Chapter 11
Geneva, 1919–1945: The Spatialities of Public Internationalism and Global Networks

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From the "Spirit of Geneva" to the Spatial Representation of Public Internationalism

In 1942, a mysterious man knocked on the doors of several international organizations located in Switzerland to interview their secretaries and directors. As the German spy hidden behind the initial *Oe*, he was better known within the community of international organizations as Herbert Oelschlägel, secretary of the International Bureau of Associations of Manufacturers, Wholesalers, and Retailers of Jewellery, Gold, and Silver Ware. This organization was founded in 1926 and had a seat in the Netherlands (Herren, 2009; Herren & Zala, 2002; League of Nations, 1938, p. 356) and an entry in the *Handbook of International Organizations*, a League of Nations publication (LONSEA, International Bureau n.d.-c).

Interestingly, the international jewelry organization was important enough to find the interest of national socialist officials, who not only placed a spy in the secretary's position but also even allowed him the spending of scarce foreign currency and the application for a rare exit visa during World War II. Although the presence of spies in neutral countries is nothing new, finding one masked as secretary of an international organization is remarkable. Oelschlägel's excursion to Geneva was based on an understanding of international organizations less as single institutions but as a network, coherent even under wartime conditions, and attributed to specific places.

A German spy working systematically through the addresses of all international organizations challenges the understanding of Geneva as an international meeting point whose importance increased as the seat of the League of Nations after World War I and dwindled away with the political tensions leading to World War II. This

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history of decline corresponded to a contemporary discourse that translated an already existing debate about the *esprit de Genève* into the spatial, urban version of a programmatic, League-of-Nations-driven understanding of international relations based on idealistic concepts. This "spirit of Geneva" was attributed to the city after World War I by a variety of agencies with far-distant aims, for instance, the Geneva tourist office, philosophers from venerable Geneva families (e.g., de Traz, 1929), foreign journalists and politicians (e.g., Eduard Benes), and the League of Nations, which, as the forerunner of the United Nations (UN), had its main seat at the shore of lake Geneva.

To historians using discourse analysis, the spirit of Geneva appears as a specific narrative, based on at least two different, and sometimes intertwined spatialities after World War I. First, there is a strong focus on local traditions. A proud and impenetrable circle of venerable Geneva families had adapted Calvinist internationalism to secular international relations by supporting the foundation of the International Committee of the Red Cross in 1863 and its legal basis with the signature of the Geneva convention in 1864. These international activities left their mark in the old city, and in the *salle de la réformation*, where the General Assembly of the League of Nations met for a limited time. Second, the spirit of Geneva materialized in the Palais des Nations, the seat of the League of Nations. Opened in the late 1930s, the building evoked ambivalent and emotional reactions, and celebrating its modern functional style, the "gleaming wood, and glass, and metal" (Slocombe, 1938, p. 328), became a sign of decline in the light of the obvious political tensions that substantially weakened the League of Nations. At this time, the spirit of Geneva was perceived critically. The well-known British journalist to the Daily Herald, George Slocombe, grappled with the fact that Geneva had not at all the character of a cosmopolitan capital. He called Geneva in 1938 "a third rate European city of little international importance. It was a small town in a small state, and not even its capital. Nothing happened there" (Slocombe, 1938, p. 52). Although things changed gradually as time went by, with more than two hundred journalists ultimately listed in the Geneva directory of 1937, Slocombe had good reasons to stay with his diagnosis of parallel lives:

> For seventeen years the several thousand foreigners of culture and distinction associated with the various international movements with headquarters in Geneva have lived on the fringe of a small, dull, and conservative society which at first affected to ignore their very existence and later made clumsy and transparent attempts to create social relations with them. (Slocombe, 1938, p. 43)

Indeed, the usual infrastructure of a capital with diplomatic quarters was missing, and the situation became even more difficult because an international administration of this size challenged established ideas about well-known (diplomatic) representation. As Slocombe explained, the League's secretariat was the center of a microcosm based on expert knowledge covering all topics imaginable, from currency problems to narcotic drug trafficking, with a research department and a library available. But the idea of a "super-state . . . governed by scientists" (Slocombe, 1938, p. 324) remained a utopian project without traces in the real city from this

point of view. While the spirit of Geneva remains fragile and its explanatory capacities ambivalent, the obvious function of the city as a global meeting point provides a model or laboratory of how a global society tested the invention of an international space, including, but also overstepping and challenging diplomatic representation.

The two approaches—the contemporary discourse about the spirit of Geneva and its spatial manifestations—are only rarely connected to each other. Usually, Geneva's international character remains embedded in a discursive concept, fleshing out the contemporary debate on internationalism, a concept developed in the late nineteenth century and reformulated after World War I. The scholarly interest in internationalism has coincided with analyzing transnational entanglements and non-state actors in the international system. In the newest publications, internationalism and nationalism are represented not as mutually exclusive, but as intertwined phenomena (Sluga, 2013). This approach contributes to another strand in recent historiographical debates, namely the interest of global history in the close interferences of local and global aspects. Combining these two discourses, I elucidate the traces internationalism left behind in Geneva's urban landscape.

Looking behind programmatic internationalist concepts, I am interested in the shaping of global meeting places that found spatial expression in a diversity of places—in hotels, bars, and restaurants; in the many buildings of international organizations that interested Oelschlägel; in international research facilities; in an urban landscape characterized by fast connections across national borders—but, astonishingly enough, without quarters with a specific national character. There was no little Italy or little China in Geneva.

In this chapter, I connect the previously underestimated scholarly interest in internationalism with the development of Geneva's local urban landscape in the 1930s. Internationalism is considered the local manifestation of a global public sphere and investigated in its spatial conditions. In my understanding, the spatial expression of internationalism is not limited to the institutions of international organizations and international congresses, to their production of events and texts. In lieu thereof, what I call *public internationalism* encompasses the analytical potential of discourse analysis.

In this chapter, I investigate the traces the 1930s internationalism imprinted on the urban landscape with the aim of elaborating on the question of whether the local spatial conditions existed for the development of a global public sphere, a discussion of relevance for democracy debates beyond the nation state (Nash, 2014). The methodological approach chosen in this chapter relies on networks. Although used in historiography in a more pragmatic understanding than actor-network theory suggests, the focus on networks allows combining social relations in connection with related materialities. It accentuates primarily the importance of a dynamic exchange across borders.

The findings in this chapter are based on data generated by the database League of Nations Search Engine (LONSEA, League of Nations, n.d.-a). This analytical tool combines data compiled by the League of Nations on two different occasions, namely information collected from international organizations for the publication of

the above-mentioned *Handbook of International Organizations*, which provides the names of those acting as representatives, directors, and secretaries of international organizations, and personal data collected by the League's secretariat between 1920 and 1946 for all persons on the payroll of the League, independent of their status or length of employment. In addition, LONSEA shows in the case of Geneva the location of international organizations and the persons involved. Instead of merely linking institutions with people, this twofold approach investigates the spatial dimensions of networks on a social level, presuming, therefore, space as a semantic concept (Meusburger, 2008, p. 42). Thus, in this chapter I investigate whether the presumption of public internationalism goes beyond the verification of places where international organizations had their seats. Moreover, I examine whether the spirit of Geneva turned into a sort of social coherence, in which the permeability of public spheres and the missing borders between institutionalized international contacts fostered social contacts. Knowing the working places and personal addresses of people employed by international organizations, what can be learned about the persons involved by investigating their spatial location? In addition, what are the consequences of adding a spatial dimension to networks in comparison with the findings provided by the institutional histories of international organizations and the ongoing debates on cosmopolitans and expatriates? Is it evident whether the people and institutions involved defined themselves as a community by producing, sharing, and spreading common knowledge?

Although Geneva remains the main example and although the city probably presented a unique laboratory of public internationalism after World War I, this approach concentrates on the spatial manifestation of internationalism. For this investigation, internationalism is limited to international organizations connected to the League of Nations and restricted to persons working for these organizations. Although of unquestioned importance, urban planning and specific local politics stand outside these considerations. Geneva and the League of Nations are therefore both examples and testing fields for a theoretical problem with far-reaching methodological consequences. If an attempt is made to overcome the limits of discourse analysis by investigating border-crossing networks, how resilient are the findings? In the case of international organizations founded between the late nineteenth century and the 1930s, coherence beyond the handling of different topics can be found in the often formally established obligation of the executive organs to transfer information between the adhering members (Herren, 2009; Murphy, 1994). It seems, therefore, obvious to understand international organizations as institutional forms that fit into the new technical possibilities provided by the telegraph and the development of other communication technologies. Combining the two histories of international organizations and communication technologies, the approach underlying the study described in this chapter has to deal with development and modernization. Can it be said, that by using new, efficient, and transgressing communication and management technologies, international organizations achieved a significance in the era of globalization similar to that resulting from the construction of railroads in the era of industrialization? Or, less ambitiously, that investigating the spread of information by international organizations may help to understand

how globally available knowledge gained the character of raw material, which then could be processed in pieces of fast-delivered information.

Recent research, however, is rather reluctant in applying well-established narratives of modernization pointing out that communication technology does more than just shrinking distances and that information transfer always implies the development of an infrastructure going beyond the simple installation of telegraph poles (Wenzlhuemer, 2010). And because debates on modernity have taken a critical distance to evolutionary ways of development, I do agree with the rather cautious voices who doubt that networks connecting knowledge and information transfer automatically follow the narrative of modernization (Meusburger, 2008).

Leaving development strategies and referring to a more antithetical argumentation, there are good reasons to discuss the flow of transboundary information in the light of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries' most important master narrative, the concept and idea of the nation. Following this perspective, nationalized knowledge needed shaping and translation into a form that ensured transfer across borders to fulfill the requirements of increasing societal mobility and the needs of a world market. This procedure of adaptation referred to different conceptual frames. One is intellectual cooperation based on shared cultural and educational values; another refers to the global spread of similar governmental structures (e.g., the republic) or societal ordering principles (working classes); a third comprises technical cooperation including an agreement on shared standards. All categories are concepts influenced by their specific historical context and therefore underwent substantial change. Just recently, scholarly attention started to discuss *standardization* as the new paradigm of how to reach global compatibility (Murphy & Yates, 2011). This example shows clearly that finding a form that allows locally shaped knowledge to travel globally also implies social change. Or to say it more clearly: The concept of a *global world* needs a cosmopolitan society with meeting points and bargaining routines on the one hand, and appropriate methodological tools for their analysis on the other. With the example of Geneva, although it is limited in spatial and temporal reach, I therefore allocate a territorial quality to networks, asking what kind of international *contact zones* existed, and whether evidence can be found that people involved met in a way overstepping the simple statement that they were members of certain international organizations or international civil servants.

In the following section I discuss the League of Nations' spatial presence in Geneva in the 1930s and the public accessibility of the buildings associated with the League. Furthermore, premises serving as seats of international organizations or as their administrators' and civil servants' residences will provide the reference points for tracing global connectivities and meeting points. Therefore, the institutional history of international organizations is overstepped and a contemporary global mind map is drawn. Understanding space as social construct and individuals as global actors, the question is whether the line of argument remains stuck in investigating the small elite of diplomats and rich cosmopolitans. On these grounds, the less well-paid employees—the typists and translators, the people responsible for the infrastructure globalization is based on—are methodologically also considered. I will describe this lower-ranking group as "subaltern diplomats," using a concept that is

at the core of an ongoing research project at Heidelberg University, "Subaltern Diplomacy 1930–1960," which is investigating the existence of a specific form of subaltern diplomacy. Do the "little people" contribute to the development of a global civil society, and do they shape the global space intermingling private domiciles, activities, and business environments?

"Inhabité"—Controversies About the International Space or How Public Internationalism Translated into Space

In 1937, everybody on this planet in reach of a newspaper faced global entanglement at its worst and its best. When the world's fair opened its doors in Paris, the clash of global panoramas was enormous, from the encounter of fascist, national socialist, and Stalinist architectural nationalism to Picasso's famous painting *Guernica*. The Sino-Japanese War and the Japanese invasion of Nanjing shed a grim light onto a conflict with a global impact that already had begun to surpass the dimension of a local conflict.

The session of the League of Nations' General Assembly in September of the same year can be read as another aspect of global entanglements mentioned above. Newspapers from Singapore to Paris celebrated the moment when the General Assembly of the League of Nations met for the first time in the newly opened assembly hall in the Palais des Nations. For the first time, this global community had found an adequate meeting point, big enough for all members, equipped with the newest microphones and interpreters' boxes, but even more importantly with space offered to a global public.

Translating the concept of *open diplomacy*, the League was and remained a governmental organization with states as members. However, the architecture of the newly opened Palais des Nations presented a specific and elaborate spatial layout, where the public was given access and had the opportunity to contact members in an informal way. Unthinkable for traditional diplomatic deliberations, this approach translated into spatial evidence, for instance into an assembly hall with tribunes and comfortable lobbies with sofas. Moreover, supported by the secretariat's information section, established flows of information also underwent a *spatial turn*. The *Journal des Nations* (Geneva 1931–1940), the League's own newspaper, spread gossip by a column apparently written by a "barman." Even in the year 1939, the headline guided the reader to the Palais, promising the newest gossip under the title "on potine au Bar de la S.d.N," or "Get your Gossip at the League of Nations Bar" (*Journal des Nations*, 1939).

Interestingly, the innovative spatial layout of the Palais des Nations did indeed have a bar placed in such a way that almost all members of delegation, staff, journalists, and visitors had to pass through it. Besides the bar as a meeting point accessible to an international public, additional spatial evidence confirms the very existence of

such a global civil society in Geneva. At least in September, when the League's Assembly met, Geneva became crowded, and tourist guides warned about fully booked hotels (Baedeker, 1938). Moreover, and with more temporal consistency, the League had attracted a variety of international organizations, whose numbers of offices and representatives had increased—even during the years of crisis (League of Nations, 1938). Indeed, international organizations had changed the city's face in a way not limited to the League's buildings and had contributed to the rise of Geneva's population to 124,293 inhabitants within just 282 km^2 (*Annuaire Genevois*, 1937, p. 1897).

For a first overview, LONSEA shows the presence of a variety of organizations in Geneva. A concentration of humanitarian organizations and institutions of pacifism and international relations seems obvious (LONSEA, organisations, n.d.-b). The database reveals the long-lasting influence of pacifist and humanitarian traditions established before World War I and centered around the International Committee of the Red Cross. Moreover, the increase in the number of organizations in the 1920s confirms the impact of the League of Nations, which also induced non-governmental organizations (NGO) to transfer their seats to Geneva.

At first glance, the spatial placement of these organizations follows the patterns expected. With the opening of the Palais des Nations, non-governmental organizations devoted to the aims of the League transferred their offices to the former seat of the League's secretariat, Palais Wilson. In the late 1930s therefore, besides the League, a civil society had at least a coherence that was not necessarily thematic but spatial and included a considerable variety of different fields of knowledge. Palais Wilson, a former hotel and now the seat of the United Nations' refugee agency, the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees, housed, for example, representatives of the World Alliance for International Friendship and the International Social Insurance Conference. Here, the Young Men's Christian Association met representatives of the International Broadcasting Union, the World Calendar Association, and the Esperantists. Although only the federation of the international semi-official and private institutions established at Geneva aimed to bring together these worlds of internationalism, a concentration of global expertise shared the same address in proximity to the glamorous quarters at the shore of Lake Geneva.

With regard to the circulation of knowledge, these locations suggest disturbingly multifaceted patterns of interpretation. Even for a dynamic and global twenty-first century with considerable interest in non-governmental organizations, Palais Wilson rarely finds a counterpart, namely an NGO building of comparable size, in the contemporary world. The transfer of the offices from the secretaries' homes to an office building appears as a process of professionalization on the one hand, and as a disentanglement of civil society and experts on the other. Indeed, the *Annuaire Genevois*, the city's official directory, discloses the address of Palais Wilson—51 Quai Wilson—as "inhabité"—unoccupied (*Annuaire Genevois*, 1937, p. 469). Besides their concentration in a huge office building with a spectacular view, the organizations transferred to Palais Wilson shared a European profile. The opening of the European Cultural Centre in 1950 at this place (The European Cultural Centre,

1953) thus continued a development that had already started in the late 1930s, when the organizations that selected to transfer their seats to Palais Wilson had global membership but a Western-oriented universal profile. Where, then, were the extra-European and explicitly global organizations? Can it be inferred from a Palais Wilson with a rather Eurocentric profile that extra-European organizations disappeared—or does the lack of their presence in an uninhabited office building indicate an even closer entanglement with a supportive civil society? In the following section I take a closer look at the separation of work and living spaces and ask where the many international civil servants lived and who—in the case of truly global organizations, rather than European international ones—the neighbors were. Of course, spatial closeness does not necessarily imply a transfer of knowledge and it cannot be assumed that people and organizations living in the same house shared their thoughts or even met in the staircase; however, biographical studies of such individuals suggest—as will later be seen—that this was most likely the case, facilitated by the spatial proximity of Geneva's international organizations.

Tracing Spatial Contexts of Global Organizations

The architects of the Palais des Nations considered and implemented meeting points and gave room to modern communication technologies. No wonder that a spacious parking lot provided space for opulent cars in the front of the building. Nevertheless, the city's official directory shows that these apparently mobile international civil servants preferred to work and to live in the quarters around these office buildings as well. For the late 1930s there was an unexpected closeness between European and non-European organizations, between governmental diplomatic representation and civil, non-governmental organizations. Although the presumption of a circulation of global knowledge needs examination in each case, the focus on global-local conjunctions at face value connect international topics in a way rather overlooked until now.

In the following paragraph, I approach spatial connectivity from three different perspectives, examining (a) the neighborhood and spatial placement of global organizations, (b) the porosity of borders separating the private lives of internationalists and international institutions, and (c) the way in which the spatial connectivity resulted in networks that overstepped the institutional and personal frameworks of the actors involved.

An intellectual sightseeing beginning at Palais Wilson reveals that the building and its environment remained a focal point of global contacts even after the transfer of the League to Rue de Lausanne. From street number 39–43, all buildings at Quai Wilson presented a mixture of private and official residencies (*Annuaire Genevois*, 1937, pp. 468–469). The consulates of Great Britain and Japan and the official representation of Romania worked next door to the "délégations auprès de la S.D.N," representing Iran, Ireland, and Portugal. In these cases spatial closeness mattered and rules of contact were formed on a negotiable basis. From this point of view, in

1937 Geneva was far distant from today's delimitations, where exterritorial sovereign rights are clearly visible and international organizations separated by control posts and barbed wire from the city's territory. In the past, different varieties of delegations filled the gap between the official diplomatic representations in Bern and local consulates. Even more interestingly, newly invented institutions of official national representation at the League overstepped the spatial invisibility of non-sovereign entities. As delegations at the League or the International Labour Organization (ILO), dominions such as Canada had their own, at least diplomatic-like offices. At Quai Wilson, indeed the institutional and personal connectivity between formal and informal institutions found its spatial expression, which facilitated access to information not available otherwise.

In number 41, where most of the diplomatic representatives had their offices, the list of inhabitants also shows the private address of Massimo Pilotti. He was a well-known international lawyer, a member of the Academy of International Law in The Hague, and First President of the Court of Appeal in Trieste, Italy (Notes in Brief, 1939, p. 61). He was in close contact to circles and organizations of international law and the protection of intellectual property, and later became one of the leading figures of the European Court of Justice. Before he left Geneva at the end of the year 1937 for political reasons, he worked as the League's under-secretary general in charge of the section that cultivated the connections between the League and the international organizations (LONSEA, Pilotti, n.d.-d). His concerns at work were literally not far from his private rooms, with the address also being home to an international organization in the form of the Union Internationale des Etudiants and its secretary Alexander Hedden. Furthermore, colleagues in similar functions worked next door. At number 43, with Thomas Frank Johnson (LONSEA, Johnson, n.d.-e), the secretary general of the Nansen International Office for Refugees, the Geneva directory shows another of those well-connected personalities, while LONSEA discloses his dense connections to the League, where he worked as an international civil servant before his appointment as secretary general of the Nansen office.

In the cases mentioned, the spatial coincidence discloses contacts missed by institutional or professional networks. The spatial dimension of globalization helps to formulate new hypotheses on the basis of knowledge transfer. Apparently, formal diplomatic representation and the members of an international civil society were—at least spatially—closer connected to each other than rules and opportunities of institutional contacts would suggest.

In the case of Massimo Pilotti's disturbingly ambivalent activities, a spatial approach helps to ask whether this person operated one of the channels needed for transforming information on a global level. This figure's presumed function as Mussolini's contact to the League, and his embarrassing celebration of the Italian conquest of Ethiopia in Geneva (Salvemini, 1953, p. 448) gain an additional profile with regard to a *glocal* context.[1] The spatial perspective suggests rather an increase

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[1] Journals mentioned the presence of Pilotti and of "nombreux fonctionnaires italiens de la S.d.N. et du B.I.T" among those who celebrated (Les Italiens de Genève fêtent la prise d'Addis-Abeba, 1936).

of interest in such entangled connections in the preparation of the Italian withdrawal from the League in December 1937.

Indeed, although in a very benevolent way, in his pivotal League of Nations History, Francis Walters confirmed the importance of these informal connections especially in periods of increasing political tensions. Walters, who agreed that his precursor Pilotti "had made his peace with fascism," placed him at the center of fascist attention: ". . . he was watched and spied upon by the numerous fascists who frequented Geneva as delegates, as consular officers, or propagandists, and who sought to win the approval of the men in power in Rome by parading their dislike for the League" (Walters, 1952, p. 558). As one who probably prepared a legal discourse on how Ethiopia could be expelled from the League, Pilotti was extremely well placed in proximity to Palais Wilson.

Religious and Philosophical Networks: Global Knowledge from Other than Diplomatic Perspectives?

Is spatial connectivity to be understood as a crude coincidence—or as the confirmation of close connections among Western elites? Does the discovery of proximity just confirm a certain process of adaptation, a process instigating the organized international civil society to wrap global knowledge in a diplomatic-like form of communication determined by a European understanding of international rules? Or does a spatial approach to global knowledge also consider alternative forms of transboundary contacts?

The search for extra-European organizations in Geneva confirms the previous findings in an unexpected way. All those civil groups with a global instead of a European agenda were not situated in a less advantageous position in Geneva. Not far away from Quai Wilson, and at a similarly expensive address at 46 Quai Gustave Ador, one of the city's most beautiful buildings, the "Maison royale," discloses an interesting and unexpected combination of inhabitants in 1937. Here, at walking distance to Palais Wilson, the directory of Geneva lists the official address of the Turkish consulate, while the League of Nations' *Handbook of International Organizations* locates the international headquarters of the Sufi Movement (League of Nations, 1938, p. 94) in the same building. A look at the building's other inhabitants increases the impression of a spatial meeting point underestimated until now, with it being the site of a remarkable combination of extra-European networks with a religious focus in an at least semi-official setting.

In the context of religious internationalism, the Sufi Movement occupies a crucial position. This order of universal religiosity based on Islam brought together disciples from different religious backgrounds. Established in 1923 in Geneva, the movement developed into an esoteric circle frequented by European and American followers, an open-minded organization with only the positions of spiritual leaders connected to Islamic faith. Similar to other (Western) religious movements with an

Asian background (e.g., the Theosophical Society), the Sufi Movement chose not a spiritual but a secular institutional form and appeared as an international organization.

The principle *form follows function* also worked for other than aesthetic questions, because in the 1920s and 1930s the movement chose the legal form of an association, not an order or a religious community. Sufi literature and autobiographical sources of the movement's leaders highlighted the choice of Geneva as transcendental manifestation of universalism. In this reading, the founder of the Sufi Movement was guided by transcendental powers to Geneva with the reason to build the spiritual counterpart to the League, a function confirmed by the fact that the seat was located across the lake opposite the Palais des Nations (for the relations between the Sufi Movement and the League of Nations see Inayat-Khan, 2006). Claimed as a unique feature and as a political contribution of the movement by its followers, the spatial situation allows differentiation and shows a highly ambivalent situation. In the same house lived Pierre Bouscharain, an international civil servant and a member of the League's Opium section (LONSEA, Bouscharain, n.d.-f). Working in a field closely connected to Asia, he also published on internationalism in a religious context.[2] Connections between religious international organizations, experts in international drug control, and Asian networks are not at the center of academic attention in today's research and, again, it is unknown whether Bouscharain was an open-hearted person who liked a chat with his Sufi neighbors, or someone who preferred privacy and a strict separation between work and leisure hours. However, the spatial conjunctions are worth investigating, all the more because the Geneva directory discloses additional information about the Maison royale—where a representative of the Cuban consulate underlined the diplomatic character of number 46—or, at least, reveals an additional element by which official contacts translate into informal personal cooperation. Moreover, the directory shows five Japanese inhabitants, whose functions are described as "Délégation du gouvernement japonais au conseil d'administration B.I.T" (*Annuaire Genevois*, 1937, p. 223). This apparently featureless information illuminates the rather secret and enclosed life of Japanese representation after this state's dramatic withdrawal from the League of Nations in 1933.

Even in 1937, there were still many places where the former interest in Geneva's internationalism remained active or at least had some discrete traces. The examples presented above disclose the combination of diplomacy and religion as rather underestimated carriers of global knowledge. In the case of Geneva, there are two aspects to recognize. Religious networks presented a way to underline differentiation and exclusion of other religious communities, but they also gained an explicit international and even diplomatic dimension. Especially in the 1930s, when Geneva celebrated the 4th centenary of Calvin's reformation, the awareness of religious

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[2] For example, he was a discussant at the Camp International de la Jeunesse, organized by the Alliance universelle pour l'Amitié Internationale par les Eglises (see Ricœur, 1933, p. 128) and published *L'Esprit international dans l'individu* in 1932 (Bouscharain, 1932).

internationalism increased and gained additional platforms and meeting points. These organizations clustered in the old city around Rue Calvin, again presenting strong interferences with other networks, in this case focusing on different international youth movements and student organizations. At Rue Calvin, the Methodist Church possessed landed property at number 12, the address of its German and Italian branches and the church's organization for young women (*Annuaire Genevois*, 1937, p. 65). Next door, at numbers 13 and 14, the organizations for Christian students were registered, neighboring the International Migration Service. Initiated by the Young Women's Christian Organization (League of Nations, 1938, p. 72), the *Annuaire* listed as this institution's responsible person Suzanne Ferrière (*Annuaire Genevois*, 1937, p. 65), a member of the International Committee of the Red Cross, and a frequent participant in the Swiss delegation for the League of Nations (see Suzanne Ferrière, 1970). Following the street in the other direction, a cosmopolitan walker had the chance to pick up the newest books from the Dante Alighieri Library before visiting the Maison Internationale des Etudiants at 9 Rue Calvin (*Annuaire Genevois*, 1937, p. 65). This organization developed within the well-known tradition of the Cité Universitaire in Paris and the international students' houses in the United States. In Geneva, however, the Maison Internationale fostered an "oriental" profile and merged higher education, philosophy, and religion under the umbrella of the League of Nations institutions in such a way that the claimed apolitical approach became a political profile.

The most remarkable feature of this innovative approach was not so much the romantic descriptions of colorful saris but the considerable representation of Geneva's Indian, Japanese, and Chinese communities in the late 1930s. In July 1936, the Maison Internationale offered a lunch to the members of the League's Commission of Intellectual Cooperation. This event brought together diplomats, internationalists, the newly elected rector of Geneva University William Rappard, and the Indian philosopher S. Radhakrishnan, later president of India (Maison internationale des étudiants, 1936). In April 1937, the Maison Internationale organized a Japanese dinner. Although well covered by the local press (L'Orient et l'Occident se rencontrent, 1937), the historiographical added value of the event goes beyond the well-established Orient-meets-Occident metaphor (Said, 1978).

The spatial surrounding at the center of Christian international organizations is even more interesting in the view of the contemporary political context, because the Japanese delegate at the BIT and the Chinese minister participated long after the withdrawal of Japan from the League of Nations and up until just a few months before the atrocities of Nanjing.[3] The spatial approach therefore critically interrogates the historiographical presumptions of incidents, turning points, and breaks, or at least reflects about timelines and how developments overlap on a global scale.

The withdrawal of Japan gives an interesting example of how the decision to stop membership rather fostered than diminished varieties of contact zones, even on a

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[3] For example, the Maison Internationale des Etudiants at 9 Rue Calvin, provided such a "contact zone" (L'Orient et l'Occident se rencontrent, 1937).

diplomatic level. Besides the Japanese consulate at Quai Wilson, and the officials listed at Quai Gustave Ador, there was an additional seat of the Japanese representation accredited to the International Labour Office, at Route de Florissant 47 B (*Annuaire Genevois*, 1937, p. 1212). Global knowledge flows continued, but their historical value has remained beyond established modes of interpretation.

Translating Agencies

The examples discussed above throw light on elites, consular representatives, international civil servants, and section members well established in the League's secretariat. As mentioned above, global knowledge transfer requires appropriate forms and also infrastructure. Many clerks, interpreters, secretaries, and drivers, all working for different international organizations, made the world of Geneva's internationalism go round—although this fact is not mentioned at all in reflections about the historical value or the political importance of international civil society. Are these subaltern diplomats part of the picture and do they guarantee the infrastructure mentioned above? With established historiographical methods, these people are difficult to recognize. They rarely wrote pamphlets, they usually had left their families and peers, and their subaltern position often did not match their origin and educational background. Does a spatial approach reveal information other than that obtained by one analyzing cosmopolitans by investigating their different backgrounds?

They lived within walking distance of their offices, sharing with their colleagues in the executive suite the spatial opportunity of transgressing the boundary between work and leisure. Some examples from the League of Nations' personnel files might illustrate the question of who had access to urban zones distinguished by a dense exchange of border-crossing information.[4] Tamara Goetze, first a stenographer and later a secretary in the Minorities section of the League of Nations, lived just across the corner from the old League of Nations building. The Chinese Li Dzeh-djen, a temporary employee in the information section, had his private address at Rue Charles-Bonnet, next door to the German consulate, the Bureau International de la Paix, and the Geneva Association for the League of Nations, and just around the corner from the residence of the Finnish permanent delegation to the League. Not far away from this address, at Rue Micheli du Crest, lived the Indian Tarini Prasad Sinha, a short-term employee in the League's Opium section. Of course, further debates need additional examples; however, there is an interesting spatial cohesion, not only between international organizations of different kinds, but also with regard to those working for these organizations.

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[4] An extended investigation of these files is part of an ongoing research project. For first results see: Herren (2013).

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have discussed the merging of two historicities, one telling the history of international organizations, the other focusing on border-crossing communication and information transfer. Taking the example of Geneva after World War I, the coincidence of international organizations and knowledge is expressed in the spatial dimension. Contrary to the usual approach underlining urban internationalism as the city's ideological profile and as an expression of the *spirit of Geneva*, the question is who is the neighbor, and how can personal networks be derived from spatial closeness. In this chapter, I have shown that, at least in the 1930s, global knowledge transfer was related to spatial proximity and therefore to connections difficult to trace with traditional methodological tools usually introduced for the understanding of transboundary networks in historical research. A spatial contextualization of global knowledge brought insights into a characteristic of Geneva overlooked until now. Because Geneva was not the capital where diplomatic representations gained their well-known profile as extraterritorial space distant from civil society, the city's spatial connectivity developed especially well and was probably supported by semi-official contacts, which fostered the prosperity of a global civil society. A spatial approach, however, questions whether the example of Geneva goes beyond the specificities of this city, and whether international organizations and their personnel are useful examples for analyzing the development of global spaces and an international civil society in an urban context more generally. Although there is no need to claim a golden past, a look at today's situation reveals a stark contrast. The places described as *non habité* have increased, barbed wire protects the entry of the United Nations, the blue plates of UN relief organizations have become a sign for crisis regions, and the place for addressing civil purposes is now outside the doors and not at the bar. The decreasing porosity might provide better local protection but questions a democratic transfer of knowledge on a global scale.

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