Martin Ottovay Jørgensen
Paper for the Conference: The Road to Global Inequality, 1945-Present Day – New Historical Perspectives
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How has the International System Been Connected to Inequalities, Vulnerabilities and Insecurities from 1900 to 1945?

Introduction

Inequality is a global phenomenon. Much scholarship has acknowledged this, or is moving towards recognition thereof. Given the contemporary foci of social sciences concerned with inequality, however, emphasis still appears to be placed mostly on the influences of the neoliberal paradigm and income equality.[1] Both shaped by and shaping historical processes, global inequality, however, has deeper roots than neoliberalism and is much broader than income equality. Take, for example, the World Health Organization (WHO) report on air pollution from earlier this year. The report noted that 98% of people in urban areas with more than 100,000 inhabitants in low- and middle income countries are exposed to air quality levels well below the standards of the WHO air quality guidelines, compared to 56% of similar areas in high income countries.[2] To understand how that came to be entails a departure from purely synchronic and economic studies to much broader analyses that also consider both synchronic and diachronic factors. In this case, we have to consider the links to the histories of late colonial and postcolonial industrialisation, urbanisation, and transport systems. If we extrapolate from this, inequality appears not only simultaneously global and individual. Perhaps thus best understood in the plural, inequalities also cut across a multitude of historically rooted spheres such as land ownership, economy, politics, security, and law on the one hand and race, class, gender, etc. on the other. Put differently, inequalities are intersectional, relational, embodied, geographically and spatially entrenched, and historical. Moreover, inequalities should perhaps also be understood in relation to vulnerability and insecurity—or vulnerabilities and insecurities—given the strong links between inequalities and precariousness in everyday life.

Global and imperial historians have irrefutably shown that the expansions of agrarian empires, informal imperialism, and eventually settler colonialism from the 1500s through to the late 19th century, led to starkly different living standards and life trajectories—and thus vulnerabilities, inequalities and insecurities—at the expense of not only but especially the majority of the local populations. Conquest, slavery, forced mine and

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[1] See for example "Globalisation at the Crossroads – Rethinking Inequalities and Boundaries," accessed October 12, 2016, http://eadi-nordic2017.org/about/thematic-overview/; and "Geographies of Inequalities," text, accessed October 12, 2016, http://www.humangeo.su.se/english/ngm-2017/programme/theme.

[2] "Air Pollution Levels Rising in Many of the World's Poorest Cities," *WHO*, accessed October 12, 2016, http://www.who.int/mediacentre/news/releases/2016/air-pollution-rising/en/.

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plantation labour, convict labour, frontier warfare, and genocides were the main vehicles.[3] Given how the global imperial system engendered inequalities, vulnerabilities and insecurities until 1900 (and again from 1989 one might add), I ask the question *how has the international system been connected to inequalities, vulnerabilities and insecurities from 1900 to 1945*?

In other words, this paper focuses on how the new imperialism of the late 19th century and emerging forms of inter-imperial formations and relations further embedded imperial institutional logics, technologies of power and practices of governance—and thus inequalities, vulnerabilities and insecurities—into the emerging international system from 1900 to 1945. The aim of doing so is to two-fold. Firstly, I wish to provide a deeper context than a focus on the period from 1945 to 1989 might offer. Secondly, I aim to do so by joining colonial, imperial and international historiography. Accordingly, the paper falls in three parts. The first part is structured around the concept of 'Imperialism'. The second and third parts revolve around the concepts of 'multinational imperialism' and 'imperial multilateralism', concepts devised by the scholar of International Relations Phillip Cunliffe.

Inequalities, Vulnerabilities and Insecurities in a Worlds of Imperialism around 1900

By 1900, the various imperial expansions and associated trans-nationalisation of markets (textile, grain, meat, etc.) had spread and intensified the intra-imperial processes of the previous centuries all over the world. Many areas in which peasants had lived on subsistence farming had become starving geographies with many forced into poorly paid wage labour. Yet, both everyday life and the mobilities of the emerging global poor were racialised for control and regulated to prevent diseases and what was seen as disorder.

In 1900, the British empire faced both an economic slowdown compared to the American and German lead in the oil, chemical and electrical industries and an expensive war in South Africa despite large incomes from shipping, insurance, and banking. Foremost, the British turned to India. However, the emphasis on agri-capitalism and market access via railways and canals, had left Indian peasants vulnerable during a drought from 1900-1902. This and the continued tax collection led not only to lenders calling back their credits and rising grain prices. Famine also spread, resulting in both millions of dead and large anti-British movements. In Eastern and Southern Africa, conditions were not much better. Among the Kikuyu in British East Africa, the combination of imperial and market expansion, drought and cattle deaths led to a mortality of between 50 and 95%, depending on the area. In Buganda, the combination of economic expansion, colonial warfare and

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[3] See for example Jane Burbank and Frederick Cooper, *Empires in World History: Power and the Politics of Difference* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2010); Trevor R Getz and Heather Streets-Salter, *Modern Imperialism and Colonialism: A Global Perspective* (Boston: Prentice Hall, 2011).

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famine not only left thousands vulnerable and suffering. An estimated 40,000 of the most marginalised also died. In South Africa, the war with the Boers cost 76,000 lives and furthered racial policies.[4]

American imperial expansion in both the Philippines and Mexico did not pale in comparison, however. In 1898, Filipino smallholders and sharecroppers rose against the Spanish, motivated by the dismantling of subsistence agriculture and communal lands through commercial sugarcane and rice mono-cropping as well as droughts from 1896 to 1903 that had many landowners reduce their labour pools. With the colonial order besieged when taking over, US forces ended the import of foodstuffs and the migration of starving people, initiated a passport system, and moved parts of the population to controllable areas. Worsening the famine, the US killed around one million people. In Mexico, US mining, oil, sugar, and steel companies not only ensured poor working conditions. The US companies and government also sided with the Mexican elite, securing state repression of workers, low corporate taxes and the right to repatriate large profits. Around 1900, this combination and drought led to widespread famine, which fuelled several peasant uprisings that coalesced into a national revolution in 1910.[5]

No less untethered from the international system, the German empire also followed the imperial logic of expansion, technologies of power and practices of governance. In Tanganyika, the colonial government also used famine, monetary taxation and grain destruction to secure its rule and to turn peasants into wage labour. In German South West Africa, the colonial government also enforced a regime that removed land from cattle communities for the benefit of companies and settlers. Several German campaigns and massacres followed. In 1910, a diverse but uniting colony-wide revolt broke out.[6]

However, the imperial logic of expansion and profit-margins at any cost were not restricted to empires and colonial powers. Part and parcel of the global imperial system, the postcolonial Brazilian regime—which was largely built on the economic, racial and militarised logics and practices of the colonial state—not only worsened existing inequalities, vulnerabilities and insecurities. It also failed to offer relief and aid in the already less-prioritised and poorer northeast that had the highest ratio of freed slaves, thus prompting several riots, which were subsequently struck down with military forces.[7]

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[4] Mike Davis, *Late Victorian Holocausts: El Niño Famines and the Making of the Third World* (London; New York: Verso, 2001), 177–210 & 279–310; Denis Judd and Keith Surridge, *The Boer War: A History* (London, US: I.B.Tauris, 2013).

[5] Davis, *Late Victorian Holocausts*, 197–200; John Mason Hart, *Empire and Revolution: The Americans in Mexico since the Civil War* (Berkeley, US: University of California Press, 2002); Myrna Santiago, "Rejecting Progress in Paradise: Huastecs, the Environment, and the Oil Industry in Veracruz, Mexico, 1900-1935," *Environmental History* 3, no. 2 (April 1998): 169–88.

[6] Davis, *Late Victorian Holocausts*, 204; Philipp Prein, "Guns and Top Hats: African Resistance in German South West Africa, 1907–1915," *Journal of Southern African Studies* 20, no. 1 (1994): 99–121.

[7] Peter M. Beattie, *The Tribute of Blood: Army, Honor, Race, and Nation in Brazil, 1864-1945* (Durham, London: Duke University Press, 2001); James Belich, *Replenishing the Earth: The Settler Revolution and the Rise of the Anglo-World, 1783-1939* (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), 518–22; Davis, *Late Victorian Holocausts*, 188–95.

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Common for many of these geographies around 1900 was not only the role of the imperial logic of expansion, technologies of power and practices of governance in everyday life. Especially the colonial regimes also enforced migration regimes to control mobilities and prevent challenges to the ways in which intra-imperial spaces were ordered. Overall, global migration patterns were tied to demographic growth, labour, religions, wars, droughts and famines. Around the 1870´s, nearly half of all migrants originated in Great Britain due to shifting imperial opportunities, economic conditions or famine as in the case for the Irish. Many migrants were also soldiers. Around 1900, however, the annual global number of migrants increased from 8 million to 12 million. The flows also began to pivot in Asia and South Asia. Increasingly, especially poor Chinese and Indians began moving due to the impacts of the imperial systems in the form of socio-economic changes, colonial and civil wars, and droughts that often became famines. Indentured labour was also still common. Moreover, state-sponsored Russian and Japanese settlers had begun migrating to both Siberia and Manchuria and to a lesser extent Korea and Taiwan. Unsurprisingly perhaps, these changes in global migration flows led to the further racialisation of bodies. While many states promoted emigration to "(…) *free themselves of "surplus" population*"[8] especially the English-speaking settler colonies began to set up strict migration regimes, citizenship regulations and land ownership limitations—as the White Australia Policy—to protect their 'whiteness', which they perceived as threatened. It was also in this context that eugenics began evolving. Altogether, the internal migration regimes and racial policies of especially the settler societies appear to have reinforced existing dynamics and thus created or reinforced inequalities, vulnerabilities and insecurities for many so imperial and colonial elites and middle classes could enjoy improved living standards and chances in life.[9]

Inequalities, Vulnerabilities and Insecurities in a World of Multinational Imperialism from 1900 to 1918

By 1900, however, inter-imperial cooperation was also becoming common. The scholar of international relations Philip Cunliffe's notion of 'multinational imperialism'[10] is useful to understand the *ad hoc* inter-imperial cooperation from the late 19th century to the First World War, as the shortage of 'empty' spaces for expansion, conflicts and new ideas on both race and cooperation moved several of the actors in the international system in that direction.

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[8] Matthew James Connelly, *Fatal Misconception: The Struggle to Control World Population* (Cambridge: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2008), 42.

[9] See for example Belich, *Replenishing the Earth*; Marilyn Lake and Henry Reynolds, *Drawing the Global Colour Line: White Men's Countries and the International Challenge of Racial Equality*, 2011; Adam McKeown, "Global Migration, 1846-1940 *.," *Journal of World History* 15, no. 2 (June 1, 2004): 155-; Jürgen Osterhammel, *The transformation of the world: a global history of the nineteenth century*, 2014, 117–66.

[10] Philip Cunliffe, *Legions of Peace: UN Peacekeepers from the Global South* (London: Hurst, 2013).

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Economic relations are perhaps one of the most obvious examples of both *ad hoc* and deepening ties that went in a different direction than conflict, but were still part of promoting the imperial and colonial economies at the expense of most locals. Whether British, German or American, banks as well as insurance and investment companies operated not only within territories of other empires and colonial powers, but also within the Latin American postcolonial republics.[11] Nevertheless, Asian migrant merchants, especially Chinese, also took part, building fortunes and carving out little fiefdoms of their own. Railway, construction and industrial companies also transcended imperial borders.[12] All over the world, mining also became a transnational activity with workers, engineers and funding originating in different places.[13] Plantations were little different with regard to workers, knowledge and trade networks.[14] Intellectual and scientific exchanges were thus part of a broader set of inter-imperial flows related to imperial economies, which in many cases made famines worse due to both social and environmental erosion.[15]

The joint interventions and state-building projects were another sphere of inter-imperial cooperation that evolved *ad hoc*, but that would gradually become an institutionalised part of the emerging international system. Several European powers had previously intervened in Ottoman Greater Syria and Armenia, where the interests of various European imperial powers had overlapped with concerns about massacres of Christians. What changed from around 1900 was not only the experience in colonial and imperial security, planning and administration the intervening parties built up. While the Chinese and Ottoman Empires had resisted other imperial powers from eroding their power bases, imperial China was unravelling around 1900 due to decades of imperial onslaught, a civil war that killed millions and drought that turned into famine and fuelled several revolts. Nearly 75% of its budget went towards its military rather than the vulnerabilities, insecurities and inequalities of its imperial subjects such as the 300,000 displaced flood victims and the

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[11] V. Necla Geyikdağı, *Foreign Investment in the Ottoman Empire International Trade and Relations 1854-1914* (London; New York: Tauris Academic Studies, 2011); John M. MacKenzie, "European Imperialism: A Zone of Co-Operation Rather than Competition?," in *Imperial Cooperation and Transfer, 1870-1930* (New York; London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2015), 35–56.

[12] Geyikdağı, *Foreign Investment in the Ottoman Empire International Trade and Relations 1854-1914*; Valeska Huber, "Connecting Colonial Seas: The 'International Colonisation' of Port Said and the Suez Canal During and After the First World War," *European Review of History* 19, no. 1 (2012): 141–61; Jon Lunn, "The Political Economy of Primary Railway Construction in the Rhodesias, 1890–1911," *Journal of African History* 33, no. 2 (1992): 239–54; Jonathan S McMurray, *Distant Ties: Germany, the Ottoman Empire, and the Construction of the Baghdad Railway* (Westport, Conn.: Praeger, 2001).

[13] Naoto Kagotani, "The Chinese Merchant Community in The Chinese Merchant Community in Kobe and the Development of the Kobe and the Development of the Japanese Cotton Industry, 1890–1941," in *Japan, China, and the Growth of the Asian International Economy, 1850-1949*, ed. Kaoru Sugihara (Oxford Scholarship Online, 2005), 51–71; Stephen Tuffnell, "Engineering Inter-Imperialism: American Miners and the Transformation of Global Mining, 1871–1910," *Journal of Global History* 10, no. 1 (2015): 53–76.

[14] Prakash Kumar, "Plantation Indigo and Synthetic Indigo: European Planters and the Redefinition of a Colonial Commodity," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 58, no. 2 (2016): 407–31; Martin Ramstedt, "Colonial Encounters between India and Indonesia," *South Asian History and Culture* 2, no. 4 (2011): 522–39; Hanan Sabea, "Mastering the Landscape? Sisal Plantations, Land, and Labor in Tanga Region, 1893-1980s," *The International Journal of African Historical Studies* 41, no. 3 (2008): 411–32.

[15] Davis, *Late Victorian Holocausts*.

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2,000,000 famine victims. Remittances from Chinese migrants in the US, Australia, Canada, the Dutch East Indies, the American Philippines and India were only drops in the ocean. Bread and peasant riots soon escalated into an uprising of poor peasants and agricultural labourers that wanted food, freedom and to expel the European, American and Japanese soldiers, consuls and merchants, whom they blamed for their misfortunes.[16] Several European imperial powers, the US and Japan responded with force to ensure their trade concessions and non-territorial rights and in the longer term to strengthen their presence in the region. The inter-imperial force killed between 30,000 and 100,000 Chinese people and, indicative of later interventions, established governorships and joint territorial governments. While the intervening powers had internal disagreements it is possible that wider currents of racial thinking prevented it from collapsing.[17] As it were, ideas of racial superiority (and thus inequality) followed inter-imperial flows of people and goods. The Boer War, which was fought at the same time and had pegged 'brothers' against one another in the eyes of many Brits and Americans, led to calls for 'whites' to close ranks.[18] A campaign against 'white' slavery was also waged in the Mediterranean.[19] Simultaneously, some of the European imperial powers that had forces in China sent another joint military force to Crete, an island under the Ottomans. At this point, the Ottoman Empire was weakening due to immense expenditure on wars against Russia, a growing number of war refugees, foreign economic domination, marginalization of imperial subjects due to the commodification of agriculture and labour, and growing social unrest.[20] In Crete, the inter-imperial force set up a joint administration. The aims were to prevent both massacres and the potential unravelling of the Ottoman Empire via Greek nationalists' push for Cretan independence at a time when the Russian Empire was seen as gaining dangerous ground following the Crimean War. In 1913, the European powers established a new Albanian Muslim state next to the pro-Russian and Orthodox Serbian Kingdom. Once again, the aim was to prevent Russian access to the Mediterranean.[21]

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[16] Ibid., 177–88.

[17] Eric Ouellet, "Multinational Counterinsurgency: The Western Intervention in the Boxer Rebellion 1900–1901," *Small Wars & Insurgencies* 20, no. 3–4 (2009): 507–27.

[18] Paul A. Kramer, "Empires, Exceptions, and Anglo-Saxons: Race and Rule between the British and United States Empires, 1880-1910," *The Journal of American History* 88, no. 4 (2002): 1315–53.

[19] Daniel Gorman, "Empire, Internationalism and the Campaign against the Traffic in Women and Children in the 1920s," *Twentieth Century British History* 19, no. 2 (2008): 186–216.

[20] E. Attıla Aytekın, "Peasant Protest in the Late Ottoman Empire: Moral Economy, Revolt, and the Tanzimat Reforms," *International Review of Social History* 57, no. 2 (2012): 191–227; F. Ergut, "Policing the Poor in the Late Ottoman Empire," *Middle Eastern Studies* 38, no. 2 (2002): 149–64; Mehmet Soytürk, "Modern State and Security: The Gendarmerie System in France, Austria-Hungary and the Ottoman Empire," *History Studies* 4, no. 2 (2012); Nadir Özbek, "'Beggars' and 'Vagrants' in Ottoman State Policy and Public Discourse, 1876–1914," *Middle Eastern Studies* 45, no. 5 (2009): 783–801.

[21] Davide Rodogno, *Against Massacre: Humanitarian Interventions in the Ottoman Empire, 1815-1914 : The Emergence of a European Concept and International Practice* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2012); Erwin A. Schmidl, "The Evolution of Peace Operations from the Nineteenth Century," *Small Wars & Insurgencies* 10, no. 2 (1999): 4–20; Erwin A. Schmidl, "The International Operation in Albania, 1913–14," *International Peacekeeping* 6, no. 3 (1999): 1–10.

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Inter-imperial cooperation and rivalry also converged, as was the case in the First World War. Previous relations broke down and new ties were forged in the war that pitted millions of imperial 'white' citizens and 'brown' and 'black' subjects, institutions, military forces and companies against each other, and saw millions killed for an international system, which by any standard still created inequalities, vulnerabilities and insecurities.

Inequalities, Vulnerabilities and Insecurities in a World of Imperial Multilateralism from 1918 to 1942

What after the war? The Ottoman Empire, the Russian Empire, the Habsburg Empire and the German Empire all either collapsed or fell into civil war. Additionally, a new international paradigm emerged under the League of Nations, hailing national self-determination, minority protection, labour protection and emergency relief, as the powers that be were not blind to the inequalities of the system.[22] Certainly, the Irish gained recognition of their independence through the League. The new organisation also took part in stabilising Central and Southeastern Europe: It held plebiscites in German territories and aided the new states of Poland, Austria and Hungary as well as the internationalised City of Danzig from collapsing economically by turning to war-time precedents between members of the winning imperial alliance and attracting foreign investors, notably Americans. Additionally, the League also helped Greece with refugees from the Greco-Turkish War. Finally, the International Labour Organization also meant that unions were recognised as legitimate national and international political actors.[23] Cunliffe's notion of 'imperial multilateralism' nevertheless seems valuable given his emphasis on the institutionalisation of networked imperial practices. Certainly, much of the emerging international system built on imperial logics, regimes of governance and practices, although some diplomats, politicians, and functionaries began to think in broader terms, especially after the creation of the League of Nations that represented less of a rupture than a continuation of the imperial agenda, even if the un-colonised states Abyssinia, Siam, Iran and post-Ottoman Turkey were granted membership.

Indeed, the League and its the organisational regime was devised partly by British imperial officials such as the South African General Smuts and British and American economists to retain and strengthen the imperial and liberal economic order.[24] In Austria, the poor thus lost their food subsidies and nearly 50.000 state employees their jobs. The Hungarians and Poles were left with authoritarian governments.[25] In the realm of labour, the unions for women—which were for 'white' women only—also objected to how women

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[22] Akira Iriye, *Global Community: The Role of International Organizations in the Making of the Contemporary World* (Berkeley; London: University of California Press, 2004), 9–36.

[23] Patricia Clavin, *Securing the World Economy: The Reinvention of the League of Nations, 1920-1946* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2015), 11–33.

[24] Mark Mazower, "An International Civilization? Empire, Internationalism and the Crisis of the Mid-Twentieth Century.," *International Affairs* 82, no. 3 (2006): 553–66; Mark Mazower, *Governing the World: The Rise and Fall of an Idea* (London: Allen Lane, 2012).

[25] Clavin, *Securing the World Economy*.

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(and children) were to protected but could not be representatives or gain equal rights to the male members of their class.[26] Beyond Central and Eastern Europe, the continuities become even clearer.

The Suez Canal, for example, became a symbol of the new era. Previously, the canal had mostly seen 'white' merchant and military bodies pass by the international port town colonies that consisted of local labourers and mostly European sailors, prostitutes and consuls. During and after the war, 'brown' and 'black' military bodies also began using the canal, which in part led to a new regime of disease and migration control that took existing ad hoc inspections of pilgrims, Bedouin and slave traders to a new level. However, the demographic surveillance and regulation of people became an ideology that spread beyond the imperial powers. Increasingly, politicians, strategists and eugenicists in Europe and its colonies, the US, Latin America and Asia concerned themselves with both population reproduction and population 'quality', tipping yet again power towards the state (and the international system) rather than the citizenry (and the imperial subjects).[27] The ideas and practices of the League predictably favoured the logics and practices of the imperial powers, especially because the emerging paradigm of international law built on imperial and colonial legal practices and was configured to respect these bodies of law.[28] This, for example, allowed the Spanish, the British and the French to wage rather public but undisturbed colonial warfare in Morocco, Sudan and Indochina. The British were also fully entitled to deny their Indian imperial subjects (imperial) citizenship while granting the 'white' settler colonies Dominion status and Mandates to govern.[29] Most importantly, international law enabled the creation of Mandates.

Also of Smuts' design, the Mandates were imagined to also encompass the German territories in Europe. Although the US eventually failed to join the League, President Wilson managed to restrict the Mandate regime to the 'backward' people in the Ottoman territories and German tropical colonies.[30] Occupied by the winning alliance, these territories got no plebiscites and were split between the imperial powers while the smallest territories went to Australia and New Zealand in return for their war efforts and Japan. The latter wanted recognition as an equal, since the British-Japanese naval alliance from 1902 to 1922, the victory in

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[26] Lara Vapnek, "The 1919 International Congress of Working Women: Transnational Debates on the 'Woman Worker,'" *Journal of Women's History* 26, no. 1 (2014): 160–84.

[27] Tomoko Akami, "Beyond Empires' Science: Inter-Imperial Pacific Science Networks in the 1920s," in *Networking the International System: Global Histories of International Organizations* (Cham, Heidelberg, New York, Dordrecht, London: Springer, 2014), 97–132; Connelly, *Fatal Misconception*, 46–76; Huber, "Connecting Colonial Seas"; Valeska Huber, *Channelling Mobilities: Migration and Globalisation in the Suez Canal Region and Beyond, 1869-1914* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013).

[28] Antony. Anghie, *Imperialism, Sovereignty, and the Making of International Law* (Cambridge, New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005).

[29] Pierre Brocheux and Daniel Hémery, *Indochina: an ambiguous colonization, 1858-1954* (Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press, 2009); Daniel Gorman, *Imperial Citizenship: Empire and the Question of Belonging* (Manchester, New York: Manchester University Press and Palgrave, 2006); Pablo La Porte, "'Rien À Ajouter': The League of Nations and the Rif War (1921—1926)," *European History Quarterly* 41, no. 1 (2011): 66–87.

[30] Anghie, *Imperialism, Sovereignty, and the Making of International Law*, 119.

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the Russo-Japanese War from 1904 to 1905 and the conquest of Korea and Taiwan had failed to ensure this. The British thus gained Palestine, Transjordan, Iraq, and German East Africa. France got Syria, Lebanon, Togo and Cameroun, while Belgium got Ruanda and Burundi. The Dominions of South Africa, Australia and New Zealand gained South West Africa, German New Guinea and Nauru and Western Samoa. Finally, Japan took control of the German Pacific island territories. These smaller Mandates were unofficially expected to be governed as internal territories rather than international mandates under the Permanent Mandates Commission. Contrary to the Anglo-American design, however, the Commission—which was to oversee the Mandate powers supervision of the so-called 'backwards' people—came to be more international in character, in part due to the influence of its German members. For example, New Zealand came to face problems following petitions from Western Samoa on its population and tax policies.[31] This was not typical, however. For the most part, the charges and appeals from the Mandate populations were not considered. In fact, the Commission, which comprised partly of former colonial governors and administrators, never formally reported on nearly 90%, meaning they were effectively disregarded. Yet, the growing discontent with living conditions was very real. After allowing settlers to buy native lands, the South African government faced at least one revolt by a disenfranchised population group. In both Palestine and Syria, the British and French engendered rural poverty through the commodification of labour, the shift to export-oriented mono-cropping, and monetised taxes and large-scale Jewish settlement in Palestine. When petitions failed, people turned to riots and later wide-scale revolts, in Syria in 1925 and Palestine in both the late 1920's and mid-1930's. Already using the colonial toolbox, the British and French responded as they did elsewhere. First with political surveillance and movement control, later with militarised colonial policing, fortified police buildings, destruction of property, and when policing became counterinsurgency, corporeal and collective punishment. Syria and Palestine, however, did not gain independence until the 1940's. In comparison, Iraq became formally independent in 1930. Most likely, however, the British wished to secure Iraq's oil, as they would otherwise have been forced to open the Iraqi oil market due to the Mandate free trade rules.[32]

The League of Nations also caused problems amongst the imperial powers. The Soviet government saw the League as a tool of the capitalist powers until it, if hesitatingly, became a member. While strikingly similar

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[31] Susan Pedersen, *The Guardians: The League of Nations and the Crisis of Empire*, 2015; Sean Andrew Wempe, "From Unfit Imperialists to Fellow Civilizers: German Colonial Officials as Imperial Experts in the League of Nations, 1919–1933," *German History* 34, no. 1 (2016): 21–48.

[32] El-Eini, Roza I.M., "The Implementation of British Agricultural Policy in Palestine in the 1930s," *Middle Eastern Studies* 32, no. 4 (1996): 211–50; El-Eini, Roza I.M., "Trade Agreements and the Continuation of Tariff Protection Policy in Mandate Palestine in the 1930s," *Middle Eastern Studies* 34, no. 1 (1998): 164–91; Daniel Neep, *Occupying Syria under the French Mandate: Insurgency, Space and State Formation*, 2012; Susan Pedersen, "Samoa on the World Stage: Petitions and Peoples before the Mandates Commission of the League of Nations," *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 40, no. 2 (2012): 231–61; Pedersen, *The Guardians*; Martin Thomas, *Empires of Intelligence: Security Services and Colonial Disorder after 1914* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2008).

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to British and French expansionist policies, those of Japan, Germany and Italy gradually instead brought these imperial outsiders into conflict with the League as well as its backing powers, and eventually the US. By the late 1930's, the shifting imperial tectonics had created three blocs: the liberal bloc, the Fascist bloc and the Soviet Union, each engendering inequalities, vulnerabilities and insecurities in their own regions.[33] Hardly lurking in the background at this point, the US saw its informal ties with the League—that had their roots in 'Anglo-American' thinking and war finances—and its role in the League's economic activities intensify. In retrospect, the gradual American entanglement and influence was an indication of what was to come both in the Second World War and after 1945 in terms of prioritising the market economy over profoundly mending peoples' inequalities, vulnerabilities and insecurities.[34]

Conclusion

Looking from 2016, the growing degree of state control in and on everyday life, demographics, and mobilities from 1900 to 1945 may not seem as much. Although this paper is only a brief outline and not without shortcomings, it hopefully still holds some analytical purchase with respect to three valuable points. Firstly, it should be clear that the shift from imperial systems towards inter-imperial and international regimes from 1900 to 1941 in many ways carried over the embedded inequalities, vulnerabilities and insecurities from the imperial systems. Secondly (and reiterating the first point), it should be equally apparent that those on the 'receiving' end used the new channels for voicing concern and the new means to oversee imperial multilateralism, and went beyond these when they failed. Thirdly, it should also be clear that we cannot consider only the period from 1945 in relation to global inequality (or what Arturo Escobar has called a moment of 'imperial globality' and 'global coloniality')[35], but that we must consider at the very least both legacies from and continuities of late 19th century imperialism.

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[33] Mazower, "An International Civilization?"; Mazower, *Governing the World*.

[34] Clavin, *Securing the World Economy*; Daniel Gorman, *The Emergence of International Society in the 1920s*, 2012; Kramer, "Empires, Exceptions, and Anglo-Saxons"; J. Adam Tooze, *The Deluge: The Great War and the Remaking of Global Order 1916-1931* (London, New York: Allen Lane, 2014).

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