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Citation: Davies, T. (2025). Transnational associations and intellectual cooperation: anticipating, lobbying, serving and complementing the league of nations institutions. In: Laqua, D. & Grandjean, M. (Eds.), United Nations Historical Series. United Nations Historical Series, 5. (pp. 127-137). Geneva, Switzerland: United Nations. ISBN 9789211072808 doi: 10.18356/9789211072808c012

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Link to published version: <https://doi.org/10.18356/9789211072808c012>

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**Transnational Associations and Intellectual Co-operation:
Anticipating, Lobbying, Serving and Complementing the League of Nations
Institutions**

Thomas Davies

The project of international intellectual cooperation following the First World War was one that League of Nations officials realised could not be accomplished through the efforts of the organization and governments alone. As the chief of the general affairs section of the International Institute of Intellectual Cooperation (IIIC), British scholar Alfred Zimmern noted in a 1926 address to supportive transnational associations, League institutions were confined in their scope of action by their mandates from governments whereas transnational associations were freer to serve as “pioneers and pathfinders to go forward in their own way”.¹

This chapter explores four pathways by which transnational associations were able to advance intellectual cooperation in relation to the League of Nations in view of their independence: (i) anticipating the work of the League institutions; (ii) lobbying for the League to adopt certain policies; (iii) collaboration in the work of the League institutions; and (iv) complementing the work of the League in areas it served less comprehensively by undertaking their own intellectual cooperation initiatives. The analysis ahead considers each of these pathways in turn, providing examples and drawing on the archival resources of not only the League but also private associations and individuals involved in intellectual cooperation between the two World Wars.

¹ Transcript of the second meeting of the Co-ordinating Committee of Major International Associations, 28 January 1926, 1, R1018/13/41815/48412, League of Nations Archives, Geneva.

Anticipating the work of the League institutions

Over the course of the century prior to the League's establishment, the activities of multiple transnational associations may be considered to have constituted precursors to aspects of the League's work towards international intellectual cooperation. The writings of Marc-Antoine Jullien in the early nineteenth century have frequently been cited as having anticipated the idea of an international educational commission facilitating international learning with a view to overcoming the "baneful and contagious influence of national prejudices".² Less well-known is that Jullien established his own transnational associations aiming to advance such objectives through intellectual exchange among the luminaries of the 1810s to 1830s.³ While editing the *Revue Encyclopédique* from 1818 onwards, Jullien organized an accompanying learned society aiming to assemble "distinguished men of all nations" to support the journal's work in providing a "sort of institution to bring together the inhabitants of the different countries of the world through scientific and literary communication" and to "destroy the old prejudices and rivalries that separate peoples".⁴ Following the July Revolution of 1830, this association was succeeded by the *Société de l'Union des Nations*, which aimed "to eradicate national prejudices – and, by the frequent collision of intellect, to promote peace and good-will throughout the earth, by unitedly and mutually advancing the progress of civilization and improvement".⁵ Similar goals in this period were pursued by associations such as the *Société Universelle de Civilisation*.⁶

² This quotation from Jullien's 1817 *Esquisse et vues préliminaires d'un ouvrage sur l'éducation comparée* appears in F. S. Northedge, "International Intellectual Co-operation within the League of Nations: Its Conceptual Basis and Lessons for the Present" (PhD thesis, London School of Economics and Political Science, 1953), 227. See also Helmut Goetz, *Marc-Antoine Jullien de Paris (1775–1848): Der geistige Werdegang eines Revolutionärs: Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte der Vorläufer internationaler Organisationen des 20. Jahrhunderts* (Dornbirn: Hugo Mayer, 1954).

³ Thomas Davies, *NGOs: A New History of Transnational Civil Society* (London: Hurst, 2013), 29.

⁴ "Banquet mensuel de la Société de la *Revue Encyclopédique*", *Revue Encyclopédique* 36 (1827): 255.

⁵ Quoted in *The Crisis and National Co-Operative Trades' Union and Equitable Labour Exchange Gazette* 25, no. 3 (15 February 1834): 207.

⁶ M. de Moncey, ed., *Annuaire de la Civilisation pour l'An 31831 de Civilisation et l'An 1831 de l'Ère Vulgaire* (Paris: Bachelier, 1831), 47.

Transnational associations of the later nineteenth century sought to advance international intellectual cooperation through more functionally specialized means. Scientists in diverse fields established transnational disciplinary associations to exchange findings and facilitate cooperation, with more than one hundred such organizations being established between 1870 and 1900.⁷ The International Literary and Artistic Association founded in 1878, on the other hand, aimed not only towards developing “bonds of brotherhood” among “writers and artists of all countries” but the defence of their common interests, especially intellectual property.⁸ The Universal Scientific Alliance had broader objectives – “to facilitate relations between the men of science distributed throughout all countries of the world”⁹ – and pursued this goal through *présidences générales* in every continent and its “Diplôme Circulaire” to facilitate scientists’ movement across borders.¹⁰ At the elite level, the International Association of Academies brought together from 1899 the national scientific academies of ten European and North American countries in the belief that “the agreement between scientific men in the field of theoretical research often precedes a good understanding between peoples in the field of practice and business”.¹¹ At the popular level, international correspondence clubs with grand names such as *Internationalis Concordia* and *Kosmos* aimed “to put men of different nationalities in touch with each other along the line of their special interests, be they intellectual, industrial, commercial, [or] recreational”.¹²

Prior to the First World War, some of the most ambitious work towards international intellectual cooperation was advanced by the Brussels-based Union of International

⁷ Peter Alter, “The Royal Society and the International Association of Academies 1897–1919”, *Notes and Records of the Royal Society of London*, 34, no. 2 (1980): 241.

⁸ *Association littéraire et artistique internationale, son histoire, ses travaux, 1878–1889* (Paris: Chacornac, 1889), vii.

⁹ Union of International Associations, *Annuaire de la Vie Internationale 1908–1909* (Brussels: Office Central des Associations Internationales, 1909), 537.

¹⁰ Elisabeth Crawford, *Nationalism and Internationalism in Science, 1880–1939: Four Studies of the Nobel Population* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 39.

¹¹ “The International Association of Academies”, *Nature* 63, no. 1639 (1901), 519.

¹² John Culbert Faries, *The Rise of Internationalism* (New York: W. D. Gray, 1915), 106.

Associations (UIA), which besides its overarching aim towards “the systematic organisation of International Life in all its branches” sought to offer diverse services towards intellectual exchange such as an international library, encyclopaedic archives and a universal bibliographic catalogue.¹³ During the First World War, one of its co-founders Henri La Fontaine advocated “international organization of education” including a “pedagogic center”, an international university and “international protection of intellectual culture”.¹⁴ Immediately after the war, the UIA’s other co-founder Paul Otlet published a pamphlet advocating establishment of an “intellectual league of nations”, and a “World Palace” in Brussels was established in the hope that it would provide the location for this body. While this was not to be the case, Otlet and La Fontaine succeeded in pushing for the first League of Nations discussions on the subject of intellectual cooperation.¹⁵

The immediate-term role of Otlet and La Fontaine in stimulating the work of the League of Nations on intellectual cooperation is well-acknowledged,¹⁶ but less well-known are some of the earlier efforts to advance such cooperation through transnational associationalism during the First World War. One such effort was the Entente Committee of the UK’s Royal Society of Literature (RSL), established in October 1916 with correspondents in allied countries including China, Italy, France, Japan, Russia, and the USA.¹⁷ Its official aims encompassed steps towards “increasing the intellectual intercourse among those nations upon whom depends the shaping of the path of human progress after the present struggle”.¹⁸ The RSL’s vice-president Henry

¹³ Union of International Associations, *Union of International Associations: A World Center* (Brussels: Office Central des Associations Internationales, 1914), 7. For a survey of the UIA’s history, see Daniel Laqua, Wouter Van Acker, and Christophe Verbruggen, eds, *International Organizations and Global Civil Society: Histories of the Union of International Associations* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2019).

¹⁴ Henri La Fontaine, *The Great Solution: Magnissima Charta* (Boston: World Peace Foundation, 1916), 79.

¹⁵ Daniel Laqua, “Transnational Intellectual Cooperation, the League of Nations, and the Problem of Order”, *Journal of Global History* 6, no. 2 (2011): 227.

¹⁶ Jean Jacques Renoliet, *L’UNESCO oubliée: la Société des Nations et la coopération intellectuelle, 1919–1946* (Paris: Publications de la Sorbonne, 1999), 11–19.

¹⁷ “Committee for Promoting an Intellectual Entente among the Allied and Friendly Countries”, *Report of the Royal Society of Literature, 1917* (London: Royal Society of Literature, 1917), 18–23.

¹⁸ “Committee for Promoting an Intellectual Entente”, 23.

Newbolt saw the committee's purpose as facilitating "the reeducation of Europe in ... principles of humanity" and to "make every nation an element in the culture of every other nation".¹⁹ In practice, the committee's work included exchange of publications, liaison among correspondents among literary institutions across allied countries, and the drafting of "principles of public and international morality" in order to "refound the education of the world on a basis of ideals".²⁰ In 1918, Francis Younghusband presented a paper to the committee anticipating that "the intellectual entente we now desire to promote may develop into an intellectual union of nations".²¹ However, the committee was dealt a substantial blow following the withdrawal after the war of funding from the UK's Ministry of Information; it was perceived that the work of the League of Nations would have the potential to facilitate international intellectual cooperation more effectively.²² The entente committee was always limited by its inter-allied rather than wider reach, as well as by its dependency on a single government's support – two problems which a turn to the League of Nations was hoped to avoid.

Lobbying the League of Nations

While we have seen how diverse functions that were to be served by League of Nations institutions were anticipated among an array of transnational associations over the preceding century, following their establishment, the institutions of the League of Nations offered new opportunities for transnational advocacy. The previous section has already noted the role of the UIA's founders in putting intellectual cooperation on the League agenda. They were not alone:

¹⁹ Henry Newbolt, "Anniversary Address 1917", *Report of the Royal Society of Literature, 1917* (London: Humphrey Milford, 1917), 59.

²⁰ "Entente Committee February 18th 1917. Communication from Sir Henry Newbolt", MS RSL C2/1, archives of the Royal Society of Literature, Cambridge University Library; Henry Newbolt, "Anniversary Address, 1919", *Report of the Royal Society of Literature, 1919* (London: Royal Society of Literature, 1919), 63.

²¹ Quoted in William C. Lubenow, *"Only Connect": Learned Societies in Nineteenth-century Britain* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2015), 263.

²² R. W. Needham to Henry Newbolt, 23 August 1918, MS RSL EF Newbolt, archives of the Royal Society of Literature; Lubenow, *"Only Connect"*, 264.

as early as December 1919, the International Federation of League of Nations Societies passed a resolution urging the League of Nations to “encourage and direct” international scientific and educational endeavours, and the following year the Federation’s French member association wrote to the secretary general of the League Eric Drummond, requesting the establishment of an international intellectual bureau analogous to the International Labour Office.²³

In the period leading to the establishment of the International Committee on Intellectual Cooperation (ICIC) in 1921–2, Drummond produced a report presenting the prior history of such work exclusively with reference to the activities of the UIA.²⁴ Subsequently, however, it was other transnational associations that were often to be more prominent in lobbying the League in respect of its work for intellectual cooperation, with Paris instead of Brussels selected as the location for the IIIC when it was launched in 1926. The founding director of the IIIC was Julien Luchaire, the author of the plans for the establishment of an “Office for Intellectual Intercourse and Education” that were set out in the request of the French Association for the League of Nations to Drummond in July 2020.²⁵

In his early study of the ICIC, F. S. Northedge observed that it “lacked the backing of organised pressures and powerful trade associations which assured the success of the Labour Organisation”.²⁶ Nevertheless, the array of transnational associations that sought to influence the work of the Committee and Institute was extensive. At the second meeting of the ICIC in August 1922, a lengthy memorandum was circulated, summarizing the diverse communications received from transnational associations. The proposals varied from general plans for international organization of intellectual, scientific and inter-university cooperation, through to more limited objectives centred on educational and publication exchange. The

²³ Renoliet, *L'UNESCO oubliée*, 13–14.

²⁴ Eric Drummond, “L’activité éducative et l’organisation du travail intellectuel accomplis par l’Union des Associations Internationales”, 23 August 1921, C-267-1921_FR, League of Nations Archives, Geneva.

²⁵ *League of Nations Official Journal*, issue 8, October 1920, 445–51.

²⁶ Northedge, “International Intellectual Co-operation”, 118.

submitting groups included the Union of International Associations, the International Federation of University Women, the International Confederation of Students, the Institute of International Education, the World Association for Adult Education, the International Bureau representing secondary school teachers, and various League of Nations societies.²⁷

Among the most prolific in its demands was the International Federation of League of Nations Societies which by June 1922 had already demanded a “technical organization for education and science”, an “International Education Bureau” and “two textbooks dealing with international collaboration and the League of Nations, for the use of children under twelve years of age, and from twelve to sixteen years of age”.²⁸ This latter objective of textbook development and revision was one of the most popular themes for transnational associational lobbying of the ICIC, with further proposals received by July 1922 ranging from the organizational (such as a “committee on the critical examination of textbooks”) to the functional (such as statements of League of ideals for insertion in textbooks).²⁹ The ICIC’s response, however, was lukewarm, adopting in 1925 a limited proposal by Julio Casares for mutual liaison among member national committees to suggest corrections of errors in each other’s textbooks on the basis that it was “useless to try to impose any particular textbook on countries or even to recommend its adoption”, and claiming that it was “premature to attempt the teaching of any subject, and especially of history, from an international point of view”.³⁰ Later efforts to produce an international textbook of world history – including at a League-organized congress on history teaching held in the Hague in 1932 – were to be crushed by the ICIC.³¹

²⁷ “Rapport du Secrétariat sur les propositions qui lui ont été soumises en matière intellectuelle par diverses organisations et personnalités”, 29 July 1922, R1031/13/22167/14297, League of Nations Archives, Geneva.

²⁸ “Rapport du Secrétariat sur les propositions”, section vi.

²⁹ “Rapport du Secrétariat sur les propositions”, section iii.

³⁰ ICIC, *Minutes of the Sixth Session* (Geneva: ICIC, 1925), 14-15.

³¹ Ken Osborne, “Creating the ‘International Mind’: The League of Nations Attempts to Reform History Teaching, 1920–1939”, *History of Education Quarterly* 56, no. 2 (2016): 226.

Greater success was achieved in less contentious area of intellectual and educational exchange, another popular subject in the petitions received from transnational associations in the first year of the ICIC's work, including multiple requests for co-ordination of international exchange of students.³² This was to materialize the subsequent year, with the ICIC resolving in 1923 to bring together international students' associations to coordinate exchange activities.³³ Concrete outcomes of this process included the development of the International Student Identity Card, proposed by the International Confederation of Students to the ICIC in 1923 and launched in 1926.³⁴ By 1928, the student organization noted that the card was being issued in 17 countries, and that this was "due to the kindly interest and support of the Committee on Intellectual Cooperation of the League of Nations, to which the students of the world are duly grateful".³⁵ Daniel Laqua has argued that the card represents "an example of successful co-operation", involving the International Confederation of Students as well as "other student organisations, and the League".³⁶

Collaboration on student exchanges was not the only example of successful petitioning of the League's intellectual cooperation infrastructure. For instance, the 1930 appeal of the International Federation of League of Nations Societies for an international conference on educational problems was to be taken forward in a series of higher education conferences from 1932.³⁷ However, limited financial resources proved to be a frequent obstacle to achieving some of the more ambitious goals pressed upon the ICIC by transnational associations, including the frequently-requested establishment of an international university based on League principles. The university proposal was considered both likely to find that "the financial

³² "Rapport du Secrétariat sur les propositions", section ii.

³³ ICIC, *Minutes of the Second Session* (Geneva: ICIC, 1923), 32.

³⁴ "Réponse au questionnaire de la commission de Coopération Intellectuelle de la Société des Nations concernant les échanges d'étudiants", September 1923, R1055/13C/28306/28307, League of Nations Archives, Geneva.

³⁵ "Report on the Identity Card", April 1928, R2202/5B/3738/423, League of Nations Archives, Geneva.

³⁶ Daniel Laqua, "Activism in the 'Students' League of Nations': International Student Politics and the *Confédération Internationale des Étudiants*, 1919–1939", *The English Historical Review* 132, no. 556 (2017): 625.

³⁷ Northedge, "International Intellectual Co-operation", 458–60.

obstacle will prove insurmountable” as well as a superfluous endeavour given established universities’ pre-existing interest in international peace and cooperation.³⁸ In other cases, the objectives submitted to the League’s intellectual cooperation institutions were unviable given the limitations of an international order based on principles of state sovereignty: among the most notable proposals to fail at this hurdle was the UIA’s campaign for special international legal status for transnational associations, an issue which was handed to the IIIC to address through a survey. While the survey revealed considerable demand among transnational associations for international legal status, the IIIC was in no position to bring this idea into fruition.³⁹

Collaboration in the work of the League institutions

One of the most remarkable features of the relationship between the League’s institutions for intellectual cooperation and private international associations concerned with this domain of activity was the extent to which the latter sought to collaborate in the work of the former. In the initial batch of petitions considered by the ICIC in 1922, several transnational associations either requested its patronage (for instance in the case of the International Confederation of Students) or offered their assistance (in the case of the International Research Council, the Union Académique Internationale, the International Federation of University Women and the International Bureau of secondary school teachers’ federations).

In practice, the IIIC was to establish diverse means of cooperation with transnational associations. Its 1931 programme and methods provided detailed arrangements for liaison with these associations, dividing them up into general and specialised organizations in a manner

³⁸ “A proposal for the establishment of an International University, Under the Auspices of the League of Nations”, observations of Prof. D. N. Bannerjea, 22 May 1923, R1056/13C/28370/28370, League of Nations Archives, Geneva.

³⁹ IIIC, *L’Institut International de Coopération Intellectuelle, 1925–1946* (Paris: Institut International de Coopération Intellectuelle, 1949), 523–5.

anticipating the later division of categories of organizations in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations. These provisions also provided both for delegation of tasks to transnational associations, as well as for co-optation of their members in IIIC expert committees.⁴⁰ As with the wider League of Nations, the IIIC observed transnational associations' meetings in areas of its interest, and the IIIC also provided meeting facilities – although the extent to which these were possible was limited by budgetary constraints, and (especially into the 1930s) political considerations.⁴¹ The tasks delegated by the ICIC and IIIC to transnational associations included data collection, publications, and coordination of work in areas of common interest, notably in respect of student exchanges as discussed earlier.⁴²

The success of delegation of tasks to transnational associations depended significantly on the latter's competence. Compilation of the first *List of International Unions* circulated by the League of Nations secretariat in 1919 was made possible by drawing on data supplied by Otlet and La Fontaine of the UIA, who had assembled the comprehensive *Annuaire de la Vie Internationale* prior to the First World War, and this collaboration laid the foundation for the series of *Handbooks of International Organisations* published by the League from 1922 until 1938.⁴³ On the other hand, delegation by the ICIC of compilation of the *Index Bibliographicus* to another of Otlet and La Fontaine's associations – the International Institute of Bibliography – was to prove disastrous, with the Institute unable to achieve the confidence of national bibliographical authorities and the first supplement of 1925 having to be withdrawn from circulation due to its numerous errors.⁴⁴

⁴⁰ IIIC, *L'Institut International*, 47–8.

⁴¹ Renoliet, *L'UNESCO oubliée*, 275–80.

⁴² IIIC, *L'Institut International*, 123–4, 157 and 163; Renoliet, *L'UNESCO oubliée*, 206.

⁴³ League of Nations, “List of International Unions, Associations, Institutions, Commissions, Bureaux, &c.”, 4 November 1919, R1004/13/1434/299, League of Nations Archives, Geneva.

⁴⁴ The lack of confidence in the Institute is reported in J. E. de Vos van Steenwijk, “Report of Mr. de Vos van Steenwijk on the Brussels Institute of Bibliography”, 3 November 1926, R1066/13C/44162/32725, League of Nations Archives, Geneva. On the fraught relationship between the League of Nations institutions and Otlet and La Fontaine in respect of their collaboration on publications, see Martin Grandjean, “Les réseaux de la coopération intellectuelle. La Société des Nations comme actrice des échanges scientifiques et culturels dans l'entre-deux-guerres” (Thèse de doctorat, Université de Lausanne, 2018), 128–9, 135–6, 177–80, 263–5.

The League's efforts to collaborate with transnational scientific associations also met with variable success. The International Research Council and its successor the International Council of Scientific Unions (ICSU) were sceptical that the League could offer more than they were already able to perform well themselves, and it was not until 1937 that the IIIC and the ICSU signed an agreement that the latter could serve as an official consultative organ of the former and by which each organization could send representatives to one another's meetings.⁴⁵ The IIIC also conducted joint investigations with member organizations of the ICSU, for instance collaborating with the International Union of Biological Science on the stabilization of auxin.⁴⁶

More impactful was the IIIC's work to cooperate with transnational associations in the advancement of the study of international relations (IR), which unlike other fields was in the early stages of its disciplinary development. Stöckmann has argued that the International Studies Conference (ISC) which the IIIC organized "turned into the most important annual meeting for professors, diplomats, politicians, philanthropists, and journalists who engaged in some way with the study of IR".⁴⁷ Organization of the ISC required the cooperation not only of research institutes such as Chatham House and university bodies such as the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy, but transnational associations such as the Carnegie Endowment, with the director of its European Center serving as the ISC Bureau President.⁴⁸

Possibly the most ambitious effort towards collaboration between the IIIC and transnational associations was the establishment in December 1925 of the Co-ordinating Committee of Major International Associations. At its inaugural meeting Luchaire described

⁴⁵ Frank Greenaway, *Science International: A History of the International Council of Scientific Unions* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 38; the text of the agreement is provided in IIIC, *L'Institut International*, 354–5.

⁴⁶ IIIC, *L'Institut International*, 362–3.

⁴⁷ Jan Stöckmann, *The Architects of International Relations: Building a Discipline, Designing the World, 1914–1940* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2022), 186.

⁴⁸ IIIC, *L'Institut International*, 330.

its origins in a League of Nations Assembly resolution calling for “preparing for peace in people’s souls through education”, but he also attributed this to being a response to the appeals of transnational associations.⁴⁹ The Co-ordinating Committee aimed to enable among its participating transnational associations “exchanges of views, facilitation of joint studies, and the finding of practical means of implementing” their goals, which included textbook revision, liaison with teachers, and summer schools – much of which to work effectively would need governments’ cooperation.⁵⁰ In recognition of this, Drummond suggested that the group should consist not only of transnational associations but also national educational officials, but IIC deputy-director Alfred Zimmern ruled this out on the basis that “as prophets and statesmen respectively they could not act together”.⁵¹

The Co-ordinating Committee aimed to facilitate collaboration with the IIC of not just educational organizations but a wider array of major transnational associations, including the International Council of Women, the International Alliance of Women, the International Federation of League of Nations Societies, Pax Romana, the Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom, the International Conference of Disabled Ex-Servicemen, the League of Red Cross Societies, and Save the Children International Union.⁵² However, efforts to establish parallel national committees of national associations failed to materialize and in 1938 A.-M. Gossart lamented to colleagues that “It appears that, too often, the work carried on amongst the international organisations has not enough bearing on that of the national sections and their members ... The danger of carrying on certain work in a set direction without having

⁴⁹ Transcript of the first meeting of the Co-ordinating Committee of Major International Associations, 10 December 1925, 1-2, R1018/13/41815/48412, League of Nations Archives, Geneva.

⁵⁰ First annual report of the Co-ordinating Committee of Major International Associations to the IIC, May 1926, 1, dossier B.IV.39, box 73, IIC archives, UNESCO, Paris.

⁵¹ Note by Eric Drummond, 18 December 1925; transcript of the second meeting of the Co-ordinating Committee of Major International Associations, 28 January 1926, 1, R1018/13/41815/48412, League of Nations Archives, Geneva.

⁵² A list of participating associations was provided in Co-ordinating Committee of Major International Associations, *Le Comité d'Entente des Grandes Associations Internationales: Dix Années d'Activité* (Paris: Co-ordinating Committee of Major International Associations, 1936), 21–3.

any real support from the individual constitutive elements of public opinion, has not escaped your notice.”⁵³

One of the principal problems confronting the Co-ordinating Committee was its ineffectual leadership by André Waltz of whom Gabrielle Radziwill of the League Secretariat noted that at its first meeting he “evidently knew neither the work the organizations are doing, nor the delegates they had sent”.⁵⁴ However, scarce resources also limited the Co-ordinating Committee’s impact: while the IIIC could offer staff and offices, funds for the Co-ordinating Committee’s activities generally needed to come from the participating transnational associations, which tended themselves to have barely enough means to cover their own core activities let alone those of the Co-ordinating Committee.⁵⁵ The Co-ordinating Committee’s achievements, therefore, were extremely limited, although it claimed progress in relation to promoting textbook revision, disseminating publicity for League aims and activities, and the issuing of reports on special topics such as children’s literature, the role of cinema in peace education, and the problem of unemployment among literary workers.⁵⁶ Just as dependency on ephemeral government support had stymied the work of the earlier Entente Committee, dependence on scarce IIIC resources limited the effectiveness of the Co-ordinating Committee.

Complementing the work of the League institutions

Given the limitations of efforts to collaborate with the League, consideration should also be made of the activities undertaken by transnational associations independently yet in sympathy

⁵³ Letter of 24 November 1928, R4054/5C/1175/699, League of Nations Archives, Geneva.

⁵⁴ Gabrielle Radziwill, “Meeting of the international organisations working in favour of peace education through the schools”, 16 December 1925, 2, R1018/13/41815/48412, League of Nations Archives, Geneva.

⁵⁵ Some of the Co-ordinating Committee’s more ambitious efforts such as the proposed international magazine *A-Z: The International Link of Youth* were therefore not to get off the ground – R2262/5C/583/300, League of Nations Archives, Geneva.

⁵⁶ An overview is offered in Co-ordinating Committee of Major International Associations, *Le Comité d'Entente des Grandes Associations Internationales*, 28–42. See also Elly Hermon, “Le Comité d’entente des grandes associations internationales: un chapitre de l’histoire du mouvement transnational d’éducation pour la paix et la coopération intellectuelle internationale”, *Associations Transnationales* 2 (1987): 68–78.

with the League's aims in intellectual cooperation. In some cases, transnational associations undertook their own initiatives paralleling those of the IIIC – for instance, the inter-Scandinavian association Norden put together its own textbook examination commission to identify inaccuracies and partiality in school history textbooks and made recommendations to their authors for revisions, which the IIIC claimed were “warmly received and led to satisfactory results”.⁵⁷

The activities of transnational associations to promote moral disarmament were among some of the most extensive in paralleling or in several cases even exceeding the League's own endeavours. A diverse array of transnational associations set up their own summer schools with a view to education in international understanding, including the Union of International Associations and the International Federation of League of Nations Societies, as well as internationally-oriented national associations such as the British League of Nations Union, the League of Nations Association of Japan, and in France the *Association de la Paix par le Droit*.⁵⁸ Associations including the International Federation of League of Nations Societies and the League of Nations Union also provided teacher training in world citizenship. Moreover, as further discussed in Pelle van Dijk's contribution to this book, the League of Nations Union pioneered in 1921 the holding of a model assembly of the League of Nations – a widely emulated forerunner of the Model United Nations movement.⁵⁹

As a case study of how a transnational association could extend the work of intellectual cooperation in ways beyond the reach of League institutions, we can turn to the transnational association of writers, International PEN (known since 2010 as PEN International). Despite its modest origins in 1921 as an “international dinner club” for “men and women of repute ...

⁵⁷ IIIC, *L'Institut International*, 196.

⁵⁸ See Thomas Davies, “Internationalism in a Divided World: The Experience of the International Federation of League of Nations Societies, 1919–1939”, *Peace and Change: A Journal of Peace Research* 37, no. 2 (2012): 227–52.

⁵⁹ See also Mark J. Mullenbach, “A History of Model League of Nations in the United States”, 2017, <https://uca.edu/politicalscience/files/2017/12/AMUN-Chapter-1.pdf>.

PPEN (Poet, Playwright, Editor, Novelist) people”, its founder English writer Amy Dawson Scott intended from the outset wider aims to provide “a common meeting ground in every country for all writers” and “to draw the nations together – United States of Europe and America in literature”, forging connections between literary figures “without being under any obligation to anybody” and funded by members’ subscriptions.⁶⁰ Its first president John Galsworthy, author of the *Forsyte Saga*, saw in the voluntary formation of PEN clubs around the world a means towards advancing through transnational cooperation among writers “international understanding and peace” – and within three years it boasted 18 international centres.⁶¹

International PEN occasionally lobbied the League of Nations, for instance campaigning unsuccessfully for a “League of Nations prize for literature” which, like so many other intellectual cooperation initiatives proposed to the League of Nations, was rejected on the basis of lack of funds.⁶² International PEN on the other hand was relatively well-resourced and unlike the Co-ordinating Committee was able to issue regular periodical publications. Moreover, despite cooperating in several areas of League work such as translation and challenging censorship, International PEN – like the ICSU – was cautious about cooperation with the ICIC, with its Council in 1925 affirming that “it would be wiser to remain quite free”.⁶³

PEN’s leadership considered that its non-governmental composition enabled it to pioneer intellectual cooperation in domains beyond the reach of the League of Nations. Galsworthy argued that whereas “governments are competitive trustees for competitive sections of mankind” ... “the exchange of international thought” through bodies such as PEN

⁶⁰ All quotations are from Amy Dawson Scott’s correspondence of July–September 1921, in Marjorie Watts, *P.E.N.: The Early Years, 1921-1926* (London: Archive, 1971), 11–13.

⁶¹ The quotation is from Galsworthy’s letter of acceptance to PEN’s first London meeting in 1921, in Watts, *P.E.N.*, 14.

⁶² J.D. de Montenach to Hermon Ould, 9 January 1932, R2216/5B/40197/78, League of Nations Archives, Geneva.

⁶³ Quoted in Carles Torner and Jan Martens, eds, *PEN International: An Illustrated History* (London: Thames & Hudson, 2021), 22.

could offer the potential means by which “we might hear the rustle of salvation’s wings” – he further argued that at PEN “we stand for keeping literature outside politics, as one of the few, perhaps the one disinterested link between peoples”.⁶⁴ On account of its separation from interstate tensions, International PEN could advance intellectual cooperation in contexts beyond the League’s reach, for instance organizing its fourth international congress in 1926 in Berlin – in Dawson Scott’s view “the first time since the war that there had been an international gathering of any sort in Berlin”, advancing intellectual cooperation where the League could not.⁶⁵

International PEN’s non-state composition also enabled it to take a much stronger stand on issues of freedom of expression. Its 1931 Appeal to All Governments urged respect of rights of prisoners of conscience and invoked “the conscience of the world”, anticipating by thirty years the founding aims of Amnesty International.⁶⁶ Under the stewardship of H. G. Wells from 1933, International PEN became increasingly outspoken on this issue, expelling the Nazi German branch and establishing émigré centres including German PEN-in-exile in London in 1934.⁶⁷ Its letter-writing initiatives in relation to individual prisoners of conscience – including its campaign leading to the release of Arthur Koestler from Spanish prison in 1937 – further anticipated the later better-known human rights work of Amnesty International.⁶⁸ Long outlasting the work towards intellectual cooperation of the League of Nations institutions, International PEN was later to consider itself “the true UNESCO of peoples and of individuals” in place of “governments and civil servants”.⁶⁹

⁶⁴ John Galsworthy, *International Thought* (Cambridge: W. Heffer and Sons, 1923), 4 and 7; John Galsworthy to Thomas Hardy, 20 January 1923, H.2563, TH.Lt.7, Thomas Hardy Papers, Dorset History Centre, Dorchester.

⁶⁵ Quoted in Watts, *P.E.N.*, 33.

⁶⁶ Rachel Potter, “Literature Knows No Frontiers: Modernism and Free Speech”, in *Moving Modernisms: Motion, Technology, and Modernity*, ed. David Bradshaw, Laura Marcus, and Rebecca Roach (Oxford: Oxford University Press 2016), 159–74.

⁶⁷ Megan Doherty, “PEN International and its Republic of Letters, 1921–1970” (PhD thesis, Columbia University, 2011), 135 and 148.

⁶⁸ Torner and Martens, *PEN International*, 52–4.

⁶⁹ Alexandre Blokh, quoted in Torner and Martens, *PEN International*, 62.

Conclusion

Transnational associations both long anticipated much of the work towards intellectual cooperation of the League of Nations, and played a significant role in campaigning for the establishment of the institutions of the League dedicated to this field of activity. Once operational, the ICIC and IIIC were frequently lobbied by transnational associations for the extension of their work, and although achievements in contentious subjects such as textbook revision were limited, in areas more amenable to cooperation such as the facilitation of student exchanges, the results were to be more impressive.

Many transnational associations were keen to collaborate with the League of Nations on intellectual cooperation, and in domains such as the advancement of the discipline of international relations the impact was substantial. Further-reaching efforts towards collaboration between the League institutions and transnational associations such as the Coordinating Committee of Major International Associations were limited by scarcity of resources and the constraints of the League institutions' mandates.

In view of these limitations, some of the most impressive efforts towards international intellectual cooperation between the two World Wars were undertaken by transnational associations entirely outside the League institutions: this was especially the case in more contentious subjects such as campaigning for the release of prisoners of conscience in respect of which International PEN pioneered forms of transnational human rights activism that were to become a prominent feature of later twentieth century world politics.