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Internationalism

by Daniel Laqua

The term "internationalism" denotes a variety of impulses and initiatives that favoured and facilitated cooperation between individuals, groups, organisations or governments. The multifarious nature of internationalism meant that it manifested itself in different places and manifold ways. Rather than being informed by a coherent political or social agenda, internationalism was deployed by a wide array of political, social and cultural actors. This essay highlights such diversity and therefore approaches internationalism from several angles: as an idea, a narrative, a set of practices and a quest for international organisation.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. Introduction
2. Internationalism as an Idea and Narrative
3. Internationalism as Practice
4. Internationalism as Organisation
5. Sites of Internationalism
6. A Multifarious Phenomenon
7. Appendix
 1. Sources
 2. Literature
 3. Notes

Indices

Citation

Introduction

In 1937, the Hungarian-born, US-based pacifist Rosika Schwimmer (1877–1948) (→ Media Link #ab) and her American colleague Lola Maverick Lloyd (1875–1944) (→ Media Link #ac) issued a call for a "World Constitutional Convention" that would create a "Federation of Nations".¹ Their statement was a formative episode in the history of the World Federalist movement and distinctive in its insistence on democratic representation as a key element of global governance.² Faced with aggressive nationalisms, Schwimmer and Lloyd were convinced that internationalism was not only a matter of political organisation but also of attitudes. To them, it seemed clear that "Only international-minded men and women can be trusted to reorganize human society on a safe basis".³ Accordingly, any attempt to reorganise the world would require educational efforts, for instance the production of school textbooks that would stress "the moral, economic, scientific and artistic contributions to mankind's progress and happiness by all nations, races, classes, creeds and both sexes".

▲ 1

In a nutshell, the term "internationalism" denotes efforts to forge cooperation across national borders. In its anticipation of a new international order, Schwimmer and Lloyd's scheme was one particular manifestation of internationalism. Yet the activities of its authors also draw attention to another dimension: the intrinsic connection between internationalism and particular social or political movements. As a leading figure in the Hungarian woman's movement, Schwimmer had played an active role in the International Woman's Suffrage Alliance, for instance organising its Budapest congress (1913) (→ Media Link #ad). After the outbreak of war, both Schwimmer and Lloyd participated in a major pacifist venture, the Women's Peace Congress at The Hague (1915). They were subsequently involved in the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (→ Media Link #ae), which had its roots in the wartime meeting. Schwimmer and Lloyd's endeavours thus indicate how we can also approach internationalism through the lens of activism. Moreover, Schwimmer's personal trajectory highlights how internationalism could be underpinned by transnational experiences: she spent the final decades of her life as a stateless resident of the United States.⁴ Hence, even one specific initiative – namely the proposal for a World Federation – reveals several dimensions and sub-texts. Accordingly, this essay emphasises the multiplicity of meanings and actions associated with internationalism.

▲ 2

At one level, internationalism is an analytical category through which we can approach the past. Yet it is also a historical phenomenon – and a term that, since the 19th century, has been used by a variety of actors. Etymologically, it derived from the word "international". The English philosopher Jeremy Bentham (1747–1832) (→ Media Link #af) had coined the latter word both to define the field of international law and to contemplate broader principles of international order.⁵ Yet, from its first recorded uses, "internationalism" covered different realms of action – not only the sphere of inter-state relations but also challenges from below. Accordingly, the scholarly literature on the subject comprises a plurality of perspectives: historians who study the subject may focus on institutions, activists or experts, and they may place the emphasis on different spheres of interaction, from the local to the global.⁶ This essay acknowledges such diversity by discussing internationalism as an idea, as a practice and as a way of organising the world.

▲3

Internationalism as an Idea and Narrative

One way of approaching internationalism is to view it as a belief in the value of international cooperation. Before the First World War (→ Media Link #ag), peace activists often sought legal approaches to the prevention or resolution of military conflicts.⁷ In doing so, they interacted with the nascent and growing community of international law scholars: indeed, in some respects, the development of international law during the 19th century was informed by an "internationalist sensibility".⁸ The emphasis on international law (→ Media Link #ah) as a vehicle for internationalist vision continued during the interwar years, exemplified by campaigns that centred on the "outlawry of war".⁹

▲4

While legal internationalists and pacifists favoured collaboration across national borders, they rarely questioned the validity of nations and statehood as such.¹⁰ This perspective is illustrated by the writings of Francis Lieber (1798–1872) (→ Media Link #ai). Having moved from his native Prussia to the United States, Lieber had an illustrious career: he attained a professorship at Columbia College and subsequently drafted rules for the conduct of Union soldiers in the American Civil War, the so-called "Lieber Code" (1863). It has been noted that Lieber "displayed a concern for international affairs" even before he "turned his talents to international law and organization".¹¹ In 1868, he tackled internationalism a treatise that stressed its compatibility with nationalism. While noting that a "process of inter-nationalization" had begun after an earlier period of "nationalization", Lieber predicted that there would be "no obliteration of nationalities". Indeed, he claimed that "civilization would be seriously injured" if nationhood was adversely affected.¹²

▲5

Lieber was far from exceptional in countering potential suspicions that internationalism might be unpatriotic. Likewise, many supporters of the peace movement stressed that the virtues of unity and dialogue did not pose a threat to national allegiances. A case in point is provided by *True Patriotism and Other Lessons on Peace and Internationalism*, a book aimed at "Sunday school teachers who desire to give lessons on Peace" and first published before the First World War, with a second edition appearing in 1915.¹³ Its author, the British Quaker and pacifist Margaret Pease (died 1917) (→ Media Link #aj), juxtaposed "true patriotism" with a "false patriotism that often drives countries to war with one another when they might be at peace".¹⁴ In a chapter on internationalism, Pease described the "lives of all people" as being "bound up closely together", offering a sense of connectedness: "just as we call friendly life of all Englishmen together, the *national* life, so we shall call the friendly life of many nations together, *international* life".¹⁵ Such comments resonated with attempts to set internationalism apart from cosmopolitanism. To many activists, such distinctions were important because of cosmopolitanism's supposed detachment from national categories.¹⁶

▲6

International lawyers and peace activists promoted a particular vision of internationalism – yet they were not the only ones to do so. To socialists (→ Media Link #ak) and trade unionists, the term expressed principles and experiences that bound together the working classes of different countries. The International Workingman's Association (First International) and its successors portrayed internationalism as an intrinsic feature of the labour movement. In 1905, Jean Jaurès (1859–1914) (→ Media Link #al) – a leading figure in the Second International – stressed this point in a speech to the French Chamber of Deputies. He suggested that an emerging "international life" was based on "a community of profound sympathy between workers of all countries". As he put it, workers were experiencing "the same suffering" and therefore engaged in "the same endeavour: from one end to Europe to the other". To the French socialist, the "vast political and cooperative congresses" were another expression of solidarity that cut across national borders.

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▲7

In the era of the Second International, the socialist movement staged its internationalism in manifold ways.¹⁸ At the same time, it could hardly detach itself from political concerns in the national arena. Indeed, Jaurès's 1905 speech accorded detailed attention to patriotism and the stance of German socialists. Whereas Jaurès was assassinated on the eve of the Great War, many of his former comrades from the Second International subsequently demonstrated the difference between internationalist ideas and practices, as they backed their country's war effort. Rosa Luxemburg (1871–1919) (→ Media Link #am) – who herself had repeatedly discussed German and Polish nationalism – was one critical voice amidst these divisions. Attacking German social democrats as "the shield-bearer of imperialism in the present war", she argued that a "rebuilding of the International" would require it to acknowledge its "moral fall" at the outbreak of war. Luxemburg urged internationalists "to take action for the rapid termination of the war and for the preparation of a peace in accordance with the common interest of the international proletariat".¹⁹ Such discourse resonated with the views of the Zimmerwald Left, which was spearheaded by Vladimir Ilich Lenin (1870–1924) (→ Media Link #an) and later found its successor in the Communist International (Comintern).²⁰

▲ 8

The socialist reference to an overriding international principle points to a particular strand of internationalism – one in which activists promoted a cause internationally, based on shared interests and identities. Such activism could challenge existing power relations, as exemplified by strands of the women's movement whose internationalism was grounded in notions of sisterhood.²¹ During the interwar years, women's organisations sought to develop their global reach, yet national and cultural biases remained evident in their endeavours.²² Such limitations indicate the ambivalent nature of internationalism: it was compatible with imperialism (→ Media Link #ao) and notions of cultural superiority, and as such it could advance inequality.²³ However, internationalist ideas could also challenge political or cultural domination. For instance, Pan-Africanism has sometimes been approached as a "black internationalism", and some internationalist visions stressed the intrinsic connection between different liberation struggles (→ Media Link #ap).²⁴

▲ 9

While such examples relate to political movements or communities of action, internationalism was also an idea in science (→ Media Link #aq) and the arts (→ Media Link #ar). Many scientists and scholars argued that their commitment to research and progress favoured cooperation (→ Media Link #as). In this vein, Irène Joliot-Curie (1897–1956) (→ Media Link #at) – recipient of the Nobel Prize for Chemistry in 1935 – treated "her pacifist ideals as inherent to her humanist education and as a corollary of her responsibility as a scientist".²⁵ Meanwhile, to some artists, aesthetic principles seemed to transcend national categories. In such discourse, the non-verbal arts could be cast as a "universal language".²⁶ Any such claims evidently require critical interrogation. After all, national contexts continued to shape many artistic movements, some of which were cast in terms of national "schools". Moreover, professions of transnational principles in science and scholarship sat uneasily with the wartime "mobilisation of intellect".²⁷

▲ 10

Notwithstanding its manifold contradictions, a variety of groups, communities and individuals evoked and enacted internationalism. This development did not go unnoticed. In the 19th and early 20th centuries, various observers claimed that "internationalism" was (or was becoming) a reality. For example, Francis Lieber's 1868 treatise highlighted a growth in international norms and arrangements (→ Media Link #au), from "a united mail system, and uniting telegraphs" (→ Media Link #av) to "an international copyright" as well as "an extending agreement in measures weights, coinage, and signals at sea, and one financial conception". His study also listed "a common international law, even during war" as well as shared scientific practices, "an international literature" and "a common history of Civilization".²⁸

▲ 11

Some proponents of internationalism not only believed in the momentum towards international cooperation, but also in the value of documenting it. Founded in 1910, the Brussels-based Union of International Associations (UIA) gathered information on the growth of international organisations, congresses and agreements. In launching their periodical *La Vie Internationale* in 1912, the UIA's founders described "the development of relations between people" as "the most characteristic feature of present-day civilisation", with internationalism not being "a conception of the spirit, but a set of realities".²⁹ The "converging movement of facts, organisations and ideas" generated optimism about the potential "advent of a universal civilisation".³⁰ Such statements illustrate how internationalism could amount to a teleological narrative, positing claims about ever-closer global integration.

▲ 12

Internationalism as Practice

If – at least to some observers – internationalism appeared like a growing reality, such perceptions were the product of specific actions. Indeed, the very documentation of international activities was an internationalist act in itself. Yet other activities were prominent, too, and it is therefore important to venture beyond the realm of ideas when studying internationalism. For example, it has been argued that socialist internationalism is better understood as a practice that was "centred on concrete issues of international politics" than approaching it in purely ideological terms.³¹ A practice-based approach also informs scholarly work on "cultural internationalism" – a term that describes "the idea that internationalism may best be fostered through cross-national cultural communication, understanding, and cooperation".³² Educational undertakings were one key element of cultural internationalism – and so was the articulation and nurturing of particular feelings: various proponents of internationalism "expressed emotions profusely and tenaciously chased them because they considered them an essential part of their work".³³

▲ 13

Among the different practices associated with internationalism, international conferences and congresses (→ Media Link #aw) were a particularly prominent one. Although data on international congresses is subject to various limitations, it is possible to trace a rise in such activity during the 19th and 20th centuries.³⁴ Events of this kind produced a variety of outcomes: at the personal level, they allowed participants to forge friendships (or enmities); at a more formal level, they generated resolutions and created bodies that were charged with perpetuating the work that had been launched.

▲ 14

International conferences and congresses were certainly conducive to transnational encounters. Yet, similar to the idea of internationalism itself, the practice of gathering at congresses rarely involved an abandonment of national categories. Congress participation was often based on the principle of national representation, with delegates attending on behalf of member organisations from their own country. National difference was "flagged" within congress settings, both literally and figuratively. Accordingly, research on internationalism has highlighted "the juxtaposition of national symbols, especially flags and traditional costumes, in international ceremonies".³⁵ Meanwhile, for all their proclamations of solidarity, many socialists found it difficult to detach themselves from preoccupations that derived from their particular national contexts.³⁶ At various international events, different delegations wrestled for control over the proceedings. Such observations raise wider questions about inclusion and exclusion. Congresses and similar events tended to favour protagonists from some countries and marginalised subaltern voices.

▲ 15

World's fairs (→ Media Link #ax) were a striking manifestation of internationalism's seemingly contradictory features. These large-scale events certainly served as showcases for national progress and imperial confidence (→ Media Link #ay), and they were underpinned by notions of peaceful competition (→ Media Link #az). At the same time, world's fairs provided opportunities for international dialogue: they attracted visitors from abroad and offered a framework for staging international congresses. For example, an analysis of congress activity in connection with events such as the Parisian world's fairs of 1889 and 1900, but also Brussels in 1910 has provided "confirmation that universal expositions played a central role in structuring the activity of international organizations".³⁷ While world's fairs were an eye-catching example of exhibition activity, even displays that operated on a much smaller scale served as vehicles for internationalism. For instance, the art market (→ Media Link #bo) operated internationally, and art works frequently crossed national borders (→ Media Link #b1). Some art exhibitions deliberately eschewed national categories, instead seeking to express shared aesthetic principles or to showcase artistic movements that were being defined in international terms.³⁸

▲ 16

The reference to internationalism in the arts draws attention to a wider issue: as a set of practices, internationalism had symbolic dimensions. International congresses drew upon an established choreography, for instance through programmes that mixed formal elements with social activities. Repeated affirmations of international fraternity and similar rhetorical staples were another feature. Such elements proved durable, as highlighted by the World Festivals of Youth. Launched in 1947 and held under the aegis of the communist-aligned World Federation of Democratic Youth, these events "started as an international project with the idea of providing all young people an international forum to discuss global and local societal problems together".³⁹ While its activities have often been seen through the prism of Cold War politics,⁴⁰ they can also be viewed as an expression of internationalism. For example, the World Youth Festival of 1957 (→ Media Link #b2) can be understood as forming part of a "revival of internationalism" during the Khrushchev (→ Media Link #b3) years.⁴¹ Recent scholarship has highlighted that internationalism within the Soviet bloc could go beyond mere lip service: it helped to create an "empire of friends", based on the idea that "Soviet and Eastern European citizens were bound together not only by military force but also by transnational contacts and personal encounters".⁴²

▲ 17

Internationalism as Organisation

The coming together at specific events was not the only way in which internationalism became tangible. Internationalism was a way of "ordering the world" – and, as such, it was partly defined by its quest for organisation.⁴³ For many internationalists, the creation and strengthening of international organisations was a major objective: from building associations that advanced their own cause internationally to calls for institutions with a formal role in international law. International organisations could be charged with organising transnational exchanges. Often, they were set up to address problems that could not be resolved at the national level alone, with remits that covered areas such as transport, communication and health (→ Media Link #b5).⁴⁴ As a French observer put it in 1910, such cooperation was meant to allow states "to do things better that they would do less well in isolation, or even to enable them to do as a group what they would be unable to do alone".⁴⁵

▲ 18

It is no surprise that the word "internationalism" enjoyed particular currency in the aftermath of the First World War. A desire for order was a plausible response to the conflagration that had caused such widespread devastation. The foundation of the League of Nations (→ Media Link #b6) reflected such concerns. The League's underlying principles represented a particular strand that International Relations scholars characterise as liberal internationalism. Research in this field has noted that, at the time, protagonists of a "new liberal internationalism" viewed "international government" not in rigid terms, but rather "as a fluid set of organizations aimed at facilitating and directing co-operation for the improvement of human welfare and liberty".⁴⁶ Having launched its work in 1920, the League provided an institutional base from which to organise and discuss international matters (→ Media Link #b7) – and, in this respect, it seemed to fulfil demands that had been important to pre-war internationalists. As a new international venture, the League attracted substantial interest within civil society and became a focal point for activists – even those who acknowledged its imperfections.⁴⁷

▲ 19

If we approach the League's history through the prism of internationalism, it helps us move beyond traditional questions of success and failure, as it places the institution within a wider historical context. After 1945, the United Nations built on the League's experiences, even though it operated in a vastly different geopolitical context.⁴⁸ In an assessment of the nascent UN system, the Italian politician Luigi Sturzo (1871–1959) (→ Media Link #b8) acknowledged the intention "of eliminating the deficiencies of the Geneva body and of giving the new experiment a greater forcefulness". At the same time, he also stressed the ongoing limitations in the way that internationalism was being organised. To Sturzo, the architects of the new international structures seemed to be "as tenaciously bound as their predecessors to the maintenance of the political sovereignty of their own countries and of maintaining and consolidating their positions to the detriment of a real international concept".⁴⁹

▲ 20

To most of its supporters, the League of Nations was supposed to strengthen rather than overthrow the existing order. Another body founded in the aftermath of the First World War, namely the Comintern, articulated a contrasting vision. Established in 1919, it sought to advance the cause of world revolution, even if its local practices were often at odds with its proclaimed aims.⁵⁰ In the 1930s, the Comintern's work in organising the International Brigades meant that it supported a form of internationalist action, namely volunteering in support of Republican Spain. Likewise, communist funding and logistical support sustained the League Against Imperialism (LAI), founded at a congress in Brussels in 1927. The organisation's name contrasted it with the League of Nations, which it denounced as a "League of Imperialists". The LAI soon narrowed its base by sidelining non-communist actors – yet in its early years, it brought together a remarkable range of activists who challenged imperial domination.⁵¹

▲ 21

After 1945, the internationalist drive towards organisation building ran through different channels. Countries in the Soviet orbit continued to maintain international bodies such as the Cominform (1947–1956). While the latter has been viewed as the "puny successor of the disbanded Comintern", the post-Stalinist era saw renewed efforts to assert internationalism, partly addressing the Global South in the twin contexts of Cold War rivalry and decolonisation: "The Soviet state now presented itself to the Third World as a role model of non-western development and as an altruistic helper."⁵² During the 1960s, communist Cuba was associated with new internationalist channels, as exemplified by the Organization of Solidarity with the People of Asia, Africa and Latin America (OSPAAAL) and the Organization of Latin American Solidarity (OLAS). International Relations scholar Fred Halliday (1946–2010) (→ Media Link #b9) suggested that, "as with the Comintern, OSPAAAL and OLAS had a later life more effective than the organisations themselves".⁵³

▲ 22

In the same period that it was involved in OSAAL and OLAS, Cuba also became the focus of leftist sympathies, emblematic of a growing interest in the "Third World" among European activists.⁵⁴ In general, the internationalism of a new generation of younger activists focused much less on institutional routes. Certainly, Soviet-dominated internationalism seemed to be less attractive, especially after the crushing of the Hungarian Uprising in 1956 (→ Media Link #ba) and the Prague Spring in 1968 (→ Media Link #bb). Although some Trotskyist groups in the West cast themselves as a "Fourth International", many protagonists of the New Left were less concerned with building formal international organisations. For example, a major activist gathering such as the Vietnam Congress held at West Berlin's Technical University in February 1968 (→ Media Link #bc) reflected the internationalism of anti-war campaigners, yet activists did not steer their opposition into an institutional channel. Tension between older-style, communist internationalism and New Left internationalism emerged on several occasions in this period, as illustrated by the World Festival of Youth of 1968: held in place in Sofia, it was an event at which radical student activists from West Germany clashed with communist youth officials. As such, it revealed the "contrasting understandings of words like *solidarity*, *global*, and *internationalism*".⁵⁵

▲ 23

As a quest for order, internationalism appeared in various guises during the 1970s. On the one hand, a variety of non-governmental organisations (NGOs) promoted humanitarian relief, human rights and the protection of the environment (→ Media Link #bd), favouring a world order in which states and the United Nations would recognise NGOs as agents of global civil society.⁵⁶ Indeed, the rise of human rights discourse in the 1970s has been interpreted as a new way of organising the world – a "last utopia" after earlier hopes regarding a socialist or post-colonial world order had been disappointed.⁵⁷ Such ambitions could still be tied to formal institutional arrangements, as highlighted by the interactions between dissidents from Central and Eastern Europe and the institutional reference point created by the Conference of Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE).⁵⁸ Yet the 1970s and 1980s were also characterised by more transient coalitions built around international solidarity. For instance, European protests against the Chilean dictatorship of Augusto Pinochet (1915–2006) (→ Media Link #be) during the 1970s and 1980s or support networks for Nicaragua in the 1980s can be viewed as part of a wider strand of internationalism that was based on the politics of solidarity.⁵⁹

▲ 24

After the end of the Cold War, the "organisation and order" strand of internationalism received a fresh impetus from two major directions. First, in the wake of humanitarian catastrophes in the former Yugoslavia and Rwanda, debates about humanitarian intervention were interwoven with the language of internationalism.⁶⁰ Second, the impacts of globalisation (→ Media Link #bf) triggered new debates: either to strengthen existing international institutions, for instance with a view to preventing future economic crises (such as the global one of 2008), or with the aim of creating an entirely different international order based on global justice (as promoted by the World Social Forums from 2001 onwards). Such initiatives have been interpreted as a manifestation of "complex internationalism".⁶¹

▲ 25

Sites of Internationalism

The act of coming together at a congress as well as the foundation of organisations with physical or spiritual headquarters meant that internationalism was associated with specific sites. A quantitative analysis of congress venues in the period between 1840 and 1960 has acknowledged their highly "inequitable distribution", with "certain cities ... rapidly becoming true poles of internationalism". Yet the same data suggests a "diversification of conference venues" over time.⁶² In essence, then, internationalism could be found in different places: while it had certain centres of gravity, it rarely lent itself to centralisation. In this respect, a consideration of internationalism's different sites and spatialities is highly pertinent.⁶³

▲ 26

Internationalism allows us to approach international history in a way that shifts attention from a focus on "great powers". For instance, smaller countries in Western Europe were important sites of internationalism from the late 19th century onwards.⁶⁴ Even before the establishment of the League of Nations in Geneva, Switzerland was a significant site, with Basel and Bern hosting various international organisations and with Zurich as a hub of émigré activism. The Belgian capital of Brussels was an international congress centre well before it welcomed the European Commission and NATO. In the Netherlands, The Hague's association with international law was cemented by the Peace Conference of 1899 (→ Media Link #bg) which launched the Permanent Court of Arbitration.⁶⁵

▲ 27

Recent work on European internationalism has highlighted the need to move beyond Western Europe, for instance drawing attention to Polish and Czechoslovakian engagement with internationalism in medicine and public health.⁶⁶ Internationalism could help protagonists from Central and Eastern Europe to find a role within a new international order. Even involvement in rather specialist internationalist ventures could have wider significance. For instance, Czechoslovakian, Hungarian and Polish engagement with the Union Internationale des Associations d'Alpinisme – an international mountaineering organisation (→ Media Link #bh) – might indicate how "East Central European internationalism" may have been "a response to the dissolution of the Habsburg Empire".⁶⁷ From a different angle, new patterns of internationalism during the 1960s invite us to write different countries into a broader history of "1968". One example is the way in which, under the military junta, parts of Greek radical youth aligned with Western European student movements and connected their own experiences to anti-imperialist struggles elsewhere.⁶⁸

▲ 28

Questions of centres and periphery also are relevant in other respects. The institutional varieties of internationalism tended to be built on principles of national representation and thus excluded populations that were under colonial rule (→ Media Link #bi) or that experienced other forms of imperial domination. Yet internationalism could also be vehicle to seek representation. For instance, Latin American states used international organisations to stake their claims to civilisation and agency.⁶⁹ Moreover, in the age of decolonisation, new sites became associated with an internationalist contention – for instance Bandung as a site of Asian–African solidarity in the wake of the conference of 1955 (→ Media Link #bj) and Algiers as a site of liberation struggles after the Algerian War of Independence (1954–1962).⁷⁰ Casting the "Third World" as an international project provided opportunities for transnational alliances and new spatial conceptions in which, for instance, Latin American perspectives were integrated with African-Asian solidarities.⁷¹

▲ 29

After 1945, global dynamics also began to transform the organisational guises of internationalism. In some respects, this was a slow process: the evaluation of international congress data gathered by the UIA suggests that in the 1950s, 78 per cent of such events took place in Europe.⁷² Yet between 1951 and 2011, Europe's share of the headquarters or secretariats of international organisations fell from 82 to 58.9 per cent.⁷³ Such changes tie in with the wider impacts of geopolitical shifts and their implications for the work of international non-governmental organisations (INGOs): "The divisions to which the Cold War and decolonization contributed in turn provided the context for the formation of a new generation of INGOs that were more geographically dispersed than previously".⁷⁴ At the same time, both INGOs and intergovernmental organisations played a significant role in a process that has been described as a "global transformation since the 1970s".⁷⁵

▲ 30

A Multifarious Phenomenon

As this essay has suggested, internationalism was defined by broad support for the principle of international cooperation, manifesting itself in efforts across different sites and fields of activity. This may sound vague, but necessarily so: after all, no two actors agreed on a definition of what internationalism entailed. Some internationalists interpreted the term in a normative sense, arguing for the centrality of particular ideas and rules. By contrast, others construed internationalism much more broadly, without seeking to derive any overarching norms from it. It therefore seems most appropriate to treat internationalism as a set of tools and mechanisms that were available to a multitude of actors. When viewed in this way, it also becomes clear that internationalism was not confined to liberal or socialist actors.⁷⁶ For instance, while the Roman Catholic Church had traditionally posited its universality, the 19th and 20th centuries also saw the emergence of a Catholic internationalism that partly revolved around lay action.⁷⁷

▲ 31

Strikingly, even the far right deployed some forms of internationalism. Although the ultra-nationalism of fascist movements seems at odds with the values of international cooperation, they made use of its mechanisms. For instance, prior to the Abyssinia Crisis, Fascist Italy was an active participant in the League of Nations (→ Media Link #bk), in particular its cultural ventures. And during the 1930s, Nazi Germany used particular internationalist practices, for instance with regard to promoting active involvement in international congresses. In this respect, practices that were built around a language of cooperation could be deployed for an agenda of domination. The internationalism of the far right is a particularly drastic example, yet it may also lead us to probe the more problematic aspects of seemingly "benign" internationalisms.⁷⁸

▲ 32

When understood as a highly malleable phenomenon, internationalism seems far from peripheral. Indeed, recent work in the field has sought to highlight "the historical relevance of internationalism to the modern history of nationalism, imperialism and globalisation, reconnecting their thematic significance as core 20th-century ideologies and practices".⁷⁹ It is worthwhile considering this wider context. Among historians, internationalism has been attracting growing interest in the last two decades – a time that has also seen the rise of global and transnational approaches in history.⁸⁰ This, of course, is no coincidence, as internationalism could foster transnational and global exchanges, even when it remained wedded to ideas of nationhood. At a time when international norms and global processes are subject to intense debate, research on internationalism continues to be highly pertinent in more than one way.

▲ 33

Daniel Laqua (→ Media Link #bl)

Appendix

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Notes

1. ^ Lloyd / Schwimmer, *Chaos, War, or a New World Order* 1942.
2. ^ Threlkeld, *A Radical Plan for Peace and World Government* 2018, pp. 473–97.
3. ^ Lloyd / Schwimmer, *Chaos, War, or a New World Order* 1942, p. 7.
4. ^ Wernitznig, *Rosika Schwimmer's Transnational Activism* 2017, pp. 262–79.
5. ^ Armitage, *Foundations of Modern International Thought* 2013; Janis, *Jeremy Bentham* 1984.
6. ^ See e.g. the breadth of contributions in Brydan / Reinisch, *Internationalists in European History* 2021. This book is connected to a Wellcome Trust-funded project led by Jessica Reinisch, which also explored the multiple dimensions of internationalism ('The Reluctant Internationalists', 2013 to 2018).
7. ^ Cooper, *Patriotic Pacifism* 1991, e.g. pp. 91–115.
8. ^ Koskeniemi, *The Gentle Civilizer of Nations* 2004.
9. ^ Hathaway / Shapiro, *The Internationalists* 2017.
10. ^ Sluga, *Internationalism in the Age of Nationalism* 2013.
11. ^ Clinton, *Francis Lieber* 2005, p. 23.
12. ^ Lieber, *Fragments* 1868, p. 21.
13. ^ Pease, *True Patriotism and Other Lessons on Peace and Internationalism* 1915, p. v.
14. ^ Pease, *True Patriotism and Other Lessons on Peace and Internationalism* 1915, p. 33.
15. ^ Pease, *True Patriotism and Other Lessons on Peace and Internationalism* 1915, p. 83.
16. ^ See e.g. Sluga, *Internationalism in the Age of Nationalism* 2013, p. 44. I have commented on the relationship between internationalism and cosmopolitanism in Laqua, *Cosmopolitanism and the Individual* 2019.
17. ^ Jaurès, *L'Internationale et la patrie* 1906, p. 5.
18. ^ Callahan, *Demonstration Culture* 2010; Delalande, *La lutte et l'entraide* 2019.
19. ^ Luxemburg, *Rebuilding the International* 1915. For context, see Lim, *Rosa Luxemburg on the Dialectics of Proletarian Internationalism and Social Patriotism* 1995/1996.
20. ^ Nation, *War on War* 1989.
21. ^ Rupp, *Worlds of Women* 1997.
22. ^ On efforts to develop the global reach of women's organisations as well as the engagement with questions of difference, see Sandell, *The Rise of Women's Transnational Activism* 2015; Bolt, *Sisterhood Questioned?* 2004.
23. ^ Laqua, *The Tensions of Internationalism* 2011.

24. ^ Makalani, *In the Cause of Freedom* 2011; Hodder, *Toward a Geography of Black Internationalism* 2016. For a cautious note on the term "black internationalism", see Adi, *Pan-Africanism* 2018, pp. 4–5. For examples of transnational bonds, see Slate, *Black Power Beyond Borders* 2012. With a focus on forms of internationalism that connected activists from Africa and Asia in the early Cold War years, see Lewis / Stolte, *Other Bandungs* 2019.
25. ^ Jacquemond, Irène Joliot-Curie 2014, p. 196. On different conceptions of scientific internationalism, see Somsen, *A History of Universalism* 2008; Crawford, *Denationalizing Science* 1993; Rasmussen, *L' Internationale scientifique* 1995.
26. ^ Brockington, *The Expanded Universal Language Movement* 2019. See also Brockington's earlier discussion in Brockington, *Internationalism and the Arts* 2009.
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Transnational Movements and Organisations › Internationalism

Indices

DDC: 320

Locations

Algiers DNB [🔗](http://d-nb.info/gnd/4084955-7) (http://d-nb.info/gnd/4084955-7)
 Bandung DNB [🔗](http://d-nb.info/gnd/4820072-4) (http://d-nb.info/gnd/4820072-4)
 Basel DNB [🔗](http://d-nb.info/gnd/4004617-5) (http://d-nb.info/gnd/4004617-5)
 Belgium DNB [🔗](http://d-nb.info/gnd/4005406-8) (http://d-nb.info/gnd/4005406-8)
 Berne DNB [🔗](http://d-nb.info/gnd/4005762-8) (http://d-nb.info/gnd/4005762-8)
 Brussels DNB [🔗](http://d-nb.info/gnd/4008460-7) (http://d-nb.info/gnd/4008460-7)
 Budapest DNB [🔗](http://d-nb.info/gnd/4008684-7) (http://d-nb.info/gnd/4008684-7)
 Chile DNB [🔗](http://d-nb.info/gnd/4009929-5) (http://d-nb.info/gnd/4009929-5)
 Cuba DNB [🔗](http://d-nb.info/gnd/4033340-1) (http://d-nb.info/gnd/4033340-1)
 Czechoslovakia DNB [🔗](http://d-nb.info/gnd/4078435-6) (http://d-nb.info/gnd/4078435-6)
 France DNB [🔗](http://d-nb.info/gnd/4018145-5) (http://d-nb.info/gnd/4018145-5)
 Geneva DNB [🔗](http://d-nb.info/gnd/4020137-5) (http://d-nb.info/gnd/4020137-5)
 German Empire (1871-1945) DNB [🔗](http://d-nb.info/gnd/2008993-4) (http://d-nb.info/gnd/2008993-4)
 Greece DNB [🔗](http://d-nb.info/gnd/4022047-3) (http://d-nb.info/gnd/4022047-3)
 Holy Roman Empire (-1806) DNB [🔗](http://d-nb.info/gnd/2035457-5) (http://d-nb.info/gnd/2035457-5)
 Hungary DNB [🔗](http://d-nb.info/gnd/4078541-5) (http://d-nb.info/gnd/4078541-5)
 Italy DNB [🔗](http://d-nb.info/gnd/4027833-5) (http://d-nb.info/gnd/4027833-5)
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 Prussia DNB [↗](http://d-nb.info/gnd/4047194-9) (<http://d-nb.info/gnd/4047194-9>)
 Rwanda DNB [↗](http://d-nb.info/gnd/4076910-0) (<http://d-nb.info/gnd/4076910-0>)
 Sofia DNB [↗](http://d-nb.info/gnd/4077502-1) (<http://d-nb.info/gnd/4077502-1>)
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 The Hague DNB [↗](http://d-nb.info/gnd/4011446-6) (<http://d-nb.info/gnd/4011446-6>)
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Rosika Schwimmer (1877–1948)

Link #ac

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Link #ad



- <http://www.ieg-ego.eu/en/mediainfo/congress-members-outside-of-headquarters>
Seventh Conference of the International Woman Suffrage Alliance 1913

Link #ae

- Women's Movements (<http://www.ieg-ego.eu/en/threads/transnational-movements-and-organisations/international-organisations-and-congresses/transnational-womens-movements-womens-movements-be-freigabe>)

Link #af

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Link #ag

- Erster Weltkrieg (<http://www.ieg-ego.eu/en/threads/alliances-and-wars/war-as-an-agent-of-transfer/der-erste-weltkrieg-als-medienergebnis-erster-weltkrieg-be-freigabe>)

Link #ah

- Law (<http://www.ieg-ego.eu/en/threads/backgrounds/law/martin-otto-law>)

Link #ai

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- (<http://www.ieg-ego.eu/en/mediainfo/francis-lieber-180020131872>)
Francis Lieber (1798–1872)

Link #aj

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Link #ak

- Socialist International (<http://www.ieg-ego.eu/en/threads/transnational-movements-and-organisations/international-social-movements/bernd-rother-the-socialist-international>)

Link #al

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- (<http://www.ieg-ego.eu/en/mediainfo/jean-jaures-185920131914>)
Jean Jaurès (1859–1914)

Link #am

- Rosa Luxemburg (1871–1919) VIAF [✉](http://viaf.org/viaf/51749376) (<http://viaf.org/viaf/51749376>) DNB [✉](http://d-nb.info/gnd/118575503) (<http://d-nb.info/gnd/118575503>) ADB/NDB [✉](http://www.deutsche-biographie.de/pnd118575503.html) (<http://www.deutsche-biographie.de/pnd118575503.html>)



- (<http://www.ieg-ego.eu/en/mediainfo/rosa-luxemburg-187120131919>)
Rosa Luxemburg (1871–1919)

Link #an

- Vladimir Ilich Lenin (1870–1924) VIAF [✉](http://viaf.org/viaf/7393146) (<http://viaf.org/viaf/7393146>) DNB [✉](http://d-nb.info/gnd/118640402) (<http://d-nb.info/gnd/118640402>) ADB/NDB [✉](http://www.deutsche-biographie.de/pnd118640402.html) (<http://www.deutsche-biographie.de/pnd118640402.html>)

Link #ao

- Colonialism and Imperialism (<http://www.ieg-ego.eu/en/threads/backgrounds/colonialism-and-imperialism/benedikt-stuchtey-colonialism-and-imperialism-1450-1950>)

Link #ap

- Decolonization and Revolution (<http://www.ieg-ego.eu/en/threads/europe-and-the-world/european-overseas-rule/fabian-klose-decolonization-and-revolution>)

Link #aq

- Science (<http://www.ieg-ego.eu/en/threads/backgrounds/science/paul-ziche-joppe-van-driel-science>)




Link #ar

- Künste (<http://www.ieg-ego.eu/de/threads/europa-und-die-welt/kuenste/eva-maria-troelenberg-kuenste>)

Link #as

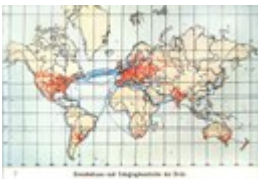
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Link #at

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Link #au

- Standardisation in Europe (<http://www.ieg-ego.eu/en/threads/transnational-movements-and-organisations/internationalism/roland-wenzlhuemer-the-history-of-standardisation-in-europe>)

Link #av

- (<http://www.ieg-ego.eu/en/mediainfo/global-railway-and-telegraph-concentration-1901>)
Global railway and telegraph concentration 1901

Link #aw

- (<http://www.ieg-ego.eu/en/threads/transnational-movements-and-organisations/international-organisations-and-congresses>)

Link #ax

- World's Fairs (<http://www.ieg-ego.eu/en/threads/crossroads/knowledge-spaces/alexander-c-t-geppert-worlds-fairs>)

Link #ay

- (<http://www.ieg-ego.eu/en/mediainfo/view-of-eiffel-tower-and-exposition-buildings-1889>)
View of Eiffel Tower and Exposition Buildings

Link #az

- (<http://www.ieg-ego.eu/en/mediainfo/national-socialist-germany-vs.-the-ussr-in-paris-in-1937>)
National Socialist Germany vs. the USSR in Paris in 1937

Link #bo

- Metropolises (<http://www.ieg-ego.eu/en/threads/crossroads/courts-and-cities/markian-prokopovych-rosemary-h-sweet-literary-and-artistic-metropolises>)

Link #b1

- International Exhibition of Chinese Art, 28 November 1935 to 7 March 1936, London – Royal Academy of Arts <http://www.ieg-ego.eu> <https://www.royalacademy.org.uk/art-artists/exhibition-catalogue/1935-36-international-exhibition-of-chinese-art>

Link #b2

- <http://www.ieg-ego.eu/en/mediainfo/6th-world-festival-of-youth-and-students-1957>
Sixth World Festival of Youth and Students 1957

Link #b3

- Nikita Khrushchev (1894–1971) VIAF <http://viaf.org/viaf/64007537> DNB <http://d-nb.info/gnd/118638378> ADB/NDB <http://www.deutsche-biographie.de/pnd118638378.html>

Link #b5

- Global Health (<http://www.ieg-ego.eu/en/threads/theories-and-methods/knowledge-transfer/walter-bruchhausen-global-health-in-the-colonial-era-the-expansion-of-european-medicine>)

Link #b6

- League of Nations (<http://www.ieg-ego.eu/en/threads/transnational-movements-and-organisations/internationalism/isabella-loehr-the-league-of-nations>)

Link #b7

- <http://www.ieg-ego.eu/en/mediainfo/a-meeting-of-the-league-of-nations-in-1926>
A Meeting of the League of Nations in 1926

Link #b8

- Luigi Sturzo (1871–1959) VIAF <http://viaf.org/viaf/4947454> DNB <http://d-nb.info/gnd/118799290> ADB/NDB <http://www.deutsche-biographie.de/pnd118799290.html>

Link #b9

- Fred Halliday (1946–2010) VIAF <http://viaf.org/viaf/108256756> DNB <http://d-nb.info/gnd/109995899>

Link #ba

- <http://www.ieg-ego.eu/en/mediainfo/hungarian-uprising-1956-young-revolutionaries-on-the-jozsef-koru>
Hungarian Uprising 1956: Young Revolutionaries on the József körú

Link #bb

- <http://www.ieg-ego.eu/en/mediainfo/soviet-invasion-of-czechoslovakia-1968>
Soviet Invasion of Czechoslovakia 1968

Link #bc

- <http://www.ieg-ego.eu/en/mediainfo/international-vietnam-congress-at-tu-berlin>
International Vietnam Congress at TU Berlin 1968

Link #bd

- Nature and Environment (<http://www.ieg-ego.eu/en/threads/backgrounds/nature-and-environment/nils-freytag-nature-and-environment>)

Link #be

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Link #bf

- Globalization (<http://www.ieg-ego.eu/en/threads/backgrounds/globalization>)

Link #bg

- <http://www.ieg-ego.eu/en/mediainfo/the-peace-palace-in-the-hague-netherlands>
The Peace Palace in The Hague, Netherlands

Link #bh

- Alpine tourism (<http://www.ieg-ego.eu/en/threads/europe-on-the-road/the-history-of-tourism/burkhart-lauterbach-the-mountain-calls-alpine-tourism-and-cultural-transfer-since-the-18th-century>)

Link #bi

- European Overseas Rule (<http://www.ieg-ego.eu/en/threads/europe-and-the-world/european-overseas-rule/reinhard-wendt-european-overseas-rule>)

Link #bj

- <http://www.ieg-ego.eu/en/mediainfo/bandung-conference-1955>
Bandung conference 1955

Link #bk

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"The Final" 1936

Link #bl

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