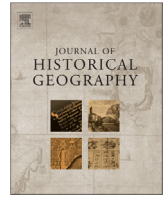




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An international anomaly? Sovereignty, the League of Nations and India's princely geographies



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Abstract

This paper examines India's experiences as the only non-self-governing member of the League of Nations as a means of addressing the broader question: where was the international? As the only non-self-governing member of the League, India's new international status exposed both its external, more imperial, as well as its internal, more colonial, anomalies. This paper examines, first, the Indian anomaly from the 'inside out', looking at India's representation and silencing at Geneva, and how Indian commentators assessed India's external status in the League. Secondly, it considers the Indian anomaly from the 'outside in', by exploring colonial tensions that the internationalism of the League provoked relating to India's internal political geography. The League posed taxing questions about the Government of India's decision to exclude international law from the spaces between British and Princely India, examined here through the example of trafficking in women and children. In exploring India's anomalous situation two broader approaches are deployed. The first is a scalar methodology, which shows how the concepts of the national and international operated at various scales, with India's burgeoning sense of nationhood taking one of its many shapes in the international sphere, while the internationalism of the League seeped into the national fissures between British and Princely India. Secondly, the paper approaches these questions through the lens of sovereignty. Moving beyond associations with the juridical and the territorial, it explores sovereignty as: representational (diplomacy); governmental (administration), theoretical (political philosophy), political (anti-colonialism), territorial (political geography) and contractual (international law).
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Keywords: India; League of Nations; Imperialism; Princely States; Sovereignty; Trafficking; Scale

Thanks, in part, to its contribution of men and materiel to the First World War, India secured a place at the 1919 Versailles Peace Conference, which (unexpectedly) made it a founding member of the League of Nations. The League itself is the subject of increasing academic interest,¹ which is moving beyond traditional areas of concern such as international relations and the 'problem of "security"', to 'humanitarian and educational initiatives', the role of 'experts, officials, lobbies and publics', 'the construction of rights and identities' and the 'redrawing of empires, nations and regions'.² In terms of the latter, India's position was of especial interest. No other non-self-governing state was allowed to join the League after

Versailles, making India a permanent anomaly in a membership of otherwise free nation-states.

This paper will expose the troubling questions of scale and sovereignty that India's membership of the League provoked. In terms of scale, the Indian nation started to take shape through its international activities, while international concerns seeped into national politics, provoking troubling tensions for the colonial government. In terms of sovereignty, these interactions provoked the fundamental question of whether India was even a state at all, and raised the problem of the 'quasi-sovereignty' of the Princely States. By tracing debates about sovereignty beyond the juridical

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¹ See S. Pedersen, Back to the League of Nations, *American Historical Review* 112 (2007) 1091–1117; M. Housden, *The League of Nations and the Organization of Peace*, London, 2012.

² These headings are taken from the 'Towards a New History of the League of Nations' conference, held at the Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies in Geneva in August 2011, at which a version of this paper was presented. The conference included 21 presented papers and 26 tabled papers; a research network of League scholars now exists at: <http://www.leagueofnationshistory.org/homepage.shtml>. This expanding interest is reflected in recent works on the League and health, economy and colonial critique: I. Borowy, *Coming to Terms With World Health: The League of Nations Health Organisation 1921–1946*, Frankfurt, 2009; P. Clavin, *Securing the World Economy: The Reinvention of the League of Nations, 1920–1946*, Oxford, 2013; J.P. Daughton, Behind the imperial curtain: international humanitarian efforts and the critique of French colonialism in the interwar years, *French Historical Studies* 34 (2011) 503–528.

and the territorial this paper tracks the fundamentally geographical and historical question: where was the international?³

The paper will proceed in two parts. The first looks at India 'inside out', examining its representation abroad and the debates within India about its external position, in terms of internationalism and India's 'imperial' status. This is the scale at which India's anomalous nature has been mostly commented upon,⁴ but it is also the scale at which most League members could claim to be anomalous, given the newness of the League experiment and the ruptured imperial and nation-state system across which it was attempting the 'organisation of peace'.⁵ The second section examines the subcontinent from the 'outside in', charting a lesser known Indian anomaly, which raised more 'colonial' questions about territory and the indirect rule of India's Princely States (as opposed to directly ruled British India). The League's activities provoked tensions between these two sovereign regimes, which will here be examined through the lens of trafficking in women and children (TWC).

Trafficking was an international concern which emerged in the interwar period, especially through the activities of the League,⁶ augmenting previous concerns about the white slave trade, and prostitution—regulation policies which focused on the health of colonial elites,⁷ with a concern for mobility, rights and human dignity.⁸ In late-colonial India this development was clearly part of a broader and ongoing negotiation of imperialism, gender and sexuality.⁹ But trafficking also fitted into the 'social and technical' section of the League's duties, which saw it move beyond peace-keeping and international law to investigate economics, epidemics, refugees, arms and opium trafficking.¹⁰ The League could only concern itself with the international elements of these topics, but in this respect TWC is of special interest to the geographer.¹¹ This sort of trafficking did not entail large shipments or bulky goods; a girl or woman, often seemingly willing, could be easily concealed, or openly flaunted.¹² But, most importantly, there was evidence of 'trafficking' in India, but it was 'regional' trafficking between states of the Indian Empire. So defined, it was beyond the a League of Nations' purview, but a 1933 draft of a League convention questioned this territorial definition of sovereignty by redefining the relationship between 'protectorates', 'suzerainties' and 'colonies'.

As such, TWC brought issues of internationalist concern into the cracks and fissures between politically sovereign domestic units, as the case of the indirectly ruled Princely States in India will highlight. Trafficking in women and children will, therefore, allow us to consider India's specifically anomalous status within the League of Nations but, in so doing, will also provide insight into the aforementioned concepts which have been explored, at great length, by geographers and others, namely: sovereignty; imperialism; and internationalism.

Sovereignty, imperialism, internationalism and India

There has also been an... extensive rethinking of imperial power and where we might look for it. The battle for empire has seen military and economic might challenged by the power of discourse, identity, and representation, then by disciplinary power, biopolitics, and embodiment, and, latterly, by increased attention to sovereignty.¹³

The abstract notion of sovereignty as the ultimate authority over a political community requires constant tailoring to its geographies, exploring how state sovereignty is changing and how new spatialities of power negotiate 'the push and pull of centripetal globalizing forces and centrifugal forces of regionalism, separatism and nationalism'.¹⁴ Historical debates about the nature of sovereignty, whether dependent on supreme command (constituted) or liberal, democratic authority (constituent), also require tailoring to context, including that of the colonial.¹⁵ Colonial sovereignties were hybrid and frequently violated,¹⁶ while the domination at their core could be exposed by the politics of anti-colonial nationalism.¹⁷ This made it clear that sovereignty is also exerted over bodies, symbols, money, and representations.¹⁸ Recent approaches to sovereignty have moved beyond the readings of political philosophy and jurisprudence to engage with geopolitics, discourse analysis, performativity, embodiment and power.¹⁹ At a theoretical level, Foucault's call to examine governmentalities that triangulate disciplinary and governmental power with sovereign powers still demands attention.²⁰

One productive frame for approaching these provocations is to think of 'sovereignty regimes' as combinations of central state

³ This question follows Miles Ogborn's provocation to think 'where was the eighteenth century': M. Ogborn 'Spatiality in the long eighteenth century' contribution to panel discussion, Long Eighteenth Century Seminar Series, Institute of Historical Research, University of London, 10th January 2001.

⁴ See K.J. Schmidt, 'An anomaly among anomalies': India's entry into the League of Nations, *Proceedings of the Florida Conference of Historians* 1 (1993) 1–13.

⁵ Housden, *The League of Nations and the Organization of Peace* (note 1).

⁶ D. Gorman, Empire, internationalism, and the campaign against the traffic in women and children in the 1920s, *Twentieth Century British History* 19 (2008) 186–216.

⁷ P. Howell, *Geographies of Regulation: Policing Prostitution in Nineteenth-Century Britain and the Empire*, Cambridge, 2009; P. Levine, *Prostitution, Race and Politics: Policing Venereal Disease in the British Empire*, London, 2003.

⁸ B. Metzger, Towards an international human rights regime during the interwar years: the League of Nations' combat of traffic in women and children, in: K. Grant et al. (Eds), *Beyond Sovereignty: Britain, Empire and Transnationalism, c.1880–1950*, Basingstoke, New York, 2007, 54–79.

⁹ M. Sinha, *Specters of Mother India: The Global Restructuring of an Empire*, Durham, 2006.

¹⁰ Pedersen, Back to the League of Nations (note 1); S. Legg, 'The life of individuals as well as of nations': international law and the League of Nations' anti-trafficking governmentalities, *Leiden Journal of International Law* 25 (2012) 647–664.

¹¹ Article 15, paragraph eight, of the League covenant stated that: 'If the dispute between the parties is claimed by one of them, and is found by the Council, to arise out of a matter which by international law is solely within the domestic jurisdiction of that party, the Council shall so report, and shall make no recommendation as to its settlement'.

¹² For contemporary considerations of this 'underside of globalisation' see G. Bhattacharyya, *Traffick: The Illicit Movement of People and Things*, London, 2005.

¹³ M. Ogborn, Review: Lauren Benton. A search for sovereignty: law and geography in European empires, 1400–1900, *American Historical Review* 117 (2012) 814–816 [814].

¹⁴ C. Flint, Political geography: globalization, metapolitical geographies and everyday life, *Progress in Human Geography* 26 (2002) 391–400, 393.

¹⁵ M. Coleman, Sovereignty, in: N. Thrift, R. Kitchen (Eds), *International Encyclopedia of Human Geography*, 2009, 255–261. Also see R. Jackson, *Sovereignty: The Evolution of an Idea*, Cambridge, 2007.

¹⁶ D. Strang, Contested sovereignty: the social construction of colonial imperialism, in: T.J. Biersteker, C. Webber (Eds), *State Sovereignty as Social Construct*, Cambridge, 1996, 22–49.

¹⁷ D. Chakrabarty, 'In the name of politics': democracy and the power of the multitude in India, *Public Culture* 19 (2007) 35–57. For a thorough exploration of national community and popular sovereignty see B. Yack, Popular sovereignty and nationalism, *Political Theory* 29 (2001) 517–536.

¹⁸ T.B. Hansen and F. Stepputat (Eds), *Sovereign Bodies: Citizens, Migrants, and States in the Postcolonial World*, Princeton, Oxford, 2005.

¹⁹ F. McConnell, Sovereignty, in: K. Dodds et al. (Eds), *The Ashgate Research Companion to Critical Geopolitics*, Aldershot, 2013, 109–128; S. Legg and A. Vasudevan, Introduction: geographies of the nomos, in: S. Legg (Ed.), *Spatiality, Sovereignty and Carl Schmitt: Geographies of the Nomos*, London, 2011, 1–23.

²⁰ M. Foucault, *Security, Territory, Population: Lectures at the Collège de France 1977–78*, Basingstoke, New York, 2007; M. Dillon, Sovereignty and governmentality: from the problematics of the 'New World Order' to the ethical problematics of the world order, *Alternatives* 20 (1995) 323–368.

authority and political territoriality.²¹ This focus on effective sovereignty draws attention to authorities from both within and beyond strict territorial state limits: 'sovereignty—in the sense of the socially constructed practices of political authority—may be exercised non-territorially or in scattered pockets connected by flows across space-spanning networks'.²² This paper examines the Government of India's grappling with sovereignty regimes that were imagined to be below (the Princely States) and above (the League of Nations) its domain of scalar sovereignty.²³ The following cases will highlight some of these many types of sovereignty (and their forms), namely: *representational* (diplomacy); *governmental* (administration); *theoretical* (political philosophy); *political* (anti-colonialism); *territorial* (political geography); and *contractual* (international law).²⁴ These types and forms constituted the 'imperialist' sovereignty regime that Agnew has identified, and which is a defining feature of current postcolonial work on empires.²⁵

Empires are currently being re-imagined, through postcolonial and new imperial histories,²⁶ as sovereign regimes with multiple and overlapping scales and networks of authority.²⁷ These span divisions between formal and informal empires, imperial metropole and colonial periphery, and norms and exceptions.²⁸ The complex geographies of these experimental sovereignty regimes have been mapped by Benton's magisterial survey of imperial experiments with international law between 1400 and 1900.²⁹ She showed how imperial sovereignty expanded through corridors and estuaries, negotiated hills and mountains, strung together islands of martial experimentation, and incorporated enclaves of quasi-sovereignty.³⁰ Benton's examples of the latter are the Princely States that feature later in this paper, where her work will be explored in greater depth. Nair has recently suggested that the region might be the necessary scale at which to rethink Princely modernity in India but it might also be a vital scale for thinking the international within national borders.³¹ This study of the interwar period extends Benton's temporal scope to a period when imperial sovereignty, federalism, and the ever-expanding networks of globalisation were being debated.

These debates took place within a post-First World War enthusiasm for internationalism, the emergent phenomenon marked

by increasingly dense diplomatic encounters, the growth of international institutions and international law, and the re-negotiation of state sovereignty.³² In addition to shifts in practice, internationalism was also a utopian aspiration that anticipated a more benign form of cooperation between cohabitating (rather than competing) states. As against imperialism and nationalism, the internationalist ethic marked itself out by proposing an alternative vehicle of civilised development.³³ Yet E.H. Carr famously argued that such utopian liberalism ignored the geopolitical realities of imperialism, exploitation, and state formation in the interwar period.³⁴ Others demonstrated that the proposed international system was based around an idea of European civilisation, thus reconstituting the *nomos* of nineteenth-century international law but in a way which allowed America to supplant Europe as global sovereign.³⁵ As the primary institutional manifestation of the internationalist utopian spirit, all of the above criticisms of internationalism were laid at the League of Nations' door. The configuration of these criticisms very much depended upon the national context from which they came. Latin American countries constituted a third of the League's member states but railed against the lack of interest displayed by what quickly came to be seen as a European organisation.³⁶ In the heart of Europe, however, others described the League as an occupying force, colonising the defeated powers of the First World War under the banner of a triumphant internationalism.³⁷ Eric Manela has shown how initial enthusiasm for Wilson's concept of 'self-determination' in China, Korea, Egypt and India quickly failed as the racial delimitations of this term came to be understood.³⁸ But India's engagement with the League, and its criticisms, outlasted the period of Manela's interest, and that of his other case studies, due to India's position as a non-self-governing, increasingly anti-colonial, member of the League.

But India's League of Nations membership did not mark the beginning of its international biography; it followed, and depended upon, an already growing international status. Pre-colonial India had been at the heart of trading and diplomatic networks across the Indian Ocean arena, while it continued to dominate this region as a British imperial sub-pole in terms of expertise and influence and through territorial protectorates and residencies.³⁹ India had

²¹ J. Agnew, Sovereignty regimes: territoriality and state authority in contemporary world politics, *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 95 (2005) 437–461.

²² Agnew, Sovereignty regimes (note 21), 441.

²³ S. Legg, Of scales, networks and assemblages: the League of Nations apparatus and the scalar sovereignty of the Government of India, *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* 34 (2009) 234–253.

²⁴ These categories draw on suggestions made by J.D. Sidaway, Sovereign excesses? Portraying postcolonial sovereigntyscapes, *Political Geography* 22 (2003) 157–178.

²⁵ See K. Grant et al. (Eds), *Beyond Sovereignty: Britain, Empire and Transnationalism, c.1880–1950*, New York, 2007.

²⁶ A. Burton (Ed.), *After the Imperial Turn: Thinking With and Through the Nation*, Durham, London, 2003; S. Howe (Ed.), *The New Imperial Histories Reader*, Oxon, 2010.

²⁷ Legg, Of scales, networks and assemblages (note 23).

²⁸ J. Onley, The Raj reconsidered: British India's informal empire and spheres of influence in Asia and Africa, *Asian Affairs* 40 (2009) 44–62; A. Lester, Imperial circuits and networks: geographies of the British Empire, *History Compass* 4 (2006) 124–141; P. Chatterjee, *Lineages of Political Society: Studies in Postcolonial Democracy*, Columbia, NY, 2011, 9–10.

²⁹ L. Benton, *A Search for Sovereignty: Law and Geography in European Empires 1400–1900*, Cambridge, 2010.

³⁰ For a comparative reading, see S. Legg, Legal geographies and the state of imperialism: environments, constitutions, and violence, *Journal of Historical Geography* 37 (2011) 505–508.

³¹ J. Nair, *Mysore Modern: Rethinking the Region under Princely Rule*, Minneapolis, 2011, 1. Also see E.L. Beverley, Frontier as Resource: Law, Crime, and Sovereignty on the Margins of Empire, *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 55 (2013) 241–272 and B. Bhukya, The Subordination of the Sovereigns: Colonialism and the Gond Rajas in Central India, 1818–1948, *Modern Asian Studies* 47 (2013) 288–317.

³² C. Navari, *Internationalism and the State in the Twentieth Century*, London, 2000; C. Sylvest, Beyond the state? Pluralism and internationalism in early twentieth-century Britain, *International Relations* 21 (2007) 67–85.

³³ T. Nairn, Internationalism and the second coming, *Daedalus* 122 (1993) 155–170, 161.

³⁴ E.H. Carr, *The Twenty Years' Crisis 1919–1939: An Introduction to the Study of International Relations*, London, 1939 [1993].

³⁵ M. Mazower, An international civilization? Empire, internationalism and the crisis of the mid-twentieth century, *International Affairs* 82 (2006) 553–566; S. Legg, Inter-war spatial chaos? Imperialism, internationalism and the League of Nations, in: S. Legg (Ed.), *Spatiality, Sovereignty and Carl Schmitt: Geographies of the Nomos*, London, 2011, 106–123.

³⁶ S. Haynes, *Alternative Vision: The United States, Latin America, and the League of Nations during the Republican Ascendancy*, Ph.D. thesis, Kent State University, 2012.

³⁷ Legg, Inter-war spatial chaos? (note 35).

³⁸ E. Manela, *The Wilsonian Moment: Self-determination and the International Origins of Anticolonial Nationalism*, Oxford, 2007.

³⁹ S. Subrahmanyam, *The Political Economy of Commerce: Southern India 1500–1650*, Cambridge, 2002; T. Metcalf, *Imperial Connections: India in the Indian Ocean Arena, 1860–1920*, Berkeley, 2007; Onley, The Raj reconsidered (note 28).

started to attend meetings of experts on technical or scientific subjects, organised by international bureaux including the Postal and Telegraph Unions or the Office of Public Health at Paris. A major step towards political recognition was taken when it was admitted to the Councils of Empire along with the self-governing Dominions,⁴⁰ responding to pressure from Indian campaigning groups since the 1880s.⁴¹ As a result, India attended the 1917 Imperial Conference and the Imperial War Cabinet of 1918, which paved the way for its attendance at the Versailles Peace Conference of 1919.⁴² It was this forum that catapulted India into international consciousness as a diplomatic unit, just as its nationalist movements were becoming increasingly *internationalist* in their campaigns.⁴³

While India's nationalist emergence has garnered endless attention, its interwar international identity remains less well studied. In part this is because India's position in Geneva has been viewed as a curio or novelty, and most undeniably as an anomaly. But this also reflects the failure to study the intersection of imperialism and internationalism more broadly. While there is a growing literature on the League's mandated territories,⁴⁴ the League also intersected with imperial geographies in non-mandated spaces. Zanasi, for instance, has suggested that the League attempted to take over the colonial 'civilising mission' framework in its attempt to aid China's interwar development, but was struck by indecision over lingering evolutionary narratives, the possibility of exporting modernity, and the exigencies of local implementation.⁴⁵ Hell has also shown how the Kingdom of Siam, the only territory in Southeast Asia never to have been formally colonised, became a founding member of the League and used this status to bargain for full sovereignty and greater economic autonomy from the French and British empires which surrounded it.⁴⁶

Other interpretations have seen the League as a foil for American economic imperialism, often in the guise of humanitarianism; as raising the prospect of a global Monroe Doctrine; or as being so heavily complicit with empires that it risked contaminating the United Nations with its pro-imperialism.⁴⁷ When dealing with European empires the League often came up

against the stubborn obstinacy of colonial governors inimical to the cost (political or economic) of change.⁴⁸ Yet, there were those who believed that the League offered imperial salvation, with Alfred Zimmern (and Arthur Berridale Keith)⁴⁹ suggesting that the *Third British Empire* would be held together by bonds forged in Geneva, not London.⁵⁰ Zimmern also believed that debates in Geneva could help India forge its own constitution, in what he falsely believed would be India's imminent status as dominion and federation.⁵¹

Inside out: India and the League of Nations

This section will explore how 'India' was negotiated and in part emerged through its engagement with the international. It will show how the imperial anomaly of India's status was, first, exploited by the government, secondly, negotiated in terms of diplomacy and silencing and, finally, criticised from the perspectives of political philosophy and nationalism as public and intellectual opinion in India turned against the League.⁵²

The admission of India to the League is evidence of a norm of international law being laid aside.⁵³ But India's exceptionalism went beyond this one decision, to an ongoing state of exceptional relations with the League. This was not an exceptionalism imposed by Britain, but one sought directly by the Government of India *itself* as a means of avoiding both economic cost and political controversy. Thus, India used its position as one of only eight nations to have a seat on the International Labour Organisation Governing Body to voice concerns over regulations regarding work hours and conditions, suggesting that they would be inconsistent with India's 'backward conditions of industrial development'.⁵⁴ As such, the Organisation's recommendations were amended to take account of climatic conditions, imperfect industrial organisation, and 'special circumstances'.⁵⁵ Tambe has also shown how climate was evoked by the League as a substitute for race-hierarchies, allowing the Government of India to successfully argue for differential age of consent across nations on this basis during debates about trafficking and the League's 1921 convention.⁵⁶

⁴⁰ Dominions were former Settler Colonies that had been granted self-governing rights, while remaining within the British Empire, the largest of which being Australia, Canada, the Union of South Africa, and New Zealand.

⁴¹ J. Kettle, *The Colonial and Imperial Conferences, 1887–1911: A Study in Imperial Organization*, London, 1967.

⁴² *Indian Statutory Commission: Memoranda Submitted by the Government of India and the India Office to the Indian Statutory Commission: Part II*, Vol. V, London, 1930, 1633 (henceforth *Memoranda*).

⁴³ Indian nationalism is increasingly recognised as an international movement itself, see R.C. Young, *Postcolonialism: An Historical Introduction*, Oxford, 2001 on Gandhi See M. Ramnath, *Haj to Utopia: How the Ghadar Movement Charted Global Radicalism and Attempted to Overthrow the British Empire*, Berkeley, CA, 2011 on the revolutionary Ghadr movement See K. Manjappa, *M.N. Roy: Marxism and Colonial Cosmopolitanism*, Delhi, 2010 on M.N. Roy and M. Louro, Rethinking Nehru's internationalism: the League against imperialism and anti-imperial networks, 1927–1939, *Third Frame: Literature, Culture and Society* 2 (2009) 79–94 on Nehru. For a penetrating analysis of an international scandal about Indian women and nationalist responses see Sinha, *Specters of Mother India* (note 9). For an important recent contribution on India's conception of, and interaction with, Asia see C. Stolte and H. Fischer-Tiné, Imagining Asia in India: nationalism and internationalism (ca. 1905–1940), *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 54 (2012) 65–92.

⁴⁴ S. Pedersen, The meaning of the Mandates system: an argument, *Geschichte und Gesellschaft* 32 (2006) 560–582.

⁴⁵ M. Zanasi, Exporting development: the League of Nations and Republican China, *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 49 (2007) 143–169.

⁴⁶ S. Hell, *Siam and the League of Nations: Modernisation, Sovereignty and Multilateral Diplomacy, 1920–1940*, Bangkok, 2010, 13.

⁴⁷ C. Schmitt, Forms of modern imperialism in international law, trans. Matthew G. Hannah, in: S. Legg (Ed.), *Spatiality, Sovereignty and Carl Schmitt: Geographies of the Nomos*, London, 2011 [1932], 29–45; N. Smith, *The Endgame of Globalization*, London, 2005; M. Mazower, *No Enchanted Palace: The End of Empire and the Ideological Origins of the United Nations*, Princeton, NJ, 2009.

⁴⁸ L. Manderson, Wireless wars in the eastern area: epidemiological surveillance, disease prevention and the work of the Eastern Bureau of the League of Nations headquarters, in: P. Weindling (Ed.), *International Health Organisations and Movements, 1918–39*, Cambridge, 1995, 109–133.

⁴⁹ A.B. Keith, *The Place of Empire in the League of Nations*, London, 1925. Arthur Berridale Keith (1879–1944) worked as a jurist and colonial office civil servant before lecturing at the University of Edinburgh in Sanskrit and the constitutional history of the British Empire.

⁵⁰ A. Zimmern, *The Third British Empire*, New York, London, 1927. Sir Alfred Eckhard Zimmern (1879–1957) was a British classical scholar and internationalist who played a role in the founding of the League and championed it into the 1930s.

⁵¹ A. Zimmern, India and the world situation, in: F.M. Houlston, B.P.L. Bedi (Eds), *India Analysed: International*, Vol. I, London, 1933, 13–29.

⁵² For a broader history of India and the League see K.J. Schmidt, *India's Role in the League of Nations, 1919–1939*, Unpublished doctoral thesis, Florida State University, 1994.

⁵³ On the norm-exception dialectic of liberal imperialism see Chatterjee, *Lineages of Political Society* (note 28), 8–15.

⁵⁴ D.N. Verma, *India and the League of Nations*, Patna, 1968, 148.

⁵⁵ Verma, *India and the League of Nations* (note 54).

⁵⁶ A. Tambe, Climate, race science and the age of consent in the League of Nations, *Theory Culture Society* 28 (2011) 109–130.

Diplomatic silencing: representing India

Colonial discourse analysis has clearly shown how India, within imperial rhetorical frames, was silenced and over-determined, in terms of representational sovereignty.⁵⁷ But this representation also carried over into the international realm. Questions of silencing emerged soon after the ramifications of India's membership became clear, raising questions of statehood, sovereignty and political subjectivity. On the 28th June 1919 the Secretary of State for India, Edwin Montagu, and HH Maharaja Ganga Singh of Bikaner⁵⁸ had signed the Treaty of Versailles.⁵⁹ But this did not alter the fact of India's subservience to British foreign policy. Montague and his Under-Secretary, Satyendra Prasanno Sinha,⁶⁰ had argued that this was no less the case for the dominions, none of whom were sovereign states or had independent foreign relations.⁶¹ As such, many pro-League commentators would try to argue that, in matters of the League, India was independent.⁶² Though its delegates were briefed by the Government of India, they could and did challenge the approach of Great Britain, and voted differently. Others, however, remained incredulous, insisting that India's membership was merely another way of increasing Britain's vote to six (in addition to those of the four dominions).

This appeared to be very much the case in terms of *governmental* sovereignty and the day-to-day administration of India's League membership, where the scale of the imperial mediated the national and the international. The status of India was constantly being negotiated by the India Office in London, as well as the Indian Civil Service in New Delhi. For instance, in June 1920 it was decided that correspondence between the League Secretariat and either the India Office or the Government of India should pass through the Cabinet Office in London.⁶³ On hearing that a member of the League and the Director of Statistics in India had been in correspondence, the India Office received a sharp rebuke from the Cabinet Office, reminding it that direct correspondence between the Government of India and the League of Nations was against Cabinet rules and recognised practice. F.W. Duke, of the India Office, countered in a letter of 29th October 1920 that: 'In view of the fact that India herself is a Member of the League its position is analogous to that of the other overseas British members whose Governments communicate directly with the League Secretariat'. The Cabinet later clarified that the Secretary of State for India in London remained the channel for policy correspondence although India was allowed to respond directly to routine requests for information.⁶⁴

The representation of India was not only debated within the imperial machine in London. On 22nd April 1924 the Home Department in New Delhi received notice of two questions proposed by Khan Bahadur Sarfaraz Hussain Khan for the Legislative

Assembly.⁶⁵ The first requested the names of the Indian gentlemen that the Government had sent to represent India in Imperial Conferences and at the League of Nations, while the second asked whether in future the Indian Legislatures would be allowed to elect these gentlemen, rather than them being selected by Government? While the second question was eventually omitted, the details of the League delegates did not suggest figures likely to represent the full range of pro- and anti-colonial sentiment present in India at that time. Rather, they were often prominent figures from the Chamber of Princes who had experience of international travel. The listed delegates were: 1920, HH Maharaja of Nawanagar and Sir Saiyid Ali Imam; 1921, HH the Maharao of Cutch and Rt Hon'ble V.S. Srinivasa Sastri; 1922, HH Maharaja of Nawanagar and Sir P.S. Sivaswamy Aiyer; 1923, HH Maharaja of Nawanagar and Mr. Saiyid Hasan Imam.⁶⁶

The questions of delegate representation and the scalar relationships between London, Geneva and New Delhi were brought together in an internal Government of India debate between March and May 1926.⁶⁷ The question was whether the Secretary of State in London or the Viceroy in New Delhi should appoint Indian representatives at the League of Nations. India's status as an original member of the League, distinct from Great Britain, meant that it should have had the right of self-representation, although the Secretary of State had always approved the Viceroy's choices to date. The previous Viceroy, Lord Reading, had claimed in 1925 that the Secretary of State was the only representative of India in imperial and international questions. This was also the position after the Government of India Act of 1919. Yet Sir B.N. Sarma, a member of the Viceroy's Executive Council, commented that both the scheme and spirit of the 1919 Act, as well as of the Treaty of Peace admitting India as an integral member of the League, suggested that the delegates should be appointed in New Delhi. The question remained an ambiguous one, straddling international recognition and imperial subordination, as expressed in a note for the Indian delegate of 1926 which advised that while both the Viceroy and Secretary of State would agree on the selection, 'an understanding has grown up that the authority by whom the delegates are to be appointed shall be left undefined'.⁶⁸

But beyond these private debates, the unevenness of India's anomalous position was also obvious in public, and was commented on precisely in the representational terminology of silencing. The markers of its diplomatic subordination were clear; India was permanently relegated to the lower ranks of the League (despite the Aga Khan taking up Presidency of the League Assembly in 1937),⁶⁹ never taking a seat in the Council, despite vastly overshadowing other nations which had enjoyed such a privilege in terms of population, wealth and geographical size. This was pointed out by British

⁵⁷ See V. Chaturvedi, *Mapping Subaltern Studies and the Postcolonial*, London, New York, 2000.

⁵⁸ Ganga Singh (1880–1943), Maharaja of Bikaner, represented India at the Imperial War Conference of 1917 as well as at Versailles, and went on to be President of the Chamber of Princes from 1920 to 1926, representing India at the League in 1924.

⁵⁹ See H. Purcell, *Maharajah of Bikaner: India*, London, 2010, xii. Under-Secretary of State Sir S.P. Sinha should have signed but the King expressed a preference for Bikaner, who had served as his aide-de-camp in 1902.

⁶⁰ Satyendra Prasanno Sinha, first Baron Sinha (1863–1928) trained as a lawyer in London and returned to practice in Calcutta. He was appointed to Government service in India and was summoned to work with Montagu in London in 1917, where he was given a peerage and represented Indian interests in the House of Lords.

⁶¹ Schmidt, *India's Role in the League of Nations, 1919–1939* (note 52).

⁶² C. Hall and J. Sen, *The League of Nations: A Manual for the Use of University Students and Teachers of Secondary Schools in India, Burma and Ceylon*, Calcutta, Madras, Bombay and London, 1927, 159.

⁶³ National Archives, New Delhi (henceforth NA)/Home(Public)/1921/195-201B/June.

⁶⁴ *Memoranda*, 1647.

⁶⁵ Khan Bahadur Sarfaraz Hussain Khan was the member of the Legislative Assembly for Patna and Chota Nagpur, holding the Muslim reserved seat.

⁶⁶ NA/Home(Public)/1924/301/24; the names and titles here are as they were listed in the original file.

⁶⁷ NA/Home(Public)/1927/330.

⁶⁸ NA/Home(Public)/1927/330.

⁶⁹ Mohammed Shah (1877–1957), the Third Aga Khan (a title bestowed by the British) and the 48th head of the Ismaili sect of the Shia Muslim community, was a moderate head of Muslim opinion in India and beyond. He was involved in constitutional reform debates until 1935 and, after that, headed several Indian delegations to the League.

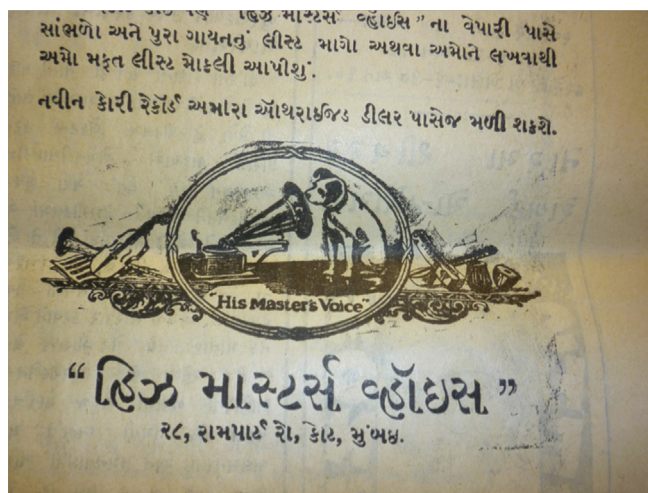


Fig. 1. A HMV advert from the newspaper *Kaisar-i-Hind*, 24 July 1932.

born Indian nationalist sympathiser C.F. Andrews who asked: 'is India, with all her great traditions of the past and her vast economic and industrial importance in the world to-day, to be treated as a mere cipher? Can she not even speak with her own voice?'.⁷⁰ Andrews had not understood this 'anomaly' until he read an article explaining India's exceptional status in the League which made it unable to contract and honour international obligations freely.

This diplomatic silencing was also commented upon in the Indian Legislative Assembly. In 1935 Govind Ballabh Pant⁷¹ denounced as a sham and farce the situation whereby India as a 'member' of the League only sang the praises of its master and reflected 'His Master's Voice'.⁷² This referred to the 1899 painting of a dog listening to a gramophone, raising parallels not only with a speechless subaltern, but a more animalistic colonial subject/servant (Fig. 1).⁷³ Pant went on to denounce the voice heard at Geneva as being no more genuine than that of the American film 'India Speaks', a 1933 film also titled 'Bride of the East' that claimed to provide a travelogue of sexual habits in India, alleging the abuse and over sexualisation of Indian women and children (Fig. 2). An accompanying book was also produced featuring stills from the film with accompanying captions decrying Indian poverty, backwardness and immorality.⁷⁴ The silencing metaphor was deployed again

in the Assembly in 1937 by Bhagwan Das⁷⁵ who suggested Indian representatives were but the nominated tools, mouthpieces, megaphones and microphones of the British Government.⁷⁶ These accusations of silencing formed part of a growing cacophony of dissent against India's silenced role in the League, and of the League's benefits for India.

Criticising the League: from political philosophy to anti-colonial nationalism

Even those who defended the League in Britain, and who saw it as of great benefit for India, were aware of its limitations and inequalities. Professor C.A.W. Manning agreed that India paid more than any other non-member of the permanent council for relatively little direct benefit, and questioned how representative India's League representatives were.⁷⁷ But he also stressed how various League initiatives were of benefit to the country, and how its contributions in the League Assembly regarding India, Asia, and the members in general, were fortifying its international reputation. There is a general consensus that India's League membership worked to dispel world opinions regarding its backwardness, granted it similar diplomatic status to the Dominions, and framed its nationalist movement in interesting ways.⁷⁸ The first major post-independence review of India and the League went so far as to suggest that India was thrust back into world politics, regaining its pre-colonial international status.⁷⁹

But debate over the League of Nations took place across the spectrum of Indian political opinion. Moderate commentators launched their critiques and defences in terms of *theoretical* state sovereignty. The League was a specifically internationalist body and could not intervene, in the terms of political philosophy, in 'domestic' issues. Despite the tradition of this domesticity being continually impinged upon by imperial states outside Europe, Western states could now appeal to the Westphalian concept of territorial integrity and exclusive sovereign autonomy to prevent League intervention into their metropolitan and peripheral possessions.⁸⁰ But when these arguments were extended to India, they raised the very question of India's ontological sovereign status.

Sir J. C. Coyajee's pro-League commentary argued that a state's sovereignty was fundamentally unaltered by League membership, which supplemented rather than detracted from state sovereignty.⁸¹ However, others argued that colonial India did not even constitute a sovereign nation-state in terms of international law: it was not internationally recognised as independent; it was not self-governing; it had been committed to war by another state; it could

⁷⁰ C. Andrews, *The Challenges of the North West Frontier: A Contribution to World Peace*, London, 1937, 34.

⁷¹ Govind Ballabh Pant (1887–1961) led Congress in the United Provinces in the 1920s, became close to Nehru during his imprisonment for Civil Disobedience in the early 1930s, and became Deputy Leader of Congress in the mid-1930s, when he also served as Chief Minister of the United Provinces.

⁷² Quoted in Verma, *India and the League of Nations* (note 54), 271 'HMV' music retailer became popular in India in the 1920s.

⁷³ It may also have referenced more contemporary debates. The metaphor itself had been used in 1926 to criticise the dyarchy system of government (introduced in 1919) whereby nominated Indian ministers 'would be but a phonographic automaton of his nominator'. S. Sinha, *Dyarchy in Indian Provinces in Theory and Practice*, London, 1926, 15. More relevantly, however, in 1935 it was agreed that political discussions would be banned from the airwaves in order to prevent the promotion of pro-independence sentiment in low literacy areas, directly raising the same issue of voice and national representation. I am indebted to Alasdair Pinkerton for this point.

⁷⁴ W. Futter, *India Speaks with Richard Halliburton*, New York, 1933.

⁷⁵ Bhagwan Das (1869–1958) was a religious and social reformer who served in the Central Legislative Assembly and was a Congress sympathiser.

⁷⁶ Verma, *India and the League of Nations* (note 54), 272.

⁷⁷ C. Manning, India and the League of Nations, in: F.M. Houlston, B.P.L. Bedi (Eds), *India Analysed: International*, Vol. I, London, 1933, 30–65. Charles Anthony Woodward Manning (1894–1978) was a scholar of international relations. Born in South Africa but trained in England, he worked at the League in 1922–23 but later lectured at Oxford and the London School of Economics and published on the League the question of British Dominions.

⁷⁸ Schmidt, *India's Role in the League of Nations, 1919–1939* (note 52).

⁷⁹ Verma, *India and the League of Nations* (note 54), ix.

⁸⁰ Strang, *Contested sovereignty* (note 16).

⁸¹ J. Coyajee, *India and the League of Nations*, Madras, 1932, 10. Sir J.C. Coyajee (1875–1943) was a Parsi economist who had trained in Bombay and Cambridge before joining Presidency College in Calcutta. In 1930 he was appointed to the Indian Council of State and attended the sessions of the League of Nations in Geneva as a delegate in 1930 and 1932.

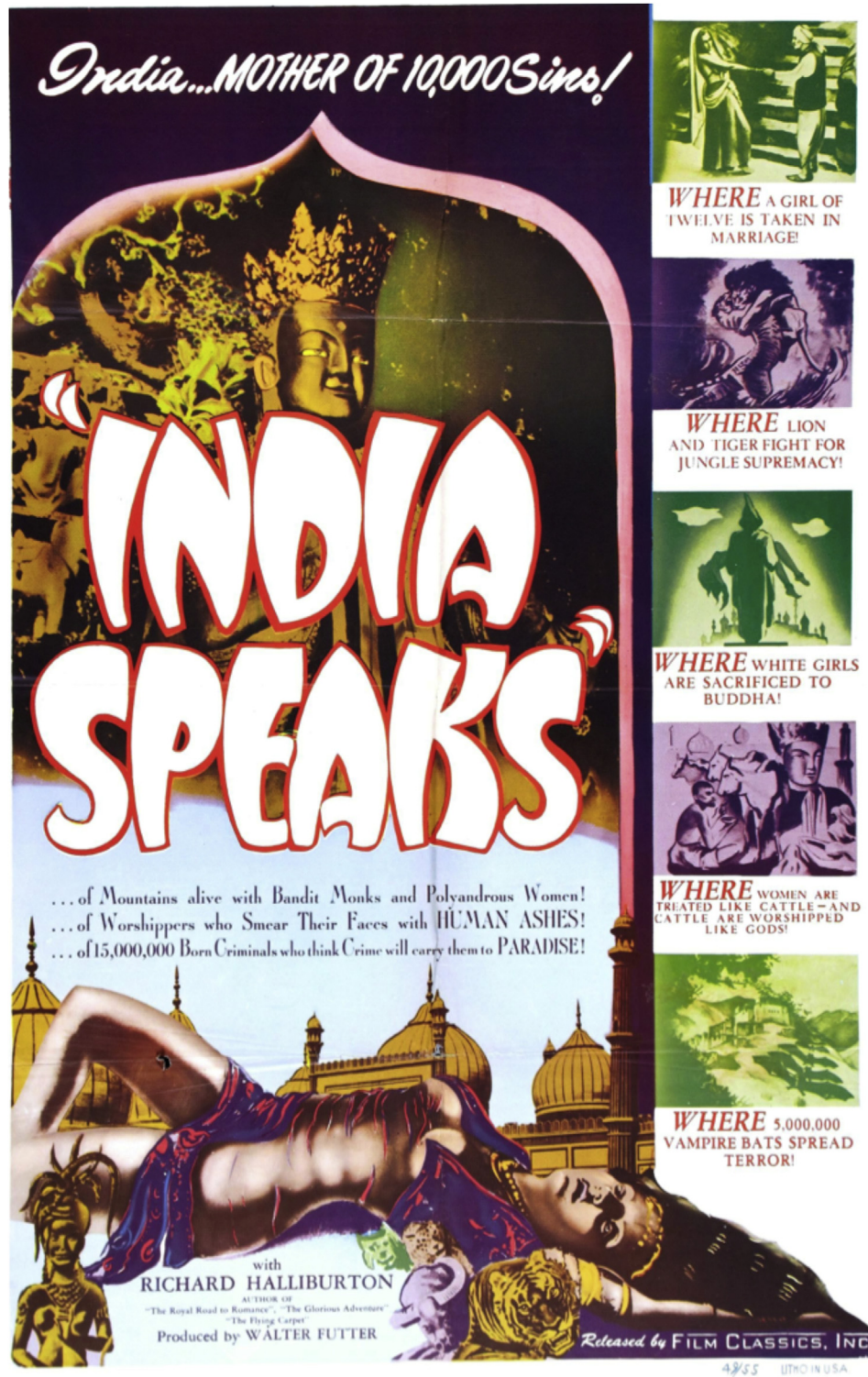


Fig. 2. *India Speaks* film poster, downloaded from <http://www.movieposterdb.com/poster/8d378566>.

not enter international obligations of its own will; and it did not have freedom of action from Britain.⁸² Quoting Winston Churchill, Verma concurred that colonial India's international status had been 'fictitious and farcical'.⁸³

The contradictions of India's anomalous membership were widely commented upon at the time. Had India applied for membership of the League it would have been rejected as a non-self-governing state; its membership relied solely on having signed

⁸² Verma, *India and the League of Nations* (note 54), 29.

⁸³ Verma, *India and the League of Nations* (note 54), 31.

the Versailles treaty. The terms used to describe this predicament altered, but the contradiction at the heart of India's status did not. Hall and Sen acknowledged India's status as the only one of the 56 member states of the League not to be self-governing, but argued that in international matters India *was* self-governing, and that the League could not help nations on the path to democratic government.⁸⁴ Ram and Sharma were less ambiguous: 'It is surely a curious phenomenon that a country should have the right to direct, conjointly with others, the common affairs of 54 countries, without the right to govern herself. Looked at from this point of view, India is a political curiosity inside the League'.⁸⁵ Even Coyajee admitted that India's status was anomalous, but insisted that dominions had similar problems.⁸⁶

As these comments make clear, the supposed benefits brought to India by its membership were far from universally appreciated by Indians themselves. This was in spite of initial enthusiasm not just from political commentators, but from anti-colonial nationalists as well. During the Versailles debates the nationalist politician Bal Gangadhar Tilak wrote to Clemenceau, the French Prime Minister, posing India as a self-contained yet vast, and potentially powerful, state on the international plane.⁸⁷ Manela has pursued the other ways in which India attempted to use the diplomatic sphere to assert its growing sense of national entitlement in synch with broader networks of international anti-colonialism. Wilson's call for self-determinism was taken up as a *political* principle by nationalisms that challenged imperialisms and as a practice in asserting the case for independence, though these were largely ineffective.⁸⁸

India's massive contribution to the war (estimated to be 1,200,000 men) led to great expectations of reward, and enthusiasm for Wilson. His principles had been taken up in 1917 in India, and had been circulated by the Irish theosophist and Indian nationalist Annie Besant; Wilson was also petitioned by the *Ghadr* revolutionary party, the more moderate Lala Lajpat Rai, and the later Comintern Presidium member M.N. Roy.⁸⁹ After the war the Indian National Congress and Muslim League took up the call for self-determination, despite their disappointment at the British selection of Indian delegates at Geneva. When it became clear that post-war constitutional reform in India would disappoint common expectations, the nationalist press turned against Wilson.

The 'Golden Peacock's Diary' in the *New Burma* newspaper on 29th May 1920 suggested that self-determination was not just for white nations (as Ireland was also denied) but for old nations. But the denying of this right to Egypt, Ireland and India had exposed self-determination as 'a huge international sham'.⁹⁰ For Congress leader M.K. Gandhi, the *Khilafat* movement (a pan-Islamist protest at the Allied treatment of the Ottoman Empire after the war) had

exposed the League not only as capitalist but as Christian, in its denial of self-determination to Ottoman Muslims.⁹¹ Congress's Rowlatt satyagraha in 1919, followed by the non-cooperation movement, appealed to Indian tradition, in clear rejection of claims to international order or civilisation.⁹²

While Manela's investigations were focused on Wilson and the debates over Versailles, the League attracted ongoing comment in India where, in general, its popularity declined. When the Legislative Assembly was allowed to discuss the League in 1923 it recorded anger at the treatment of Indian labourers in ex-German mandates, while further questions were raised about the size of India's contribution and its lack of democratic representation in Geneva.⁹³ In 1924 the assessment by a Professor of Economics at the University of Bombay of the 1919 Government of India Act casually decried the League for its lack of policing powers, and its foundation on consent and compliance: 'To the enthusiastic idealist, the League may appear as the embryo of the future, full-grown "Parliament of Man": but judged from its actual history of four years' existence, the League is still only – a pious aspiration'.⁹⁴

The former President of the Indian National Congress, C. Vijayaraghavachariar, outlined a more aggressive vision of the possibilities of the League.⁹⁵ He quoted the political theorist of politics and sovereignty Harold Laski's assertion that India must be allowed to appeal to the League as a representation of 'the common will of the world'.⁹⁶ This would help, in Vijayaraghavachariar's view, discipline the Indian population, who had proven themselves unready for the challenge of non-cooperation in the early 1920s. The logic was that India had a right to call on the League regarding any threat to world peace, but that its delegates would not do this as they were selected by the British government. It was necessary to take on Britain 'in any sphere'. The League presented a forum in which to challenge the government on, for instance, its 'anti-national financial policy' or its treatment of minorities.

Indian criticisms also targeted the activities of the League on the world stage. Ram and Sharma listed the League's failure to effectively enforce disarmament, to include the USSR, USA, Afghanistan and Brazil in its membership, to encourage the self-government of 'dependencies' or the independence of mandates, or to grant seats on the Council to African, Australian, American or Asian nations, besides China.⁹⁷ In broader terms it was criticised as an institution that excelled in advising but not in actually dealing with crises.

For Jawaharlal Nehru, the League's noble principles had been squandered, leaving it as little more than a tool of imperialism for the Great Powers.⁹⁸ This built on his late-1920s series of pamphlets that had denounced League inaction over the oppressed within the British Empire, and contrasted its ideals with the harsh facts of

⁸⁴ Hall and Sen, *The League of Nations* (note 62), 158.

⁸⁵ V.S. Ram and B.M. Sharma, *India & the League of Nations*, Lucknow, 1932, 139.

⁸⁶ Coyajee, *India and the League of Nations* (note 81), 26.

⁸⁷ Verma, *India and the League of Nations* (note 54), 270.

⁸⁸ Manela, *The Wilsonian Moment* (note 38), 62.

⁸⁹ Manjapra, *M.N. Roy* (note 43), 34.

⁹⁰ NA/Reforms(General)/1920/87-117A.

⁹¹ K. Grant and L. Trivedi, A question of trust: the Government of India, the League of Nations, and Mohandas Gandhi, in: R.M. Douglas et al. (Eds), *Imperialism on Trial: International Oversight of Colonial Rule in Historical Perspective*, Lanham, MD, 2006, 21–44, 22.

⁹² Manela, *The Wilsonian Moment* (note 38), 170.

⁹³ Schmidt, *India's Role in the League of Nations, 1919–1939* (note 52).

⁹⁴ K. Shah and G.J. Bahadurji, *A Commentary on the Government of India Act, (consolidated) of 1919, with Additional Chapters on the Indian Local Governments, Indian Army, Indian Finance, and the Native States in India*, Bombay, 1924, 11.

⁹⁵ C. Vijayaraghavachariar, *League of Nations and India's Emancipation*, Madras, 1929.

⁹⁶ H.J. Laski, *A Grammar of Politics*, London, 1925.

⁹⁷ Ram and Sharma, *India & the League of Nations* (note 85).

⁹⁸ See Nehru's, *Glimpses of World History*, Allahabad, 1934, 681–683, quoted in Verma, *India and the League of Nations* (note 54), 274.

reality. By 1937 C.F. Andrews could report a profound distrust of the 'League of Robbers' among educated Indians, who saw it as a European club devised to divide the spoil, and guard the loot, of imperialism. The failure to censure Italy effectively over its invasion of Abyssinia in 1935 did untold harm to the League in India. In a Legislative Assembly motion in 1937 Seth Sheodas Daga, representing the Indian National Congress, denounced the League of 'Brigands and Butchers' that had failed to protect China, Abyssinia, the Rhineland or Spain. In response, Sir Abdul Hamid conceded these weakness, but argued that India acquired intellectual,⁹⁹ social and commercial benefits from its membership.¹⁰⁰ In surveying similar critical literature Verma also noted the more positive commentary in India on the League's work on labour, intellectual cooperation and anti-trafficking.¹⁰¹

Regarding the latter, clause 23c of the League Covenant was honoured with the first meeting of the Advisory Committee for Trafficking in Women and Children in 1922.¹⁰² It worked through conventions and publications to encourage legislation and policies to reduce enforced prostitution and international trafficking.¹⁰³ As has been demonstrated at length regarding League enquiries into trafficking in women and children, the Government of India constantly invoked the 'domestic' to defend itself from League enquiries.¹⁰⁴ But the division between Princely and British Indian States within the Indian Empire provoked a much more complex dilemma over territory and sovereignty than that of the domestic/international debate.

Outside in: internal political geographies and international trafficking

As an international anomaly, India reformulated Britain's imperial sovereignty regime through debates about *representation* (diplomatic silencing), *government* (administering internationalism), *theory* (political philosophies of statehood) and *politics* (anti-colonialism). The internal anomaly of the Princely States, and the problems raised by trafficking in women and children, raised similar sovereign dilemmas within the scale of the subcontinent, but in very different forms. *Territorial* questions of sovereignty emerged regarding India's regional political geographies, to which *theories* of quasi-sovereignty and unfettered paramountcy were proffered in response. Mundane *governmental* sovereignties of administrative indirect rule of the Princely States were threatened by *theoretical* possibilities opened up by League membership, which provoked constitutional dilemmas, *representational* clashes between the Viceroy and the Chamber of Princes, and a crisis of *contractual* sovereignty as the implications of India's commitments in international law to tackle trafficking in women and children became clear.

India's princely geographies

While the diplomatic status of India was a complex and vexed one for the League of Nations, so was the question of India's geography that the League's legal conventions and probing questions regarding the trafficking in women and children committee provoked. This geography was an internal one of *territory* and quasi-sovereignty, but one that the League threw into a new light.

'India' was a founding member of the League, but it was also part of the British Empire, although it was an Empire within the Empire, rather than a colony. Within the subcontinent, 'India' was divided into British India and the Princely States (of which there were 562 in 1929)¹⁰⁵ while British India was divided into three Presidencies (Bengal, Bombay and Madras) and subdivided into Provinces (Fig. 3). Thus, when each member of the League was asked to appoint a coordinating authority for trafficking in women and children policy, 'India' returned four, one for each of the three Presidencies plus Burma, while after partial devolution under the dyarchy system in 1919 it was the provinces who would legislate on trafficking and prostitution.¹⁰⁶ The Princely States were territories unconquered at the time of the Government of India Act of 1858 who were guaranteed their continued existence by Queen Victoria's pledge of the same year.¹⁰⁷ Yet, the States had to accept British residents at court, the regulation of succession and control of their foreign affairs, as had been the case since the 1820s.¹⁰⁸ Their independence was further intruded upon by legal re-workings of British–Indian state relations in the 1870s–90s that increased British powers of intervention. But the Princely States also created regional spaces for experiments with modernisation that could be less constrained than in the politically sensitive British Indian States.¹⁰⁹ These experiments took place within the 'quasi-sovereignty' of the Princely States as defined by 'imperial law'.¹¹⁰

Benton has shown how the *theoretical* concept of quasi-sovereignty was invented by the mid- to late-nineteenth-century international legal community in an attempt to classify dependent imperial sub-polities that were technically outside the scope of international law.¹¹¹ These attempts included analogy (empires as international orders or legal hegemonies) or description (ranking polities from federalisms to coalitions of near independent states). On the latter scale the Princely States were somewhere in the middle, but analogically it was stressed that the British had theoretically unlimited power over the Princes. Such thinking was justified by the principle of divisible sovereignty. Sir Henry Maine, a law member of the Viceroy of India's council, claimed in 1887 that sovereignty was an assemblage of separate powers, including those regarding peace or war, justice, and law making.¹¹² To possess all of them indicated an independent sovereign, but they could be divided, as was the case in

⁹⁹ See D. Laqua, Transnational intellectual cooperation, the League of Nations, and the problem of order, *Journal of Global History* 6 (2011) 223–247.

¹⁰⁰ NA/Home(Political)/1937/24/13/37.

¹⁰¹ Verma, *India and the League of Nations* (note 54), 284.

¹⁰² Gorman, Empire, internationalism, and the campaign against the traffic in women and children in the 1920s (note 6).

¹⁰³ Legg, 'The life of individuals as well as of nations' (note 10).

¹⁰⁴ Legg, Of scales, networks and assemblages (note 23); Metzger, Towards an international human rights regime during the interwar years (note 8).

¹⁰⁵ B. Ramusack, *The Indian Princes and their States*, Cambridge, 2004, 2.

¹⁰⁶ S. Legg, Stimulation, segregation and scandal: geographies of prostitution regulation in British India, between registration (1888) and suppression (1923), *Modern Asian Studies* 46 (2012) 1459–1505.

¹⁰⁷ For a review of broader literature on the Princely States see F. Groenhout, The history of the Indian princely states: bringing the puppets back onto centre stage, *History Compass* 4 (2006) 629–644.

¹⁰⁸ I. Copland, *The Princes of India in the Endgame of Empire, 1917–1947*, Cambridge, 1997, 15.

¹⁰⁹ Nair, *Mysore Modern* (note 31), 14.

¹¹⁰ L. Benton, From international law to imperial constitutions: the problem of quasi-sovereignty, 1870–1900, *Law and History Review* 26 (2008) 595–619.

¹¹¹ Benton, *A Search for Sovereignty* (note 29), 237.

¹¹² Ramusack, *The Indian Princes and their States* (note 105), 94; also see K. Mantena, *Alibis of Empire: Henry Maine and the Ends of Liberal Imperialism*, Princeton, NJ, 2010.

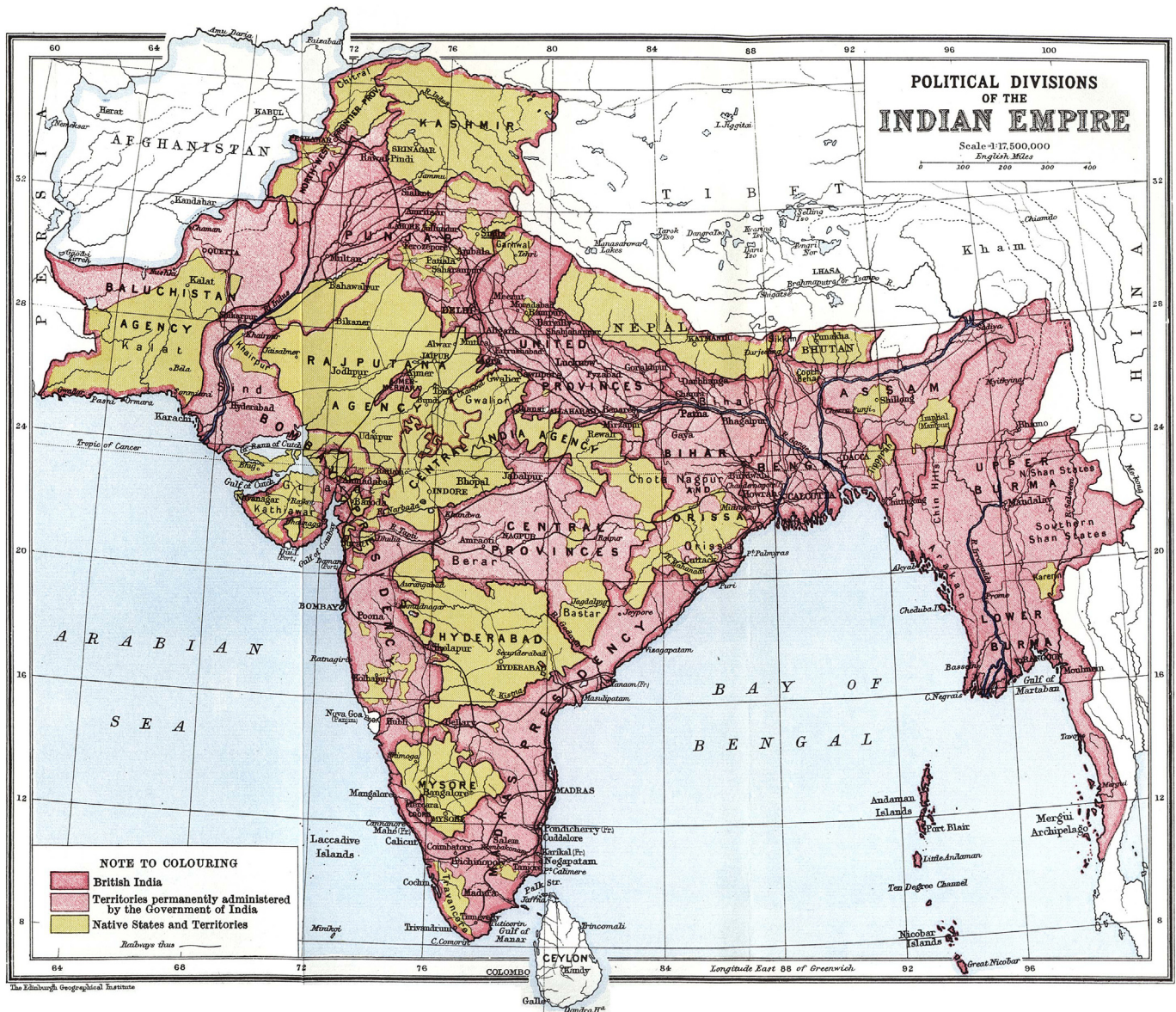


Fig. 3. Political Divisions of the Indian Empire, c. 1916, downloaded from <http://www.gutenberg.org/files/20583/20583-h/20583-h.htm>. The map is the frontispiece to R.V. Russell, *The Tribes and Castes of the Central Provinces of India*, London, 1916; it was adapted from the *Imperial Gazetteer of India: Atlas*, Vol. 26, Oxford, 1909, map 20.

the Princely States, and in the imperial policy of indirect rule more generally.¹¹³ Yet this left the problem of how to encourage ‘development’, and to exert control, in these spaces. Sir Charles Lewis Tupper, drawing on Maine, argued in the 1890s that the Princely States should be exempt from international law and be governed by officially determined law (that is ‘political’ not ‘diplomatic’ law) based upon the doctrines of divisible sovereignty and usage. But this determination would be relating to decisions based on British precedent, not on general rules. This established, as Benton put it, ‘indeterminacy as policy’.¹¹⁴ While Benton’s studies conclude in 1900, this policy was very much taken forward into the Prince’s almost-international life in the interwar period.

The governmental sovereignty of the Princely States was eroded through controls over trade, commerce and communication, although these interventions were reined in during 1909–10 in an attempt to guarantee Princely support against the emergent nationalist movement.¹¹⁵ This ‘laissez faire’ period was undermined in 1926 when Viceroy Reading’s campaign to reclaim British supremacy over the Princes culminated in an open letter declaring that the sovereignty of the British Crown in India was supreme, and that it had the right to intervene in the Princely States due to its conditions of ‘unfettered paramountcy’.¹¹⁶ The League of Nations threw into question, however, the nature of this paramountcy, even though the term had itself been negotiated and included at

¹¹³ Metcalf, *Imperial Connections* (note 39), 33.

¹¹⁴ Benton, *A Search for Sovereignty* (note 29), 258.

¹¹⁵ W. Ernst and B. Pari, *People, princes and colonialism*, in: W. Ernst, B. Pari (Eds), *India’s Princely States: People, Princes and Colonialism*, Abingdon, 2007, 1–14.

¹¹⁶ Copland, *The Princes of India in the Endgame of Empire, 1917–1947* (note 108), 30, 55.

Versailles.¹¹⁷ In one sense, British and Princely India had a unity at the international level that they had never had at the national level¹¹⁸; a Princely representative had always taken a place in the Indian delegation, but had spoken for all of India.¹¹⁹ But this could not deny the government's view that many Princely territories were 'backward' and would need to be written out of League conventions, while encouraging reform on similar lines. Literature to date has failed to consider the impact of the League upon the development of the Princely States, at most noting the role of Princely delegates to Geneva.¹²⁰

Yet some of the questions provoked by 'India's' League membership had been outlined as early as 1924 in M.V. Kibe's *The League of Nations and the Indian States*.¹²¹ The aim of the book was to encourage the betterment of the Princely States and the people of India, the aspiration to this betterment having been roused by ideas 'prevailing all over the world'. Kibe portrayed the Princely States as being under a state of military occupation by the British, not one of dialogue or association. In contrast he, falsely, suggested that the League was open to all states and that it existed to check imperialism. Despite this misunderstanding, Kibe did hit upon a key fear of the central government. He suggested that, in relation to Great Britain, British India was a state, just like the Indian States, and that it was British India who had signed the Treaty of Versailles. Thus it was the Government of (British) India which became a member of the League and had deigned to speak on the Princes' behalf. It was, therefore, suggested that Indian States become members of the League themselves, and that the latter act as an independent adjudicator of disputes between British and Princely India.

While accepting that a 'state' should be defined as self-governing, Kibe had pointed out that Bulgaria, though a member of the League, had military and financial restrictions imposed by Versailles, just as Austria was not allowed treaty relations with other countries.¹²² Overplaying their actual independence, Kibe suggested that the Princely States had, besides war making, all the rights which form the attributes of sovereignty, but the Governor-General's decree of 1891 had firmly stated that the principles of international law would have no bearing on the relationships between the Queen-Empress/Government of India and the Princely States.¹²³

This conundrum of the 'anomalous legal spaces' of the Princely States,¹²⁴ within the broader anomaly of India within the League, was the subject of extensive correspondence between the Secretary of State, the Viceroy, and the heads of various governmental departments between September 1925 and October 1927.¹²⁵ The debate was prompted on 29th September 1925 by a letter from N.M. Joshi, a member of the Legislative Assembly, to the Government. Joshi queried the extent of the government's legislative or administrative actions in relation to conventions passed by the

League of Nations or other international Conventions. While appreciating the 'constitutional difficulties' posed by the Indian States, Joshi insisted that if India was to be true to its international obligations then something would have to be done in these territories. H.R. Lynch Blosse, of the Foreign and Political Department, commented on 13th October that as a last resort the Government of India could compel recalcitrant States to come in line with conventions signed on their behalf, though such extreme action should have been unnecessary as most States had been willing to comply with international conventions signed on their behalf. The *territorial* and *contractual* complexity of the questions was, however, made clear by G.H. Spence of the Legislative Department in a note of 16th October 1925:

The Member of the League being 'India', League Conventions are necessarily ratified on behalf of 'India' and the obligations arising from ratification attach to 'India'. Action necessary to implement the ratification of Conventions is taken in the administrative Department of the GoI [Government of India] concerned, and this Department is not in a position to state what efforts, if any, are made to ensure the taking of the necessary action in the States as well as in British India.¹²⁶

Whilst this statement highlighted the problematic nature of the category 'India', L. Graham of the same Department disagreed with its conclusions, stressing that each Department of the Government of India could not operate autonomously in relation to League affairs. As a single member of the League, India would need a single ratifying authority, and could entertain no question of Indian States ratifying or refusing League conventions. In his note of 16th October he continued that: 'I have long been expecting this question to be raised and it is only one of the many questions involved in the anomalous position of India as a member of the League'.¹²⁷

This disagreement summarised the main problem that was debated for the following two years in extensive internal dialogue across the departments of government, often in reaction to prompts issued by the Secretary of State in London. Each Department was asked to comment upon the international conventions which affected it, and whether they had made efforts to encourage the Princely States to adopt similar measures. The replies proved a complete lack of common policy regarding the Indian States, and a panoply of suggested negotiations of this problem. The Department of Industries and Labour acknowledged that the status of the Indian States in the Treaty of Versailles was undefined, although states with colonies, protectorates or possessions which were not self-governing were obliged to apply conventions to them, but the Foreign and Political Department had already ruled out consideration of the Indian States as protectorates. During the Versailles negotiations, the Maharaja of Bikaner had insisted that laws in British India in relation to League conventions would not apply to

¹¹⁷ Purcell, *Maharajah of Bikaner* (note 59), x.

¹¹⁸ Coyajee, *India and the League of Nations* (note 81), 128.

¹¹⁹ Ram and Sharma, *India & the League of Nations* (note 85), 142.

¹²⁰ S.R. Ashton, *British Policy Towards the Indian States, 1905–1939*, London, 1982, 66, 206; J. Macleod, *Sovereignty, Power, Control: Politics in the State of Western India, 1916–1947*, Leiden, 1999, 72.

¹²¹ Rao Bahadur Sardar Madhav Vinayak Kibe (1877–nd) was a scholar of Indian history and member of the Royal Asiatic Society who went on to become Deputy Prime Minister of Indore State. He published on eighteenth-century Marathi documents and the religious geographies of 'Lanka' (M.V. Kibe, *The Location of Lanka*, Poona, 1947). In addition to his writings on the League he also provided commentary pieces on the over-taxation of native states peoples and their economic relationship with the Indian government, the fate of the Princely States, and a caustic paper against the potential of League of Nations procedures being used to protect Muslim minorities in India, see Editorial: current topics, *The Economic Journal* 34 (1924) 294–299; M. Kibe, The states and federation, *Triveni* May–June (1933); M. Kibe, The rejuvenation of the Princes' chamber, *Triveni* March (1939); and M. Kibe, The Hindu–Muslim problem, *Triveni* May–June (1931).

¹²² M. Kibe, *The League of Nations and the Indian States*, Indore, 1924, 18.

¹²³ Kibe, *The League of Nations and the Indian States* (note 122), 26.

¹²⁴ Benton, *A Search for Sovereignty* (note 29), 9.

¹²⁵ NA/Foreign and Political/1926/264(2)P (Secret).

¹²⁶ NA/Foreign and Political/1926/264(2)P (Secret).

¹²⁷ NA/Foreign and Political/1926/264(2)P (Secret).

Princely States. Article 405 of the Versailles Treaty had been amended to insist on due regard to 'those countries in which climatic conditions, the imperfect development of industrial organisations or other special circumstances make the industrial conditions substantially different', but this amendment seemed to have been forgotten, for the time being.¹²⁸

While analogies were made to provisions in existence for federal states, this suggestion was ruled out by the Legislative Department. Some clarity was provided by Viceroy Reading's opening speech at the session of the Chamber of Princes held in January 1926.¹²⁹ This was the same year in which his campaign to reinforce British paramountcy was coming to a head, and marked a stark *representational* and *governmental* claim over the quasi-sovereignty of the Princes. He praised the participation of members of the Chamber in League and international assemblies, suggesting that they promote 'reflection to larger lines concerned with the solidarity of the unit of which India is a part and the higher calls of its destiny and humanity at large'. Such participation was also said, however, to entail obligations and responsibilities. The Viceroy emphasised his confidence in the 'co-operation' of the assembled Highnesses in discharging their responsibilities. He continued:

I need not assure you that there is no intention of encroaching unnecessarily on the freedom with which you conduct your internal administrations. At the same time I must ask you to realise that one of the most important results of the creation of the League of Nations has been to bring into existence machinery by which international influence, or rather the joint public opinion of many countries, can be brought to bear on the domestic affairs of all countries and all administrations.¹³⁰

This suggestion was responded to, however, in a speech by the Maharaja of Patiala in the Chamber of Princes, of which he was the new Chancellor, on 25th November 1926. Whilst not questioning the humanitarian spirit of the international conventions in questions, he insisted that: 'howsoever great the pressure exerted upon the Government of India, by international opinion, for their immediate ratification, there none the less exist obligations, anterior in time and no less sacred in character, which bind the Government of India to respect the autonomy of the Indian States'. As a result of this constitutional dilemma, the decision was reached by the Government of India in 1926 to leave things as they were until there was a practical necessity for action.

This necessity arose, however, in the shape of despatch from the Secretary of State for India, issued on 24th March 1927. Keen to avoid the status of the Princely States being investigated by the Permanent Court of International Justice (inaugurated in 1922), the Secretary wished it to be made public that obligations undertaken by the Government of India, in this case the International Labour Convention, could only be applied to British India. Although the central government admitted the flaws in this stance, it was agreed to have no more faults than any alternative solution to India's anomalous position with regard to the League. These geographical anomalies would play out repeatedly as the Government of India attempted to honour its commitments to legal conventions concerning the suppression of trafficking in women and children.

International or internal trafficking?

The sheer scale of India meant that 'international trafficking' was a contentious concept, as women could be moved across greater distances within India and not be internationally trafficked than it would take to move them across multiple nations in Europe. This was at the heart of the controversy of trafficking in India, which led to various governmental enquiries about brothel inhabitants. One of these took place in 1927 following League enquiries regarding the provenance of the women supplied to Bombay's brothels.¹³¹ The Bombay authorities responded to the Home Department's request for information on 31st May by stating that there was no question of international trafficking, but there was clear evidence of women being trafficked within India to Bombay's brothels. Following further enquiries made by the central government, the Punjab Government assured the Home Department, on 6th July 1927, that there was no traffic of women to Bombay from its population. It did insist, however, that there was considerable traffic within India to supply women to the Punjab itself.

In the 1920s the Government of India was forced to consider the ramifications of Princely political geographies for its commitments, having signed the 1921 International Convention for the Suppression of the Traffic in Women and Children.¹³² India was now bound to implement the conditions of 1904 or 1910 conventions on the 'white slave trade', to tackle trafficking in women and children, and acts deemed preparatory to such trade, and to allow for the extradition of persons accused of TWC. This convention for the suppression of TWC had been signed by 'India', whereas the 1904 convention had been signed by Britain for 'India' and thus only referred to British India, not the Princely States. These Indian States were now, technically, under the same obligations as the British ones, and would thus need legislation to enforce the obligations of the convention. This would involve appointing a coordinating authority, sending reports to the League, and passing legislation against procurement. Unsure of how to proceed, the central government consulted the four existing authorities in British India to ask them their opinions. Sir Charles Tegart, the Calcutta Commissioner of Police, replied on 19th February 1928 that he believed there to be trade from the Princely States to British India, and thus some sort of legislation would be advised. Evidence of this had come to light during a brief scandal in February 1927 when a 16 year old Nepalese girl named Maiya Rani, alias Rajkumari, accused her uncle of kidnapping her from the Political Residency protectorate state of Nepal and selling her to Hiralal Agarwalla in Calcutta.¹³³ This 'caused a great sensation' amongst the local Nepali and Gurkha communities, in the midst of which the Secretary of the Gurkha Association stabbed Hiralal to death at his office. Police enquiries showed that many girls were being trafficked from Nepal to Benares, where they were sold as wives, often destined for the Punjab. In a separate case in May 1927, a raid on a brothel in Calcutta had found three girls from the Princely State of Kashmir, aged 15, 11 and eight, living under a Kashmiri madame. As a result of these enquiries a letter was sent to the Princely States asking that they take action inline with a convention to which they were now signed.

¹²⁸ NA/Foreign and Political/1926/264(2)P (Secret).

¹²⁹ A forum founded in 1920 alongside the new Central Legislative Assembly and Council of State, resulting from the 1919 Government of India Act. It allowed the Princes to gather in New Delhi and institutionally represented their transition from pageantry to politics in colonial India.

¹³⁰ NA/Foreign and Political/1926/264(2)P (Secret).

¹³¹ NA/Home(Judicial)/1927/733/27.

¹³² NA/Home(Police)/1927/85/11/27.

¹³³ See NA/Home(Judicial)/1927/1158. Even amongst the vast diversity of Princely States, Nepal stands out as an exception as Britain recognised its *de jure* independence.

Having had to negotiate these problems in the 1920s the Government of India made sure that they would not make the same mistake again when a new League convention was proposed. Following a conference in Geneva in October 1933, the League proposed a convention that would augment the agreements of 1904, 1910 and 1921 by penalising anyone who procured females of any age, even with their consent, for immoral purposes to be carried out in another 'country', whether or not those offensive acts were committed in different 'countries'.¹³⁴ As defined by the convention, a country would include colonies, protectorates, and territories under the suzerainty or mandate of the signing party. The effect of this definition would be that Indian States could be treated as foreign states relative to British India, and that traffic within the subcontinent between Princely and British Indian States or between Princely States would thus become international trafficking.

On 14th December 1933 the Home Department circulated the draft convention for comment to the various provinces of British India, with a commentary that dissuaded any contemplation of its applicability.¹³⁵ The wording of the convention, it was argued, would treat Indian States as foreign states relative to India, and would thus be open to objection. The note, from the Joint Secretary of the Home Judicial Department, showed how the anomalous situation of the Indian States was, in fact, being used as a convenient means of sidestepping the other, more substantial, obligations that the convention would have imposed:

It appears to the Government of India that there are obvious objections to such an arrangement as British India and the States form a single geographical unit. There are social and religious factors which make it impossible in present conditions to penalise the procurement of women within this area. Even within the narrower limits of British India it seems impracticable to penalise all procurement.¹³⁶

In conclusion, it was stated that if internal trafficking were allowed to continue, it would not be practical to ban it between British and Indian States. As such, on 4th December 1934 the India Office wrote to Eric Ekstrand, head of the Social Questions section of the League, clearly stating that: 'owing to the nature of the relations which exist between British India and Indian States, which under the definition in Article 1 of the Convention would be treated as foreign countries relative to British India, the Government of India does not feel itself in a position to accede to the Convention'.¹³⁷

The issue was again raised by a draft convention drawn up during the TWC Committee's session in 1936 that aimed to address the expulsion of procurers.¹³⁸ In briefing the Indian delegate, the Home Department insisted that any articles of the convention that addressed international traffic would be of little relevance to India, as there was barely any international trafficking, while internal trafficking was now a matter for provincial governments, most of which had recently legislated against the evil. As such, when Mrs. K.

Bose reported to the TWC Committee, she stressed that the Government of India could not conform to the 1933 Convention, or any following acts, due to the distinction it would enforce between British and Indian States.¹³⁹ This would continue to be a position of great discomfort for the Government of India, as revealed in the brief given to the Indian delegate to the Advisory Committee on Social Questions for the June 1939 meeting.¹⁴⁰ It was remembered that recent conventions had made a reservation excluding the Indian States, but that this had not been done for the TWC Convention in 1921. The obligations of the Convention could have forced the central government into direct interference with the domestic administration of the Indian States, thus it was requested that any reference to the states be avoided. It was true, however, that many states in India, whether British or Princely, had been considering or enacting legislation against trafficking in women and children. For instance, suppressionist legislation was passed in Mysore in 1937 while Bhopal had a much longer, if contentious, history of interventions into women's rights.¹⁴¹ The nature of much of this legislation had been affected, directly or indirectly, by the reports, terminology, advice and educative materials circulated by the League, despite the Princely States' uneasy ambivalence regarding their international status. After the first decade of League membership the India Office had already noted in 1930 that:

It is India, and not British India, which is a member of the League, and 'India' as defined in the Interpretation Act includes the Indian States. The position of these quasi-independent States in regard to India's representation, and to international obligations that may be undertaken, was at first left undetermined, and... special problems in this connection had to be faced.¹⁴²

The British Interpretation Act (1889) defined India as British India plus territories of any native prince or chief under the suzerainty of His Majesty. Suzerainty was here tackled with the rubric of paramountcy¹⁴³: 'The Paramount Power exercises some of the attributes of sovereignty on behalf of the States, and in respect of those attributes His Majesty's Government can bind a State absolutely and by its own authority'.¹⁴⁴ While the state technically could bind the Princes, whether it would do so depended on the subject: for international affairs the British could insist on conformity; for domestic concerns the British would rely on influence and persuasion. While League conventions were meant to be accepted for the whole country, during the internal government debate from 1925 to 1926 article 405 of the Treaty of Versailles had finally been remembered, allowing India to 'contract out' parts of its territory, which was used in future cases between the Princely States and the League more broadly. This power was summarised in the 1930 'Simon Report' on Indian constitution development, which reflected back on domestic developments since the 1919 Government of India Act, but also re-considered India's international situation, providing a series of fascinating insights into the scalar and

¹³⁴ *League of Nations, Diplomatic Conference Concerning the Suppression of Traffic in Women of Full Age*, Geneva, 1933.

¹³⁵ Delhi State Archives (henceforth DA)/Chief Commissioner's files (henceforth CC)/Home/1934/74B.

¹³⁶ DA/CC/Home/1934/74B.

¹³⁷ League of Nations Archive, United Nations Office at Geneva/11B/15088/7285 (carton R4685).

¹³⁸ NA/Home(Jails)/1938/43/3/38.

¹³⁹ NA/Home(Jails)/1938/43/10/38.

¹⁴⁰ NA/Home(Police)/1938/43/12.

¹⁴¹ J. Nair, 'Imperial reason', national honour and new patriarchal compacts in early twentieth-century India, *History Workshop Journal* 66 (2008) 208–226. This built on longer campaigns against devadasi 'temple prostitutes', see Nair, *Mysore Modern* (note 31), chapter 6; S. Lambert-Hurley, Historicizing debates over women's status in Islam: the case of Nawab Sultan Jahan Beham of Bhopal, in: W. Ernst, B. Pari (Eds), *India's Princely States: People, Princes and Colonialism*, Abingdon, 2007, 139–156.

¹⁴² *Memoranda*, 1636.

¹⁴³ See Benton, *A Search for Sovereignty* (note 29), 245.

¹⁴⁴ *Memoranda*, 1648.

sovereign complexities of India as an anomalously international part of the British Empire.

Conclusion: anomalies, scales, and sovereignties

The anomaly is evident. On the one hand, as the [British] powers of superintendence, direction and control, vested by the [1919] Act... extend *a fortiori* to all matters affecting her external relations... The existence of these powers would, therefore, seem to preclude the idea of a separate international status for India. On the other hand, by being placed on an equality with the self-governing Dominions at Versailles and in the League of Nations, India has been treated as it she had attained to the same kind of separate nationhood as that now enjoyed by those Dominions.¹⁴⁵

The Simon Report chapter on 'India in the British Empire' comprised submissions by the Government of India (from New Delhi) and the India Office (from London). The latter emphatically pronounced India's difference from the self-governing Dominions, but admitted that India had an exceptional international existence for a state within the British Empire. While the League could in no way effect relations between India and Britain, it was admitted to benefit India in terms of diplomatic experience, public interest in international affairs, and economic and social questions.

However, as the quote above demonstrates, while refusing to acknowledge the questions provoked by India's internal anomalies, its external anomaly was returned to again and again. It was unique among 'all the non-Self-Governing States, Dominions or Colonies throughout the world' through its founding member status of the League, and would remain the only such 'striking paradox' as long as the non-self-governing membership exclusions for new entrants remained in the covenant.¹⁴⁶ Under the sub-heading 'Anomalies of the New Status' it was insisted that: 'The new status cannot by any process of reasoning be harmonised with the constitutional relations between India and His Majesty's Government'.¹⁴⁷ As the India Office commented, while the rules of business in the Indian Legislature forbade the discussion of foreign affairs, they had been 'interpreted with sufficient elasticity to allow discussion of many questions actually before the League which affect India'.¹⁴⁸

This rhetorical flourish was typical of India Office (London) and Raisina Hill (New Delhi) mandarin rhetoric, but also of a broader imperial negotiation of the elasticity of international law.¹⁴⁹ This was achieved through a policy of, wherever possible, non-definition. Terms would be left ambiguous and thus open to interpretation, hence the policy was: 'That a formal decision to the effect that either the Secretary of State or the Government in India is the proper authority in Imperial and international questions should be avoided'.¹⁵⁰ A second tactic was to stress how difficult it was to make India's new status a reality, suggesting

that the outcome of 1919 discussions in the Versailles Hall of Mirrors had been an unreality, a fantasy. This condensed both the Hegelian view of India as a dream world with E.H. Carr's denunciation of liberal-internationalist dreamers, who set their sights to the stars, not the reality of politics on the ground.¹⁵¹ The Secretary of State's job, therefore, was to make India's status a reality for practical purposes, within the widest possible limits. The question of India's 'quasi-independence' in external relations was, however, immediately dismissed by the India Office: 'The whole situation, besides being theoretically anomalous, is still too new and experimental to allow of the formulation of any but the most general principles'.¹⁵²

What these documents show is that the 'anomaly' of India's international status was recognised and debated at the time, in exactly these terms. The analysis of the scalar dynamics of this anomaly has exposed some of the ways in which the national and the international were interacting in the interwar period. In terms of imperial interactions, India ('inside out') had a degree of self-government and unity at the international level, in the League of Nations, that it did not possess at the national level, in the subcontinent. This was in part a product of governmental exceptionalism, but it was also a product of political philosophical debates about the status of 'India' and of anti-colonial commentaries on India's treatment in the international sphere. In terms of colonial interactions, India ('outside in') was exposed as lacking territorial unity through debates about the quasi-sovereignty of the Princely States, which trafficking in women and children exposed due to its capillary ability to course between the fissures between Princely and British India.¹⁵³

Examining the Indian international anomaly through this scalar lens provides a series of insights into a particular sovereignty regime of colonialism. India's external engagement with the League, coordinated through New Delhi, London and Geneva, saw sovereignty being deployed in terms of representation (diplomatic silencing), government (administering exceptionalism), theory (political philosophies of statehood) and politics (anti-colonialism). The internal questions provoked by the League were raised between New Delhi and provincial and regional cities, which saw sovereignty debated in terms of territory (British and Princely India), theory (quasi-sovereignty), government (indirect rule), representation (the Chamber of Princes) and contract (international conventions regarding trafficking). The diversity of these sites and techniques prove that the international was not a sphere with semi-naturalistic processes of government, capital or civilisation. It was a network of sites and names that took in cities and people across the globe, though not on terms of equality, fraternity or liberty. Rather, it produced anomalies in imperial relations and colonial territory that forced novel experiments across the performative range of sovereignty, the traces of which give us, I hope, some tentative and specific answers to the more general question: where was the international?

¹⁴⁵ *Memoranda*, 1632. The first part refers to the 1919 Government of India Act, which devolved some powers to elected Indian Ministers in the provinces but retained British control over India's external relations.

¹⁴⁶ *Memoranda*, 1633, 1635.

¹⁴⁷ *Memoranda*, 1636.

¹⁴⁸ *Memoranda*, 1637.

¹⁴⁹ 'This remarkable elasticity and extensibility, this holding open of all possibilities, this holding open above all of the alternative law or politics is in my opinion typical of every true and great imperialism': Schmitt, *Forms of modern imperialism in international law* (note 47), 35.

¹⁵⁰ *Memoranda*, 1644.

¹⁵¹ R. Inden, *Imagining India*, Oxford, 1990, 47; Carr, *The Twenty Years' Crisis 1919–1939* (note 34).

¹⁵² *Memoranda*, 1632.

¹⁵³ It is possible to argue that these debates about the Princely States foreshadowed, and possibly contributed to, their forcible integration into postcolonial federal India. See M. Bhagavan, *Princely states and the making of modern India*, *Indian Economic & Social History Review* 46 (2009) 427–456.

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