

# The International Law Collections of the IALS Library

**Abstract:** This article concerns the international law collections at the library of the Institute of Advanced Legal Studies (IALS) in London. It is based on a talk given by Hester Swift at the training day entitled ‘Socio-Legal Sources and Methods in International Law’ which was held at IALS on 25 November 2016.

**Keywords:** public international law; academic law libraries

## INTRODUCTION

The Institute of Advanced Legal Studies (IALS) was established in 1947. It is part of the University of London, but serves legal scholars from all over the United Kingdom and overseas. From the very beginning, international law was one of the subjects that the Institute’s library covered. The first prospectus for the Institute, published in 1948, mentions a public international law collection located on the third floor (at this time, IALS’ home was 25 Russell Square, in a Georgian terrace backing on to Senate House).

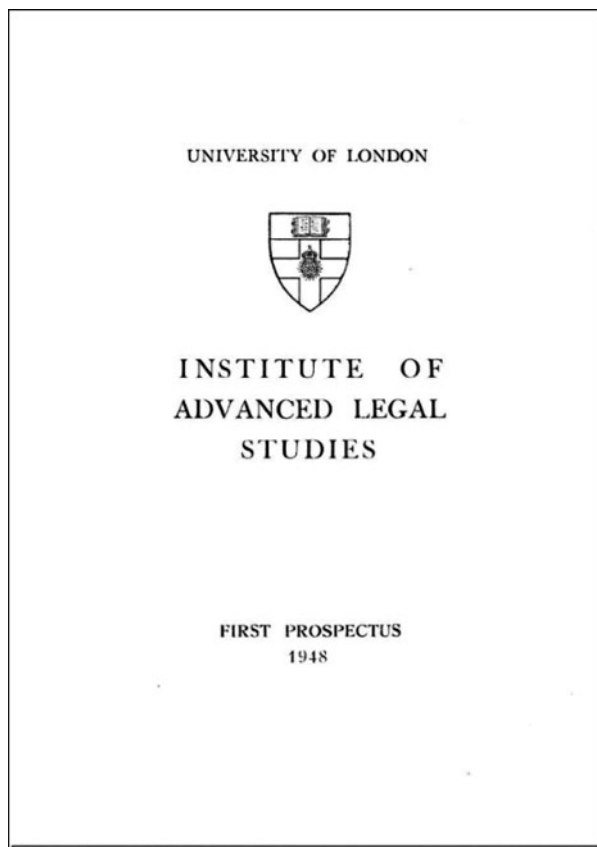


Figure 1. The Institute’s first prospectus<sup>1</sup>.

## THE INTERNATIONAL LAW COLLECTIONS AND THE INSTITUTE’S EARLY YEARS

Much of the international law material held by IALS Library when it opened was from the collection of Dr Charles Huberich, a deceased American lawyer who had practised in Europe. Huberich’s will left about 5,000 volumes on various legal topics to the University of London and Middle Temple, and the Inn generously gave up its share to the University.<sup>2</sup> We still have these volumes in the library, their provenance recorded by handwritten entries in the first Accessions Book.

The collections expanded rapidly in the early years, with more donations, as well as purchases. We were given material by the United Nations, the Council of Europe, the Peace Palace at the Hague and other international organisations. Gifts also came from UK academic, professional and government libraries and from international lawyer Professor J. L. Brierly.<sup>3</sup>

The Institute’s library has always had a research-level collection, as its main objective is to support doctoral and higher research. In addition to this, one of the library’s functions from its foundation was (and still is) to provide material for University of London LLM students. In 1948 the London LLM course only had one public international law paper, but international law was an expanding field and a few years later there were six international law options on the syllabus,<sup>4</sup> including air law and international economic law; by 1968, the ‘Air Law’ paper had become ‘Air and Space Law’. These developments meant that IALS had to expand its collections further: in the area of international air law, for example.<sup>5</sup>

## THE COLLECTIONS TODAY

The public international law collection in 2017 consists of many thousands of titles, accompanied by vast online resources. We have numerous sets of treaties, current and historical, including the United Kingdom *Treaty Series* and its American equivalent, *United States Treaties and*

*Other International Agreements*, as well as the United Nations *Treaty Series* and the *Council of Europe Treaty Series*. Historical holdings include Clive Parry's *Consolidated Treaty Series*, which contains treaties made between 1648 and 1920, in more than 200 volumes, and the League of Nations *Treaty Series*.

The official reports of international courts and tribunals are collected, notably those of the International Court of Justice, European Court of Human Rights and the (now-defunct) European Commission of Human Rights. We have commercially-published reports too, notably *International Law Reports* (Cambridge University Press) and *Annotated Leading Cases of International Criminal Tribunals* (Intersentia).

Digests of state practice also form part of the IALS collection. The practice of states in the field of international relations is a key element of customary international law<sup>6</sup> and a few jurisdictions have compiled these systematic collections of state practice material, in order to make this type of information more accessible. Clive Parry's *A British Digest of International Law: compiled principally from the archives of the Foreign Office* covers the period 1860 to 1914. Several volumes were published by Stevens in the 1960s and are held at IALS, but Parry's vast project was never completed. More recent material relating to British practice can be found in sources such as *British and Foreign State Papers* and the *British Year Book of International Law*, both of which are available in the library. We also have the US State Department's *Digest of United States Practice in International Law*, a series which is still published (recent volumes are on the State Department website<sup>7</sup>).

Every year IALS Library buys a substantial number of books on international law, and we have classic treatises on the subject going back centuries. We subscribe to journals and yearbooks of international law from all over the world: there approximately 140 series on the open shelves and more in the basement depository and online. Leading international law journals include *American Journal of International Law*, *International and Comparative Law Quarterly*, *Journal de droit international* (known as



Figure 2. Part of the public international law collection, with the US treaty series in the foreground.

'Clunet'), the Hague Academy of International Law's *Collected Courses* and *Zeitschrift für ausländisches öffentliches Recht und Völkerrecht*; all are held at IALS. The rest of the international law collection includes encyclopedias, indexes, bibliographies and other material.

One type of international material that IALS does not collect on a large scale is the documentation of intergovernmental organisations (IGOs). However, we do take IGO publications where they are of legal interest, for example, the *UN Juridical Yearbook*, UN resolutions, some Council of Europe documentation and the *Official Journal of the European Union*.<sup>8</sup> Within the University of London, primary responsibility for official publications of intergovernmental organisations lies with the LSE Library, which has excellent collections and is both a UN depository library and an EU Documentation Centre.

## WAR CRIMES AND TRIBUNALS

The IALS library's 'Collection and Retention Policy' highlights our holdings relating to war crimes. We have a complete set of original papers from the Nuremberg Tribunal, kept in forty-five boxes in the basement depository. They were donated by Lord Birkett, the British alternate judge at Nuremberg (he also gave a set to Inner Temple Library).<sup>9</sup> IALS also holds other war crimes cases, including East and West German court decisions in Second World War criminal cases<sup>10</sup> and Intersentia's current series *Annotated Leading Cases of International Criminal Tribunals*. The Intersentia title publishes decisions of the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia, the Rwanda Tribunal, the Special Court for Sierra Leone and other international criminal courts and tribunals. Complementing the collection of war crimes reports, we also have a large collection of treatises on the laws of war. Several specialist periodicals are held, notably the Asser Institute's *Yearbook of International Humanitarian Law* and Oxford's *Journal of International Criminal Justice*; however, general international law journals also cover the laws of war and war crimes.

## THE OLDEST BOOK

The library's oldest book with an international law classmark is a maritime law treatise in Dutch, *Zee-rechten inhoudende dat oudste en hoogste water-rechten...* (the title is extremely long) by Quintyn Weytsen. Published in 1635, it is from a collection of 144 titles given to IALS by the Association of Average Adjusters, many of which are treatises relating to international law. Selected old and/or rare titles from this donation, including Weytsen, have been digitised by IALS Library in order to make them available to researchers worldwide; there are links to the digitised versions from the online catalogue.<sup>11</sup>

## ONLINE SERVICES

Apart from print, the IALS library subscribes to several online databases with substantial international law

content. HeinOnline has a particularly strong focus on the subject, with a whole module dedicated to United Nations material, a vast treaty library (consisting of commentary and indexes as well as treaty texts) and a Foreign and International Law Resources Database which includes many yearbooks and journals of international law. Another key resource available via HeinOnline is *Index to Foreign Legal Periodicals*, which (despite its name) covers international law journals and yearbooks as well as foreign law titles. Nor is that everything on Hein for the international law researcher: the service also includes International Law Association reports, *Foreign Relations of the United States* (which is relevant to customary international law research) and *Harvard Research in International Law*.

Other noteworthy databases for international law research include Lexis<sup>®</sup>Library and Westlaw, both of which have international cases and journals of international law, as well as huge collections of United States treaties. The relatively new database, Oxford Reports on International Law (ORIL), has international cases arranged into specialist modules, such as international investment

law. One of the ORIL modules, International Law in Domestic Courts, provides scholarly analysis of cases as well as reports of the judgments. Justis.com includes the online version of the *International Law Reports* and several of our other databases also have international law content.

## RESEARCH GUIDES

It is an indication of the importance of international law at the IALS library that we have published not one, but several research guides relating to the subject, all of which are available on the website.<sup>12</sup> As well as a general public international law guide, we have written separate guides to United Nations, Council of Europe and European Union research, plus a guide to researching private international law. Each gives a description of our print collections, provides research tips and highlights relevant subscription databases and free websites. So if this article has made you want to know more about what is available at IALS, or you have a tricky international law research question, our Library Guides web page could be your next port of call.

## Footnotes

<sup>1</sup> A digitised version of the prospectus is available on the IALS website: <[http://ials.sas.ac.uk/sites/default/files/files/IALS\\_1948-1.pdf](http://ials.sas.ac.uk/sites/default/files/files/IALS_1948-1.pdf)>.

<sup>2</sup> Willi Steiner, 'A Note on the Institute of Advanced Legal Studies', in Barry Rider (ed.), *Law at the Centre: the Institute of Advanced Legal Studies at Fifty* (Kluwer Law, 1999) 1–2; Elizabeth Moys, 'The Library of the Institute of Advanced Legal Studies, London', (1956) 49 L.Libr.J. 23, 25.

<sup>3</sup> Jill Newell, 'The Public International Law Collection in the Library of the IALS' (1995) 26 Law Librarian 13, 14.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid*, 13.

<sup>5</sup> Elizabeth Moys, 'The Library of the Institute of Advanced Legal Studies, London', (1956) 49 Law Library Journal 23, 26.

<sup>6</sup> Evidence of state practice may be found in diplomatic correspondence, legal opinions, parliamentary statements and elsewhere. For an introduction to the concept of state practice, see M. Wood, 'State Practice', in R. Wolfrum (ed.), *The Max Planck Encyclopedia of Public International Law*.

<sup>7</sup> <<https://www.state.gov/s/l/c8183.htm>>.

<sup>8</sup> Further information about IGO material is available in our United Nations, Council of Europe and European Union research guides: see <<http://libguides.ials.sas.ac.uk/international>>.

<sup>9</sup> The Nuremberg documents were later published under the title *Trial of the Major War Criminals before the International Military Tribunal, Nuremberg, 14 November 1945–1 October 1946* (Nuremberg, Germany: [s.n.], 1947–1949).

<sup>10</sup> *DDR-Justiz und NS-Verbrechen : Sammlung Ostdeutscher Strafurteile wegen Nationalsozialistischer Tötungsverbrechen*, ed. Laurenz Demps (University Press Amsterdam, 2002–2010); and *Justiz und NS-Verbrechen : Sammlung Deutscher Strafurteile wegen Nationalsozialistischer Tötungsverbrechen* (University Press Amsterdam, 1968–81).

<sup>11</sup> <<http://catalogue.ulrls.lon.ac.uk/search~S6/>>.

<sup>12</sup> <<http://libguides.ials.sas.ac.uk/publicinternationallaw>>.

## Biography

Hester Swift is the Foreign and International Law Librarian at the Institute of Advanced Legal Studies Library.