

REVIEW ARTICLE

AMERICAN POWER AND INTERWAR INTERNATIONALISM

The deluge: the Great War and the remaking of global order, 1916–1931. By Adam Tooze. London: Allen Lane, 2015. Pp. 672. ISBN 9780143127970. £12.99 pbk.

The guardians: the League of Nations and the crisis of empire. By Susan Pedersen. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017. Pp. 592. ISBN 9780198743491. £14.99 pbk.

Securing the world economy: the reinvention of the League of Nations, 1920–1946. By Patricia Clavin. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015. Pp. 416. ISBN 9780198766483. £28.49 pbk.

The emergence of international society in the 1920s. By Daniel Gorman. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2014. Pp. 390. ISBN 9781107640948. £36.99 pbk.

Two central features of global history over the past century have been the pre-eminent power of the United States in world politics and the growth of international organizations. The relationship between these phenomena has been variously interpreted, in ways that reflect theoretical and methodological commitments as well as political perspectives. The Realist school, for whom power relationships are always determinative, have followed Carl Schmitt and E. H. Carr in seeing international institutions, and the norms and laws they uphold, as instruments through which dominant powers seek legitimacy as well as influence. By contrast, liberal theorists have viewed the pursuit of a rule-governed world order, and the development of the idea of a ‘world community’, as a more autonomous and broadly based enterprise, one spurred by increased interdependence and greater concern with matters of common interest to all nations – not least that of avoiding the devastating effects of great power warfare in the modern era. As is usually the case with such analytically sharp distinctions, neither of these positions conveys the whole truth. From the Concert of Europe on, great powers have recognized a collective interest in peace and stability but the growth of international institutions has also been the product of wider ideals and interests. As Mark Mazower has shown in his wide-ranging study, *Governing the world*, the relationship between the narrower interests of great powers on the one hand and various forms of internationalism on the other has been a complex one, involving elements both of conflict and of congruence. But, Mazower emphasizes, since the Second

World War, the structure and activities of the United Nations, the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank, and other international organizations have been largely shaped by Washington.¹ A generation earlier, however, the United States did not even become a member of the League of Nations, making it more possible to distinguish between the role of American power and that of other sources of support for international bodies, and also to assess the relationship and comparative importance of these two novel elements in world politics. It is perhaps not surprising that much of the recent scholarship on the international history of the post-First World War period has focused, in one way or another, on this issue.

For Adam Tooze, it is the scale of American power that is the big story. A central theme of his justly acclaimed study of the rise and fall of the Nazi economy, *The wages of destruction*, was that Adolf Hitler's thinking and strategy was fundamentally shaped by what he saw as the threat posed by the emerging 'global hegemony of the North American continent'.² In *The deluge*, which may be seen as a 'prequel' to the earlier book, Tooze has provided a history of the later stages of the First World War and the subsequent evolution of international politics until the Great Depression (and the eve of the Nazi regime). His geographical purview has broadened to encompass the whole globe, with chapters on developments in China and Japan, and a notably fresh and insightful account of the way the evolution of the Russian revolution interacted with the progression of the war. The main focus, however, remains on Europe – with particular attention paid to the internal politics of Germany. As before, much of the distinctive originality of Tooze's approach derives from his command of the economic and financial realities underlying political developments. The almost twenty tables and graphs give quantitative precision as well as evidentiary weight to the discussion of such matters as the scale and the differential effect on the major countries of both the great inflation of prices during the war and of the dramatic post-war deflation in 1919–22.

Some of these data are deployed to illustrate Tooze's central argument, which is that 'the truly defining feature' of the post-war international order was 'the absent presence' of American power (pp. 3–4, 515–16). Tooze recognizes that it was the unprecedentedly rapid growth of the United States in the fifty years following the Civil War that promoted it to economic primacy; by 1916, its output already exceeded that of the entire British empire. But he argues that the 'global economic dominance' the United States had acquired by the 1920s was not simply the result of its superior rate of growth but was a product of the First World War – and particularly of the way the war had been fought by the allies. As J. M. Keynes, then a treasury official, pointed out at the time, during the Somme offensive of 1916, 45 per cent of Britain's war

¹ Mark Mazower, *Governing the world: the history of an idea* (New York, NY, 2012).

² Adam Tooze, *The wages of destruction: the making and breaking of the Nazi economy* (London, 2006), 9–11, 328, 337, 400–2, 407–9, 423–4, 461, 502–6, 657–8, 663–9.

expenditure was in North America. Tooze provides a tabular breakdown of the proportion of vital war materials that were imported in this way, making his case that it was their access to America's extraordinary productive capacity that enabled the Entente powers to win a decisive military victory (pp. 39–40). But this victory came at a price. The inter-governmental loans the United States extended to the other countries fighting Germany after its own entry into the war in April 1917 eventually amounted to more than ten billion dollars. These 'war debts', which were over and above the huge domestic public debt incurred by each of the belligerent states during the war, left the European powers dependent on both Washington and Wall Street in a way that they had never been before. It was thus 'the Entente's transatlantic war effort', Tooze argues, that 'raised the United States to a position of unprecedented dominance...over Britain, France, and Italy, the great powers of Europe'. It had become 'a power unlike any other' (pp. 6, 11–15, 38–40, 200–3, 211, 296, 302, *passim*).

How was this power exercised, and to what end? Tooze rightly identifies President Woodrow Wilson's January 1917 address to the Senate as inaugurating the involvement of the United States in European politics. The president's call in that speech for 'a peace without victory', taken to imply a 'moral equivalence' between the belligerents, infuriated not only the allies but also those Americans, such as Theodore Roosevelt, who felt that Britain and France were fighting for a just cause that the United States should support. Tooze sees Wilson's speech, with its advocacy of a new international order based on American principles, as 'an explicit claim to world leadership': 'Whereas interventionists of Roosevelt's ilk aspired merely to equality – to have America counted as a fully fledged great power – Wilson's goal was absolute pre-eminence.' The peace he was calling for would 'ensure that the United States emerged as the truly undisputed arbiter of world affairs.' It was an 'agenda of American hegemony' (pp. 16, 44–5, 53–5).

Notwithstanding this unsympathetic reading of Wilson's motives and objectives, Tooze clearly regrets the failure to achieve a 'peace without victory' in 1917. Pursuing this counterfactual, he suggests that it might have preserved democracy in Russia as well as creating less post-war bitterness in Germany. But after the United States had entered the war, Wilson rebuffed the calls for such a peace that were made during the summer of 1917 successively by the Petrograd Soviet, the German Reichstag, and Pope Benedict XV, and insisted on the need first to defeat 'the present rulers' of Germany. Tooze is critical of Wilson over this, remarking that the president's adviser, Colonel House, displayed 'superior insights into the geopolitics of progress' when he urged Wilson to make a more positive response to the pope's appeal. Tooze attributes Wilson's rejection of these various initiatives to a determination to keep 'control of the politics of peace'. Elsewhere, however, he implicitly acknowledges that after Germany's 'headlong aggression' in the spring of 1917 had

forced Wilson into the war, it would have been hard for him to change course and pressure the allies to the peace table (pp. 72–8, 86–7, 122–3).

On the causes of American intervention, too, Tooze is not entirely consistent. At one point, he suggests that the size of British purchases and the private loans raised to finance them had by 1916 committed the United States to the Allied cause, but elsewhere he recognizes that, while this was the belief held in Berlin (and by some in London), it was not really true. US policy was not in fact governed by the interests of Wall Street, and Wilson was very reluctant to enter the war (not least, as Tooze insufficiently recognizes, because he was very conscious of the strength of anti-interventionist feeling among the American public) (pp. 49–50, 57–8, 65–7, 496).

Whether Wilson was responsible for aborting a real possibility for a negotiated peace in 1917 depends on how one interprets the situation in Berlin. Tooze attaches great weight to the resolution passed by the Reichstag in July 1917 calling for a peace without ‘forced territorial acquisition’ and based on the liberal principles of free trade, freedom of the seas, and the establishment of an ‘international judicial organization’. Tooze emphasizes the size of the majority supporting this resolution and that its component parties had won two-thirds of the vote in the 1912 elections and were to win the support of 76 per cent of the electorate in 1919. But he admits that the political support for a negotiated peace was evanescent and did not survive Germany’s military victories in the late summer and autumn of 1917. So when Wilson in his Fourteen Points address of January 1918 made an implicit appeal to ‘the Liberal leaders and parties of Germany’ responsible for the Reichstag resolution, ‘he was too late’. In March, the draconian Brest–Litovsk treaty was approved by the Reichstag, with the support (albeit conditional) of the sponsor of the July resolution and the Social Democrats (SPD) abstaining. Then there is the question of how far a Reichstag majority could determine the actions of the German government, at that time so much under the sway of the High Command. Tooze argues that ‘Ludendorff and Hindenburg knew that they could not act in complete disregard of the civilian authorities’ and that ‘even at the height of World War I, the safeguards of nineteenth-century constitutionalism continued to function’. Yet he himself recounts how in July 1918 Foreign Secretary Richard von Kühlmann was swiftly dismissed after he publicly cast doubt on the military’s insistence that the Western powers could be defeated as comprehensively as Russia had been (pp. 75, 239, 122–3, 155, 162–3).

Having deplored Wilson’s unwavering commitment to the joint war effort in 1917, Tooze somewhat inconsistently criticizes the president’s unilateral conduct of the initial exchange of Notes with Germany over an armistice in October 1918, describing it as ‘an extraordinary power play...motivated...by a desire to subordinate Britain and France to his particular vision of American power’. He suggests that this desire was strengthened by Wilson’s antagonism to the allies’ partisans in the Republican party and on Wall Street. There may be something in this last suggestion, but the divergence

between the president's peace programme and the goals of the allies had deeper and more enduring causes. Tooze is repeatedly critical of Wilson's opposition to what he calls the 'more multilateral vision of a new international order' advanced by the French in particular. But such proposals as that for continuing global collaboration between France, Britain, and the United States to control key raw materials were not only contrary to the Open Door principle that was an established axiom of US policy but also hardly compatible with a peace settlement to which the defeated powers could be reconciled. More broadly, the European policy of the United States in the first half of the twentieth century can be seen as the product of two distinguishable impulses – an ideological and strategic alignment with Britain and France on the one hand, and the desire to achieve a stable settlement that included Germany on the other. The former was dominant in 1917–18 and also after 1938, but for most of the interwar period, the latter was the basic objective of US policy-makers (pp. 231, 106–7, 211, 290–1).

In the latter part of the book, Tooze recognizes that the course followed by the United States was shaped by broader factors than the personal attitudes of Woodrow Wilson. Indeed, although he had earlier attached undue importance to Wilson's southern upbringing and racial views in explaining the president's policy choices, he himself observes that to focus on personalities is 'to understate the forces in play'. Unlike some historians, he does not attribute the failure of the United States to join the League of Nations simply to a vain obstinacy on Wilson's part in refusing to accept the reservations sponsored by his political foe, Henry Cabot Lodge, pointing out that other members of the League, particularly Britain and Japan, would have found it very difficult to accept these reservations. In line with the revisionist school of American diplomatic historians, Tooze also downplays the significance of the League fight by emphasizing the continuity of policy between the Wilson administration and its Republican successors. His focus on financial matters helps him to do this because, as he points out, the US treasury took a hard line on these throughout. Even under Wilson, it not only scotched proposals for further post-war loans to restart Europe's economy but also insisted on the full repayment of the war debts, with interest. And then throughout the 1920s, the repeated efforts of Britain and France to link the issues of war debts and reparations were firmly resisted. Tooze endorses a traditional historiography in seeing this economic nationalism, also manifested in the high tariffs of the Fordney–McCumber Act (1922), as the basic cause of the collapse of the world economy in the 1930s. He also emphasizes the uncooperative unilateralism of US policy in other respects, such as the belligerent response to the Geneva Protocol of 1924, a proposal for strengthening the League of Nations through a compulsory arbitration procedure enforced through automatic sanctions (pp. 174, 298–304, 334–7, 472–3).

Why did the flourishing of the world economy or the strengthening of international order count for so little in Washington? Why was the great potential

power of the United States in world politics 'absent' in the 1920s and 1930s? Tooze sees the answer as lying in 'the frailty of the American state': 'behind the desire to keep a distance from the violent forces unleashed in Europe and Asia, there lay a recognition of the limits of what the American polity, despite its fabulous wealth, was actually capable of' (pp. 27–9, 334). It is true that, after Wilson's defeat over the League of Nations, officials in the executive branch were very attentive to Congressional sentiment, and that this was strongly hostile to any form of entangling commitment and fiercely protective of the interests of US taxpayers. However, in the First World War, the constitutional separation of powers had not prevented the federal government from mobilizing the nation's resources in order to project power abroad very effectively, and since the 1940s it has done so on a continuous basis. As earlier during the Civil War, the capacity of the American state has grown when there has been a political consensus that the national interest required that it should. In the 1920s, however, few Americans believed that the course of events beyond the western hemisphere would seriously affect the nation's security or prosperity. So the achievement of foreign policy objectives was not thought to justify any significant cost, whether this was financial or in the form of long-term commitments, particularly those that carried any risk of involvement in foreign wars. This helps to explain what Tooze calls 'a bewildering mismatch between political rhetoric and the effective deployment of resources' with regard to the promotion of democracy in China and Russia. Such minimalism was hardly conducive to the establishment of 'American hegemony' in any ordinary sense of that term. It fits much better, however, with a more persuasive aspect of Tooze's reading of Wilson's policy – that its basic goal (shared by Republican successors like Herbert Hoover) was to establish a form of self-sustaining world order that would enable the United States to continue to pursue its traditional way of life undisturbed by events overseas. This conservative aspiration, resting as it did on the nation's strategic and economic self-sufficiency, had wide appeal (pp. 334, 28–9, 103–6, 516–17).

In the post-war period, then, Washington's ability to influence overseas developments was severely constrained by domestic resistance to providing the means for doing so. And yet, Tooze stresses, following the impressive demonstration of its multi-faceted power in the First World War, the United States loomed large for politicians elsewhere. Broadening his earlier interpretation of Hitler's perspective, Tooze claims that the Italian Fascists, Stalin, and the Japanese militarists likewise feared 'the future dominance of American capitalist democracy' and 'saw themselves as radical insurgents against an oppressive and powerful world order'. Western European statesmen, too, were very conscious of the scale of American power, with the British deferring to it, sometimes resentfully, the French hoping for its support, and Germans, particularly Gustav Stresemann, looking to it for revision of the terms of the Versailles treaty. Such perceptions, resentments, and hopes persisted despite Washington's evident determination to avoid political involvement and commitments because the

form of power that primarily inspired them was financial. American money, however, was mostly not under the direct command of the US government so the making of foreign loans depended on the complex interaction of private investment banks (pre-eminently J. P. Morgan) and capital markets, within parameters set by the still embryonic Federal Reserve system. To a limited degree and in some contexts, American financial resources could be deployed by Washington for diplomatic purposes, as was evidenced above all by the Dawes Plan of 1924, which resolved the impasse over reparations that had led to the French occupation of the Ruhr and thus paved the way for the Locarno treaties of 1925. Patrick O. Cohrs sees these agreements as establishing ‘the “real” post-World War I peace order’ and an emergent ‘Euro-Atlantic international system...whose *de facto* pre-eminent power was the United States’. However, the Dawes Plan was not followed up by further steps to promote European stabilization; on the contrary, the 1926 Thoiry agreement that would have involved Germany transferring funds raised on Wall Street to France was blocked by Washington. As Cohrs admits, ‘the United States was ultimately unwilling to fulfill the role that its financial hegemony accorded it in a manner consolidating this system’.³ But in other ways and on issues that more directly affected American interests, the nation’s financial muscle was used to shape the international system, notably by the Federal Reserve Bank of New York (a largely autonomous entity under Benjamin Strong) in its insistence on the restoration of the gold standard after the war. Tooze argues that this was responsible not only for a sharp price deflation in other countries but also for creating ‘a new hierarchy’ in the world economy with the USA and the UK ‘at the top’, leaving other states with ‘diminished sovereignty’ (pp. 6–8, 453–61, 358–67).

The inclusion of the United Kingdom here is a recognition that, insofar as there was a liberal international order in the 1920s, it was an Anglo-American project. That was true of the League of Nations itself, notwithstanding Wilson’s unquestionably crucial role in its establishment; Mazower has stressed the extent to which the League Covenant was based upon British drafts and promoted in both Whitehall and Paris by ‘imperial internationalists’ like Jan Smuts and Robert Cecil.⁴ The failure of the United States to join the League left Britain playing the leading role, as emerges clearly in the recent scholarship reappraising that organization and its achievements. This reappraisal has been effected by shifting the focus from the proceedings of the Council, where the failure to achieve disarmament or maintain collective security eventually discredited the League, to the activities of other parts of the organization. To what extent have these studies confirmed the view that the League of

³ Patrick O. Cohrs, *The unfinished peace after World War I: America, Britain and the stabilisation of Europe 1919–1932* (Cambridge, 2006), pp. 2, 178–9, 269, 378–407, 566, *passim*.

⁴ Mazower, *Governing the world*, pp. 128–35; *idem*, *No enchanted palace: the end of empire and the ideological origins of the United Nations* (Princeton, NJ, 2009), pp. 13–14, 20–3, 36–46, 78–86, 104.

Nations was essentially an instrument of great power hegemony, or alternatively shown it to have been responsive to and fostering of a more independent internationalism?

Susan Pedersen's masterly history of the operation of the mandates system throws light on this question with regard to parts of the world that were not self-governing members of the League. The system was overseen by a nine-member Mandates Commission, appointed by the Council. Pedersen provides deft pen portraits of those who served as commissioners over the years (always eight men and one woman). The Commission's proceedings during its annual sessions at Geneva form the stem of Pedersen's history, but the major substance of the book consists of in-depth accounts of those incidents and problems in various mandated territories that caused the Commission the greatest concern. These accounts include full and evocative portrayals of the societies of South West Africa, Rwanda-Burundi, Western Samoa, and the interior of north-west New Guinea, as well as of the post-Ottoman Middle East. Maps, tables, and lists of *dramatis personae* convey a wealth of factual detail very lucidly, and the narrative is enriched by the inclusion of many illuminating contemporary photographs. Clearly, the fruit of prodigious research, this wide-ranging, elegantly written and analytically sophisticated study is a most distinguished piece of historiography that will surely be the definitive treatment of the subject.

According to the League Covenant (Article 22), the mandates system was set up to meet the responsibility of the 'advanced nations' for 'the tutelage' of 'peoples not yet able to stand by themselves under the strenuous conditions of the modern world'. This basic assumption of a civilizational hierarchy provided the justification for the creation of three classes of mandate – 'A' for the former Ottoman territories, which were judged to have 'reached a stage of development where their existence as independent nations can be provisionally recognized', 'B' for Germany's ex-colonies in Africa, and 'C' for those that, for one reason or another, could be administered as 'integral portions' of the mandatory power's own territory (Smuts ensured that South-West Africa was placed in this last category). Pedersen shows the extent to which this ideological framework shaped the attitudes and behaviour of the Mandates Commission. Petitions from indigenous peoples who were presumed to lack capacity were largely dismissed, whereas those from 'whites that partook of the system's racial and civilizational logic', such as the Anti-Slavery Society or the Bureau International pour la Défense des Indigènes, were thoroughly investigated. Appeals from the Syro-Palestinian Congress, Pedersen points out, 'didn't so much repudiate "civilizational" language as seek to appropriate it. An ancient land, home of a civilization as cultivated as any in the West, Syria could not be placed "alongside Cameroon, Togo and other savage countries".' Despite the implication in the Covenant that the peoples in the mandated territories should be prepared for self-government, the Commission tended to regard with scepticism and disfavour moves to yield control to them, such as the

British grant of independence to Iraq or the New Zealand Labour government's recognition of the Mau in Samoa as a legitimate and representative movement (pp. 408–9, 91–4, 148–9, 189–91, 266–9).

However, the Commission's acceptance of the ideological justification for European imperialism did not lead it always to adopt an acquiescent attitude to the actions of the mandatory powers. In its early years, the harsh repression of rebellion (including aerial bombing) by South Africa in South-West Africa and by France in Syria attracted the Commission's intense scrutiny, though it showed greater tolerance in the latter case. After joining the Commission in 1923, the former British colonial governor Frederick (Lord) Lugard became particularly influential, seeking to use his position to extend to other empires his doctrine, first developed in northern Nigeria, that colonial rule had a 'dual mandate' – not only to develop a territory's natural resources but also to promote the welfare of the inhabitants and preserve the structure of their society. The subsequent comparative evaluation of mandatory territories, Pedersen writes, 'had a real impact, shaping how the Commission – and crucially, the newspaper-reading European public – viewed and ranked not only the different mandate regimes but also, importantly, the imperial powers governing them. The result was a quite undeserved reputational bonanza for Britain.' In the late 1930s, however, the Commission became highly critical of British restrictions on Jewish immigration to Palestine. The Commission's position was based on the terms of the mandate, into which the Balfour Declaration pledge had been written at British insistence, but it also reflected effective Zionist lobbying and the pressure of other governments, including those seeking to drive Jews from their own countries. Pedersen provides a full and admirably balanced account of this fraught issue (pp. 107–11, 130–5, 356–93).

Pedersen shows that it was largely the League secretariat that ensured that the mandates system became something more than the merest fig-leaf covering naked imperialism that it appeared to be in the summer of 1920. She credits Sir Eric Drummond, the British civil servant who became secretary-general, with creating 'something entirely new, a truly international bureaucracy, structured by function and not by nationality, loyal to an international charter' (p. 7). Steered by the future Nobel Prize winner Philip Noel-Baker, then seconded from the Foreign Office, the secretariat led the Council to require the mandatory powers to define the terms of each mandate. As director of the Mandates Section, William E. Rappard, a Swiss professor of economics and law who had become an ardent Wilsonian, managed the establishment of an oversight regime that demanded regular reports from the mandatory powers and held hearings during the Commission's annual sessions in Geneva. By 1923, a procedure for receiving petitions from the inhabitants of mandated territories had been approved by the League Council.

The authority of the Mandates Commission derived from two sources – the wording of the Covenant and public opinion. In its proceedings, Pedersen

writes, League texts or Council decisions were scrupulously cited by ‘not only Commission members but also mandatory powers and legal scholars, humanitarians and petitioners’: ‘textualism became the language politics was forced to speak’ (pp. 64–5). In upholding the authority of such texts over the action of states – always a problem for international law – Commission members and secretariat officials sought to enlist public support through publicity and the leaking of information to sympathetic political figures. When the British Foreign Secretary Austen Chamberlain attacked the Commission in 1926, ‘the whole apparatus of liberal opinion-formation mobilized’, and government spokesmen swiftly reaffirmed their support for the Commission in unequivocal terms (pp. 214–15). This mobilization was brought about not only by the League of Nations Union and the liberal press but also by organizations such as the Anti-Slavery Society (to whose representations the Commission was particularly attentive).

The active role of the League secretariat is further documented in the other works under review. Its largest section was the Economic and Financial Organization (EFO) with a staff of fifty-six in 1930 (compared to nine permanent and four temporary staff in the Disarmament Section). As Patricia Clavin shows in *Securing the world economy*, the EFO established itself, under the direction of Sir Arthur Salter, by organizing the financial stabilization of Austria, Hungary, and eventually most of the countries of Eastern Europe, in the early 1920s. Clavin’s comprehensive and very thoroughly researched account of its subsequent activities highlights the roles of Alexander Loveday, the thirty-year-old Scottish statistician hired in 1919 to head the fledgling Economic Intelligence Service, and of his principal colleagues, the Italian Pietro Stoppani and the Australian F. L. McDougall. The EFO prepared the ground for and serviced the economic conferences organized by the League in 1927 and 1933, and also a four-year (1928–32) inquiry into the working of the gold standard that produced three substantial reports. On a regular basis, it gathered statistics on various aspects of trade, money, and banking, and later also on nutrition, and made these available in a series of periodical and special publications. Conscious of its dependence on the support of member states, the secretariat presented its role as ‘technical’ rather than political and, particularly in the early years, was careful to avoid making policy recommendations. Nevertheless, as Clavin points out, Loveday and Stoppani had a clear commitment to the principles of economic liberalism – though in the Depression years of the 1930s, they and McDougall came to favour government measures to raise agricultural prices.

In Daniel Gorman’s *The emergence of international society in the 1920s*, which takes the form of a series of studies on different topics, two chapters are devoted to Rachel Crowdy, the British former nurse who headed the Social Section of the secretariat, and her campaign against the ‘Traffic in Women and Children’. Crowdy’s efforts took advantage of the Covenant’s grant to the League of supervisory authority over the execution of international

agreements regarding this traffic, and they bore fruit in the form of a conference in 1921 that led to an International Convention, a well-funded inquiry that produced a report in 1927, and a further inquiry and report on the situation in the 'Far East' in 1932 (pp. 52–108). (Small wonder perhaps that this was the aspect of the League's work that attracted most attention in fiction, notably Evelyn Waugh's *Decline and fall*.) Like the Mandates Commission, Crowdy relied on the support of non-governmental organizations, particularly the International Bureau for the Suppression of the Traffic in Women and Children (pp. 53–108).

The public opinion to which Crowdy and other agents of the League looked for support was Western and the values it sought to promote were commonly seen elsewhere as Western ones, as the Chinese and Japanese governments indicated (pp. 86–91). But if not universal, the opinion was certainly trans-national, and in particular it was largely Anglo-American. Gorman provides an overview of the voluntary societies that were formed to promote such purposes as the resettlement of Armenian refugees, the fight against opium, and the progressive codification of international law. Following the First World War, the over-riding goal for many was naturally the promotion of peace, the concern not only of the League of Nations Association (particularly vigorous in the mid-1920s) but also the World Alliance of Churches for Promoting International Friendship and the movement for the Outlawry of War that gave rise to the Kellogg–Briand treaty of 1928.

This was only one of the ways in which interwar internationalism benefited from American energy – and money. The scale of the nation's resources not only provided the means for such commitments but also augmented the motivation for them. Consciousness of their country's pre-eminent power induced in many active and influential Americans both a confidence that they could affect developments overseas and a sense of responsibility for doing so. A number became directly involved in international affairs. One of several working at the League of Nations was Huntington Gilchrist, who became assistant director of the Mandates Section, while S. Parker Gilbert served as agent general for reparations from 1924. Most important was financial support – Gorman points out that the combined American public and private contributions to the League in its first eight years were second only to those of Great Britain (p. 183). The lead here was taken by the major American philanthropic foundations. The Carnegie Endowment for International Peace sought particularly to promote the development of international law and American membership of the World Court, while the Rockefeller Foundation funded various health and educational programmes, including League of Nations activities that could be thought of as technical rather than political.⁵ As Clavin shows, the

⁵ On this, see Katharina Rietzler, 'Experts for peace: structures and motivations of philanthropic internationalism in the United States and Europe', in David Lacqua, ed., *Internationalism reconfigured: transnational ideas and movements between the World Wars* (London,

Rockefeller Foundation developed a particular relationship with the EFO, which in the 1930s increasingly looked to the United States to counter the spread of nationalist protectionism in Europe. This orientation conflicted with the commitment to neutrality in the approaching European conflict of the League's secretary-general, Joseph Avenol, and after war broke out Loveday (who himself became acting secretary-general) moved the EFO to the Institute for Advanced Study in Princeton, New Jersey, where its members contributed to the planning for the post-war organizations that would at last put the authority and resources of the US government behind the internationalist project.

In sum, then, there is no gainsaying the immense scale of America's relative economic and financial strength following the First World War. But the potential power to influence the world beyond its borders that this brought the United States was neither under unified control nor all directed to the achievement of a common objective. The government itself was divided between the executive and the Congress. More importantly, the vast majority of the nation's resources were in private hands, and mostly employed to add to their owners' own income and wealth. Only in major wars could the government mobilize them for the achievement of clear national goals; the rest of the time, America's potential international power is better viewed as a resource that a variety of different interests sought to use for their own particular purposes. It was, as it were, a site of contestation. The same was true of the arena of international public opinion, where the contending parties were often transnational in character, with alignments and divisions reflecting ideological commitments rather than national loyalties. If the Westphalian system of state sovereignty was under pressure, as many internationalists hoped and believed, it was more from these forces of fragmentation than from any alternative source of governmental authority.

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2011), and for a more critical view, Inderjeet Parmar, *Foundations of the American century: the Ford, Carnegie and Rockefeller Foundations in the rise of American power* (New York, NY, 2012).