Please accept, Monsieur, the assurance of my highest consideration:

Weighted Internationalism in League of Nations Hiring Practices, 1924-37

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HIS 400-S07: Remaking the World

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This paper represents my own work in accordance with University Regulations.

/s/ Benjamin Guzovsky

Introduction

The League of Nations was the world's first permanent, multi-issue organization. It reflected and pursued an internationalist view of the world, seeking greater international cooperation and coordination. In the service of those goals, it involved another major innovation: an international civil service called the Secretariat. Secretariat staff were not representatives of their respective nationalities, but truly international civil servants that placed the League's interests first. Through the Secretariat, this essay explores how the League's internationalism was not only an ideology or political goal, but also a practice, manifested not only in content of the organization's work, but also its form. By examining the League's hiring practices, we can watch this form of lived, organizational internationalism in action and from the ground up. The complexities of the League's hiring processes, especially as the League attempted to shift towards a more nationality-diverse group of employees in the mid 1920s, shed light on its understanding of internationalism. I will take a ground-up approach—understanding international dynamics through organizational minutiae of the hiring process—to share a previously untold story and complicate existing conclusions in the League's historical cannon.

This approach is underutilized: international histories of the League focus on large scale decisions rather than day-to-day operations.[1] If they analyze practical aspects, they do so for some theoretical end. This paper has one core objective: explore how League actors understood and applied their international stance through hiring. What follows are a series of case studies about different nations' interactions with the League regarding hiring, detailing each national approach to pressing for greater, more equitable representation. This essay then analyzes

[1] Many of which have been extremely influential in directing my work, such as Susan Pedersen's "Nicolai Rubinstein Lecture," Patricia Clavin's *Securing the World Economy: The Reinvention of the League of Nations*, and the readings done in class—all in the HIS 400-S07 reading packet.

retrospective accounts of League practices, again looking to see how its ideological approach to internationalism is interpreted.

First, this essay will orient itself in time and place, both through factual context and an understanding of the existing historiography. Then it can begin to deconstruct League hiring and League international relations. Complete with this fundamental baseline, this essay will explore the hiring process itself, and how that process shaped what I am calling weighted internationalism, a concept that will in turn prove pivotal in our description and discussion of League hiring dynamics.

In the context of the League, internationalism worked on two levels: individual and organizational. Individual employees were expected to act as unbiased civil servants, not representing their own nationality.[2] To be an international official you must have no national allegiance, but in order to create a more nationally diverse Secretariat you must push for your nation's involvement. To untangle this paradox, the essay distinguishes between personal, national, and international appeals for more equitable representation. Each approach leveraged a variety of rhetorical, emotional, ideological, and political arguments, illuminating a range of flaws and limitations in the League's hiring process. The League was not, however, advocating for national blindness—quite the opposite. League officials were very careful to balance the nationalities dealing with each specific issue, both to counteract national biases that would continue to surface throughout the Secretariat's history and to present well outwardly.[3] The League was less careful in representing all nations equally, the driving problem behind this article.[4] Klaas Dykmann was the first historian to capture this difference between the League's

[2] Eric Drummond, "The Secretariat of the League of Nations," *International Public Administration*, ix (1931): 235.
[3] The League did advocate for blindness for its employees, but not in its hiring process. See Myers, *Handbook of the League of Nations*, 46 for the nationalism-renouncing oath each member of the Secretariat had to take.
[4] Egon Ranshofen-Wertheimer, *The International Secretariat: A Great Experiment in International Administration*, (Washington: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 1945), 358.

doctrine of international-mindedness for its employees and the national terms in which the Secretariat is staffed and structured.[5] Hiring, a process Dykmann touches on but doesn't fully explore ground-up, will prove to be emblematic in demonstrating this disconnect.

Dykmann's attempt at painting a picture of a typical "international civil servant" has been criticized by Karen Gram-Skjoldager & Haakon A. Ikonomou. Working with the "human composition of [the] Secretariat" to explore its international impact, they accuse Dykmann of overly generalizing the typical employee. They understand the League's internationalism as a balance between establishing the organization's legitimacy (which required the support of other nations and, consequently, required nationally-minded priorities), and its autonomy, which would require thinking independent of national interests.[6] They focus on early years and the establishment of the Secretariat staff, arguing that hiring practices "reproduced existing hierarchies of power and prestige."[7] While these scholars don't mean this in absolute terms, this essay will clarify and complicate this idea. All three scholars articulate the eurocentrism in the League's internationalism, but Gram-Skjoldager and Ikonomou do so much more explicitly, outlining the tensions in the League's early years around hiring. This essay will intervene in other historiographical discussions less directly, but it is through the work of these historians that this paper will frame our own discussion.

Gram-Skjoldager and Ikonomou explore the development of the League's hiring process prior to 1924; this paper will explore its crystallization. This discussion is important because while the League's formative practices revealed its priorities in hiring officials, this paper analyzes the extent to which those priorities were applied. Gram-Skjoldager and Ikonomou also

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[5] Klaas Dykmann, "How International was the Secretariat of the League of Nations?" *The International History Review*, 37:4, 2015, 721-744.
[6] Karen Gram-Skjoldager & Haakon A. Ikonomou, "The Construction of the League of Nations Secretariat," *The International History Review*, 41:2, 2015, 257-279. Same challenge here.
[7] Gram-Skjoldager & Ikonomou, "Construction."

focus on sources surrounding the appointments committee, a body of the Secretariat created to deal exclusively with the hiring process. These sources reveal the League's approaches, but they don't speak to the perspectives of the other nations the League was allegedly underrepresenting.

This essay will look at previously untouched sources from the League of Nations Archive in Geneva: a collection of internal and external correspondence that paints a picture of League hiring practices for nations outside of Western Europe.[8] Generally, the League hired on merit—often requiring qualifications hard to get outside of the West—and in an effort to allow national representation.[9] Early pleas were met with great flexibility, but as the League lost international standing and the Secretariat began to shrink in 1930, it had to make even more difficult choices for how to equitably distribute its limited seats, further revealing its priorities under those constraints. This essay will analyze the extent of which merit was prioritized depending on the nation involved through writings of Secretariat members and diplomats from the USSR, Romania, India, Iran, South Africa, Panama, and many more—and through nonpartisan Secretariat members from the West—each with their own perspective. League responses to all these pleas for more nationally diverse hiring reveal what I call a weighted internationalism: an international outlook that prioritizes Western nations over others in a relative spectrum of power and representation. The League's hiring practices and unique language of diversity embody this outlook.

Weighted internationalism is a concept alluded to by many scholars but not yet explicitly articulated. It differs from general ideas of paternalism and rankings of development in that there is no hierarchy of nations, or unilateral superior relationships, but rather a priority weighting.

[8] I'm grateful for the support from the archivists and Geneva, who promptly gave me online access to their database and pointed me in the right direction. These sources were found through "Organisation and Internal Services" (Collection of Dossiers), United Nations Archives, Geneva, Switzerland. They are specifically located in "Representation of various Countries on the Secretariat," R1468/30/33327, United Nations Archives, Geneva, Switzerland. The latter source will be cited with specific country names in following footnotes.
[9] Drummond, "The Secretariat" 195.

Many nations have a voice at the international forum, but the volume of that voice is determined by a confluence of political and economic factors—and status in the Western European lens.[10] This essay examines how this outlook is reflected in both later retrospective work on the League and modern scholarship. Historians have looked at gradations for international weighting in minorities treaties and the League's mandates system, but this essay approaches those gradations from hiring, and in a more granular way: exactly how many positions did each nation have on the Secretariat, and how high-ranking were those positions? Why did members of those particular nations get those positions? League data and correspondence can help answer both questions, revealing the internal priorities of the League and how it treated each nation. Each treatment was different, and changed over time—hence the system of weighted internationalism.

Throughout analysis of the League correspondence, and with a dedicated section afterwards, this essay will shift towards analyzing the ways weighted internationalism presents itself in retrospective accounts of the League—specifically accounts of hiring processes and international spirit—focusing on Egon Ranshofen-Wertheimer's *The International Secretariat*. Ranshofen-Wertheimer's work has been extensively analyzed by scholars of the League, but less often is it analyzed for its word choice and international attitude.[11] Also, more broadly, this essay looks to find parallels to recent work on the League's Mandates Commission and humanitarian efforts, each demonstrative of the League's international attitude from other angles.[12] In sum, this

[10] This idea is alluded to across League scholarship, but especially in Susan Pedersen's *The Guardians: The League of Nations and the Crisis of Empire* and Patricia Clavin's *Securing the World Economy*.
[11] Gram-Skjoldager & Ikonomou, "Construction" being one representative example.
[12] This is referring to Susan Pedersen's work on the Mandates Commission, Keith Watenpaugh's "The League of Nations' Rescue of Armenian Genocide Survivors and the Making of Modern Humanitarianism, 1920–1927," and Tomas Irish's "The 'Moral Basis' of Reconstruction? Humanitarianism, Intellectual Relief, and The League of Nations, 1918-25."

article uses a ground-up approach to synthesize a key aspect of international relationships, demonstrating how weighted internationalism drove League hiring practices in 1924-37.[13]

League Hiring Practices and its Language of Diversity

The following sections will begin in Eastern Europe and the USSR, fully independent states that were closest geographically and culturally to Geneva (where the League was based), then move outwards to British India and South Africa before finishing in Latin America. Each nation has a colorful push-and-pull story with the League as it fights for representation. This organization, Western in structure, found itself short on employees from Eastern Europe, Latin America, and Asia, but couldn't easily fix the problem because candidates from those countries did not have Western skillsets. International hiring was used as political capital in negotiation or to "adequately represent" other nations—the time period's language of diversity. The numerical representation of each nation, as well as that nation's own local political climate, was constantly in flux, leading to a range of League attitudes depending on how they weighed that nation's importance.[14] The League itself changed, too, from a fast-growing organization in 1924 to a shrinking staff in 1937—and each moment forced the League to make difficult hiring decisions that could not only be based on merit. Overall, the League attempted to hire a nationality-blind Secretariat through exclusively national means, drawing the line on "adequate" representation in a different location, demonstrating a subjective prioritization of each nation.

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[13] This essay doesn't focus as directly on implicit biases in the hiring process, rather explicit components. Economists have demonstrated that even a slight preference to working with others of your race or nationality leads to extremely segregated behavior. Whether other nations wanted to be involved in a largely Western European organization, and whether the Western Europeans involved in hiring had implicit preferences that prevented them from hiring internationally, are more psychological questions. The first study of this kind was performed by Thomas Schelling, "Models of Segregation," *The American Economic Review* 59, no. 2 (1969): 490, and has since cemented itself as a viable component of more modern economic theory.

[14] Ranshofen-Wertheimer, *The International Secretariat* 336.

After a period of rapid change leading up to 1924, change became bureaucratically slow—so even though the League wanted to create a truly international organization, the pre-1924 was so truly non-international that there was too much ground left to cover.[15] In 1920, the Secretariat had only 60 members (compared to about 160 at its peak) and all were Western European.[16] Immediately, the highest, most important positions were filled in the early skeleton structure. However, marked steps were taken to rectify that imbalance in the coming years. This required a careful balancing of state interests—especially for Sections of the Secretariat with political importance—and international representation, though often in only a European sense of the word. Even Eastern European candidates were seen as less qualified than their Western counterparts, not based on objective comparisons, but subjective biases.[17] However, between 1924 and 1925, the Secretariat hired staff from five new nations: change was taking place, but to what extent?

The League's languaging decisions in job postings revealed its approach and attitude towards increasing national diversity. Job postings were simple and to the point. One for Assistant Internal Control Officer, a position for managing the League's internal financial regulations, listed only two qualifications: fluency in English or French, with proficiency in the other language, and "knowledge and practical experience in accounting and administrative work."[18] Many job postings were similarly brief in structure and vague in detail.[19] Most importantly, no job posts were written to disqualify candidates: it was the targeted publicity of those postings that limited their international audience. The League chose which nations to

[15] Dykmann, "How International was the Secretariat?"
[16] See the appendix.
[17] Gram-Skjoldager & Ikonomou, "Construction"
[18] "Representation of South Africa on the Secretariat," R1468/30/47076/33327, Representation of Various Countries on the Secretariat, League of Nations Archives, Geneva, Switzerland, 7.
[19] Both posts with only internal competition (see "Conditions of Competitions for Vacancies on the League Staff," R3438/18A/39946/39946) and a European target audience (see "Correspondence with the Government of France," R5389/18A/31146/6858) had similar structure.

advertise job openings to: the ones it felt were least represented, and used more individual recruitment versus mass recruitment channels depending on the nation—all of which will be discussed in more detail in later sections.[20]

Eastern Europe, Relative Representation, and Relative Power

In 1924 conversations between Romania and the League, the core tensions of the League's hiring process began to emerge. Eric Drummond, Secretary General of the League, revising his letter to a Romanian minister regarding the minister's request for more Romanian representation, received a suggestion from another League officer:

> "The post is to be advertised both in Roumania and in Bulgaria, I wonder if might not be well if, instead of expressing your "desire that it should, if possible, be filled by a Roumanian subject," you expressed the "hope that it may be found possible to appoint to the post a Roumanian subject."[21]

This is not a letter Drummond had written himself and sent off: he circulated it with other League staffers and received help.[22] The revised version was significantly more deferential and passive: it used "hope," a wishful word, rather than "desire." If the Secretary General desires something, it will occur, but if he only hopes, he is not making any guarantees—and must account for the opportunity of a Bulgarian to fill the role. The word "may" was edited in a *third* draft, replacing the more definitive "might." Despite having a direct communication with Romania around hiring, Drummond, to Romania and to other countries with regards to hiring, wrote like there was nothing he could do. While it is also possible to conclude that this second

[20] Ranshofen-Wertheimer, *The International Secretariat* 336.
[21] "Representation of Roumania on the Secretariat," R1468/30/33327/33327, Representation of Various Countries on the Secretariat, League of Nations Archives, Geneva, Switzerland, 15-16.
[22] Ibid, 14.

draft is only better written, the overwhelming number of similar instances of drafting changes and the specificity of the suggested change in the Bulgarian-Romanian context suggests otherwise.[23] Precise language choices will continue to demonstrate the League's views on adequate representation—and a picture of its strange priorities is beginning to form in this debate between Bulgarian and Romanian Representation.

In the continuation of this correspondence, another core tension surfaced: the relationship between financial contribution and national representation.[24] Every member state of the League contributed some amount of money to keep the League running, but that amount was not fixed, and no specific amount was solicited by the League. Further, there was debate in the 1940s on whether there was a direct relationship between contribution size and League representation.[25] However, regardless of whether there was correlation, there was certainly no causation: nations constantly tried to leverage their donation size as justification for greater representation, but the League considered these arguments selectively, and in parallel with a myriad of other factors.

These arguments were context-dependent, lessening in weight once a nation had some small foothold in representation. The Romanian minister had a particularly aggressive tone in his request in 1924, where he argued that Romania's contribution relative to other nations was greater in ratio than its relative national representation. Drummond responded passively, and informed Romania when a vacancy appeared.[26] The argument seemed to be enough. However, two years later, when Romania had two representatives on the League's staff, the minister made the same plea, but it was Drummond who responded aggressively. He explained that there was

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[23] Ibid, 13.
[24] Representation here means the number of officials of a given nationality in the most important League sections. While the League had around 400 employees in 1924, only 90 actually served in an administrative capacity while the rest performed menial tasks (so were hired locally) or translation work (so were hired from Switzerland and neighboring nations, where there was the greatest concentration of the necessary fluency. For context, there were about 40 nations in the League. See Ranshofen-Wertheimer, *The International Secretariat* 351.
[25] See Ranshofen-Wertheimer, *The International Secretariat* 343.
[26] "Representation of Roumania on the Secretariat," 19.

large British, French, and Swiss representation because most seats are filled by laborers and translators, and only 90 seats (of 400) are for administrative staff. He didn't address the minister's argument that other nations have more representatives despite contributing less.[27] Drummond said that enough had been done for Romania from his international perspective, even if the nation did not yet have more than two seats and donated more than nations with more administrative seats.[28] It is impossible to determine whether Romania objectively deserved more seats: this section focuses on Drummond's approach to determining the appropriate number and the distance between that number and each nation's expectation. Here, once Romania had an appropriate foothold, the same justifications, slightly lessened, were no longer enough for it to request more seats. Romania's weight had been balanced: its financial contribution had been enough to earn it two seats, but other factors, most likely its perceived international importance, prevented it from gaining more.[29]

Not every seat was created equally, and Western perceptions of power for each nation determined the quality of seats each nation received. When the USSR joined the League in 1934, the political motivations behind its appointments to the Secretariat were clear. While Eastern European states were new and on uncertain footing—and very keen on being a part of Europe (rather than under the control of large empires) and, by proxy, the League—the USSR was extremely powerful under Stalin.[30] The USSR was also much better equipped to present qualified and experienced statesmen as desirable candidates for the League, though Eastern European officials were held in higher regard than their Asian and Latin American counterparts.[31] While

[27] Ibid, 6.
[28] Often this essay equates the Secretary General's attitudes with the League's. This connection is justified because the Secretary General took charge of many aspects of the hiring process and set hiring policies. This parallel has also been drawn before in past hiring analyses: see Dykmann, "How International was the Secretariat?"
[29] Romania would not gain members for the remainder of the Secretariat's history.
[30] Iryna Vushko, "Interwar Eastern Europe" (presentation, Princeton University, Princeton, NJ, October 29, 2021).
[31] Ranshofen-Wertheimer, *The International Secretariat* 353.

most nations spent years communicating with the League and waiting for an open position to present itself, a new high level position, Deputy Secretary, was created in less than a year and awarded to Marcel Rosenberg, an experienced Soviet diplomat.[32] In meeting minutes discussing this appointment, League officials had a resounding agreement on the merit of Rosenberg as a hire.[33] Other powerful nations like France had a similarly easy time gaining greater representation—not numerically, but in importance of position.[34] Less internationally recognized nations had to fight for seats; more recognized nations did not.

Polish requests for greater representation revealed the way the League entrenched itself as a fundamentally European organization: a system of permanent and temporary appointments. In 1929 Mr. Sokal, the Polish representative to the League, pushed for greater representation of Polish nationals.[35] Poland was an Eastern European state that secured its independence less than a decade prior to the beginning of this correspondence, and so was geographically close to Europe but still seen as socioeconomically backward.[36] A record of Sokal's conversation with Arthur Salter, head of the Secretariat's financial section, details the current opportunities for Poles and the interests of the Polish government. Salter described to Sokal that there were temporary Polish appointments "likely to become permanent" in the Opium Section and "emphasized" that temporary appointments in the Economic Section were not "implying any

[32] Rosenberg was one of several new Soviet appointees, but he was the highest ranking, and the source material focuses on him. For more on the somewhat secretive practices involved in circumventing typical hiring processes, see Ranshofen-Wertheimer, *The International Secretariat* 326.
[33] These minutes were unique in that they were not exact quotes, and were clearly meant to be circulated within the League based on the high quality of the paper and the almost propagandistic tone. Officially, there was no doubt that a Soviet had to be appointed to a high position. See "Representation of Russia on the Secretariat."
[34] "Representation of France on the Secretariat," R5389/18A/31146/6858, Representation of Various Countries on the Secretariat, League of Nations Archives, Geneva, Switzerland.
[35] Sadly, this history crosses paths with many others. Rosenberg was a Jew, but that likely played only a small role in why he was disappeared by Stalin—he was one of many. For further reading on this, I recommend *The Jews of the Soviet Union: The History of a National Minority* by Benjamin Pinkus.
[36] Vushko, "Interwar Eastern Europe"

permanency."[37] Opium Section appointments were both less prestigious and less relevant than Economic Section appointments for Sokal and Poland, which had no involvement in opium-related issues. Unlike the powerful positions carved out for the USSR, Poland—in spite of being a European state—could not overcome temporary appointments, a system put into place by the League as a trial period for new employees that became a system for faux representation. As a result, the League was able to appear as an organization that included many nations without giving those nations permanent positions. This issue of temporary appointments would become a continuity: emerging nations would struggle to earn them, even in less prestigious Secretariat sections, but find it nearly impossible to make them permanent.

National Blindness: South Africa and India

More distant from Europe, the initial euphoria for new nations and subsequent disregard was only exacerbated. In 1925, South Africa's Afrikaner National Party had just come into power, and the nation, a self-governing British dominion since 1910, was for the first time unified in its desire for fuller national independence and international recognition—and made its first foray into the League with British support.[38] In fact, South Africa's communications with the League were through a British intermediary: Alexander Cambridge, 1st Earl of Athlone, who was at the time the High Commissioner for the Union of South Africa. Cambridge is popular in both South Africa and Europe, giving South Africa unique agency compared to other fledgling nations.[39] South Africa was also unique in that towering South African statesman Jan Smuts was integral in

[37] "Appointment of Polish Nationals," R3433/18A/17692/17692, Representation of Various Countries on the Secretariat, League of Nations Archives, Geneva, Switzerland.
[38] This shift has been described by historians as a turning point in 1924. See Davenport, *South Africa: A Modern History*.
[39]Bede Clifford, "Cambridge, Alexander Augustus Frederick William Alfred George, Earl of Athlone [formerly Prince Alexander of Teck] (1874–1957), army officer and governor-general of South Africa," Oxford Dictionary of National Biography, 23 Sep. 2004.

the establishment of the League: his text, *The League of Nations: A Practical Suggestion*, was virtually its blueprint.[40]

South Africa received preferential treatment that other new members of the League did not, manifesting in both leniency in evaluating qualifications and reception of notifications for job openings. In 1925, Cambridge reached out to Drummond pointing out that there were no South Africans on the League staff. Drummond responded more positively than in any other correspondence, claiming to "appreciate the quite well founded" interest in greater representation. More importantly, Drummond's response goes through a careful revision before being sent. Drummond told Cambridge to send the League a list of qualified candidates and at first said they will be fully considered, "qualifications being equal." The draft revision sees Drummond insert "qualifications being comparatively equal." This language did not appear in Eastern European or Latin American correspondences. This is not only because of Britain's influence in the League, as there was no comparable language in Indian correspondence, either.[41] One week later—an incredibly fast timetable compared to other League messaging—Cambridge's office received details for a job posting in the Secretariat: Assistant Internal Control Officer. A week after that, Drummond used a middleman to "unofficially" notify Cambridge's office of an opening in the Secretariat for the same position, specifically soliciting an application from a South African candidate that had applied earlier for a different position.[42] The existence of both official and unofficial solicitations for a job posting with such rapidity demonstrate the clear preference given to South Africa.

[40] Shula Marks, "Smuts, Jan Christiaan (1870–1950), prime minister of South Africa, army officer, and writer on evolution," *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, 23 Sep. 2004.
[41] "Representation of South Africa on the Secretariat," 8-9.
[42] Ibid, 4-5.

Drummond's first priority was for every nation to have some representation, however small, rather than immediately scaling that nation's representation in proportion to its international standing. In the unofficial letter, a man who identified himself only as P., explained to his contact in the High Commissioner's office that "we are trying to fill the post [of Asst. Internal Control Officer] with a [Latvian], a Finn, or a South African, as these nationalities are at the moment inadequately represented."[43] First, P.'s use of "we" suggests that he was writing about the League's intention rather than his own. Second, the phrase "inadequately represented" here demonstrates a disconnect between the League's private and public-facing intentions. There were many nations unrepresented at the time, but these three were chosen for this position. In his letter to Cambridge, Drummond stresses the importance of "adequate international representation," but only in P.'s correspondence does it become clear that the League achieved its vision of internationalism was to target specific nations in a determined order.[44] Emerging in 1925 was evidence of prioritization: subjective decision-making on which nations are in the most urgent need of representation. In contrast, there was no evidence of prioritization by position, any position, even the lowliest, is deemed "adequate" by the League's standards.

According to the University of Basel's LONSEA database on League staffing, a Finn was appointed to the Assistant Control Officer position in December 1925, and record of communication with South Africa ended before then. Only one South African would serve in the Secretariat throughout the remainder of its existence, and no Latvian would ever serve on the staff.[45] Despite a half-dozen Latin American nations having joined the League in 1920—several unrepresented—they are not included in this Finn-Latvian-South-African checklist.

[43] Ibid, 5. None had any representation on the staff.
[44] Ibid, 12.
[45] Madeleine Herren et. al., *LONSEA – League of Nations Search Engine*, Heidelberg/Basel, 2010–2017. The LONSEA online database has been unreliable, and its software quite dated. Whether or not it is a strong source is questionable. Ranshofen-Wertheimer's data on League staff match there only being one South African on the staff, but who that South African was is unclear.

On January 9th, 1915, after contributing to the independence movement in South Africa, Mahatma Gandhi moved to India, and as the nation grew more internationally-minded, so did its desire to be involved with the League. In 1919, when the League began its own international career, the British Parliament passed the Government of India Act, 1919, which allowed Indian officials to share power with British legislators. By the time India's record of correspondence with the League started in 1926, the nation's international sentiment had grown significantly—and India was already making a sizable financial contribution to the League. However, Britain had a very different attitude towards India than South Africa: India was one of its most valuable colonies, and Britain was much more hesitant to let it go.[46] Overall, Indian correspondence was the most thorough and long-lasting, most discussed in retrospective literature, and most diverse in the language and style of appeals for representation and responses.

Increasingly, there was a disconnect between League and national perspectives on what equitable representation looked like. In 1926, one of two Indians in the League staff left his position, leading to a wave of national appeals for greater representation starting with India's delegate to the League, Rammaswad Ayyar. This was a continuation of previous Indian delegations' appeals, but this one was especially emphatic because there has been a decrease in the number of Indian officials.[47] Ayyar not-so-subtly claims that he is arguing "not on the narrow ground of India's comparatively large [monetary] contribution," clearly mentioning it directly, but "to make every member of the League feel that all the nations of the world have a fair chance in the matter, other things being equal."[48] Ayyar was not thinking about India in competition with other underrepresented nations, but against the developed nations of Europe that held a majority

[46] Michael Laffan, "First Ends of Empire" (presentation, Princeton University, Princeton, NJ, March 24, 2021).
[47] "Representation of India on the International Secretariat," R1468/30/35045/33327, Representation of Various Countries on the Secretariat, League of Nations Archives, Geneva, Switzerland, 8.
[48] Ibid, 6.

of Secretariat positions—nations Ayyar did not "feel" India had "a fair chance" against. Drummond never responded to this claim directly, but did write to the India Office responding to a similar appeal. Like South Africa, India often worked through a British intermediary that oversaw its administration, in this case the India Office in London.[49] Drummond wrote to the Office emphasizing that "the candidates for posts are most numerous and all [he] can do is to effect as equitable a distribution as possible among different nationalities" while prioritizing "the efficiency of the Secretariat."[50] Drummond was focused on an equitable distribution between small, underrepresented nations, and at this point all job postings for new positions only went to these nations. Those nations on the other hand viewed themselves in contrast to Western Europe, which Drummond did not feel was overrepresented.[51] This created a disconnect between perspectives on "equitable distribution," but the challenges did not end there.

Re-emerging in 1928 correspondence is the issue of temporary appointments, as arguments from the Indian Parliament revealed systematic structural issues with the League's hiring process, issues that prevented staff changes and balanced national representation. Unlike Poland, which couldn't overcome the issue of short, temporary appointments for Polish nationals never becoming permanent, India's parliament at home took issue with long term appointments: 21-28 year appointments made up the majority of Secretariat staff, and many were made years earlier—close to the League's inception.[52] The parliament pressed League officials to consider

[49] William Vincent of the India Office suggested in an earlier letter, "impending vacancies should be notified some time in advance of the date on which they will actually occur in order that distant countries may be in as good a position to put forward candidates as those that are near the seat of the League." —suggestion after appeal. This was an interesting middle ground suggestion, thinking in terms of "countries" as the subject and as the actors, not as individual candidates.
[50] Ibid, 4.
[51] Ranshofen-Wertheimer, *The International Secretariat* 336. Further, "The problem of publicity for vacancies was complicated… by the fact that the Administration, in order to secure a fair nationality distribution within the Secretariat as a whole and the different sections in particular, had to restrict its publicity according to the needs of the moment, from case to case, to countries which were underrepresented." This left little middle ground in the hiring process, with Drummond's correspondence either favoring countries most likely to have qualified candidates or countries that were completely underrepresented.
[52] The exact number of long term permanent appointments has proved difficult to determine.

removing those appointees in favor of a more nationally diverse staff. The concerned officials wrote to Geneva, "Can anything be said on the point whether these people [who have 28 year posts] are really liable to termination of appointment merely for the sake of adjusting the representation of nationalities?"[53] Their use of reductive adverbs "really" and "merely" suggests that they were dismissive of this idea: they were looking for justification to veto it. Frank Walters, League Deputy Secretary-General, responded to the letter citing Article 19 of the Staff Regulations of the Secretariat: "Appointments made for 21 and 28 years can only be terminated… for good and sufficient reasons, independent of the nationality of the official." This phrase "independent of the nationality" was likely meant to prevent national tensions from intervening in League operations, like firing a German because of Germany's actions. Here, it was used conversely: to justify the League's lack of balancing national representation. The League frequently hired on the basis of nationality, but was unwilling to fire for it, even for greater national representation, which may have seemed to India a "good and sufficient" reason.

By 1928, the consensus within the League—here spoken by a League official to the Indian Parliament—was that India "has put [its] case very well and very fully… and this persistent importunity [its constant appeals] will not… improve the case."[54] Whether India—which had a League branch office at home, and had three representatives employed in the International Labor Office—was justified in making continued appeals is beyond the scope of this essay.[55] Nevertheless, the League's mobilization of wording in its founding documents to suppress change here meant other nations with insufficient representation would not be able to

[53] "Correspondence with the India Office respecting the Staff of the Secretariat and B.I.T.," R3427/18A/3218/3218, Representation of Various Countries on the Secretariat, League of Nations Archives, Geneva, Switzerland, 4.
[54] Ibid, 3. Ranshofen-Wertheimer's accounts of the League's relationship with India confirm that this attitude was widely held.
[55] Further, when an Indian moved to the ILO, "steps [were] being taken" to fill his post with "an official of the same nationality." See Ibid, 3. This indicates a change from the League's earlier dismissive attitude. India seemed to be gaining traction in the Secretariat. Whether this is due to the country's growing prominence and independence or simply continued pressure through correspondence is unclear, though the former seems more likely.

fight against long term permanent appointments, either. This, coupled with the fact that "vacancies [did] not occur every day," a common and true phrase across all hiring-related correspondence, made for a system where there were few opportunities for leveling the playing field of international representation.[56]

In 1935, a series of complications permanently changed the League's ability to hire internationally. As the League declined in stature in the face of growing European tensions, its supervisory committee recognized it could no longer pay highly enough to "obtain officials of the same quality as previously, and even, in certain cases, to keep them."[57] The League was also growing in membership but shrinking in staff size due to financial constraints, complicating questions of international representation. These constraints forced the League to make more granular choices, better revealing its priorities. Meanwhile, the British Parliament passed the Government of India Act, continuing reforms that gave India greater power. The desire for full Indian independence was beginning to boil over—making League representation all the more important and possibly causing the flurry of correspondence that subsequently emerged.[58]

Just prior, in October 1932—Drummond's final months as Secretary General—Prabhashankar Pattani, former League member and then-politician, reached out to Drummond in a considerate and differential tone, which Drummond said he "much appreciated," and passively requested more representation if possible.[59] Drummond replied "unhappily" that no posts are likely to appear, especially because "new members… will claim to have one or two

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[56] Ibid, 7.
[57] Ranshofen-Wertheimer, *The International Secretariat* 324. This was further complicated by the high-paying Indian Civil service taking many of the best Indian civil service candidates for itself. See page 338.
[58] Ibid, 325. To clarify, Ranshofen-Wertheimer did not place a causal link between Indian independence movements and efforts towards greater international representation, but did acknowledge the flurry of correspondence and intense desire for greater representation.
[59] "Representation on the Secretariat by the Government of India" R5389/18A/7217/6858, Representation of Various Countries on the Secretariat, League of Nations Archives, Geneva, Switzerland, 18. Pattani, interestingly, suggests that Drummond specifically consider a Muslim candidate. This is the only source explored in this essay where a cultural division within a nation reaches the League's consideration.

nationals in the organization."[60] Following correspondence in 1935 cited many familiar concerns: inadequate representation both in number and importance of appointments relative to financial contribution and international importance. The League had a new reason not to make more appointments, though: Avenol, the new Secretary General, claimed that "in the interests of economy," the League has begun to transfer officials to fill vacancies rather than appoint new ones.[61] One way the League worked around these financial restrictions was by creating "specialist" positions: new, advanced posts for diplomats and doctorate-holders with a five-year limit and no pension. An Indian was offered such a position, but further research will be necessary to explore how prevalent specialists were and whether they enabled nationality-diverse hiring.[62]

Throughout this correspondence, the League posited having a national blindness, but attempted to also pursue adequate national representation, leading to a disconnect between the feasibility of a truly international League and revealing inherently Western preferences. The League prioritized appointing someone from every nation, but did not put weight to the importance of the appointed positions. Through constant correspondence with British intermediaries regarding Indian and South African representation—and the higher international standing that implied—both nations received preferential treatment and several appointments, though rarely to positions in political and economic sections.[63] The League used a nationality-blind justification to protect long-term appointments, but gave clear national priorities to other aspects of hiring. Beyond illustrating the delicate balance of being a group of nations and an international organization, which is well-discussed in secondary literature, this

[60] Ibid, 16. Like other nations, many Indians in the League had temporary appointments.
[61] Ibid, 13-15.
[62] Ibid 7-9. I have seen no other mention of specialists in any of my reading.
[63] Ibid, 8.

correspondence illustrated the League's efforts at maintaining that balance.[64] These methods wouldn't always carry over to Latin America, where the League had a different, but still inherently Western outlook.

Latin America and the "Legitimate" Appeal for Representation

The 20th century saw an emergence of more politically and economically stable Latin America. Many Latin American nations joined the League at its inception in 1920, but about half of them (El Salvador, Chile, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, Venezuela, and Paraguay) left before 1939—before Western nations, and 7 years before the League's full collapse. Throughout their time in the organization, Latin American nations felt increasing disillusionment, seeing little practical actions being taken to benefit them.[65] Zero officials were appointed to the League in the early 1920s, though—and only one was appointed, from Panama, before 1930, in spite of strong interest. There were valid reasons for this: working at the League required fluency in English and French, with the latter presumably being rare; the League employed Western system of evaluating what made an official qualified; and though there were "continual" requests for Latin American representation from delegates to the League, there was little evidence of domestic interest for working in Geneva.[66] However, in 1924 the League made a very unique effort to establish an office in Latin America—which would of course be staffed by Latin Americans—and improve its relationship with the continent.[67] This section not only explores the League's hiring practices, but the creation (and dissolution) of the League branch office—with

[64] Dykmann, "How International was the Secretariat?"
[65] Don Agustin Edwards, "Latin America and the League of Nations," *Journal of the Royal Institute of International Affairs* 8, no. 2 (1929): 134.
[66] "Representation of Latin America," 1934-7, R5389/18A/11094/6858, Representation of Governments on the Secretariat, League of Nations Archives, Geneva, Switzerland, 58.
[67] This essay generalizes Latin America as a continent because Latin American nations acted similarly in the League, and correspondence of the time from League and Latin American officials referred to the continent as a whole.

individual appeals on both affairs complicating the idea of representation as a national or international force. The following correspondence reflected the League's condescending attitude towards Latin America, despite crediting its appeals for greater representation as the most "legitimate."[68]

Latin America pressed for greater representation using many of the same methods as their non-Western European peers. In September of 1933, Mr. Rodriguez (the sole member from Panama) wrote to Walters:

> "The future historian of the relations between the Latin American Republics and the League of Nations will I think refer to the efforts made to bring nationals of the different Latin American Countries into the Secretariat, and I think that some suggestions of mine may prove useful."[69]

Rodriguez was a Secretariat member serving as a Liaison to the Latin American Republics, so he had a unique position as both an international intermediary and a Latin American individual clearly interested in furthering the interests of his home continent. In this letter, Rodriguez pushed for hiring the first Mexican appointee, explicitly stating that "no Mexican official" suggested he advocate for this. He specified a desire for Health or Economic section appointments, which are "most likely to interest Latin American Republics," and emphasized the consistency and size of Mexico's financial contribution.

However, these pleas were significantly less well-received. Walters said that he "sympathizes," but redirected Rodriguez to Avenol, the new Secretary General.[70] Interestingly, Walters did handle staffing concerns in 1928 with India, but this behavior alone is not indicative

[68] Ibid, 4.
[69] Ibid, 58. Rodriguez was not wrong.
[70] Ibid, 57. I'm indebted here to Varun Deb, who helped me work through the finer points in translating the French elements of this source.

of an avoidant sentiment because the League restructured significantly under Avenol's leadership. Much more indicative is Avenol's non-response, despite persistent (yet deferential) pleas from Rodriguez directly to him. Further, Avenol avoided meeting with Rodriguez regarding the staffing issue for a full year. Latin America was clearly much lower on the League's priority list for representation (and for Avenol's general priorities) than other nations, as there were other new appointments in 1933.[71] The deferential language of diversity seen in other letters was not present here. Instead, a feeling of stalemate emerged.

The stalemate manifested in both in Latin American unwillingness to press for greater representation and in League ambivalence. In 1934, Rodriguez wrote to Avenol about a private conversation he had with Latin American officials who had no Secretariat representation. These officials said they wanted a spontaneous offer for representation because they didn't want to ask.[72] Few nations outside of Europe secured representation without applying some amount of pressure—even South Africa, with its pivotal role in founding the League, had to send letters to the Secretary General. Latin America also had a different argument for representation:

> "They don't want to hold the posts for the posts themselves, but rather for the goal of interesting the [public] opinions and governments of their respective countries of and for the League… and because the presence of their compatriots in the different institutions of the League would greatly help the League take more and more interest in Latin America."[73]

This would be a cyclical effect: the more representation Latin America received, the more public opinion would favor the League and more qualified Latin Americans would apply to League positions, the greater impact the League would have on Latin America, boosting public opinion,

[71] Ibid, 55.
[72] Ibid, 58.
[73] Ibid, 54.

and so on. This logic was fine, but there was no way to spark the cycle. In order to start, the cycle had to be initiated by both sides simultaneously—a nearly impossible feat with a lack of Latin American pressure for representation. By 1934, the League was in no position to initiate a hiring process significant enough to launch such a cycle, either.

These arguments—not based on how much greater representation was justified, but rather how positive an international impact the representation could have—made League officials and retrospective accounts to label their appeals as "the legitimate wishes of the countries of Latin America."[74] Ironically, the most legitimate appeal, the one most in line with the League's internationalist values, received the least leeway. Their arguments were not a differentiating factor, only a record of the League's lack of effort to include Latin America in this aspect of its hiring process.[75]

In 1924, during the fifth assembly of the League, the Latin American Bureau was established under two conditions: it would not be abolished unless a permanent Latin American "national [could] be found in each section of the Secretariat" and the League would endeavor to fill new Secretariat vacancies with Latin American nationals. The League promised to replace this "temporary" office, located in Latin America and relatively distant from the League's core operations, with permanent staff.[76] The Bureau was closed in 1937, but Rodriguez opposed the decision, pointing to the continued lack of Latin American representation and the aforementioned text in the fifth assembly resolution as justification.[77] In a letter to Avenol, Pablo Azcarate, who presumably read Rodriguez's letter citing these concerns, summarized its

[74] Ibid 4. These are words from an official promising to consider more Latin American applicants in response to a 1937 Cuban plea. Diligent readers will find the use of the word "wishes" both curious and familiar.
[75] The League of course made distinctions between Latin American nations, but they cannot be discerned through hiring, where each nation had either zero or one Secretariat members, so there was not a big enough difference between them to draw conclusions.
[76] Ibid, 52.
[77] For further reading on the bureau office, see R1461/30/12526, "Latin American Bureau of the League."

arguments. Azcarate reread the 1924 assembly fine print that the Bureau was always supposed to be temporary, and he claimed Rodriguez's emphasis on the point of "a national… in each section" was not "sufficient" to assert that closing the Bureau was "subordinating the presence of Latin Americans" on the Secretariat.[78] Beyond ample evidence that Latin American nations did see this closing as a hostile act, Azcarate's dismissal of Rodriguez's argument demonstrated an underlying issue: the hiring of more Latin Americans, Rodriguez's core motivation in all his correspondence, was dismissed from the priority list in this debate.[79] The Bureau was opened as a stepping stone to greater Latin American representation, but its closure did the opposite.

The agency required by Rodriguez to make this communication was unique and above what was asked of him, demonstrating the strain required to make progress towards greater representation in the 1934 Secretariat. Rodriguez, a Panamanian, was shedding not only his individuality, but his nationality.[80] Rodriguez served as Liaison to the Latin American states, but in his correspondence he did not act as a middleman, instead taking initiative and starting conversations. He did not act only in Panama's interests, or in his, but in the interests of both Latin America and the betterment of the League.[81] Latin America was frequently grouped as a whole on the international stage at the time—both by its nations and external actors—to a much larger extent than in, for instance, Eastern Europe.[82] Drummond had always encouraged the League to be nationality blind, and its members to be members of the League first and of their

[78] Ibid, 46.
[79] See page 36 for an example of a Panamanian delegate's confusion on the Bureau's closure, and his framing of it as a hostile act. Azcarate was not against communication with Latin American nations to resolve this tension, but again was unwilling to reconcile it with the issue of inadequate representation.
[80] Ibid, 44. There is uncertainty on whether to file a record of this correspondence in the Personnel Office, as it references Rodriguez's "personal position," or in the registry, which deals "with questions of organization." Ultimately, the presence of this document within the "Organisation of the Secretariat" section of the Geneva archives suggests that at the time, this correspondence was added to the latter category and seen as primarily non-personal.
[81] Ibid, 58.
[82] Edwards, "Latin America and the League of Nations," 136.

nation second.[83] However, when it came to the issue of international representation, an inevitable paradox emerged: the lack of representation within the League for small nations could only be addressed by heavily considering nationality in the hiring process. Rodriguez was, then, in many ways taking up the League's ideals, dismissing national interests for the interests of the League, but he is not doing so for the League's external interests, but rather to press against its internal machinations.[84] He took this belief to an extreme, advocating for an internationally condescended-upon continent.

The Cuban delegation to the League similarly used the unfulfilled promises of the fifth assembly as justification for greater representation, revealing how temporary appointments rarely became permanent for Latin American officials. Like other non-Western European nations, Cuban officials were often given temporary appointments without a clear promise of future permanent ones, a phenomenon only exacerbated by the coming closure of the Bureau office.[85] They specifically cited the text of the fifth assembly, which emphasized that the Bureau office was a segway from temporary representation to permanent seats.[86] This transition, of course, hadn't taken place. Cuba also specifically argued against biases it believed were inherent in the League and could not "shut [its] eyes to the impression… quite unjustifiably" that work done in English and French could only be done by "French or English-speaking nationals," rather than fluent Latin Americans, for example.[87] While these biases were implicitly visible in the language

[83] See Morley's *The Society of Nations* or Fosdick's *The League of Nations Starts* 16, discussed later.
[84] In contrast, Azcarate, a Spaniard, argues that Latin American officials should not be seen as a group and their individuality should be emphasized. I read this as it being easier to disregard one small nation rather than face inadequately representing an entire continent, but his argument felt too strange and out of place to analyze its affect.
[85] Ibid, 41.
[86] The pivotal component of the resolution itself is "The Secretary-General shall, when vacancies occur in the general services of the Secretariat, endeavour to secure more appropriate representation for the Latin-American States, provided always that the candidates for these posts possess the necessary qualifications… In order that the above scheme may be carried out as rapidly as possible, the Secretary-General shall have power to substitute, upon their expiration or even previously, for the contracts of officials of the Latin American Bureau, contracts as permanent Members of Section." This is cited by the Cuban delegation on page 42.
[87] Ibid, 42. Cuba even sent the League two letters, one in English and one in French, perhaps to hammer in this point. This could have only been for record-keeping purposes, but this dual letter is the only one I've encountered.

of League writing to other nations, discussed in earlier sections, here Cuba takes on the onus of pointing it out itself. They cloaked this idea in with all necessary diplomatic flourishes, but nevertheless pressed strongly for it. Cuba's argument for greater representation was unique in its citation of the fifth assembly, but demonstrated a continuity in League biases and in the issue of temporary appointments.[88]

Weighted Internationalism at a Distance: Asia and the League

What happens when a nation doesn't make any appeals for greater representation, even if it contributes financially to the League and is in good international standing? This was the case for most Asian countries. While they were certainly more internally focused at the time and could have had no interest in sending officials to the Secretariat, there is no question that there was an absence of League outreach of any kind in an effort to hire from Asian states.[89] Despite claiming to seek a diverse pool of Secretariat workers, it did not always actively do so. In other words, by taking on the responsibility of creating equitable representation independent of biased national interests, the League fell victim to its own mistakes: in this case, it overlooked the importance of Asian representation. While it was vastly evident for Asia, many countries discussed thus far were not considered for representation until they reached out, and many did not receive representation even when they did. The absence of League initiative required pleas for representation, and yet the League's ideological stance prevented it from accepting some of those pleas because they were seen as entitled.

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[88] It was in this collection of correspondence that the titular phrase, "Please accept, Monsieur, the assurance of my highest consideration" emerged with great frequency. It is a French phrase that only means "sincerely," and doesn't have any subtext beyond being a way to end a letter, but it is somehow still so emblematic of the tensions this essay seeks to illustrate. The League was a bureaucracy, operating the way it sincerely thought was best, but it consistently left other nations feeling marginalized—just as the repetitive and obfuscating text in a job posting or rejection letter might today.

[89] Japan, the most westernized Asian country at the time, was a notable exception that was adequately represented in the League. See Ranshofen-Wertheimer, *The International Secretariat* 338.

The League thought that "the notion had to be dispelled that a member was *entitled* to any proportion of the staff appointments." This was a given to the League, which saw no issue in intuitively distinguishing between "legitimate" pleas for greater representation and overbearing pleas.[90] While the League undoubtedly did have this intuitive ability, it proved—especially with Asian member states, but for every state with relatively less international power—that it was not objective in its application of its international principles. These were pleas coming from nations, yet the League claimed to be blind to nationality. This paradox, nationality blindness in seeking international diversity, prevented the League from always reaching out to other nations to solicit employees and accommodate national appeals. For Asian nations especially, The League created an international hiring system fraught with internal complexities that prevented fully equitable distribution of Secretariat nationalities and exposed the reality of the League's internationalism: a weighted system where efforts to balance international voices were limited by national biases.[91]

The Weights Themselves: Statistics and Data Behind Secretariat Composition

Appeals covered thus far leveraged an array of emotive, analytical, and political devices to sway League officials' attitudes. Fundamentally, though, the issue of representation came down to numbers: how many members were in each of the League's sections from each nation, in what positions over time, and was that representation adequate? League data would seem like an objective way to answer that question, but even it had flaws. This section will analyze the actual proportions of each nation's representation in the Secretariat—heavily relying on records

[90] Ibid, 352.

[91] It is inherently difficult to make meaningful conclusions from these types of sources, especially in the case of Asia, where it is the absence of sources that are being analyzed, but in all cases when sources are read for authorial intent as much as they are for content. However, that difficulty is also what makes these correspondences and meeting minutes and retrospective accounts so valuable: individually, they are skewed representations of the League; together, they form an undeniable picture of the League's uneven international tapestry. This duality will continue in the following sections.

preserved through Ranshofen-Wertheimer's *The International Secretariat*, visible in full in the appendix—and demonstrate that potential metrics like size of financial contributions would not be fair to base hiring practices on. This section will also discuss an example of a flawed appeal for representation from Czechoslovakia, which provided a unique, but unreliable set of data to aid its argument. Finally, this section will begin to analyze the weights of various nations in the Secretariat and the ways in which hiring practices demonstrate the League's specific preferences for each nation. After a period of rapid change in representation leading up to 1924, change became bureaucratically slow, so though some elements within the League wanted to create a truly international organization, there was too much ground left to cover and no definite path to balanced representation.

In 1934, a Czechoslovak delegate wrote to Avenol on their perceived underrepresentation, attaching a chart that listed each member state, its financial contribution, and its number of representatives at each rank (Secretary General or Undersecretary General, Director, Chief of Section, member of Section, and junior staff).[92] By grouping this information, the delegate was clearly trying to make a familiar argument, relating financial contribution to deserved representation. However, Azcarate dismissively summarized this data for the Secretary General before it reached him, accurately claiming that it was simply numerically "unreliable," an objective truth, and that "Czecholovakia's position is by no means the worst, and that, if we are to have equitable representation of the different nationalities" based on financial representation, "other nationalities have stronger claims."[93] For example, Czechoslovakia's contribution was the same as Australia's, but Czechoslovakia had one more member (both

[92] "Representation of Czechoslovakia," 1934, R5389/18A/12443/6858, Representation of Various Countries on the Secretariat, League of Nations Archives, Geneva, Switzerland, 12. No mention is made of temporary versus permanent appointments: junior staff represents assistants and clerks rather than true Secretariat members. Interestingly, these documents are marked as confidential.
[93] Ibid, 10.

nations had no high-ranking representatives). India had double the contribution and the same number of members—and many nations contributed without any representatives.[94] Azcarate compared Czechoslovakia to other non-Western European states in his analysis, questioning why the nation would even send such an appeal. The only reason, then, that Czechoslovakia would send this data would be if it thought the data was favorable. Czechoslovakia's contribution to representation ratio was only higher than other European nations: for example the Netherlands contributed less and had six members, two in high-ranking positions. Czechoslovakia was clearly hoping to compare itself to the rest of Europe while the League saw it as a nation punching at its proverbial weight.[95]

Czechoslovakia misunderstood that financial contribution was correlated with representation, not leading to it. Ranshofen-Wertheimer wrote, "Officially there was no link of cause and effect between a country's contribution to the League budget and the number of officials employed from that country… but there was a certain parallelism."[96] The insertion of the word "officially" suggests that this truth was not absolute, but the writing that followed clarified that Ranshofen-Wertheimer indeed meant there was a third variable that influenced both contribution and representation: "contribution… was based on a composite index taking into account economic strength, foreign trade, population, and other factors indicative of a country's

[94] Perhaps the disturbing element here is the League's reply to Czechoslovakia read very similarly to nations with more "deserving" appeals, cloaked in the same diplomatic pacifications.
[95] For another example of strange misuse of data, see "Representation of Iran in the Secretariat," 2-7. Iran's requests for greater representation mirrored India's, and fell into the same issue of underrepresentation in more important Secretariat sections. Iran as a nation was under dictatorial rule in the 1930s, and as a result had a complicated relationship with the League—but Iran had one member in the Secretariat. In 1940, Iran solicited data from the League about the history of its representation in the Secretariat, but a miscommunication revealed conflicting interpretations of equitable representation. The League responded with data from all Iranians affiliated with the League from 1926 to 1940, including volunteers and observers—with only three full-time employees. Iran responded, diplomatically, that it was only interested in data on full-time employees. While the source of this frustration was unclear, it was evident that all of Iran's representation fell in the information section: none of its three full-time members worked in the political or economic sections—as was the case with India post-1935. While the League's data was reasonable, it demonstrates a dangerous reality about how Iran was viewed in the League's weighted international gaze, and the relative importance of different positions.
[96] Ranshofen-Wertheimer, *The International Secretariat* 353.

importance." In other words, a country's international importance determined its representation, and contribution amount was only a proxy for importance. Indeed, around 150,000 francs seemed to correspond to one seat in the Secretariat for every nation, with some variation (France contributed 2.4 million for 15 seats, for example).[97] The Czechoslovak delegation's appeal was unemotional and impersonal, and made no appeal to the League values. The purely financial nature of the appeal—and the misunderstanding of financial contribution relating to representation rather than national importance—led to its failure.

The representation numbers themselves demonstrate the weighted priorities of the League as a gradual geopolitical gradient centered in Geneva moving outward. In 1920, 15 nations had representation in the League, all European. Data in the appendix shows that by 1930, 35 did: huge progress for the League. However, each of the original 15 gained more new Secretariat members, and each previously unrepresented European nation gained at least two seats—except for Lithuania and Austria, which each gained one. They are a perfect example of why a tiered system for understanding the League's internationalism would be insufficient, as while that difference was only one seat, it was a seat that League officials consciously chose to not give priority to for those nations. When Austria moved further away from Germany, it gained more seats, with four in 1938.[98] Lithuania, like many other Eastern European states, only received one token low level seat in an undesirable section.[99] Further East, Latvia and Estonia did not yet have any seats.

In Western Europe, these differences were exacerbated. The United Kingdom had many more seats than France, which had more seats than Italy, and the Netherlands and Switzerland (the home of the League) in turn had more seats than the remainder of Western Europe.

[97] "Representation of Czechoslovakia," 13.
[98] This is a simplification: Austria faced internal conflict throughout the League's existence.
[99] Ibid 13.

Importantly, the number of members from these nations grew and shrunk in parallel with growing and shrinking of the total staff size (with the exception of Italy in 1938, which was moving away from the League by then). France, for example, went from composing 21% of the Secretariat in 1920 to 19% in 1930: while new nations took advantage of the Secretariat's growth from 68 to 169 members, European nations stayed firmly entrenched in its ranks. Further, much of this ten year change took place in the first half of the decade, and representation changes from 1925–37 were small. This issue was magnified by a profound difficulty in keeping nations in the League by 1938, when the final column of data was collected.[100] Total membership decreased from 169 to 152 across the board.

The multifaceted, one-opening-at-a-time nature of League hiring obscured the League's process of calculating the number and quality of positions each nation deserved, but the result was clear. Nearly all nations outside of Latin America and Asia were represented, and nations in those areas—as well as Africa, India, and Eastern Europe—were given representation based on availability and geopolitical standing, with Western Europe retaining a dominant foothold in the League's membership. The League's internationalism in its hiring process manifested in a nation-specific evaluation of that geopolitical standing, reflecting biases on how qualified individuals from that nation were perceived to be.[101] This process resulted in an organization that was international in name and on the surface, but with a careful weighting of each member state manifesting in who was given what posts.

Retrospective Analyses of League Hiring

This section will trace the shift in definitions of internationalism from the inception of the League to later accounts of its successes and failures. Specifically, it looks at how these writers,

[100] Ranshofen-Wertheimer, *The International Secretariat* 357.
[101] Dykmann, "How International was the Secretariat?"

often former League members, conceptualized equity in representation and hiring, and how those conceptions differed from the external perspectives analyzed in the previous section. Weighted internationalism reemerged as a driving force in these accounts, but each writer—Ranshofen-Wertheimer, Howard-Ellis, Carr, and Morley—has his own way of articulating it. Ranshofen-Wertheimer looked most objectively at the hiring issue, while his contemporaries discussed internationalism as an ideal, but all alluded to the weighted international reality either implicitly or explicitly. These writers had the luxury of saying what the League should be rather than what it was, as in some cases they looked to influence public opinion on the League or, in Ranshofen-Wertheimer's case, to influence the structure of the League's successor, the United Nations. This section provides a retrospective perspective on hiring, but also on that internationalist ideal, in theory and in practice, as a driving force in the League's push for "adequate representation."

International representation, Ranshofen-Wertheimer argued, was never fully achieved because of the League's practices regarding publicizing positions. While admitting that "no procedure that might have been devised would have been satisfactory at all" because of the complexity of the hiring process, Ranshofen-Wertheimer strongly emphasized that "in order to secure a fair nationality distribution," the League " had to restrict its publicity according to the needs of the moment, from case to case, to countries which were underrepresented."[102] Each position was publicized manually, as the dynamism of the process prevented it from being systematized. The process was also reduced to a dangerous binary: positions were either advertised exclusively to nations with already large representation that had more qualified candidates or to underrepresented—usually meaning unrepresented—countries. While this balancing act allowed the League's international preferences and priorities to shine through, it

[102] Ibid, 336.

was inconvenient in that it was a response to rectifying existing biases rather than a system put in place from the start. Implicit in Ranshofen-Wertheimer's arguments is the fact that these were vacancies for low level positions, with high level positions either already filled or not publicized to underrepresented countries.[103] Regardless, the tailored publicizing of positions exemplified the League's effort to hire internationally.

The League had obstacles, but their hiring outcomes were far worse than necessary because it chose the path of least resistance. Ranshofen-Wertheimer articulates that the results of its hiring process "looked more equitable in the staff lists than they really were" because the League often hired people ethnically international but were trained in Europe, having spent most of their lives there.[104] Further, the League chose to hire "with due regard to the relative importance of the member States, without, however, attempting to make the representation of the different States proportional." This first clause is a clear articulation of weighted internationalism, and the second clause delineates the League's limited approach to realizing it. Ranshofen-Wertheimer supported this approach, which in effect stopped the hiring of new British and French officials after 1924, but did nothing to address permanent staffing imbalances that manifested in long-term, high-ranking appointments for existing staff and temporary appointments for new ones.[105] The League chose that approach and pursued it from 1924 onwards.

Both prior and later accounts grappled with the conflict between internationalism, national blindness, and fair national representation. In 1920 Raymond Fosdick, American Undersecretary General of the League until the U.S. withdrew, edited *The League of Nations*

[103] Ibid, 326.
[104] Ibid, 338.
[105] Ibid, 353.

Starts, an optimistic book on the League's planned structure and function. William Rappard, Director of the Mandate Section and influential League advocate, wrote in its opening chapter:

> "Every attempt has been made to create as truly an international atmosphere as possible… These members… do not represent the countries from which they come, although in making his selection Sir Eric has attempted to draw experts from as many parts of the world as possible."[106]

In his 1928 account of the League and its progress, Charles Howard-Ellis echoed this sentiment with equal idealism, claiming the League had an "absence of a national atmosphere and the growth in its place of a sense of world issues and international perspective."[107] He saw internationalism as synonymous with the League, placing it in Geneva as a core value and not acknowledging its nuances, not even with the "although" phrase Rappard included, a phrase that illustrates that internationalism was still an ideal composed of nations.[108] Other accounts of the League, like E.H. Carr's *The Twenty Years' Crisis*, were more reticent with regard to the League's internationalism, but also discounted certain complexities on the making of an international system.[109] Black and white analyses of the League were artifacts of a difference between its international presentation and internal realities.

Conclusion

The idea that international voice must be proportional to international importance was not new, but the idea of an international Secretariat was. The League, upon failing to balance international

[106] Raymond Fosdick, *The League of Nations Starts: An Outline by its Organisers*, (London: MacMillan and Co., 1920), 16. See also Myers, *Handbook of the League of Nations* 46 for the impartial oath all officials had to take.
[107] Charles Howard-Ellis, *The Origin, Structure, & Working of the League of Nations*, (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1928), 451-2. There is no clearer way to paint a picture of Howard-Ellis' idealistic focus than the final sentence of his introduction: "This book is conceived as an essay in applied sociology, as a monograph on the obstetrics of the womb of time." Coincidentally, the latter clause in that sentence was a potential title for this paper.
[108] Ibid, 164. For another example of absolute writing on internationalism, see Morley, *The Society of Nations*.
[109] E.H. Carr, *The Twenty Years' Crisis, 1919-1939: An Introduction to the Study of International Relations* (London: MacMillan and Co., 1946), 7.

ideals and international representation in its early years, had to find a way to create it in spite of increasingly tightening financial and political constraints. It made significant efforts to do so, but from the perspective of hiring, the Secretariat showed that its internationalism was weighted: League attitudes in correspondence, retrospective accounts, and representation data all illustrated a pattern of representation based almost entirely on international standing. There were weighted gradations in other aspects of the League edifice as well, explored in modern scholarship such as Susan Pedersen's work on the Mandates Commission and the idea of A, B, and C level nations, as well as the works of Tomas Irish and Keith Watenpaugh on paternalism in League humanitarian efforts.[110]

Post-1924 appointments did little to create a truly international Secretariat: legitimate appeals were not given due consideration, and priority was always given to better geopolitically positioned nations. Many new nations outside of Latin America and Asia received a seat immediately upon joining the League, but the quality of that seat depended on international importance: a new high level position was carved out when the USSR joined the League, but other Eastern European nations struggled to receive any appointments in prestigious Sections. Even well-connected nations like South Africa and India, which received preferences due to their British connection, struggled with issues of temporary and low-ranking appointments. Many pleas embodied the international spirit of the League, but few League responses acknowledged that, revealing League biases on the quality of officials from each nation. Gram-Skjoldager and Ikonomou wrote that League hiring practices leading up to 1924 "reproduced existing hierarchies of power and prestige."[111] Even as the League pushed for more international representation after

[110] See Pedersen, *The Guardians*, Watenpaugh, "Modern Humanitarianism," and Irish, "The 'Moral Basis' of Reconstruction?"
[111] Gram-Skjoldager & Ikonomou, "Construction."

1924, percentages of European representation stayed close to level, with small moves down—and Europeans retained the highest League offices.

By the 1940s, the League's international character could no longer be maintained. Between WWII and many nations leaving the organization, the League was quickly unraveling.[112] Still, there were important complexities that this paper did not have the opportunity to explore, both before and after 1938, where hiring data ended. This paper relies heavily on the given correspondence, but many other appointments happened outside of it, leaving unanswered questions. Why, for example, after Argentina had no representation for 18 years, was an Argentine Undersecretary General Appointed in 1938? There are many more records of hiring processes—both surrounding the nations discussed in this essay and many others—left to explore in the League of Nations Archives.

Today, international diversity is understood much differently. This paper doesn't claim to be a policy memo, but perhaps it would be wise to ask: How are the UN's hiring functions similar to the League's? How have they changed? What structural systems may still be in place that prevent truly international hiring? And in any international system, how do you foster international diversity?

[112] Ranshofen-Wertheimer, *The International Secretariat* 357.

Appendix

Number of Permanent Members by Nation Over Time[113]

Country	Year of Admission to League of Nations	Number of Officials		
		1920	1930	1938
Afghanistan	1934			
Union of South Africa	1920		1	1
Albania	1920 (1941)*			1
Argentine Republic	1920			1
Australia	1920		2	3
Austria	1920 (1938)		1	4
Belgium	1920	1	4	5
Bolivia	1920			
Brazil	1920 (1928)		NM	NM
Bulgaria	1920		1	1
United Kingdom	1920	23	39	34
Canada	1920	3	3	3
Chile	1920 (1940)		1	1
China	1920		2	2
Colombia	1920		1	1
Costa Rica	1924 (1927)	NM	NM	NM
Cuba	1920		1	
Czechoslovakia	1920	1	4	4
Denmark	1920 (1941)	1	3	2
Dominican Republic	1924	NM		
Ecuador	1934	NM	NM	
Egypt	1937	NM	NM	
Estonia	1921			1
Ethiopia	1923	NM		
Finland	1920 (1943)		2	1
France	1920 (1941)	14	32	25
Germany	1926 (1935)	NM	10	4 (NM)
Greece	1920	1	2	2

[113] Ranshofen-Wertheimer, *The International Secretariat* 356-7. This list contains strange omissions (Uruguay not being listed for example), and there is no indication of how it was compiled. For the most part it matches with data in the correspondence.

Country	Year of Admission to League of Nations	Number of Officials		
		1920	1930	1938
Guatemala	1920 (1938)			NM
Haiti	1920			
Honduras	1920 (1938)			NM
Hungary	1922 (1941)	NM	2	3
India	1920		3	3
Iran	1920		1	1
Iraq	1932	NM	NM	
Ireland	1923	NM	2	3
Italy	1920 (1939)	7	12	1
Japan	1920 (1935)	2	3	2 (NM)
Latvia	1921	NM		
Liberia	1920			
Lithuania	1921	NM	1	1
Luxemburg	1920			1
Mexico	1931	NM	NM	1
Netherlands	1920	4	7	5
New Zealand	1920		3	2
Nicaragua	1920 (1938)			NM
Norway	1920	4	1	2
Panama	1920		1	
Peru	1920 (1941)			
Poland	1920	1	5	8
Portugal	1920		1	1
Rumania	1920 (1942)		2	2
El Salvador	1920			
Siam	1920		1	1
Spain	1920 (1941)	1	3	3
Sweden	1920	1	3	7
Switzerland	1920	4	9	8
Turkey	1932	NM	NM	1
Total		68	169	152

*Number in parenthesis is the year a nation left.

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