biased dismissals they had a negative effect on the secretariat's morale. By the late 1930s, Avenol's goal was to preserve what he saw as the League's business, which did not include its legal principles. For those who still harboured doubts about his politics, his activities in 1939-1940 made matters even clearer. In section 5.2 below we analyse his ideas and political projects; here we focus on what his practice in his final year in office reveals about his internationalism.

In January 1939, he commented that "practically the entire world was engaged in […] a demi-guerre in which the ordinary principles of order and international law were suspended", so that the political side of the League should "remain dormant"[512]. Sean Lester, by then Avenol's deputy, disagreed, suggesting that after Munich the League could be "a rallying point – in spite of the smash – alongside the alliance system they seem to be working on"; Avenol replied that "the

511 Cecil to Halifax (3/10/1939), BL – Cecil Papers Add. MS 51084. Also quoted in Barros: 1969, p.188.
512 Quoted in Ibid., p.189.

League's time is not yet"[513]. Avenol's attitude had a serious effect on the secretariat's staff, and fuelled a backlash by senior officials, contributing to the premature end of his tenure.

By early 1940, after resignations and dismissals, the secretariat's top direction was down to Avenol, Lester and Walters as deputies, and Aghnides as Under Secretary-General. They saw their staff decrease even further, to about 100 by the end of 1940[514], and member states disappear altogether as the war progressed. Worried about the League's future under Avenol, Lester and his colleagues tried to ensure its survival. At this point the institutional independence of the secretariat, which had been created and developed by Drummond in the 1920s, began to be expressed forcefully against the Secretary-General's office, whose practice had deviated from the secretariat's norm. This expression was in itself an internationalist practice: a rescue of the earlier forms of secretariat internationalism, which Avenol had tried to change. Top officials such as Lester, Loveday, and Aghnides, played a crucial role here.

Some background on Lester is relevant here[515]: he had become Deputy Secretary-General in February 1937 after Pablo de Azcárate left to become the republican Spanish ambassador to London. Lester was a former journalist, Irish republican activist, and Ireland's representative to the League, who had returned to Geneva that year after four years serving as the League's High Commissioner to Danzig, in which position he was the Free City's *de facto* administrator (it had been officially under League protection since 1920). In Danzig, Lester's protests against the increasingly assertive Nazis, with little backing from Avenol[516], made his situation untenable, and he was recalled to Geneva. Between then and the start of war, Lester grew appalled at Avenol's behaviour and tried to revive the earlier spirit of liberal internationalism and independent action of the secretariat, believing that the League, with its emphasis on the rule of law, should become a

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513 Quoted in Ibid., p.193.
514 Walters: 1952, p.809.
515 For more on Lester's background and pre-1940 activities, see 6.1 below.
516 Gageby: 1999, p.145.

bastion of anti-fascism. In February 1940 he wrote to the Foreign Office noting the importance that the organisation would have after the war, and, while acknowledging that Britain had more pressing concerns, suggested it was essential to maintain the League, continuing "the holding of meetings – of League committees, and [*that Britain should*] take part in them as fully as possible and with the best possible representatives"[517].

On 10 May 1940 Avenol sent around the secretariat a circular stating that all employees who wanted to leave should feel "free both morally and administratively, to ask for a suspension of their contracts; or, if they wish to do so, to resign"[518]. Despite the ostensible preoccupation with staff safety, this had a bad effect overall (according to secretariat official Arthur Sweetser, "had I been a government representative, I should have had the feeling that, if officials were so unessential as they seemed by this circular to be, there was little need of my government continuing to subsidize the office. The dearth of leadership and inspiration was unbelievable; the [*Secretary-General's*] office seemed without a soul"[519]). Around that time, Walters having resigned, Avenol targeted Lester, trying to play him and Aghnides against each other[520]. Avenol accused Lester of 'conspiring' with Loveday to arrange the transfer of the EFO to Princeton (discussed in 5.2.1 below) and pressured him to resign[521]. After France fell, in June 1940, Avenol would himself often threaten to resign, only to change his mind, declaring with pride that he had been elected Secretary-General by the members of the League, "including Germany and Italy"[522].

Here we arrive at the crisis with which this thesis opened, and which reveals much about Avenol's internationalist conception. Avenol's behaviour was part of a larger plan to remake the League into a pan-European technocratic organisation that could improve international relations

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517 Quoted in Barros: 1969, p.206.
518 Internal Circular 10/5/1940, LNA 41.1940.
519 Quoted in Rovine: 1970, p.176.
520 Lester Diary (17/7/1940), LNA – Lester Papers.
521 Lester Diary (27/7/1940), LNA – Lester Papers. See also Gageby: 1999, p.189.
522 Lester Diary (27/7/1940), LNA – Lester Papers.

with the Axis, hoping that "[*t*]he increasing tension between England and its former ally France, and the tightening Nazi grip on Europe would assist in its execution"[523]. Lester's notes from the period recall that after the French armistice, Avenol's reaction was despondent, but Lester also notes that:

"*Long before the armistice was signed however* […], *it became evident that he* [Avenol] *was thinking in terms of a future which fitted in with the military situation on the Continent* [i.e. German advances]. *It seemed to Lester* [Lester wrote this in a note] *that this desire was dictated by one or two objectives: the first and strongest in his mind* […] *was to play a part in the new Europe, especially economically, as a consequence of the defeat of France, a Europe which would be identical with that desired by the conquering States*"[524].

He grew convinced that the Axis would win the war, telling colleagues that the League "should work together with the Germans to expel the English from Europe"[525]. In Lester's diary recollections, Avenol told him at this time that "the British must be kept out of Europe and driven from the Mediterranean"[526] and that "the British are going to expiate their crimes and mistakes"[527]. He would also write to Sweetser:

"*If Princeton* [where the EFO had moved to…] *becomes a foyer for the preparation of the future, then its role could be great, because, except for the Germans and Italians who have a program, a doctrine, and a method, no one seems to me to have one. The words 'new order' are a slogan, but who can say what they mean? The year 1941 will remain the starting point of a historic era; it is the end of the world of the 19th century. We are at the beginning of a great revolution.*

The German and Italian programmes which are penetrating Europe […] *should not be rejected wholesale; they contain things which one can no longer reject.* […] *I don't believe that an international organisation is no longer necessary.* […Most secretariat officials] *hope that England's resistance will allow the avoidance of a purely dictated peace. But, even so, it will be a very difficult peace. If it is to be avoided that it is a purely German organisation that will be imposed, it is necessary to at least propose an alternative, inspired by the experience of the LoN, that is everything it managed to create in terms of methods, usage, systems of relation etc..*"[528]

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523 Barros: 1969, p.233.
524 Lester Diary (27/7/1940), LNA – Lester Papers.
525 Quoted in Rovine: 1970, p.160.
526 Lester Diary (27/7/1940), LNA – Lester Papers.
527 Lester Diary (27/7/1940), LNA – Lester Papers.
528 Avenol to Sweetser (1/9/1940), LNA – Avenol Papers.

Some then and since have claimed that Avenol went so far as to go Bern at this time to offer the Germans and Italians control of the League[529]. In 1970 Rovine argued that there was no definitive proof of this (and Avenol denied it[530]), but, in any case, it is clear that he was convinced the Axis would win the war and that it was therefore necessary to make the League attractive to them[531]. Later research, drawing on Lester's diary from the period, suggests that Avenol did indeed make such moves: apparently in July 1940 Avenol tried to approach the German consul through Aghnides, and Pierre Laval (the French half of the Hoare-Laval plan, now helping Pétain at Vichy) through the ILO's Marius Vipple; both Aghnides and Vipple refused[532]. To Vipple, Avenol enthused that there would soon be "a new France, which was to be given a new soul to work in collaboration with Germany and Italy and keep the British out of Europe"[533]. On 10 July Avenol met an Italian official, who reported to Lester "that the interview was a one-sided one, that Avenol made an enthusiastic anti-British speech to him and spoke with the greatest praise of the greatness of Herr Hitler"[534].

In early July he told Lester "that he did not yet know what Hitler and Mussolini would want as regards the League"[535] and that "he was not sure if Hitler wanted a League but fairly sure that Mussolini would, to help indirectly to create a certain balance of power"[536]. Lester strongly disagreed, arguing that the principles upon which the League had been founded, and to which the secretariat officials owed their loyalty, were directly opposed to alliances with the fascists. Lester based his arguments precisely on the brand of liberal internationalism the League secretariat was meant to embody, replying that "these speculations might be true, but they had nothing to do with

529 E.g. Siotis: 1963, pp.108-109.
530 See e.g. interview with Stephen Schwebel from 1951, LNA – Avenol Papers.
531 Rovine: 1970, p.160.
532 Lester Diary (27/7/1940), LNA – Lester Papers. See also background in Gageby 1999, p.190.
533 Quoted in Barros: 1969, p.233.
534 Lester Diary (27/7/1940), LNA – Lester Papers.
535 Lester Diary (27/7/1940), LNA – Lester Papers.
536 Gageby: 1999, p.192.

the duty of the Secretariat and that for each of us there was a moral issue and the question of loyalty to our trust and self-respect"[537].

In mid-July Avenol wrote to Vichy directly, pledging his support: the regime replied telling him to resign (Pétain was wary of looking too intertwined with the League by having a French Secretary-General[538]: "they had decided to stay in the League but also decided that it would be desirable for Mr. Avenol to quit the post of Secretary-General"[539]). Avenol then tried to persuade Aghnides to become Acting Secretary-General, with himself remaining in the background controlling the League's finances. Aghnides flatly refused, saying Avenol should make a clean break, and Lester, as Avenol's deputy, should become Secretary-General[540]. Avenol, thinking Lester disloyal and pro-British, rejected this. It was in this context that Lester found himself, as we quoted at the beginning of this thesis, at "the core of the resistance".

Finally, on 25 July, unable to break his officials' resistance and under pressure from Vichy, Avenol announced his resignation, saying he would soon announce his departure date. He tried one last plan, which would effectively shut down the League: he told the Supervisory Commission on 9 August that since the Assembly could not meet to approve a budget (which he refused to draft), the League should cease activities, it being "a generally accepted principle that without a budget or without authorization taking place, an administration loses all right to spend"[541]. Lester called this "an argument for implied liquidation"[542], and Ranshofen-Wertheimer the attempted "destruction of the machinery which had been entrusted to his care"[543]. As Lester noted in his diary, "[*t*]hus came into possibility the alternative if the machine which he controlled (and during this period he often said: 'I am now the League of Nations') could not be utilised under his

537 Lester Diary (27/7/1940), LNA – Lester Papers.
538 Fosse and Fox: 2016, p.183.
539 Lester Diary (27/7/1940), LNA – Lester Papers.
540 Ibid.. See also background in Gageby: 1999, p.196.
541 Quoted in Rovine: 1970, p.162.
542 Quoted in Ibid., p.163.
543 Ranshofen-Wertheimer(ii): 1945, p.381.

guidance for the new Europe purposes, he would not allow it to exist for its original purpose. The main idea, however, continued to be the transformation of the League machinery"[544].

This convoluted affair ended when the Supervisory Commission and the Council rejected Avenol's plan, making him finally give up. On 20 August he announced that he would depart on 31 August and that Lester "had been Acting Secretary-General since July 26th"[545] – a surprise to everybody, including Lester, who strongly denied it. In a note to Lester from 26 July he had stated: "As I want to arrange my papers and prepare my final report, I ask Mr. Lester to assume the interim [Secretary-General post]. Nevertheless, no decision having a financial repercussion shall be taken without the due agreement of the Treasurer. […] I reserve nevertheless the decisions relative to the Princeton"[546]. However, he had continued to exercise control of the League, as Lester protested in late August, without consulting or informing Lester[547].

In any case, this time Avenol did leave. On 21 August, Avenol left for a weeklong trip to Vichy, unsuccessfully seeking a job in the regime, leaving Lester to work out the details with the Supervisory Commission and the Council. Despite making formal requests, he was not invited to meet either Laval or General Weygand.

It is notable that, as his politics and plans for the League became clearer after the outbreak of the war, Avenol tried until the end to use bureaucratic institutional means to shape the direction the organisation would take. From manipulating the staffing procedure, to trying to remain as finance administrator controlling the League from the background, to finally trying to shut down the League through a budget manoeuvre, he sought different organisational levers in the hope that one of them would allow him to exercise power over the League and thereby fulfil his strategy. This failed as, ultimately, having lost almost all legitimacy vis-à-vis his colleagues, Avenol had

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544 Lester Diary (27/7/1940), LNA – Lester Papers.
545 Rovine: 1970, p.164.
546 Avenol to Lester (26/7/1940), LNA – Lester Papers.
547 Lester to Avenol (27/8/1940), LNA – Lester Papers.

little if any authority left – and in an office which historically had close to no formal power (especially as he had lost the support of France), authority was a prerequisite for effective action.

Lester thus became Acting Secretary-General (his official title until 1946) on 1 September 1940. A small swearing-in ceremony was arranged for the following afternoon, and the few remaining secretariat officials gathered to mark the occasion. Avenol, without notice and despite the time having been arranged to suit him, did not attend. Lester wrote in his diary that "his empty chair was a reproach to his manners", adding "but no one seemed to be particularly hurt"[548].

5.2 *Technocracy or Fascist Internationalism?*

In this section I argue that the traditional interpretations of Avenol as either an apolitical technocrat, as he claimed, or a miscast nationalist, as Barros and Rovine have argued, are incorrect. Following the methodology of this thesis of analysing the practice of secretaries-general in light of their internationalism(s), in this case fascist internationalism, helps us see that Avenol's practice was very political and indeed very internationalist – only closer to the internationalism of the Axis powers than to the liberal variant the secretary-generalship had previously represented. This will do three things. First, it will help us better understand the context of Avenol's actions throughout his tenure and in 1940, showing that he was not simply an opportunist, but rather pursued broader strategic considerations. Second, it gives us insights into how international organisations can work with, or even be created and sustained by, non-liberal nationalist regimes, highlighting how an emphasis on technocracy can hide political strategies. Third, it provides a framework to study the relationship between international power and authority in a fascist international environment, as

548 Lester Diary (3/9/1940), LNA – Lester Papers.

chapter 4 did for liberalism, and how sources of legitimacy differ in a fascist conception of international law.

A note of reflection is important here. As with liberalism, fascism and fascist internationalism had (and have) different strands and approaches to international order. Given the range of officials, professionals, and intellectuals who joined these movements, the fascist spectrum is wide and often contradictory. At one end stands the most commonly identified version of fascism, especially of Nazism; racialist ideology along Hitlerian lines. This perspective was in itself 'globalist', in that it encompassed and divided the entirety of humanity, with little regard for state borders (seen as artificial constructs which impeded the natural course of humanity; in Hitler's view, the biological race struggle[549]). Given the enormity of the crimes committed under this ideology, the traditional focus on this dimension of fascism is undoubtedly merited.

There were, however, other strands of fascist internationalism whose functionalist elements overlap significantly with internationalist positions we see in Avenol, and in institutions of technocratic international organisation, including liberal ones. This is not to say, as one scholar of fascism has wisely observed, "that there was any ideological affinity between the liberal internationalism of the pre-war era and the Nazi New Order"; rather, "[*w*]hat [*studying such connections*] does do, however, is highlight entanglements and parallels between the two phenomena, not least from the perspective of many of the actors involved"[550]. Additionally, it "illustrates how the habits of acting and thinking 'internationally' that had been embedded through the growth of international organisations and networks prior to the war served to underpin support for the idea of a reformed and reformulated international system under Nazi leadership"[551]. How such processes could be internationalist and yet serve authoritatian genocidal regimes shows how

549 For an innovative approach to the globalism of Hitler's racial ideology, see Snyder: 2016, ch.1.
550 Brydan: 2016, p.299.
551 Ibid., p.310.

internationalism can fuel the engines of international relations in different directions. Underneath similarities in the ostensible functionalism and technocracy of fascist internationalism, however, there lurked a core of powerful and dangerous politics. Indeed the politics were never separate from it: as I argue throughout this thesis, 'internationalism' is never an apolitical process that can be used for different political ends – internationalism in in itself inherently political, which is why we should study it in terms of practices, individuals, ideologies and historical context.

In this section I make this argument in two parts. First, I analyse Avenol's post-League activities, his thoughts on international organisation, and relate them to fascist projects of world corporatism (section 5.2.1). This seeks to analyse his actions in broader context, examining his particular brand of international corporatism, the book he wrote about international organisation, and fascist, mainly Italian, plans for international corporatist organisation. Second, I explore the internationalist thought behind two Nazi international organisations (section 5.2.2), the DKZ and the IRK, discussing how their ostensibly technocratic exterior masked an underlying relationship between international power and authority radically different from liberalism. This aims to show how Avenol's conception of international organisation rested on assumptions that were fundamentally different from those that the League, and the secretariat in particular, had been created upon.

5.2.1 *Avenol's International Corporatism and Fascist Internationalist Plans for World Order*

Avenol's practice shows how fascist internationalism can influence a liberal international organisation. In this section we analyse this dynamic in three parts: first, by analysing the politics behind Avenol's contribution to the Bruce report; second, by analysing his ideas of international

order published in his 1944 book; and, third, by comparing his ideas and practice to Italian fascist internationalist plans for world corporatism.

Given his administrative and organisational focus on the League's economic and technical dimensions, his attempts to 'depoliticise' the secretariat, and his commitment to the Bruce Report, it is possible one would think of Avenol's internationalism as fundamentally technocratic, functionalist. In this view, his organisational politics (the direction in which he wanted to take the League) were not necessarily fascist or even pro-appeasement; they were a pragmatic way to save what still worked at the League by the late 1930s. This is the view, for instance, taken by Dubin in his study of the *Bruce Report*: he argues that Avenol's reforms were necessary as the League's political influence declined, and that they at first "were intended to improve the League's effectiveness in economic diplomacy; subsequently, they were intended to also help the League remain productive in the absence of political success; and ultimately, in the summer of 1939, they furnished the League with a means for survival as Europe was headed into a general war"[552]. The *Bruce Report* "was not an instrument for appeasement"[553], because its Central Committee for Economic and Social Questions would have been dominated by Britain and France, the Assembly would retain budgetary control, and overall it promoted "the very kind of open international economic system the Germans and Italians had rejected"[554]. In consequence, Dubin argues that "Avenol was indeed a conservative French nationalist […*and*] French policies [*sought to*] minimise antagonisms with Tokyo, Berlin, and Rome. Nonetheless, to interpret his initiative in developing the Bruce Report as an act of appeasement, or as a device to accommodate the totalitarians, would be wrong"[555].

552 Dubin: 1983, p.59.
553 Ibid., p.63.
554 Ibid..
555 Ibid., p.42.

There are two problems with this view. First, as seen in 5.1 above, it leaves out too much context: it takes Avenol's self-portrayal as the League's great defender at face value and disregards his behaviour towards the aggressor states throughout the decade and his actions in the crucial year 1940. Second, it fails to distinguish between different approaches to international functionalism. In her study of the EFO, Clavin shows how Avenol's 'functionalism' was in fact distinct from the EFO's (and even Stanley Bruce's), and that the path towards the Bruce Report was actually one of conflict between two views of international organisational functionalism. This introduces us to the debate between liberal and non-liberal functionalism. There were in fact two committees working on economic reform proposals for the League in the late 1930s (confusingly, both were chaired by Stanley Bruce). Both believed the League required reform, but they differed in how they proposed to do it: by preserving the League's political side and bolstering the economic one, or by transforming the League into a purely economic cooperation organisation.

The Coordination Committee, initiated by the EFO's Loveday, reflected the first position. It argued what Dubin applies to the Bruce Report in its entirety: that it was important to tackle the socio-economic roots of conflict, that the League had been quite successful at this in the 1920s, and that bolstering the economic development dimensions of the League could now compensate for the paralysis in its political dimensions. It advocated for a liberal international economic and financial infrastructure to foster free trade and programmes to improve social welfare policies and living standards[556]. Especially in the face of growing nationalism, the Depression, and the economic protectionism of the late 1930s, this represented "the aspiration to return to the values of economic liberalism of 1920s Europe that were now represented largely in the political ideals embodied in the governance of the United States and Britain"[557].

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556 Clavin: 2013, pp.231-232.
557 Ibid., p.232.

The other committee, informally called the ‘Bruce Committee’, was inspired and effectively led by Avenol in 1939. Although sharing the desire for enhancing the League’s economic side, this had radically different political implications from the first committee. It argued for a far deeper transformation of the League, in which the political and diplomatic work would essentially be substituted by the economic work. Its political economy vision too was fundamentally different from the EFO’s: while Loveday and the EFO had been critical of the economic policies of Germany and Italy for years, Avenol believed that the League should remain strictly neutral in its criticism of them, and try to lure them back in as members, so that the Bruce Committee’s proposals were corporatist and protectionist, divorced from concerns of political development, liberalism, and democracy. With the outbreak of war, and specially after the invasion of France in spring 1940, “Avenol’s and Loveday’s apparently shared views for reform within the League were unmasked as diametrically opposed […] for the politics that underpinned them”[558]. Bruce himself was wary of Avenol’s actions and since early 1939 feared that Avenol’s plans “might kill the political side of the League without giving birth to anything new”[559].

Avenol’s main concern was membership, and finding ways in which ‘non-members’, especially the revisionist powers, could work with and within the League. Loveday resisted this, and the Foreign Office was “aware that incorporating non-members in future League work opened up the possibility of providing the Axis powers with a legitimate route back into the committee rooms of the League”[560], sensing that Avenol’s plans implied “an authoritarian internationalist ‘block centred on Germany, Italy, France and Spain’”[561]. In any case, Loveday’s proposals eventually won out and the Bruce Report did not incorporate the more politically biased of Avenol’s plans (it actually contained strong limits on non-member participation[562]). Ultimately,

558 Ibid..
559 Quoted in Ibid., p.243.
560 Ibid., p.249.
561 Quoted in Clavin: 2013, p.232. Quote from a Foreign Office analysis of Avenol’s plan.
562 Ibid., p.249.

the outbreak of the war the week after the report was published meant that projects for reforming the League were put on hold. But analysing these debates reveals much about Avenol's motivations and the importance of analysing particular institutional practices within broader political and historical contexts.

To deepen this analysis, we also have an important and almost universally overlooked source; Avenol's own book on international organisation.

After leaving the League, Avenol spent much of the war in Vichy France near the Swiss border, eventually moving back to Switzerland, where he lived until his death in 1952. Towards the end of the war, in August 1944 (just after the liberation of France) he published a short book on postwar international organisation, *L'Europe Silencieuse* ('Silent Europe'). Certainly this must be taken cautiously as a source, especially given the timing of publication and the surrounding political circumstances (Avenol might have been trying to burnish his image in a France that was prosecuting alleged collaborators: for instance, in the book he praises the Free French as "those who, from abroad, could speak on behalf of France"[563] – a very different tone from the one he had adopted in 1940). However, as an international organisation planning document it is remarkably aligned with his practice while in office, and as such, to the extent it helps shed light on his internationalism, deserves analysis here[564] .

The book opens with a epigraph from the early 20th century French nationalist writer Maurice Barrès: "they wanted us to be citizens of the world; they spoke to us of human brotherhood. We must face the facts. That cosmopolitanism had to admit it was defeated. But there is no incompatibility between the demands of the motherland and the demands of humanity"[565]. This sets the line for the relation between nationalism and internationalism discussed in the book, one

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563 Avenol: 1944, p.72.

564 In fact, if the book were to be considered a public relations move, it is even more indicative of Avenol's politics: if *this* is what he proposes when he is trying to portray himself as a liberal, that is revealing.

565 Quoted in Avenol: 1944, epigraph.

quite different from the liberal dynamic discussed above in 4.2. There the idea was that liberal nationalism would work internationally to perfect institutions (reflecting the Kantian perspective of international organisation as moderating, and mediating, forces between nation and world[566]); here the starting premise is that 'cosmopolitanism has failed', and therefore we need a new beginning, a national regeneration, to renegotiate the 'demands of the motherland' and those of 'humanity' (reflecting elements of the palingenetic dimension of fascism discussed in chapter 2).

Avenol attempts a balance between national power and international cooperation that is based on what Avenol considers the realities of power, not on international law. Arguing that "[*d*]uring this war we have rediscovered what Machiavelli wrote long ago with such concision: 'only force and necessity, rather than the writings and the treaties, force kings to comply with pacts'"[567], he predicts that geopolitical clout in the postwar world will be divided among the United States and the Soviet Union (the 'natural autarchies'[568]). Therefore, if European countries want to remain in play in the international sphere, "[*t*]he unity of Europe is an essential goal"[569].

Crucially, the basis for the legitimacy of such union is fundamentally different from the liberal one (grounded, at least in theory if not always in practice, on law, norms and principles, forming a constitutional framework). Avenol flatly rejects that approach, proposing an international unity deriving not from 'constitutional documents' like the League Covenant but from functionalist arrangements of socio-economic cooperation: "The League and the other wartime alliances have taught States methods other than federative constitutional pacts"[570]. His focus instead is on apolitical functional cooperation, which does not seek to meddle in states' internal constitution or to, in the Kantian approach, use international law to mediate between national impulses and international rights. He proposes instead the promotion of "intimate and

566 Viera de Mello: 2004.
567 Avenol: 1944, pp.26-27.
568 Ibid., p.28.
569 Ibid., p.39.
570 Ibid., p.60.

close cooperation [*for*] the preparation and execution of common programmes"[571] but without any overarching international constitutional framework: "[*n*]one of the constitutional mechanisms of national decision-making would be transferred. No superimposition of sovereignty. […] Each plan adopted after a shared analysis becomes something like a federal policy whose objective is to coordinate the economies to found and reconstruct the peace, like those used to coordinate war"[572].

Legitimised by this essentially corporatist functionalism, the 'federative' arrangement Avenol proposed would involve three pillars: (i) "each member-State shall conserve intact its freedom of constitutional choice, sovereignty, regime type, administrative organisation"[573], but all must subscribe to President Roosevelt's four freedoms (of speech, of worship, from want, and from fear); (ii) states must declare 'solidarity' with members threatened with aggression and contribute to a common military force ("either an European police force, or a grouping of European national forces, or both"[574]); and (iii) members must execute the "programmes of social and economic reconstruction adopted after free discussion by the Council of Europe"[575]. That Council would oversee the union, but "in contrast to the League of Nations Council, the Council of Europe would not have as its primary vocation conciliation and arbitration of conflicts. Its essential mission will be to coordinate, decide, act"[576]. At times the Council could resort to force, he says, but ultimately its decisions should be made in conjunction with a 'Court of Justice' composed not of judges, but of 'experienced politicians' with the counsel of 'experts, jurists, and technicians': this would allow for flexibility and negotiation in its decisions[577]. In other words, not even the body overseeing the union or its international court would have a juridical basis: a court of

571 Ibid., p.61.
572 Ibid..
573 Ibid., p.62.
574 Ibid., p.63.
575 Ibid..
576 Ibid., p.68.
577 Ibid., p.69.

politicians would be more efficient to ‘decide, act’, since its decisions would not need to be based on law but could instead be based on political expediency.

This is because, for Avenol, international organisations without national force backing them have no power and therefore cannot enforce their laws; consequentially, any ‘juridical’ framework around them is at best hypocritical and ineffective. Avenol makes this clear when he argues that:

> “[T]*he organisation of an international institution does not have virtue in and of itself. It can only be effective while everything is going well. In a grave crisis, when passionate tensions dissociate the juridical values, all that is left is the face-off between the strong and the weak, and peace ultimately can only be maintained by the balance of forces and wills*”[578].

As a consequence, the best international organisations can hope for is ‘cooperation’ between sovereign nations. This emphasis on political expediency over law, even in legal bodies, is consistent with his practice at the League. Then, he was at odds with an organisation founded upon principles of law; the tone and the proposals of the book seem to indicate that, by the end of the war, Avenol considered the downfall of the League as vindication of his diplomatic approach: that is, an international organisation based on law, principles, and ‘constitutional’ frameworks was bound to fail. Instead, political expediency should take its place, and states should cooperate ‘programme by programme’ with other states independent of their constitution. Importantly, and differently from the liberal approach to functionalism, in Avenol’s view functional cooperation is not a means to greater political integration (as it was, for instance, in the case of postwar European integration[579]). For Avenol international bodies should not aim at great political integration, but aim at peace through functionalism.

Certainly, several of the proposals he makes are contradictory. For instance, how are states to maintain their ‘regime type’ and national sovereignty if they must at the same time sign up to Roosevelt’s distinctly liberal four freedoms? How are they to retain their sovereignty if the Council

578 Ibid., p.91.
579 See, e.g., Judt: 2005.

can use force to enforce decisions? How does it work having states sign up to liberal principles if any findings of breach and possible enforcement will be made by an explicitly political organ rather than by a legal organ? Reinforcing the feeling that the book was an instrument of public relations to rehabilitate Avenol is the contradiction between the emphasis on the inefficacy of international law and liberalism on the one hand, and the fawning over Roosevelt's four freedoms on the other: Avenol might be trying to coopt elements of the American governance to appeal to the Allies, soon to be victorious.

Nevertheless, underneath these contradictions we can identify three tendencies Avenol identifies in the negotiation between nationalism and internationalism: the primacy of power over law in the international space; the dislike of 'cosmopolitanism' and the accompanying faith in national decision-making; and the importance of functionalism in promoting international cooperation. Avenol should not be seen as a binary nationalist/internationalist figure, but rather as inhabiting a space in between the two, a form of nationalist internationalism. Especially for the secretary-generalship, he believed that this combination was necessary, and to that extent he stressed, in a 1951 interview, the difference between the international office and the national civil service:

> "*My activities were – different. Sir Eric… it was all… All was smooth* [before 1933]. *It was not the time of difficulties*. […] *I favor an active role of the Secretary-General. Like the BIT* [Bureau International du Travail, the ILO]. *But once Sir Eric began in one way, it was difficult to change*. […] *Sir Eric quite rightly took it as a civil servant. The civil service in England – at least then – was the best in the world. But we are not in England*."[580]

It is worth noting that this strengthens the approach of this thesis concerning the importance of studying practice: "once Sir Eric began in one way, it was difficult to change" shows Avenol himself saw his office in the way we have approached it; shaped by the practice and precedent-building of its occupants, and the way they negotiated institutionally the political constraints of

580 Interview with Stephen Schwebel (1951), LNA – Avenol Papers.

their times. He introduced a distinct version of the active international official, one that mediated between internationalism and nationalism in a very distinct way from Drummond, and, given his political inclinations and the war, this acquired a distinct anti-liberal flavour. The form of technical cooperation that he prioritised is a crucial element in this reconciliation: but even this had a note of appeasement to it, of prioritising 'good relations' among powers, even fascist powers, over the law of the organisation.

In fact, Avenol continued pursuing this policy even after he had left office, arguing, for instance, in a letter to a former colleague that (even in wartime) the League could coordinate technical work among member states, but that it should so in such a way as to avoid angering Germany. Therefore, he suggests 'for political reasons' not inviting certain countries:

> "*Would it not be possible, on the initiative of a few Governments, merely to invite those members of the League who wish to maintain certain activities, particularly the technical ones and among them the ILO, to have a semi-official meeting with members of the Supervisory Commission?* […] *It would be desirable* […] *to avoid inviting countries at present invaded by Germany – for political reasons*."[581]

Precisely for 'political reasons', though, we can see that Avenol's brand of internationalism was not the apolitical technocracy as he stated. We can also see that it was more complicated than the simple 'nationalism' scholars have branded him with. He was a nationalist, but he was also an internationalist: his way of negotiating the two finds clear expression in one type of fascist internationalist project, world corporatism. The similarities in terms of the type of functionalism they espoused, the primacy of power, the bias for authoritarianism, the way of organising the international are striking.

World corporatism was a branch of fascist internationalism particularly developed in Italy in the 1920s and 1930s. Despite pursuing an aggressive militarist imperial strategy, Italian fascists

[581] Avenol to Hume Wrong (1 September 1940), LNA – Avenol Papers. Emphasis added.

also developed internationalist plans for 'organising the world' (like British imperialists, Italian fascist imperialists also had their internationalism).

For context, 'corporatism' in the fascist sense is a philosophy and a policy of socio-economic organisation which emerged in the aftermath of the First World War, and, like internationalism, it was attractive to many different political movements: factors such as social Catholicism mourning for a lost past of order and harmony, new nationalist movements, and guild socialism struggling with economic changes all contributed to the growing attractiveness of corporatism as a political alternative. Corporatism basically advocated the reorganization of national society, after the catastrophe of war and the political and economic chaos of peace, along the interests of 'corporations' (from the Latin *corpus*, or group, here meaning social sector groups such as unions, agriculture, the military etc,) rather than of individuals. The corporations are then organised into hierarchical pyramids, and their leaders negotiate social policy; society as a whole, in turn, is organised in such structures, ultimately as a huge pyramid under a single political leader.

Corporatism was not necessarily a fascist movement: it informed, and has informed since, many political projects in democratic countries, from liberal progressive corporatism in Roosevelt's New Deal to economic corporatism in Japanese *zaibatsu* conglomerates. However, corporatism was particularly attractive to fascists, as Pasetti notes: "[*t*]hese trends did not necessitate the rise of fascism, but they meant corporativism was in vogue in the early 1920s, presented a critique to the liberal state, and was then coopted by fascism, especially in Italy, as a central pillar of the new socio-economic organisation of the state[582]. It was a way of combining syndicalism, anti-liberalism, and authoritarianism in a single, nationalist 'philosophy of the State'. As such, it informed the Italian fascist motto; "tutto nello Stato, niente al di fuori dello Stato, nulla contro lo Stato" ('everything in the state, nothing outside the state, nothing against the state').

582 Pasetti: 2017, p.70.

Indeed, Mussolini makes this clear in his Doctrine of Fascism: "[*w*]hen brought within the orbit of the State, Fascism recognizes the real needs which gave rise to socialism and trade unionism, giving them due weight in the guild or corporative system in which divergent interests are coordinated and harmonized in the unity of the State"[583].

Despite that motto, however, fascists did think of world corporatism beyond the state. Indeed, in terms of international organisation, corporatism presented a version of fascist internationalism which shares many characteristics with liberal functionalism. As we saw in chapter 2, de Michelis's 1934 *World Reorganisation on Corporative Lines*[584] was an influential work of the notion of organising the world along rationalist, functionalist lines. As Steffek noted, the parallels between this corporatist view and David Mitrany's liberal-functionalist view of international organisation are striking: the progressive belief in modern technocracy and systematic rationalisation, the primary focus on functionalism not on legalism, the scientificism of a supposedly 'apolitical' bureaucracy[585].

They were similar in vision and in the modernist sources of that vision: "vision of global cooperation developed by some Italian fascists and explicitly connected to fascist ideology, resembled some world order proposals developed by liberals during the same historical period"[586]: it was based on similar domestic analogies, drawing on similar foundations, and both "were influenced by modernist utopias, optimistic about the possibilities of economic planning and societal engineering"[587]. Of course, liberal and fascist internationalisms have radically different

583 Mussolini: 1933, p.4.

584 Michelis: 1935.

585 *The Bruce Report*, for instance, offered a blueprint for such a technocratic international organisation. This is not to suggest that it was a fascist plan: it was closer to a Mitranyan-functionalist plan of socio-economic cooperation, and it was, in fact, realised after 1945 with ECOSOC. A notable difference, however, is that ECOSOC was born alongside the very legalist – and political – structure of the UN, whereas the Bruce reforms in Avenol's conception involved actually substituting the League altogether for this kind of pan-European technocratic organisation. Indeed, even Dubin acknowledges its corporatist tendencies, noting how it "advocated "the development of sectoral linkages across state boundaries" (Dubin: 1983, p.54).

586 Steffek: 2015, p.5.

587 Ibid..

political end-goals (and these Italian plans are in themselves different from the even more aggressive and genocidal Nazi plans), but it is illustrative of our argument that parts of the process of so many of these internationalisms are similar: "[*t*]he fascist internationalism of de Michelis was technocratic and dirigist, enthusiastic about the possibilities of public planning and the virtues of bureaucratic organisation in safeguarding the 'common good' of (international) society"[588]. The importance of studying internationalism through practice and with politico-historical context is essential: if we fail to analyse the political context and strategies behind international organisation projects, it is sometimes difficult to tell them apart at a superficial level.

In practice, Italian fascists tried to export this, and other, versions of fascism internationally, not only through war and conquest as in Ethiopia, but also through international conferences and gatherings. The strategic dimension of this internationalism was seeing Italy as the centre of a 'new fascist civilisation': as fascism scholar Martin says in his recent study of Nazi-fascist cultural internationalism, "Germany was the brawn of this 'European bloc', but Italy was its brains"[589]. The key tactical project behind positioning Italy thus was the Esposizione Universale Roma, an enormous global exhibit planned since 1936 to happen in 1942 (called 'E'42'). By September 1939, 32 nations had already accepted invitations to attend (including Germany, Britain, France, Brazil, Belgium, Spain, the USA, Japan, and China[590]). The E'42 plans were only quietly abandoned in mid-1941, following Germany's invasion of the Soviet Union – Martin argues that "Hitler's war in the east had now made international collaboration of the kind [*that the organisers of E'42*] had imagined impossible, not only materially and logistically, but in a more profound sense: the conflict had become a 'war without quarter … that will leave great wounds to heal, profound abysses to bridge'"[591]. What this represented, in fact, was a change in the nature of Italian

588 Ibid., p.21.
589 Martin: 2016, p.165.
590 Ibid., p.166.
591 Ibid., p.175.

fascist internationalism, from it being in the centre of the internationalist organisation to it aligning itself with Germany in order to pursue its goals. And, as the war in Russia became more difficult and desperate, the alliance between the two fascist powers would be tested and their competing internationalist strategies would clash.

Of course, fascist internationalism, both in the German and the Italian variants, was "a reality rich in contradictions", Martin observes; "[*b*]ased on the principle not of equality but of hegemony, enshrining the racist dominance of Europe in the world and of Germany in Europe, this was an internationalism at odds with the values we associate with that word. In place of values like mutual respect among peoples, cooperation, and peace, it served racism, exploitation, and genocide"[592]. But, as per Halliday's comment that from the perspective of those who benefit from it, hegemonic internationalism is just an extension of nationalism, so much of Hitler's dreams of a slave empire in the East were inspired by the 'hegemonic colonialism' of European colonialism[593].

It would be an exaggeration to apply to Avenol this more extreme version of fascist internationalism, but many of the more 'mainstream' (to the extent this word can be used in this context) elements are present in his ideas and practice. The belief in technocracy, systematic rationalisation, the primacy of economic functionalism over legalism, and the scientificism of a supposedly 'apolitical' bureaucracy were all important elements in Avenol's attempts to shape his office and the League. It is tempting, at this point, to argue that Avenol was in fact a liberal functionalist – it is just that so much of this philosophy 'overlaps' with fascist world corporatism. This could be the case if one were just to consider his administrative reforms of the League, analysed in 5.1 above. But here again we must stress the importance of going beyond the mere structure of international organisation plans and practice to try to identify the politics behind them. And in Avenol's case, given the combination of his administrative side with his consistent political

[592] Ibid., p.267.
[593] Ibid..

bias towards the fascists, his ideas about the primacy of force in international relations, and especially his actions in 1940, labelling him simply a technocratic functionalist would be too generous. He developed an internationalism that was very political, and the flavour of his politics, in the context of the time, puts his plans much closer to fascist internationalism than to mere functionalism.

I am mindful of the dangerous habit, widespread in society at the time of writing (early 2020), of labelling anybody one disagrees with a 'fascist'. Doing so oversimplifies one's criticisms and devalues the term 'fascist' – which should, given the horrors it has led to historically, be taken very seriously indeed. However, this should not stop us from using the term when it is appropriate to do so (which is another trend quite widespread in today's political commentary). And if we analyse carefully what the League of Nations would look like if Avenol had had full power, we can see that it would be an organisation which not only did not stand up to international aggression, but, as he showed over Ethiopia, actually facilitated it; an organisation which would legitimise the Axis powers by promoting economic cooperation with them; which would have repudiated the liberal legal framework upon which it was based; and which, when the war started, would have aligned itself with Vichy France and fascist Italy again Britain and the US. We cannot tell whether, spiritually, Avenol was a 'real' fascist, believing in the entire ideology, or whether he was simply opportunistically linked with these organisational and political ideas – we do not have the evidence to pass conclusive judgment on his internal emotional or psychological sympathies. But in a study of the political and diplomatic influence of his practice – which is the subject of this thesis – that internal state matters less than his actions: many people in various countries and organisations at the time – common citizens, officials, diplomats, soldiers – were not 'fully' fascists at a deep personal level, but they behaved in ways which led to the fulfilment of fascist goals; in practice that was enough. In the case of Avenol we do have material to approximate his practice to strands of fascist internationalism, particularly when we combine his political actions in the late 1930s and

at a crucial time of the war with his administrative measures and his views of international organisation. He shared some of these goals, they did not include a role for independent international organisation or for liberal international law, and he tried to pursue them to a significant degree, in dereliction of his duty as Secretary-General.

Now, in order to better understand why fascist internationalism was so impossible to fit with the League, we must take a step further and analyse how, in fascist international law, the sources of authority are fundamentally different from those of the League and of liberalism.

5.2.2 *National Socialist International Organisations and an Alternative Basis of International Law*

This section analyses two Nazi internationalist organisations, the DKZ (part (a)) and the IRK (part (b)), to gain deeper insight into the nature of international authority in fascist internationalism, especially focusing on how they conceived the relationship between order and law within an international organisation. These two organisations are certainly different from the Italian corporatism explored above, but much of the process guiding their practice is similar and, in a way, they provide a more extreme example of the fascist internationalist movement, which helps clarify analysis. Studying them also highlights the importance for IR scholars to move beyond simply studying the 'rationalist' or 'functional' dynamics of international organisations and to incorporate their politics: these two organisations were ostensibly technocratic and apolitical, but underneath served very clear and dangerous political goals.

To begin, we note that Avenol's plan to turn the League over to Vichy so that it could serve as a pan-European fascist international organisation was not senseless from a strategic perspective. It was disastrous from an ethical point of view, completely contradictory to the League's principles and practices, and probably illegal since many Covenant provisions were diametrically opposed to

fascist principles (indeed opposition to the League was a core fascist rallying cry, especially for Nazis). But unfortunately it would not be extraordinary: many international organisations, voluntarily or otherwise, did go fascist shortly before or during the war. As Kott has observed, once the war started several "technical bodies like the International Bureau of Education or the Bank for International Settlements were collaborating with the Nazis"[594]. The International Criminal Police Commission ('**ICPC**'), which later became Interpol, effectively became a Nazi organisation during the war, moving its headquarters to Berlin and being led by SS generals, including Reinhard Heydrich and Ernst Kaltenbrunner[595].

The reason for these moves was partly endogenous, deriving from political processes within those organisations which are outside our scope, but a large part derived from efforts the Nazis and Italian fascists made to engage with, co-opt, or create international organisations throughout the 1930s and early 1940s. In these cases, many of the practices, processes, and language that prewar international organisations had developed were absorbed by the Nazis. A recent study of Nazi health organisations notes that "[*i*]n some cases this involved the formation of new 'international' or 'European' bodies bringing together cultural, technical or professional groups [...]. In other cases it involved appropriating existing international organisations which had either fallen under direct German control or were of practical interest for Nazi authorities"[596] (such as the ICPC or the International Office of Public Hygiene). In yet other cases, it involved using liberal internationalist practices to resolve disputes between fascist countries, such as the application of international mediation and the concept of minority rights to a wartime dispute between Hungary and Romania over Transylvania, in which the fascist great powers established a "joint German-

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594 Kott: 2014, p.366.

595 On the ICPC during the war, see Deflem: 2002.

596 Brydan: 2016, p.298.

Italian Commission on the issue which echoed many of the goals and expectations of its precursors within the League of Nations"[597].

(a) *The DKZ: Re-organising international organisations*

At an ideological level, these dynamics relate to Nazi palingenetic plans to remake Europe and bring about "a new 'epoch of the community of the free peoples of Europe', that would create an atmosphere of 'comradeship' of all European nations, finally freed from the liberal-capitalist plutocratic system" [598], even if this "clashed with, and was ultimately made impossible due to, the very core of Nazi racial ideology and violence"[599].

At a practical level, however, the creation of international organisational networks was largely coordinated by the DKZ, a Nazi Party body created in 1936 to organise German participation in international conferences, issuing passes, controlling foreign currency, overseeing attendees etc. (hence its name; 'congresses central'). From this bureaucratic beginning, the DKZ's remit expanded enormously in subsequent years, as its database of international conference attendees, information management functions, diplomatic access, and contacts with foreigners gave it extraordinary power within Germany's highly centralised dictatorship, so that by 1939, Herren argues, it "had become a shadowy actor in the background of international relations, with considerable power and an increasingly racist and anti-Semitic profile"[600]. By the start of the war, it had become a central for modelling Nazi international organisation for when Germany won the war; interestingly, from a functional perspective, its template for an international network structure

597 Ibid., p.299.
598 Antic et al.: 2016, p.370.
599 Ibid..
600 Herren: 2017, p.206.

was the League system – structurally, the DKZ plans evidenced Nazi interest in “taking over the League of Nations as a model for a fascist-driven global governance”[601].

As Germany invaded cities which hosted international organisations, such as Brussels, Amsterdam, and Paris, the DKZ expanded its activities further, sending officials to occupied territories alongside the first waves of soldiers to collect data on these organisations and send them back to Berlin for analysis. Herren calculates that “two-thirds of existing international organisations came under the control of the occupying power, which systematically looted their archives”[602], transferring them to the central DKZ archives in Berlin, an archive which “offers an insight into Nazi views of reusable forms of internationalism […*and*] constitute strong empirical evidence of fascist interest in internationalism”[603]. Indeed, the DKZ archives, which are today at the Hoover Institution at Stanford (having arrived there following a series of lootings in 1945 and subsequent sales), show the wealth of material on early 20th century and interwar organisations which the DKZ looted, from the Bureau International de la Paix[604] to the ‘International Confederation of Authors and Composers’[605] to the Swiss International Philately Association[606]. The DKZ stole and catalogued lists and almanacs of international organisations from the late 19th century onwards[607] and produced annual lists of Germany-based foreign associations like the ‘Society for Foreign Press in Berlin’[608]. In short, it became a data centre for the work of European international organisations around Europe. Many DKZ files were destroyed in 1945, but enough remains in its archives to reveal the nature and extent of its ambitions.

601 Ibid., p.192.
602 Ibid., p.207.
603 Ibid..
604 DKZ – Box 240.
605 DKZ – Box 287.
606 DKZ – Box 251.
607 DKZ – Box 287.
608 DKZ – Box 250.

One institution of particular interest to the DKZ, given its wealth of data about the international organisational world, was the Union of International Associations ("**UIA**"). Founded in 1907 by the Belgian peace activists Paul Ontlet and Henri La Fontaine, it was based in Brussels and served as a central repository of information about international organisations around the world, both inter- and non-governmental (it is still Brussels-based and serving this purpose today). The UIA was aware its archives presented the Germans with a ready-made index of international organisations, their officers, members, contact details etc., and knew it would be targeted. This is recorded in a note by Ontlet (himself one of the inventors of modern information science and of the Universal Decimal Classification bibliographic cataloguing system) from November 1940, now in the DKZ archives:

"*No doubt the Axis powers have the intention to use the archives* [of the UIA]. *But they can only do so if they respect the 'extraterritorial' and international character of the big institutions, for which they will need to negotiate with the states which have not joined the three-power pact, above all with the United States and the South American Republics*" [609].

The Nazis, however, plundered their archives anyway, systematically analysing them and using them to access other institutions: the DKZ issued questionnaires to the UAI and other organisations, requesting information to create their central registry and determine which organisations pursued 'anti-Reich' activities)[610].

A 1942 note from the office of Karl Schweig, the head of the DKZ, to Heinrich Hunke, an economist and Nazi Party official who was a key planner of the economic infrastructure of a postwar German empire[611], outlines how the DKZ presented itself publicly: "the DKZ has the task of connecting the German and international associations and supervising and carrying through

609 'Confidential Note on the 'Société Générale de Belgique'' (25/11/1940), DKZ – Box 317.
610 'Questionnaire for International Organisations', DKZ – Box 287.
611 For Hunke see especially Swett: 2009.

congresses and conferences"[612]. This description belies the increasingly complex and political role the DKZ acquired in the early years of the war. As it gathered information in 1940-1941, the DKZ developed three main functions, apart from its original congress-oversight role. First, it analysed the material collected and decided "which organisation to close (socialist and Jewish organisations), undercut (the Union of International Associations in Brussels) or transform and/or create (the European Postal Union)"[613]. Second, it began looking forward and planning a "fascist version of the League of Nations for a postwar order dictated by the Nazi regime"[614]. Third, it took the first steps towards creating that institution by preparing a handbook of fascist-sanctioned international organisations: essentially a Nazi version of the International Organisations Handbook, which the League had published annually with information about existing organisations and fields of activity. This handbook was called for by ministries and other Party organs to facilitate the political and economic integration of territories annexed by Germany during the war[615]. It would also provide lists and details of persons to be targeted as anti-German or 'cosmopolitan'.

The usefulness of the DKZ to the Nazi internationalist structure can be seen, for instance, in a January 1942 memo from the Ministry of Propaganda to the Ministry of Transportation which quotes a Reich Chancellery circular of 5 July 1941 as stating, *inter alias*:

"*The military and political transformations of the past two years have made it necessary and possible to redefine the system of international congresses and associations, and, in due course, to relocate its headquarters to Germany*. [...] *In doing so, the experience gained by the Deutsche Kongress-Zentrale in the entire area of international congresses and associations must be utilised*"[616].

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612 'Note to Ministerial Director Prof. Hunke' (15/7/1942), DKZ – Box 317.
613 Herren: 2017, p.208.
614 Ibid..
615 Von Twardowki Note (23/12/1941), DKZ – Box 317.
616 Ministry of Propaganda to Ministry of Transportation (22/1/1942), DKZ – Box 317.

The DKZ's ultimate aim was to reorganise the universe of international organisations, to effect, as Martin notes, "a radical streamlining of the very nature of international cooperation, replacing the chaotic variety of structures and types of associations with one standardised type so as to create a network of relationships that could be overseen, and controlled, from one central vantage point"[617]. This was, essentially, a *corporatist international*; an 'organisation of organisations'. Schweig planned to transform the DKZ after the war into the 'International Office for Conferences and Organisations', which would centralise all information on, access to, and power over international organisations, and thereby "'achieve the great task of the reordering of international unions and organisations', giving rise to a New Order in which Germany would hold a 'monopoly as regards leadership and direction'"[618].

Nazis even considered the role of officials of international organisations, stressing, in contrast to the League, the importance of maintaining national control over the international officialdom. A May 1942 letter to Schweig from Helmut Aschenbrenner, Secretary-General of the Bremen-based International Tobacco Knowledge Society is illustrative of this position: Aschenbrenner highlights the importance of a Reich-centred international trade organisation, but stresses that "the future foundations [*for such an organ*] should not provide for the formation of a proper legislative body […], but rather only the formation of a directive body in which each member country has representatives"[619] – that is, an international concerting body rather than parliamentary one. He further notes the importance of key officials being German, and of Germany controlling them, especially as international bureaucracies tended in practice to give power to their chiefs: "[*i*]n such organisations actual power lies in the hands of the Secretary-General, who, according to international custom, belongs to the country in which the organisation is based, that

617 Martin: 2016, p.163.
618 Ibid., Schweig quotes included.
619 Aschenbrenner to Schweig (7/5/1942), DKZ – Box 317.

is to say, that for now he will be German"[620]. He suggests that Germany would then yield control, as "the German delegate will de facto always play the first fiddle, because his country also provides the Secretary-General, whose supervisor he [*i.e. the delegate*] is (for example, as a minister or state secretary) in domestic German politics"[621]. This is an acknowledgement that international bureaucracies create their own power structures, and a call that Germany retain control through staffing its key positions with national representatives and ensuring they remain subject to German national politics.

Ultimately, the DKZ did not get to fulfil its ambitions since political priorities changed as the war outlook worsened for Germany. Its handbook was not published, as from November 1942 the German government transferred 'all forms of transborder contact' to the Foreign Ministry, and the DKZ lost power and independence. But the material collected and draft versions of the handbook in the DKZ archives[622] reveal how far it went in its plans. And, as Herren notes, even from within the Foreign Ministry the DKZ continued its work: by January 1943 its draft handbook listed 581 international organisations – a very high number, especially for wartime (in comparison, the League's last published issue, from 1938, listed 667)[623].

A study of the DKZ could merit its own thesis, but for our purposes, it is important to note that not only were Nazi officials actively thinking internationally and seeking to control and create international bureaucracies, but that despite the hatred directed at the League as the embodiment of the 1919 settlement, it was used as an institutional benchmark: "[*a*]lthough resolutely antagonized, the League of Nations and its mandate system […] remained the ultimate point of reference in fascist thinking in terms of status and organizational features of international

620 Ibid..
621 Ibid..
622 DKZ – Box 380.
623 Herren: 2017, p.210.

organizations"[624]. The League's mandates system, in particular, was seen by Nazis as a potential model for authority and control over territories controlled by Germany but that were not-quite-colonies. And even the method to copy the League's structure followed the League's process, through developing the Nazi handbook of international organisations as a survey of international institutions. This came with a corporatist twist: Germany aimed not only at liaising but actually controlling, coordinating, and directing organisations. Another important diference was that while the League's secretariat was relatively independent, the DKZ was directly controlled by the Nazi Party and its corporatist 'network of networks' was conceived to expand Party control over the world; this was using the League's internationalist template to further Nazi imperialism.

(b) *The IRK and sources of Nazi international law*

If the DKZ shines light on the organisational aspect of Nazi internationalism, illustrating how a mundane-looking functionalism can facilitate dangerous politics, another Nazi international organisation shines light on the relationship between law and power in the Nazi conception; this was the IRK, the 'International Law Chamber'. It was founded in 1941, with occupied Poland's Governor-General Hans Frank as President, as a centre for scholarship and debate about international law. This seems counter-intuitive, but a paradoxical feature of Nazi plans for European domination was the extent to which they sought the perception of legitimising power through authority and norms; "the fascist [*internationalist*] network had a clearly visible thematic centre of gravity in international law"[625]. The IRK was central to this effort, both in coordinating international law research and practice, and trying to devise a legal framework for Nazi international order. It was an active and popular institution, publishing a journal and hosting regular debates. Its view of international organisation combined nationalism and internationalism

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624 Herren: 2016, p.52.

625 Ibid..

in a radically different way from liberalism. It argued that host states had to exercise direct control over international organisations, and it stressed functional advantages of international law over its political dimensions. Law was meant as a tool of power, not an instrument of international progress as in liberalism (which Nazis saw as a hypocritical cover for 'alternative' politics): as Martin notes, IRK "meetings rang out with violent denunciations of the values of internationalism which, speakers insisted, had only ever served the ambitions of world domination of Britain and international Jewry"[626].

The Nazi regime also used the IRK to infiltrate and influence epistemic and professional networks of lawyers throughout Europe, sending members abroad, receiving foreign guests, cross-promoting events and publications. The IRK thus represented a seemingly nuanced 'soft-power' strategy, rolled out alongside brutal hard power politics, and, although only operational between 1941 and 1944, it "mobilized foreign intellectuals and served Nazi hegemony by articulating a regional-European, anti-liberal, and fascist-corporatist vision of international legal order"[627]. Of course, the IRK's intellectual vision is rife with contradictions born out of the inherent incompatibility of existing international law with Nazi doctrine; it was a fundamentally conflicted organisation, seeking "to articulate a vision of internationalism opposed to the ideas and ideals of international law"[628]. Nevertheless, as Martin argues, its work at the very least "shows that liberal visions of international order did not hold a monopoly in the arena of the international organization of intellectual life"[629].

This forces us to ask: how did Nazi jurists try to conciliate Nazi doctrine, grounded on a racialist world view and extreme nationalism, with a legal conception of international rights and duties? Although he was not one of the main participants of the IRK, Carl Schmitt's views of

[626] Martin: 2018, p.871.
[627] Ibid., p.872.
[628] Ibid., p.871.
[629] Ibid., p.885.

international organisation had a deep impact on Nazi international law early on and influenced many of the IRK's paradigms. Schmitt's position, briefly, was that the legalism of the League was just a cover to uphold the territorial gains of the allied powers in the First World War[630], and that 'international law' was not, as liberals argued, a universalist force, but a reflection of hard power and 'spatial orientation'. This was the foundation of his concept of international law; the "unity of order and orientation"[631] ('*Einheit von Ordnung und Ortung'*). 'Orientation' means the spatial sphere of influence of a hegemon, within and upon which it can institute order (Schmitt's prime example was the Monroe Doctrine)[632]: fundamentally, therefore, justice is subject to order and power. In consequence, the focus of foreign policy should be spatial rather than ideational; it should not operate in terms of legalist 'internationalism' but rather play for the concrete 'great spaces' of the world[633]: essentially, geopolitics over internationalism.

This leaves little to no room for international organisations, which are, in this linguistic obsession with concreteness, fundamentally 'aspatial'. Traditional international law, therefore, is based on certain principles which were opposed by basic concepts of Nazi legal doctrine. First and foremost, the abstract notion of the state was a liberal keystone (Hans Kelsen's 'pure' theory of law, for instance, called the modern state the 'abstract sphere of competence'[634] as opposed to the previous *Macht-Staat*, or 'power-state'); in contrast, for Nazis the national foundation was the concrete '*Boden'* (ground, soil), coming into legal existence in the *völkisch* conception of the state as an organic entity, the 'sacral' Reich. The abstract, the general, was attacked by Nazis as a 'Jewish' construct, basically opposed to concrete reality and to those ('real' Germans) who lived and functioned in it. Moreover, the abstract construct was for Nazis not only an alien thing existing in opposition to the 'real people', but more dangerously a weapon for Jews, liberals, capitalists,

630 Koskenniemi: 2017, p.593.
631 Schmitt: 2004(i), p.23.
632 Meierhenrich and Simmons: 2017, p.36.
633 Mazower: 2012, p.183.
634 Quoted in Diner: 2000, p.51.

communists, cosmopolitans, lawyers, financiers, British imperialists, and other 'manipulative' groups to fool and take advantage of 'real people'. Indeed, abstract concepts such as universal rights, equality, and compassion were, in the Hitlerite worldview, mechanisms created to keep Germans down, oppressed, and thus prevent them from winning the biological race struggle, which was the 'real' (concrete) reality of all existence[635] (war was therefore seen as necessary in order to demolish those 'oppressive' abstractions, thereby creating the conditions for concrete reality to 'purify' the *Volk*).

Like the state, the liberal international organisation too is a 'sphere of competence': its practical functions are grounded on abstract principles of international law, such as sovereign equality. The Nazis, therefore, attacked it for the same reasons that they attacked the abstract state: "for those sharing a *völkisch* notion of the state, the aims of the state and international law cannot be severed […*as*] the universalistic world principle corresponds to the abstract state, hence to the opposite of concrete territory"[636]. And, much like 'Jews' were supposed to be hiding behind the fiction of the abstract state in order to oppress 'real people', at the international level the notion of 'spaces of abstract competence' was a ploy by liberal nations to oppress the sacral Reich, an expression of "the *imperialist rule of the abstract norm*"[637]. Nazis thus opposed what they called the modern trend of 'thinking in general concepts', which they thought had upended the medieval world order, destroyed the Holy Roman Empire, and ushered in the era of *droit public européen* (a front for French political domination[638]) and liberal freedom (a front for British commercial

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635 Snyder: 2016, pp.12-15.

636 Diner: 2000, p.52.

637 Ibid.. Emphasis added.

638 This drew on 19th century German romantic narratives of national rebirth, which championed the story of Hermann (or Arminius), the leader of the Cherusci who, leading an alliance of Germanic tribes, defeated the Romans in the Battle of Teutoburg Forest in AD 9. German nationalists fighting French occupation during the Napoleonic wars mythologised this character, seeing parallels between Rome's decadent cosmopolitan 'empire of law' and French Enlightenment values and the Napoleonic Code. This myth was in turn resurrected by the Nazis, again portraying 'pure' Germans, a people of the soil and the forest, against the decadent cosmopolitans of the liberal democracies and the Jews (for a good overview of the Hermann vs. French cosmopolitanism narrative, see Schama: 1996, pp.100-120).

imperialism, which Nazis believed relied on the artificial separation between the public and the individual/private sphere[639]). In short, international organisation promoted what German jurist Heinrich Rogge called the "pacifist misconception of a growing internationalization of the life of states and peoples"[640], keeping people from seeing "the basic rules of social fighting instincts"[641].

To the Nazis the League of Nations, therefore, was the institutional embodiment of all that was wrong with international law, defending the notion of abstract states and promoting an abstract normative international paradigm. As Diner argued, they believed the League served "the Jews as a realization of their striving"[642] (including by representing the Versailles settlement, the 'original sin' of the postwar order[643]). Any notions of an independent core of the international organisation, like the League secretariat, would be even more insidious. As seen, the maximum allowance (some) Nazi jurists would make would be to transform the League into "a purely cultural and economic system of collaboration and that its political activity be limited to mediation"[644].

In contrast, Nazism proposed an international 'counterorder' that deconstructed the edifice of existing international law. If the starting premise of international law was the *equality* of parties, in the Nazi conception it was their inequality: the basis of all politics is *difference* (between races, nations, states etc.). As Herz noted in 1939, if for Nazis "genuine law can grow only out of the racial substance of the people, then logically international law also must have its basis in the legal convictions of the various racial groups; and, as each group is said to have its own particular conception of law, the foundation of an international law even as interracial law would appear impossible"[645].

[639] Diner: 2000, p.72. This is turned on its head by totalitarianism, which, as Hannah Arendt argued, came into its deepest expression precisely when the separation between the private and the public disappear and the individual morphs into the mass (Arendt: 1958, p.17).
[640] Quoted in Herz: 1939, p.548.
[641] Quoted in Ibid..
[642] Diner: 2000, p.57.
[643] Kosekenniemi: 2015, p.9.
[644] Quoted in Herz: 1939, p.551.
[645] Ibid., p.538.

Taken to its logical conclusion, Nazi racial theory would mean that international law only exists to the extent it is incorporated by domestic (German) law. Until the outbreak of war, Herz argues, political considerations prevented Nazis from publicly accepting this (instead, they were still arguing that international law had simply been unjustly applied), and Nazi jurists tried to square the circle "to erect a system based upon the recognition of international law and to safeguard the principles and dogmas of the racial theory of law"[646] – through the concept of a law's *Gerechtigkeit* (its 'just-ness'): the notion that, above legal formalism there exists a higher standard of assessment, the subjective ideal of justice and 'right-ness' (based on race and the Reich). This, Diner argues, effectively changed the orientation of international law from horizontal (founded on the at least notional equality of parties) to vertical (founded on their inherent inequality, supposedly legitimised by biology and geopolitics)[647].

Writing in 1939, Herz imagined that this was temporary adaptation and that the war would indicate a 'next step' where such schemes would no longer be felt necessary[648]. In fact, as seen, the Nazis continued making concessions to international organisations, working in them, coopting them, or creating their own. As Herren notes, "[*a*] new generation of fascist international organizations tied together the Axis in a semiofficial network"[649]. Ultimately, however, the more the war became 'total' for Germany, and especially as the military and political situation deteriorated on the Eastern front, Herz's grim prediction came true precisely in the territories over which the Germans held control in Central and Eastern Europe and the Western Soviet Union. These regions, during the period of 'imperial' German dominance, became the zones of total destruction of rights, sovereignty, and people – areas over which the Nazis felt no need for political compromise (as they did, relatively speaking, in Western Europe)[650].

646 Herz: 1938, p.540.
647 Diner: 2000, p.65.
648 Herz: 1939, pp.553-554.
649 Herren: 2016, p.52.
650 This is, indeed, a central argument of Snyder's thesis in *Bloodlands* (Snyder: 2010).

Nevertheless, that they kept up the (compromised) internationalist effort for so long should signal us into a richer way of theorising about organisations and law in IR. It also reinforces the goal of this thesis of seeing internationalism as an organisational practice (which operated even if the intellectual bases for it were contradictory or unclear), and highlights the need for deeper levels of analysis, examining the sources of authority for different internationalisms. This helps us not only contrast different organisations, but also develop more sophisticated methodologies to approach international law and order than only rationalism or institutionalism: these traditional frameworks are insufficient to analyse non-liberal approaches to internationalism. Such insufficiency inspired Sylvest's call for a richer theory of organisations: "it is particularly fitting to retrieve this complexity at a time when contemporary realist approaches to international law appear unable to fully appreciate or assess the importance of ongoing processes like the legalization of politics and the fragmentation and globalization of law"[651]. Indeed, this call was mirrored in legal scholarship, in Koskenniemi's lament over the estrangement of international law and politics in the mid-20th century[652], when the realist turn away from practical legalism toward 'IR' made international law epiphenomenal, thereby 'flattening' its study, which became largely monopolised by the one-dimensional rationalism of 'interests'. When it comes to internationalisms and organisations, as we have seen from the experience of fascist world corporatism and Nazi internationalism, we need to 'un-flatten' their study.

At the very least, this study should serve as a reminder for us to resist separating internationalisms from the political ends they serve, and to beware those who claim internationalism (and its conferences, bureaucracies, reports, assessments, round-tables etc.) to be a 'neutral', apolitical, technocratic, even mundane, process. This hides too much. In 1957, as

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[651] Sylvest: 2010, p.142.

[652] Koskenniemi: 2004, pp.440-445

Martin noted, an innocuous-sounding 'technical' handbook was published, entitled *How do I Organise an International Conference?*.

Its author was Karl Schweig, former head of the DKZ[653].

5.3 *Coda: Subverting Practice, Politics, and Authority*

This chapter has examined Avenol's internationalism, and how he sought to exercise his practice in shaping the office, pursue political goals, and advocate for international sources of authority in a radically different way from his predecessor and from many of the secretariat's officials. It rebuts the traditional views of Avenol as either a French nationalist miscast in the secretary-generalship or, as he sought to portray himself, an apolitical technocrat; we have shown that, in fact, Avenol had a clear internationalist stance, one which combined politics and technocracy in a way which was popular in the period, only that it was fundamentally opposed to the liberal internationalism which had become the bedrock of the secretariat and related, in functional and ideological terms, to elements of fascist internationalism.

As we had done with Drummond, the first section (5.1) examined Avenol's internationalism at work, analysing how he sought to shape his office and the League more broadly through his practice, considering both international administrative and external diplomatic initiatives. This has shown how his practice was a far cry from the apolitical technocracy he ostensibly championed: it was clearly and consistently political, going far beyond appeasement, moving towards a fundamental realignment of international organisation, in clear dereliction of his duty as Secretary-General. In section 5.2, then, we dived deeper into his politics to relate elements of it to fascist internationalist plans for international order. Analysing Italian fascist corporatist internationalism

653 Martin: 2016, p.273.

and Nazi plans for international organisation helps us see how international organisations can be subverted to serve non-liberal politics, and how fascist movements sought to create and institutionalise organisations founded on sources of authority and international law fundamentally different from, and opposed to, liberalism. This provides an important case to argue for a more historically-grounded and politically-minded approach to the study of international organisations, which examines not only their functionalities but also their more fundamental sources of authority and legitimacy.

Studying Avenol's secretary-generalship, in short, illustrates not only that different conceptions of internationalism (even some nationalist internationalisms) can co-exist and compete within an organisation through competing practices, but also hints at how we could examine these dynamics, showing how essential it is to, in practice and scholarship, question the basic principles of organisations in terms of how they seek to mediate between law and power and attain a measure of authority.

6. LESTER, THE SECRETARIAT IN WARTIME, AND BECOMING THE UN, 1940-1946

"Nationalism [*in Ireland*] was so deep rooted as to be invisible, but nonetheless real. I believed, and would always believe, in the liberty of my country, but that did not prevent me […] from being a good European and perhaps in a modest way a citizen of the world." [654]

Sean Lester

"A start is again made, with a new name, a new Covenant, a new centre, but the problems remain much the same."[655]

Sean Lester

This chapter explores Sean Lester's secretary-generalship (1940-1946) and his development of the office as an international, political, organ. It makes two main arguments. First, that the widespread perception that the League effectively shut down during the Second World War is inaccurate: although Assembly and Council meetings became logistically difficult, the secretariat (albeit with reduced resources) worked throughout the war. In fact, after Avenol's tenure, there was a renaissance in the international secretariat; Lester's administration is almost universally overlooked, and yet it is perhaps the greatest evidence that the League secretariat had developed a strong internationalist ethos, which survived the 1930s crises and Avenol's attacks. Moreover, Lester was able to refine Drummond's model to develop a brand of internationalism which was, ultimately, very close to what would become the ethos of the UN secretary-generalship. Second, this chapter deconstructs another myth; that the League provided little input into the UN's construction. At San Francisco, the UN founders made a public show of breaking with the League (to project a sense of renewal, prevent American isolationism, placate the Soviets, or spite Ireland);

[654] Lester Diary (16 April 1945), LNA – Lester Papers.
[655] Interview with *The New York Herald Tribune* (1946), LNA – Lester Papers.

behind the scenes, however, the League secretariat played a crucial role feeding its experience into the UN, and the transfer of the international secretary-generalship template was a key part of that process.

It does this in two main parts. The first (6.1) analyses Lester's leadership during the war, as he maintained the secretariat working and liaising with member states. Not only was the secretary-generalship active throughout the war, but, through strong leadership and a rescue (and refinement) of the liberal internationalism of the Drummond years, Lester managed to not only preserve but actually develop the secretariat's political and bureaucratic structure in difficult conditions. This shows the importance of leadership, but also the sticking power of the early brand of independent liberal internationalism, which had inculcated certain values and practices in the secretariat allowing for Lester's leadership to flourish. The second part (6.2) analyses the transfer of functions and organisational structures of the secretariat in general and the secretary-generalship in particular, from the League to the UN. It reveals how the Preparatory Commission for the UN drew inspiration from the League as a template international secretariat and how the League secretariat, directed by Lester, provided detailed advice about how to construct such an international secretariat, focusing especially on the politically active role of the Secretary-General.

Last, a coda (6.3) highlights our main findings, arguing that studying the Lester years teaches us that, contrary to traditional views, the fact that the secretariat and the secretary-generalship survived during the war was not inevitable, and that the (re)construction of those offices at the UN after 1945 was not accidental. Furthermore, the League offered a politically and active precedent for the secretary-generalship, which Lester and his team encouraged the Preparatory Commission to consider, thus helping shape the new office. In short, concerning the secretary-generalship, Lester's internationalist practice was not a placeholder in international organisation, or a mere transfer from Drummond to the UN; it was the crucial step in the development of the office between the League and the UN.

6.1 *Reviving and Refining the Secretariat: Lester in Wartime, 1940-1945*

Taking office in September 1940, Lester was faced with the task of reviving a secretariat whose morale (and numbers) had been decimated during the last years, and especially the last few months, of Avenol's administration. However misguided and ultimately ill-fated Avenol's schemes were, Lester was concerned that they left a negative mark on the League and a catastrophic impression on member-states surrounding the independent action of the secretariat. On 2 September, the day after taking office, Lester wrote the ILO's Edward Phelan: "I am afraid that he [*Avenol*] may have achieved some of his objectives and that we shall be very lucky now if we find we have any liberty of decision. […] There are major questions of principle and methods involved and the delay of the past month [*August 1940 – see 5.1.3 above*] has, as was intended, created great difficulties"[656].

Nevertheless, having assumed the office, Lester set out to revive – to the extent possible, given circumstances – the spirit of the international secretariat and maintain it through the war. Although his budget was cut by two-thirds, few officials remained in Geneva, and the sections were scattered around the world, Lester maintained the secretariat's work as best he could. Political work was naturally difficult, but they continued developing surveys, issuing reports and bulletins, and sending representatives to postwar reconstruction planning groups. His goal was to preserve the secretariat "in such a way that their work could be restarted after the war with the minimum of loss and interruption"[657]. Funding, mainly from Britain and the Dominions, added to the League's previous reserves, enabled Lester to sustain his skeleton staff. The Supervisory Commission and the Council held meetings where and when war logistics permitted (Lisbon, London, or the USA), in which members agreed "to ensure the financing of the modest programme which they and Lester

656 Lester to Phelan (2/9/1940), LNA – Lester Papers.
657 Walters: 1952, p.810.

had drawn up"[658]. As Lester confided in a 1942 letter, "[*r*]esponsibilities unsought and unwished fell upon me […] through the failure of my predecessor and I am trying to do my part in preserving something of this great Institution to be handed over to the Governments when normal times return"[659].

Seeing Lester's administration as merely a caretaking exercise, however, would be grossly simplistic. His tenure was not merely a conduit of Drummond's institutional creations, just about coaxed back to life following the disaster of the Avenol years and kept semi-comatose during the war to then be resurrected at the UN. This is, admittedly, how much of the traditional literature sees him (what few authors have covered Lester, that is: if the League is the overlooked precedent for the UN and the secretary-generalship the overlooked office at the League, Lester is the overlooked holder of that office). As an article in the *Irish Independent* which Lester clipped in his diary in November 1940 commented, "[*h*]e [*Lester*] is the keeper now of the tiny flickering light, all that remains of the flaming torch of great hope and ideals. Betrayed and belittled, let us remember, by all the big Powers without exception"[660].

This might be true enough, but is an unnecessarily reductive view of his administration. He was not simply the anti-Avenol: Lester in fact had, as we will see in this chapter, a distinctive view of the secretary-generalship, which encompassed and embodied many of Drummond's practice elements but also introduced new features, stressing the importance of the independent impartiality of the office to an even deeper degree than Drummond had. Lester's contribution, in short, was not only *reviving* but also *refining* the internationalist organisational practice of the secretary-generalship. In this section 6.1 we will see how Lester's diplomatic background, views on internationalism, liberalism, and nationalism contributed to shaping the office in a distinctive way

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658 Ibid..

659 Quoted in Barros: 1969, p.256.

660 Lester Diary (11/1040), LNA – Lester Papers. Indeed, the subtitle of the (nonetheless very insightful) most recent book on Lester is *The Guardian of a Small Flickering Light* (Fosse and Fox: 2016).

(section 6.1.1) and how he applied this throughout the war years (6.1.2). Then in section 6.2 we will see how this distinctive approach in turn fed into the creation of the UN secretary-generalship.

6.1.1 *Liberal Nationalism and Internationalism*

We should begin with a brief overview of Lester's political and diplomatic background, which, as for Drummond and Avenol, influenced his conception of internationalism. Lester combined liberalism, nationalism, and internationalism in a distinct way, which marked his approach to the office.

It is ironic that we started the analysis of the office in this thesis with an outline of the ways in which British imperialist politics and bureaucratic dynamics contributed to its creation (see chapters 3 and 4 above). Now we will see how, from 1940 onwards, the ultimate saviour, protector, and developer of the office was a man whose political life had been largely defined by the fight *against* British imperialism. Understanding this dynamic helps us understand how Lester both revived (i.e. upheld Drummond's principles of internationalism) and refined the office (by applying to it a more liberal internationalist energy more independent from big powers).

Born in 1888 in Woodburn, Lester was a journalist and republican activist who, after the Irish War of Independence, joined the new government of the Free State as a press officer. In 1923 he moved to the newly set up Department of External Affairs, and soon was charged with heading its League of Nations section. In this position, his job was mainly "seen as a means of supplying Irish representatives abroad with reliable information to counter anti-Irish propaganda by the British Government"[661]. He eventually became Director of Publicity for the Department and, in 1929, moved to Geneva to take up the post of Permanent Representative of the Irish Free State at

[661] Posse and Fox: 2016, p.13.

the League of Nations. He remained Ireland's representative until 1934, when he was seconded to the League to be its High Commissioner in Danzig.

The early 1930s were a crucial time for Irish foreign policy, and its mission to the League was a central part of it. Throughout that period, Ireland, although legally independent from Britain, still had political ties to London as a 'Dominion', ties which it severed gradually throughout the 1930s (ultimately arriving at the 1937 Constitution – and, eventually, the 1948 Republic of Ireland Act, which led to the creation of the Republic of Ireland the following year). Indeed, Lester's appointment to the League was officially made by King George V[662]. During this time, having the ability to conduct its own foreign policy, diplomatic relations, and methods of international cooperation was central to Ireland's political strategy. It saw its League membership as a key instrument in the pursuit of that strategy: the "Irish delegation was prepared not only to show that it was independent from the United Kingdom, but that it was ready to assume its role in world politics. The League of Nations gave the Irish Free State an opportunity to act as a completely autonomous nation"[663].

This concern is evident, for instance, in a 1932 letter of instruction from the Department of External Affairs to Lester regarding the League's Disarmament Conference:

> "*In any matters arising at the Disarmament Conference which are of direct concern to this country, it continues to be essential that you should deal with such matters, as heretofore, purely from the view point of the Irish Free State. In matters which are only of general interest to us, it is also desirable that you should follow the policy hitherto pursued, i.e., a policy of co-operation, as far as you may judge it expedient, with the other Commonwealth delegations, always, of course, safeguarding the status of the Irish Free State as an independent member of the League*"[664].

This message exemplifies the two dimensions of Ireland's League strategy: (i) that it should act in it as an independent state and (ii) that League membership was, in return, a source of

662 Instrument of Appointment (2/10/1930). LNA – Lester Papers.
663 Fosse and Fox: 2016, p.24.
664 Secretary of the Department of External Affairs to Lester (13/6/1932), LNA – Lester Papers.

validation, if not a guarantee, of its independence. That is, through conducting independent international relations in the liberal multilateral forum of the League, the Free State further asserted its independence, in law and in fact – to obtain "sovereignty through the League"[665]. It was able to, in a way, leverage the awkwardness of its 'Dominion' status into becoming an international broker: "[*o*]wing to her geographical proximity to both Geneva and London, to her unique position as a European Dominion in a predominantly European League, and to her acute national sensitivity, the Irish Free State was well placed to press the claims of the Dominions [*against Britain and others*]"[666]. When Éamon de Valera gained power in 1932, despite his initial hesitation in relation to the League, Ireland continued to pursue this strategy, in the belief that for a small newly independent state there were few better arenas for international action. As de Valera commented early on in his administration, "the act of participation of the smaller states [*in the League*] is more important than ever at the present time, because they constitute the strongest element for making the peace"[667].

Lester, as the Permanent Representative, was a key player in executing this strategy, and sought to apply it even further when Ireland was elected to the League's Council in September 1930 (as a non-permanent member, until September 1933), and especially while it held the rotating presidency of the Council (1932-1933). Lester gained a reputation as an energetic and effective representative at the Council, using the perception of his county as a small, independent state to work as an independent, impartial mediator in international disputes.

This was evident, for instance, in his work in the Chaco and Leticia disputes. As analysed in 4.1 above, Drummond was in charge of top-level negotiations in Geneva, but in practice Lester played a key role as a go-between negotiator and mediator. He headed the Committee of Three mandated by the Council with trying to broker peace in those disputes (also composed of Salvador

[665] Keatinge: 1970, p.138.
[666] Ibid., p.137.
[667] Quoted in Ibid., p.141.

de Madariaga from Spain and José Matos from Guatemala). The ultimate Leticia settlement, in particular, which included one of the first League-overseen international administrations of territory, greatly increased Lester's prestige in the League and earned him a reputation as an honest, efficient, and well-connected international negotiator and administrator – this marked the beginning of his move from Irish diplomat to League official. As Fosse and Fox noted, this success "established Lester's personal reputation in the Council independent of his position as his country's representative, and this contributed to his appointment to Danzig late in 1933"[668].

His appointment as High Commissioner to Danzig was in fact directly related to his work on Leticia. As E.H. Carr, later IR scholar and then a British official in Geneva, noted, the secretariat itself "suggested that we should consider Lester who made himself a considerable reputation here and would certainly have strong support on the Council. It is a serious drawback that he knows no German, but I believe all the same he would make a very good High Commissioner and it would not be easy for either side to find good reasons for turning him down"[669]. Lester was seen as personally efficient and able, but also benefited from coming from a small relatively impartial state without great interest either on the German or the Polish side of the dispute. He was appointed in 1933, moved to Danzig in early 1934 and stayed until February 1937.

As High Commissioner, although he had no direct executive control over the city, he was meant to represent the League and administer it legally and diplomatically. Despite the high profile of the position, he became increasingly frustrated at the fact that he was undermined by both sides, as both Germans and Poles grew to oppose the city's international administration, particularly after the German–Polish Non-Aggression Pact was signed in 1934. Lester felt that the Nazis' aggressive plans for the region threatened security and that Polish Foreign Minister Józef Beck's alliance with Germany was misguided. Stuck in the middle, meant to represent an organisation that was

668 Fosse and Fox: 2016, p.41.
669 Quoted in Ibid., p.81.

increasingly mistrusted by the parties, and receiving little support from Avenol at headquarters, as noted in 5.1 above, Lester's space for activity was severely curtailed[670]. He strongly opposed the appeasement then in vogue in major Western capitals and in Geneva, believing that "making concessions in the belief that they would lead to moderation was misguided"[671]. By 1936, his vocal opposition against Nazi policies and the growing militarisation of the city put him in physical danger, and his insistence on upholding the League's law in a context in which powerful parties opposed it, made his work difficult and at the end of the year he was recalled to Geneva.

He returned to League headquarters as Deputy Secretary-General, replacing Pablo de Azcárate. This was a position he would occupy between February 1937 and, as seen, September 1940. On 18 February 1937, the day he took office, he reflected in his diary on his journey from Ireland to Geneva to Danzig and commented "I sometimes wonder what on Earth I'm doing here, being a man without ambition"[672]. Reviewing his work and personal writings, despite his meteoric professional rise within the League bureaucracy, one is struck by the impression that indeed he was not motivated by personal ambition but instead by a strong sense of responsibility and a vision of international duty. This will become clear as we explore his role as Secretary-General during the war, and contributed to his brand of internationalism.

As Lester rose in the international hierarchy of the League, he was able to play the role he had developed in the Council as an impartial broker on a still bigger stage. This coloured his internationalism as Deputy Secretary-General and as Secretary-General, and evidence of this was clear from his time as Irish representative in the early 1930s. The archival evidence makes it clear that he had, early on, a clear vision that the international civil service would be best headed by a national of a small, independent, seemingly impartial state rather than of a big power. He was

670 For Lester's work in Danzig, see MacNamara: 2008.
671 Fosse and Fox: 2016, p.121.
672 Lester Diary (18/2/1937), LNA – Lester Papers.

chairing the Council throughout the Avenol election of 1932-1933 and tried hard to get someone from a small state elected instead.

In July 1932, from the Council, he wrote back to Dublin that "[*t*]here is said to be a so-called gentlemen's agreement between London and Paris, dating from about the time of Drummond's appointment, that a Frenchman would succeed him. I am beginning to fear that there is a very real likelihood that this […] will be carried out"[673] and outlining his efforts to propose candidates from smaller, neutral states. In discussing potential candidates, he lists the qualities he felt were necessary: temperament, administrative ability, capacity for hard work, "courage and brains and knowledge of the League". He places great importance on independence from the big powers; in dismissing one potential candidate, from Norway, he notes that "I cannot help fearing that, although I think him honest, he might have a strong tendency to trim his sails when the wind blows from the Great Powers". By October, he wrote that "[*w*]e had almost won with regard to the Deputy Secretary or the Secretary-General himself being a national of a small power. This, however, is still being opposed by Italy and a very serious situation at the moment exists"[674]. As seen in 5.1 above, Italy argued that at least a national from a big power would be an explicit rather than a secret agent of that power, denying the possibility of a truly independent international service.

Being from such a small country, however, was what had first enabled Lester to develop his brand of internationalism as an independent, impartial mediator. He further developed this political strategy of independence and impartiality (and adherence to the core principles of the League) in Danzig, honing the practical diplomatic and administrative skills that went along with it, and brought them to Geneva in 1937, and to the secretary-generalship in 1940. This helps us see that it is no accident that Lester behaved as he did during the 1940 crisis: he was by then deeply attached to the independence and liberal internationalism of the League constitution. His political career

[673] Lester to the Secretary of the Department for External Affairs (19/7/1932), LNA – Lester Papers.
[674] Lester to the Secretary of the Department for External Affairs (10/10/1932), LNA – Lester Papers. See also Lester to the Secretary of the Department for External Affairs (23/10/1932), LNA – Lester Papers.

over the previous decade had been based around it, and on a belief, from his time in the Irish mission, that liberal nationalism could fruitfully complement internationalism at the League.

This was, as we will see in the next section, crucial to maintain the secretariat in wartime. But it also illustrates that Lester was not only reviving Drummond's brand of internationalism in opposition to Avenol's, he was adding to it with his own brand of small-country, impartial-broker, League-principle-adhering internationalism. Clearly, he used the legal and organisational principles which Drummond had laid down (if not, as seen in 4.2, fully practiced) in his opposition to Avenol, but went further than Drummond in arguing that his – Lester's – big-power-independent internationalism was a better fit to uphold the principles of the secretary-generalship. This does not mean that Lester had no links to big powers – as we will see, throughout the war, he worked very closely with Britain, for instance – but that he sought to refine the organisational practice of the Secretary-General's office to make it more aligned with the organisational principles of that office. This was a fundamentally liberal internationalist approach, combining legalism, liberal nationalism, constitutionalism, and a belief in international cooperation to progressively improve an international institution (this contrasts radically, for instance, with the revolutionary approach of fascist internationalism discussed in 5.2 above, whose legalism instead sought to introduce external criteria to judge the 'purity' of organisations). Lester, in short, was not appointed because he was a national of a great power; instead, partly because he was not, and his background, skillset, and conception of internationalism were directly shaped by his *not* coming from a great power (and indeed from having spent much of his political and diplomatic career opposing one): this was a fundamentally different perspective of the relationship between the organisation and big powers and small states, one that relied much more on the institutional principles and organisational practices of the League than before. By placing the secretary-generalship even farther away from the big powers and the Council, Lester asserted its independence and strengthened its claim to authority (based on internationalist organisational practice).

6.1.2 *Wartime*

Throughout the war, Lester remained in Geneva trying to maintain that organisational structure of the League and as much of the secretariat's work as he could. The aim was as much to help the organisation survive as it was to use it to rebuild the peace after the war.

This goal, Lester later commented, became even more relevant by the end of 1941, after the USSR and the USA joined the war. From this point, his goal was no longer simply maintaining what was left of the League, but preparing for the postwar world: "[*t*]he purpose became a politically positive one" as, after the war, "most countries would see the essential need to have another League whatever its name and constitution", and then "[*a*] great deal of this [*the difficulties of international organisation*] could be avoided if the fabric, however attenuated, were there"[675]. Lester sought not only the survival of an internationalist blueprint, but to assist in its (re)implementation. As he wrote in late 1941 to Carl Hambro, the Norwegian politician serving as President of the League's Supervisory Commission, "the foundations [*of a postwar organisation*] will quite definitely have to be the present League and the present Covenant"[676].

Reflecting on the wartime experiences in a 1944 report, Lester noted that:

> "*The negative fight for existence rapidly passed into a positive, real, and continuing contribution to the needs of States Members and of other Governments* […] *to remain as a beacon and a guide until the peoples of the world had again found faith in a future of ordered peace and justice, and had an opportunity to consider the best means of reorganising international co-operation for these objects*"[677].

Conditions for work at the Palais at this time were difficult, however. Lester had sent his family to Ireland before France fell, but could not himself leave Geneva during the war,

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675 Ibid., p.268.
676 Gram-Skjoldager: 2019(i), p.47.
677 'Some Considerations on the Expenditure of the Secretariat in the Last Four Years' (2/5/1944), LNA – Lester Papers.

Switzerland being surrounded by Axis countries and Vichy France. He tried once to get to Lisbon for meetings, but was turned back at the Spanish border. Fearing that, even if on his (neutral) Irish passport he managed to leave Switzerland he would be unable to return, he stood his ground in the League building. The huge Palais des Nations was by now mostly empty and locked up, the hundred or so staff gathering around the Secretary-General's office and the Library[678]. In a 1944 financial report to the Supervisory Commission on the wartime work of the League, Lester noted that, in comparison to 1939, when he took office, by 1943 the League's overall expenditure was only 19.60%, expenditure on salaries was 18.7%, and number of officials was 15% (each percentage in relation to 1939 figures); by early 1944 the League's overall budget was 31.25% that of 1939 (which itself was already a decrease from the mid-1930s)[679].

Despite the hardships, Lester managed to maintain the staff's morale up and develop a strong sense of duty to the League during the period. And they were able to sustain a healthy sense of humour, as this riff on Kipling's *If* which Seymour Jacklin, the League's Treasurer, sent Lester in 1942 shows (in what was as much a source of relief as an accurate tribute to Lester's stoicism):

"*If you can keep yourself from going crackers*
at all the things that you are told to do
When Hitler sends his horrid air attackers
with squibs and bombs to try to frighten you
If you can sleep in dug-outs till the morning
and never feel you ought to have more rest
If you can bear that hellish banshee warning
without that sinking feeling in your breast
If you can laugh at every black-out stumble
nor murmur when you cannot find a pub
If you can eat your rations and not grumble

678 The Library, incidentally, has recently been refurbished and now hosts the excellent League Archives.

679 All figures in 'Some Considerations on the Expenditure of the Secretariat in the Last Four Years' (2/5/1944), LNA – Lester Papers.

about the wicked price you pay for grub
If you can keep depression down to zero
and view it all as just a bit of fun
Then mark me Sir, you'll be a b..... hero
and what is more, you'll be the only one."[680]

During those years, in addition to the EFO's work from Princeton, the secretariat managed a reasonable amount of data-gathering, statistical reporting, and work on public health, refugees, and humanitarian assistance. It tried to avoid overtly political actions, fearing that the Swiss government, which hinted throughout the war for them to leave the country (through not-so-subtle actions such as stopping paying its League membership dues, and at times turning off the heating to the Palais[681]), would officially ask them to leave. Or that German troops, stationed on the French border only ten minutes' walk away from the Palais, would invade Switzerland and target the League. In consequence, Lester wrote, they tried to make their reports "seem humdrum matter-of-fact foot-pace stuff"[682].

Despite such attempts at appearing apolitical, the very decision to stand up to Avenol to begin with, and then to maintain the secretariat in place was profoundly political: a strategic policy to keep the League from either going over to the Axis or dissolving altogether, and to preserve it for the postwar period was in no way apolitical. The Swiss realised this, hence their desire to see the League go lest it made Geneva a target of German attacks. Lester certainly saw his role as such, telling Sweetser that he saw himself "holding a not unimportant part of the political front"[683] through his wartime work.

680 Attributed to "an unknown Civil Servant", Jacklin to Lester (1942), LNA – Lester Papers.
681 Gageby: 1999, pp.217-219.
682 Rovine: 1970, pp.188-190.
683 Quoted in Rovine: 1970, p.192.

This was also the view from the British government. In May 1942 Eden (then Foreign Secretary again) wrote Lester to thank him for maintaining the League, acknowledging that “the situation of the Secretary-General in the centre of a German-controlled Europe is far from an enviable one”, but stressing that “[*t*]he fact that you are still keeping the flag flying at Geneva has, quite apart from the technical work which the Secretariat can still usefully do, a moral and political significance which could perhaps only be accurately measured if you were ever obliged to haul it down”[684]. Aghnides, who had retained his post at the League but gone to London in 1942 to also serve as ambassador for the Greek government in exile, continued to work closely with Lester and was an important link between the League and Eden and the British government.

There were also explicit political victories during this period, though they were discrete and bureaucratic. One concerned the status of France as a League member. On 19 April 1941, Admiral Darlan, the Vichy Foreign Minister, cabled Lester to say France was withdrawing from the League. Considering that per League rules there was a two-year notice for withdrawal, Lester only acknowledged receipt and took no further action, hoping circumstances would change during the notice period. Then on 20 March 1943, soon before the notice period expired, Lester brought it up with the American Ambassador to Switzerland, saying that “the Secretariat was in no position to take any action, but that any government, whether a Member of the League or not, might feel free to act”[685]. The Ambassador passed this on to the State Department, which brought it to the attention of the French Committee for National Liberation leaders in London, generals Henri Giraud and Charles de Gaulle. On 15 April they cabled Lester and the Supervisory Commission, stating that “the French at present free to express their will cannot regard as effective the notification which was made to you on April 19th 1941 when the French people deprived of the exercise of their sovereignty were not in a position to express through the medium of lawful representatives their

684 Quoted in Gageby: 1999, p.215.
685 Rovine: 1970, p.187.

views on the position of France in relation to the League of Nations. I accordingly request you to be good enough to consider that the said notification made under foreign pressure can have no effect and that consequently France continues to be a Member of the League of Nations"[686]. Lester was only too happy to do so. This was a case of tactical inaction followed by discrete action, through which a (largely symbolic, but powerful) bureaucratic and political victory was won. Lester circulated the French cable around the secretariat in triumph.

Later in the war, Lester's hopes that the League would be revived began to fade. On 31 March 1944 he received word from the Supervisory Commission that "[*i*]n spite of all our efforts we have to expect that the League of Nations will not ever be re-established as it was before"[687]. Then on 16 June Cadogan wrote to say that, although Britain was not changing its support "for the present", soon there would need to be "the substitution of some New World organisation for the existing League", explaining that "[*a*]part from the United States attitude, Russia will not forget her expulsion in 1939. She has since refused to cooperate with any of the League organs. A world organisation must necessarily embrace the majority of victorious Powers without whose help it would be doomed to failure". He nevertheless encouraged Lester to continue his current work, since "many functions now carried out by the League organs will continue under whatever new order may be set up"[688].

The two superpowers rejected reviving the League. Besides remembering its 1939 expulsion, Russia also objected to Irishmen heading both the League and the ILO (Lester and Phelan), since Ireland had stayed neutral in the war[689]. And the 'US attitude', Sweetser learnt in conversation with Roosevelt, was the President's awareness that joining a postwar organisation would require Senate ratification (which Wilson had failed to obtain in 1920), and he feared that debates about

686 Quoted in Ibid., pp.187-188.
687 Ibid., p.219.
688 Ibid., pp.219-220.
689 Ibid., p.193.

League membership might reanimate isolationism, thus concluding that "the most appropriate strategy was to establish an entirely new organisation"[690]. Overcoming his disappointment, Lester set out to organise the transfer of the League's bureaucracy to the UN. Following the liberation of France, he was finally able to leave Geneva, arriving in London in November 1944. There, after meeting former colleagues such as Drummond and Cecil, he began a whirlwind of meetings and conferences, assisting in UN planning and preparing the transfer of the League's work, assets, and liabilities to the new organisation. This would occupy him, in London and Geneva, until 1946.

In 6.2 below we examine that transfer, highlighting the League's input in the UN's design, especially regarding the secretary-generalship. But it is important to note here how the work of Lester and his colleagues from 1940 onwards represented a retrieval and a development of a kind of internationalism which the Avenol years had forsaken, based on the principles of liberal internationalism which had motivated Drummond and the first generation of League officials. It was not idealistic or naïvely hopeful regarding supranationality, but grounded in a belief in the interdependence of states for peace and on the mutual complementarity of nationalism and internationalism – principles Lester championed. He had been, for most of his pre-League career (as seen in 6.1 above), a strong Irish nationalist in Ireland's fight for independence, and he did not believe this excluded internationalism. At a dinner in his honour given in London at the end of the war, he criticised a recent newspaper article which had suggested that "an Irish nationalist could not be a good internationalist or England's friend"[691]. Instead, he argued;

> "*Nationalism* [in Ireland] *was so deep rooted as to be invisible, but nonetheless real. I believed, and would always believe, in the liberty of my country, but that did not prevent me from being a good friend of Britain and other members of the Commonwealth. Nor did it prevent me from being a good European and perhaps in a modest way a citizen of the world*"[692].

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690 Ibid., p.192.

691 Lester Diary (16 April 1945), LNA – Lester Papers.

692 Lester Diary (16 April 1945), LNA – Lester Papers.

He was sitting next to the British diplomat Philip Noel-Baker when he said this. In his diary he commented; "When referring to friendship with England, I bent down, and *sotto voce* said to Noel-Baker, 'as long as she behaves herself'"[693].

Furthermore, when discussing Ireland's neutrality during the war, he acknowledged Ireland's difficult position given its relatively recent independence from England and admitted that "[*i*]t makes me rather tired however if any outsider talks about a moral issue for the Government of Ireland not having taken that action [*declaring war on Germany*]"[694]. Nevertheless, he continued;

> "*I don't believe in neutrality as a general principle – I believe in collective security* […]. *We all know that the collective security system might have worked but it had broken down* [by 1939] *primarily because of the refusal of the Great Powers to take their responsibilities and fulfil their obligations in the years immediately preceding the war.* […] *I do not believe in neutrality. I believe that the interests of all States are more or less intimately bound up, that peace is indivisible and that a threat of war in Europe or war in Europe is of vital concern even to the small Irish people on the fringe of the Continent*"[695].

This basic liberal internationalist position (that nationalism and internationalism are not mutually exclusive and collective security is necessary given global interdependence) clearly reflects the early secretariat ethos, which survived Avenol's administration, and inspired the officials in 1940 to reclaim it – but with a distinctive refinement by Lester, as discussed in 6.1 above. This started at the top of the organisation. Noting that the secretary-generalship is perhaps the organisation's foremost symbol, Rovine commented that "[*a*]t a time when the League was little more than symbols, Joseph Avenol weakened it still further by destroying one of its primary offices"[696]. Lester, elected in reaction to that, managed to nurture that symbol. Certainly, Lester did not accomplish this shift on his own: other secretariat officials, such as Aghnides, were

693 Lester Diary (16 April 1945), LNA – Lester Papers.
694 Quoted in Gageby: 1999, p.236.
695 Quoted in Ibid..
696 Rovine: 1970, p.165.

influential, and recent scholarship by Gram-Skjoldager has shown that Hambro played an important role in steering the Supervisory Commission against Avenol and towards the Anglo-American world before and during the war[697]. Still, as Secretary-General Lester proved an important figure, refined the conception of the office, and through his strong leadership and hard work showed that the League's liberal internationalism practice could be revived.

This was arguably Lester's greatest political action and contribution: resisting in 1940 (with his colleagues and the Supervisory Commission) to preserve the secretariat along the Covenant's principles, and seeing it through until 1946. Crucially, this was a deliberate choice: nobody had to stay in Geneva during the war or maintain the secretariat. There is no indication that Lester was acting on behalf of Ireland (or of Britain), Aghnides of Greece etc.: in their resistance to Avenol and in taking power they saw themselves as acting on behalf of the League, as international civil servants bound to uphold the Covenant. This choice attests to the staying power of the kind of liberal internationalist ethos developed in the secretariat in the previous decades, which was strong enough to withstand the internal and external adversities of the 1930s. But it also evidences the individual influence and leadership which Lester brought to the position, not only reviving Drummond's brand of internationalism, but imbuing it with an even more liberal combination of small-state liberal nationalism and a strong focus on independence, impartiality, and adherence to the core principles of the League. It was a potent political move if ever the League saw one.

6.2 *Postwar and the UN*

The League secretariat's influence on the UN's creation is grossly overlooked, yet here we find a clear case of the secretary-generalship not only transmitting its practice, but specifically

[697] Gram-Skjoldager: 2019(i), pp.40-50. Gram-Skjoldager shows how the Supervisory Commission, in fact, played a centrally important balancing role in the League's administration, providing a measure of political control over the secretariat.

highlighting its independent political role. This has long been overlooked because it was a matter of deliberate institutional forgetting, the history of which is an appropriate place to start.

On 25 April 1945, as the war in Europe reached its last days, delegates from allied nations gathered at the San Francisco Opera House, a stunning Beaux-Arts building on Van Ness Avenue, to attend the opening of the United Nations Conference on International Organisation. The conference, which would last until late June, reworked and formalised the plans set out at the Dumbarton Oaks meetings in the previous year. It laid out projects for postwar international organisation and, most significantly, marked the signing of the Charter of the United Nations. The gathering was enormous for an international political conference: 46 nations were represented by over 850 delegates with some 3,000 national staff to help, plus thousands of extra participants from the press and non-governmental organisations. Among all this crowd, one institution was barely present: the UN's predecessor organisation.

Lester had received a lukewarm invitation from the US State Department just two weeks earlier, suggesting it 'might be helpful' if an 'unofficial' League party were present, ideally no more than two or three people. The message was worded so ambiguously that Lester wondered if this was an invitation at all or really a diplomatic request to stay away[698]. He ultimately told himself that preparations for such events were always hasty and that it would indeed be helpful if the League were present; so, after putting together a small party (himself, the League's Treasurer Seymour Jacklin, and the EFO's Loveday), he headed to San Francisco. On arrival, he found that not only were they lodged in a third-class hotel far away from the conference, but that the organisers were in fact "anxious to keep League officials in the background"[699]. The feeling was often displayed literally: at the Opera House during the conference they were given seats in the penultimate row of the dress circle, among the general public, were not mentioned in the

[698] Lester to J.P. Walshe (12/4/1945).
[699] Rovine: 1970, p.193.

proceedings and were not asked to make statements. After some discussions, Lester was not invited to speak, but Loveday was asked to give brief administrative comments to the new ECOSOC, and Jacklin got fifteen minutes to present about the League's finances[700]. From up there in the gods, they were, as Clavin elegantly put it, "guests at their own funeral"[701].

From then on in the scholarship and commentary, the plan to 'keep League officials in the background' has worked all too well. It set out a narrative of dismissing the League experience as a 'failure', and irrelevant to the new organisation, which became standard in popular perception and in scholarly literature – up until the very recent renaissance in League scholarship which we discussed in chapter 2. In consequence, the impact of the League on the UN has been severely understudied, and the secretary-generalship is no exception, as seen above: most of the scholarship still sees 1945 as a fresh start for this area of international organisation. Rather, I argue that the construction of UN secretariat and its secretary-generalship was a continuation of the League's, both in organisational inspiration and in practice.

We have seen in the previous chapters how by 1945 there was a well-established practice of political and diplomatic activity by the Secretary-General, and there was a long record of sophisticated debates within the secretariat about the office's political and international duties. This section aims to further the argument for League-UN continuation by showing how the political and bureaucratic transfer concerning the secretary-generalship between the two happened. In 6.2.1 below we discuss the development, in the final years of the war, of the UN secretary-generalship as an independent international office along the mould of the League's, and in 6.2.2 we dissect direct input from League secretariat officials in that development.

[700] Bendiner: 1975, p.403.
[701] Clavin: 2013, p.341.

6.2.1 *Designing the UN Secretariat, 1944-1946*

Plans for the UN's creation, as they had been for the League, started being developed halfway through the war, as the Allies held a series of negotiations aimed at transforming the wartime 'United Nations' military alliance (formalised in the 1942 'United Nations Declaration') into a permanent international organisation after the war[702]. Between mid-1943 and mid-1945, US State Department officials formulated several plans for this transformation. At the Moscow Conference (October 1943) the 'Big Three' (Roosevelt, Churchill, and Stalin) stated the "necessity of establishing at the earliest practicable date a general international organisation […] for the maintenance of international peace and security"[703], and at Tehran (December 1943), they declared that the 'United Nations' would work toward a democratic and enduring peace as a postwar organisation. Following the Dumbarton Oaks conference in Washington, DC (August-October 1944), which filled in the details of the organisation into a concrete institutional agreement for the UN's architecture, plans were finalised at San Francisco in the final months of the war (April-June 1945), when the UN was founded.

Few scholars since have paid any attention to the League's input into these debates, especially concerning the secretary-generalship. And yet, League secretariat officials were involved from the start in discussions with US and British officials about how to best structure the new organisation. Clavin has examined Loveday's and Sweetser's extensive efforts from their Princeton base through conferences, meetings, and discussion groups as early as 1941 to propagate the EFO's work. Initial American plans were so technocratic and removed from the realities of international politics as to prompt Loveday to argue for a "'more organic conception of the United Nations' than appeared to be developing in Washington – one that combined the 'tried technical

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702 For recent scholarly analysis of this passage from wartime alliance to postwar international organisation, see Plesch: 2010, and for the meetings that led to the creation of the UN, see Schlesinger: 2003.

703 Quoted in Mazower: 2012, p.203.

services of the League' as well as its 'old political structure'"[704]. He told Lester that American proposals displayed a "naïve bureaucratic innocence which is almost unbelievable"[705].

By late summer 1944, however, as Lester and the Geneva officials were finally free to move about, Dumbarton Oaks was underway and those earlier technocratic plans were being combined with hard power in the form of the Security Council and its emphasis on security. Ultimately, the structure that emerged at Dumbarton Oaks was strikingly similar to the League's: the Assembly became the General Assembly; the Council, the Security Council; and the secretariat remained the secretariat. If anything, given the centrality of the Security Council, with its five permanent members vested with veto power, the UN was even more great-power-centric than the League: according to Mazower, the Big Three "preserved the form of the League but turned back via the United Nations to the era Woodrow Wilson claimed to have rejected"[706]; 19th century great-power diplomacy.

When it comes to the executive arm of the organisation, the UN secretariat was, as Sending put it, "designed on the basis of the League of Nations template"[707]. Pedersen argues that "[*t*]his is probably the single most important thing about the League: that the UN replicates that [*secretariat*] structure completely"[708]. In contrast to the discussions surrounding the larger architecture of the organisation, "[*t*]here was not a great deal of discussion on the Secretary-General's Office at the various stages"[709], partly because it did not change much from the League. Early State Department plans had toyed with the idea of two leaders for the UN – one 'general-secretary' as 'chief administrative officer', and one 'president' to chair Security Council meetings and flag security threats – but there was no agreement on the work division or the president's

704 Clavin: 2013, p.296.
705 Ibid., pp.301-302.
706 Mazower: 2012, p.213.
707 Sending: 2014: p.339.
708 Pedersen: 2015(ii), at 28min.
709 Newman: 1998, p.18.

status[710]. In consequence, at Dumbarton Oaks the 'president' post was dropped and the 'chief administrative officer' became the Secretary-General – even if there were still debates about his selection and precise role[711]. In short, following a process similar to the creation of the League's secretary-generalship, the UN creators obtained a remarkably similar result.

After Dumbarton Oaks, the soon-to-be member states agreed the final version of the Charter, signed at San Francisco on 26 June 1945, and established the Preparatory Commission for the United Nations. This, like the League Commission at Paris, was meant to design and set up the UN bureaucratic architecture, a process that lasted until early 1946. Its job was to build up the organisation, prepare the first General Assembly, and hand it over to the first Secretary-General. The Preparatory Commission was headed by an Executive Committee, with the British diplomat Gladwyn Jebb as Executive Secretary, and he was nominated 'Acting Secretary-General' of the UN during this construction phase[712]. In early November 1945 the Executive Committee published its first report on the UN organisation. Its diagram of the proposed secretariat, reproduced below in Diagram 3, depicts the similarity with the League's secretariat:

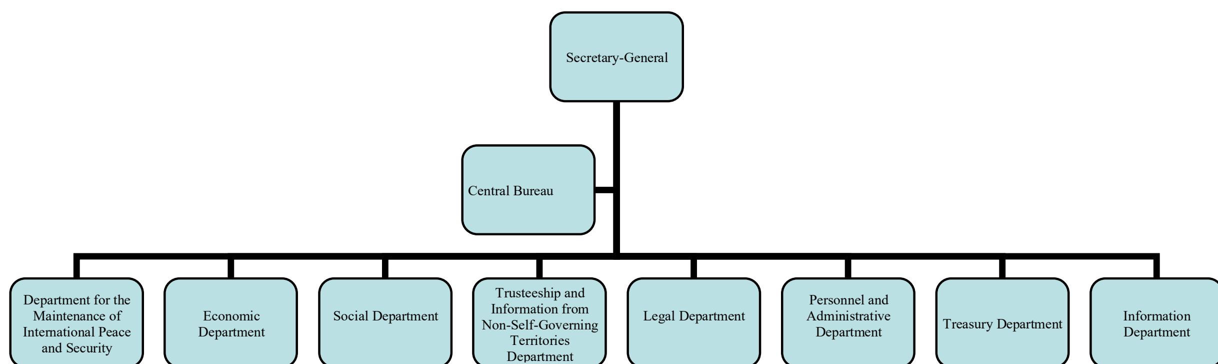

Diagram 3: 'Proposed Initial Organisation of the Secretariat'[713]

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[710] Ravndal: 2015, p.82.

[711] Russel: 1958, pp.430-432.

[712] In a letter to Lester as he left the San Francisco conference, Sweetser commented: "I find it intensely dramatic that a small group of men will set out from Frisco to London to organize the second League as 25 years ago a small group of men set out from Paris to London to do the first" (Sweetser to Lester (30/6/1945), LNA – Lester Papers).

[713] 'Proposed Initial Organisation of the Secretariat' in the *Report of the Executive Committee of the Preparatory Commission for the United Nations* (12/11/1945) p.78, UNA S-369/35/1. The diagram in

This structure is remarkably similar to the League's secretariat, and can be traced back to the Drummond Plan (see Diagram 2 in chapter 3). This proposed structure remained stable, with relatively few changes, as the actual organisation was built[714]. One difference from the League is the Central Bureau which, the report states, "occupies a special place in the structure of the Secretariat and its exact status has been left undefined"[715]: it was meant to be a secretarial organ to assist the Secretary-General with his work and liaise with the General Assembly.

Concerning the secretary-generalship, the UN Charter and the Preparatory Commission drew on the League experience not only structurally, but also in terms of its legal parameters. The Charter, while crystalising many of the League secretariat's principles (from the Covenant, Staff Regulations, and League practice), is more detailed about the Secretary-General' role: the UN Secretary-General, heading a secretariat independent of the member states (Charter Article 97), is entrusted to act as the organisation's chief administrator, making annual reports, and shall "perform such other functions as entrusted to him" by member states (Article 98), including bringing matters to the Security Council which he believes are threats to peace (Article 99 – discussed further below). Crucially, Article 100 states:

> "*100(1) In the performance of their duties the Secretary-General and the staff shall not seek or receive instructions from any government or from any other authority external to the Organization. They shall refrain from any action which might reflect on their position as international officials responsible only to the Organization*".

the Report also contains administrative subdivisions in some of the departments, not shown in Diagram 3 above for clarity.

714 Subsequently the UN secretariat has gone through changes, as departments have been changed, removed, or added (e.g. Peacekeeping) and a Deputy Secretary-General was instituted in 1998. Although it is outside the scope of this thesis to analyse the evolution of the UN's secretariat, for our purposes it is important to note how the early model largely reflected the League experience. For a scholarly analysis of the evolution of the UN secretariat, see e.g. Gordenker: 2005, and for the early secretary-generalship structure in particular, see Urquhart: 1972 and 1993, Fröhlich: 2008, Ravndal: 2015.

715 'Proposed Initial Organisation of the Secretariat' in the *Report of the Executive Committee of the Preparatory Commission for the United Nations* (12/11/1945) p.77, UNA S-369/35/1.

Article 100(2) then requests member states to respect "the exclusively international character of the responsibilities of the Secretary-General and the staff", and refrain from influencing them.

These provisions clearly echo the League's principles, seen in chapters 3 and 4. While at San Francisco, "there was a distinct air of superiority that the League of Nations had failed [...*and*] an air of hubris that the two major powers, the USA and the USSR, were in at the foundation of the new body"[716], their ultimate creation was more a (reworked) continuation of rather than a total break with the League. Ravndal provides a good overview of the creation of the UN secretary-generalship at Dumbarton Oaks and San Francisco, noting how the UN creators were aware of the League Secretary-General's political powers, and sought "to formalise, institutionalise, and enhance them in the UN Charter"[717]. Similarly, Rovine notes that "San Francisco ratified what the League experience had demonstrated was fact – that is, the head of the international civil service has the opportunity and resources, even without explicit constitutional prerogatives, to influence the course of decision-making in the international arena, and it was decided very early to legitimise their influence, and if possible, carry it further by means of particular Charter norms"[718].

The 'enhancement' they mention is the provision in Article 99 of the Charter entitling the Secretary-General to bring matters directly to the Security Council's attention "which in his opinion may threaten the maintenance of international peace and security". This widened Covenant Article 11, which required a member state to request the Secretary-General to bring a matter to the Council. So far, this power has been rarely invoked (e.g. in 1960 by Hammarskjöld over the Congo, in 1979 by Kurt Waldheim over the Iran-US hostage crisis), and it is debatable whether it truly signifies an expansion of powers. On the one hand, as seen in 4.2 above, Drummond already did this *de facto*, through informal meetings and negotiations, and he would discretely raise something

716 Gageby: 1999, p.248.
717 Ravndal: 2015, p.78.
718 Rovine: 1970, p.203.

with a Council member, who would then formally 'request' him to bring it to the Council's attention. On the other, Article 99 legitimises *de jure* the office's powers of investigation and consultation, beyond actually invoking the provision[719]: in order for the Secretary-General to form 'an opinion' on whether the matter should be brought, he already needs to have investigated it quite extensively. However, even in this we will see below that the League offered important precedents and provided guidance to the Preparatory Commission on how these powers could be used.

6.2.2 *Direct League Input*

Despite these provisions, the Charter remains relatively vague about the secretariat. The Preparatory Commission was meant to fill in the details in its period of operation (August to December 1946). During this time, despite the very public snub of the League officials at San Francisco, the Preparatory Commission would work closely with them (including Lester, by now shuttling between London and Geneva). Lester told Sweetser that the UN "must get every possible support"[720] and directed the heads of section to provide assistance to the Preparatory Commission and begin the handover process. Lester himself, from August 1945 onwards, was frequently advising Jebb and Jebb's assistant, David Owen, on the UN's set-up, as the League's archives[721] and Jebb's papers[722] show. At this point, the Preparatory Commission was working, as the embryonic League secretariat had in 1919, out of a few borrowed rooms in London.

Brian Urquhart, who was then attached to Jebb's team, recalls that "[*i*]n 1945 it was the general view that the functions of the Secretary-General and his staff would be primarily

[719] Ravndal: 2015, p.97.
[720] Quoted in Rovine: 1970, p.195.
[721] See especially correspondence at LNA 50/4329/4362.
[722] See TNA FO 73/254.

administrative and that political involvement would be the exception rather than the rule"[723]. This position was informed mainly by the two superpowers, which, now both founding members of the new organisation, vied for influence in shaping its structure: on the one side, the Soviets, recalling their experience with Avenol in 1939, dislike the idea of a politically active Secretary-General and feared a Western-inclined official might again incite the organisation against them; on the other side, the Americans, which were playing a large role in shaping the new international bureaucratic infrastructure, were not necessarily ideologically opposed to a political secretariat, but developed their planning in a more technocratic view. This American tendency reflected a bureaucratic genealogy from officials who had worked on the New Deal during the 1930s, and were now bringing their technocratic progressivism as an administrative model for the UN. This, Burley has argued, was an early attempt at spreading the liberal administrative model of a 'regulatory state' onto the world[724]: this was the 'almost unbelievable' 'naïve bureaucratic innocence' Loveday had derided in the early UN plans.

This underplays, however, the contribution of the League to the formation of the UN. In reality, Lester and his team were offering concrete advice to the Preparatory Commission, and arguing for the political role of the Secretary-General. Indeed, they were arguing that this had already been the case at the League. One of their most significant pieces of advice, which outlines this and other matters relating to the functioning of the secretariat as an international body, was a document produced by Lester's office in the last year of the war, still unexamined by scholars.

This is a 72-page memo entitled *Summary of the history and development of the Secretariat as an international service*[725]. It originated in November 1944, when Lester, from London, cabled his colleague Valentin Stencek back in Geneva asking for a summary of the Balfour, Noblemaire,

723 Urquhart: 1987, p.96.
724 Burley: 1993.
725 'Summary of the history and development of the Secretariat as an international service', LNA 18A/44136/563.

and Committee of Thirteen reports "as basis for memorandum on history development of the Secretariat as international service [*sic*]". Over the next four months, Stencek and Lester exchanged drafts and comments, until a final version was sent by Stencek and his colleague Henri Vilatte to Lester in February 1945. After the San Francisco conference, Lester sent it to Jebb, who in turn circulated it to the Preparatory Commission's Executive Committee in early September[726].

The *Summary* has three parts. Part I outlines the development of the concept of the international civil service noting how the Balfour and Noblemaire reports fed into the 1922 Staff Regulations, later supported by the Committee of Thirteen, and how the minority German-Italian opinion was rejected, preserving the secretary-generalship (see chapters 3 and 4 above). Part II covers largely administrative matters, from sectional divisions to pension schemes, from the importance of permanent contracts to institutional memory. Most significantly for our purposes here, Part III covers the secretary-generalship, from election procedures to mandates, stressing its international nature and loyalty, giving detailed advice on how to construct the office. Strikingly, it also discusses "two precedents in regard to the extension of the functions of the Secretary-General"[727] which prefigure the provisions of UN Charter Article 99 discussed above.

Noting that the Dumbarton Oaks proposals had raised the possibility of the Secretary-General being able to bring matters to the Council directly, the *Summary* (finished in early 1945, *before* the San Francisco conference) observes that Drummond's practice at the League had in fact provided two official precedents for this, beyond the aforementioned informal discussions with state representatives.

The first of these precedents was in December 1928, when Drummond alerted the Council to the Gran Chaco conflict (see 4.2 above) by circulating press reports of the war's outbreak to Council members: the Council, "although the matter had not been formally brought before it by a

[726] Jebb to Preparatory Commission, UNA S-0924/1/14.
[727] 'Summary …', LNA 18A/44136/563, Part III, p.9.

Government in virtue of a provision in the Covenant, immediately considered the situation and entered into communication with the Governments of Bolivia and Paraguay"[728]. That is, in this case, the Secretary-General managed to summon the Council even without doing so 'at the request' of a member state.

The second precedent occurred as a consequence of a conflict breaking out when the Council was not in session, in which case to delay action until it could meet and communicate with the parties "may render more difficult for the Council to discharge the duty of attempting to bring about a pacification"[729]. Initially, the Council President (the representative of the member state then holding the rotating presidency) would have "sent a telegram to the Parties exhorting them to refrain from any measures that might aggravate the situation"[730]: Aristide Briand, for instance, had done this during the Greek-Bulgarian crisis when France held the Council presidency. In 1928, the Szent-Gottard incident happened (the entry into, sale in, and destruction by Hungary of certain unlawful war materials) before the Council or its President could act: Hungary's destruction of the materials "rendered abortive subsequent League investigations into the origin, destination, and concealed circumstances of the shipment"[731]. Therefore, on 7 June 1928 the Council passed a resolution instructing the Secretary-General to, in similar circumstances, immediately communicate with the parties asking them to "take whatever steps might be necessary or useful to prevent anything occurring which might prejudice the examination or settlement of the question by the Council [*…and*] requesting them, in the name of the Council, to forward their replies to him without delay for communication to the Council and to inform him of the steps which have been taken"[732]. That is, the Secretary-General was granted authorisation to centralise communication with the parties in order for them to 'take whatever steps' to assist the Council

[728] Ibid..
[729] Ibid..
[730] Ibid., pp.9-10.
[731] Morley: 1932, p.397.
[732] 'Summary …', Part III, p.10, LNA 18A/44136/563.

with conflict resolution: this was precisely the kind of bureaucratic latitude through which Drummond managed to, case after case, expand the practical parameters of his office.

These two cases, the *Summary* indicates, were proto-Article 99 actions, lending legitimacy to the proposal to formalise such provision in the UN Charter.

Jebb clearly absorbed the advice from the League officials. The Executive Committee's *Report* of 12 November 1945 recommends, for instance, that "all officials, upon assuming their duties, make an oath or declaration that they will discharge their functions and regulate their conduct with the interests of the United Nations only in view" (Article VI(i)(2)), that a fixed term for the Secretary-General be set (now five rather than ten years) (Article VI(ii)(5)), and "that the Secretariat be organised on a functional basis, each administrative unit at the disposal of any organ of the United Nations for the performance of work falling within its competence" (Article VI(iii)(8))[733] – all issues the League had introduced and which Lester's *Summary* covered in detail.

Additionally, when discussing the secretary-generalship, the *Report* draws on the *Summary*'s comments regarding the office and stresses the importance, also outlined in the *Summary*, of the way the officeholder would define the office through leadership initiatives and practical work:

"*The Secretary-General is the head of the Secretariat. He appoints all staff under regulations established by the General Assembly* […]. *He alone is responsible to the other principal organs for the Secretariat's work; his choice of staff – more particularly higher staff – and his leadership will largely determine the character and efficiency of the Secretariat as a while. It is on him that will mainly fall the duty of creating and maintaining a team spirit in a body of officials recruited from many countries. His moral authority within the Secretariat will depend at once upon the example he gives of the qualities prescribed in Article 100* [of the UN Charter]*, and upon the confidence shown in him by the Members of the United Nations*"[734].

733 'Report by the Executive Commission to the Preparatory Commission of the United Nations' (12/11/1945), p.11, UNA 369/35/1.
734 'Report by the Executive Committee to the Preparatory Commission of the United Nations' (12/11/1945), p.75, UNA S-369/35/1.

Following the *Summary*'s circulation, Lester and his colleagues continued working closely with the Preparatory Commission. In December 1945 Lester received the Woodrow Wilson Award by the Woodrow Wilson Foundation, for "your steadfastness and loyalty in holding to a difficult post during six long years when normal support was seriously lacking", but, "above all, your vision and largeness of view in making available to the new agency of the United Nations the rich experience and valuable facilities of its predecessor"[735] – i.e. precisely this UN 'consultancy' work we analyse here, showing that this contribution, today forgotten, was acknowledged at the time.

Even though at that point the League's work was reduced to winding itself up, the *Report* drafters felt the need to stress the public distance between the two organisations: it recommends that "the functions, activities and assets of the League of Nations be transferred to the United Nations […] with the understanding that the contemplated transfer does not include the political functions of the League, which have in fact already ceased, but solely the technical and non-political functions" (Ch. IX(1)(1)), such as economic, health and drug traffic questions (Ch. IX(1)(3))[736].

Then, in its final report (23 December 1945)[737], the Executive Committee stresses that the secretariat "must be truly international in character" and restates Charter Article 100, adding that "[*s*]uch a Secretariat cannot be composed, even in part, of national representatives responsible to Governments. For the duration of their appointments, the Secretary-General and the staff will not be the servants of the state of which they are nationals, but the servants only of the United Nations" (S.2(A)(3)). It proposed Staff Regulations providing that "[*t*]he Secretary-General and all members of the staff of the Organization are international civil servants, and their responsibilities are not national but exclusively international" (reg.1). And it recommended a loyalty oath: "I solemnly

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735 Quoted in Gageby: 1999, p.253.

736 'Report by the Executive Commission to the Preparatory Commission of the United Nations on 12 November 1945', pp.108-109, UNA 369/35/1.

737 'Report by the Executive Commission to the Preparatory Commission of the United Nations' (23/12/1945), p.85, UNA 369/35/2.

swear […] to exercise in all loyalty, discretion, and conscience the functions entrusted to me as a member of the international service of the United nations, to discharge those functions and regulate my conduct with the interests of the United Nations only in view, and not seek or accept instructions in regard to the performance of my duties from any Government or other authority external to the Organization"[738] (reg.2). The wording throughout is very similar to the *Balfour Declaration* and the League's *Staff Regulations* (see section 4.1). In practice too, the UN followed the League model, especially the Lester variant of internationalism, by adopting the practice of appointing secretaries-general from small, traditionally impartial states, rather than from the big powers. Thus, following the model set by Lester, the secretary-generalship's institutional role as an impartial broker is strengthened, underlining the fact that the office's authority is clearly meant to, at least in theory, derive not from his proximity to the great powers but from his independent diplomatic ability.

After the Preparatory Commission completed its work, the First UN General Assembly opened in London in January 1946, adopting its proposals and electing Norway's Trygve Lie as the first UN Secretary-General. Therefore, by the time Lie was sworn in on 2 February, not only was his organisation similar in many ways to the League, but his office had been largely shaped by the League experience. Of course, the two organisations were different in many respects[739], but, given how most of the literature overlooks their similarities, here we have noted some of the many ways they were alike.

Moreover, many of Lie's new employees were former League officials: the final report of the League's Board of Liquidation, from April 1947, shows that over 200 former League officials were now with the UN and its agencies (not counting those who had moved over before 1945). The Board, the report added, was "glad to note […] that the successor international organisations

[738] Ibid., p.95.
[739] See Michalyk: 1970 for a contrasting analysis.

have thus secured the advantage of the experience gained by these officials during their service with the League Secretariat"[740]. Among these were many characters we have met throughout this thesis: Thanassis Aghnides became head of the UN Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions; Arthur Sweetser became Lie's special adviser; Pablo de Azcárate became Principal Secretary of the UN's Palestine Conciliation Commission[741]. Memorably, Ludwik Rachjman, who had clashed with Avenol throughout the 1930s and been chased out of the League in 1939, became the first Chairman of UNICEF.

After the deliberate snub of the League at San Francisco, Lester returned to Geneva to prepare the last League Assembly. Initially, the UN had refused this, preferring a low-key transfer meeting in London, but British officials resisted, insisting "that the League be allowed the dignity of burial with full honours in its own marble tomb"[742] – or, in Walters's only slightly brighter terms, to pay a "debt owed to history"[743].

The last League Assembly took place between 8 and 18 April 1946 in Geneva. Member state representatives, including Cecil for Britain, paid their respects to the organisation, praised Lester for his work (Philip Noel-Baker quoted Seneca; "with nothing to hope for, he despaired of nothing"[744]), and approved his transfers to the UN. As a final gesture to Lester, the Assembly voted to make him full Secretary-General, making the title retroactive to 1 September 1940 (he had been 'acting' until then). Bendiner's words on this are as poignant as they are accurate: "[*i*]t was the least and the most that the League, in its weakened state, could do"[745]. The League would officially dissolve on the following day, 19 April 1946.

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740 Quoted in Rovine: 1970, p.197.
741 Rovine: 1970, pp.197-198.
742 Ibid., p.404.
743 Walters: 1952, p.814.
744 Quoted in Gageby: 1999, p.251.
745 Bendiner: 1975, p.404.

As for Lester, after finishing the Board of Liquidation's work in 1947, he declined to take on any public posts. Instead, he bought a fishing lodge in Ireland, where he led a quiet, and by all accounts happy, retirement with his family.

6.3 *Coda: Leadership, Practice, and Organisational Memory*

This chapter has examined how Lester's secretary-generalship provides a further argument in support of our thesis, showing how through his practice he was able to shape the office back to an original, liberal, internationalism after the Avenol debacle, and refining it, setting the model which was later applied at the UN. Indeed, it highlights the importance of individuals' practice in shaping institutions, of examining the clearly political nature of their practice, and of understanding how they conceive of sources of authority for their organisations – the three elements of our study of internationalism. This chapter has therefore criticised the traditional view of the League as shutting down during the war: despite the very limited work it could do, Lester's effort in sustaining the secretariat and the secretary-generalship was itself a deeply meaningful political act, which helped the organisation survive the war and for its secretariat model to be revived later at the UN.

We have seen in section 6.1 that Lester's leadership and practice in resisting Avenol's attempted subversion of the secretariat and in maintaining it during the war allowed, in internationalism-as-practice terms, a renaissance of the original liberal internationalism of the League, with a distinctive combination of liberal nationalism and internationalism which sought to uphold the League's organisational principles against political expediency. Its concrete political work was limited, but its structural and bureaucratic model remained very important, and provided not only a template but actual guidance for the creation of the UN. Section 6.2 then analysed how that template was transferred and that guidance given, as League officials helped the team setting

up the UN structure in 1944-1946. It showed how many of the political features of the UN secretary-generalship traditionally considered post-1945 novelties, such as the Article 99 provisions, were already present in the practice of League secretaries-general, how Lester was aware of this and sought to transmit this practice to the UN as a precedent.

Lester's administration, therefore, is unjustly overlooked in the existing literature. It provides examples of the role of leadership in organisations, the role of practice in shaping offices, the dynamics of internationalisms competing with an organisation and, perhaps most importantly, it stresses the importance of individual decision-making and behaviour within organisational structures, and provides evidence that the League secretariat had developed a strong internationalist ethos, which survived the 1930s and provided the space for a new brand of liberal internationalism to be applied from 1940 onwards – and, when it comes to the secretary-generalship, transferred to the UN.

As seen, Lester's model of a secretary-general appointed primarily not because of his proximity to the great powers but rather because of his diplomatic skills as an independent, impartial broker directly fed into the UN's secretary-generalship. From Leticia to Danzig to Geneva, his experience was an important step in the development of the international civil service, reinterpreting the *raison d'être* of the office not as a conduit for big powers but as a safeguard for small nations and the principles and laws of the international organisation. Through his leadership and practice, Lester was instrumental in refining the office in this way. He did not, therefore, merely carry the torch from Drummond to the UN; he also shaped the secretary-generalship and contributed elements of its organisational practice which have continued ever since at the UN – a clear example of an individual shaping an international organisation through diplomatic craftsmanship, entrepreneurship, and personal courage, thereby creating lasting precedents.

7. CONCLUSION: PRACTICE, MEMORY, AND THE FABRIC OF INTERNATIONALISM

"The 'great' commitment is so much easier than the ordinary everyday one – and can all too easily shut our hearts to the latter."[746]

Dag Hammarskjöld

In politics, as in life, it is much easier to make the occasional grand gesture than it is to make a commitment and reaffirm it every day through practice. In scholarship too, IR has long focused on grand gestures – great power treaties, high-level strategies, intellectual projects – and largely forgotten about the everyday practice of officials who continuously design, implement, and change internationalism. This thesis has argued that the nature, meaning, and impact of internationalism are to be found precisely in the 'ordinary everyday commitment' that Hammarskjöld mentioned.

In an attempt to address this, this thesis has analysed the history of the League of Nations Secretary-General's office through the prism of internationalism as an organisational practice. In doing so, it has aimed to offer two contributions to IR. The first, at the broadest level, relates to the conception of internationalism as a multiple phenomenon and as an organisational practice encompassing specific practices, inherent politics, and debates about sources of authority. It has shown how this enriches our understanding of internationalism in the study of international relations and organisation, adding valuable nuance to historical and contemporary studies. The second contribution relates to the importance of studying the League of Nations secretariat, and its secretary-generalship in particular, as an internationalist actor, as a site where multiple

[746] Hammarskjöld: 1964, p.112.

internationalisms competed for power and influence, and as a precursor, in organisational terms, to the UN secretariat. The office of the League's Secretary-General is consistently overlooked in scholarship, even in the recent League renaissance, but it is one which highlights unique elements of the practice of internationalism within international organisations. Below we highlight some of our main conclusions in these two areas.

Internationalisms

With regard to internationalism, this thesis has advocated for the term to be grounded in the practice of international officials working in international organisations, showing how internationalist creativity can be expressed through bureaucratic and diplomatic structures, as well as how multiple internationalisms compete within those structures through different practices.

This argument has involved a critical and a constructive dimension. The *critical* dimension has argued that for too long IR, both in liberal and realist fields, has considered internationalism in oversimplified terms as a unitary concept or ideology. For liberals, this has led to a blind spot whereby internationalism is described as inherently liberal, democratic, friendly to free markets, socially progressive, and generally as the opposite of nationalism (which in turn is taken to mean the opposite of all these things). For realists, this has led to a similar belief that internationalism is the remit of liberalism, and an underappreciation for how even regimes traditionally associated with power politics and nationalism seek to develop international networks of normative cooperation and law.

The *constructive* dimension of this argument has been to offer an innovative interpretation of internationalism which is grounded on the independent organisational practice of key international officials at a crucial period in history. This interpretation has seen internationalism not merely as an intellectual trend or a structural phenomenon but as a concrete organisational

practice seeking to reach a level of political and diplomatic agency beyond the level of state representation. This practice incorporated three elements, as outlined in chapter 1 and discussed throughout the thesis; *practice* (the actual policy and administrative measures taken to develop an office within an institution), *politics* (the inherently political dimension of practice, and how it relates to broader political trends), and *authority* (how the office aimed to mediate between norms and power and thereby legitimise its practice, and whether this was accepted by states and other stakeholders, either setting precedent or being rejected). These three dimensions of the practice of internationalism constantly feed into each other and, if successful, set precedents for the evolution of the office.

Treating internationalism in this way enables us to understand how officials in the first supposedly 'international' office sought to create, expand, or change their patterns of practice as they tackled international crises and responded to pressures from within the secretariat and from states, thus taking into account both individual action and structural forces. This was, as seen in chapter 3, a founding stone of the League secretariat, itself laid by the secretary-generalship. Analysing the history of the League secretaries-general in this way, we have seen how certain brands of internationalism can through practice by officials become embedded in organisational structures, or challenged within them. In exercising this practice, especially in the interwar period as the League was developing, we can see that the secretaries-general were not only civil servants, but rather 'bureaucratic entrepreneurs', creating and developing a new international actor (their office) as a product of both individual initiative and adaptation to political and administrative pressures.

This bureaucratic creativity is what Loveday, in his study of international administration, called 'constructive imagination':

"[i]*nternational work must be conducted mainly through the agency of committees* [and there] *what is wanted is a capacity to penetrate through the haze of words in which a group of*

persons expressing themselves inadequately in a foreign tongue obscure their meaning down into their underlying thought, grasp their underlying point, and suggest an acceptable solution which is more than a disemboweled compromise"[747].

Internationalism in and of itself is not simply a process that can used in different political directions, but rather is an inherently political creative practice; it is a way of realising a political vision. This practice, therefore, must be studied in the broader political and intellectual context in which it emerged; we can thus analyse how different practitioners sought to legitimise and expand the remit of their office by exploring how they sought to base their practices upon different sources of authority.

For Drummond, as seen in chapter 4, authority would come from following the Covenant and the Council, and by discretely influencing the Council through effective, competent practice, generating a largely liberal internationalist secretary-generalship. Even if this liberalism was challenged by the Council at times, and was, as seen, not diverse in terms of gender, ethnicity, or geographic origin, it was at least based on international law as codified in the Covenant, and was able to create a space that allowed for the more activist sections and officials of the secretariat to increase their independence and autonomy. Despite its flaws and limitations, this internationalism was based on a belief in the rule of law and the necessity of creating an international constitutional framework, which fostered the development of an internationally-minded secretariat and served the purpose of international dispute resolution effectively.

In contrast, as seen in chapter 5, Avenol sought to legitimise his practice and thereby gain authority by aligning with powerful, even if aggressive, states, regardless of whether that conformed to Covenant provisions or Council resolutions. His bureaucratic creativity actually sought to create a space in which authoritarian states could use the League to further their international political aims. This related, as we have argued, to elements of fascist internationalism

[747] Loveday: 1956, p.34. Emphasis added.

which (a) sought to create authoritarian corporatist forms of international organisation and (b) based the authority of those organisations not on liberal principles of international law, but on power, force, and authoritarian, nationalist, even racist constitutional principles. Indeed, if freedom and autonomy are fundamentally liberal values, Avenol argued for subjugation of the independent international organisation to authoritarian regimes.

Lester's administration, as seen in chapter 6, saw not only the revival of Drummond's principles of internationalist organisational practice, but also its updating through the introduction of a powerful combination of liberal nationalism and the contribution of small countries to the League. In institutional terms, this wrested the secretary-generalship away from the big powers, on the basis that smaller, seemingly neutral countries were better able to gain the necessary authority for effective internationalist practice – thereby providing the template later adopted at the UN.

Analysing how different officials' practices related to broader political movements through their sources of authority as well as their institutional actions highlights the importance of going beyond rationalist or functionalist methodologies for the study of international organisations. Failing to drill down the analysis to this level, we risk falling into the blind spots discussed above, at best noticing certain similarities between, say, liberal functionalism and fascist corporatism; we would miss the deeper political forces animating the core of these practices and processes. Institutions, including (perhaps especially) international ones, do not act in a political vacuum: one of the binaries we have sought to break is international/political. As seen in chapters 3 to 6, many conflate acting 'internationally' with acting 'non-politically'; Avenol himself argued that to be an international official meant being an apolitical technocrat, implying politics is the exclusive remit of states, and that one could not be political and international (fascists, as seen in chapter 5, argued that being both indicated a rootless cosmopolitan conspiracy, and therefore wanted to bring politics back to the exclusive realm of the nation). Drummond, in contrast, sought to create a genuinely

new form of politics: his office was (imperfectly, but more than any other) international and (discretely, but consistently) political – one which Lester could later uphold and improve upon, by seeking to more faithfully serve the principles that anchored it. These three officials were creative internationalists within their institution, and analysing them comparatively has shown how internationalisms-as-organisational practices compete – through conflicting practices, politics, and claims to authority.

Legacies of the League Secretary-Generalship

"The history of internationalism has always involved forgetting"[748], Glenda Sluga wrote. And forgetting is what this thesis has analysed: of an institution, a set of practices, and how competition between different internationalisms shook the top of the League bureaucracy. Drawing on this first contribution's definition of internationalism as an organisational practice, therefore, the second contribution of this thesis highlighted the scholarly and practical benefit of constructing an analysis of the League secretary-generalship that applied this definition. This helps us understand how the office evolved into a powerful international institution, shaped the League as a pioneering international bureaucracy, and produced templates and guidance for the development of the UN secretariat and secretary-generalship: important legacies of an office today largely forgotten.

This thesis has recovered some of the lessons for international organisation that were deliberately forgotten in 1945. Dispelling the notion of 1945 as a break and the UN as a fresh start, this thesis deconstructs two common myths: first, by showing that the League secretaries-general were not timid managers but rather politically active actors throughout the League's existence; and, second, that during the UN's establishment, League officials provided frequent and detailed

748 Sluga: 2013, p.45.

input, resulting in the UN secretariat largely reproducing League structures and practices. The traditional narrative of the League – death and the fresh start of a UN untainted by any associations – was the narrative Americans, Soviets, and many others wanted to project. This developed into the all-too-prevalent view of a passive, timid, and apolitical League secretariat. Instead, as seen in chapters 3 and 4, the creation of the League secretariat, *how* it was created, and what principles and structures were developed, represented a revolutionary turn in diplomatic practice, inaugurating the role of an international actor in world politics, and its practice, as seen in chapters 4 to 6, generated crucial precedents for international organisations, contributing both directly and indirectly to how the UN secretariat, examined in chapter 6, was established.

Interestingly, at certain crucial times of the UN's life officials did try to rescue the experience of the League in order to inform their practice, and the way they did so strengthens the argument of this thesis that internationalism should, in the context of international organisations, be considered as a practice[749]. For instance, soon after assuming office as UN Secretary-General in April 1953, Dag Hammarskjöld launched a full review of the secretariat and an organisational reform to increase its efficiency and morale (which had decreased in previous years due to issues like Cold War tensions and McCarthyism). In this review, Hammarskjöld sought the advice of former League secretariat officials. One was Ranshofen-Wertheimer, whose analysis has permeated the research of this thesis. In May 1953, he encouraged Hammarskjöld to adopt elements of the League's administrative approach, rather than the American bureaucratic model (discussed in chapter 6). Writing "that there is need for change in some of the basic concepts of the organization [*the UN*], on a long-range basis"[750] to improve the quality and efficiency of the secretariat, he noted that, at the UN, for general secretariat staff (below the Secretary-General),

[749] Indeed, Trygve Lie himself saw his office as continuation from the League's: in a 1947 letter to Lester, thanking him for his work in transferring the League's assets to the UN, he comments that "it has been of the greatest important to me personally to have, as it were, as my predecessor someone like yourself who has so willingly given his very best efforts at all times in what must often have been a very disheartening and depressing task". Lie to Lester (27/8/1947), LNA – Lester Papers.

[750] 'Memo on Administrative Procedures' (5/1953), UNA S-183/1/1.

there had been a move away from the League's British Civil Service model toward an American bureaucracy model, which was less appropriate for international administration: it was over-technical, relying too much on specialists and not enough on generalists, with a preference for 'hiring-and-firing' over long-term service, and therefore making it difficult for the UN to develop a civil service as the League had.

Hammarskjöld received similar advice from Martin Hill, another former League official, who argued that the League secretariat had greatly benefited from Drummond's *practice* as its shaping force. Hill wrote Hammarskjöld in June 1953 noting the impact of that practice upon the very notion of the international secretariat: "I doubt if the independence of the international secretariat is a fundamental principle on the same plane as respect for international law. It is rather a principle of organization. The Covenant of the League did not prescribe it: it was Drummond's own decision, and the wisdom of that decision was recognised at San Francisco"[751]. Yet another example came from a report by the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace on the 1958 'Conference on the Concept of a True International Civil Service', attended by League and UN officials, which found that "there is some evidence of a decline in the status of international civil servants [*in the UN as compared to the League:*] [*t*]he diplomatic privileges accorded to the League Secretariat members have been whittled down to such privileges 'as are necessary'. The salaries of most higher officials are well below League standards even in absolute terms. One participant felt that the United Nations Secretariat has not acquired the prestige vis-à-vis Governments and the public that the League Secretariat had enjoyed"[752].

In short, not only was the League an important and overlooked predecessor to the UN, but in some ways the UN secretariat was seen as a downgrade in terms of international expertise,

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751 Memo from Martin Hill to Dag Hammarskjöld (22/6/1953), UNA S-369/23/4. As we have seen, the Covenant *did* prescribe it, but in vague terms, so that Hill's overall point here about the influence of Drummond in giving shape and meaning to those terms is justified.

752 Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 'Conference on the Concept of a True International Civil Service' (Vevey, 7-14 February 1958), UNA 369/2/1.

status, and influence when compared to the League. And this organisational genealogy was a subject for research at the highest levels of the UN at a crucial time for its own development. This signals a promising avenue for future research emerging from this thesis: conducting further analysis along the internationalism lines adopted by this thesis comparing League secretariat practices with those of UN secretaries-general. Many of the crises faced by early UN leaders had been previously rehearsed at the League (see section 4.1 above): Lie's struggle with McCarthyism witch-hunts in the early 1950s[753], for instance, echoed Drummond's conflicts with the employment of Italians after Mussolini's loyalty decrees in the late 1920s. Similarly, Khrushchev's attack on Hammarskjöld in 1960 over the Congo has strong echoes of the comments of the Committee of Thirteen's minority opinion against Drummond: like the minority group, Khrushchev argued that "while there are neutral countries there are no neutral men"[754], and that therefore the secretary-generalship should be substituted by a tripartite directorate of state representatives (an eerily similar proposal to the German-Italian one from 1930). Moreover, Hammarskjöld's defence of his office reveals a political rationale which was fundamentally similar to Drummond's and Lester's[755], stressing the need for an independent institution at the core of the organisation. These are only brief examples; other League innovations, such as mediation by the Secretary-General, or international administration, could also inspire promising comparative research projects, especially justifying further study of the undeservedly under-researched Lester administration and internationalist model.

753 For a good analysis of this see Ravndal: 2015, pp.214-217.

754 Foote: 1962, p.314.

755 Ibid., p.318. Undoubtedly, Hammarskjöld's now classic argument in response to Khrushchev was more fully articulated than Drummond's, and benefited from the then-expanding constituency of newly-independent states (so that the secretary-generalship could appear and act as a form of security to smaller states), but the underlying rationale of a core international institution to safeguard the principles of the organisation was similar. Furthermore, Hammarskjöld's defence of the organisation's rationale for existence as primarily providing security for small states rather than for big powers directly echoes Lester's approach to internationalism discussed in chapter 6 above.

Beyond this basic level of import to the UN, this thesis has also shown that the League secretary-generalship in its own right is a rich source for the study of internationalism as a practice. Contrary to the traditional view that the League secretaries-general were too close to the Council and member states to be as interesting for study as other, more independent and 'technical' sections of the secretariat, I have argued that it is precisely this unique position of the secretaries-general that makes them such fruitful cases for the study of internationalism as an organisational practice. They were directly buffeted by the winds of various internationalisms coming from different member states, and had to mediate between them and the various internationalisms emanating from different sections of the secretariat, at the same time as developing the functions of their own office. No other body at the League occupied such a central crossroads position, therefore offering us as a unique perspective to analyse how competing internationalisms worked their way through and around the League.

And yet the League remains overlooked in IR, highlighting some broader theoretical lessons about the role of historical research in IR. While studying the League as a source of organisational and diplomatic precedents is important, the League secretariat and its secretary-generalship were significant international actors in and of themselves, generating a plethora of narratives and practices of internationalism which remain thus far understudied. Treating the League as a mere preamble to the UN (as most of the traditional literature does) imposes an artificial teleology onto the League's history, a perspective which did not exist at the time. From the vantage point of 1919, 1933, or 1940, the League was not 'leading up to the UN': until 1944 or so, League officials were not acting 'as a prelude' to anything. It is therefore essential that we study the practice of internationalism at the League on its own terms, as we have done in this thesis, seeking to contextualise the different internationalisms of the top officials within broader trends at the time. There are many lessons that we can learn from the League experience itself, and studying it through the prism of internationalism-as-organisational-practice, as we have done, enriches those lessons.

One crucial lesson concerns the role that practice plays in the shaping of institutions, and how different internationalisms can impact international organisations from within. Our three-dimensional framework for internationalism, encompassing practice, politics, and authority, has shown, among other things, how important it is to search for the politics and sources of authority claims behind practices. As seen in chapter 1, this is a particularly relevant lesson nowadays, when once again 'apolitical' technocratic language is being used to defend a particular view of politics in the realm of international organisation. The League experience, especially with Avenol, offers valuable insights in this area and helps us ask what kind of organisational practices, structures, and officials we want.

Barros concluded that the Avenol experience shows why the secretariat should *not* have political power: "[*Avenol's*] use of the office raises the question of whether political initiatives undertaken by a Secretary-General are desirable, and whether the good that can be achieved by a Secretary-General in world affairs is more than offset by the damage it can cause"[756]. Barros called the hope that the Secretary-General will be a positive, liberal internationalist, transformative progressive figure the 'Hammarskjöld syndrome': taking an extremely exceptional high-profile character as norm. In fact, Barros argues, given the danger that a character such as Avenol poses in such a politically delicate office, it is better that the office be little more than administrative. Applying it to today's circumstances, Barros's fear would be of something like an authoritarian UN Secretary-General, sympathetic to the more expansive and authoritarian impulses of, say, the current Chinese or Russian governments, who denudes the UN of its human rights and liberal principles to serve hard power. This would indeed be a grave threat, and the Avenol case shows such things are possible, and we should bear in mind that there will not always be a summer of 1940 and a Sean Lester available, willing, and able to uphold liberal values. Barros, however, is overcompensating, and his idea is impractical: as seen throughout this thesis, the office is

[756] Barros: 1970, p.121.

inherently political, even a notionally 'secretarial' bureaucracy holds significant potential for political influence, and skillful officials are able to exercise that power in many ways. Fundamentally, though, as I argued in chapter 5, Barros takes the wrong lesson from the case: the problem was not that Avenol was political, or even that he was a nationalist, but rather that he aligned himself with fascist internationalism, in opposition to the Covenant and in dereliction of his duty.

This thesis has shown how its definition of internationalism as applied to the secretary-generalship helps refine this analysis and take the debate forward. Its basic movement has been to link internationalism to the independence of the office and thereby to the secretary-generalship's authority: the way of being 'international' was directly related to the autonomy of the office, as seen in chapters 3 and 4; and being independent, in turn, was a major source of legitimacy, through which the office achieved what power it could in authority. Therefore, the type of internationalism adopted by the official (i.e. the 'way of being international') directly influenced the measure of his authority.

We can see this, for instance, in comparing the role of authority as used by Drummond and Avenol. The authority of Drummond's internationalism was largely derived from that international independence; as evidenced by his practice and illustrated in the quote which provides the epigraph to chapter 4, showing he believed that if the secretariat abdicated its international independence, it would lose the trust of states and thereby its source of power. In this sense, Drummond's internationalism, which we examined in the context of British liberal imperialism and liberal internationalism of the 1920s, was quite attuned with the League's own internationalism, its fundamental values and principles. He was therefore able to carve out quite a large measure of independent action. That is, the way in which he sought to exercise the independence of his office (indeed create it) was aligned with the League's principles. In contrast, Avenol's internationalism (i.e. the way he sought to exercise the independence of his office) was in significant ways in

conflict with the League's own internationalism. He was thus never able to achieve much authority, even if he was doing what he felt the big powers in the League wanted. So the problem with Avenol is not, as is commonly said, that he was not enough of an internationalist to be an effective League Secretary-General; he was very much an internationalist – his problem was that his internationalism was at odds with the League's, so he obtained little legitimacy and, ultimately, when the international situation changed in 1939 he was unable to stand as the League's representative, not even as a figure of moral authority. Fortunately for the League, Lester was present, willing, and able to reintroduce authority to the office and the organisation.

This in turn offers a larger lesson concerning the Secretary-General's job. Given the lack of hard power, limited resources, and poor enforceability instruments at its disposal, the office's most crucial asset is its *authority*. As seen throughout this thesis, an official with authority, even without traditional 'power', can exercise great influence in organisations through a variety of diplomatic, administrative, and bureaucratic initiatives. It is essential, though, that the official's brand of internationalism (i.e. his practice, politics, and sources of authority) is aligned with the organisation's; otherwise the office loses all the power it has. In this sense, practice and authority are inextricably linked: authority increases when practice and legitimacy are aligned (e.g. Drummond, Lester) and decreases when they are in conflict (e.g. Avenol). Certainly, there might come times when a secretary-general may be perceived to lose their usefulness to states if they stand by the organisation's principles against state politics, and then become relegated to the margins and unable to develop their office further (as happened, for instance, to Hammarskjöld over the Congo in 1961, or to Kofi Annan over Iraq in 2003). Nevertheless, this is a risk they must run: if they go against the organisation's law they are in effect abjuring any claim to their own authority, and they will then lose their influence anyway. As the Avenol case showed, the backlash may not come for years, but eventually it will, and if the secretary-generalship is unable to justify its legitimacy vis-à-vis the organisation's principles, any claims to authority will fail. This thesis

has shown how important it is that the secretary-generalship's practice is considered holistically, contextually, and in the long term, not only in 'big decision' moments.

We therefore return to Hammarskjöld's observation about the small, everyday commitments being so much harder than the grand moments. As this thesis has shown, when it came to the secretary-generalship, they were also much more important: through their practice, officials could set precedents, lay the groundwork, prepare expectations, and build stores of authority which could be deployed at the right time. It was, of course, no guarantee that when the time came for a grand decision this would be enough to uphold the organisation's principles; but without this, as we have seen, it would be impossible to do so. The 'small commitments' are what define the different internationalist practices of key officials; these seemingly ordinary acts – reports, resolutions, circulars, organisational charts etc. – accumulate and weave the fabric of internationalism. Coloured by what politics they represent, they then imbue that internationalism with meaning.

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