

Papal Diplomacy by Proxy? Catholic Internationalism at the League of Nations' International Committee on Intellectual Cooperation, 1922–1939

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The Holy See's involvement in interwar multilateralism is rarely acknowledged, largely due to its exclusion from the Versailles settlement and resulting institutions. Using new archival findings, this article reevaluates the Vatican's role in the contestation and construction of this new order, focusing on the League's International Committee on Intellectual Cooperation. Unofficially acting as Vatican intermediaries, a number of League officials quietly promoted Catholic visions of internationalism from within this body. The activities of these individuals provided an alternative method for promoting the Holy See's interests within the emergent international order, in conscious competition with more dominant secular conceptions of internationalism.

The history of the League of Nations, and the conceptions of international order that coalesced within its constituent bodies, has undergone a renaissance in recent years. This literature generally

ASV = Vatican Secret Archives; CICI = International Committee on Intellectual Cooperation; IEI = International Educational Cinematography Institute; IICI = International Institute of Intellectual Cooperation; LNA = League of Nations Archives; OCI = Intellectual Cooperation Organisation; UCEI = L'Union Catholique d'Etudes Internationales; UNESCOA = UNESCO Archives.

All documents cited from the Vatican Secret Archives can be located in the catalogue 'Archivio della Nunziatura Apostolica in Svizzera (Berna) (1915–1935)', indice 1225, catalogued by Carlo Piacentini, 13 July 2009.

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emphasises the role of the League as a construct of internationalism,¹ in which its exact tenets were competitively shaped by the various actors within this sphere, providing ‘a significant conduit for transnational connections in the interwar period’.² Catholic internationalist activists, much like other such activists of different creeds, sought to use this conduit to imprint their own values on the shape of this international institution, with varying degrees of success. Yet this particular group’s position within the emergent postwar international order has largely been neglected in both secular and ecclesiastical literatures. Indeed, little scholarly attention has been paid to the Holy See’s involvement with multilateral institutions before World War II, as the Vatican’s uncertain diplomatic status up to 1929 is generally equated with a corresponding lack of activity in the interwar international realm. A rare exception is Robert Araujo and John Lugal’s monograph on the topic, which outlines in detail the efforts of the Vatican and its intermediaries within the League of Nations.³ This work, however, is somewhat hampered by the authors’ explicit biases,⁴ and its insights merit reexamination in light of documents since made available at the Vatican Secret Archives. In light of these new archival findings, this article will outline the pursuit of Catholic internationalism⁵ within the League’s International Committee on Intellectual Cooperation (CICI)

¹ See Patricia Clavin, *Securing the world economy: the reinvention of the League of Nations, 1920–1946*, Oxford 2013; Daniel Gorman, *The emergence of international society in the 1920s*, Cambridge 2012; Akira Iriye, *Cultural internationalism and world order*, Baltimore 1997, and *Global community: the role of international organizations in the making of the contemporary world*, Berkeley 2004; Daniel Laqua, *Internationalism reconfigured: transnational ideas and movements between the world wars*, London 2011; Mark Mazower, *Governing the world: the history of an idea*, New York 2013; Susan Pedersen, ‘Back to the League of Nations’, *American Historical Review* cxii (2007), 1091–117; Emily S. Rosenberg (ed.), *A world connecting, 1870–1945*, Cambridge, MA 2012; and Glenda Sluga and Patricia Clavin (eds), *Internationalisms: a twentieth-century history*, Cambridge 2016.

² Emily S. Rosenberg, ‘Transnational currents in a shrinking world’, in Rosenberg, *A world connecting*, 841.

³ Robert John Araujo and John A. Lugal, *Papal diplomacy and the quest for peace: the Vatican and international organization from the early years to the League of Nations*, Naples, FL 2004.

⁴ Araujo and Lugal, both Jesuit priests, advised and represented the Holy See in various capacities within UN bodies throughout their careers. In their own words, their work was ‘influenced not only by their academic study of papal diplomacy ... but also by their participation in the activities of the Holy See in such organisations’: *Papal diplomacy and the quest for peace*, p. ix.

⁵ Defined as ‘the sum of practices, representations and organizations that unite believers of different nationalities or ethnicities in a global effort to reform modern society in accordance with the Church’s principles’: Vincent Viaene, ‘Nineteenth-century Catholic internationalism and its predecessors’, in Abigail Green and Vincent Viaene (eds), *Religious internationalism in the modern world: globalization and faith communities since 1750*, Basingstoke 2012, 83.

from 1922 to 1939, placing these activities within the wider context of papal diplomacy during the interwar period. By doing so, I hope to underline the need for secular and ecclesiastical historians alike to substantively acknowledge the presence of actors working on behalf of the Holy See within the world's first truly multilateral political institution, rather than viewing contemporary Catholic internationalist activities through a purely bilateral lens.

Both Pope Benedict xv (r. 1914–22) and his successor, Pope Pius xi (r. 1922–39), were deeply concerned with the direction and values of the postwar international order, and with how the Holy See might shape it. But the Vatican's international position seemed increasingly precarious during this period. Awkwardly fitting the conventional definition of statehood, the Holy See's status had been uncertain since the loss of the Papal States to Italy in 1870 had stripped it of almost all of its territory, population and the last vestiges of temporal power. The papacy's subsequent refusal to acknowledge Italy's victory precluded active involvement in world affairs for almost six decades and, as a result, in 1914 the Holy See had diplomatic relations with only seventeen states.⁶ Further, while prewar Europe had been home to a host of amorphous, multi-ethnic empires, by 1919 the Holy See was the last remaining chink in the Wilsonian armour of the European system of nation-states on which the new order was to be based. The Vatican's anomalous status meant that it was officially excluded from the Paris Peace Conference, and from the resultant state-based power structures of the postwar settlement. These structures, at the pinnacle of which stood the League of Nations, were informed by the largely secular principles of liberal internationalism, not by those of the Church. This development was all the more problematic for the Church since the League became the official arbiter of international disputes, a role that the Vatican had newly sought to inhabit, with reasonable success, after it was involuntarily freed from the shackles of temporal politics in 1870.⁷ The Vatican's desired role within the European international system had thus been supplanted by an institution whose values were largely at odds with its own, and in whose workings the Church had no official say.

Nevertheless, Pope Benedict xv attempted to portray the papacy as the 'custodian of a supranational doctrine that was genuinely concerned about the destiny of world society'.⁸ His 1917 peace note, *Dès le Début*,

⁶ John F. Pollard, *The unknown pope: Benedict XV and the pursuit of peace*, London 2005, 155.

⁷ See, for example, Pope Leo xiii's arbitration of the dispute between Germany and Spain concerning the Caroline Islands in 1875: Francis Rooney, *The global Vatican*, Lanham, Md 2013, 67.

⁸ Araujo and Lucal, *Papal diplomacy and the quest for peace*, 62.

had called for the establishment of a new organisation to promote international harmony, naturally envisioning a prominent role for the Holy See within it.⁹ His efforts, however, were swiftly superseded by those of President Wilson, whose Fourteen Points statement of January 1918 set the tone for the Paris Peace Conference. While the ‘fundamental defect’ of the resulting settlement, in the eyes of the papacy, was its foundation on secular principles,¹⁰ the Holy See’s exclusion both from the conference and the League were significant factors in its initial hostility towards the organisation.¹¹ Pope Pius XI underlined this hostility in his 1922 encyclical, *Ubi arcano Dei consilio*, in which he asserted that no earthly organisation could mirror the success of ‘that true League of Nations’, medieval European Christendom.¹² For the pope, no ‘merely human institution’ could reproduce such a supposedly harmonious international order without subscribing to the teachings of the Catholic Church, rather than to the secular sensibilities of the post-Enlightenment era. Cloaked in its godless language, the emergent ‘religion humanitaire de Genève’ was viewed as nothing more than a corrupted form of that idealism peculiar to Freemasonry, flanked on its left by socialism, and on its right by liberal Protestantism.¹³

Excluded from this new order, the Vatican instead attempted to bolster its international standing by aggressively pursuing bilateral concordats throughout the 1920s, a process recently described as ‘the Vatican’s counter-settlement to Versailles’.¹⁴ This strategy culminated in the Lateran Treaty with Italy in 1929, which answered the festering Roman Question and restored the Holy See’s status as a *bona fide* member of the international community. But while the Vatican remained publicly non-committal toward the new, secular temple of internationalism, a number of Catholic internationalists recognised and sought to justify the benefits of participating more proactively in the contestation of this new, imperfect order which claimed to embody the universality once solely proclaimed by the Church. Gonzague de Reynold, among the most prominent of these men, argued that the League represented an attempt to emulate St Augustine’s *societas civitatum*, based on the traditions of Roman law and Christian morality.¹⁵ Since this was a Christian ideal, it followed that it could only succeed if guided, overtly or covertly, by the Church and its

⁹ Giuliana Chamedes, ‘The Vatican and the reshaping of the European international order after World War I’, *HJlvi* (2013), 955–76.

¹⁰ John F. Pollard, *The papacy in the age of totalitarianism, 1914–1958*, Oxford 2014, 75–6.

¹¹ Idem, *The unknown pope*, 141.

¹² Pope Pius XI, *Ubi arcano Dei consilio*, Vatican City 1922, col. 45.

¹³ Gonzague de Reynold, *L’Europe tragique: la révolution moderne, la fin d’un monde*, Paris 1934, 385.

¹⁴ Chamedes, ‘The Vatican and the reshaping of the European international order’, 964.

¹⁵ De Reynold, *L’Europe tragique*, 372.

values. Correspondingly, if the secular nature of the League were allowed to blossom unchallenged, it would pose a serious threat to Catholic ideals.¹⁶ Similarly, in 1919, Heinrich Lammasch, the last Minister-President of the Austrian half of the recently dissolved Habsburg empire, called for the establishment of an ‘International Catholic League’. In his view, ‘such a union [as the League] can only be established upon ... Christian ethics, which have been interpreted and preached since twenty centuries [*sic*] by the Catholic Church to her devout in all countries’.¹⁷ The need for a Catholic presence at the League was therefore pitched in conscious opposition to the secular domination of international order. The Vatican and its intermediaries quickly accepted that the contours of the postwar international system would be contested and constructed from within the League; if Catholic actors were completely absent from this process, secular visions of internationalism would simply gain a monopoly, to the further detriment of the Holy See’s international status. Grudgingly aware of the League’s potential power in shaping the norms of this order, Vatican officials thus lent their support to individuals and organisations that worked to influence its activities. Chief among these was L’Union Catholique d’Études Internationales (UCEI), a Geneva-based group led by Gonzague de Reynold for most of its existence, which became the institutional home of Catholic internationalism at the League of Nations, and a proxy voice for the promotion of the Holy See’s otherwise unrepresented interests within the international organisation.

II

UCEI was founded in the Swiss city of Fribourg, historically a Catholic stronghold, in 1917, and modelled after the Fribourg Union, an organisation prominent within the social Catholicism movement of the late nineteenth century.¹⁸ Baron Georges de Montenach, a Fribourgeois noble dedicated to advancing conservative Catholic causes, founded the group, and served as its inaugural president. His cousin, Gonzague de Reynold, served as vice-president, and led the organisation after de Montenach’s death in 1925 until its demise during World War II. Like de Montenach, de Reynold was a fervently traditionalist Catholic of the minor nobility, sceptical of liberal democracy and scathing about modernity in all its forms. A professor of French literature and dean of the philosophy

¹⁶ Gonzague de Reynold to Mgr Lani, 7 Nov. 1924, ASV, ANS/41/142.

¹⁷ Heinrich Lammasch to Eric Drummond, 24 Nov. 1919, LNA, R1006/1219/2285.

¹⁸ *L’Union Catholique d’études internationales*, Fribourg 1926, 1.

faculty at the University of Bern,¹⁹ de Reynold wrote more than thirty books outlining his world view in a career spanning some six decades. His writings centred on the history and politics of Switzerland, Europe and Christendom. Indeed, for both men, their Fribourgeois, Swiss, Catholic and European identities were inextricably tied together,²⁰ an amalgam of traditionalist values explicitly opposed to the tenets of secular modernity – such suspicious concepts as liberty, democracy, progress and cosmopolitanism.²¹

In de Reynold's view, the future ought to resemble the authoritarian, aristocratic and (most important) ecclesiastical past of the *ancien régime* and earlier, and he accordingly applauded the reforms of Fascist and authoritarian leaders such as Mussolini, Franco and Salazar.²² For him, the Renaissance and Reformation had destroyed the sacred stability and certainty of the High Middle Ages, leading directly to 'une véritable anarchie juridique et diplomatique' from the eighteenth century onwards.²³ It followed that harmony could only be restored if international affairs were to be dictated once again by the Catholic Church. His approach to international order was thus firmly rooted in a Catholic, romantic philosophy, formulated in explicit opposition to the Rousseauian rationalism of modernity.²⁴ Recognising the importance of the League as an arena for shaping this order, de Reynold devoted himself to the promotion of Catholic internationalism during the interwar period, temporarily sidelining his domestic activities in right-wing nationalist politics. De Reynold's ceaseless advocacy and writings on behalf of the Holy See and Catholic interests, in addition to his senior positions in both the UCEI and the CICI, saw him become a central figure within the Catholic internationalist movement during the interwar period.

As the organisation's name suggests, UCEI's initial aim was to study international questions from a Catholic perspective,²⁵ and it more than fulfilled this purpose, hosting annual conferences in cities around Europe that considered such questions for days at a time.²⁶ But the organisation soon

¹⁹ 'Procès-verbal de la quatrième session de la Commission de Coopération Intellectuelle, tenue à Genève du vendredi 25 juillet au mardi 29 juillet 1924', ASV, ANS/41/142.

²⁰ For example, when giving a televised tour of his family's sixteenth-century chateau in Cressier in 1957, de Reynold remarked that 'L'Europe? Je n'ai pas besoin de sortir de ma maison pour la voir. Elle est déjà dans cette maison': 'Gonzague de Reynold', *Les archives de la RTS*, <<https://www.rts.ch/archives/tv/divers/allocutions-declarations/6263955-gonzague-de-reynold.html/>>, accessed 29 May 2017.

²¹ Gonzague de Reynold, *Mes Mémoires*, iii, Geneva 1963, 493–4.

²² Wolfram Kaiser and Helmut Wahnout, *Political Catholicism in Europe, 1918–45*, Abingdon 2004, 75. ²³ De Reynold, *L'Europe tragique*, 371–2. ²⁴ *Ibid.* 369.

²⁵ Eugène Beaupin, *Les Catholiques et la Société des Nations*, Paris 1923, 2.

²⁶ Stephen J. Brown, 'Catholic internationalism', *Studies: An Irish Quarterly Review* xiv (1925), 476–9.

became a focal point for Catholic efforts actively to influence the League of Nations, instituting a 'kind of functional linkage between the Holy See and the new organisation in Geneva'.²⁷ The organisation's proximity to the headquarters of the multilateral institution, and the natural interest of many of its members in its activities, ensured that the League soon became the primary focus of its inquiries; by the early 1920s the organisation's structure and committee mirrored those of the League, allowing for focused, subject-specific lobbying efforts.²⁸ In 1920 Pope Benedict xv approved UCEI's programme; this approval, granted just as the League's operations began in earnest in Geneva, provided great latitude for UCEI to act on behalf of the Holy See at the League, and created a conduit for informal relations between the two institutions.²⁹ The organisation's status as the Vatican-approved clearing house for Catholic internationalist activities was bolstered by the diverse, influential makeup of its membership, drawn from many strands of Europe's Catholic elite. For example, ten of the twenty-three attendees at UCEI's annual conference in 1922 were senior clerics drawn from Czechoslovakia, France, Germany, Poland and Switzerland (including a number of bishops); other attendees included Austrian, Polish and Swiss politicians; academics from France, Italy, Switzerland and Yugoslavia; and an Italian nobleman.³⁰ Marius Besson, the bishop of Lausanne, Geneva and Fribourg from 1920 until his death in 1945, was an active member, providing episcopal approval and an additional link to the Church hierarchy beyond members' continuous correspondence with the nunciature in Bern.³¹ By the mid-1920s UCEI had constituent groups in Austria, Britain, Czechoslovakia, France, Germany, Hungary, Italy, Poland, Switzerland and Yugoslavia, and maintained further correspondence with like-minded groups and individuals in Belgium, Canada, Ireland, the Netherlands, Spain and the United States.³²

Perhaps most important, UCEI's status was enhanced by its members' early and sustained ability to secure representation within the secretariat staff of specific League bodies, in particular at the International Committee on Intellectual Cooperation, which became the epicentre of institutionalised Catholic internationalism within the League as a whole. This presence somewhat neutralised the impact of the Holy See's absence from the institution, providing numerous opportunities for

²⁷ Araujo and Lucal, *Papal diplomacy and the quest for peace*, 142.

²⁸ *L'Union Catholique d'Etudes Internationales*, 4.

²⁹ Yves de la Brière, *L'Organisation internationale du monde contemporain et la papauté souveraine*, i, Paris 1930, 59; Eugenio Cardinale, *The Holy See and the international order*, Gerrards Cross 1976, 231.

³⁰ Oskar Halecki to Drummond, 29 Apr. 1922, LNA, R1011/20427/20427.

³¹ Beaupin, *Les Catholiques et la Société des Nations*, 2.

³² *L'Union Catholique d'études internationales*, 3.

official and unofficial advocacy on behalf of Catholic interests, in place of a *bona fide* diplomatic presence. Most notably, de Reynold served as the Swiss delegate and *rapporteur* to the CICI from its inception in 1922 until its dissolution in 1939 (one of only two members to serve on the committee for the entirety of its existence);³³ Oskar Halecki, a Polish diplomat, historian and fellow UCEI member, served as inaugural secretary of the same committee from 1922 to 1925, staying on as an expert adviser afterwards;³⁴ and Jean-Daniel de Montenach, son of Baron de Montenach, worked in the secretariat from 1919 to 1939, serving for most of the 1930s as secretary of the Intellectual Cooperation Organisation (OCI), the body which oversaw both the CICI and its constituent agencies.³⁵ This ability to permeate the League's organisational structure, and in particular that of the intellectual cooperation movement, was particularly beneficial for Catholic interests, since the secretariat, rather than the more explicitly political organs of the League, comprised the 'beating heart' of the organisation; it was the secretariat staff who 'briefed the politicians, organised the meetings, wrote the press releases and, meeting on the golf links or in the bars, kept open [the] "back channel"'.³⁶ It was within these circles, then, that competing visions of international order were most concretely contested, constructed and enacted.

Founded in 1922, the CICI's activities were not strictly defined, owing to its absence from the League charter. Eventually, members fleshed out three main aims for the committee: it was to be a means of contact between national education systems; to 'further the development of an international outlook', and conversely counteract 'the nationalistic tendencies which have invaded education in almost every country'; and to 'take care of the interests of the [intellectual] worker'.³⁷ The International Labor Organization strongly objected to this third aim, which it viewed as encroaching upon its own mandate, and so in practice the CICI's first two objectives remained 'the signposts indicating the direction of the Committee's labours' throughout its existence.³⁸

The CICI initially had twelve members, increased to fifteen by 1926.³⁹ Members were to be 'appointed in consideration of their personal ability and their reputation in learned circles, and without any discrimination as

³³ Jean-Jacques Renoliet, *L'UNESCO oubliée: la Société des Nations et la coopération intellectuelle, 1919-1946*, Paris 1999, 181, 184.

³⁴ 'Gavard-Hochstrasser' volume, LNA, personnel files.

³⁵ Mgr Eugène Beaupin to Jean-Daniel de Montenach, 9 Jan. 1933, UNESCOA, 1/IICI/B/IV/34; 'Lemaire-Murray' volume, LNA personnel files.

³⁶ Pedersen, 'Back to the League of Nations', 1112.

³⁷ H. R. G. Greaves, *The League committees and world order: a study of the permanent expert committees of the League of Nations as an instrument of international government*, London 1931, 117.

³⁸ *Ibid.*

³⁹ *Ibid.* 118.

to nationality'.⁴⁰ Prominent appointees in this mould included Albert Einstein, Marie Curie and Henri Bergson, the committee's inaugural chairman. Despite the nominally disinterested nature of its membership criteria, political considerations played a part in the makeup of the organisation. For example, Gonzague de Reynold's explicit Catholicism, and his corresponding claim to speak as the proxy voice of the Vatican within the League, was doubtless the primary reason for his being appointed to the CICI in 1922, a fact he himself acknowledged at length in his memoirs,⁴¹ borne out further by confidential Vatican documents regarding the selection process.⁴² As secretary, Oskar Halecki had directly lobbied the League's secretary-general, Eric Drummond, for de Reynold's appointment as the Swiss delegate to the CICI, informing him that de Reynold 'would be a very useful member, and his appointment would give satisfaction to Catholic opinion all over the world'.⁴³ Drummond, a devout Catholic, condoned this explicit attempt to gain Catholic representation on the committee, responding simply, 'I agree with you as to the importance of the League securing the support of Catholic opinion, and have always myself done my best to obtain this.'⁴⁴ Drummond's agreement had helped to shift the general opinion of Secretariat staff, who had intended to appoint Albert Einstein to this position. Einstein, a dual German-Swiss citizen, was instead appointed as the German delegate, thanks to the political machinations of Halecki, Jean-Daniel de Montenach and the Swiss Federal Councillor Giuseppe Motta (also a committed Catholic).⁴⁵ Indeed, until his resignation as secretary-general in 1933, Drummond was a faithful ally of the Holy See and its agents in matters multilateral, and often quietly met with Vatican officials when in Rome to meet with Italian government ministers.⁴⁶ In 1923, he personally handed a letter from John Eppstein, a British League official and UCEI activist, to Lord Robert Cecil, the British delegate to the League, requesting his cooperation on matters relating to Vatican-League relations.⁴⁷ In 1932 Drummond agreed that the nunciatures in Bern and Paris should receive copies of all documents regularly communicated to the governments of member states of the League, in order to satisfy the express wishes of the Cardinal Secretary of State, Eugenio

⁴⁰ Daniel Laqua, 'Transnational intellectual cooperation, the League of Nations, and the problem of order', *Journal of Global History* vi (2011), 223–47.

⁴¹ De Reynold, *Mes Mémoires*, iii. 387.

⁴² 'Commissione special lavoro intellettuale', n.d., ASV, ANS/42/142.

⁴³ Halecki to Drummond, 29 Apr. 1922, LNA, R1011/20427/20427.

⁴⁴ Drummond to Halecki, 29 Apr. 1922, *ibid.*

⁴⁵ De Reynold, *Mes Mémoires*, 386.

⁴⁶ James Barros, *Office without power: Secretary-General Sir Eric Drummond, 1919–1933*, Oxford 1979, 275–8.

⁴⁷ John Eppstein to Mgr Luigi Maglione, 12 Sept. 1923, ASV, ANS/40/139.

Pacelli (the future Pope Pius XII). This bold request had been privately communicated to Drummond by Princess Maria Cristina Giustiniani-Bandini, a member of the papal nobility and a private secretary in the secretary-general's office.⁴⁸ Drummond's *de facto* recognition of the Holy See as an entity worthy of a privilege reserved for member states was highly irregular, and reveals a favourable disposition towards Catholic aims that has not been sufficiently explored to date.

The limited literature on the CICI lacks a nuanced depiction of this conscious Catholic presence within the organisation.⁴⁹ Jean-Jacques Renoliet's *L'UNESCO oubliée*, the most recent monograph on the topic, exemplifies the degree to which the existing literature fails to recognise the importance of Catholic identity to a number of the CICI's most prominent members and staff. While de Reynold's prolific activities are heavily referenced throughout, his Catholicism is never mentioned – despite the fact that it was the primary reason for his sitting on the committee, and central to his political identity and motivations. Indeed, throughout the work, Catholicism is never mentioned at all, let alone the strong Catholic sympathies of some of the committee's most active agents. This pattern is also evident in older works, where much of the focus is on national rivalries, rather than competing strands of internationalism.

Although the CICI was solely an advisory body, with no authority to pursue direct action, it nevertheless developed a strong influence within its domain.⁵⁰ The CICI formed a significant conduit for elite intellectual exchange, typifying the quiet success of the League's technical organisations, which in general commanded less attention than other League bodies, relatively undisturbed by politicians and the public at large.⁵¹ Spotting this potential, the Holy See deemed it crucial to shaping conceptions of internationalism within the League as a whole, fearing that the CICI '[would] hardly be more than a façade behind which other forces [would] work' to promote their visions of world order.⁵² The humanitarian, socialist and Masonic tendencies present at the League were, in de

⁴⁸ Drummond to Mgr Pietro di Maria, 15 Sept. 1932, ASV, ANS/76/183.

⁴⁹ Primary works on the topic include Jan Kolasa, *International intellectual cooperation, the League experience and the beginnings of UNESCO*, Wrocław 1962; Daniel Laqua, 'Internationalisme ou affirmation de la nation? La coopération intellectuelle transnationale dans l'entre-deux-guerres', *Critique Internationale* lii (2011), 51–67, and 'Transnational intellectual cooperation'; Renoliet, *L'UNESCO oubliée*, and Fernando Valderrama, *A history of UNESCO*, Paris 1995.

⁵⁰ Greaves, *The League committees and world order*, 2.

⁵¹ Gonzague de Reynold, 'La Commission Internationale de Coopération Intellectuelle de la S.d.N.', *Revue de Genève*, 30 Dec. 1922, 798.

⁵² 'Cette commission de "coopération intellectuelle" ne sera guère qu'une façade, derrière laquelle d'autres forces travailleront': 'Commissione special lavoro intellettuale', n.d., ASV, ANS/41/142.

Reynold's view, particularly dangerous in an organisation like the CICI, since he was its only Catholic member, and all the other members were 'imbued with ideas on the matter of education ... that would substitute a sort of "religion of humanity" in place of Christianity and its dogmas'.⁵³ As such, Catholic internationalists not only followed its work, but made interaction with the CICI central to their activities within the League, in order to counter these secular influences.⁵⁴

De Reynold was thus committed to countering 'l'assaut des utopistes' from within the committee for the entirety of its existence, and much of UCEI's clout within the League rested upon his position.⁵⁵ This consisted of opposing the promotion of any ideas perceived as contrary to Catholic interests. In a 1923 letter outlining his methods to Mgr Luigi Maglione, papal nuncio to Switzerland, de Reynold argued that in times of increasing international turbulence, there was 'a latent need which only the Church can satisfy' for an 'intellectually sound apostolate', and so vigorous engagement with the issue of intellectual cooperation was paramount.⁵⁶ He aimed to fulfil this role himself as the Vatican's intermediary in Geneva, leveraging his position on numerous occasions to promote the Catholic viewpoint on intellectual cooperation, and on broader issues, during this period.

III

With Oskar Halecki as secretary and de Reynold as *rapporteur*, UCEI members controlled all official channels of communication and output on the CICI during the first three years of its existence. This institutional presence was exploited on a number of occasions to hew the organisation's line closer to the preferences of the Holy See. As secretary, Halecki was responsible for pursuing and enacting the CICI's conclusions, including directing all official correspondence with external institutions and individuals.⁵⁷ This included writing and editing letters signed by the chairman,

⁵³ 'Ces tendances sont particulièrement dangereuses dans un organisme comme la Commission de Coopération Intellectuelle, où il ne se trouve qu'un seul catholique et dont tous les autres membres sont imbus, en matière d'éducation, d'idées qui, si elles l'emportaient, tendraient à substituer une sorte de "religion de l'humanité" à la foi chrétienne et à ses dogmes': de Reynold to Lani, 7 Nov. 1924, ASV, ANS/41/142.

⁵⁴ 'Commissione special lavoro intellettuale', n.d., ASV, ANS/41/142.

⁵⁵ De Reynold, *Mes Mémoires*, 384.

⁵⁶ 'Il y a là des besoins latents auxquels seule l'Eglise peut satisfaire: l'heure de l'apostolat intellectuelle et sonnée, et il ne faudrait pas la laisser passer': de Reynold to Maglione, 9 Sept. 1923, ASV, ANS/41/142.

⁵⁷ Andrzej M. Brzezinski, 'Oskar Halecki: the advocate of Central and Eastern European countries in the International Committee on Intellectual Cooperation of

Henri Bergson, on the committee's behalf; contacting institutions regarding the CICI's various investigations and reports; and managing relationships with other League departments. For example, when the CICI began its first major initiative, an appeal to promote intellectual life in postwar Austria in December 1922, Bergson, Halecki and de Reynold wrote and signed it on behalf of the CICI, and sent copies of the document to universities and scientific establishments across the world.⁵⁸ Among those first contacted directly by Halecki were the presidents of two of the Holy See's academic institutions, the Pontifical Biblical Institute and the Pontifical Oriental Institute.⁵⁹ Catholic internationalists saw the diminution of intellectual life in the former Austro-Hungarian Empire as representative of 'le péril de déchristianisation', and both Halecki and de Reynold placed a vocal emphasis on preserving the 'bastions catholiques' of central and eastern Europe.⁶⁰ Part of this meant ensuring that Catholic intellectuals in these regions received support from the CICI, since UCEI believed that they were discriminated against in relief efforts.⁶¹ While there seems to be little basis for this assumption, fear of the deChristianisation of the former seat of a Catholic empire spoke to broader concerns about the increasingly dominant secular tone of international order, and fit with Catholic internationalist priorities at the CICI.

As *rapporteur*, de Reynold held ultimate responsibility for composing the committee's reports and other written output. Here, too, his conservative Catholic impulses were evident. In a 1923 report on student exchanges, an innovation that he conditionally supported, he took the opportunity to underline his strong belief in place and (Christian) tradition, which he felt underpinned European society: 'The eternal student who wanders from one university to another ... ultimately losing all his home ties without learning anything, is an intellectually sterile creature. Breadth of interests – in short, intelligence – has no worse enemy than cosmopolitanism.'⁶² On the same report, questionnaires had not only been sent to the International Federation of Students, but also to the World Federation of Christian Students' Unions, and Pax Romana, an international association of Catholic student groups which had its headquarters in Fribourg and which maintained close links with UCEI.⁶³ The

the League of Nations (1922–1925)', *Studies into the History of Russia and Central-Eastern Europe* xlviii (2014), 5–19. ⁵⁸ *Ibid.* 10.

⁵⁹ Halecki to Andre Fernandez, 10 Jan. 1923, LNA, R1050/24014/25571; Halecki to Michel d'Herbigny, 22 Dec. 1922, LNA, R1050/24014/25423.

⁶⁰ 'Union Catholique d'Etudes Internationales: Commission de Coopération Intellectuelle, première session 10, 11 juin 1924', ASV, ANS/41/142.

⁶¹ De Reynold to Lani, 7 Nov. 1924, ASV, ANS/41/141.

⁶² 'League of Nations Committee on Intellectual Cooperation: report by Professor de Reynold on the Exchange of Students', 21 July 1923, LNA, R1055/28306/29850.

⁶³ *Ibid.*

inclusion of two explicitly Christian student groups in the consultation process allowed de Reynold to point to nominally external perspectives in agreement with his philosophy, versus that of the secular, and much larger, International Federation of Students.

Similarly, by virtue of his position, de Reynold was able to lobby for a more prominent position for Catholic organisations in the CICI's initiatives, while also succeeding in postponing the pursuit of 'less happy projects'.⁶⁴ When the CICI debated recognising the newly formed Catholic Commission for International Cooperation in 1924, de Reynold's presence proved invaluable in rebutting the scepticism of Marie Curie and Jules Destrée, who felt that only national committees should be recognised. Thanks to his advocacy, a compromise was reached, whereby commissions of a corporate, political or religious character would be listed separately from national commissions of intellectual cooperation, but otherwise were to be treated equally in terms of interaction with the CICI.⁶⁵ De Reynold's presence at internal meetings also gave the Vatican privileged access to the committee's private deliberations. In a confidential note sent to the nunciature in Bern, de Reynold summarised in great detail the activities and results of the CICI's inaugural meeting in 1922. This note outlined the first projects agreed upon by the committee, and de Reynold's detailed recommendations as to whether the Church should covertly or overtly support or oppose each measure. He advised that the Vatican support collaboration between scientific associations, universities and libraries, and the standardisation of grades and diplomas.⁶⁶ When the CICI later compiled a catalogue of scientific establishments throughout the world to achieve these ends, de Reynold successfully intervened to argue for the inclusion of the academic institutions of the Holy See.⁶⁷ The notion of establishing an international university, however, was labelled an 'idée dangereuse', opposition to which should be led by the newly established Catholic university in Milan, to counter the secularising impulses of the international education movement. The idea of the creation of an international bureau of education was thought even more dangerous, as it was closer to realisation; de Reynold thus advised the Vatican that Catholics should unequivocally oppose this initiative.⁶⁸

De Reynold did not simply furnish the nunciature in Bern with reports on his activities at the CICI. In September 1923 he travelled to Rome for

⁶⁴ 'M. Gonzague de Reynold ... a pu, par ailleurs, faire ajourner l'examen d'autres projets moins heureux': note enclosed with de Reynold to Lani, 7 Nov. 1924, ASV, ANS/41/142.

⁶⁵ 'Procès-verbal de la quatrième session de la Commission de Coopération Intellectuelle, tenue à Genève du vendredi 25 juillet au mardi 29 juillet 1924', *ibid.*

⁶⁶ Confidential note, de Reynold to Maglione, Aug. 1922, *ibid.*

⁶⁷ Note enclosed with de Reynold to Lani, 7 Nov. 1924, *ibid.*

⁶⁸ Confidential note, de Reynold to Maglione, Aug. 1922, *ibid.*

the first time in his life. While the ostensible purpose of his mission would be an investigation of the Vatican's scientific establishments on the committee's behalf, his actual intent was rather different. De Reynold informed Maglione that 'I want to confidentially report to His Holiness and the Cardinal Secretary of State regarding my past, present, and future activities at the Committee on Intellectual Cooperation, and to consult with them as to the best means to ensure for Catholicism the influence to which it is entitled within the League of Nations.'⁶⁹ He duly travelled to the Vatican with the encouragement of Halecki, de Montenach and Secretary-General Drummond, and with the blessing of Maglione.⁷⁰ De Reynold's excitement, palpable in his account of the trip in his memoirs, does not seem to have been dimmed by the fact that Pope Pius XI granted him an audience of approximately eight minutes. The short meeting consisted of de Reynold receiving a general lecture from the pontiff about peace, and the attitudes that Catholics should have towards international life.⁷¹ Brief though the encounter was, the fact that de Reynold was granted an audience with the pope, and a more substantial one with the Cardinal Secretary of State, underlines the Vatican's recognition that the League of Nations could not be ignored, that it had created an order with which the Church had to actively engage to promote its own vision of internationalism. De Reynold's status as the proxy Vatican actor at the international organisation is strongly supported by these meetings. These encounters also underline the difference between Catholic intermediaries and the Holy See; although closely intertwined and in constant contact, agents such as de Reynold largely acted on their own initiative, albeit with the approval and loose supervision of the Vatican hierarchy. Cooperation between the Vatican and its intermediaries at the League was nevertheless strong – as, for example, when de Reynold received explicit directions regarding the programme of the UCEI's annual conference in Milan in 1923.⁷² These findings contradict the conclusions of Araujo and Lucal, who assert that the 'Holy See neither controlled nor directed the work of [organisations such as UCEI]', and that actors such as de Reynold 'did not consider themselves to be official representatives of the Holy See'.⁷³

⁶⁹ 'Essentiellement et confidentiellement, je désirerais rendre compte à Sa Sainteté et à S.E. le Cardinal Secrétaire d'Etat, de mon action passée, présente et future dans la Commission de coopération intellectuelle, et conférer sur les moyens les meilleurs d'assurer au catholicisme l'influence à laquelle il a droit dans la Société des Nations': de Reynold to Maglione, 9 Sept. 1923, *ibid.* ⁷⁰ De Reynold, *Mes Mémoires*, 458.

⁷¹ *Ibid.* 459.

⁷² De Reynold to Maglione, 4 Sept. 1923, ASV, ANS/41/142.

⁷³ Araujo and Lucal, *Papal diplomacy and the quest for peace*, 253.

IV

Expanding upon its modest, uncodified beginnings, from the mid-1920s onwards the CICI underwent a 'structural metamorphosis',⁷⁴ transforming from a purely consultative technical body into an 'organe de contrôle', overseeing a network of related institutes and exchanges dedicated to various aspects of intellectual cooperation.⁷⁵ The vaunted universality of the League was now preached, promoted and pursued not only within the CICI itself (which drew almost 40 per cent of its members from outside Europe by 1939),⁷⁶ but also through the constituent national committees for intellectual cooperation, and two specialised agencies established during this period: the International Institute of Intellectual Cooperation (IICI), founded in Paris in 1926, and the International Educational Cinematography Institute (IECI), founded in Rome in 1928.

National committees served as the formal link between initiatives at the national level and the League.⁷⁷ The number of national committees for intellectual cooperation stood at thirty in 1929 (including the Catholic Commission for Intellectual Cooperation and a committee for Ukrainian exiles),⁷⁸ rising to forty-five by 1937,⁷⁹ and fifty-three by the beginning of World War II (fifty states, the Catholic Commission, an evangelical commission and the Permanent Inter-Parliamentary Committee on Intellectual Relations).⁸⁰ In comparison, the League itself had fifty member states at the beginning of the war.⁸¹ De Reynold had successfully advocated for the Catholic Commission to be treated on an equal footing with national committees on intellectual cooperation in the eyes of the CICI, and UCEI leveraged this concession throughout the 1920s and 1930s. At the first international conference of national committees, held in Geneva in July 1929, UCEI's Catholic Commission for Intellectual Cooperation was the only non-state-based group present.⁸² While there were a small number of non-state-based groups at the second such conference, held in Paris in 1937, it is instructive to note that the Catholic Commission was the only such organisation consistently present at CICI gatherings throughout this period, underlining UCEI's commitment to Catholic

⁷⁴ Ibid. 238.

⁷⁵ De Reynold, *Mes Mémoires*, 398.

⁷⁶ Renoliet, *L'UNESCO oubliée*, 185.

⁷⁷ Laqua, 'Internationalisme ou affirmation de la nation?', 55–6.

⁷⁸ 'Liste des représentants des commissions nationales de coopération intellectuelle, qui assisteront à la réunion de Genève', 12 July 1929, LNA, R2242/9432/13394.

⁷⁹ De Reynold, *Mes Mémoires*, 401.

⁸⁰ *L'Institut International de Coopération Intellectuelle, 1925–1946: rapports de fonctionnaires et anciens fonctionnaires*, Paris 1946, 539.

⁸¹ F. S. Northedge, *The League of Nations: its life and times, 1920–1946*, Leicester 1986, 329.

⁸² Beupin to Georges Oprescu, 6 May 1929, LNA, R2209/651/11370.

participation in the intellectual cooperation movement.⁸³ Collaboration with other groups was made easier by the fact that several UCEI members also served on their respective national committees, while correspondence was proactively maintained with those further afield from the organisation's western European heartland, such as the Ukrainian, Chinese and Japanese committees.⁸⁴ Thus, while the UCEI was but one of a small number of NGOs that lobbied for its particular worldview within the intellectual cooperation movement, no other such organisation managed to sustain such a continuous, consistent presence within the appropriate League bodies throughout this period.

UCEI's commitment to shaping the intellectual cooperation movement was evident in other ways. By the late 1920s, an increasing number of UCEI members held official positions within the CICI and its related bodies, further embedding and institutionalising the Catholic internationalist presence there (a development that, again, has been scarcely noted in the existing literature). Blaise Briod, a translator, poet and Catholic convert, was Assistant Chief of the IICI's Section on Literary Relations, and a Vice-President of the same institute from the late 1920s onwards;⁸⁵ Gaston Castella, a Fribourgeois historian and president of UCEI's Swiss branch, served as an expert adviser to the CICI, along with Oskar Halecki;⁸⁶ Marquis Pedro Sangro y Ros de Olano, a Spanish nobleman and member of the Catholic Commission on Intellectual Cooperation,⁸⁷ was a member of the IECI's governing body;⁸⁸ and Jean-Daniel de Montenach became Secretary of the Intellectual Cooperation Organisation (OCI), the umbrella body that oversaw the CICI and its constituent agencies, in 1931, serving until he left for the Swiss diplomatic service in early 1939.⁸⁹ De Montenach's elevation allowed him further to promote the informal authority of his cousin, Gonzague de Reynold, within the movement.⁹⁰ In his memoirs, de Reynold (who now also served on the governing bodies of both the IECI⁹¹ and the IICI)⁹²

⁸³ Kolasa, *International intellectual cooperation*, 27.

⁸⁴ 'Mémoire de l'IICI sur la Commission de Coopération intellectuelle de l'Union Catholique d'Etudes Internationales', 7 Jan. 1937, UNESCOA, FR PUNES AG 1-IICI-B-IV-34. ⁸⁵ *L'Union Catholique d'études internationales*, 9. ⁸⁶ *Ibid.*

⁸⁷ 'Liste et adresses des membres de la Commission Catholique Coopération Intellectuelle de l'Union Catholique d'Etudes Internationales', 1924, ASV, ANS/41/142. ⁸⁸ Kolasa, *International intellectual cooperation*, 35.

⁸⁹ 'Lemaire-Murray' volume, LNA, personnel files.

⁹⁰ As, for example, when de Montenach suggested to Gilbert Murray that he delegate his duties as committee chairman to de Reynold on occasion: '[I]f it is difficult for you to come again to Geneva for so short a stay, perhaps you would think it wise to delegate the necessary authority to the rapporteur – M. de Reynold. He is in the neighbourhood of Geneva and could easily come': de Montenach to Gilbert Murray, 1 Sept. 1931, LNA, R2187/220.

⁹¹ Kolasa, *International intellectual cooperation*, 34.

⁹² *Ibid.* 32.

underlined how this expanding institutional presence strengthened relations between the CICI and UCEI, and led to successes such as the commitment to regard private Catholic universities as having the same status as state universities, and, similarly, to treat Pax Romana on an equal footing with the secular International Federation of Students.⁹³

In July 1924 the French government had offered to establish and fund an International Institute for Intellectual Cooperation, to act as an executive arm of the CICI in Geneva. The IICI opened in January 1926; the organisation was led by Julien Luchaire,⁹⁴ a French scholar and authority on Italian literature, and was headquartered on the appropriately named Rue Montpensier, within the Palais-Royal complex.⁹⁵ The organisation's presence in Paris, as a French government-funded body geographically and organisationally separate from the League system, gave rise to fears among Catholics that the organisation would be heavily influenced by the 'Wilsonian catechism' of French authorities, which many believed were tightly controlled by secularist Freemasons.⁹⁶ In the Vatican's view, it was imperative to maintain a presence at the IICI, since it sought to oversee issues such as the revision of textbooks and history curricula.⁹⁷ Relations between UCEI and IICI were thus formalised early on. Mgr Eugène Beaupin, secretary-general of UCEI's French branch, became the organisation's liaison with the Institute.⁹⁸ Upon hearing this news, Luchaire wrote to de Reynold to express his delight, commenting that this would 'further strengthen the ties that bind our Institute and your Union in your person', since the 'excellent personal relationship I already have with Monsignor Beaupin will make [maintaining] this connection easier and more fruitful'.⁹⁹ The two men stayed in close written and verbal contact throughout this period, and both Luchaire and his chief of staff, Giuseppe Prezzolini, endeavoured regularly to send Beaupin all primary documents produced by the IICI.¹⁰⁰ This close contact fostered

⁹³ De Reynold, *Mes Mémoires*, 9.

⁹⁴ Valderrama, *A history of UNESCO*, 2.

⁹⁵ 'Intellectual Cooperation Organisation: proposal by M. Castillejo', 16 July 1932, LNA, R2187/220/36340.

⁹⁶ John Eppstein, *Ten years' life of the League of Nations: a history of the origins of the League and its development from A.D. 1919 to 1929*, London 1929, 79.

⁹⁷ Eckhardt Fuchs, 'The creation of new international networks in education: the League of Nations and educational organizations in the 1920s', *Paedagogica Historica* xliii (2007), 199–209.

⁹⁸ De Reynold to Julien Luchaire, 15 Apr. 1926, UNESCOA, FR PUNES AG 1–IICI–B–IV–34.

⁹⁹ 'Je suis particulièrement heureux de cette décision, qui resserrera encore les liens qui unissaient notre Institut à votre Union dans votre personne. Les excellents rapports personnels que j'entretiens déjà avec Mgr Beaupin rendront encore cette liaison plus facile et plus fructueuse': Luchaire to de Reynold, 18 Apr. 1926, *ibid.*

¹⁰⁰ Luchaire to Beaupin, 19 Apr. 1926, and Giuseppe Prezzolini to Beaupin, 18 Nov. 1926, *ibid.*

connections in other areas within the scope the IICI's mandate in the 1930s, even as the League's activities were increasingly sidelined in more political areas. For example, IICI officials encouraged collaboration with the Vatican itself in the area of museums, historical monuments and cultural preservation – made easier by the city-state's newly assured international status after the Lateran Treaty.¹⁰¹

Many members of the Catholic internationalist elite also wanted to involve themselves more proactively in the dissemination of information regarding international order, including the education of youth about internationalist ideals;¹⁰² connected to this was a desire to ensure that this education was not overly secular or contrary to Catholic values. As early as 1926, a Catholic go-between had been put in place to maintain contact with the relevant experts' committee on education.¹⁰³ While a Spanish academic had once asked in a 1932 proposal to the OCI, 'What has the teaching of physics or mathematics to do with the sovereignty of States?', the Vatican, along with numerous other international actors, was all too aware of the power of ideas and education in shaping individual worldviews.¹⁰⁴

Thus, along with Catholicism's strong institutional presence at the CICI and its constituent parts, from the late 1920s onwards, Catholic activists increasingly produced a steady stream of literature aiming to inform its audience about international life in a way amenable to their own ideals. To this end, in September 1926, Catholic internationalists drawn from the CICI and other League technical bodies, the ILO, and national delegations then attending the seventh Assembly of the League, announced plans for a Catholic information centre in Geneva.¹⁰⁵ This centre would provide a meeting place for Catholics already present within the international system, and also aimed to help represent Catholic interests, especially in opposition to enemy creeds such as Freemasonry, socialism and Protestantism (concerns about the recent activity of 'L'Union des Eglises séparées de Rome' were specifically mentioned in the memo).¹⁰⁶ From this point onwards, in response to the League's publication of reports advising on international education and pedagogy, UCEI began producing its own works to put forward a perspective more amenable to the Catholic

¹⁰¹ 'Note sur la collaboration de la Cité du Vatican avec l'Office International des Musées', and de Montenach to E. B. Foundoukidis, 5 Mar. 1934, UNESCOA, FR PUNES AG 1-IICI-OIM-XIV-15.

¹⁰² *Les Grands Problèmes internationaux de l'heure présente: conférences de la première semaine Catholique internationale de Genève, 16–22 Septembre 1929*, Paris 1930, 19–20.

¹⁰³ Oprescu to de Reynold, 10 Feb. 1926, LNA, R1023/48790/48790.

¹⁰⁴ 'Intellectual Cooperation Organisation: proposal by M. Castillejo', 16 July 1932, LNA, R2187/220/36340.

¹⁰⁵ 'Lettre d'envoi qui serait adressé avec les deux mémoires suivants à quelques notabilités catholiques', 1926, ASV, ANS/42/154.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid.

perspective. *La Société internationale*, a volume on Catholic values and their relationship with international relations, was published in 1928; *International relations from a Catholic standpoint*, published by UCEI's Irish chapter, followed in 1932, providing an 'informative index to attitudes toward the League held by the Catholic elites'.¹⁰⁷

In 1926, when the creation of a Geneva-based postgraduate institution of international studies, to be led by a senior League official, was announced (today known as the Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies, Geneva), a private missive to the Cardinal Secretary of State noted that this 'nursery of functionaries' would be dominated by a philosophy 'very far from Catholic spirit and doctrine'.¹⁰⁸ The feared spirit and doctrine of this institution risked creating 'generations [of officials] imbued with humanitarian internationalism and secularism', a move which must be fought at every turn if the Church were to continue to make its mark upon the new international order.¹⁰⁹

In response to this, the creation of a rival Catholic institute of international studies was proposed by UCEI, both to shelter internationally-minded Catholic youth from dangerous, secular influences, and to facilitate their access to international careers, imbued with 'l'esprit catholique'.¹¹⁰ This institution would be created by an agreement between UCEI and the University of Fribourg, whose location was considered ideal, located in a half-Latin, half-Germanic city close to Geneva, but without the latter city's toxic atmosphere of Protestantism and liberal internationalism.¹¹¹ By establishing UCEI's educational and informational efforts on two bases, a Fribourg-based postgraduate institution and a Geneva-based information centre, members hoped to 'give the best guarantee of the future and effective work for the defence of Catholic interests and the establishment of the reign of Christ in the world'.¹¹² Unlike the information centre, the proposed Catholic rival to the League's secular institution of international affairs was never realised. However, the fact that it was proposed and seriously considered conveys the gravity with which Catholic internationalist actors saw the need to actively promote

¹⁰⁷ Araujo and Lugal, *Papal diplomacy and the quest for peace*, 238.

¹⁰⁸ 'L'Institut de Genève deviendra donc une pépinière de fonctionnaires pour la S.D.N. Mais il ne faut pas se dissimuler que l'esprit et les tendances qui domineront dans cet établissement, seront fort loin d'être d'accord avec l'esprit et la doctrine catholiques. Il risque d'en sortir des générations imprégnées d'internationalisme humanitaire et de laïcisme': 'Note sur un Centre Catholique de Réunion et d'Information', enclosed with Maglione to Cardinal Pietro Gasparri, 28 Oct. 1926, ASV, ANS/42/154.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid.

¹¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹¹ Ibid.

¹¹² 'En asseyant ainsi l'Union sur deux bases, nous lui donnons la meilleure garantie d'avenir et de travail efficace pour la défense des intérêts catholiques et l'établissement du règne du Christ dans le monde': *ibid.*

their own vision of international order if they were to succeed in competition with other, secular internationalisms at the League of Nations.

V

The outbreak of war in 1939 put a halt to the League's intellectual cooperation activities, leading to the permanent closure of the CICI and its constituent organisations in 1946, when their responsibilities were transferred to the newly formed UNESCO. For almost two decades up to this point, the Catholic internationalist movement, centred around de Reynold and UCEI, had succeeded in building and maintaining a consistent presence at all levels of the machinery of perhaps the League's most universal entity.¹¹³ This institutional presence had tangible results; by de Reynold's own estimation, most of UCEI's successes came as a result of the personal interventions of its members within the League.¹¹⁴ As early as 1923, the League's under-secretary-general, Inazō Nitobe, acknowledged the growing influence of UCEI within the League, privately remarking to Eric Drummond that '[t]his Union seems to become more and more important'.¹¹⁵ This influence remained strong until the League's demise, and as a result a small number of Catholic internationalists largely succeeded in their explicit aim of maintaining 'the most dangerous ideas and associations' of secular internationalism 'within reasonable limits'.¹¹⁶

More significantly, the presence of these individuals gave the Holy See access to the internal workings of the League of Nations, and more broadly to the construction of its fleeting international order, when no other avenue was available. Although much diminished in status in the immediate postwar years, the Holy See adapted to and ultimately outlived the League, occupying a far stronger position in 1939 than it had twenty years earlier, or indeed at any point since 1870. But the survival and renewal of the Holy See as an international actor within this newly wrought order was far from inevitable. Long considered a spent force, the Vatican began tangibly to regain its international status only after the Lateran Treaty of 1929. However, a significant but rarely considered part of this rehabilitation occurred within the *multilateral* setting of the League of Nations system, and not simply through the strengthening of

¹¹³ Iriye, *Cultural internationalism and world order*, 64.

¹¹⁴ De Reynold to Besson, 28 Dec. 1926, ASV, ANS/42/152.

¹¹⁵ Inazō Nitobe to Drummond, 18 Oct. 1923, LNA, R1011/20427/31878.

¹¹⁶ '[G]râce à cette représentation l'activité de ce comité, où sont représentées les associations et les idées les plus dangereuses, maintenue dans les limites raisonnables': 'Liste des avantages obtenus en faveur des catholiques par les interventions de l'Union catholique auprès de la Société des Nations', enclosed with de Reynold to Bishop Marius Besson, 28 Dec. 1926, ASV, ANS/42/154.

bilateral relationships during this period. It was within the League that the contours of international order were debated and developed during the interwar period, where tentative claims to universality were staked out between competing internationalisms – and without the presence of its intermediaries, the Vatican would have been all but shut out from this process. As such, acknowledging this multilateral context is crucial to developing a full understanding of the Holy See's interwar resurgence. While the Vatican did not succeed in reasserting its erstwhile geopolitical importance, nor in recasting the new postwar settlement in its own idealised, medieval image, it did succeed in carving out a role for itself within this new Wilsonian order, inserting itself into a system into which it had no rightful or easy access. These findings should serve as a stepping-stone in helping to build a more nuanced understanding of how the Holy See reacted to the emergence of the new, state-based international order of the twentieth century, and how it claimed a place within this milieu.