



## The archival geographies of twentieth-century internationalism: Nation, empire and race

Jake Hodder<sup>\*</sup>, Michael Heffernan, Stephen Legg

School of Geography, University of Nottingham, Sir Clive Granger Building, University Park, Nottingham, NG7 2RD, United Kingdom

### ARTICLE INFO

#### Article history:

Received 6 June 2019

Received in revised form

12 June 2020

Accepted 18 June 2020

#### Keywords:

Internationalism

International organisations

Archives

Paris

Bikaner

New Bedford, MA

### ABSTRACT

This paper argues that more explicitly geographical methodologies are required to study twentieth-century internationalism, which invite different conversations between international historians and historical geographers. We show how the form and location of international archival records is itself evidence of multiple, interlocking modes of internationalism which unevenly intersected with national, imperial, and pan-national pasts. This is explored through three case studies: the archive of the International Institute of Intellectual Cooperation (IIIC), located in the UNESCO headquarters in Paris; the Maharaja Ganga Singh Archive in the Indian city of Bikaner; and the papers of Lydia Brown in New Bedford, Massachusetts, a translator and interpreter at the Second Pan-African Congress. We argue that bringing the archives of large international organisations into dialogue with a wider overlooked field of international archival evidence offers new perspectives on what internationalism was, where it happened, and to whom it mattered.

© 2020 The Authors. Published by Elsevier Ltd. This is an open access article under the CC BY license (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>).

Almost fifteen years ago, the political historian Matthew Connelly argued that his discipline had virtually ignored international organisations and their extensive archives.<sup>1</sup> Surveying the field of international history today, Connelly's reflections seem remarkable. The records of international organisations, such as the League of Nations, the United Nations and their associated agencies, have been central in facilitating a renewed interest in the study of twentieth-century internationalism.<sup>2</sup> This scholarship invites different conversations to emerge between international historians and historical geographers who are increasingly interested in how global challenges have been engaged with in the past. Specifically, geographers are well placed to ask fundamental questions about the nature and location of international archives. These archives are more complex and widely dispersed than the public, state-

controlled archives that have dominated national and regional histories. The international archive is a scattered archipelago, which includes better known and surveyed archival 'islands' alongside many smaller, previously unexplored collections. The exploration of this archival archipelago requires different and more explicitly geographical methodologies that take seriously the historical geographies of these collections. As Lara Putnam has recently noted, the transnational turn has been facilitated by an expanding digital archive of online material that reduces the need for expensive research travel. And yet as Putnam also argues, histories of internationalism that draw on remotely accessed records often fail to recognise how the geographically dispersed, real-world 'topography of physical information' is itself evidence of complex transnational interactions in the past.<sup>3</sup>

Following the work of historians such as Antoinette Burton and Ann Laura Stoler, this paper considers how internationalism was constituted through practices of archiving.<sup>4</sup> Acts of collecting, cataloguing and preserving records were important mechanisms to universalise geographically contingent international claims, which

<sup>\*</sup> Corresponding author.

E-mail address: [jake.hodder@nottingham.ac.uk](mailto:jake.hodder@nottingham.ac.uk) (J. Hodder).

<sup>1</sup> C. A. Bayly, S. Beckert, M. Connelly, I. Hofmeyr, W. Kozol, P. Seed, AHR Conversation: On Transnational History, *American Historical Review* 111 (2006) 1441–1464, 1461.

<sup>2</sup> S. Pederson, *Guardians: the League of Nations and the crisis of empire*, Oxford, 2015; Sunil Amrith and Glenda Sluga, New Histories of the UN, special issue, *Journal of World History*, 19, 3 (2008); P. Clavin, *Securing the World Economy: The Reinvention of the League of Nations, 1920–1946*, Oxford, 2013; see recent conference *A Century of Internationalisms: The Promise and Legacies of the League of Nations*, Lisbon, 19–20 September 2019.

<sup>3</sup> L. Putnam, The transnational and the text-searchable: digitized sources and the shadows they cast, *American Historical Review* 121 (2016) 377–402.

<sup>4</sup> A. Burton, *Archive stories: Facts, fictions, and the writing of history*, Durham, 2005; A. Stoler, *Along the archival grain: Epistemic anxieties and colonial common sense*, Princeton, 2010.

explains why attempts to discredit internationalism frequently involved displacing or destroying archival evidence.<sup>5</sup> In this paper we investigate how archive materials *became* international both literally and discursively; how materials moved across national borders and how some records were categorised as ‘internationally’ significant whilst others were not. Historical geographers have a particular role to play in interrogating how the international archive has assumed the form that it has, in the places that it has, and why this matters. This paper argues that closer attention to the *geographies* of international archival records reveal bigger political struggles over who and where was able to claim to be internationalist in the past. It also offers important conceptual insights into the spatial and scalar complexity of twentieth-century internationalism which, although often framed as a natural even inevitable sphere of existence, was selectively mobilised by historical actors as they traversed multiple political loyalties, such as to nation, empire or race.

In this paper we use three vignettes of working in ‘international’ archives, drawn from our collective research project, to interrogate the interplay between internationalism and the other ‘big-space’ political ideas that have shaped the modern world: nationalism, imperialism and pan-nationalism.<sup>6</sup> Our first case study focuses on the relationship between nationalism and internationalism through the papers of the International Institute of Intellectual Cooperation (IIIC), located in the Paris archives of UNESCO, one of the world’s most prominent international organisations. In this example, we consider how large, self-titled international organisations often reflected the political and cultural values of the cities and countries in which they were located. We reveal how the archives of these international organisations, widely studied in recent years, reveal geographically distinctive versions of internationalism. Our second example, the Maharaja Ganga Singh Archive in the Indian city of Bikaner, considers the hybridity of imperial and international pasts. Whether internationalism was a means to sustain, reform or critique empire, we explore how these connections reveal themselves through a regional and imperial archive which contains the records of a key player in the development of twentieth-century internationalism. Our third case study takes us to New Bedford, Massachusetts to explore the relationship between pan-nationalism and internationalism through the papers of Lydia Brown, a translator and interpreter at the Second Pan-African Congress. Here, we examine how foregrounding the work of those behind-the-scenes allows us to capture more amorphous and marginalised forms of internationalism in the archive, which often lacked a permanent organisation to preserve their records.

These three case studies are purposefully diverse, each is drawn from a different continent and each is suggestive of a different form of twentieth-century internationalism which moves progressively further from the nation state, identified by Fred Halliday as ‘liberal’, ‘hegemonic’ and ‘radical’ internationalism respectively.<sup>7</sup> Our approach is inspired by recent arguments made by the Afro-Asian Networks Research Collective that the records of multiple, interlocking modes of internationalism demand new forms of historical

inquiry. These should ‘shift the focus away from the interstate relations found in official records, and on to the networks created and maintained by actors that are harder to identify in the archive.’<sup>8</sup> This paper invites scholars to read across a fuller array of spaces in which internationalism was devised and archived by reading the extensive archives of international organisations alongside smaller regional or family collections which are rarely catalogued as ‘international’. This offers the potential for decentering state-accredited forms of internationalism by provincializing the claims of large international organisations, whilst opening the field to a wider array of materials and perspectives than are often considered. In doing so, we propose a historical geography of internationalism that attends to the geographical assumptions that structure how we read and interpret international archival evidence. As we argue in the conclusion, this offers new perspectives on what internationalism was, where it happened and to whom it mattered.

### Internationalism, transnationalism and archives

The past three decades have witnessed a dramatic increase in the scope and range of historical approaches that think beyond and between nation-states and regions, the traditional units of historical enquiry.<sup>9</sup> The ‘transnational turn’, as some of its most perceptive writers attest, calls not simply for a ‘scaling-up’ of the frame of analysis but a broader connective approach which is sensitive to multiple spatial and scalar lenses and which traverse the histories of institutions, social groups and cultural practices.<sup>10</sup> The recent renaissance in the study of internationalism, much of it under the label of ‘new international history’, has been profoundly influenced by these developments. Although traditional international and diplomatic history has always had an inherent sensitivity to cross-border exchange, it was rarely transnational; the nation and interstate relations were the dominant object of study, often investigated through state archives.<sup>11</sup> Just as the work of Benedict Anderson, Michael Billig and Partha Chatterjee prompted a re-evaluation of nationalism as a cultural force, so the writings of Akira Iriye, Mark Mazower and Glenda Sluga have inspired new research on the social, cultural, educational, scientific and emotional dimensions of twentieth-century internationalism.<sup>12</sup>

<sup>8</sup> Afro-Asian Networks Research Collective, Manifesto: networks of decolonization in Asia and Africa, *Radical History Review* 131 (2018) 176–182.

<sup>9</sup> A. Iriye, *Global and transnational history: The past, present and future*, Basingstoke, 2013.

<sup>10</sup> P. Clavin, Time, manner, place: Writing modern European history in global, transnational and international contexts, *European History Quarterly* 40 (2010), 624–640.

<sup>11</sup> -Y. Saunier, *Transnational History*, London, 2013; A. Iriye, *Global and Transnational History: The Past, Present, and Future*, London, 2012; and A. Iriye and P.-Y. Saunier (eds), *The Palgrave Dictionary of Transnational History: From the Mid-19th Century to the Present Day*, London, 2009. For recent discussions on how these developments relate to Global History see S. Conrad, *What is global history?* Princeton, 2016; R. Drayton and D. Motadel, Discussion: the futures of global history, *Journal of Global History* 13 (2018) 1–2.

<sup>12</sup> B. Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, London, 1983; M. Billig, *Banal Nationalism*, London, 1995; P. Chatterjee, *The Nation and its Fragments: Colonial and Postcolonial Histories*, Princeton, 1993 on nationalism; A. Iriye, *Cultural Internationalism and World Order*, Baltimore, 2000; A. Iriye, *Global Community: The Role of International Organisations in the Making of the Contemporary World*, Berkeley, CA, 2002; M. Mazower, *Governing the World: The History of an Idea*, London, 2012; and G. Sluga, *Internationalism in the Age of Nationalism*, Philadelphia, 2013.

<sup>5</sup> For example, see B. Thorpe, *The Time and Space of Richard Coudenhove-Kalergi’s Pan-Europe, 1923–1939*, Unpublished PhD thesis, University of Nottingham, 2018; T. Shepard, ‘Of sovereignty’: disputed archives, ‘wholly modern’ archives, and the post-decolonization French and Algerian Republics, 1962–2012, *American Historical Review* 120 (2015) 869–883.

<sup>6</sup> S. Legg (PI) and M. Heffernan (Co-I) Conferencing the international: a cultural and historical geography of the origins of internationalism (1919–1939), Arts and Humanities Research Council (grant number AH/M008142/1), <https://gtr.ukri.org/projects?ref=AH%2FM008142%2F1> [accessed June 11, 2020].

<sup>7</sup> F. Halliday, Three concepts of internationalism, *International Affairs* 64 (1988) 187–98.

Much recent research has foregrounded the role of international organisations, such as the League of Nations.<sup>13</sup> An alternative genealogy of early twentieth-century internationalism has emerged which underscores the complex interplay between the League of Nations, private philanthropic agencies, and grassroots movements inspired by anti-colonial, black, feminist and pacifist traditions. Groups ranging from nationalists and imperialists to radical anti-colonial activists embraced internationalist ideas which offered cultural and political authority, however fleeting. Although these groups promoted sometimes rival forms of internationalism, they also drew strength and credibility from their interactions with each other.<sup>14</sup> Twentieth-century 'internationalisms' were, therefore, malleable, diverse and inherently ambiguous.<sup>15</sup> The scale of the international, where and what it included, and who had jurisdiction over it were hotly contested topics. Internationalism existed in productive tension with nationalism, imperialism and pan-nationalism in ways which raise significant methodological questions of the evidential authority of international organisations' archives, which exemplify only one particular interpretation of internationalism. Once widely ignored, these sources have come to dominate which internationalisms we see and risk marginalising alternative internationalist projects, few of which were so tightly aligned to state interests.

Although nationalism and internationalism are sometimes regarded as oppositional, they were also 'twinned liberal ideologies' shaped by the same twentieth-century challenges of modernity and democracy.<sup>16</sup> As such it remains difficult to draw simple distinctions between national and international records which frequently intermingle in the same locations and spaces. In smaller nation-states such as Belgium and Switzerland, which were entirely dependent on a stable international order, this distinction was largely meaningless as national identities were often expressed in internationalist terms.<sup>17</sup> Larger nation-states, including those under fascist regimes, regularly invoked internationalism to bolster domestic and foreign policies. The Rome-based International Institute of Agriculture (IIA), the precursor of the UN Food and Agriculture Organization, was enthusiastically supported by Mussolini while the Nazis, determined to ensure German global

hegemony in forestry, provided palatial accommodation in Berlin for the IIA's *Centre International de Sylviculture*.<sup>18</sup> Histories of twentieth-century internationalism have mostly therefore been written from functioning institutional spaces, which include the familiar, well-funded repositories of larger international institutions such as the League of Nations and the International Committee of the Red Cross in Geneva, or the United Nations and the Rockefeller Foundation in New York. Each of these organisations, and many others, reflect particular national claims to internationalism.

The relationship between internationalism and imperialism was equally opaque. As its many critics have often lamented, the League of the Nations helped to sustain European imperialism after the First World War and even overtly anti-imperial agencies such as the International Labour Organisation absorbed imperial norms and values, especially in discussions about demography, migration and health.<sup>19</sup> While some international organisations had a moderating influence on imperial policies, colonial governments were remarkably resilient in the face of international challenges. For some, these relationships have blunted the emancipatory promise of internationalism, staining it with the legacies of empire. For others, the same connections raised the prospect of holding imperialism to account.<sup>20</sup> These negotiations dominate discussions of twentieth-century internationalism, but few consider the archival implications of this complex relationship.<sup>21</sup>

Similarly, the politics of the archive has obscured one of the least understood forms of internationalism associated with the various pan-national movements, including pan-Africanism, pan-Asianism and pan-Islam. These movements, which appealed to supranational identities unified by ethnic, religious, or other form of likeness, proliferated after the First World War and developed into a popular form of internationalism. Pan-movements were marked by their variety and improvisation rather than their politics, which ranged from imperialistic to anti-colonial. As such, they rarely developed formalised political structures or a long-lasting institutional apparatus to collate and preserve their records, dispersing their archival traces. Whilst pan-movements drew strength and legitimacy from the emerging system of global governance, and steered it in significant ways, their appearance in the archives of international organisations remains limited. As we show below, many activists were, in Sorrels terms, 'cosmopolitan outsiders' whose internationalist thought and practice has fallen outside the administrative structures of national, imperial and international recordkeeping.<sup>22</sup> Recovering these movements, explicitly framed around ideas of race, religion or region, prompts us to consider how such categories became important vehicles for mobilising political and emotional

<sup>13</sup> Clavin, *Securing the World Economy*; D. Laqua et al. (eds), *International Organisations and Global Civil Society: Histories of the Union of International Associations*, London, 2019; M. Mazower, *No Enchanted Palace: The End of Empire and the Ideological Origins of the United Nations*, Princeton, 2009; Pedersen, *The Guardians*; and G. F. Sinclair, *To Reform the World: International Organisations and the Making of Modern States*, Oxford, 2017.

<sup>14</sup> S. Legg, An intimate and imperial feminism: Meliscent Shephard and the regulation of prostitution in colonial India, *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 28 (2010) 68–94; S. Mukherjee, The All-Asian Women's Conference 1931: Indian women and their leadership of a pan-Asian feminist organisation, *Women's History Review* 26 (2017) 363–381; F. Ferretti, Geographies of Internationalism: radical development and critical geopolitics from the Northeast of Brazil, *Political Geography* 63 (2018) 10–19; D. Featherstone, Black internationalism, subaltern cosmopolitanism, and the spatial politics of antifascism, *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 103 (2013) 1406–20; J. Hodder, Toward a geography of black internationalism: Bayard Rustin, nonviolence, and the promise of Africa, *Annals of the American Association of Geographers* 106 (2016) 1360–77; J. Hodder, S. Legg and M. Heffernan, Introduction: historical geographies of internationalism, 1900–1950, *Political Geography* (Special Issue, Historical Geographies of Internationalism), 49 (2015) 1–6.

<sup>15</sup> G. Sluga and P. Clavin, Rethinking the history of internationalism, in G. Sluga and P. Clavin (eds) *Internationalisms: A Twentieth-Century History*, Cambridge, 2016, 3–14.

<sup>16</sup> G. Sluga, *Internationalism in the Age of Nationalism*, Philadelphia, 2015, 3.

<sup>17</sup> D. Laqua, *The Age of Internationalism and Belgium, 1880–1930*, Manchester, 2015.

<sup>18</sup> F. D'Onofrio, Agricultural numbers: the statistics of the International Institute of Agriculture in the interwar period, *Agricultural History Review* 65 (2017) 277–296; J. Ball and W. Kollert, The Centre *Internationale de Sylviculture* and its historic book collection, *Unasylva* 64 (2013) 19–25; and more generally M. Herren, Fascist internationalism, in Sluga and Clavin, *Internationalisms*, 191–212.

<sup>19</sup> A. Bashford, *Global Population: History, Geopolitics, and Life on Earth*, New York, 2014; N. Smith, *The Endgame of Globalization*, London, 2005; and S. Kott, Towards a social history of international organisations: the ILO and the internationalisation of western social expertise (1919–1949), in M. B. Jerónimo and J. P. Monteiro (eds), *Internationalism, Imperialism and the Formation of the Contemporary World: The Pasts of the Present*, Dordrecht, 2017, 33–57.

<sup>20</sup> See D. Gorman, *The Emergence of International Society in the 1920s*, Cambridge, 2012; A. Anghie, *Imperialism, Sovereignty and the Making of International Law*, Cambridge, 2004; R. Shillam, The perilous but unavoidable terrain of the non-West, in R. Shillam (ed.) *International Relations and Non-Western Thought: Imperialism, Colonialism and Investigations of Global Modernity*, London, 2011, 12–26; and S. Legg, An international anomaly? Sovereignty, the League of Nations, and India's princely geographies, *Journal of Historical Geography* 43 (2014) 96–110; M. B. Jerónimo and J. P. Monteiro, Pasts to be unveiled: the interconnections between the international and the imperial, in Jerónimo and Monteiro, *Internationalism, Imperialism and the Formation of the Contemporary World*, 11–29.

<sup>21</sup> For an exception, see J. Baikin, Where did the empire go? Archives and decolonization in Britain, *The American Historical Review* 120 (2015), 884–899.

<sup>22</sup> K. Sorrels, *Cosmopolitan outsiders: imperial inclusion, national exclusion, and the Pan-European Idea, 1900–1930*, New York, 2016.

investments in internationalism.<sup>23</sup>

In the remainder of this paper we explore how the uneven geographies of international archival materials reflect the conceptual ambiguities of internationalism outlined above. In doing so, we draw inspiration from a tradition of work in historical geography on the politics of archives, which has called attention to the incompleteness of historical records and the need to situate the archive as a contested space of political and cultural authority.<sup>24</sup> Asking fundamental questions as to why international records are in the places they are currently located, and how they came to be there, invites us to consider how different international perspectives became universalised or marginalised. As David Featherstone argues, the intellectual stakes of recovering subaltern perspectives, in particular, rewards difficult methodological work. It allows us to approach international solidarity in ways which challenge nationalist or globalist accounts of internationalism which are structured into the archive.<sup>25</sup> We dedicate our third case study on the pan-Africanist Lydia Brown, to examine explicitly what a subaltern perspective can offer to the history of internationalism. Whilst the Subaltern Studies collective has always been concerned with the politics of representation (exemplified by Spivak's *Can the subaltern speak?*), drawing on recent geography scholarship we deploy the term subaltern to refer to the perspectives of a broader group of overlooked actors, like Brown, who occupied both a position of relative privilege whilst also being marginally positioned within international historical accounts.<sup>26</sup> More generally, each of the case studies below reveal how competing twentieth-century internationalisms were constructed and contested through the archive: how powerful states made claims over international life and how others consciously eschewed predetermined definitions of where and what internationalism could be. We explore this through the entanglement of internationalism with national, imperial and pan-national projects respectively.

### The IIIC archive, Paris

International organisations often insist that their buildings and facilities operate beyond the legal regulations of the cities and countries in which they are located, in a separate sphere of international governance. Yet, the archives of the International Institute of Intellectual Cooperation (IIIC), and the wider UNESCO archive in which these records are based, suggest that internationalism can never escape from the compromising realities of geography, and is

always constrained by national ambitions and rivalries. The IIIC archive, which has been extensively used for recent investigations into the 'forgotten' pre-histories of today's international organisations, also highlights the geographical interplay between the venues where past events took place and the locations where archival traces of these events survive in the present.<sup>27</sup> In this first case study, the historical geography of the IIIC archive is considered to demonstrate how the surviving records of interwar internationalism reflect the violent conflicts between rival nation-states in twentieth-century Europe and the changing character of the spaces and places in which these records were organised and manipulated.<sup>28</sup> In the case of the IIIC archive, the story involves three locations in central Paris – the Palais-Royal, the Hôtel Majestic and the UNESCO building – in which these records were stored, used and sometimes abused during the middle decades of the twentieth-century.

The IIIC was established in Paris in 1925 as the administrative centre of the International Committee on Intellectual Co-operation (ICIC), an advisory agency of the League of Nations launched three years earlier in Geneva as an 'invisible college' of prominent intellectuals, including Henri Bergson, Marie Curie, Albert Einstein, Thomas Mann and Gilbert Murray. The ICIC's grand ambition was to foster the spirit of internationalism through educational reform and cultural-intellectual interaction and exchange. The IIIC was established to facilitate that objective from Paris rather than Geneva.<sup>29</sup> Generously supported by the French government, and later by subscriptions from affiliated nation-states, the IIIC was more or less openly intended to promote France's cultural and imperial policies, based on the familiar assumption that intellectual cooperation was an inherently French prerogative and that by taking control of this aspect of the League's activities, France would provide an appropriate and much-needed service to the international community. Although this attitude generated more indignation than gratitude in other capital cities, it was nevertheless widely accepted in diplomatic circles that international initiatives would inevitably reflect the values and priorities of those nation-states that were willing to provide the necessary funding, accommodation and co-ordination for different international initiatives.

The position was eloquently expressed in a five-page memorandum prepared by the Foreign Office for the Oxford classicist Gilbert Murray when he was invited to join the ICIC in early 1922. 'The French have a genuine and even a passionate interest in the affairs of the mind', acknowledged the memorandum, 'and are not indifferent to an opportunity for the expansion of French culture'. It would be 'foolish and mischievous to grudge them the influence they rightly possess', the document continued, for it was 'only natural and just' that France, along with Switzerland and Belgium, should have 'by far the greatest authority and interest' in this new endeavour. While the Foreign Office accepted with regret that Britain was 'doing so little for a work of considerable importance in itself, and one which is not negligible in its political effects', the memorandum was clear about the stance Gilbert should adopt as

<sup>23</sup> For recent examples on pan-nationalism see H. Adi *Pan-Africanism: a history*, London, 2018; C. Aydin *The idea of the Muslim world: A global intellectual history*, Cambridge, MA, 2019; P. Roberts, *The Institute of Pacific Relations: pan-Pacific and pan-Asian visions of international order*, *International Politics* 55 (2018), 836–851.

<sup>24</sup> For an overview of this work see E. Gagen, H. Lorimer and A. Vasudevan (eds.) *Practising the Archive: Reflections on Method and Practice in Historical Geography*, London, 2007; J. Hodder, *On Absence and Abundance: Biography as Method in Archival Research*, *Area* 49 (2017) 452–459; H. Lorimer, *Caught in the nick of time: Archives and fieldwork* in D. DeLyser, S. Aitken, M. A. Crang, S. Herbert and L. McDowell, *SAGE Handbook of Qualitative Research in Human Geography*, London, 2009, 248–273, and S. Mills, *Cultural-historical geographies of the archive: fragments, objects and ghosts*, *Geography Compass* 7 (2013) 701–713.

<sup>25</sup> D. Featherstone, *Black internationalism, subaltern cosmopolitanism, and the spatial politics of antifascism*, *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 103, 6 (2013) 1406–1420; D. Featherstone, *Solidarity: Hidden Histories and Geographies of Internationalism*, London, 2012.

<sup>26</sup> G. Spivak 2010 [1988]. 'Can the Subaltern Speak?' In *Can the Subaltern Speak: Reflections on the History of an Idea*, edited by R. Morris, Chichester, NY, 2010 [1988], 237–92. For recent scholarship which has used the term 'subaltern' in this way, see Sharp, *Subaltern geopolitics*; J. Sharp, *A subaltern critical geopolitics of the war on terror: Postcolonial security in Tanzania*, *Geoforum* 42 (2011), 297–305; J. Sharp, *Geopolitics at the margins? Reconsidering genealogies of critical geopolitics*, *Political Geography* 37 (2013), 20–29; R. Craggs, *Subaltern geopolitics and the post-colonial Commonwealth, 1965–1990*, *Political Geography* 65 (2018) 46–56.

<sup>27</sup> See J.-J. Renoliet, *L'UNESCO oubliée: la Société des Nations et la co-opération intellectuelle (1919–1946)*, Paris 1999. For related arguments about the politics of other archival collections, see M. Heffernan, *A paper city: on history, maps and map collections in 18th and 19th century Paris*, *Imago Mundi* 66 (2014) 5–20.

<sup>28</sup> For historical context on the relationship between internationalism and nationalism in interwar Europe, see M. Matera and S. K. Kent, *The Global 1930s: The International Decade*, London, 2017; and Z. S. Steiner, *The Lights that Failed: European International History, 1919–1933*, Oxford, 2007.

<sup>29</sup> D. Laqua, *Transnational intellectual cooperation, the League of Nations, and the problem of order*, *Journal of Global History* 6 (2011) 223–247; P. Wilson, *Gilbert Murray and international relations: Hellenism, liberalism and international intellectual cooperation as paths to peace*, *Review of International Studies* 37 (2011) 881–909.



Britain's representative on the ICIC: 'The very words "intellectual co-operation" are distasteful to the English ear ... [and] ... contrary to our traditions ... The painful duty of the Englishmen ... should be to criticise impractical proposals and explain that most suggestions are unsuitable to English conditions'.<sup>30</sup>

In keeping with its French ethos, the IIIC was directed until 1930 by the French Renaissance scholar and writer Julian Luçhaire and thereafter by the French diplomat Henri Bonnet, from impressive offices in the Palais-Royal, provided at a peppercorn rent.<sup>31</sup> The IIIC's activities, which included sustained attempts to develop a new science of international relations in universities, to promote internationalism in national primary and secondary education, and to cultivate international networks of scholars, scientists and writers generated a mass of paperwork which Bonnet, in particular, was determined to preserve for future historians in accordance with the IIIC's self-appointed responsibility to encourage co-operation between archives, museums and libraries based on its recommended best practice.<sup>32</sup> By the mid-1930s, the IIIC was increasingly defined by its own archive, viewed by Bonnet and the organisation's representatives as a strategic resource for enlightened internationalists everywhere.

The IIIC's self-image was not lost on the German military authorities who assumed control of Paris after the fall of France in the summer of 1940. Dozens of files, currently identified as 'manqué' or 'néant' in the archival catalogue, were removed by German or French officials charged with discovering as much as possible about suspect individuals, activities and proposals (Fig. 1). As recent negotiations about archival restitution have revealed, documents seized by the occupying German authorities from libraries and archives in Paris were usually stored temporarily elsewhere in the city before relocation to storage depots in Germany, whence a significant proportion were seized by the invading Red Army at the end of World War Two. Many IIIC documents were therefore either destroyed in Germany or remain in long-forgotten Russian vaults. When questioned about the curious absence of photographs from these otherwise voluminous files, the current IIIC archivist suggested that most, if not all, photographic material was sequestered by the Germans during the war.<sup>33</sup>

There is no way of knowing where the IIIC documents taken from the Palais-Royal were stored but it is possible that at least some of this material was moved across the city to the Hôtel Majestic on the avenue Kléber, a building whose complex history became closely entangled with that of the IIIC archive. This opulent Second Empire hotel, a short walk from the Arc de Triomphe, had been frequently used by visitors to the IIIC before 1940. Under the German occupation, however, the Hôtel Majestic served as the headquarters of the Militärbefehlshaber Frankreich and was one of

the main clearing houses for information relevant to the control and regulation of Paris and the wider zone of German occupation. The SS department that oversaw the deportation of France's Jewish population, directed by Carl Oberg, was of one many German military offices based at the Hôtel Majestic.

After the liberation, the Hôtel Majestic was selected, in a further twist to the story, as the headquarters of the newly-established UNESCO, launched in November 1945 at a conference in London hosted by Ellen Wilkinson, Education Minister in the new Labour government.<sup>34</sup> UNESCO was explicitly tasked with continuing the work initiated by the IIIC under the auspices of the United Nations. The IIIC's much-abused archive, deemed necessary to provide UNESCO with a sense of its historical mission, was therefore transferred from the Palais-Royal to the very location where German officials had searched through some of its plundered files before 1945.

The challenges Bonnet confronted with respect to the IIIC's paperwork before 1940 were minor compared to those facing UNESCO officials after 1945 in the cluttered environment of the Hôtel Majestic. By the early 1950s, desks, cabinets and indeed officials were bundled together in a riot of disorganised paperwork in bathrooms, cupboards and corridors. Under the energetic direction of the American political scientist Luther Harris Evans, plans were drawn up for a brand-new building. Before he took over as UNESCO Director-General in 1953, Evans had been a highly successful Librarian of Congress and before had overseen the major re-organisation of the US National Archives in the 1930s. Given his background and interests, it was no surprise that Evans envisioned a modern UNESCO headquarters that would function as a unique bibliographical centre of cultural internationalism in which the organisation's library and the archive, including the IIIC papers, would play a central role as scholarly resource and aid to international policy development.<sup>35</sup>

The new UNESCO headquarters was expensively constructed on land donated by the French government on the Place de Fontenoy in an affluent district of south-west Paris adjacent to the École Militaire and the Eiffel Tower. The three-pointed design, intended by the architects to be visible from the air, was inaugurated in November 1958 in the presence of French President René Coty and a roll-call of prominent artists, scientists and intellectuals, including Pablo Picasso whose specially commissioned mural on the Fall of Icarus was unveiled in the foyer of the Bâtiment des Conférences.<sup>36</sup> The soaring internationalist rhetoric of the speech-makers must have rung hollow given the context in which the event took place. France was in the middle of a serious crisis at the time, provoked by the on-going war in Algeria. The constitution for the new Fifth Republic, allocating vastly enhanced presidential powers to Charles de Gaulle, recently recalled from retirement as prime minister to appease army officers openly plotting to overthrow the fragile institutions of the Fourth Republic, had been endorsed a few weeks earlier in a national referendum widely interpreted as a popular vindication of France's continuing 'colonial' rule in Algeria.

Despite this inauspicious beginning, the UNESCO building has provided an impressive location for the IIIC archive and for the

<sup>30</sup> Gilbert Murray Papers, 265/10041–5, Bodleian Library, Oxford University.

<sup>31</sup> See Reniolet, *L'UNESCO oubliée*, 44–75; D. Laqua, Internationalisme ou affirmation de la nation? La coopération intellectuelle transnationale dans l'entre-deux-guerres, *Critique Internationale* 52 (2011) 51–67; A. Lombard, *Politique culturelle internationale: le modèle français face à la mondialisation*, Paris 2003. On the IIIC accommodation, including the art works loaned by the French government, see Archives Nationales de France (AN) F/4/2973: Ministère de l'Intérieur: comptabilité générale – subventions; F/21/3914–5: Bâtiments civils I, série alphabétique; and F/21/7274: Gestion du mobilier: demande de prêts aux établissements publics, 1929–1945.

<sup>32</sup> The IIIC committee on archival standards, established in April 1931, produced hundreds of new recommendations, including advice on the paper and ink to use for international treaties. See IIIC, *Guide international des archives*, Paris/Rome 1934.

<sup>33</sup> J. Lowry (ed.), *Displaced Archives*, London, 2017; P. K. Grimsted, E. Ketelaar, and F. J. Hoogewoud, *Returned from Russia: Nazi Archival Plunder in Western Europe and Recent Restitution Issues*, London, 2013; A. M. Eckert, *The Struggle for the Files: The Western Allies and the Return of German Archives After the Second World War*, Cambridge, 2012.

<sup>34</sup> See <http://www.unesco.org/archives/multimedia/?pg=33&amp;s=films&details&id=15>.

<sup>35</sup> C. E. M. Pearson, *Designing UNESCO: Art, Architecture and International Politics at Mid-Century*, London 2010. The Luther Harris Evans Papers, 1923–1989 can be consulted in the Dolph Briscoe Center for American History, The University of Texas at Austin. See also S. E. Graham, The (real)politik of culture: US cultural diplomacy in UNESCO, 1946–1954, *Diplomatic History* 30 (2006) 231–251.

<sup>36</sup> On Picasso's mural, see T. J. Clark, Picasso and the fall of Europe, *London Review of Books* 38, June 2016, 7–10; and Pearson, *Designing UNESCO*, 291–9.

ARCHIVES	D.VI	INSTITUTIONS NATIONALES	
Les Archives de l'Institut International de Coopération Intellectuelle ont été créées en 1928. Elles contiennent la correspondance complète échangée par l'Institut à partir de cette époque et quelques dossiers établis à des dates antérieures.	D.VI.1	British Biological Society ..	MANQUE
Les dossiers sont divisés par groupes - chacun de ces groupes contient la correspondance relative à une question déterminée.	2	National Research Council, Washington	MANQUE
<u>Groupe A</u> - Correspondance relative aux Commissions nationales - Délégués d'Etats et Affaires générales de la Direction.	3	Fondation nationale espagnole de recherches scientifiques	MANQUE
<u>Groupe B</u> - Correspondance relative aux relations diverses entre pays - Affaires diverses d'instruction publique - Services d'Etudes cinématographiques - statistiques intellectuelles - manuels scolaires - radio - Accords culturels.	4		NEANT
<u>Groupe C</u> - Correspondance relative aux questions des relations universitaires - début de la Conférence permanente - Etudiants.	5		NEANT
<u>Groupe D</u> - Correspondance relative aux questions scientifiques - Bibliothèques et Congrès bibliothécaires - Bibliographie - Documentation - Congrès internationaux - Archives.	6	Institut de Paléontologie humaine, Paris	MANQUE
<u>Groupe E</u> - Correspondance relative aux questions juridiques.	7	Institut océanique à Paris	MANQUE
<u>Groupe F</u> - Correspondance relative aux questions littéraires et artistiques.	8	Institut Pasteur, Paris	MANQUE
<u>Groupe G</u> - Correspondance relative aux Sciences sociales.	9	Académie des Sciences, Paris	MANQUE
<u>Groupe H</u> - Correspondance relative à la Presse et aux Publications de l'Institut international de coopération intellectuelle.	10		NEANT
<u>Groupe I</u> - Correspondance relative à la Pédagogie - Enseignement - Comité consultatif pour l'enseignement de la Société des Nations Manuels scolaires Radiodiffusion éducative Enseignement Echanges et Voyages scolaires Publications pédagogiques.	11	Circulaire aux Académies et Sociétés savantes	MANQUE
<u>Groupe K</u> - Correspondance relative à la Conférence permanente des Hautes Etudes internationales.	12		MANQUE
Durant l'occupation allemande à Paris (1940-1944) certains dossiers ont disparus, notamment ceux concernant les questions scientifiques.	13 à 17		NEANT
	18	Fédération belge des Sociétés de Science ( M. Timmermans )	MANQUE
	19		NEANT
	20	Liste d'adresses de Sociétés savantes et d'Académie	MANQUE
	21	Decimal Association	MANQUE
	22	British Science Guild	MANQUE
	23 à 33		NEANT
	34	Vergeinschaft der deutschen Wissenschaft, Berlin.	MANQUE
	35	Reichszentrale für naturwissenschaftliche Berichterstattung "Forschungen und Fortschritte", Berlin	MANQUE
	36		NEANT
	37	Sociétés de Chirurgie en général	MANQUE
	38		NEANT

**Fig. 1.** Selected pages from *Inventaire des Archives de l'Institut international de coopération intellectuelle (IICI) 1925–1946: dossiers de correspondance, documents et publications aux Archives de l'UNESCO à Paris* (2 vol, 348 pp) available at: <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000086288?posInSet=2&queryId=153549fe-642d-40cf-9016-835fdd953798> [accessed June 11, 2020], prepared in 1980s, indicating (on the left) that 'certains dossiers ont disparus' during the German occupation, and (on the right) that entire sections were removed, leaving empty folders whose original contents are either unknown ('néant') or discerned only from their original title ('manqué'). The IIC archive is being digitalised and can be consulted at: <https://atom.archives.unesco.org/records-of-international-institute-of-intellectual-co-operation> [accessed June 11, 2020].

expanding library and archive of UNESCO itself. It was only in this more stable environment that the wartime gaps in the seemingly comprehensive IIC archive were finally revealed when the material was properly catalogued, according to UNESCO regulations, in the 1980s.<sup>37</sup> As UNESCO embarked on its golden age, the Hôtel Majestic acquired new layers of significance as an international conference centre for the French Foreign Ministry, the location for the convention that established the OECD in December 1960, the protracted discussions between American and Vietnamese officials that culminated with the January 1973 peace accords that ended the Vietnam War, and the negotiations between the Vietnamese and the Khmer Rouge that brought their conflict to a close in 1991. In 2008, the Hôtel Majestic was sold once again and, following an expensive renovation, is now the fabulously luxurious Peninsula Paris hotel. If the complex historical geographies of the IIC archive demonstrate how twentieth-century internationalism was shaped by rivalries and conflicts between European nation-states, our next case study reveals how ostensibly similar internationalist ideals were also influenced by Britain's tangled imperial relations with

India.

### The Maharaja Ganga Singh archive, Bikaner

The ancient Rajasthan desert city and camel trading hub of Bikaner can be reached by the 7-hour overnight sleeper train from Delhi, which heads 300-miles due west of the capital into the Thar Desert. Bikaner is now at the outer fringes of northern India's tourist 'golden triangle' (Delhi, Agra, Jaipur) but attracts far fewer visitors than fellow outliers Jodhpur or Udaipur. An unlikely location for an archive of internationalism, perhaps. It lacks the international connotations of Paris or Geneva, and the imperial heft of London or New Delhi. But the geography of Bikaner, in its own way, helped push its most famous son and ruler onto the imperial-international stage. The harsh desert environment had escaped subsumption by the colonial East India Company, the desert kingdoms of Rajputana retaining their sovereignty as 'Indian' or 'Princely' States. The relative stability of the region had created a loyal population who were willing to serve in their Maharaja's armed forces, including Bikaner's famed Camel Corps. The latter proved of great use to British imperial campaigns in China (1900) and to the war effort in the Middle East (1916–18).<sup>38</sup>

<sup>37</sup> A printed catalogue of the IIC archive, the hard copies of which have been continually amended over the years, is available on the UNESCO website at <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0008/000862/086288MB.pdf> under the title *Inventaire des Archives de l'Institut international de coopération intellectuelle (IICI) 1925–1946: dossiers de Correspondance, documents et publications aux Archives de l'UNESCO à Paris*, 2 vol, Paris 1990.

<sup>38</sup> B. N. Ramusack, Singh, Ganga (1880–1943), Maharaja of Bikaner, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (2004).

Having created and led the Camel Corps, the Maharaja of Bikaner, Ganga Singh found himself promoted to international prominence. Born in 1880, he had succeeded his half-brother in 1887 and was invested with ruling powers in 1898. He went on to represent India in London at the Imperial Conference of 1917 and the Imperial War Cabinet of 1918, and then at the Paris Peace Conference, signing the Treaty of Versailles for India in 1919. This, and his work in India, would earn him an invite to the Round Table Conference (RTC) in 1930, the largest ever political gathering of Indians on British soil, placing this desert ruler at the heart of an international meeting that would determine India's future within the British Empire.

For many, the Maharaja was an irresistibly romantic figure, incredibly popular with the British press and political leaders alike.<sup>39</sup> In one person, it seemed, many of the ambiguities and curiosities of internationalism were embodied. A key player in the founding of twentieth-century internationalism who was also the ruler of a feudal desert kingdom; a keen political negotiator who was also a royal aristocrat; and a campaigner for peaceful resolution of international and national tensions who was also a decorated military official and the first Indian to be awarded the rank of general in the British Army. What the Maharaja allows us to do is to explore the international archive beyond spaces and institutions, such as UNESCO, labelled 'international' but which are nonetheless teeming with international stories.

Bikaner was one of the Princely States of Rajputana, whose files are partly stored in the Rajasthan State Archives. Being a benevolent autocracy, however, the Maharaja of Bikaner ruled directly and retained his own archives. They fit neither into the category of anti-colonial archives, like those of the Indian National Congress or the personal papers of leading Indian 'freedom fighters', nor as archives of indirect imperial rule. Rather, they record the actions of a leader committed to greater Indian self-government that would be within the British Empire, and would feature a prominent role for hereditary, princely rulers. The Bikaner archives have recently been opened to researchers by the Maharaja Ganga Singh Trust.<sup>40</sup> They are situated in the Lallgarh Palace, outside the city walls of Bikaner. The Palace's first wing was constructed between 1896 and 1902 for Ganga Singh and was designed by Sir Swinton Jacob, a colonial advocate of Indo-Saracenic architecture which blended architectural traditions from across India and beyond with more European flavoured interiors. It was one of the most desirable palaces in North India and was visited by British and Indian royalty and Viceroys alike.<sup>41</sup>

The archive room is modest, the indexes handwritten, and documents are delivered in bundles bound with string. What they contain are incredibly rich materials, collated for the bureaucrats of the Princely State. The 'pads', which include several 'files', often hundreds of documents thick, are indexed into 61 subjects. Traces of the Maharaja's international activities and interests recur throughout, including war service and assistance, foreigners, and the British royal family. Closest to our interests, and embedding explicitly internationalist subjects at the heart of the archive, are the three topics of: the (Paris) peace conference; the League of Nations; and the Round Table Conference. The latter consists of 14 pads, each containing 10 to 20 files.

The RTC files reflect the intermixing of scales and topics at the

conference itself. We can, at best, think of the conference as an event space of 'imperial internationalism' at which the objectives, aspirations and tactics of internationalism emerged in tension with those of Indian imperialism, nationalism and regionalism.<sup>42</sup> The RTC files present us with traces of the international archive in this regional record room. These relate to the League of Nations, federalism, imperial internationalism, and to shopping.

While Ganga Singh had been at the Paris Peace Conference his role had mainly been an advisory one to British Prime Minister Lloyd George, except on the matter of membership of the League of Nations.<sup>43</sup> He had campaigned, then, for India's position in the League and had gone on to lead the Indian delegation at Geneva in 1924 and then in 1930, before heading to the RTC in London. In one of the many press clippings files in Bikaner was preserved a *Daily Herald* article from September 22, 1930 entitled 'Geneva—the World's Family Album' by British Labour MP Ellen Wilkinson (who would give the UNESCO speech, 15 years later, mentioned above).<sup>44</sup> In this light-hearted depiction of the mixing of international faces and personalities at Geneva, Ganga Singh was the foremost personality: 'Physically, the most impressive delegate is the Maharaja of Bikaner. When an Indian is IT he knows it, and shows it in the very poise of his head. An English aristocrat of great wealth and pedigree may look like a hard-up clerk, but the Maharajah, in a lounge suit, carries his body as though it were robed in red and purple satin with lots of pearls.' (see Fig. 2).

The Maharaja of Bikaner brought this prestige, and press interest, with him to London. The interest in him has left a press paper-trail, an unintentional and rivetingly visual and gossipy international archive, preserved in files of press clippings at the Lallgarh Palace. League proponents in England were keen to court him. Elizabeth Day sent him a copy of her book, recounting historical precedents for the League of Nations.<sup>45</sup> Another clipping from the *Eastbourne Chronicle* reported on the League of Nations Union



Fig. 2. Geneva – the World's Family Album, *Daily Herald*, September 22nd, 1930. Reproduced with the permission of the Maharaja Ganga Singhji Trust.

<sup>39</sup> The ex-Viceroy, Lord Hardinge, later reflected that he and the Maharaja of Gwalior were '... of the very highest character in every way and were models of what Indian Princes are and should be.' Lord-Hardinge, Introduction, in K. M. Panikkar (ed.), *His Highness the Maharaja of Bikaner*, London, 1937, vi.

<sup>40</sup> With thanks to Hugh Purcell for providing the contacts which enabled access to the Trust.

<sup>41</sup> R. K. Bikaner, *The Lallgarh Palace: Home of the Maharajas of Bikaner*, Delhi, 2009.

<sup>42</sup> S. Legg, Imperial internationalism: the Round Table Conference and the making of India in London, 1930–32, *Humanity: An International Journal of Human Rights, Humanitarianism, and Development* 11 (2020) 32–53.

<sup>43</sup> Purcell, *Maharajah of Bikaner: India*, 91.

<sup>44</sup> Maharaja Ganga Singhji Trust Archive (henceforth MGSTA) pad 365/file 6387: IRC important cuttings.

<sup>45</sup> E. York, *Leagues of Nations, Ancient, Mediaeval, and Modern*, London, 1919; MGSTA/364/8603: 1 RTC papers.



dinner on October 30th. The opening speech by the Prince of Wales reminded attendees that war was prevented by the ‘... gradual and steady formation of habits of international co-operation and mutual trust’.<sup>46</sup> Amongst the attendees, the *Chronicle* noted, ‘the Maharajah of Bikaner was a conspicuous figure in his handsome uniform and red turban.’

It is not easy to pose Ganga Singh as an explicit internationalist, however. He positioned himself first and foremost as a regional leader; the Maharaja of Bikaner. In an ‘extraordinary proclamation’ published on August 14, 1930 in his official organ, *The Bikaner Rajpatra*, Singh had explained that it was only as a matter of duty that he would be representing his people at the three conferences (League, Imperial and Round Table). Despite the estimated five-month absence, Singh insisted that ‘... my place is in my State in the midst of my own dear people; and, as I trust is well-known to every one, I am never happier than when I am in my own State.’<sup>47</sup> He also assured his people that he had only ever visited Europe twice on private visits (for health treatment for him and his family).

While at the Conference, others criticised Ganga Singh’s unwillingness to frame nationalist demands internationally. Gandhi and the Indian National Congress had been pushing for the British to award India ‘Dominion Status’, alongside Canada, South Africa, New Zealand and Australia, which would mean internal self-government and relative autonomy within the Commonwealth. Bikaner helped divert attention from this internationalist objective to that of national federation. Leading Hindu delegates wrote to Ganga Singh on December 8, 1930 complaining that the attention on federating British and Princely India had detracted attention from the goal of self-government (or dominion status).<sup>48</sup> While no response was archived in Bikaner, a drafted answer to questions submitted by ‘Frank C Betts Literary & Editorial Agent’ in the autumn of 1930 made his approach clear. He insisted that he did believe that dominion status, the goal he said was obsessing India, could be attained, but only on a federal or union basis, no other. Without the association of the Princely States, he insisted ‘dominion status is a dream.’<sup>49</sup>

In this sense, the federal idea came to serve both British and Princely interests well. The Princes insisted on the Crown remaining sovereign in India, so as to protect their treaty rights and to prevent a radical nationalist federal government from imposing reforms on the states. In this sense, Ganga Singh can be considered an imperial internationalist. He was, indeed, as well networked in Britain as he was in India. Before arriving for the second RTC, Ganga Singh had a list drawn up of those to be invited to lunch or dinner in London.<sup>50</sup> The number totalled 444 people. This included a guest for most colleagues, but his over 200 official guests included ex-Viceroy, the staff of royalty, ex-Governors of Indian provinces and members of the British Government. His lunches, dinners and suppers were the thing of legend.<sup>51</sup> He also co-hosted events that portrayed India to the British public, such as the ‘India Week-End’ of 23rd to October 25, 1931, including a service at the London Mosque in Southfields, theatrical performances at the Imperial Institute in

Kensington, and tours of Indian artefacts in London museums.<sup>52</sup>

Ganga Singh was greedily consumed by the British press and public, while guests feasted on his generosity at the Carlton Hotel.<sup>53</sup> But he was, himself, also a voracious consumer and shopper. This was not a personal matter, but a matter of state. He was an assiduous gift giver, appreciating the political and social value of such gifts, whether to Kings and Queens or to official acquaintances and friends. But he also recruited his staff on extensive shopping missions to deck out the Lallgarh Palace in Bikaner with the best of European design. File 8559 of pad 367 in the Bikaner archive, entitled ‘Shopping Lists 1930–31’ detailed the firms to visit in Geneva, Paris and London. Ganga Singh compiled detailed instructions for gathering samples and for matching items to plans of the palace, while the Comptroller in Bikaner was telegraphed with queries when necessary. Items to be purchased included fireplaces, tiles, crockery and china, glass, furniture, fire screens, coal boxes, clocks, wall paper, carpets, gates, balustrades and art works, the latter depicting large game, small game, landscapes, ‘and female figures (not nude).’<sup>54</sup> The *Daily Herald* reported that on the eve of his departure after the first conference session Ganga Singh had between five and six hundred large boxes awaiting despatch.<sup>55</sup>

Many of these purchases adorn the Lallgarh Palace today, the home of an international archive (and domestic interior) in the Thar Desert. Ganga Singh was a profoundly international figure. A keen shopper in Paris during his stop-overs *en route* from India to Britain, and a popular and respected figure in London and Geneva, his work in the latter has left numerous traces in formal international archives at the League of Nations and the India Office. However, traces of his fuller contribution to this imperial international moment lie dispersed in the archives of London, New Delhi, and in the voluminous pads of notes, minutes and press clippings in Bikaner. This reflects Ganga Singh’s position as a Maharaja to his own people, an indirect ruler for the British, and a participant in a new realm of international relations and geopolitics, within which he was still deemed ‘subaltern.’<sup>56</sup> It is to a more marginal but no less significant form of subaltern agency that we turn in our final site to consider the relationship between internationalism and pan-nationalism.

### The Brown family archive, New Bedford, MA

New Bedford sits sixty miles south of Boston where the Acushnet River empties into Buzzards Bay. With easy access to the rich waters of the North Atlantic, the town became the pre-eminent American whaling port during the nineteenth century, offering the setting for Herman Melville’s *Moby-Dick*. This history is sensitively preserved in a 34 acre downtown National Historical Park, the centrepiece of which is the New Bedford Whaling Museum. The Museum’s research library and archives also contain the city’s local history records, some 140 collections, including the family papers of New Bedford resident Lydia Brown (see Fig. 3).<sup>57</sup> Brown’s papers are typical of a small, personal collection – they are comprised of scribbled notes, hand-written letters and sentimental keepsakes which have been compiled by the passing of time rather than a curatorial eye. The bulk of the papers consist of letters between Lydia and her mother, father and brother, as well as a collection of school and examination books (early signs of her intellect), and

<sup>46</sup> MGSTA/363/6368: IRTC: personal papers-cuttings.

<sup>47</sup> MGSTA/368/5080: IRTC: England visit, file III, Geneva Paris London 1930.

<sup>48</sup> MGSTA/361/8275: Federal Structure Committee papers received after HHs return from RTC(II) Nov 1931.

<sup>49</sup> MGSTA/368/7725: IRTC Interviews, Aug–Nov 1930.

<sup>50</sup> MGSTA/370/6294: HHs visit to England for II RTC 1931 & general list of people invited for dinners etc.

<sup>51</sup> MGSTA/363/6370: IRTC personal papers, cuttings, Dec. 1930: A Prince’s £575 Bill at hotel: spent in a day’s restaurant parties – and cash down! *Sunday Express*, 18th January 1931.

<sup>52</sup> MGSTA/373/6286: II RTC England visit 1931- Invitations to HH for dinners and luncheons.

<sup>53</sup> See [https://spacesofinternationalism.omeka.net/exhibits/show/3/an-international-london/bikaner\\_invites](https://spacesofinternationalism.omeka.net/exhibits/show/3/an-international-london/bikaner_invites) [accessed June 9, 2020].

<sup>54</sup> MGSTA/367/8559: II<sup>nd</sup> RTC shopping list 1930–31.

<sup>55</sup> ‘Back to India’ *Daily Herald*, 15th January 1931.

<sup>56</sup> Sharp, Subaltern geopolitics.

<sup>57</sup> Brown Family Papers (Mss 110), New Bedford Whaling Museum Research Library, Brown Family Papers (Mss 110), Series II (hereafter NBWM). The papers were acquired in 1991 and processed in 2012.





Fig. 3. Grimshaw-Gudewicz Reading Room, New Bedford Whaling Museum, New Bedford Whaling Museum Research Library, New Bedford, MA. May 31, 2017, Author's own.

general ephemera. Buried among these are a series of letters which relate to her travel to Europe in 1921 to attend the Second Pan-African Congress in London, Brussels and Paris as a translator and interpreter. In our final case study, we explore how this small collection of family papers can yield fresh perspectives on the history of twentieth-century internationalism.

Scholars of internationalism are unlikely to stumble upon Brown's papers. Our own journey to New Bedford had been long and circuitous. The interwar Pan-African Congress movement was based on an informal international network maintained through periodic conference, but which never developed a permanent organisation.<sup>58</sup> Yet, pan-Africanism was a historically important mode of internationalist thought which stands in stark contrast to the dominant field of internationalism viewed through liberal, state-centred diplomacy. Without a central office or permanent staff, the archive of the Pan-African Congress is now scattered among various personal papers of those that attended. In practice, the movement's figureheads became the 'official' record of the movement. That includes the African-American intellectual W. E. B. Du Bois, Senegalese political leader Blaise Diagne, and the Belgian internationalist Paul Otlet, whose impressive Palais Mondial in Brussels served as a conference venue. The different positions of Du Bois, Diagne and Otlet reveal the complex interplay between internationalism, nationalism and pan-nationalism as each sought to repurpose the events for competing political agendas. Du Bois saw the Congress as a platform to place America's deepening race problem before the 'court of world opinion' in Geneva (he presented the conference resolutions to the League of Nations personally), Diagne sought to diffuse radical voices by promoting France's reputation as a racially enlightened colonial power, and Otlet used the Congress to secure Belgium's position as the logical co-ordinating centre for internationalism and its various institutions.

The ambitions of these figures, however, reveal only one part of the Congress' story. Of the hundreds of attendees' names which appear fleetingly in reports or correspondence, tracing their surviving papers is a time-consuming and often frustrating exercise: many left no papers, and those that did often feature a lone

<sup>58</sup> The Pan-African Congress met in Paris (1919); London, Brussels and Paris (1921); London and Lisbon (1923); and New York City (1927).

conference flyer, programme, or brief exchanges confirming attendance. Yet, through this process Lydia Brown comes into view. She appears among the 110 delegates listed in the December 1921 issue of *The Crisis* as well as on a list of donors to the Congress in the personal papers of W. E. B. Du Bois.<sup>59</sup>

The effort required to reach Brown tells us something important about the uneven archival geographies of internationalism. Whilst histories of some of the most improvised forms of twentieth-century internationalism, in lieu of an organisational repository, coalesce around the biographies of those that attended events, these rarely include accounts by the many rank-and-file organisers, secretaries, interpreters or translators.<sup>60</sup> Brown was emblematic of a group of figures who laboured behind-the-scenes to make the Pan-African Congress possible. Robert Broadhurst, a founding member of the London-based African Progress Union, was the Congress' assistant secretary in charge of arranging the London session; Isaac Beton was a young, Parisian school-teacher who became head of the short-lived Pan-African Association; and Rayford Logan, an African American ex-serviceman in Paris and later prominent historian, played a pivotal organisational role as well as acting as an interpreter at the events themselves. These figures are rarely mentioned at all in later accounts.

The recovery of these figures and their labour is not only an issue of recognition, but more significantly offers perhaps the best chance of understanding some of the most marginalised forms of twentieth-century internationalism.<sup>61</sup> Not all forms of internationalism were equally marked for archival preservation, but all internationalist projects depended on a workforce of organisers, interpreters, translators, secretaries, stenographers and typists, what Madeleine Herren terms 'subaltern diplomats'.<sup>62</sup> Historical geographers can offer useful insights for recovering these forms of labour, drawn from recent scholarship which has foregrounded the role of "intermediaries or 'go-betweens' needed to manage the ongoing process of 'encounter'".<sup>63</sup> Focusing on these figures allows us to decentre 'great men' and to reconstruct ephemeral internationalist movements, broadening the constituency of who we consider agents of internationalism, not least the role of women.<sup>64</sup>

Brown was archetypical of the 'subaltern diplomat' – she was young, female and talented; a woman whose subaltern position, as Herren reminds us, rarely matched their educational background. Brown held a degree in Secretarial Studies from Boston's Simmons College (she was the college's first African American graduate) and won a gold medal from the Remington and Underwood Typewriting Companies for her speed and accuracy. She was also a talented linguist who was fluent in French, Spanish and German,

<sup>59</sup> Fauset, What Europe thought of the Second Pan-African Congress, *The Crisis* (December 1921) 60–69; Report of contributions to the Pan-African Congress, 1921. W. E. B. Du Bois Papers (MS 312). Special Collections and University Archives, University of Massachusetts Amherst Libraries.

<sup>60</sup> M. Herren, Geneva, 1919–1945: the spatialities of public internationalism and global networks, in H. Jöns, P. Meusburger and M. Heffernan (eds), *Mobilities of Knowledge*, Dordrecht, 2017, 223.

<sup>61</sup> For example, Du Bois noted that the organisation of a conference had been "altogether in his hands", see Du Bois off to Pan-African Congress, *Baltimore Afro-American*, November 2nd 1923.

<sup>62</sup> Herren, 223; for a recent exhibition featuring 'behind-the-scenes' figures of international conferences, see <https://spacesofinternationalism.omeka.net/exhibits/show/2/behind-the-scenes> [accessed May 23, 2019].

<sup>63</sup> M. Ogborn, 'It's Not What You Know...': encounters, go-betweens and the geography of knowledge, *Modern Intellectual History* 10 (2013), 163–175, 166–67; F. Driver, Intermediaries and the archive of exploration, in S. Konishi, M. Nugent and T. Shellam (eds), *Indigenous Intermediaries: New Perspectives on Exploration Archives* Canberra, 2015 11–30.

<sup>64</sup> G. Sluga and C. James (eds), *Women, Diplomacy and International Politics since 1500*, London, 2015.

and had served as a translator in Boston during the war.<sup>65</sup> Before travelling to Europe in 1921 for the Congress, she moved to Washington DC to teach at the nationally renowned Dunbar High School where she worked alongside the poet and novelist, Jessie Fauset, fellow Congress attendee who wrote the most widely read reports of the Congress in the NAACP's *Crisis* magazine.<sup>66</sup>

Brown's papers offer a frustratingly incomplete picture of the Congress; traces of missing reports and lost photographs abound. For example, she wrote a 70-page report of the events which was placed in Dunbar High School's library, but there the trail goes cold.<sup>67</sup> Likewise, discussions of photography feature heavily in letters to her brother, a keen amateur photographer who had exhibited at a prominent local college. He gave Brown several cameras to practice with before the trip and schooled her on how best to manage exposure and shutter speed. Yet, no photographs of the Congress survive in her papers.<sup>68</sup>

What does survive in Brown's archive, however, is an alternative account of twentieth-century internationalism centred on the embodied and everyday realities which international life demanded in the early-1920s. The Browns were self-declared 'race people'; committed civil rights advocates who enthusiastically supported the accommodationist strategy of Du Bois and the NAACP.<sup>69</sup> They occupied an ambiguous social position: they were marginalised by white society whilst being relatively elite within the black community, emblematic members of Du Bois's 'talented tenth' who would lead the charge for racial uplift. The papers reveal how Brown's internationalism was inflected through this politics which saw work abroad as a natural extension of the struggle for racial justice at home. Within this context, attendance at the Congress carried considerable social kudos, the chance to tell friends that her daughter was at the famous 'Pan' helped Brown's mother overcome her early hesitations about the trip.<sup>70</sup>

Correspondence with her brother, who had recently served in France during the war, focused on practical travel advice, including things to see, what to pack and what to wear. Letters are replete with tips on how to forestall an attack of 'mal de mar' during a difficult Atlantic crossing and how best to return to the US if the 'disease epidemics are still raging'.<sup>71</sup> They spoke at length about clothing: the availability of different items abroad and the importance of appearing 'tres chic' in France, whatever ones background.<sup>72</sup> The papers contain news clippings of French fashion trends which Brown had researched in advance of the trip, taking note that Parisians had recently come to 'look with as much scorn on a short skirt as they do on a German mark at the Bourse'.<sup>73</sup> These discussions highlight, as Neumann argues, how class and gender are scripted onto the diplomats' body.<sup>74</sup> Brown's preoccupation

with dress reflects the micro-negotiations which women made in order to be taken seriously in international affairs, alongside an African American tradition of 'respectability politics' which mobilised dress as a powerful mode of resistance.<sup>75</sup> It is telling that news reports of the Congress often referred to attendees' clothing and comportment, which delegates consciously used to overcome criticisms of the events' lack of formal state recognition. Here, the value of Brown's archive becomes apparent in the revealing glimpses it offers of how legitimacy was racialised and gendered in international affairs, as well as how these processes were imaginatively contested.

Read collectively these fragments, and dozens more, offer an alternative archive of the Pan-African Congress which reflects the importance of affect, emotion and atmosphere in understanding the history of twentieth-century internationalism.<sup>76</sup> Taking seriously the embodied experiences of those labouring at the coalface, whether the cramped and noisy working conditions in the League of Nations or the difficult Atlantic crossing taken by Brown and others, offers a means to destabilise easy distinctions between official and unofficial internationalist projects.<sup>77</sup> Like many African Americans, Brown went on to live in Paris in the 1920s before returning to the US. She died in New York City in 1945, aged 52. Her letters illustrate what we instinctively know, but rarely reflect upon, that twentieth-century internationalism was dependent upon a wide field of talented organisers who laboured behind-the-scenes often at great personal expense. Recovering her contribution encourages us to ask important questions of where and whose internationalism survives in the archive.

## Conclusion

The three case studies examined in this paper are intended as provocations to open a closer dialogue between international historians and historical geographers. The latter have much to offer in understanding the peculiar form and geographies of international archival records. Each case study has been selected to reveal how internationalism has been constituted by its archival geographies and, in turn, how these geographies reflect the conceptual ambiguities of internationalism within a crowded global arena of political ideas and movements: including nationalism, imperialism and pan-nationalism. Prompted by Putnam, this paper has interrogated how the interconnected transnational and digital turns, which have renewed interest in the study of internationalism, also risk obfuscating the significance of 'real-world' archival material. These materials are themselves evidence of a historical geography of internationalism which we argue can be defined, at least in part, by reference to the spaces and places in which this material has

<sup>65</sup> NBWM, Box 7, Folder 25, Letter from Lydia Brown to G. D. Houston, February 11, 1920.

<sup>66</sup> J Fauset, Impressions of the Second Pan-African Congress, *The Crisis* (November 1921) 12–18; J Fauset, What Europe thought of the Second Pan-African Congress.

<sup>67</sup> NBWM, Box 7, Folder 26, Letter from Garnet Wilkinson to Lydia Brown, November 23, 1921; Brown also wrote a report for the local newspaper, *The New Bedford Standard*, which cannot be located.

<sup>68</sup> NBWM, Box 4, Folder 6, Letter from Dallas Brown Jr. to Lydia Brown, January 31, 1921; NBWM, Box 4, Folder 6, Letter from Dallas Brown Jr. to Lydia Brown, May 1, 1921; NBWM, Box 4, Folder 7, Letter from Dallas Brown Jr. to Lydia Brown, October 26, 1921.

<sup>69</sup> NBWM, Box 5, Folder 19, Letter from Dallas Brown Sr to Lydia Brown, March 15, 1921.

<sup>70</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>71</sup> NBWM, Box 4, Folder 6, Letter from Dallas Brown Jr. to Lydia Brown, March 15.

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>73</sup> NBWM, Box 4, Folder 20, Paris gives short skirt the ha-ha.

<sup>74</sup> I. Neumann, The body of the diplomat, *European Journal of International Relations*, 14 (2008), 671–695.

<sup>75</sup> E. F. White, *Dark continent of our bodies: Black feminism and the politics of respectability*, Philadelphia, 2001.

<sup>76</sup> R. Craggs, Hospitality in geopolitics and the making of Commonwealth International relations, *Geoforum* 52 (2014), 90–100; J. Dittmer, Humour at the Model United Nations: the role of laughter in constituting geopolitical assemblages, *Geopolitics* 18 (2013); S. Legg, "Political Atmospherics": The India Round Table Conference's Atmospheric Environments, Bodies and Representations, London 1930–1932, *Annals of the American Association of Geographers* 110 (2020) 774–792; F. McConnell, Performing Diplomatic Decorum: repertoires of "appropriate" behaviour in the margins of international diplomacy, *International Political Sociology* (in press).

<sup>77</sup> K. Gram-Skjoldager, 'A great experiment': professional self perceptions and working conditions in the secretariat in H. Ikonoumou and K. Gram-Skjoldager *The league of nations: perspectives from the present*, Aarhus, 2019; K. Gram-Skjoldager, "Utterly below Criticism" - Working conditions in the Palais des Wilson 1930, *The invention of international bureaucracy blog*, available: <https://projects.au.dk/inventingbureaucracy/blog/show/artikel/utterly-below-criticism-working-conditions-in-the-palais-wilson-1930/> [accessed January 21, 2020].

been created and preserved.<sup>78</sup> Collectively, the three case studies above have examined how the distinct archival geographies of internationalism challenge us to rethink what internationalism was, where it happened, and to whom it mattered.

To take these in turn, each case study broadens our understanding of what internationalism was by demonstrating the inherent vulnerability of international archival records. As we reveal above, at times they risked being absorbed into national or imperial histories; whilst at other times they became buried in seemingly parochial local collections and family papers. Internationalism exists, therefore, in a complex archival, scalar network in which international records have been discarded, co-opted or repurposed. Rethinking internationalism requires us to attend to its fragmented and incomplete archive; to missing files ('manqué' or 'néant' in the UNESCO catalogue) or long-lost photographs and reports fleetingly referenced in a box of letters. By taking seriously the form and location of the international archive, the case studies above encourage us to conceive of twentieth-century internationalism as a multiple and contested collection of ideas which co-existed in tension with each other and with other scales of political life (e.g. nation, empire, race).

Secondly, each case study broadens the historical geographies of where internationalism happened by questioning the revelatory prominence of self-titled 'international' collections. As the story of the IIC's archives reveal, we should approach such records with caution. These archives, both at the time of their creation and since, were regarded as strategic resources which consciously sought to claim and situate internationalism within particular political and geographical contexts. By juxtaposing these claims alongside more ambivalent internationalists such as the Maharajah of Bikaner and those who laboured behind-the-scenes, these case studies encourage us to explore the international archive beyond those spaces and institutions formally labelled 'international'.

Thirdly, each case study critically questions who could claim to be an internationalist. Guided by its community of leading intellectuals, the IIC demonstrates that this question was intimately tied to who had the power and authority to assemble 'international' archives which, in the case of UNESCO, included codifying the very terms by which 'international' records should be processed and catalogued. By broadening consideration to a more diffuse

international archive in both form and location, other internationalist perspectives can be discerned which, to varied degrees, distanced themselves from state-accredited interpretations of international life. Recovering the agency of imperial internationalists, like the Maharajah of Bikaner, requires new approaches to the source materials we use, including gossip columns, shopping lists, or the Lallgarh palace's furniture, and recovering the agency of 'subaltern diplomats' requires a reevaluation of which types of archive stories matter.

Taken collectively, these case studies attend to the co-production of multiple, interlocking forms of internationalism and the starkly uneven archive they have left behind. There is value in considering these cases together. Aristocratic and imperial figures like the Maharajah of Bikaner, engaged passionately in crafting key liberal institutions of international governance (he signed the Treaty of Versailles, campaigned for India's position in the League and led the Indian delegation at Geneva). Likewise, those ostensibly on the political margins, like the Pan-African Congress, adopted the protocols and procedures of the League of Nations to advance alternative geopolitical visions of internationalism. Reading across the various spaces in which international life was conceived, contested and recorded exposes the previously hidden or silenced diversity of internationalist voices in the past and offers new, critical perspectives on the historical geographies of twentieth-century internationalism.

### Acknowledgements

This work was supported by the Arts and Humanities Research Council [grant number AH/M008142/1]. The authors would also like to thank Adele Torrance, Eng Sengsavang, and Zine El Abidine Larhfiri for their assistance with the IIC archive; the administrators of the Maharaja Ganga Singhji Trust Archive in Bikaner and the archive room assistant Mr Chain Singh Rathore for his help in interpreting the catalogue and delivering the pads of files; and Mark Procknik of the New Bedford Whaling Museum for his assistance with the Brown family papers. The authors also thank Benjamin Thorpe, Miles Ogborn, Nicola Thomas and the three anonymous readers for their useful suggestions on earlier drafts.

<sup>78</sup> L. Putnam, The transnational and text-searchable: digitized sources and the shadows they cast, *The American Historical Review* 121 (2016) 377–402.