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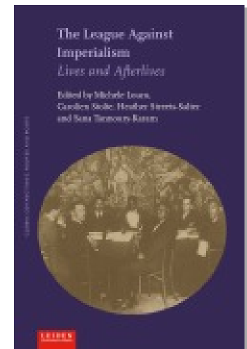

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Chapter 1

The League Against Imperialism: Lives and Afterlives

Michele Louro, Carolien Stolte, Heather Streets-Salter, Sana Tannoury-Karam

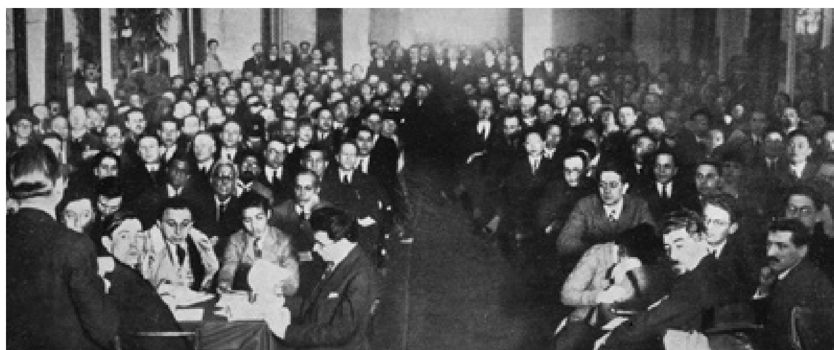
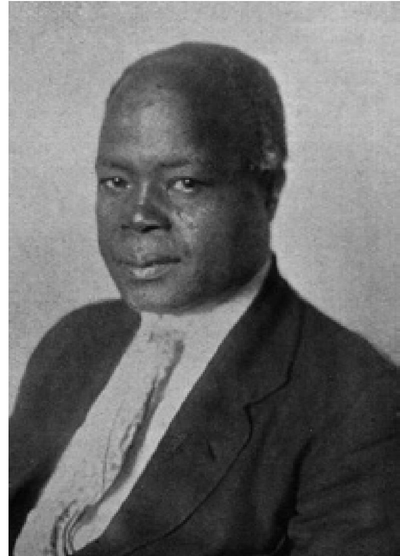


Fig. 1. Plenary Meeting of the Congress in the Main Hall of Egmont Palace.

On 10 February 1927, 174 delegates representing thirty-one states, colonies, or regions and 134 organizations came together at the Palais d'Egmont in Brussels for a Congress on anti-imperialism. Over the course of five days, delegates witnessed and participated in demonstrations of inter-racial and inter-cultural solidarity, heard each other's accounts of colonial oppression, hammered out specific resolutions, and planned for the future. The tone was set on the very first day, when A. Fenner Brockway of Britain's Independent Labour Party joined hands with one of the Chinese delegates, Liao Huanxing, and the two raised their arms together in unity to a roar of applause from the entire Congress.[1] Later the same day José Vasconcelos, representing Puerto Rico, reminded participants that imperialism appeared in many forms, and took the United States to task for its "robbery" and "cruelty" in Latin America.[2] He then exhorted delegates to "remember, friends, from all over the world, that Latin America is not only our country but also your country, the country of every man, no matter what race or color, the country of the future and the home of all men."[3] One of the ten African delegates, Josiah Tshangana Gumede, stood in front of the Congress and told the audience that in South Africa, the country of his forefathers, "we have no

place to lay our heads. All the land was taken from us by the Crown of Great Britain and the people were turned away from their ancestral homes which were turned into farms."[4]



Figs. 2 and 3. Former Mexican Education Minister and Puerto Rican delegate José Vasconcelos (l) and South African ANC delegate Josiah Tshangana Gumede (r) at the Brussels Congress.

Over the course of the Congress, delegates brought forward twenty-six resolutions and unanimously approved ten.[5] These resolutions spelled out in detail what Congress members stood for, and the future they envisaged. For example, an Anglo-Indian-Chinese resolution committed, among other things, to "fighting side-by-side with national forces for the complete freedom of oppressed countries," to opposing "all forms of oppression against colonial peoples," to denouncing "the horrors of imperialism," and to challenging "imperial politics in order to achieve freedom according to the teachings of class struggle."[6]

At the end of the Congress, delegates voted to continue their work through the founding of a new organization called the League Against Imperialism and for National Independence. Its purpose was clear: to establish "a permanent worldwide organisation linking up all forces against imperialism and colonial oppression."[7] Its manifesto appealed specifically to "all who do not profit from the oppression of others and who do not live on the fruits of this oppression and for all who hate modern slavery

and are longing for their own freedom and the freedom of their fellow-men."[8] Its "Honorary Presidents" included luminaries like Albert Einstein of Germany, Madame Sun Yat-sen of China, George Lansbury of Britain, and Romain Rolland of France. Its Executive Committee was comprised of representatives from China, Mexico, India, the Philippines, North Africa, South Africa, Egypt, Persia, Japan, Puerto Rico, and Korea, as well as all of the major European states.[9] The new organization was to be based in Berlin, and its day-to-day affairs were to be run by an International Secretariat headed by the German communist and Reichstag Member Willi Münzenberg, and including the Indian revolutionary Virendranath Chattopadhyaya ("Chatto"), the Hungarian journalist and communist Louis Gibarti, and later in the 1930s by the Turkish communist and Comintern emissary Bekar Ferdi.[10]

Fig. 4. The Executive Council as elected by the First Congress.

The Congress itself was a remarkable affair, and those who were present at the time knew it. Its principal organizer, Willi Münzenberg, had hoped for success but was jubilant that the Congress had exceeded even his high expectations.[11] Participants recalled a feeling of euphoria mixed with hope and determination as they came together to discuss the brutalities and injustices of imperial rule. Indonesia's Mohammed Hatta, for example, said of the Congress that "however colourful and diverse the races and political colours, in purpose and aspiration, people, we are of one mind," while the experience was deeply ideologically transformative for India's Jawaharlal Nehru.[12]

Fig. 5. The Praesidium at the Congress. From left to right: Jawaharlal Nehru (India), George Lansbury (England), Edo Fimmen (Netherlands), Lu Zhonglin (China), and Liao Huanxing (China).

While we know Congress participants believed they had just lived through an important historical moment in the history of international anti-imperialism, what does the Congress and the formation of the League Against Imperialism mean for those of us who study histories of anti-imperialism, internationalism and decolonization in the twentieth-century world? After all, the League existed for only ten years, from 1927 to 1937, and even then it was riven with internal conflicts and was subject to intense outside pressures. Did the League represent little more than a momentary, optimistic, but ultimately unsuccessful blip in the history of anticolonialism? We think not. In spite of its many internal conflicts and outside pressures, we share the belief of the League's original participants that its creation did indeed mark a significant historical moment. Our reasons are not entirely the same, as today's vantage point gives us the benefit of hindsight, while our various areas of expertise allow the incorporation of multiple stories from multiple places. However briefly, the League was one of the largest, most inclusive international groups of its kind. Its leadership and membership included representatives of formal colonies as well as the semi-colonial world, and Europeans and Americans from colonial as well as non-colonial powers. The League's membership was also ideologically diverse, especially in its first few years. Indeed, for a time the League brought together communists and

anticolonial nationalists in a shared platform that was not wholly defined by one side or the other.

Fig. 6. The Indian delegation alongside other participants in the Brussels Congress.

Partly because of its diverse membership, the League was also at the centre of a variety of anticolonial networks in this period, since many of its members played key leadership roles in more regional or issue-specific activist groups.[13] As such, the League functioned as a space that greased the wheels of inter-colonial connections, and allowed representatives not only to bring their own grievances to light, but also to learn about the grievances of others. The League was unique in that its entire existence was devoted to exposing imperialism as a systemic, global problem that needed to be eradicated everywhere through the activism of both colonized and non-colonized peoples. These ideas, in turn, were transformative for many future leaders and activists who emerged as significant actors in the global south both before and after the Second World War.

Although the League was clearly unique in some ways, we also argue that it was not so much an exception in its time but rather an emblem of what some scholars have called the "Internationalist Moment" of the interwar period.[14] Though mindful of the fact that the interwar period was far from a monolith, we believe that studying the League offers a way in to the internationalism of this period, allowing us to focus on the factors that contributed to such a heady moment on its own terms rather than on the factors that led to the second global war or to the global decolonization that we know was coming. When we do this, we are able to see how the interwar moment in which the League was created was itself deeply influenced by global events, and by new impulses for international

cooperation. At the same time, we are able to see the enduring afterlives of the anti-imperialism championed by the League on both individuals and groups who were active in regional and global stories long after the organization came to an end in 1937.

The Story of the League Against Imperialism

Each of the essays in this volume offers a portion of the League's story told from the perspective of an individual, region, or theme. To enable each essay to be read as part of the larger whole, here we provide a brief, bird's-eye narrative of the League from beginning to end. For the same reason, we have reproduced the photographs from the published proceedings of the Brussels Congress in this chapter.[15] The League Against Imperialism and for National Independence was founded at the end of that heady Congress in February 1927. Its operations were centralized in an International Secretariat led by Willi Münzenberg in Berlin and staffed by a diverse group of committed communists and revolutionaries. Once founded, the new organization's immediate goals were to coordinate effective relations between the Secretariat and the League's Executive Committee, and to capitalize on the energy from the Congress to develop solidarity between communists, socialists, and anticolonial nationalists worldwide. These two goals were meant to pave the way for campaigns to expose the brutalities of colonial rule, to support the liberation of colonies around the world, and to build solidarity between workers in imperialist countries and the oppressed in the colonies.

The months between Brussels and the Second World Congress of the LAI, held in Frankfurt in July 1929, marked a high point in the League's history. By the end of 1927, the LAI boasted the creation of national branches in Argentina, Brazil, China, Cuba, Ecuador, France, Germany, Great Britain, Holland, Ireland, Japan, Mexico, Nicaragua, Palestine, the Philippines, Puerto Rico, San Salvador, South Africa, the United States, and Uruguay.[16] More importantly, the LAI secretariat in Berlin began churning out news bulletins and developing a press service that continued the work of the Brussels Congress by providing a platform for the oppressed classes and nations of the world to share their experiences and learn from other anti-imperialists. The chief architect behind this propaganda operation was Chatto, an Indian revolutionary and polyglot commanding several European and South Asian languages who, more than anyone, shaped the League's literature before 1930.[17] Thanks to Chatto's ingenuity, the LAI produced in 1928 the inaugural issue of the *Anti-Imperialist Review*, the official organ of the international secretariat.[18]

Fig. 7. The original caption of this photograph was "An International Group at the Congress," meant to convey the wide range of participants. From left to right: Marteaux (Belgium), Chen (China), Mella (Mexico), Pollitt (England), Messali (Algeria), Katayama (Japan), Jiao (Indochina), Haya Della Tarre (Peru), Fournier (France), Senghor (Senegal), Barkatullah (India), Holitscher (Germany), Roland-Holst (Netherlands), Nejedli (Czechoslovakia).

LAI ephemera legitimized the movement and strengthened its appeal, which drew ninety-eight affiliates based in Asia, Africa, Latin America, North America, and Europe by 1928.[19] Chatto was aware in his own time of the tremendous importance of the LAI to the colonial world and, as Stolte's essay in this volume notes, he boasted to Nehru that the LAI might one day enjoy "the affiliation of all the national movements from Morocco to Indonesia."[20]

At the same time, tensions developed right away as members struggled to define the anti-imperialist mission and develop solidarities across a politically, geographically, and linguistically diverse membership. One of the most significant problems was over the role that the Executive Committee of the Communist International (Comintern) would play in directing and financing the League from Moscow. Certainly, the Brussels Congress and the League had ties to the Comintern from the very beginning through Willi Münzenberg. For example, Münzenberg sought, and eventually won, approval from the Executive Committee of the Comintern (ECCI) to organize the Brussels Congress. Comintern records also clearly show that the ECCI created a special committee to

discuss the Congress, and that it sent a representative, Sen Katayama, to attend.[21]

Figs. 8 and 9. Sen Katayama (l) and Hafiz Ramadan Bey (3) at the Brussels Congress.

But these early connections did not mean that the Comintern was in control of either the Congress or the League, although essays even in this volume differ in terms of the weight they ascribe to its influence. For one thing, in 1927 the Comintern's "united front" policy—which encouraged communists and communist parties to work closely with left-leaning, non-communist organizations as well as colonial nationalist parties—meant that the Comintern was willing to remain in the background of a number of anti-colonial or nationalist organizations.[22] Indeed, in the case of the League the Comintern deliberately sought to keep its involvement secret in order to broaden its appeal to non-communists and anticolonial nationalists. But even more important than the "united front" policy was the fact that the Comintern was slow to recognize the Congress, or indeed the League, as worthy of attention. Despite having given approval for the Congress, the Comintern's enthusiasm for the event was lacklustre at best—as demonstrated by the fact that it sent hardly any directives to Münzenberg in the first half of 1926 as the Congress was being planned. Additionally, promised Comintern funds for the Congress were slow to arrive, meaning that much of the cost was borne by Münzenberg's Chinese and Mexican networks.[23]

Fig. 10. Part of the large Chinese delegation to the first Congress of the League, pictured outside the palace.

The success of the Brussels Congress prompted greater interest from Moscow, and in June 1927 the Comintern created a new Anti-Imperialist Commission to finance the Secretariat in Berlin and to provide policy guidance for the League.[24] By then, global events had already begun to encourage far greater suspicion between communists and non-communists. First, in April 1927 the established "united front" between Chiang Kai-Shek's nationalist Guomindang Party and the Chinese Communist Party abruptly ended when Guomindang forces attacked and murdered thousands of communists in their midst. For Moscow, this disaster laid bare the vulnerabilities in the "united front" approach. Then, in May 1927, British security forces raided Russian-owned sites in London and discovered documents confirming the existence of an extensive Soviet spy network in Great Britain. The incident led to a collapse in diplomatic relations between Britain and the Soviet Union, and ramped up hostilities between the two states.[25] Within the Soviet Union, the ascension of Stalin and his more orthodox approach to politics shaped Comintern policy, introducing a more sectarian environment within international communism. As a result of these events, Moscow began a shift in direction away from the "united front" policy and towards a "class against class" policy (though the shift was not official until 1928), while committed communists grew far more suspicious of non-communist activists and vice versa.

Fig. 11. Lu Zhonglin, general in the Guomindang Army, delivers his speech in Brussels.

This background is crucial for understanding why it proved to be so difficult to sustain the momentum of the Brussels Congress. While the League had been founded as an institution where communists, socialists, and anticolonial nationalists could come together, by the summer of 1927 suspicions between communists and socialists in Europe had increased

dramatically. Key leaders in the Labour and Socialist International (LSI) increasingly viewed the League as a threat to the European Socialist movement, and sought to discredit the League by exposing its ties to the Comintern.[26] On 7 October 1927, the LSI published a report that accused the League of being a "sham" Bolshevik organization, and backed up the accusation with carefully collected evidence.[27] The report was devastating for the League, for it left an open wound between European socialists and communists who, in the context of current global events, increasingly felt that a shared organization was no longer feasible. In addition, the evidence provided by the LSI report was picked up by European security services, whose leaders were now more convinced than ever that the League represented a communist front.[28] As a result, organizing national chapters of the League in European states became a slow and conflict-ridden process since they now faced antagonism from socialists on the left and national security forces on the right. Moreover, the schisms within the European left infiltrated League meetings and discussions, often at the expense of significant issues non-Europeans had brought to the table.

If these challenges were not enough, in the summer of 1928 the League faced additional pressures from Moscow. At the Sixth International Comintern Congress that year, the Comintern officially shifted from the "united front" policy to the new policy of "class against class." This brought about the end of sanctioned cooperation between communists and either nationalists or socialists, and an insistence on following instructions from the Comintern. As part of this new policy, the Comintern began to take a much more active role in trying to direct League policy. A second international Congress of the League in 1929, in Frankfurt, clearly reflected these changes, as it was marked by infighting and denunciations by communist members of the remaining non-communist colleagues still committed to the organization. The result was that by 1931 nearly all of the non-communists in the League, including Nehru and Hatta but also the American Roger Baldwin and the Dutch trade unionist Edo Fimmen, had either resigned or been expelled from the League. The international secretariat fell into a period of inactivity and confusion, while nearly all of Berlin's contacts to the colonial world were lost. What emerged in the period between 1930 and 1933 was a League dominated by communist party members from Europe, as well as students and expatriates from the colonial world who were based in Europe.

In spite of these many challenges from both left and right after the initial enthusiasm in Brussels, in 1929 League participants did manage to maintain several national chapters and counted sixty-three formal

Fig. 12. Nehru (second from left) and Fimmen (first from right) socializing at the Brussels Congress.

affiliated organizations in thirty-five separate states or territories, and affiliations with five international organizations.[29] In the early 1930s, the Secretariat also managed to coordinate several high-profile international anti-imperialist campaigns. These notably included a campaign against the Meerut Conspiracy Case in India beginning in 1929, a case to publicize the arrest by the Guomindang of Hilaire and Marie Noulens beginning in 1931, and an "anti-exposition" to counter the International Colonial Exposition in Paris in 1931.[30]

By 1931, circumstances in Berlin had deteriorated, highlighted by a raid on the headquarters of the International Secretariat by German authorities in December of that year. Although the League opened its doors again in February 1932, its staff had to flee the country for their safety when the Nazis gained power in early 1933. After much debate in Moscow and Paris, where Münzenberg lived in exile after 1933, the LAI relocated to London under the leadership of Reginald Bridgeman, the secretary of the British national section. The British LAI was among the most vibrant and robust national sections of the LAI, which managed to navigate sectarian tensions between the Communist Party of Great Britain (CPGB), the Independent Labour Party (ILP), and the Labour Party (LP). Only the last refused to work with the British LAI after 1927. The success of the British section should be credited to Bridgeman, who lost his Labour Party membership because he refused to resign from the LAI. A one-time diplomat stationed in Iran before the First World War, Bridgeman came to be a stalwart of anti-imperialism in Britain by the

1920s, and he emerged as the driving force behind the British LAI from its inception in 1927 until the League's end in 1937.

Acquiring little more than an outdated list of members, Bridgeman rebuilt the LAI from the ground up.[31] He emphasized his connections to anticolonial activists in London, primarily students and expatriates from West Africa and India, as well as his ties to the ILP and CPGB. By 1934, Bridgeman and the London office had surpassed Berlin in their output of anti-imperialist publications that targeted European colonialism in Africa and Asia. They had also organized mass demonstrations against Britain's launch of the Meerut Conspiracy Case in India, a letter and telegram campaign protesting at the arrest and imprisonment of Hilaire and Marie Noulens in Shanghai, and the Italian invasion of Abyssinia.

While the period between 1929 and 1933 was driven by sectarian conflict, the revitalization of the LAI in London returned the movement to a balance of communists, sympathetic socialists, and anticolonial revolutionaries. As Mark Reeves' essay in this volume details, the LAI office in London housed a variety of leftist organizations that brought communists and non-communists together in solidarity against war, fascism, imperialism, and capitalism. Moreover, it became a meeting ground for communists such as Ben Bradley, non-party members such as Bridgeman, Pan-Africanists such as George Padmore and C.L.R. James, and Indian leaders such as V.K. Krishna Menon. By the mid-1930s, the LAI also engaged with anti-fascism and peace mobilizations as new fronts in the struggle against imperialism. After all, if imperialist competition was the root cause of war, anti-imperialism was the only path to achieving peace. Bridgeman became secretary of the British Anti-War Council in 1934, and his office served as a meeting ground for those working against war and fascism as well as imperialism. In this new milieu, the League frequently published pamphlets and organized protests against fascism in Spain and imperialist aggression in China.

In May 1937, Bridgeman announced the closure of the LAI in a letter to members that encouraged a "broadening out" of their political projects to include the most pressing issues of the day: war and fascism.[32] Most anti-imperialists recognized the urgency of anti-war and anti-fascist mobilizations as the world edged towards another global conflict, and the anti-imperialist struggle came to be incorporated into larger movements against the war. The League called on anti-imperialists to unite with the forces working against capitalist exploitation, imperialism, and fascist aggression. Bridgeman's letter also announced a new effort, the Colonial Information Bureau, which would continue the LAI's mission

to produce news bulletins that publicized the atrocities of colonialism and imperialism, although on a smaller scale. From 1937 to 1944, the CIB circulated newsletters similar to those in the earliest days of the LAI, ones that shared stories and statistics from various colonies struggling for freedom against their imperialist oppressor. It was never an institution capable of launching world congresses or global campaigns, as the LAI did in the late 1920s, yet it carried on the anti-imperialist mission well into the Second World War. The CIB ironically outlived the Comintern, which closed its doors earlier in 1943. So, while international communism was significant in the establishment and at times the functioning of the LAI—a point on which all of the essays gathered here agree—the longevity of the CIB nevertheless demonstrates the significance of anti-imperialism as a movement in its own right.[33]

The League lasted ten years in spite of enormous outside pressures and deep internal divisions, while its direct successor, the CIB, survived the onset of war and the collapse of the Comintern. Given all of the obstacles stacked against it, its brief existence does not seem as brief as it might initially appear. Rather, it demonstrates the powerful and persuasive appeal of anti-imperialism across political, ideological, and geographic boundaries of the interwar world. This volume claims that the LAI was significant in the shaping of the interwar world, informing anticolonial nationalism, communism, socialism, and pacifism in ways we have failed to see because of the contentious and all too brief history of the League's existence. The volume also overturns the common assumption that the LAI failed to connect with non-communists after the Frankfurt Congress in 1929. As many of the essays in this volume demonstrate, the afterlives of the LAI and CBI continued to shape and be shaped by both communists and non-communists in the colonized world. Finally, contributions by Lee, Stolte, and Byrne also reveal the enduring impact of the anti-imperialist movement far beyond the Second World War and into the Cold War, long after both the LAI and CBI closed their doors.

Historians and the League

In spite of its many high-profile participants and the global reach of its membership, the League remains relatively obscure and poorly understood in historical scholarship. Aside from a short but useful pamphlet written for the British Socialist History Society in 1996 and an entry on Reginald Bridgeman in the *Dictionary of Labour Biography*, only Fredrik Petersson has written a full-length work on the organization.[34] Several authors have written either article-length pieces or book chapters on various aspects

of the League, using vastly different archival sources.[35] Several key works on anti-imperialism in European metropoles also pick up on the significance of the LAI. Beyond these works, the League generally appears in scholarship on the interwar period or on anti-colonial movements in passing remarks or footnotes.[36] Often, these passing treatments produce and replicate inaccuracies about the members and general narrative of the LAI, a problem this volume seeks to remedy.

The dearth of sustained scholarship on the League is partly due to the nature and availability of sources. When the Nazi authorities raided the League Secretariat in 1933, they destroyed much of its official archive.[37] The existing archival sources from the LAI remain scattered all over the world in the personal papers of individual members, the records of European domestic and colonial intelligence agencies, and the Comintern files. Of these scattered sources, the most comprehensive are the Comintern sources, which became available to scholars only in the late 1990s and were digitized in the early twenty-first century. These, however, unsurprisingly tell the story largely from the vantage point of Moscow. The archives of European security agencies are also voluminous, but unless read together they give the perspective of only one state. Additionally, colonial archives must be read with care given their creators' deeply antagonistic relationship with the League. The papers of individual participants, meanwhile, contain a wealth of information, but are located in archives scattered around the world. The fragmented and often highly focused nature of the sources means that most studies of the League thus far have been regionally or archivally confined, telling a small aspect of a much broader and global story of anti-imperialism between the world wars.

Given the small amount of existing scholarship on the League, distortions of any kind have had a significant impact on how historians perceive it. For example, since the only comprehensive study of the League has been Fredrik Petersson's study based on Comintern archives, the perspective of the Comintern and its leaders in his story of the League has marginalized others. As a consequence, the role of non-communists in the movement is minimized. An alternative distortion made by other scholars is the tendency to cite the League's Brussels Congress as the birthplace of the third world project and the forerunner to the Asian-African Conference in Bandung, Indonesia, in 1955.[38] This reading, however, neglects the diversity of the anti-imperialist movement by marginalizing international communist involvement and exaggerating anti-colonial solidarities instead. It also reads the history of the League teleologically

from the vantage point of 1955 and thus misses its significance in the context of its own time. Moreover, this type of distortion celebrates key events and conferences without situating them within the broader milieu and historical moments of the interwar and early Cold War years. A third type of distortion concerns factual errors that have been told and re-told in the historical literature. While most of these errors are relatively small—such as the belief that Sukarno of Indonesia and Ho Chi Minh of Vietnam attended the Brussels Congress, that Mohammad Hatta represented the Indonesian nationalist movement in 1927, or that Lamine Senghor died in a French prison after being arrested by French police for his involvement in the LAI—their consistent re-telling has mythologized aspects of the League even in academic scholarship.[39]

The essays assembled here view the League from different regional and temporal vantage points and do not always agree on the fine points regarding the relative importance of various individuals, the influence of the Comintern, or the long-term legacies in the larger story of the LAI. Collectively, they both expose and challenge historiographical distortions by bringing together, for the first time, scholars researching the League from a wide range of linguistic, geographic, and historical specialties. The narrative that emerges demonstrates that although the League's anti-imperialism was closely linked to international communism, particularly from 1930 to 1933, it also interfaced and overlapped with many non-communist political and social movements across the world. Moreover, it argues that while some League participants went on to play key roles in Bandung and beyond, the historical importance of the League is best understood on its own terms and in the context of the interwar world.

Indeed, we believe the story of the League necessitates a rethinking of the basic categories of historical analysis relevant to the interwar period. The League offered remarkably fluid and flexible solidarities that attracted a broad spectrum of activists and projects struggling for an ambiguously defined notion of political and social "freedom." These collaborative interconnections, so central to the anti-imperialist movement more generally, have been neglected as historiographical fields have developed around nationalism, international communism, socialism, and pacifism as separate categories with distinctive trajectories after the Second World War. This volume demonstrates that we cannot fully understand the significance of anti-imperialist institutions and networks of the interwar world without engaging these multiple histories that overlap and intersect.

The recovery of histories of League activists from the colonies who were engaged in local anti-colonial struggles is further complicated by a predominance of historical scholarship that seeks to either displace or transcend the nation entirely. This tendency has encouraged international and national histories to develop into distinct narratives that frequently do not speak to one another, making the intertwined stories of anti-colonial nationalism and international anti-imperialism difficult to tell. This project attempts to tell such stories by building on the arguments made by Glenda Sluga that we cannot understand the twentieth century without internationalism, and that "we have forgotten the long, intimate, conceptual past shared by the national and the international as entangled ways of thinking about modernity, progress and politics."[40] By facilitating a dialogue between researchers specializing in different aspects of the anti-imperialist movement, particularly those with expertise in the formerly colonized world, this volume seeks to create a space for a global and transnational framework that moves beyond the categories of colony, nation, and empire to comprehend more fully the transnational nature of the twentieth-century world.

The League in Global Context

While the League was certainly unique in some ways, it was also deeply shaped by the past and firmly grounded in its own time. Global events, transnational spaces, and new international ideologies helped to create the conditions for the formation not only of the League but also the many other international and trans-regional organizations that flourished in this period. Of the global events that helped to create the conditions for the internationalist moment, few were more important than the First World War. Indeed, although anticolonial internationalism was not new to the interwar period, the war years provided opportunities and issues that contributed to their rapid acceleration.[41] For one thing, during the war years millions of colonial and semi-colonial subjects moved around the world to fight or to labour on the side of either the Central or Allied powers. As they moved, some experienced life in colonial metropoles and saw first-hand the contradictions inherent in the idea of European superiority as its denizens butchered each other and the land with abandon. Others had the chance to interact with colonial soldiers and labourers from other areas of the world, or simply to think deeply about the appropriate reward for such service once the war was over.[42] Some colonial subjects saw the war as an opportunity to work with the enemies of the Allies to undermine colonial rule, which resulted in revolutionaries collaborating with German

government agents in Europe, China, Siam, the United States, and the Dutch East Indies in order to wreak havoc in the colonies.[43]

In the immediate aftermath of the war, the failures of the Paris Peace Conference to recognize the desire of many colonial and semi-colonial subjects for self-determination led many to turn away from the international state system dominated by the colonial powers and towards revolutionary anticolonialism.[44] The institution of the Mandate system by the newly-created League of Nations rubbed salt in these wounds, as colonial subjects and residents of the region rightly saw it as colonialism by another name, this time with the stamp of approval of the international community as embodied in the League of Nations.[45] It was in this context of disappointment, anger, and exasperation with the international system that many anticolonial activists devoted their energies to trans-regional or international movements such as the Khilafat Movement, pan-Asianism, or pan-Africanism.[46] It is important to understand the development of the League Against Imperialism within this temporal context of both increased opportunity for interaction and intense frustration with the colonial powers. Indeed, its very name was meant to evoke this frustration: for its members the League Against Imperialism was self-consciously designed to remedy the deficiencies of that other League by focusing on the oppressed rather than the powerful. They considered themselves, as Michele Louro has argued, the "real" League of Nations.[47]

While the global events of the war contributed a great deal to the internationalist moment, it required spaces in which international movements could flourish and grow. Given the lack of freedoms afforded to most colonial subjects in the colonies and the strict supervision of those who entered and exited, these spaces were rarely in the colonies themselves. Rather, the spaces most conducive to the growth of international anticolonial movements tended to be in European or American cities, where even colonial subjects tended to have greater freedom to congregate, to organize, to move around, and to publish. Despite the fact that London and Paris were imperial metropoles, for example, they also afforded colonial subjects who travelled there an opportunity to meet and share stories with colonial subjects from other parts of the world and with European leftists opposed to imperialism.[48] As a result, many colonial subjects developed and articulated their most vehement anticolonial views as a result of their experiences living abroad and interacting with other anticolonialists.

Some cities provided an even greater opportunity for colonial subjects to come into contact with radical, leftist, anti-colonial ideas. Of these, Berlin—capital of the new Weimar Republic and location of the League's

International Secretariat—was one of the most important. Until the early 1930s, Berlin was a critical "contact zone" for radical anticolonial activists and leftist radicals—especially communists—from all over the world.[49] And unlike in London and Paris, where government authorities were invested in curtailing anticolonial activity to the best of their abilities, in 1920s Germany the government had no such investment, as it had no colonies to protect and little reason to cooperate with British or French intelligence agencies. Indeed, during the latter half of the 1920s—precisely the period in which the League Against Imperialism was formed—the German government took a neutral approach to anticolonial work being undertaken in the state, "neither suppressing nor supporting" it."[50]

Fig. 13. The large German delegation at the Brussels Conference.

Layered into this potent combination in the 1920s was the rapid growth of a new ideology that gained a wide variety of leftist adherents following the war: international communism. When the Communist International (Comintern) was founded in 1919, its leaders did not initially pay much attention to the colonial world. But beginning in 1920, Vladimir Lenin argued that communists in the West should partner with communists in the colonies in order to damage the economic foundations of the capitalist powers.[51] This "united front" policy, as we know, was meant to broaden the appeal of communism to a wide variety of left-leaning activists, including anticolonial revolutionaries, socialists, and trade unionists, in order to bring an end to colonial rule more quickly.[52] And the radical potential of communism in the colonial and semi-colonial world did seem to be borne out by events of the 1920s and early 1930s, including two short-lived

communist rebellions in Singapore and Java in 1926, and then a much more serious rebellion in Indochina from 1930–1931. Most important in terms of the "united front" policy was the formation of an alliance between the nationalist Guomindang Party and the Chinese Communist Party in China between 1923 and 1927. In 1923, Soviet authorities signed a formal deal with the Guomindang leader, Sun Yat-sen, in which his party would work with the Chinese Communist Party to achieve full sovereignty for China, thus wresting control from foreign interference and also the warlord dominance that was tearing the country apart. To aid in the success of this "united front," hundreds of Soviet advisors poured into China after 1923, bringing tactical and organizational advice, technical expertise, and aid. Soviet assistance was pivotal in the establishment of the Whampoa Military Academy (1925), where Chinese students learned revolutionary tactics and communist propaganda, while other Chinese students were sent to Moscow to learn about communist theory and strategy at the revolutionary source.[53] Although we know in hindsight the fate of the communist forces inside the Guomindang Party just after the League's first Congress in 1927, for most of the 1920s the example of China convinced many anticolonialists from a variety of ideological backgrounds that the internationalism, anticolonialism, and anti-racism of the Comintern could be a powerful partner in the struggle for independence.

This, then, was the global and internationalist milieu in which the League Against Imperialism was created. Its delegates and leadership had witnessed the frustrations of the war years and their consequences for the colonial world; many of them were already involved with other international and trans-regional movements to improve colonial conditions; and most of them had spent considerable time in European cities that exposed them not only to other anticolonial activists but also to the internationalism and egalitarianism of international communism. Through the example of China, they also saw the "united front" policy—and its potential for a successful marriage between communist support and anti-imperialism—in action. So even though the League was unique in its size, membership, and holistic view of imperialism as a global problem, it was also deeply rooted in its time.

Themes and Approaches

One of the most important intentions of this volume is the retelling of the LAI's history from what historians might consider "peripheries." Most of the people who feature in its pages were anticolonial activists from

colonial or semi-colonial locations. While some of them lived in Europe as students or exiles, they represented a wide range of places, including India, China, North and sub-Saharan Africa, the East Indies, Latin America, and the Levant. Without dismissing the significance of European actors and sites, this volume brings to light the importance of the colonial world to the making of interwar internationalism. While "provincializing Europe" has been a driving force of post-colonial scholarship, the histories of interwar internationalism lag behind in revealing the sources and perspectives outside Europe.[54] This volume uses the LAI to tell a global story of interwar internationalism, in which Europe and the colonial world mutually constituted anti-imperialism. At the same time, anti-imperialist internationalism shaped the local histories of anticolonial resistance throughout the world.

Our goal has been to be as inclusive as possible in highlighting the geographical diversity of League participants. Efforts to include every area of importance to the League's history were only partially successful—important omissions include Indochina, the Caribbean, and the Philippines—but this volume brings into dialogue a wide range of people, places, and topics related to the League. And while each story is different, when read together it is clear that certain themes and approaches continually resurface. Of these, none stand out more than the "lives" and "afterlives," for which the volume is subtitled. Many of the essays are not only *about* the "lives" or "afterlives" of the League members, but also view their stories using "lives" or "afterlives" as a methodological lens.

It is important to note, in this context, that the League brought together several generations of activists. It convened an anti-imperialist generation that had fought against colonial invasions and aggression in the pre-war period. Some, such as M.P.T. Acharya and Maulana Barakatullah, had been part of earlier anarchist and Pan-Islamist movements. This generation joined forces with a "newer" generation, whose activism targeted a changed world order from the 1920s onwards. The global context of the interwar period provided the right conditions for these two generations to unite and work together under the banner of the League.[55] Several League members of this second generation, along with younger colleagues who were still waiting in the wings, would wield a considerable amount of power as the first generation of post-colonial leaders after the Second World War. Essays by Carolien Stolte and Christopher Lee demonstrate the intellectual and personal connections between League members and later internationalisms in the early Cold War. It is no coincidence that Mark T. Berger would later see this group as different from the post-

colonial leaders of the 1960s whose careers had not started in the interwar moment of internationalist optimism. To him, early post-colonial leaders for whom decolonization had been the crowning achievement of their careers were different political beings from the generation of leaders whose careers began after the Second World War.[56] For this reason, the "afterlives" examined in this volume cover echoes of the League in the activism of those who were connected directly to the League or to its members. In the same vein, the final chapter by Jeff Byrne demonstrates that the extraordinary longevity of the League's anti-imperialist blueprint had limitations among a new generation in a decolonized world.

In terms of lives, six of the essays explore the stories of key figures who participated in the League, particularly Jawaharlal Nehru, V.K. Krishna Mennon, Mohammad Hatta, Lamine Senghor, Messali Hadj, and Willi Münzenberg. Two further essays, by Anna Belogurova and Sana Tannoury-Karam, explore several lesser-known individuals—at least outside their own region—who were involved in the League. Still another uses the life of the South African Alex la Guma to explore the intellectual legacies of the League on the post-Second World War period. The importance of individuals in these stories is testament to the usefulness, as Christopher Lee argues in this volume, "of biography for approaching broader global trends."

Indeed, many of the essays assembled here demonstrate just how much the League was about the power of experience, about building personal connections, and about learning from others. The first Congress in Brussels is a good example of this, since it was a moment that profoundly affected many who attended. Hearing messages of support from people like Gandhi and Einstein, seeing delegates from so many places in the world stand shoulder to shoulder with each other and with Europeans allies, and hearing again and again similarities of experience with imperialism regardless of the colonizing power or the region made for a deeply pedagogical experience. The orbit of the League was also a rare space in which anticolonial activists from the colonies forged real, personal, and sustained alliances with members of the European working classes.

From that initial meeting and through later executive meetings of the leadership and the activities of regional chapters, members of the League built lasting contacts with many of the individuals who would go on to play critical roles in their own national independence movements or who would represent the European left. As Dónal Hassett argues in this volume regarding Algerian participants, "their involvement in the League provided them with the language, the practices, and the contacts, which they could

use to develop their own networks of anti-imperial solidarity, sometimes within the orbit of the LAI, sometimes expressly outside it." Even years later, when Mohammad Hatta of Indonesia spoke of the development of his relationship with Jawaharlal Nehru and Messali Hadj at the Congress, he recalled that "during all these years, I have treasured their memory in my heart."[57] And as scholars like Michele Louro have shown, these relationships and the global vision of anti-imperialism they engendered went on to influence the ideas of many of the delegates—like Nehru—who helped to pioneer their respective independence movements.[58] One of the things the League demonstrates, then, is that lives were the essential building blocks of global anti-imperialist networks in the interwar period.

A different kind of (after)life of the League consisted of inter-state networks built in response to it. Colonial authorities strengthened not only their own surveillance networks but also their cooperation with one another. The importance of the League to its members was mirrored in the threat it was perceived to pose to imperial powers. During the First World War, both British and French colonies had been the target of revolutionary conspiracies between anticolonial activists and German agents, which themselves led to the establishment of political intelligence agencies aimed at counter-insurgency.[59] When the war ended, and with it the possibility of German collaboration with anticolonial activists, colonial counter-intelligence focused instead on international communism as a new, even more threatening, bogeyman. Now it appeared that a rapidly evolving great power had a specific, peace-time mission to undermine the established system of colonial rule all over the world. Instead of the threat of internal enemies opposed to colonial rule in specific colonies, colonial authorities now believed that the threat was coming from the outside, directly from Moscow. The same "united front" strategy in China that seemed so promising to anticolonial activists in the mid-1920s was, from the perspective of colonial states, intensely alarming. This was not limited to the desire of states like Britain and France to maintain control over the treaty ports and international concessions in China. Equally threatening was the potential effect of communist ideology on anti-colonial activists who were able to travel to China for training, and on the large overseas Chinese populations in Indochina, Malaya, the East Indies, and the Philippines, many of whom were already members of the Guomindang party. Colonial authorities feared that the integration of the Chinese Communist party into the Guomindang would encourage Chinese living in the colonies to become radicalized themselves, and that it would also encourage them to spread their anti-colonial, communist message among

non-Chinese colonial subjects.[60] The League was therefore founded during a time of extreme anxiety for the colonial states about the potential of communist influence from Moscow to undermine colonial and semi-colonial rule both in China and around the world.

The publication of the Labour and Socialist International report in 1927 discussed above, only further convinced European security forces that the League was a Communist front organization. In 1929, a long British report on the League summed up the opinion of colonial authorities when it concluded that "the League may be described as an International Organisation, inspired and financed by Moscow, with world-wide ramifications whose main object—euphemistically described as support of the struggle for freedom of the oppressed Colonial countries—is to stir up trouble in the Colonies and Dependencies of what it calls the Imperialist countries."[61] These beliefs inspired British and French intelligence networks to infiltrate the League's membership, sending spies not only to the first Congress but also to regional meetings.[62] Colonial authorities closely tracked League members and shared information with the other colonial states about their activities, movements, and publications.[63] They were especially keen to prevent the movement of League members to the colonies themselves, and refused visas to known participants, as Daniel Brückenhaus' essay in this volume shows.[64] Indeed, the response of colonial authorities to the formation of the League speaks volumes about their fears of collaboration between anticolonialists and more powerful allies. To counter this threat they expanded political intelligence networks, increased their networks of spies, improved their methods of surveillance and investigation of people deemed "subversive," and interfered in the movement of individuals around the world. They intensified their collaboration and information-sharing with other colonial states eager to minimize the international threat posed by the League. This "afterlife" of the League worked self-consciously to undermine the agenda of global anti-imperialist activism that the League participants were so keen to pursue.

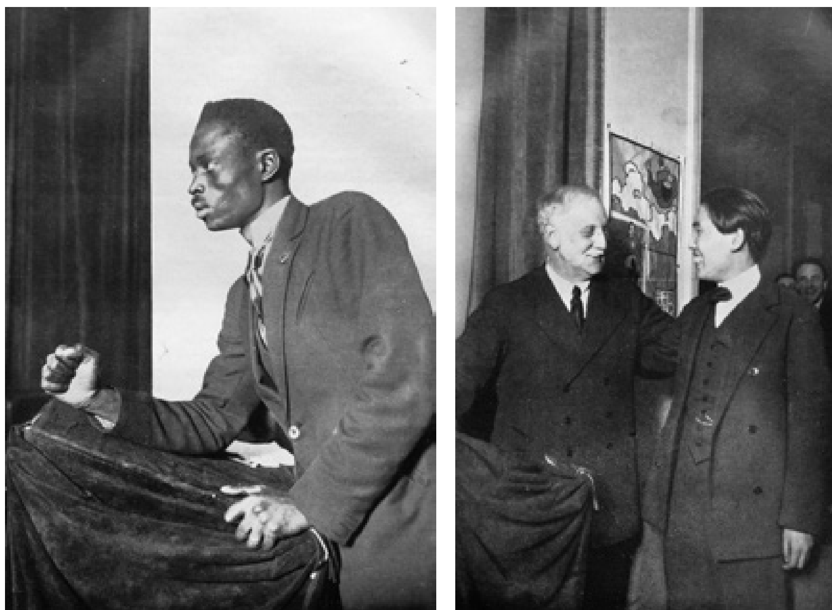
The colonial authorities' determination to undermine global anti-imperialism was hardly the only obstacle facing the League and its participants. Inherent in the structure but also the purpose of the League were tensions over race, gender, identity, and class that activists could not escape, even when they sought to overcome them. Many of these were particularly visible in the relationship between nationalism and internationalism. As many of the essays demonstrate, nationalism and internationalism were not necessarily oppositional. Yet much of the

recent historiography on transnationalism, which transcends or displaces the nation, has neglected the strong ties that connected international and national movements. Within the LAI, as Dónal Hassett argues in the case of Algeria, "the complex blend of conflict and cooperation between the nascent Algerian nationalism and the early organisations of international anti-imperialism shaped the evolution of both movements." A similar interplay, ebbing between conflict and cooperation, can be seen in essays ranging from India to South Africa, Indonesia, China, and the Levant. Overall, this volume demonstrates the significance, if not the necessity, of situating nationalism and internationalism within the same analytic frame of interwar anti-imperialism.

Many essays also reveal the significance of anti-imperialism in amplifying certain anticolonial movements and creating spaces for alternatives to nationalism in the colonial world. For example, the League offered a platform for nationalists, Pan-Asianists, and Pan-Africanists to project their local messages on a global stage. In this way, the LAI shaped the possibilities and enhanced the reach of nationalist and regionalist messages and campaigns. Klaas Stutje most clearly demonstrates this in his exploration of the ways in which the LAI amplified the Indonesian student movement, which before 1927 had been a marginal organization in the Netherlands. The LAI ultimately shaped and was shaped by nascent nationalist or regional anti-colonial organizations.

At the same time, the LAI reproduced many of the hierarchies of the interwar world. Often the activities and priorities of national sections in imperial metropoles trumped the voices and concerns of their colonial counterparts. At times, this was overlaid by assumptions about racial superiority and civilizing discourses. This is clearly demonstrated in the case of the French branch in relation to Algeria or Senghor's "negro" groups. Even within the international secretariat, Münzenberg often privileged the leadership of European socialists and communists over that of colonial members.

Equally clear were the gender hierarchies reproduced in the LAI. There is little doubt that the LAI imagined and worked within a homosocial world.[65] Returning to the Brussels Congress, the chairman of the British Labour Party, George Lansbury, argued that the LAI's chief goal was the "unity of the human race … united in the bonds of economic freedom, working to produce not for imperialist nations nor for capitalism, but for the service of all the children of *men*."[66] The Brussels Congress hosted a total of six women among its official delegates, all of whom were European and represented organizations in Britain, Germany, France,



Figs. 14 and 15. Lamine Senghor delivers his speech, and George Lansbury shares a moment with GMD representative Liao Huanxing.

and the Netherlands.[67] One notable exception was Madame Sun Yat-sen, widow of Chinese nationalist Sun Yat-sen, who could not attend but sent fraternal greetings and served on the honorary praesidium alongside other luminaries such as Mohandas Gandhi and Albert Einstein. Photographs of the Brussels Congress clearly demonstrate this overwhelmingly homosocial milieu.

This environment of the LAI stood in stark contrast to shifting gender relations in the 1920s that empowered women through suffrage and new social concepts of female leadership in movements for peace and national freedom. Women were not at all absent from interwar internationalism.[68] But the anti-imperialist circles of the League reproduced rather than overturned the older order of gender hierarchy inherent in imperialism. As Stolte's essay demonstrates, it was only after the Second World War that a larger-scale arrival of women to anti-imperialist internationalism unfolded in the era of rapid decolonization.[69]

Ultimately, we believe the League should be studied in its own right for its successes in bringing together so many leftists and anticolonial activists from so many parts of the world, and also for its initial ambitions to cross racial, cultural, and ideological boundaries to achieve its larger

Fig 16. Particularly the unstaged photographs of the Congress reveal its mostly male participation.

goals. In addition, the League should be studied because of the impact it had on leaders who went on to shape their own national independence movements, and because of the ways it triggered ever more sophisticated and collaborative networks of surveillance by the colonial powers. Finally, studying the League helps us to understand a dynamic internationalist moment in which people believed in the potential for organizing across borders to achieve complex social and political goals. Given the carnage

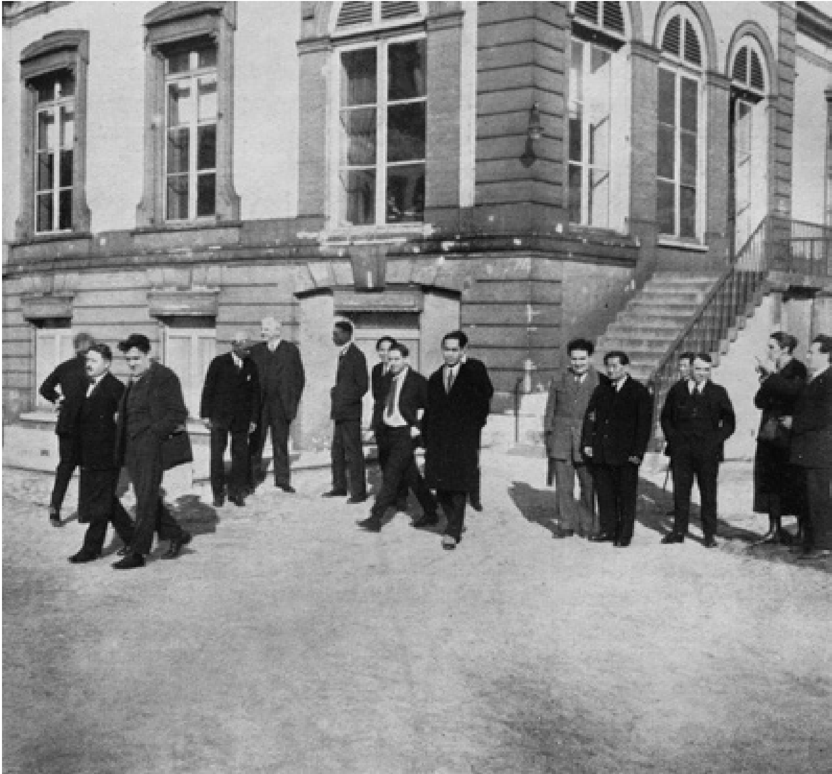


Fig. 17. Brussels delegates in the palace courtyard during a break. Dutch poet Henriëtte Roland Holst is the only female delegate, second from the right.

of the Second World War and the markedly "national" independence movements that followed in its wake, this is something of which we have too often lost sight.

Notes

1 For the example of Brockway and Liao, see Frederik Petersson, "'We Are Neither Visionaries nor Utopian Dreamers': Willi Münzenberg, the League Against Imperialism, and the Comintern, 1925–1933" (Åbo Akademi University: PhD Dissertation, 2013), 146. Petersson's dissertation is by far the most extensive institutional history of the League, although his focus is on the Comintern papers and Willi Münzenberg's role in the League's creation. Liao is featured in Anna Belogurova's essay in this volume.

2 Though representing Puerto Rico, Vasconcelos was actually from Mexico. As Michael Goebel shows in this volume, this laid bare power dynamics that did not work in favor of Puerto Rico.

3 International Institute for Social History (hereafter IISH), League Against Imperialism Archives (hereafter LAIA), Speech by Jose Vasconcelos representing Puerto Rico, 10 February 1927.

4 Speech of J.T. Gumede, President of the ANC, at the International Congress Against Imperialism, 15 February 1927. http://www.anc.org.za/content/speech-jt-gumede-president-anc-international-congress-against-imperialism. See also Christopher Lee in this volume.

5 Michele Louro, *Comrades Against Imperialism: Nehru, India, and Interwar Internationalism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018), 65. The sixteen resolutions not approved at the Congress itself were passed along to the Executive Committee for later approval.

6 IISH, LAIA, Resolution Anglo-Indoue-Chinoise, 1927. Original in French.

7 IISH, LAIA, Agenda, Brussels, 1927, 1.

8 IISH, LAIA, Manifesto of the Brussels Congress Against Imperialism, 1927.

9 IISH, LAIA, List of Organizations and Delegates Attending the Congress Against Colonial Oppression and Imperialism, 1927.

10 The other secretaries at the International Secretariat included the British journalist and communist Clemens Dutt, the Czech communist and Comintern emissary Bohumil Smeral, and the Japanese-Danish communist Hans Thogerson. Petersson, "We are Neither Visionaries," 35–6.

11 Petersson, "We are Neither Visionaries," 135.

12 Louro, *Comrades Against Imperialism*, 77. See also Klaas Stutje and Michele Louro in this volume.

13 Daniel Brückenhaus, *Policing Transnational Protest: Liberal Imperialism and the Surveillance of Anticolonialists in Europe, 1905–1945* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2017), 139.

14 See, among others: Ali Raza, Franziska Roy, and Benjamin Zachariah's edited volume called *The Internationalist Moment: South Asia, Worlds, and World Views, 1917–1939* (New Delhi: Sage, 2014). This volume views the moment extending until the start of the European phase of the war.

15 *Das Flammenzeichen vom Palais Egmont, Offizielles Protokoll des Kongresses gegen Koloniale Unterdrückung und Imperialismus, Brüssel, 10–15 Februar 1927* (Berlin: Neue Deutscher Verlag, 1927).

16 It is unclear how active these branches were in this period. The LAI produced this list to promote its work. See IISH, LAIA, File 2.

17 For his only biographical history, see N. K. Barooah, *Chatto: The Life and Times of an Indian Anti-Imperialist in Europe* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2004).

18 Only one issue of the *Anti-Imperialist Review* was published in July 1928, while several more appeared later in 1931. Copies of all are available in the reading room of the IISH. For analyses of the writings in the *Anti-Imperialist Review*, see the essays in this volume by Louro, Stolte, and Karnad Jani.

19 The official list of affiliated members is printed in the *Anti-Imperialist Review*, 94–6.

20 P. C. Joshi Archives, New Delhi, League against Imperialism Papers, File 6: Chattopadhyaya to Nehru, 3 March 1929.

21 For further details on the role of the Comintern in the League, see Petersson, "We are Neither Visionaries," 142–3, and Petersson's essay in this volume.

22 Petersson, "We are Neither Visionaries," 47.

23 Louro, *Comrades Against Imperialism*, 53–4.

24 Petersson, "We are Neither Visionaries," 160.

25 Ibid., 167.

26 For a detailed exploration of the larger context of international socialism in this period, see Talbot Imlay, *The Practice of Socialist Internationalism: European Socialists and International Politics, 1914–1960* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018).

27 The two men most responsible for this report were Friedrich Adler, secretary of the LSI in Zurich, and William Gillies, secretary of the international department of Britain's Labour Party. Petersson, "We are Neither Visionaries," 190.

28 Ibid., 200.

29 IISH, LAIA, List of Affiliated, Associated, and Sympathizing Organizations, February 1929.

30 For Meerut, see the special issue "The Meerut Conspiracy Case in Comparative and International Perspective," edited by Michele Louro and Carolien Stolte, *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa, and the Middle East*, 33:3 (2013). For the 'anti-exposition,' see Daniel Brückenhaus, "The Transnational Surveillance of Anti-Colonialist Movements in Western Europe, 1905–1945" (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2011), 161–164. For the Noulens Affair, see Heather Streets-Salter, "The Noulens Affair in East and Southeast Asia: International Communism in the Interwar Period," *Journal of American East-Asian Relations* 21 (2014), 394–414: 406.

31 See the contributions by Louro and Reeves in this volume.

32 Hull History Centre, Bridgeman Papers, File DBN 25/2: League against Imperialism secretariat to members, May 7, 1937.

33 The CIB closed in 1944, while the Comintern dissolved in May 1943.

34 Jean Jones, *The League Against Imperialism* (London: Socialist History Society, 1996); *Dictionary of Labour Biography*, vol. II, ed. by Joyce M. Bellamy and John Saville (London: Macmillan Press, 1984), 40–49; Petersson, "We are Neither Visionaries." Petersson has published several articles involving the League, including "Hub of the Anti-Imperialist Movement" in *Interventions* 16:1 (2014).

35 Vijay Prashad devotes attention to the LAI in *The Darker Nations: A People's History of the Third World* (New York: New Press, 2007), 16–30; Susan Pennybacker covers many of the key players in the LAI in *From Scottsboro to Munich: Race and Political Culture in 1930s Britain* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009); Klaas Stutje elaborates on the Indonesian context in "To Maintain an Independent Course: Inter-War Indonesian Nationalism and International Communism on a Dutch-European Stage," *Dutch Crossings* 39:3 (2015). For a short history of the LAI in Paris, see Michael Goebel's *Anti-Imperial Metropolis: Interwar Paris and the Seeds of Third World Nationalism* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2015). Michele Louro's *Comrades Against Imperialism* devotes several chapters to the League in the context of Jawaharlal Nehru's development as an internationalist, while Daniel Brückenhaus devotes a chapter to it in the context of colonial surveillance in *Policing Transnational Protest*. Nearly all of the authors mentioned here except Prashad have been involved in this volume.

36 For example, in Talbot Imlay's *The Practice of Socialist Internationalism*.

37 What remains has been preserved (and digitized) at the International Institute of Social History in Amsterdam. One notable exception is the published official proceedings and images from the Brussels Congress printed by the international secretariat: *Das Flammenzeichen vom Palais Egmont: offizielles Protokoll des Kongresses gegen koloniale Unterdrückung und Imperialismus, Brüssel, 10–15 Februar 1927* (Berlin: Neuer Deutscher Verlag, 1927).

38 President Sukarno of Indonesia himself made this case in his opening address at Bandung on April 18, 1955. See, *Selected Documents of the Bandung Conference* (New York: Institute of Pacific Relations, 1955). See also Prashad, *The Darker Nations*.

39 For the effects of mythologizing in the context of the Bandung conference, see Robert Vitalis, "The Midnight Ride of Kwame Nkrumah and Other Fables of Bandung (Ban-doong)," *Humanity: An International Journal of Human Rights, Humanitariansim, and Development* 4:2 (2013). Klaas Stutje and David Murphy explore the myths mentioned here in their essays in this volume.

40 Glenda Sluga, *Internationalism in the Age of Nationalism* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2015), 3. The argument that anticolonial nationalism for the colonized emerged in relation to internationalism has been advanced even earlier by Brent Hayes Edwards, "The Shadow of Shadows," *positions* 11:1 (2003), 11–49. This is also a central theme in Louro, *Comrades against Imperialism*.

41 There is a growing literature on international anticolonial revolutionary movements in the pre-war period, including those focused on European metropolitan cities like London, on Japan after the Russo-Japanese war, and on the United States. See Harald Fischer-Tiné, "Indian Nationalism and the 'World Forces': Transnational and Diasporic Dimensions of the Indian Freedom Movement on the Eve of the First World War," *Journal of Global History* 2:3 (2007); Shiraishi Masaya and Vinh Sinh (eds.), *Phan Boi Chau and the Dong-Du Movement*, Lac-Viet Series (New Haven, CT: Yale Southeast Asia Studies, 1988); Maia Ramnath, *Haj to Utopia: How the Ghadar Movement Charted Global Radicalism and Attempted to Overthrow the British Empire* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2011).

42 There is now a large literature about the experiences of colonial soldiers and laborers during the war, for example: Andrew Tait Jarboe and Richard Standish Fogarty, *Empires in World War I: Shifting Frontiers and Imperial Dynamics in a Global Conflict* (London, New York: I.B. Tauris, 2014); Robert Gerwarth and Erez Manela (eds.), *Empires at War, 1911–1923* (Oxford University Press, 2014); Jacques Frémeaux, *Les Colonies dans la Grande Guerre: Combats et Éprouves des Peuples d'Outre-Mer* (Paris: 14–18 Editions, 2006); Richard Standish Fogarty, *Race and War in France: Colonial Subjects in the French Army, 1914–1918* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2013); Kimloan Hill, "Strangers in a Foreign Land: Vietnamese Soldiers and Workers in France during World War I," in Nhung Tuyet Tran and Anthony Reid (eds.), *Viet Nam: Borderless Histories* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2006); Gajendra Singh, *The Testimonies of Indian Soldiers and the Two World Wars* (London: Bloomsbury, 2015).

43 The activities of Indian revolutionaries have been particularly well covered. See, in addition to Ramnath's *Haj to Utopia*, also Kris Manjapra, "The Illusions of Encounter: Muslim 'Minds' and Hindu Revolutionaries in First World War Germany and After," *Journal of Global History* 1:3 (2006); Maia Ramnath, "Two Revolutions: The Ghadar Movement and India's Radical Diaspora, 1913–1918," *Radical History Review* 92 (2005); A.C. Bose, "Activities of Indian Revolutionaries Abroad, 1914–1918," in A.C. Bose and Amitabha Mukherjee (eds.), *Militant Nationalism in India, 1876–1947* (Calcutta: Institute of Historical Studies, 1995), and Heather Streets-Salter, *World War*

One in Southeast Asia (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017). For anti-French revolutionaries during the war, see Christopher Goscha, *Thailand and the Southeast Asian Networks of the Vietnamese Revolution, 1885–1954* (Richmond, Surrey: Curzon Press, 1999), and Streets-Salter, *World War One in Southeast Asia*, chapters 5 and 6.

44 Erez Manela gives an excellent account of the promise and the profound disappointments of the Paris Peace conference in *The Wilsonian Moment: Self-Determination and the International Origins of Anticolonial Nationalism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007).

45 For a recent, thorough, and authoritative look at the establishment of the Mandates, see Susan Pedersen, *The Guardians: The League of Nations and the Crisis of Empire* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017).

46 Both pan-Asianism and pan-Africanism emerged well before the interwar years, but enjoyed a resurgence in this period. See Hakim Adi, *Pan-Africanism: A History* (London: Bloomsbury, 2018); Carolien Stolte and Harald Fischer-Tiné, "Imagining Asia in India: Nationalism and Internationalism (ca. 1905–1940)," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 54:1 (2012), 65–92; Cemil Aydin, *The Politics of Anti-Westernism in Asia: Visions of World Order in Pan-Islamic and Pan-Asian Thought* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007).

47 Louro, *Comrades Against Imperialism*, 55.

48 Michael Goebel captures this dynamic environment ably in *Anti-Imperial Metropolis: Interwar Paris and the Seeds of Third World Nationalism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015).

49 Petersson estimates that about 5,000 colonial subjects lived in Berlin during the interwar period. Petersson, "We are Neither Visionaries," 8; for the "contact zone" language, Brückenhaus, *Policing Transnational Protest*, 153. After 1933, David Motadel demonstrates that Berlin continued to provide a space for some radical anticolonial activists who preferred, or tolerated, authoritarianism. See Motadel, "The Global Authoritarian Moment and the Revolt Against Empire," *American Historical Review* 124:3 (2019).

50 Brückenhaus, *Policing Transnational Protest*, 142.

51 Louro, *Comrades Against Imperialism*, 39.

52 Communist parties certainly proliferated in the colonial world during the 1920s, beginning with the Parti Komunis Indonesia, the Communist Party of Iran, and the establishment of the first Communist Party of India in Tashkent in 1920. These were followed by the Chinese and South African Communist Parties in 1921, the Egyptian Communist Party in 1923, the Palestinian Communist Party in 1924, and then in 1925 by the Communist Party of India, the Communist Party of Korea, the Syrian and Lebanese

Communist Party, and the South Seas Communist Party. By 1930, colonial communist parties included the Indochinese Communist Party, the Malayan Communist Party, and the Filipino Communist Party.

53 Kevin McDermott, *The Comintern: A History of International Communism from Lenin to Stalin* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1997), 168–9; Streets-Salter, "The Noulens Affair in East and Southeast Asia," 406.

54 On "provincializing Europe," see the foundational text by Dipesh Chakrabarty, *Provincializing Europe: Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000). Histories of interwar internationalism tend to focus on the League of Nations, told through the sources of Europeans and Americans. See for example, Susan Pedersen, *The Guardians: The League of Nations and the Crisis of Empire* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2015); Glenda Sluga, *Internationalism in the Age of Nationalism* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2015); Daniel Laqua, ed. *Internationalism Reconfigured: Transnational Ideas and Movements between the World Wars* (New York: IB Tauris, 2011).

55 This issue is confronted explicitly in the essays by Tannoury-Karam, Hassett, and Stutje.

56 Mark T. Berger, "After the Third World? History, Destiny, and the Fate of Third Worldism," *Third World Quarterly*, 25:1 (2004), 9–39.

57 Quoted in Stutje, "To Maintain an Independent Course," 199.

58 This is one of Michele Louro's central points about Jawaharlal Nehru in this volume and in *Comrades Against Imperialism*.

59 Heather Streets-Salter's recent *World War One in Southeast Asia* details a variety of these conspiracies in Southeast and East Asia.

60 Ironically, given the fears of colonial authorities, C.F. Yong and R.B. McKenna argue that many Guomindang party members in Singapore and Malaya were anti-communist and did not support the United Front in the mid-1920s, even though British authorities believed otherwise. See Ching Fatt Yong and R.B. McKenna, "The Kuomintang Movement in Malaya and Singapore, 1912–1925," *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies* 12 (1981), 125.

61 British Library (BL), India Office Records (IOR) L/PJ/12/280 File 1309(h)/25: R.T. Peel's Memorandum on League Against Imperialism, 1929, 8.

62 Brückenhaus, *Policing Transnational Protest*, 142.

63 Among hundreds of examples are the papers in the India Office Records of the British Library, L/PJ/12/267, file 1309/25: League Against Imperialism: Reports on Activities (1927). These files indicate that all members of the League were watched, and all had files on them by their various countries or colonial governments. These papers include the French Police files of L. Gibarti, Mme. Mathilde Duchene, Alexandre Roubakine, which were given

to the British. They also include Dutch files given to the British and vice-versa.

64 A high profile refusal was to Sun Yat-Sen's widow, Soong Ching Ling, in June 1928. Officially her membership in the League Against Imperialism was not mentioned, but it was abundantly discussed in internal intelligence memos. BL, IOR, L/PJ/12/276: Madame Sun Yat Sen (Refusal of a Visa for India).

65 One omission to this volume is an essay specifically dedicated to gender. We make this point in the introduction to note the possibilities for further research, although we were unable to locate a scholar who could offer a compelling analysis of the LAI and gender.

66 Nehru Memorial Museum and Library (NMML), New Delhi: All-India Congress Committee Papers (AICC), File G29-1927: George Lansbury, Speech at the Brussels Congress.

67 These named representatives included Helen Crawfurd (Britain), Helene Stocker (Germany), Madame Duschene (France), and Henriëtte Roland-Holst (Netherlands).

68 See, among others, Leila J. Rupp, *Worlds of Women: The Making of an International Women's Movement* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997). For movements with an anti-imperialist bent, see also Elisabeth Armstrong, "Before Bandung: The Anti-Imperialist Women's Movement in Asia and the Women's International Democratic Federation," *Signs* 41:2 (2016); Sumita Mukherjee, *Indian Suffragettes: Female Identities and Transnational Networks* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018).

69 On new registers and demographics in anti-imperialist internationalism during decolonization, see the essays in the special issue edited by Su Lin Lewis and Carolien Stolte, "Other Bandungs: Afro-Asian Internationalisms in the Early Cold War," *Journal of World History* 30:1–2 (2019).