

## The Meaning of the Mandates System: An Argument

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*Abstract: This essay examines the mandates system of the League of Nations, the system of international oversight applied to German colonies and Ottoman territories seized by the Allied powers during the First World War. Although often seen as a mechanism for reforming colonial administration or for preparing territories for self-rule, empirical research has demonstrated that mandatory administrations were neither uniform, nor particularly progressive, nor clearly distinguishable from colonial administrations. The mandates system is better understood, this essay argues, as a mechanism for generating publicity and norms than as a system of governance: League oversight proliferated information and publicity about the mandates and offered legitimacy to those powers that complied with the system's formal requirements and professed to uphold its norms. This argument is sustained by evidence drawn from the administration of mandates in all regions and of all types, and by an examination of the content and reach of the oversight processes of the system itself.*

### *I. The Mandates System as a Historical Problem*

On October 4, 1921, seven European men and one Japanese man, all considered to be experts in colonial administration, together with one Swedish woman lawyer, gathered in Geneva for the first time. They had been appointed as the Permanent Mandates Commission of the League of Nations, charged with overseeing the system of international supervision established for the former German colonies and Ottoman Middle East after the First World War. Although remembered as a European conflict, that war was global as well, with major campaigns in Africa and the Middle East and the odd action in the Pacific. British and French troops seized Togo and Cameroons, British and South African troops seized South West Africa, and Australia and New Zealand occupied German New Guinea and Western Samoa, fairly early in the war. Campaigns elsewhere were more protracted, but by 1918 Britain and Belgium controlled German East

Africa and Britain and France had with Arab help wrested the Middle East from Ottoman hands.

What was to become of these territories?

Jan Christiaan Smuts, the South African general and Prime Minister, was one of the people who came up with the idea of the mandates system, which he conceived of as a means of internationalizing the control of the strategically-significant and oil-rich ex-Ottoman Middle East. Smuts did not think such international control should apply to seized German colonies in Africa and the Pacific, which were (in his view) “inhabited by barbarians, who not only cannot possibly govern themselves, but to whom it would be impracticable to apply any idea of self-determination,” and especially not to South West Africa, which South Africa was eager to annex.<sup>1</sup> But Woodrow Wilson—not to mention the huge tide of popular opinion sustaining him—thought otherwise. He had hoped for a peace without annexations, and “an open adjustment of all colonial claims” figured as one of his fourteen points. None of the allies considered giving the colonies back to Germany (although the British took care to compile an official report detailing German colonial atrocities anyway), nor did Britain much want to follow up on its ambiguous offer of Arab independence, but Wilson insisted that simple imperial annexation was not on the cards either. Reluctantly, then, the Allies agreed to hold all conquered territories in “trust,” as “mandates” under the League of Nations. Three different kinds of mandates were agreed, with distinctions based supposedly on the “stage of development” and hence capacity for self-government of the populations concerned.<sup>2</sup>

When it came to assigning the mandates, wartime occupiers were usually left in charge. The Ottoman Middle East was carved up into “A” mandates, where the mandatory powers (Britain in Iraq and Palestine, France in Syria and Lebanon) were merely to provide

“administrative advice and assistance” to peoples in theory soon to be granted self-government. Most of German Africa became “B” mandates, which the mandatory power was to administer under a list of conditions, including that the territory be opened to commerce and the inhabitants protected in various ways. The “B” mandates were Togo and Cameroon, both partitioned and divided between Britain and France; Rwanda and Burundi, which had been occupied by, and were thus granted to Belgium; and the remainder of German East Africa, controlled by the British as Tanganyika Territory. Finally, a set of territories too remote for the European powers to care much about but of enormous interest to Japan and Britain’s dominions were designated as “C” mandates: these were South West Africa, awarded to South Africa; German New Guinea, awarded to Australia; Western Samoa and some Pacific Islands, turned over to New Zealand; Germany’s Pacific Islands north of the Equator, entrusted to Japan; and the phosphate-rich Island of Nauru, awarded to the British Empire but administered by Australia. The status of the “C” mandates was particularly ambiguous: the Mandatory power was allowed to administer them “as integral portions of its territory,” and Smuts described their status with satisfaction to a group of white settlers in Windhoek as “annexation in all but name.”<sup>3</sup> Yet, all mandates were to be administered on the principle that (as Article 22 of the League Covenant put it) “the well-being and development of such peoples”—that is, of “peoples not yet able to stand by themselves under the strenuous conditions of the modern world”—“form a sacred trust of civilization.” Mandatory powers were required to report annually to the League Council on their performance of this trust, and the Mandates commission was to examine their reports together with a government representative and alert the Council to any particular concerns. “It was impossible to overestimate the importance of the duties of the present Commission,” William Rappard, the Swiss

political economist and Director of the Mandates Section of the League told the commissioners at their historic first meeting. Their gathering “marked the beginning of an epoch in colonial history.”<sup>4</sup>

Was Rappard right? What difference did the mandates system make? When the system was first established most observers—especially those on the left—believed (with Rappard) that it mattered a great deal. Mandatory rule was different from earlier, discredited types of imperial rule, the British liberals and humanitarians who helped to frame it argued, being purely benevolent in its intent and intended to last only for a limited time. It was a transitional form, a halfway house between dependence and independence, perhaps even a tool for making those earlier and more exploitative forms of imperial rule obsolete.<sup>5</sup> The first serious scholarly investigations undertaken (often by Americans) in the 1920s tended to endorse that liberal view. The mandates system, the American legal scholar Quincy Wright concluded in his massive study published in 1930, was not only a practical and more humanitarian means of administering “backward areas,” but was having a spill-over effect as well, as the principles of trusteeship and tutelage on which it was based came to be accepted throughout the colonies.<sup>6</sup>

And there, for a time, opinion rested. True, some on the political left had always shared Lenin’s view that the mandates system was merely a disguised form of imperial annexation, but not until the Italian conquest of Ethiopia and the discrediting of the League did such views become widespread.<sup>7</sup> Yet, the very mid-century wars and imperial conflicts that undermined faith in “trusteeship” also shifted scholarly attention elsewhere. A few studies of the mandates system were written in preparation for the new trusteeship system of the United Nations,<sup>8</sup> but with the Middle East mandates independent and colonial nationalism ascendant, few political

scientists and historians saw reason to look back to the ponderous musings of a group of officials meeting in Geneva.<sup>9</sup> And as the former mandates moved with the colonies towards independence, the question of the character of the mandates system began to seem irrelevant anyway.

In the last decade, however, scholarly interest in mandates has undergone a revival. In a world of occupations undertaken in the name of anti-terrorism, international peace-keeping or state-building, the mandates system looks newly relevant. Studies of particular territories' period under mandate have of course been appearing for decades; recently, however, a few scholars have taken up the task of understanding the character and consequences of the system more broadly. In 2004, Nadine Méouchy and Peter Sluglett published the proceedings of two conferences organized to share research findings on the Middle East mandates and to consider whether any claims could in fact be made about the "the mandates" as a whole; in 1993 and 2004 Michael Callahan brought out a two-volume study of Britain's and France's African "B" mandates oriented towards much the same question.<sup>10</sup> Finally, in 2004 Antony Anghie made the boldest intervention, identifying the mandates system as a crucial – and for the interwar period, the crucial – mechanism in the evolution of international law and administrative practice in dependent territories alike.<sup>11</sup>

The methodologies and arguments of these new works vary. Callahan and many of the authors in the volume on the Middle East mandates continue to see the mandatory powers as the primary actors (and hence as the crucial unit of analysis); only Anghie locates agency primarily within the international regime itself. Their normative stances differ as well, with Callahan seeing mandatory rule (rather as Rappard did) as on balance progressive and humanitarian and

Anghie seeing it as the means by which direct territorial control of the Third World gave way to an indirect (but equally damaging) form of control exercised by international organizations and the World Bank. Yet, for all that, these recent works do tend to reiterate two crucial claims made by Wright and other scholars more than sixty years ago – first, that the mandates were actually governed in a different way, and, second, that the system helped bring about the end of formal empire.

This essay takes off from, but in crucial respects also questions, this interpretation. It does so on both methodological and empirical grounds. It is worth noting, to begin with, that while these recent studies make general claims about “the mandates system,” they have tended either to be based on relatively little empirical research (in Anghie’s case) or to examine only a restricted group of mandates.<sup>12</sup> Yet, any persuasive argument about the system as a whole must be able to account for mandates in all regions and of all types, and must moreover be able to specify the distinctiveness of mandates when compared to colonies. Such a systematic study can scarcely be attempted here, yet even a cursory examination—undertaken in the first section of this essay—suggests that the claims made thus far about the system’s impact in any particular case (or set of cases) may be hard to sustain across the board. To say this, of course, is not to say that the mandates system didn’t matter, still less to reject any particular historian’s findings for the specific cases he or she discusses. It is, rather, simply to acknowledge that the system’s impact was different in different cases. It is, therefore, variation, and not uniformity, that we need to explain.

Three further sections outline an approach that will, it is hoped, better account for such variation. Such an approach must begin with a realistic assessment of the system's actual practices and capacities and not simply with its rhetorical claims. What was distinctive about the mandates, I argue in the second section, was neither the ideals the system professed nor the administrative systems the participating states operated on the ground, but rather the particular processes of international scrutiny, consultation, appeal, and publicity centered in Geneva and focused on the mandates alone. If we take those processes seriously, I argue, we see that the mandates system was less a means for transforming governance than a mechanism for generating talk: while lacking the capacity directly to affect colonial rule, it could require colonial powers to discuss the character and legitimacy of that rule. It was, in other words, an engine for the generation and promulgation of international norms.

But what difference did that international discussion make? How and when does an “incitement to discourse” affect state action? The third section explores this question by surveying how mandatory powers in five different territories – Tanganyika, Palestine, Syria, New Guinea, and South West Africa – responded to the publicity, and norm-generating, machinery of the League. Those responses, as we shall see, were far from uniform: some powers professed loyalty to mandatory ideals while others defied them; some powers learned to exploit that publicity apparatus while others sought to evade it. We must look to individual states' calculations of their (very different) geopolitical and national interests in order to explain that variation.<sup>13</sup> The League offered mandatory powers something – publicity, international legitimacy – but it was not something all powers felt they could use or could afford. A final

section thus returns briefly to the interests and calculations of the different mandatory powers themselves.

## *II. Variable Governance and the Limits of International Authority*

Let us begin, then, by examining the claim that mandatory rule constituted a new and specific form of governance. How well does that hold up? Some sixty years ago, when the former League official H. Duncan Hall asked the same question in a study of the system written in preparation for the founding conference of the United Nations, he came to a rather pessimistic conclusion. Only in two cases—those of New Zealand’s mandate in Western Samoa (which could be compared to American Samoa) and of Australia’s mandate in German New Guinea (which could be compared to Australia’s neighboring colony of Papua)—was it easy to compare mandatory governance with colonial rule, and in neither of these two cases was the mandate the more progressive of the two.<sup>14</sup> And when one extends the comparison further, the difficulty of generalization worsens. Mandates were supposed to be “developed,” economically and politically, but while Britain did introduce land reforms in Tanganyika and Transjordan, and the Japanese made every effort to build up the productivity of their island possessions, Australia wanted German New Guinea mostly as a buffer state and put very few resources into it, while South Africa simply shipped white settlers into South West Africa and accelerated a process of dispossession of African land.<sup>15</sup>

The obligation to encourage representative institutions and foster self-government was also very unevenly met. The Middle East mandates, after all, violated such norms from the outset, being established in spite of local populations’ clear preference for independence and, in

the case of Syria and Lebanon, rooted objection to the assignment of the mandate to France. True, Britain managed to locate a class of collaborators in Iraq on whom they could devolve authority without jeopardizing British strategic interests, but France set up power-sharing arrangements in Syria and Lebanon only after the great revolt of 1925-7, and British plans to introduce at least consultative institutions in Palestine came to nothing.<sup>16</sup> Efforts to elaborate systems of “indirect rule” in some African “B” mandates—such as the devolution of authority onto supposedly “traditional” chiefs in Tanganyika or the instrumental deployment of ethnic divisions in Rwanda<sup>17</sup>—were sometimes welcomed by the League but were no more progressive than (and were based upon) German antecedents or systems developed in other colonies. In the “C” mandates (like the “A” mandates), moreover, developments sometimes actually went backwards. The mixed-race Rehoboth population that had enjoyed a measure of autonomy in German South West Africa lost those rights under South African rule, and Samoans under New Zealand experienced the same retrogression. Both populations petitioned repeatedly and unsuccessfully for redress, with a major civil disobedience campaign emerging – and then being forcibly repressed – in Western Samoa in the late 1920s.<sup>18</sup>

Nor did the administrative practices used in the mandates necessarily resemble the ideals of “trusteeship” laid out in the Covenant. In France’s “B” mandates in Africa, as Callahan convincingly shows, the system had a clear effect, with governments forcing local administrators to moderate or limit some trademark French colonial practices and systems—including military recruitment and the detested code de l’indigénat—in order to ward off criticism.<sup>19</sup> Yet, reforms were not applied across the board. None of the other mandatory powers quite followed South Africa in simply turning their mandate into a kind of closely-policed labor camp, but France and

Britain bombed Middle East mandate populations during periods of unrest or rebellion, Belgium forced peasants from Burundi and Rwanda into the mines in neighboring Katanga, Australia used punitive raids to punish New Guinean tribesmen who resisted labor recruiters, and New Zealand deported the mixed-race community leaders it considered responsible for its troubles in Western Samoa.<sup>20</sup> There were efforts at infrastructural development, epidemic control and education as well, of course, but it would be hard to argue that these were different from, or more extensive than, those in other colonies across the board. Indeed, insofar as mandatory authorities tended to “borrow” methods from other administrations, they borrowed from their own colonies, and not from other nations’ mandates. Thus, Britain applied in Tanganyika models worked out in Uganda and Nigeria; Belgium linked Rwanda and Burundi to neighboring Congo; Japan ruled its island mandates in the same centralized and intensive fashion that it governed Korea and Taiwan; and South Africa introduced the pass laws and native reserves dear to Afrikaners into its South West African mandate.

But what about the claim that the mandate system differed from imperial rule because it was to be a passing phase? Empirically, this “difference” also seems hard to pin down. It is true that the establishment of the mandates system did prevent the simple annexation that would otherwise have been South West Africa’s fate, but only perhaps in Iraq did it accelerate the timetable to self rule. No mandatory power was willing to describe their rule as “temporary” anyway: “so far as any instrument could be described as permanent,” the French representative told the League Assembly in 1929, “this could be said of the ‘B’ and ‘C’ mandates.”<sup>21</sup> For its part, the Mandates commission did nothing to force the question: in fact, when Britain told the League it wished to move Iraq to independence, the Commission was reluctant to agree.<sup>22</sup> For

all the rhetoric of tutelage, the mandates system didn't really help states climb the ladder to independence; to the contrary, it appeared to create pressures the other way. Thus, when a scandal erupted about Liberian tolerance of forced labor in the late 1920s, humanitarians and imperialists alike were quick to suggest that the matter could be dealt with by handing over Liberia—a sovereign member of the League—to the USA as a mandate. Some British and French politicians also thought that the whole damaging episode of the Italo-Abyssinian war could have been avoided had Ethiopia been made a mandate of Italy at the outset. Liberia and Ethiopia were the only independent black states in Africa in the 1920s, and the fact that the mandates system threatened rather than protected their independence surely tells us something about how seriously we should treat claims that the mandates system was a step towards independence.<sup>23</sup>

### *III. Oversight Mechanisms and the Powers of International Talk*

But if the mandates system wasn't an effective administrative system, what was it? If it couldn't enforce new standards of government, what could it do? To answer this question, we must surely begin by examining how the system actually worked. “The mandates system” consisted of two institutions: the “Permanent Mandates Commission” which met twice yearly to examine the reports and representatives from the mandates, and a small permanent section of the League secretariat that gathered information and helped the commission with its work. Those bodies met or were located in Geneva; they had no powers or representatives in the mandates themselves. The commission's reports, moreover, were purely advisory: actual responsibility for overseeing the system rested with the League Council. From the beginning, William Rappard objected to the strict limits placed on the commission's and the secretariat's powers; as Ania

Peter has shown, however, the League Secretary-General Sir Eric Drummond showed no willingness to support his more ambitious ideas.<sup>24</sup> Indeed, when the commission suggested in 1926 that it be granted more powers (such the right to interview petitioners from the mandates) it was sharply rebuked. “It seemed to him,” British Foreign Secretary Austen Chamberlain said in the Council (to an orchestrated chorus of approval from the representatives of Belgium, France, New Zealand, Japan, and South Africa, mandatory powers all), that “there was a tendency on the part of the Commission to extend its authority to a point where the government would no longer be vested in the mandatory power but in the Mandates Commission”—a move that was, he said, “not the intention of the Covenant.”<sup>25</sup>

Given that the commission had very few powers and that the Council tried hard to limit even those it had, one might have expected its oversight to have been entirely meaningless. That was not the case, however, and for three reasons. The first has to do with the character and internal dynamics of the commission. Appointed by the League Council, the nine members of the commission were scarcely critics of empire: the request by the Haitian representative to the League Dantès Bellegarde that a “*homme de couleur*” be appointed, and Philip Noel-Baker’s suggestion that “this [W.E.B.] DuBois, about whom everyone is talking” might actually be a suitable such nominee, went no further.<sup>26</sup> All the commissioners save the (almost entirely silent) Japanese member were thus white Europeans; most were ex-colonial officials; and four were nationals of the chief mandatory powers (Britain, France, Belgium and Japan) themselves. Formally, then, only two, the Scandinavian member who was also the only woman and the Swiss Rappard (who continued as a commissioner after he resigned as the Director of the Mandates Section in 1925), could be considered truly independent.

And yet, for all that, the strong-minded ex-governors who made up the commission turned out to be much more critical and less tractable than the Council expected. Sir Frederick Lugard, the British appointee, proved particularly troublesome, for while his reputation lent the commission considerable prestige, he also expected to be able to set its course. The Belgian Pierre Orts, the Dutchman D. F. W. Van Rees, and the Spaniard Leopoldo Palacios (all of whom—like Rappard and Lugard—wrote works on the mandates system) also proved hard to contain. Moreover, even when commissioners simply acted as the mouthpiece of their governments (as the French, Portuguese, Japanese, and—after 1927—German members tended to do), they could for that very reason be eager to cause problems for a particular mandatory power. Italian resentment at having had their territorial ambitions thwarted at the peace conference, and German anger over the deprivation of their colonies, made the Italian and German representatives into vigilant guardians of mandatory “difference” and strong critics of any tendency by a mandatory power to claim sovereignty. The fact that the commissioners were appointed without fixed term, and that most thus tended to serve until ill health or old age overtook them, or until their state withdrew from the League, meant that they became, over time, even more knowledgeable, independent, and impossible to control.

Second, if the mandatory powers had trouble controlling the commission, they had trouble controlling information as well. To their distress, League oversight proliferated and legitimized information-gathering, including from non-governmental sources, about the mandates. The mandatory powers certainly did their best to monopolize information, frowning on any suggestion that the commission hear petitioners in person and making sure that the Council refused to finance or condone official visits or investigations in the mandates, but still

they could not prevent some independent voices from being heard. This was because of the right of inhabitants or interested outsiders to petition the Council about violations of the mandate – a right that had not been envisaged by the system’s architects but was an almost inevitable by-product of the League’s attempt to cope with the wave of protests sent to Geneva once the Allied decisions on the distribution of the mandates became public. All of the mandatory powers detested this right of petition and did their best to curtail it, persuading the Council in 1922 to agree to a British proposal that all petitions from inhabitants of the mandates be sent first to the mandatory power for comment before being sent on for investigation by the commission – a procedure, the irrepressible Bellegarde pointed out in the Assembly, that required petitioners “to communicate their grievances to the very persons of whom they complain.”<sup>27</sup> Yet, however restrictive these rules, the right of petition did come to be understood and exploited in the Middle East mandates, while in Africa and the Pacific particular conflicts (such as the Mau movement in Western Samoa) sometimes generated a spate of petitioning. When the Anti-Slavery Society or other established humanitarian organizations got wind of scandals or abuses, they also proved quite willing to petition on victims’ behalf.

Finally, all this talk became important because it was both public and publicized. Only the opening meeting of the Mandates commission session was held in public, but its deliberations—including reports on petitions, its sometimes acrimonious interrogation of officials, and its report to the Council—were published and made readily available. Those materials were also reviewed annually by the Sixth Committee (Political Questions) of the League Assembly, which to the annoyance of the Council also claimed the right to comment on, and oversee, the governance of the mandates. The Council was dominated by the great powers (who were also

mandatory powers); the Assembly, by contrast, was the forum in which small states—including a few non-white states—could have their voices heard. Debates in the Assembly tended to reveal “a noticeable undercurrent of jealousy of the mandatory powers,” the British delegate to the League warned the Foreign Secretary in 1929; “no time was lost reminding them that the other members of the League are on the watch for any attempt to evade the restrictions imposed by the mandatory system.”<sup>28</sup> Some of the most controversial or deplorable acts to take place in the mandates, including the South African bombardment of a rebellion by tribesmen, the French bombing of Damascus, and British handling of civil disturbances in Palestine, were thus first raised in the Assembly (and not the Council) of the League. The Haitian Bellegarde, who took a special interest in mandates, showed a particularly prescient awareness of the rhetorical platform that international organizations provide to the weaker and subjected nations of the world.<sup>29</sup>

If we step back and consider the practices of mandatory oversight, then, we are forced to recognize that they were not practices of governance. They were, rather, mechanisms for generating talk. The mandates system purported to require mandatory powers to govern dependent territories differently; what it did in fact, however, was simply to require them to talk about governing territories differently. It required the imperial powers to engage in a protracted, wearisome, and public debate about how undemocratic rule over alien populations (accepted before the Wilsonian era as an entirely normal state of affairs) could be justified. The mandates commission couldn't prevent these powers from lying or withholding information, of course, and if it disapproved of what it heard it could do very little about it. It could, however, approve or condemn actions, and make its views publicly known. What it did, then, was to generate norms and offer legitimacy to those powers that accepted them.

It is important to recognize the significance of this “legitimizing” function. Empire today has been very largely discredited, but in the years between the wars alien non-consensual rule over subject populations was still the practice across much of the globe. The First World War, Wilsonianism, and the Bolshevik revolution had dented the legitimacy of empire, but they had not swept it away. What the imperial powers confronted between the wars, then, was a problem not of rule but of legitimacy. Although Britain and France were still capable of holding their dependent territories, and in the First World War had increased those holdings, they faced considerable trouble justifying that possession. That challenge to legitimacy came, moreover, not only (and sometimes not even primarily) from clamant indigenous voices; it was also posed by mobilized and voting metropolitan populations which, while scarcely anti-imperialist, had begun to exhibit a worrying anxiety about the ethics of empire. Arguments about security or national interest or even racial superiority no longer sufficed: in a Wilsonian age, imperial rule required more complex justifications. This was what the mandates system provided, articulating an ideology of trusteeship, of imperial rule as training for self-determination, and legitimizing the rule of those powers who professed loyalty to that cause. Of course, that ideology of trusteeship could hurt the imperial powers as well, for those who flouted its norms then faced the censure of that “civilization” in whose name the mandates commission spoke. But did the system’s capacity to offer legitimacy really matter? How much did the mandatory powers really care about legitimation? Let us examine a few, quite disparate, cases.

#### *IV. The System in Motion: Five Cases*

##### *Tanganyika*

In their administration of Tanganyika, the British appear to have quickly grasped the propaganda advantages to be gained from the mandates system. They took care to treat the commission formally and respectfully, reporting at length on all aspects of their administration and dispatching high-ranking administrators—including, in 1927, the governor himself, Donald Cameron—to Geneva to answer questions. Those officials invariably professed Britain’s loyalty to the mandates system, insisting that all aspects of its administration in Tanganyika were, and would continue to be, based on the principles of the mandate.<sup>30</sup> Actually, as Cameron later admitted in his autobiography, he hardly noticed the mandate, and organized Tanganyika’s administration along the lines he had learned from Lugard in Nigeria.<sup>31</sup> Since Lugard was Britain’s representative on the mandates commission, he was unlikely to object to that borrowing: in Lugard’s mind, his system in Nigeria was the best model for the mandates anyway. For most of the 1920s, then, the mandates commission was warmly congratulatory about Tanganyika.<sup>32</sup>

That harmony eroded somewhat after a German representative was added to the commission, and in the face of Conservative Party proposals for closer ties between settler-dominated Kenya and Tanganyika. The commission—and, backing it up, the Assembly—was firmly opposed to such a move, seeing it as a violation of the mandate’s “separate” status and as a step towards annexation. When faced with such criticism, however, British officials consistently turned conciliatory, assuring both bodies of their intention to preserve Tanganyika’s independent administration and to abide by their obligations. For the most part, then, Britain was able to use mandatory oversight of Tanganyika to burnish its reputation as a model colonial power. It is worth noting, however, that League approval neither fostered economic

development in Tanganyika (which on independence, was one of the most underdeveloped of Britain's colonies) nor speeded up the timetable to independence (which was granted relatively late).<sup>33</sup> The commissioners would also have had a different impression of British rule had they cast their eyes over Tanganyika's northern border into Kenya, where British settlers had succeeded in seizing land and imposing a system of labor control reminiscent of South Africa, and which would degenerate into bloody chaos in the 1950s.<sup>34</sup> The Colonial Office's mounting irritation with Kenya's troublesome settlers was the main reason why Tanganyika was spared such a fate, but the fact that the mandates system acted as an engine for publicity, and hence could be exploited for propagandist effect and even to deflect attention from the worsening morass to the north, strengthened their commitment to safeguard Tanganyika's autonomy.

### *Palestine*

The British would probably have liked to use Palestine that way as well: here, however, the petitioning and publicity allowed by mandate system deepened their difficulties. The Palestine mandate, as we all know, included seemingly incompatible pledges, obliging Britain on the one hand to foster Jewish immigration and settlement so as to provide "a homeland for the Jewish people in Palestine" and on the other to do nothing "which might prejudice the civil and religious rights of existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine."<sup>35</sup> For a time, Britain insisted that it could fulfill both of these pledges, but the two communities didn't appear to share that optimistic view. Both petitioned the commission about their grievances. The commission had little trouble dismissing most Arab petitions, since the Arabs were usually complaining not of some infraction of the mandate but rather of policies undertaken in fulfillment of the Balfour

pledge, which had been written into the mandate itself. Especially once the Nazi takeover placed European Jews in immediate danger, then, the commission urged the British to repress Arab dissent firmly and honor their obligation to facilitate Jewish immigration.<sup>36</sup> In 1929, and again in 1936, the British also faced sharp criticism at the League Assembly for their failure to crack down effectively on civil disturbances.<sup>37</sup>

By the mid-thirties, however, British governments appear to have lost confidence in that policy, not simply because of the level of repression they were required to exert against the Arab population, but also because they much disliked having to play out this “no-win” game publicly and amid denunciations from Arab nationalists, Zionists, the mandates commission, representatives of other European powers, and the House of Commons alike. Britain was a democratic country, Colonial Under-Secretary William Ormsby-Gore told the commission wearily in 1937, and while the British people would tolerate the use of force in a morally unambiguous situation, they “could not for long be persuaded to use military force to settle a conflict between right and right.”<sup>38</sup> The fact that Britain’s main interest in the Middle East was in Iraq and the Gulf and not in Palestine anyway confirmed officials’ deepening conviction that they needed an exit strategy. Once again, mandatory oversight didn’t greatly affect administrative practice, which in this case was less harsh than the mandates commission recommended.<sup>39</sup> Rather, by worsening the public relations disaster that was the Palestine mandate, it helped weaken Britain’s willingness to hang on.

*Syria*

This was not the case next door in Syria, where the fierce French response to the great Arab revolt in 1925 created one of the worst legitimization crises of the mandates system. France responded harshly to a nationalist rising that began in Druze areas but soon spread throughout Syria: villages sympathizing with insurgents were bombarded and their male inhabitants sometimes executed. It was the bombing of Damascus in October that alerted and outraged Western opinion, however. The Times denounced French handling of the rising; petitions flowed towards Geneva from a diasporic Syrian population in every corner of the globe; and the commission gathered in special session in Rome in early 1926 to get to the bottom of the matter.<sup>40</sup> In a false step, the French representative on the commission suggested the issue was not really so serious: it was just a little local incident involving the Druze population, “which at all times had revolted against every regime which had been imposed upon it,” and the bombing of Damascus, while regrettable, probably resulted in less loss of life than a ground attack would have done.<sup>41</sup> Rappard, Lugard and Van Rees were outraged, and retorted that France might not have just mishandled this incident but be in violation of the mandate as a whole.

Yet, once these commissioners had vented their spleen—and, incidentally, made clear that the League too thought bombing civilians hard to reconcile with trusteeship—they got to work on damage control and re-legitimation. Syrian petitioners who had traveled to Rome to give evidence were told they would not be received, and the commission’s report, while admitting that France had made errors in its handling of the crisis, bluntly told the population that continued opposition would merely further defer independence.<sup>42</sup> France had already replaced the High Commissioner with Henry de Jouvenel, the left-leaning Senator and former editor of Le Matin who, not coincidentally, was well-known and well-liked in Geneva. Jouvenel finished the

job of putting down the revolt (including with continued bombing), but then began building up a collaboration with Syrian notables interested in stability and containment.<sup>43</sup> By generating publicity initially against and then on behalf of the French authorities, the mandates system played its part in that conservative reconciliation.

### *Mandated New Guinea*

Australia had almost as much trouble adjusting to mandatory oversight: from the outset League officials and Australian authorities regarded one another with suspicion bordering on contempt. No statesman at the Peace Conference had been so belligerently hostile to the concept of mandates as Australian Prime Minister Billy Hughes, and while he was in the end forced into line, by that point there was a legacy of four years of Australian military administration in New Guinea to overcome. That administration had been concerned mostly to keep the seized German copra plantations producing, and had thus preserved the harsh regime of recruitment, indenture and physical punishment of indigenous labor on which the Germans had relied.<sup>44</sup> Perhaps the Australians thought New Guinea was simply too far away for much that happened there to reach the commission's ears in Geneva; to their surprise, however, information flowed more easily than they expected. One source was Sir Hubert Murray, the paternalistic governor of Australia's neighboring colony of Papua, who had wanted to have the two territories amalgamated under his own control, and who, when those plans were thwarted, had few scruples about passing along the "queer tales" he heard of "the flogging of natives and illegal recruiting" to friends (including his younger brother, the Oxford classicist and prominent League of Nations supporter, Sir Gilbert Murray) in Melbourne, London, and Geneva.<sup>45</sup> German missionaries and ex-planters also

inundated the Mandates Section with critical information, and Australian newspaper exposés were picked up by the comprehensive League press service.<sup>46</sup>

Amid suspicion and negative publicity, then, the Australian government struggled to change course. Although officials in New Guinea continued to insist that the territory's "primitive beings" could only be controlled through flogging, in 1921 the Prime Minister told the new civilian Administrator firmly "that not only the dictates of humanity but the obligations which the Commonwealth Government has undertaken to the League of Nations" required that cruelty towards natives be prevented and punished.<sup>47</sup> It was quite another matter to make such pious statements a reality, but while harsh recruitment methods continued, and pay was kept below the rates enforced in Murray's Papua, the end to military administration, the appointment of the reform-minded E. L. Piesse as Director of the Pacific Branch of the Prime Minister's department, and worries about exposure in Melbourne and Geneva did have an effect. Archival records thus reveal both a widespread white culture of casual violence towards New Guineans, with repeated instances of flogging, "selling" laborers, and the capture and "use" of local women (a practice known as "pulling marys"), and administrators' persistent efforts at reform. Egregious offenders were disciplined, tried, or simply sent "home"; slowly, the statistics on whites disciplined for violence against natives inched upwards.<sup>48</sup> New Guinea remained a hard-scrabble, uncertain place, a magnet for disaffected ex-soldiers and adventurers down on their luck, but when scandals erupted (as they regularly did) about brutality towards New Guineans, the administration tried to respond. Thus, for example, when one loose-lipped Australian adventurer told an anthropological meeting in London that, in his experience, resistance to explorers or recruiters could easily be overcome by shooting a few natives (a slip that formed the

basis for a well-publicized petition by the Anti-Slavery Society to the League Council), the Melbourne government pressed the New Guinea authorities to prosecute.<sup>49</sup> New Guinea's white planters found this sensitivity to League opinion alternately laughable and dangerous,<sup>50</sup> but Australia's governments came to care about international opinion and did what they could to appease it.

### *South West Africa*

Not so South Africa, which from the outset treated its South West Africa mandate like the "fifth province" it had wanted it to be. Most fertile land not already in white hands was turned over to whites during the period of the mandate; Africans, on the other hand, were confined to native reserves or forced through taxation to labor on white farms.<sup>51</sup> Already by 1922, these policies had resulted in rebellion, as the Bondelswarts, a group of pastoralists near the Orange River, rose in opposition to the imposition of a tax on their hunting dogs and the arrest of their chosen headman. South Africa repressed this rebellion by a military campaign and aerial bombing, and when exposed in the Assembly by the vigilant Dantès Bellegarde and then called to account by the Permanent Mandates Commission, was unapologetic.<sup>52</sup> Adverse publicity—in the form of protests by the Anti-Slavery Society and exposés in the press—had no real effect. Although the mandates commission, and still more the Council, transparently wished South Africa simply to confess the error of its ways and pledge amendment, South Africa refused to do so. Only by inspiring "respect for the supremacy of the white man" could "uncivilized" natives be ruled, its representative told the commission bluntly the following year.<sup>53</sup> South Africa's repressive policies would continue unabated.

Year after year, the mandates commission questioned the designated South African representative about its harsh police policies, its lack of spending on health and education, its deference to settler interests. The South Africans answered willingly, but declined to change their tune. South West Africa's natives were "2000 years behind the European," one representative told the commission<sup>54</sup>; labor of any kind—even forced labor—could do them nothing but good. Some commissioners (notably Rappard) grew frustrated, but the Council showed little interest; only when South Africa claimed actual sovereignty did it intervene and force acknowledgment that mandatory powers were "not sovereign" in the mandated territory.<sup>55</sup> These two decades of disagreement and (sometimes) defiance thus had little impact on South West African governance; they did, however, have important implications for several mandatory powers' legitimacy and standing. The regimes of other mandatory powers, one Australian representative noted with relief, rose in credit in comparison to South Africa;<sup>56</sup> legitimization of those acknowledging League authority and stigmatization of those denying it went hand in hand. For the widening group of people paying attention to the commission's work, then, by 1939 South Africa was already seen as a kind of "rogue state"—a judgment that would be confirmed after 1945, when South Africa held Namibia in defiance of the United Nations. League oversight didn't force South Africa to govern South West Africa in accordance with ideals of "trusteeship," but it did set in motion that process of delegitimation.

There were other mandates and other mandatory powers, but these varied cases (involving mandates of all three types and in all three regions) already suggest some tentative conclusions. In all these cases, the mandates system could only indirectly affect governance; in

all cases, however, it generated an intensified discussion about the character of that rule. The mandates system offered legitimation of territorial occupation, but it did so on condition – the condition being that the particular mandatory power must come to Geneva and profess its loyalty to the ideals of the sacred trust. Those norms could then guide actions, but they need not do so, for sanctions for bad behavior were almost non-existent. The mandates commission deplored South African practices, but the option of relieving South Africa of the mandate was never discussed.

The imperial and mandatory powers responded to the incentives offered by the mandates system very differently. Britain was probably the most deliberate and consequential, consistently sending full reports and high-level representatives to the PMC, and calculating carefully in private about how to use the commission to best effect. Japan, interestingly, also proved quite adept, dutifully sending reports and officials to mandates commission even after it had withdrawn from the League. (In response, the commission gave Japan an easy time, doing little to investigate whether it had fortified its islands in violation of the mandate.<sup>57</sup>) France was more recalcitrant in showing deference, but as the Syrian case (and, still more, the African mandates) showed, it too came to understand the advantages of a careful use of the opportunities offered by Geneva. Australia and New Zealand had more difficulties. Given the distances involved, both tended to send their London-based High Commissioners to the Permanent Mandates Commission's sessions, where, given their near-total ignorance of the territory in question, those diplomats usually made a poor impression. Only gradually, and after being educated through petitions, adverse publicity and commission criticism, did these states learn to play the game. Not so South Africa, which appeared willing to bear indefinitely the cost of verbal defiance.

## *V. International Norms and the Logic of National Interest*

It remains to ask why these different mandatory powers responded to the incentives and reputational sanctions of the Geneva system so variably. One cannot search for the answer to that question in the files of the League alone, for as we have seen, decision-making power remained with the mandatory state. Policies about dependent territories (including mandates) were still made between the wars partly by officials in metropolitan centers and partly by administrators and others on the ground. They were still made partly through a careful calculation of interests (ideological and strategic, national and geopolitical), and partly by responding to unfolding and often unpredictable events. What had changed was that those officials and administrators had to consider the effects of the oversight and publicity mechanisms of the League when making their calculations.

The task of tracing those calculations is far beyond this essay, but even a cursory glance at the landscape of interests policy-makers confronted goes some distance to explain those variable responses. Britain between the wars was an overstretched global power with a democratic political culture increasingly uncomfortable about empire. Britain needed and cared about public opinion; it could not lightly ignore the powerful pro-League views of its own people or the skepticism about empire prevalent across the Atlantic. Britain also had (or thought it had) a strong interest in rehabilitating or appeasing Germany and wanted to avoid treating her ex-colonies “imperially.” When it came to the mandates anyway, Britain’s own strategic or economic interests were not greatly involved. Britain had imperial possessions it cared about—India, Malaya, Kenya—but of the mandates it was concerned greatly only with oil-rich

Iraq, which it turned into a formally independent client state outside League scrutiny as quickly as possible.<sup>58</sup> Both material and ideological interests thus predisposed Britain towards the publicity-conscious and relatively deferential policy she followed in Geneva.

Japan, too, had a not inconsiderable stake in the League, but of a different kind. An ascendant regional hegemon with global ambitions, Japan valued the League largely for the recognition of “great power” status that a permanent Council seat and possession of mandates conferred. Even internationalists, critics of the military party, and the Japan’s pro-League associations largely shared these views, seeing not only Japan’s intense exploitation of its mandated islands but equally its projects in Manchuria and the East as at one with the “civilizational” ideals of the League.<sup>59</sup> Most League members came to reject that interpretation in the case of Manchuria, but when it came to Japan’s mandated territories no power wanted to rock the boat. If Japan violated the ideals of the “sacred trust,” then, it was never called to account: with the help of a powerful internal propaganda machine, and with an easy monopoly over information about these remote and scattered islands, it never lost the rhetorical upper hand. Even after its withdrawal from the League, Japan carefully complied with reporting requirements while administratively incorporating its mandate into its strategic and economic sphere—and with the mandates, unlike in Manchuria, the League never called Japan’s bluff.

The more uncertain patterns of behaviour we see in the cases of France and the dominions, by contrast, testify to the difficulty these states had pursuing their perceived interests while also coping with the “noise” made by the League’s publicity machine. Fears about its security and anxiety about its “great power” status heightened France’s determination to dominate its mandates (even when, as in Syria, those mandates offered little in return); only in

the face of much negative publicity (including from its petition-prone mandate populations) did the costs mount high enough for France to be willing to adjust its course. Australian interests were also rather finely balanced. Australia had relatively little interest in the League, valuing it mostly as an arena in which to assert its status as an independent state. The mandates system was not popular, and anything that stood in the way of planters' interests was much resented by New Guinea's whites. Yet, while politicians in Melbourne had also hoped to get some economic benefit from New Guinea, for Australia strategic interests, and the relationship with Britain, were always paramount. Australia needed New Guinea above all as a buffer state, and accepted that the interests of a few white settlers must give way in order to win international validation in Geneva.

For South Africa, by contrast, calculations were very different. South Africa was a regional and not a global power, governed by a white population determined to entrench a race-based political system increasingly at odds with liberal international political norms. Its policies in South West Africa were in keeping and not at odds with its own domestic governance; it could not, then, govern its mandate according to the "sacred trust" without raising the question of why South Africa itself wasn't governed in that way. So long as South Africa was going to move down the road to apartheid, all its interests save its weak concern for international approbation pushed it towards defiance.

## *VI. Conclusion*

This essay has argued that the mandates system should best be seen as a discursive arena and not an administrative system. As such, it was an arena for political legitimation and political

learning, and different mandatory powers learned to use it more or less well. It should not be seen as an engine for socioeconomic progress and development, nor as a mechanism for training “backwards” peoples in the arts of self-government, since, when adroitly used, it legitimized and rationalized those populations’ continued subjection to non-consensual alien rule. Indeed, the very practices of mandatory oversight assumed and reified those populations’ exclusion, for only representatives of the mandatory powers could “speak” before the mandates commission, and the commission itself was comprised exclusively of European or great-power members. Inhabitants could be heard through petition, yes, but such petitions had to be written, to refrain from calling the mandate itself into question, and to be submitted through the mandatory power itself. The commission made no effort to inform inhabitants of their rights of petition anyway, and only in the Middle East mandates, Western Samoa, and among particular elites or ethnic groups elsewhere did that right become widely known.<sup>60</sup>

Yet, for all that, the mandates system had some impact on the inhabitants of the mandates as well. In light of the argument made here, it should come as no surprise to discover that this impact was less on the manner in which inhabitants were governed or on the timetable to self-government than on their appropriation (or “learning”) of transnational political practices. However unequal the terms of their entry into its realm, nationalist movements in the Middle East and to a degree in Africa and the Pacific learned through the League to appeal to “international opinion” over the heads of the mandatory government. They learned to seek supporters and allies in other “Third World” countries (and, as Bellegarde’s example shows, those allies learned vigilance on their behalf). They learned, finally, to fight their battles using the language of international norms and in the halls of international organizations.

When the states represented on the new United Nations Trusteeship Council began hammering out the rules of procedure for oversight of the remaining mandates and newly-acquired trust territories after the Second World War, then, lines of battle were swiftly drawn. “Administering” and “non-administering” states squared off not over the purposes of “trusteeship” (since all pleasingly agreed that trust territories were to be developed economically and set on the road to self-government) but rather over the powers and limits of that international scrutiny. Would United Nations authorities be allowed to visit and establish missions in the territories? (This time, it was agreed they would.) Should petitions from inhabitants be sent through the administering state, as with the mandates system, or directly to United Nations? Most went to United Nations authorities directly, and in terms of numbers, they exploded.<sup>61</sup> Whether those petitions resulted in better governance would certainly be an interesting research topic; what can be said is that the widening of the scope for international appeal delegitimized the administering states’ claims to authority further. It is this displacement of some amount of conflict over non-consensual rule into the international realm, and the strategic use of that realm by imperial powers and nationalist movements alike, and not higher levels of development or more enlightened forms of government, that are the mandates system’s legacies.

## Notes

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- 1 J. C. Smuts, "The League of Nations: A Practical Suggestion," in David Hunter Miller, The Drafting of the Covenant, vol. 2 (New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1928), pp. 23-60, here at p. 28. On Smuts and the mandates system, see Wm. Roger Louis, Great Britain and Germany's Lost Colonies, 1914-1919 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1967), chs. 3-4; W. K. Hancock, Smuts: The Sanguine Years, 1870-1919 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1962), chs. 20-21.
  - 2 Numerous works trace the founding of the mandates system. Miller, Drafting of the Covenant, vol. 2, pp. 194-228, reprints the relevant meetings of the Council of Ten at the peace conference, and Margaret Macmillan's Paris 1919: Six Months that Changed the World (New York: Random House, 2001), esp. ch. 8, provides a vivid reconstruction of the personalities involved. In addition, virtually all standard accounts summarize the founding of the system, including the Wright, Hall and Callahan studies cited below.
  - 3 Smuts' speech was reported in the Cape Times on Sept. 18, 1920. It aroused considerable concern, including within the Mandates Section, which requested clarification. The speech was printed in Permanent Mandates Commission [PMC], Minutes, 2<sup>nd</sup> session (1922), annex 6, pp. 92-3.
  - 4 PMC, Minutes, 1<sup>st</sup> meeting, 1<sup>st</sup> session, 4 Oct. 1921.
  5. In Britain, the League of Nations Union, the Fabian Society, and the Anti-Slavery Society strongly promoted and defended the system. See, Freda White, Mandates (London: Jonathan Cape, 1926); P.J. Noel Baker, The League of Nations At Work (London: Nisbet & Co., 1926), ch. 7; John Harris, "The Mandatory System after Five Years' Working," Contemporary Review, 127 (1925), pp. 171-8.
  - 6 Quincy Wright, Mandates under the League of Nations (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1930), pp. 581, 588. For similar, generally positive, assessments, see Rayford Logan, "The Operation of the Mandates system in Africa," Journal of Negro History, 13: 4 (Oct. 1928), pp. 423-477; Parker Thomas Moon, Imperialism and World Politics (New York: Macmillan, 1926), ch. 28; Raymond Leslie Buell, International Relations (1925; rev. ed. New York: Henry Holt, 1929), esp. chs. 15-16.
  - 7 For which, see especially, George Padmore, Africa and World Peace (1937; reprint London: Frank Cass, 1972).
  8. Two such standard works by League officials being H. Duncan Hall, Mandates, Dependencies and Trusteeship (Washington: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 1947), and William

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Rappard, "The Mandates and the International Trusteeship Systems," Political Science Quarterly, 61: 3 (1946), pp. 408-19.

9. Honorable exceptions being: Wm. Roger Louis, Great Britain and Germany's Lost Colonies, op. cit.; idem., "The United Kingdom and the Beginning of the Mandates System, 1919-1922," International Organization, 23: 1 (1969), pp. 73-96; Ralph A. Austen, "Varieties of Trusteeship: African Territories under British and French Mandate, 1919-1939," in Prosser Gifford and Wm. Roger Louis, eds., France and Britain in Africa (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1971), pp. 515-542.

10 Nadine Méouchy and Peter Sluglett, The British and French Mandates in Comparative Perspective/Les Mandats Français et Anglais dans une perspective comparative (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2004); Michael D. Callahan, Mandates and Empire: The League of Nations and Africa, 1919-1931 (Brighton: Sussex Academic Press, 1993), and A Sacred Trust: The League of Nations and Africa, 1929-1946 (Brighton: Sussex Academic Press, 2004).

11 Antony Anghie, Imperialism, Sovereignty, and the Making of International Law (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004).

12 Anghie's study relies heavily on published League records and on Wright's volume from 1930. Despite their subtitles ("The League of Nations and Africa"), Callahan's two volumes deal only with the French and British "B" mandates, excluding South Africa's mandate over South West Africa and Belgium's mandate over Burundi and Rwanda, the worst-ruled African mandates.

13 As a historian, I have not cast this argument in terms of debates in political science, but it does accord with institutionalist arguments that see international regimes as mechanisms used by states to achieve their interests in areas where individual action is ineffective or has significant costs. The literature on international regimes is far too extensive to discuss here, but for one landmark article, see Robert O. Keohane, "The Demand for International Regimes," International Organization, 36: 2 (Spring 1982), 325-355. Interestingly, this literature has paid very little attention to the League, even though institutionalist thought has some affinities with functionalist arguments developed by David Mitrany, who was influenced by his own experiences with the League. For an account of League processes that pays some attention to that genealogy, see Martin David Dubin, "Transgovernmental Processes in the League of Nations," International Organization 37: 3 (Summer, 1983), 469-93.

14 Hall, Mandates, Dependencies and Trusteeship, pp. 59-62.

15 For land reform in Tanganyika, see, Charlotte Leubuscher, Tanganyika Territory: A Study of Economic Policy under Mandate (London: Oxford University Press, 1944), and in Transjordan, Michael R. Fischbach, "The British Land Program, State-Societal Cooperation and Popular Imagination in Transjordan, in Méouchy and Sluglett, The British and French Mandates, pp.

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277-95. For Japanese economic policy, see Mark R. Peattie, Nan'yū : The Rise and Fall of the Japanese in Mocronesia, 1885-1945 Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1988), esp. ch. 5. W. J. Hudson notes the parsimony of Australian administration in New Guinea in Australia and the League of Nations (Sydney: Sydney University Press, 1980), ch. 6. For statistics on expropriation in Namibia, see A. J. Christopher, "Official land disposal policies and European settlement in southern Africa, 1860-1960," Journal of Historical Geography, 9: 4 (1983), esp. p. 371.

16 For the British strategy in Iraq, see Peter Sluglett, "Les Mandats/The Mandates: Some reflections on the Nature of the British Presence in Iraq (1914-1932) and the French Presence in Syria (1918-1946), pp. 99-127, and Toby Dodge, "International Obligation, Domestic Pressure and Colonial Nationalism: the Birth of the Iraqi State under the Mandate System," pp. 142-64, both in Méouchy and Sluglett, The British and French Mandates; for reconciliation following the Syrian revolt, see Michael Provence, The Great Syrian Revolt and the Rise of Arab Nationalism (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2005) and Philip S. Khoury, Syria and the French Mandate: The Politics of Arab Nationalism, 1920-1945 (London: I.B. Tauris & Co., 1987); for the failure of various consultative projects in Palestine in the twenties, see Bernard Wasserstein, The British in Palestine: The Mandatory Government and the Arab Jewish Conflict, 1917-1929, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1991).

17 For "indirect rule" in Tangayika, see John Iliffe, A Modern History of Tanganyika (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979), ch. 10; for Belgian empowerment of and reliance on Tutsi elites in Rwanda, see Jean Rumiya, Le Rewanda sous le Régime du Mandat Belge, 1916-1931 (Paris: Éditions l'Harmattan, 1992), esp. pp. 159-63.

18 The Rehoboth community repeatedly petitioned the PMC asking for recognition of their historic autonomy. Lugard in particular was sympathetic to their case, but noted that since their autonomy had not been recognized by the Versailles treaty, the Rehobothers could only be advised to address themselves to South Africa. See, League of Nations Archives (Geneva) [henceforth LNA], File 1/3788/1947, esp. F. Lugard, "Report," 30 May 1925. On the "Mau" movement in Western Samoa, see esp. J. W. Davidson, Samoa mo Samoa: The Emergence of the Independent State of Western Samoa (Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 1967), ch. 5, and Malama Meleisea, The Making of Modern Samoa: Traditional Authority and Colonial Administration in the Modern History of Western Samoa (Suva, Fiji: Institute of Pacific Studies, University of the South Pacific, 1987), ch. 6. The Samoan petitions must, however, be traced through the League archives in Geneva.

19 Callahan, Mandates and Empire, esp. ch. 6.

20 Conditions or incidents in Palestine, Syria, New Guinea and South Africa are discussed below. For forced labor in Burundi, see Joseph Gahama, Le Burundi sous l'administration belge (Paris: Ed. Karthala, 1983), pp. 374-8. The Samoan mandatory administration's new legislation allowing deportation was noted by the League; see LNA, R2321, 6A/709/709, jacket 1 "The

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Maintenance of Authority in Native Affairs (No. 2) Ordinance, 1928, published in the Supplement to the Western Samoa Gazette, no. 74, 21 Feb. 1928, and Legislative Council Debates, 21 Feb. 1928. Several petitions were sent protesting the policy of deportation.

21 This is Robert Cecil's paraphrase of his words, in Cecil to Arthur Henderson, 23 Sept. 1929, in British Documents on Foreign Affairs, Part II, Series J, The League of Nations, vol. 10, p. 53.

22 Rappard in particular objected to Britain's insistence on a quick timetable towards Iraqi independence, fearing the consequences for minority non-Arab populations. For Rappard's reservations, see esp. Victor Monnier, William E. Rappard: Défenseur des libertés, serviteur de son pays et de la communauté internationale (Geneva: Ed. Slatkine, 1995), pp. 448-9.

23 For such proposals, see Callahan, A Sacred Trust, pp. 52-62, 78-87, and, for Liberia in particular, Ibrahim Sundiata, Brothers and Strangers: Black Zion, Black Slavery, 1914-1940 (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2003).

24 Ania Peter, William E. Rappard und der Völkerbund: Ein Schweizer Pionier der internationalen Verständigung (Frankfurt: Peter Lang, 1973), esp. pp. 84-98.

25 Minutes of the 41<sup>st</sup> session of the Council, 3<sup>rd</sup> meeting, 3 Sept. 1926, League of Nations Official Journal (Oct. 1926), pp. 1233-37, quote at p. 1233; this episode is also covered in Callahan, Mandates, pp. 123-9.

26 Churchill Archives Center, Cambridge University, Noel-Baker Papers, NBKR 4/440, Dantès Bellegarde to Noel Baker, 7 Oct. 1921, and Noel-Baker to Ormsby-Gore, 24 Sept. 1921.

27 This restrictive procedure was proposed by the British; see LNA, Box R60, 1/22099/22099, "Submission to the League of Nations of Petitions from Inhabitants of Mandated Territories: Memorandum by the British Representative on Procedures to be Adopted," (24 July 1922). Bellegarde's criticisms in the Assembly are at Records of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Assembly, vol. 1, Minutes, Plenary session, Sept. 20, 1922, p. 156; for the approval of the Council, see Minutes of the 23<sup>rd</sup> Session of the Council, First and Fifth meetings, Jan. 29 and 31, 1923, League of Nations Official Journal, 4: 3 (Mar. 1923), pp. 200-1, 211.

28 Cecil to Arthur Henderson, 23 Sept. 1929, in British Documents on Foreign Affairs, op. cit., p. 53.

29 On Bellegarde, see esp. Patrick D. Bellegarde-Smith, "Dantes Bellegarde and Pan-Africanism," Phylon (1960-), 42: 3 (3<sup>rd</sup> Qtr., 1981), 233-244.

30 See, e.g., Cameron's reassuring statement to the Commission, PMC, Minutes, 11<sup>th</sup> Session, June 20-July 6, 1927, p. 65.

31 Donald Cameron, My Tanganyika Service (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1939), p. 20.

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32 For some examples of this harmonious relationship, see Susan Pedersen, “Settler Colonialism at the Bar of the League of Nations,” in Caroline Elkins and Susan Pedersen, eds., Settler Colonialism in the Twentieth Century (New York: Routledge, 2005), esp. p. 123.

33 For such criticisms, see esp. D. M. P. McCarthy, “Organizing Underdevelopment from the Inside: The bureaucratic Economy in Tanganyika, 1919-1940,” The International Journal of African Historical Studies, 10: 4 (1977), pp. 573-99; John Iliffe, A Modern History of Tanganyika (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979), esp. pp. 321, 326, 356.

34 For which, see especially, Caroline Elkins, Imperial Reckoning: The Untold Story of Britain’s Gulag in Kenya (New York: Henry Holt, 2004).

35 The text of the Palestine mandate is readily available; one source is Wright, Mandates, pp. 600-7, here at 600.

36 For the evolution of PMC ideas about Palestine, see Pedersen, “Settler Colonialism,” 125-9; also Roger Heacock, “Le Système international aux prises avec le colonialisme: Les Délibérations sur la Palestine dans la Commission Permanente des Mandats de la Société des Nations,” in Méouchy and Sluglett, The British and French Mandates, pp. 129-42.

37 Cecil to Arthur Henderson, 23 Sept. 1929, and Malcolm MacDonald to Anthony Eden, 10 October 1936, in British Documents on Foreign Affairs, op. cit., pp. 53, 295.

38 PMC, Minutes, 32<sup>nd</sup> session, July 30-Aug. 18, 1937, p. 170.

39 Charles Townshend explores why the British were unwilling to subject Palestine to the level of repressive policing they used elsewhere. See, “The Defense of Palestine: Insurrection and Public Security, 1837-1939,” The English Historical Review, 103: 409 (Oct. 1988), pp. 917-949.

40 For this mobilization, see esp. Provence, The Great Syrian Revolt.

41 Comments by M. Roume, in PMC, Minutes, 8<sup>th</sup> session, Feb. 16-Mar. 6, 1926, pp. 11-12.

42 Ibid., passim, and Doc. C.144.M.58.1926.V, PMC, Report to the Council on the Work of the 8<sup>th</sup> (extradordinary) session (1926).

43 For this process of reconciliation, see Philip S. Khoury’s classic study, Syria and the French Mandate.

44 For that labor system, see James Griffin, Hank Nelson and Stewart Firth, Papua New Guinea: A Political History (Victoria: Heinemann Educational, 1979), chs. 4-5; for the decision to allow flogging, see Australian National Archives (Canberra) [henceforth ANA], File A457/1, Pethebridge to Ministry of Defence, 3 December 1915 and 28 April 1916.

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45 Hubert Murray to Gilbert Murray, 3 Oct. 1918, and (for this quote) Hubert Murray to Hugh Mahon, 22 Dec. 1923, in Francis West, ed., Selected Letters of Hubert Murray (Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 1970), pp. 103, 116.

46 Hudson, Australia and the League of Nations, pp. 137, 139.

47 ANA File A457/1, op. cit., Johnston to Defence, 14 March 1919; PM's office to Administrator, Rabaul, 26 Sept. 1921.

48 See ANA Files A457/1 and A518/1 for particular cases; Report of Inquiry into Allegations of Flogging and Forced Labour of Natives, by A.S. Canning, Parliamentary Papers (Australia), 1923-4, vol. 4, for one important government response; and the statistics on prosecutions of Europeans included Australia's annual reports to the League of Nations. Very little has been written from archival sources about the New Guinea administration, but one exemplary piece is, Roger C. Thompson, "Making a Mandate: The Formation of Australia's New Guinea Policies, 1919-1925," Journal of Pacific History, 25: 1 (1990), 68-94.

49 For the handling of this petition, see especially, ANA, A518/1, "New Guinea—Attacks by natives—(General)," and A981/4, "External Affairs Department. League of Nations. Mandates. Petition re. Killing of Natives."

50 Planter opinion can be traced through the articles and letters in the Pacific Islands Monthly and the Rabaul Times. For typical examples, see, "Undisciplined Natives: A Growing Menace in New Guinea: Planter's Protest Against Official Mollycoddling of Plantation Labour," Pacific Islands Monthly, Oct. 23, 1931, pp. 1-3; "'Completely Spoiled': Natives of New Guinea," Pacific Islands Monthly, Sept. 21, 1934, p. 24; "Our critics – the P. M. C.," Rabaul Times, 3 Nov. 1933; "Bring out the Slipper," Rabaul Times, 3 May 1935.

51 For South African policy under the mandate, see esp. Tony Emmett, Popular Resistance and the Roots of Nationalism in Namibia, 1915-1966 (Basel: P. Schlettwein, 1999); also Jeremy Silvester, Marion Wallace and Patricia Hayes, "'Trees Never Meet': Mobility and Containment: An Overview," and Robert J. Gordon, "Vagrancy, Law, and 'Shadow Knowledge': International Pacification, 1915-1946," in Patricia Hayes, Jeremy Silvester, Marion Wallace and Wolfram Hartmann, eds., Namibia under South African Rule: Mobility and Containment, 1915-1946 (Oxford: James Currey, 1998), pp. 3-77.

52 For Bellegarde's raising of the matter, League of Nations, Records of the Third Assembly, Plenary Meetings, vol. 1, Minutes, 5 Sept. 1922, pp. 38-9. The inquiry into the Bondelswarts rebellion absorbed much PMC time; its final report can be found at League Doc. No. A.47.1923.VI, PMC, Report on the Bondelzwarts Rebellion (14 Aug. 1923).

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53 LNA, Box R11, 1/37014/1347, "Statement by Mr. Hofmeyr to the Permanent Mandates Commission," 25 June 1924, pp. 22, 25.

54 Dr. Conradie, Administrator, in PMC, Minutes, 27<sup>th</sup> session, 3-18 June 1935, p. 163.

55 Minutes of the 56<sup>th</sup> session of the Council, Sept. 6, 1929, League of Nations Official Journal, 10: 11 (Nov. 1929), p. 1467; Minutes of the 58<sup>th</sup> session of the Council, Jan. 13, 1930, League of Nations Official Journal, 11: 2 (Feb. 1930), pp. 69-70, and Annex 1184, p. 139; Hertzog to Drummond, 13 Mar. 1930, and Hertzog to Drummond, 16 Apr. 1930, League of Nations Official Journal, 11: 7 (July 1930), pp. 383-9.

56 This was the view of Joseph Carrodus, Australia's representative in 1926, for which see Thompson, "Making a Mandate," p. 81.

57 For the Commission's gingerly treatment of Japan, and the vexed question of Japan's militarization of its mandate, see Peattie, Nan'y, chs. 4 and 8.

58 For which, see Dodge, *op. cit.*, and Peter Suglett, *op. cit.*

59 For the character of Japanese internationalism, see esp. Ian Nish, Japan's Struggle with Internationalism: Japan, China and the League of Nations, 1931-1933 (London: Kegan Paul International, 1993); for the mobilization of public opinion in Japan behind the Manchurian project, see Louise Young, Japan's Total Empire: Manchuria and the Culture of Wartime Imperialism (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998).

60 The petition process established under the minorities protection regime of the League has been very thoroughly investigated, especially by Martin Scheuermann, Minderheitenschutz contra Konfliktverhütung? Die Minderheitenpolitik des Völkerbundes in den zwanziger Jahren (Marburg: Verlag Herder-Institut, 2000), which is based on a thorough study of all petitions up to 1929. By contrast, while Michael Callahan discusses petitions from the African "B" mandates in his two volumes cited above, and petitions are mentioned in passing in works on the Middle East, Pacific, and South West African mandates, no comprehensive study of petitioning under the mandates system exists.

61 For those conflicts in the Council, see James N. Murray, Jr., The United Nations Trusteeship System (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1957), esp. ch. 7; also more generally, R.N. Chowdhuri, International Mandates and Trusteeship Systems: A Comparative Study (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1955).