

Experiments in international administration: The forgotten functionalism of James Arthur Salter

LEONIE HOLTHAUS AND JENS STEFFEK*

Abstract. In this article, we reintroduce the political thought of James Arthur Salter (1881–1975), a British diplomat, politician, and university professor, who made a seminal contribution to the emergence of International Relations theory in the interwar years. His academic writings were informed by his professional engagement with the Allied Maritime Transport Council (AMTC) during the First World War and the technical branches of the League of Nations. Salter promoted a distinctly transgovernmental form of expert cooperation in international advisory bodies connected to national ministries. His vision of a depoliticised transnational expertocracy inspired various IR functionalists, not least David Mitrany. Salter suggested such forms of governance also for British national politics, drawing what we call here an ‘international analogy’. His work illustrates very well how the emergence of IR theory was connected to broader trends in political theory, in particular in efforts at adapting democracy to the increasing complexities of industrial modernity.

Leonie Holthaus is Research Fellow at Darmstadt University and member of the cluster of excellence ‘Normative Orders’.

Jens Steffek is Professor of Transnational Governance at Technische Universität Darmstadt and Principal Investigator in the Cluster of Excellence, ‘The Formation of Normative Orders’, hosted by the University of Frankfurt/Main. Before coming to Darmstadt he held appointments at the University of Bremen, Jacobs University, and the Robert-Schuman-Centre for Advanced Studies in Florence, Italy. His current research interests include International Relations theory, the study of international organisations, and international political theory.

Introduction

The ambition of this article is to reintroduce the political thought of James Arthur Salter (1881–1975), a British civil servant, politician, and university professor, and to shed new light on his important contribution to the development of international functionalism. We will show that Salter’s ideas about depoliticised expert cooperation strongly influenced the emergence of a functionalist ‘tradition’ of international thought after the First World War.¹ The boom of internationalism in the interwar

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¹ Traditions of thought are defined as common sets of ideas that are shared by several individuals for a clearly identifiable timeframe. Functionalism satisfies the criteria of an international tradition since functionalists agreed on particular views of international organisation and pluralist democracy.

years was triggered not only by the horrors of the war, but also by a fascination with new forms of international cooperation and the expert administration that it brought about. In this respect, Salter's academic work on the Allied Maritime Transport Council (AMTC), a short-lived international agency that during the First World War coordinated shipping capacities for the Western allies, was seminal. His book on the AMTC inspired other interwar 'functionalists' such as H. R. G. Greaves, Harold Laski, and David Mitrany. It also informed Salter's following, and largely forgotten, writings on the League of Nations, British politics, and democracy.

E. H. Carr famously characterised interwar internationalism as unworldly and naïve, emphasising its (alleged) faith in a fundamental harmony of interests among nations.² Recent literature rightly debunked this caricature of interwar idealism, or 'utopianism', as Carr would have it.³ James Arthur Salter, however, never was among Carr's direct targets,⁴ and anyway he would have been an unlikely candidate. Salter differed markedly from many of his British contemporaries, who promoted a more philosophically grounded version of liberal internationalism. Salter was aware of the fact that global economic and financial interdependence had generated a need to adjust incompatible national policies.⁵ But he was pragmatic and, as his willingness to cooperate with socialists, liberals, and conservatives shows, a man of 'selective political compromise', as Salter himself put it in a retrospective statement.⁶ Writing on various international topics parallel to his practical engagements, Salter did not provide one grand international theory. With regard to the emergence of functionalism in International Relations (IR) theory, his contribution was nevertheless a seminal one. We contend that his pragmatic thought on 'experiments in international administration' helped functionalism to appear as a 'hands-on' approach to the problems of international cooperation, without open ideological commitment. Salter's pragmatic attitude and continuing attempts to find new forms of government that can be adapted to a constantly changing environment became in the following a key feature of textbook functionalism, as embodied by the work of David Mitrany. Salter sympathised with distinctly transgovernmental forms of functional cooperation based on deliberation among national experts in advisory bodies, and not with the more supranational type of institution that Mitrany came to favour, exemplified by the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC), although Mitrany's support for the ECSC was not unconditional.

Salter prescribed a functionalist remedy at both the domestic and the international level. In particular during the 1930s, he suggested national councils of experts as a hub

That functionalism overlaps at times with liberal internationalism does not undermine its quality as an independent tradition. See Mark Bevir, 'On tradition', *Humanitas*, 8:2 (2000), pp. 28–53; Ian Hall, *Dilemmas of Decline: British Intellectuals and World Politics, 1945–1975* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2012), ch. 2.

² Edward H. Carr, *The Twenty Years' Crisis, 1919–1939: An Introduction to the Study of International Relations* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2001).

³ For critical accounts of the term idealism, see Lucian M. Ashworth, 'Where are the idealists in interwar International Relations?', *Review of International Studies*, 32:2 (2006), pp. 291–308; Peter Wilson, 'The myth of the "First Great Debate"', *Review of International Studies*, 24:5 (1998), pp. 1–15; Peter Wilson, 'Where are we now in the debate about the first great debate?', in Brian Schmidt (ed.), *International Relations and the First Great Debate: New International Relations* (London: Routledge, 2012), pp. 133–51.

⁴ Peter Wilson, *Introduction: The Twenty Years' Crisis and the Category of 'Idealism' in International Relations* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995), p. 15.

⁵ Edwin Gay, 'The future of nationalism', Record of Royal Institute of International Affairs, RIIA/8/209 (London: Chatham House, 1932), p. 27. Address given by Edwin Gay, Salter in Chair at the Study Group on Nationalism.

⁶ Arthur Salter, *Memoirs of a Public Servant* (London: Faber and Faber, 1961), p. 243. He often did not use his full name in publishing and preferred 'Arthur Salter'.

for rational economic planning. In this respect, Salter's work is a good example of what we call an 'international analogy'. Unlike the well-known 'domestic analogy' that derives proposals for international order from domestic institutions, an international analogy draws on experiences with international-level institutions in suggesting domestic reform. In this context, we also draw attention to important intersections between democratic theory and treatises on international politics that are characteristic of the interwar years. The common theme here is the challenge of complexity, which affects both international relations and parliamentary democracy. In the interwar years, both IR theorists and students of democracy questioned the ability of traditional political institutions and procedures to adequately deal with complexity, and called for expert bodies to complement or even supplant them.

This article is organised as follows: In the next section we introduce James Arthur Salter and his approach to the study of international organisation, highlighting the close connection between his practical experience as a civil servant and his programmatic reflections on this role. The second section is devoted to Salter's functionalism as it developed in his work on the AMTC and the League of Nations. In section three, we show that Salter's overall project was to rationalise government at home and abroad, and that he never made a categorical distinction between the domestic and international levels. Rather, Salter sought to apply lessons from his international experiences domestically as he became ever more absorbed with British political questions and advising developing countries emerging from colonial rule. Section four compares Salter's and Mitrany's functionalism, and locates Salter's place in the history of IR theory.

Salter's pragmatic approach to international organisation

James Arthur Salter (1st Baron Salter as of 1953) was born in 1881 into an Oxford family that owned a boating company, which still survives today under the name of 'Salter's Steamers'. His father, James Edward Salter, was active in local politics and served as mayor of Oxford in 1909 and 1910. After graduating from Oxford University, Salter joined the Civil Service in 1904 and started his career in the transport department of the Admiralty.⁷ As an expert in military logistics, he served during the First World War on the short-lived AMTC, where he became a colleague of Jean Monnet. After the war he was appointed head of the Economic and Financial Section of the League of Nations Secretariat in Geneva. He returned to Britain in 1930, and in 1934 was appointed Gladstone Professor of Political Theory and Institutions at Oxford University. He also became increasingly involved in British politics. From 1937 to 1950 he represented Oxford University in the House of Commons, and from 1951 to 1953 he represented the Ormskirk constituency (Lancashire) for the Conservative Party. Salter briefly returned to the international scene in 1944 when he worked as deputy director general of the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration (UNRRA). In the mid-1950s he also served as an external member of the Iraqi government's development board.

Salter's career as a scholar began after the First World War with the publication of his monograph on the AMTC (which we will examine in more detail shortly).

⁷ Denis Rickett, 'Salter, (James) Arthur, Baron Salter (1881–1975)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), online edition (October 2009), available at: <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/31651>; accessed 25 Nov 2013.

Generally speaking, his approach to international organisation can be described as indicative of the 'liberal internationalism' that marked much of British IR during the interwar years. However, his work lacks the philosophical foundations that are visible in many other internationalist texts from that period. Liberal internationalism experienced a gradual transformation from moral to political-institutional reasoning through the nineteenth century – but still most liberal internationalists of the early twentieth century openly identified with a particular philosophical tradition, or combined inspirations from different schools of thought.⁸ In the interwar years, John Stuart Mill, T. H. Green, and Herbert Spencer still loomed large in British liberal internationalism, and key authors such as L. T. Hobhouse and Alfred Zimmern drew heavily from their work.⁹ This does not mean that Hobhouse or Zimmern were unworldly international thinkers who failed to provide institutional proposals. But it does illustrate that British philosophy shaped their worldviews, and that Hobhouse and Zimmern felt a need to justify their policy proposals in light of the legacy of Spencer's or Green's liberal internationalism. Zimmern, however, was also a civil servant in a key position for the British state and deputy director of the League's Institute of Intellectual Cooperation.¹⁰ He drew not only from a philosophical heritage but also from real-world experiences, and he sought to legitimise particular policies with his writings. At times, as E. H. Carr critically noted in his *Twenty Years' Crisis* (1939), an extensive reference to moral and philosophical principles may have been used to conceal the very mundane interests that were also being pursued.¹¹ By contrast, James Arthur Salter consciously eschewed references to the history of ideas.

Salter himself explicitly called his approach to international organisation 'pragmatic' and stressed that it 'looks less at philosophy'.¹² He certainly used his memoirs to create a picture of himself as a popular civil servant and to show that civil servants play a far greater – and more exciting – role in international relations than the public tended to assume.¹³ But he did not in retrospect try to create an impression that he had always approached international organisation in the same way. He hardly mentioned his academic publications, and rather summed up his manifold activities and relationships in his memoirs. As such, our interpretation of Salter's fragmented academic and non-academic writings claims that his approach to international questions can be understood only with a view to his identification with the British Civil Service. A very well-respected institution at the time, members of the Civil Service were known for their high standards of qualification (usually documented by entrance exams and previous studies in Oxford or Cambridge) and for elimination of political influence in their appointment.¹⁴ It was widely understood that a career in the

⁸ Casper Sylvest, *British Liberal Internationalism, 1880–1930: Making Progress?* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2009).

⁹ Jeanne Morefield, *Covenants Without Swords* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2005).

¹⁰ Frank Trentmann, 'After the nation state: Citizenship, empire and global coordination in the new internationalism, 1914–1930', in Kevin Grant, Philippa Levine, and Frank Trendmann (eds), *Beyond Sovereignty. Britain, Empire and Transnationalism, c. 1880–1950* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), pp. 34–53 (p. 37).

¹¹ Carr, *Twenty Years' Crisis*.

¹² Arthur Salter, 'The challenge to democracy', in Ernest Simon (ed.), *Constructive Democracy* (London: George Allan & Unwin, 1938), pp. 199–214 (p. 202). Mitrany also endorsed pragmatism, but in both a philosophical and practical sense. See David Mitrany, *The Progress of International Government* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1933), p. 139; David Mitrany, 'The pragmatic forties or the "principle of practicalism"', Record of Royal Institute of International Affairs, 988 (London: Chatham House, undated).

¹³ Arthur Salter, *Slave of the Lamp* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1967).

¹⁴ George D. H. Cole, 'The Civil Service as a profession', *The New Statesman* (1923), pp. 623–4.

Civil Service required a broad education, and that civil servants nursed their own corporate ethos. In Salter's self-perception, the ideal civil servant 'sets out the pros and cons of each alternative course in the proportion to what seems to be their intrinsic importance' for elected political decision-makers.¹⁵ Salter viewed public administration as an art or a craft, not a science.¹⁶ A science of administration would aim at establishing general principles of organisation that, he feared, would risk being totally out of touch with the real world. Such abstract principles would be useless for civil servants who were, according to Salter's implicit definition, persons facing real-world problems.

In the real world of politics, Salter argued, it was rather difficult to establish general rules on how a problem is best solved. Not only does the world change so fast that formerly useful techniques may prove to be ineffective – or even harmful – in the present, but also the personality of individuals involved in public administration makes a difference. Therefore any official had to 'learn on the job', discovering what techniques suited his talents and how these techniques fit with the work of his colleagues. In doing so, he was to make use of former officials' experiences, reflections, and insights when they faced similar problems.¹⁷ At times these would provide ready-made tools, at times only offer inspiration for resolution of a new problem. Salter thus viewed human knowledge as only conditionally cumulative in the face of a changing environment. A good official questioned former experiences, reflected on the achievements of his preferred methods, and adapted them constantly to a changing world. Indeed, Salter was an avowed opponent of bureaucratic routine:

I have been frequently impressed, especially but not solely in international administration, by the fact that methods and procedures which have been clearly proved to be mistaken have been repeated later under similar conditions, and a technique already tested and proved successful by the expensive trial and error has not been adopted in a later case to which it was appropriate.¹⁸

Salter's focus on problem-solving techniques may appear somewhat natural for his acting as a civil servant – yet it is absolutely critical for understanding his academic writings and international thought. Like an official facing the everyday problems of professional life, Salter considered the intellectual task of the political scientist to be the comparison of past experiences in order to find out what form of organisation allowed man to master his environment and to best manage his social relations. He believed that the nature of modern industrial society and the international reach of socioeconomic activities had created a pressing need for international technical organisation to master the new conditions. As Waqar Zaidi noted, Salter's rhetoric was unique not only in its emphasis of the new possibilities provided by science and technology, but also in his stressing the need to adapt international organisation to modern conditions.¹⁹ But Salter was aware that the political scientist's search for such

¹⁵ Salter, *Memoirs*, p. 252.

¹⁶ Salter, *Slave of the Lamp*, p. 280.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 281.

¹⁹ Waqar Zaidi, 'Liberal internationalist approaches to science and technology in interwar Britain and the United States', in Daniel Laqua (ed.), *Internationalism Reconfigured: Transnational Ideas and Movements Between the World Wars* (London and New York: I. B. Tauris, 2011), pp. 17–43, pp. 33–8. For his enthusiasm about the international accumulation of knowledge, see Arthur Salter, 'A note by Sir Arthur Salter, K. C. B.', in League of Nations (ed.), *World Prosperity and Peace: Being the Report of a Conference held by the League of Nations Union at the Guildhall, E. C. 2, December 13th–15th, 1927, on the work of the International Economic Conference*, with an introduction by F. C. Goodenough (London: P. S. King & Son, 1928), pp. 179–80.

new methods of social and international regulation could not meet the strict scientific standards of the natural sciences or of economics.²⁰ If he had taken a stance in the so-called ‘second great debate’ of IR theory, Salter would have quite certainly sided with the ‘traditionalists’ against the ‘behaviouralists’.²¹

Salter’s adherence to pragmatic problem solving often took him between traditional ideological lines. His answer to the question of what causes war illustrates this: While liberals blamed autocratic government or the lack of democratic accountability in foreign policy, socialists saw capitalism as the root cause of war. Salter, however, used the starting point of a proto-liberal narrative where dynastic and religious causes of conflict were successfully overcome, only to then agree with the socialists’ assumption that the (remaining) critical causes of war were economic in nature.²² But going against economic determinism, Salter still allowed for a combination of political and economic factors. He suggested that economic dynamics became most dangerous when blended with political sentiment, when ‘they are united, in a Minister’s mind, with vague ideas of national power and prestige’.²³ Hence Salter argued, as did John Maynard Keynes, that economic stability had become more important than territorial security, and that governments needed to take this transformation into account.²⁴ However, he disagreed with his left-wing contemporaries who urged a turn to socialism in the face of economic depression. For Salter, both capitalism and socialism were deficient such that ‘there will be economic causes of conflict if there is socialism, and if there is not’. While Salter admitted that economic causes of war were paramount, he still preferred improving existing forms of government rather than turning away from capitalism. For him, ‘rational government’ was able to secure peace through reconciliation of divergent interests.²⁵

Experiments in international administration

Salter had his first and arguably most critical international experiences during the First World War. The war had brought about unprecedented destruction – but also proved to be a trigger of socioeconomic modernisation and change in international relations. During the war, one of the greatest dangers for Britain and its allies was German attack on their supply routes. By 1917, German submarine warfare had severely diminished allied shipping capacities. In response, the AMTC was established at an inter-allied conference that took place in Paris from 29 November to 3 December 1917 by representatives of France, Italy, Great Britain, and the United States.²⁶ The goal of the new institution was better coordination and management of shipping

²⁰ Arthur Salter, *The Framework of an Ordered Society* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1933), p. 2.

²¹ Brian Schmidt, ‘On the history and historiography of International Relations’, in Walter Carlsnaes, Thomas Risse and Beth A. Simmons (eds), *Handbook of International Relations* (London: Sage Publications, 2007), pp. 3–22 (p. 14).

²² James A. Salter, ‘Economic conflicts as the causes of war’, in Valentine Chirol, Yusuke Tsurumi, and James A. Salter (eds), *The Reawakening of the Orient and Other Addresses* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press), pp. 143–60.

²³ Arthur Salter, ‘Introduction’, in Quincy Wright (ed.), *War and the Private Investor: A Study in the Relations of International Politics and International Private Investment by Eugene Staley* (New York: Howard Fertig, 1967 [orig. pub. 1935]), pp. ix–xiii, p. xiii.

²⁴ Patricia Clavin, *Securing the World Economy: The Reinvention of the League of Nations 1920–1946* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), pp. 12–13.

²⁵ Salter, ‘Introduction’, p. xi.

²⁶ For the documentary record of council activities in 1917–18 see AMTC, *Allied Maritime Transport Council 1918* (London, 1918).

resources across national and administrative boundaries.²⁷ Its prototype was the inter-allied ‘Wheat Executive’ established one year earlier to improve cereal supply.²⁸

According to Salter’s own account, two important shifts had predated establishment of the AMTC: one at the domestic and one at the international level. Domestically, this involved abandonment of *laissez-faire* policies and the introduction of state-led economic planning. Although functional in peacetime, the free market had failed to meet the needs of the war economy. At the international level, Salter sensed a gradual departure from traditional diplomacy toward administrative arrangements.²⁹ In times of peace, the foreign offices and embassies monopolised and channelled international contacts. Wartime communication, by contrast, took place increasingly between the ministries and officials responsible for specific issues, such as commerce or trade. Circumventing the hierarchies of the foreign office, the respective ministers were for the first time in direct contact with each other.

The AMTC was in fact directed by national ministers in charge of shipping matters – but they met only rarely. Day-to-day work was performed by an ‘Executive’ based in London and staffed by diplomats from the four member countries. Here Salter worked together with French representative Jean Monnet, and a lasting friendship developed.³⁰ The organisational structure of the AMTC was complex. Below the level of the ‘Executive’, there were two further quadripartite ‘International Committees’ – one dedicated to tonnage and the other to imports. In addition, the AMTC was associated with twenty inter-allied committees established to coordinate the supply of almost the entire range of imported commodities. Its administrative backbone, the Secretariat, was ‘non-national’ in the sense that its members were expected to divest themselves of any national point of view.³¹ The other part was divided into four national sections. As head of the British section, Salter also became, *ex officio*, the AMTC’s ‘Secretary’, and thus head of the entire administrative body.

In terms of institutional design, the AMTC represented a hybrid between an advisory and an executive body, and its degree of autonomy *vis-à-vis* the member states remained contested. In particular, Great Britain and the US sought to limit the autonomous decision-making competencies of the body – while France and Italy pushed for them.³² As member states were not represented by their respective foreign offices, but rather by the national ministers and officials responsible for shipping matters, the AMTC institutionalised the previously rather informal method of direct ‘horizontal’ contact between national ministries. Without the establishment of any real supranational authority, the AMTC formally remained a forum for intergovernmental debate and negotiation. Its strength, however, was in its direct linkage with national ministries, which facilitated immediate implementation of decisions made.³³ This was essential for wartime planning efforts. In effect, the AMTC blurred the distinction between a national and an international level of decision-making, as well as the one between advisory and executive bodies. The method of direct contact between national executives in effect sidelined cabinets and parliaments.

²⁷ Salter, *Slave of the Lamp*, p. 59.

²⁸ Yann Decorzant, *La Société des Nations et la naissance d’une conception de la régulation économique internationale* (Brussels: P. I. E. Peter Lang, 2011), pp. 133–5.

²⁹ Salter, *Memoirs*, p. 106.

³⁰ Jean Monnet, *Mémoires* (Paris: Fayard, 1976), pp. 71–95; Salter, *Memoirs*, pp. 176–7.

³¹ AMTC, *Allied Maritime Transport Council 1918*, pp. 10–1.

³² On these conflicts see Georges-Henri Soutou, *L’or et le sang: Les buts de guerre économiques de la Première Guerre mondiale* (Paris: Fayard, 1989), pp. 512–17.

³³ Decorzant, *Société des Nations*, p. 136.

Salter made the AMTC and its 'experiment in international administration' widely accessible through his seminal monograph *Allied Shipping Control* (1921).³⁴ Salter here presented the AMTC experience as an argument in favour of intergovernmental cooperation, but against supranational authority. Although he did not reject supranationalism in principle, he stressed the reluctance of states to transfer their sovereignty to an external body. Under these circumstances, it was in Salter's view best to use the transgovernmental wartime experience for the establishment of peace. 'Above all, the Allied organisation solved the problem of controlling the action, without displacing the authority, of National governments.'³⁵ His book served as a blueprint of functional cooperation for H. R. G. Greaves in his praise of the League's committees; for Harold Laski in his call for international cooperation to solve technical problems; for S. H. Bailey's suggestion of international devolution in view of the overexertion of traditional diplomacy; and, perhaps most notably, for David Mitrany who cited Salter's account of wartime cooperation as a model for international organisation and planning.³⁶

The most important lesson to be learned from the AMTC was, according to Salter, the value of direct contact and face-to-face discussions among the involved ministers and officials.³⁷ The national representatives in the AMTC qualified as 'experts' because they possessed more knowledge of the respective problems than diplomats and members of the foreign office who had traditionally taken the lead in relevant discussions. As functional specialists, they found it easier to overcome their national prejudices, to appreciate the points of view of their foreign counterparts, and to focus squarely on problem solving. Harold Laski echoed this point almost literally years later.³⁸ In the AMTC, national experts had been organised in functionally differentiated committees, each discussing one specific aspect related to allied shipping and supply. Salter thus sensed a turn away from the 'old' diplomatic focus on national interests and prestige. In contrast to the secretive and elite-driven 'old' diplomacy, he argued, the new technique solved technical problems 'on their merits' before they became politicised in an intergovernmental process.³⁹ Salter shared much of the liberal internationalist opposition to traditional secret diplomacy, but for different reasons.⁴⁰ Whereas other liberal internationalists demanded full transparency in foreign affairs for the sake of democracy, Salter was more concerned with the efficiency of governance than with democratic accountability. Therefore he was able to criticise the old elite-driven 'bargaining' diplomacy, but still defend the value of non-public deliberation in small circles of experts.

³⁴ James A. Salter, *Allied Shipping Control: An Experiment in International Administration* (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1921).

³⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 246.

³⁶ Harold R. G. Greaves, *The League Committees and World Order: A Study of the Permanent Expert Committees of the League of Nations as an Instrument of International Government* (London: Oxford University Press, 1931); Harold J. Laski, *A Grammar of Politics* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1937), pp. 616–18; David Mitrany, 'Political consequences of economic planning', in Findlay Mackenzie (ed.), *Planned Society: Yesterday, Today, Tomorrow. A Symposium by Thirty-Five Economists, Sociologists, and Statesmen* (New York: Prentice-Hall, 1937), pp. 641–62 (p. 650); S. H. Bailey, 'Devolution in the conduct of International Relations', *Economica*, 30 (1930), pp. 259–74 (p. 267). Cecil Burns also suggested international 'executive' planning of, for example, finance and food along the lines of the Allied wartime cooperation but prior to the publication of Salter's book. See Cecil D. Burns, *Political Ideals: An Essay* (Oxford: Humphrey Milford, 1919), pp. 318–19.

³⁷ Salter, *Allied Shipping Control*, p. 253.

³⁸ Greaves, *League Committees*; Laski, *Grammar of Politics*, pp. 618–19.

³⁹ Salter, *Allied Shipping Control*, p. 255.

⁴⁰ Arthur Salter, 'The technique of open diplomacy', *The Political Quarterly*, 3:1 (1932), pp. 58–70.

Despite the widely perceived successes of the new expert administration, the AMTC remained a short-lived wartime institution. As soon as hostilities ceased, the United States and Britain withdrew their support.⁴¹ Experiences with the AMTC, however, influenced the debate about the design of the newly created Secretariat of the League. Salter referred to lessons drawn from the AMTC when making proposals for the institutional design of the League Secretariat. He suggested that the Secretariat should be organised along intergovernmental and transgovernmental lines, and be composed of international civil servants and officials remaining responsible to national governments.⁴² Salter thus took an intermediate position between Sir Maurice Hankey, who envisaged a Secretariat composed of national delegates, and Sir Eric Drummond (the first Secretary General of the League) who entreated for an international civil service independent from national governments and loyal only to the League.⁴³ Salter did not favour a truly international civil service because he doubted that an international civil servant living detached from national governments in a Swiss province could facilitate international cooperation. Instead, he suggested a framework that had the purpose (quite like the AMTC) of blurring the distinction between national and international administration. Important parts of this included representation of national ministries in Geneva in the form of ‘national secretaries’. These organs were supposed to function as an intermediary between national and international points of view. They were to be complemented by representations of the League in ‘home national secretaries’ in member-state capitals.⁴⁴ Their task would have been to promote the policies of the League and to inform national audiences about such; to facilitate rapid communication between the League and governments; and to ensure domestic implementation of international agreements. Finally, the proposal included ‘international councils’ for expert discussion.

Salter thought that functional international organisation could serve as an antidote to narrow-minded national policies in two ways. First, he hoped that civil servants commuting between Geneva and their respective capitals would advance an international outlook at home and thus corroborate international cooperation in the long term. Second, he conceived the League Secretariat – with its focus on the solution of common problems – as a counterweight to the Council, where governmental delegates pursued their idiosyncratic national interests. And even if Drummond’s proposal of a truly international civil service in the end defeated Salter’s ideas toward an interpenetration of national and international administrations, the drafters of the covenant still planned the Secretariat much on the basis of wartime experiences made accessible by Salter.⁴⁵

When the League became operational, Salter took over one of the most important posts in the Secretariat and became the first director of the Economic and Financial Section. In a sense, the League’s functional ‘sections’ came closest to Salter’s vision of international cooperation. Formally part of the Secretariat and staffed by

⁴¹ Yann Decorzant, ‘Internationalism in the economic and financial organisation of the League of Nations’, in Daniel Laqua (ed.), *Internationalism Reconfigured. Transnational Ideas and Movements Between the World Wars* (London and New York: I. B. Tauris, 2011), pp. 116–34 (p. 117).

⁴² Arthur Salter, *The United States of Europe, and Other Papers* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1933), pp. 13–31.

⁴³ Frank G. Boudreau, ‘International Civil Service – the secretariat of the League of Nations’, in Harriet E. Davis (ed.), *Pioneers in World Order: An American Appraisal of the League of Nations* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1945), pp. 76–86 (p. 78).

⁴⁴ Salter, *United States of Europe*, p. 26.

⁴⁵ Egon F. Ranshofen-Wertheimer, *The International Secretariat: A Great Experiment in International Administration* (Washington, DC: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 1945), p. 79.

international full-time civil servants, the League's 'sections' were to facilitate cooperation in matters perceived as 'technical', such as labour, health, communications, transit, and economics. They existed alongside a variety of committees and subcommittees. Governments retained the authority to select the experts to serve on those committees, even if the experts acted rather independently.⁴⁶ In practice, the functional dimension of the League was a bewildering complex of intergovernmental, transgovernmental, and non-governmental international cooperation that did not always strictly follow official rules of procedure, but rather bred various informal relations.⁴⁷ Experts used these functional bodies as vehicles for accumulating knowledge and for exchanging know-how in order to find practicable solutions to contemporary problems, such as currency instability.⁴⁸ But when international civil servants used the accumulated knowledge to recommend particular policies, they had to master a balancing act of considering all affected national interests. As standing against domestic administration, the new international administration was not beholden to unambiguous law, but instead had to first probe international cooperation options.⁴⁹

Historians consider Salter's work at the League a success. Under his leadership, the Economic and Financial Section expanded from 17 staff members in 1921 to 60 when he left the organisation in 1931.⁵⁰ He directed the first supervision of national economic and financial reform by an international organisation when he worked on reconstruction of various European economies, beginning with the Austrian financial crisis in 1922.⁵¹ Many League officials then feared that the crisis might escalate into social revolutions destabilising the new international order in central and Eastern Europe.⁵² On the other hand, the crisis provided the first opportunity to prove the usefulness of the League, and legitimated the international organisation. When Austria brought its case to the League, Salter established a commission that was authorised to manage Austrian fiscal and economic policy. In his view, it was not wartime destruction, but rather poor public management that was chiefly responsible for the country's troubles.⁵³ Being short of cash, the Austrian government had simply printed new banknotes to cover its expenses, thereby inducing inflation.⁵⁴ Salter successfully resolved these problems through a combination of 'national self-help and international cooperation', facilitated by the support of the Bank of England and the United States.⁵⁵ The League's temporary international supervision of national economies and the mobilisation of international loans also contributed to the reconstruction of Hungary, Greece, and the free city of Danzig in 1924, Estonia in 1926, and Bulgaria in 1928. The practices of international financial aid that were

⁴⁶ Decorzant, 'Internationalism', p. 125.

⁴⁷ Martin D. Dubin, 'Transgovernmental processes in the League of Nations', *International Organization*, 37:3 (1983), pp. 469–93 (p. 483); Greaves, *League Committees*, p. 475; Patricia Clavin and Jens-W. Wessel, 'Transnationalism and the League of Nations: Understanding the work of its economic and financial organisation', *Contemporary European History*, 14:4 (2005), pp. 465–92.

⁴⁸ Arthur Salter, *Currencies After the War: A Survey of Conditions in Various Countries. Compiled under the Auspices of the International Secretariat of the League of Nations* (London: Harisson and Sons, 1920).

⁴⁹ Edward J. Phelan, 'The new international Civil Service', *Foreign Affairs*, 11:2 (1933), pp. 307–14.

⁵⁰ Clavin and Wessel, 'Transnationalism', p. 475.

⁵¹ Arthur Salter, 'The reconstruction of Austria', *Foreign Affairs*, 2:4 (1924), pp. 630–43 (p. 630); Arthur Salter, 'The reconstruction of Hungary', *Foreign Affairs*, 5:1 (1926), pp. 91–102 (p. 91).

⁵² Frank Beyersdorf, "'Credit or chaos'?: The Austrian stabilisation programme of 1923 and the League of Nations', in Daniel Laqua (ed.), *Internationalism Reconfigured: Transnational Ideas and Movements Between the World Wars* (London and New York: I. B. Tauris, 2011), pp. 135–57 (p. 135).

⁵³ Arthur Salter, *Development in Under-Developed Countries* (London: Chatham House, 1956), p. 6.

⁵⁴ Salter, *Slave of the Lamp*, p. 72.

⁵⁵ Salter, 'Reconstruction of Austria', p. 630; Beyersdorf, 'Credit or chaos', p. 148.

developed in response to these crises became a starting point for the League's successor organisations, such as the International Monetary Fund.⁵⁶

Salter was a prominent international civil servant at a time when internationalists of various political affiliations were elaborating on the virtues of international administration. The Fabian socialist Leonard Woolf, who strongly influenced the Fabian Society's approach to international relations, had already supported international administration in 1916. Alfred Zimmern, in his position as deputy director of the League's Institute of Intellectual Cooperation, also came to appreciate debates among international experts in the League's permanent advisory committees – which he found more productive than national discussions.⁵⁷ And David Mitrany's review of the 'international experiment' of allied administration in Southeast Europe echoed Salter's claim that international administration was far more efficient than the 'nationalist incitements of political conflicts'.⁵⁸ The stylised concept of a freethinking, innovative, and unbiased international expert as opposed to the chauvinistic and incompetent national politician became a common figure in the interwar period. It was nursed by British and American internationalists, who transformed their enjoyment of the 'Geneva spirit' into theoretical claims while American philanthropic foundations promoted emergence of a transnational elite of experts that mediated between governments and publics, and forged international consensus on global problems.⁵⁹

The 'international analogy'

Experiences with technocratic types of international cooperation also had repercussions on domestic political thought. A debate that emerged in Britain about the fate of democracy under the conditions of industrial modernity – in which Salter and other internationalists took part – illustrates this connection very well. In Britain and the US there was during the interwar years a widespread perception that the relation between knowledge and democracy had shifted significantly since the Great War.⁶⁰ Technical advances and the construction of the welfare state had expanded and complicated government's tasks. In this light, parliaments appeared to many contemporary observers as inadequate and outdated institutions. Harold Laski put it this way:

In whatever analysis is made of the conditions of the modern representative system, two facts stand out with striking clarity. On the one hand, it is obvious that there is no deliberative assembly that is not utterly overwhelmed by the multiplicity of its business; on the other hand, it is at least equally clear that the average elector, except in times of crisis and abnormal excitement, is but partially interested in the political process.⁶¹

⁵⁶ Patricia Clavin, 'The Austrian hunger crisis and the genesis of international organization after the First World War', *International Affairs*, 90:2 (2014), pp. 265–78 (p. 267).

⁵⁷ Katharina Rietzler, 'Experts for peace: structures and motives of philanthropic internationalism in the interwar period', in Daniel Laqua (ed.), *Internationalism Reconfigured: Transnational Ideas and Movements Between the World Wars* (London and New York: I. B. Tauris, 2011), pp. 45–66 (p. 50).

⁵⁸ David Mitrany, *The Effect of the War in Southeastern Europe* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1936), p. 263.

⁵⁹ Rietzler, 'Experts for peace', p. 49.

⁶⁰ Alfred Zimmern, 'Democracy and the expert', *The Political Quarterly*, 1:1 (1930), pp. 7–25 (p. 7). Mary Parker Follett contended that the experts promoting the League often relied on demagogic methods in the face of an uneducated public. Though her thought is sometimes compared to Mitrany's functionalism, it should be noted that Follett was rather more critical toward increasing involvement of experts. See Mary Parker Follett, *Creative Experience* (New York: Longmans, Green & Co., 1930), p. 22.

⁶¹ Harold J. Laski, *The Foundations of Sovereignty and Other Essays* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1921), p. 38.

Searching for alternatives, British political intellectuals such as G. D. H. Cole or Beatrice and Sidney Webb tabled reform proposals intended to rationalise government and to adapt it to modern conditions. These reform proposals often combined the introduction of some kind of economic democracy and functional representation with the institutionalisation of expert advice.⁶² Both changes were meant as instruments to bring in vocational and expert knowledge at the expense of political power games. An adequate proportion of expert involvement was also perceived as a means to cut excessive bureaucratisation.⁶³

In this debate, the functional branches of the League appeared as precursors of a new type of government. According to Zimmern, the 'glorious invention' of expert committees functioned much better on an international than national basis.⁶⁴ Their recommendations, and not the ideas of statesmen, was considered to secure economic recovery. Greaves, likewise, thought that twentieth-century democracy had to involve expert administration. He presented the work of League committees as realisation of that required change.⁶⁵ Thus, much of the debate on expert administration in the interwar years was a reversal of the 'domestic analogy', which extended institutions or procedures from the domestic to the international arena. Instead, some internationalists and members of the newly emerging caste of international civil servants built on the perceived successes of international expert administration to call for domestic reform, thus creating what one could call an 'international analogy'. This type of reasoning by analogy is particularly obvious in James Arthur Salter's work. His term of office in the League Secretariat ended in 1931 and, once back in Britain, he contributed to the debate on the future of democracy, also becoming one of the major voices in the field of political economy during the Great Depression. Salter's thought remained informed by his international outlook and he provided an account of, and a far-reaching reform proposal for, both the domestic and international realm during the crisis.

Salter noted already in the early 1930s that technical advances had upset the previous balance between technical and sociopolitical progress. Quite like Karl Mannheim, he argued that economic turbulence originated from a mismatch between a society's economic organisation and its political institutions.⁶⁶ As Zaidi notes, Salter believed that the industrial revolution divided history into a premodern and a modern period.⁶⁷ He observed that only in the modern era had mankind attained the capacity to master nature and to support the wealth and leisure of all.⁶⁸ Mechanisation was a promise in that respect – yet also a danger. It promised material wealth for all, but dehumanised industrial production and displaced labour in the advanced countries. In addition, political institutions lagged far behind economic transformations. Liberal parliamentary democracy had emerged at a time when the state performed only few functions. But economic crises and popular demand for social equality had

⁶² George D. H. Cole, *Social Theory* (London: Methuen, 1920); Sidney Webb and Beatrice Webb, *A Constitution for the Socialist Commonwealth of Great Britain* (London: Green and Co, 1920).

⁶³ Harold J. Laski, *The Limitations of the Expert* (London: The Fabian Society, 1931), p. 13.

⁶⁴ Zimmern, 'Democracy and the expert', p. 15.

⁶⁵ Greaves, *League Committees*, pp.12–16.

⁶⁶ Karl Mannheim, *Rational and Irrational Elements in Contemporary Society* (London: Oxford University Press, 1934); Karl Mannheim, *Mensch und Gesellschaft im Zeitalter des Umbaus* (Leiden: A. W. Sijthoff's Uitgeversmaatschappij N.V., 1935).

⁶⁷ Zaidi, 'Liberal internationalist approaches', p. 33.

⁶⁸ Arthur Salter, *Modern Mechanization and Its Effects on the Structure of Society: Being the Second Massey Lecture Delivered before McGill University on 18 April 1933* (London: Humphrey Milford, 1933), p. 7.

normalised state interference in the economy and stressed political institutions. The situation demonstrated, in Salter's words, that 'government needs to be constantly adapting itself to the activities it seeks to control' – and that it 'always tries and always lags behind'.⁶⁹ Revealing a marked anti-statism, he lamented the lack of sufficient adaptation to the new economic circumstances of peacetime. To the contrary, most governments reacted to the depression with economic protectionism, which made the situation worse. Salter deplored the waste of available resources, nationally and worldwide, and sought to sketch new forms of social organisations that would enable humankind to again master the challenges of the environment and social relations.⁷⁰

To better cope with a complex environment, Salter proposed the institutionalisation of economic advice, internationally and also at the domestic level. In his capacity as an international civil servant, he had already studied different forms of economic advisory councils, which he recommended to developing countries such as India.⁷¹ He endorsed the popular pessimism over the future of parliamentary democracy in concluding that the representative political system was insufficient. A parliament based on general franchise and territorial representation lacked the expertise to address economic questions or to control administrative action.⁷² Proposing economic advisory councils also for Britain, Salter – as a professor – initiated a series of studies on them. He also gained some practical insight into their dynamics when he served in Ramsay MacDonald's advisory council together with Keynes, G. D. H. Cole, and Walter Citrine.⁷³ He was very aware of the challenge, to paraphrase Abraham Lincoln, of creating a government by necessity that was not too strong for the liberties of the people.⁷⁴

Salter hoped that the introduction of a permanent advisory committee system based on functional principles would improve popular government. However, he dismissed the British model where the economic advisory committee consisted of independent experts and members of government, preferring more corporatist bodies such as the German Reichswirtschaftsrat. The latter made room for debate among representatives of all major industries, professions, and trade unions.⁷⁵ In Salter's view, organs such as the Reichswirtschaftsrat promised various advantages, beginning with a certain administrative continuity independent from the political democratic process and ending with public deliberation and enlightenment.⁷⁶ Indeed, Salter hoped that a public economic forum would have educative effects by providing voters with the essential knowledge for opposing or supporting a government. He sought to grant considerable authority to these economic councils. Probably due to his AMTC experiences, Salter promoted fast and effective implementation of the committees'

⁶⁹ James A. Salter, 'World government', in Mary Adams (ed.), *The Modern State* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1933), pp. 253–316 (p. 253).

⁷⁰ Arthur Salter, *Note at the Second Annual Dinner* (London: Chatham House Archive, 1931).

⁷¹ Arthur Salter, *A Scheme for an Economic Advisory Organisation in India* (Delhi: Manager Government of India Press, 1931).

⁷² Arthur Salter, 'Preface', in Ronald V. Vernon and Nicholas Mansbergh (eds), *Advisory Bodies: A Study of Their Uses in Relation to Central Government 1919–1939* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1940), pp. 7–9 (p. 7).

⁷³ Salter, *Memoirs*, p. 230; Susan Howson and Donald Winch, *The Economic Advisory Council 1930–1939: A Study in Economic Advice during Depression and Recovery* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977), p. 107.

⁷⁴ Salter, 'Challenge to democracy', p. 207.

⁷⁵ Arthur Salter, 'Foreword', in Alderton Pink (ed.), *Moral Foundations of Citizenship* (London: University of London Press, 1952), pp. 5–7.

⁷⁶ Salter, *Scheme for an Economic Advisory Organisation*, p. 2.

recommendations as essential – and, at times, he even seemed to reduce the executive to an organ guaranteeing the realisation of expert recommendations.⁷⁷

However, as a critic of Italian fascism, Salter was aware of the totalitarian hazard. Arguing against Mussolini's tight control of society through functional bodies, Salter hoped that functional representation would find its place within liberal democracy as a supplement to political representation.⁷⁸ Thus, Salter put forward functionalist reform proposals somewhat similar to Cole's earlier guild socialism.⁷⁹ But while Cole's functionalism had been a radical democratic plea for vocational democracy, Salter's functionalism was more the result of his international experiences and pragmatism.⁸⁰ However, in the early 1930s, both authors saw the state as an agent of constitutional reform that should be tasked with organising 'self-regulating' economic infrastructure.⁸¹ In the face of fascism, Cole too, was now no longer willing to wait for functional reforms to materialise in a bottom-up process. The similarities between Salter's and Cole's proposals show that the idea of functional representation was frequently employed as a response to the deficits of liberal democracy in a modern era, across ideological borders.

Salter also feared that parliamentary democracy could hinder international agreement. 'During years of negotiations in Geneva', Salter wrote, 'I came to the conclusion that the greatest obstacle to international agreement was not a conflict of national interests, but the fact that governments were not masters in their own home.'⁸² For him, parliamentary democracy was not only inefficient. With the advent of the welfare state, he argued, national delegates were more concerned with appeasing special interest groups in their respective parliaments than with the resolution of international problems. Although Salter understood that, for instance, US workers lacking social welfare measures still desired protection of their home markets, he opposed the elimination of economic competition to grant increased profits to shareholders over workers.⁸³ He also rejected agricultural subsidies or import restrictions that would protect home production in areas where the state had no natural advantage.⁸⁴ He rejected such tariffs compensating for differences in the costs of production as a 'miscalled scientific' principle that hampers commercial exchange, creates imbalances in international trade, and increases – on a global scale – unemployment levels. Quite obviously, Salter still entertained the old liberal ideal of a 'world system, under which men of all countries will freely exchange the products of their skill and industry'.⁸⁵ As opponents of 'economic nationalism', Salter and other liberal intellectuals during the interwar years attempted to reconcile economic regulation with internationalism.⁸⁶

⁷⁷ Arthur Salter, *China and the Depression: Impressions of a Three Months Visit* (Peking: The National Economic Council, 1934), p. 85.

⁷⁸ Arthur Salter, *Personality in Politics: Studies of Contemporary Statesmen* (London: Faber and Faber, 1947), p. 238; Salter, 'Preface'.

⁷⁹ Cole, *Social Theory*.

⁸⁰ Leonie Holthaus, 'G. D. H. Cole's international thought: The dilemmas of justifying socialism in the twentieth century', *The International History Review*, 36:5 (2014), pp. 858–75.

⁸¹ George D. H. Cole, *Principles of Economic Planning* (London: Macmillan, 1935).

⁸² Arthur Salter, *World Trade and Its Future* (London: Oxford University Press, 1936), p. 91; Arthur Salter, 'The Future of economic nationalism', *Foreign Affairs*, 11:1 (1932), pp. 8–20 (p. 15).

⁸³ Clavin, *Securing the World Economy*, p. 49.

⁸⁴ Salter, 'Foreword', p. ix.

⁸⁵ Salter, *World Trade*, p. 100.

⁸⁶ Various Authors, *The Next Five Year: An Essay in Political Agreement* (London: Macmillan, 1935). On liberal internationalism and economic planning see also Or Rosenboim, 'Barbara Wootton, Friedrich Hayek and the debate on democratic federalism in the 1940s', *The International History Review*, 36:05

As a remedy, Salter suggested putting more power into the hands of economic experts. According to his vision, national economic councils should advise governments on how to manage the trade balance. Representatives of the national economic councils would then meet in a world economic council, hosted by the League. The function of this body should be to gather information about and to control 'the policy as a whole'. Hence, Salter wanted to turn this world economic council into a comprehensive technical authority that would devise global economic policy.⁸⁷

The proposal shows that Salter in some way anticipated the notion of 'epistemic communities' that has been coined in more recent years by Peter M. Haas. An epistemic community is defined as 'a network of professionals with recognised expertise and competence in a particular domain and an authoritative claim to policy relevant knowledge within that domain or issue-area'.⁸⁸ Like Haas, Salter also observed that this new degree of international interdependence created uncertainty among national decision-makers, and assumed that transnational expert networks were essential for accumulating consensual knowledge and reformulating national interests with a view to that knowledge. An underlying assumption of both seems to be that epistemic communities have the power to create a harmony of interests by providing authoritative knowledge, representing problems in consensual ways to policymakers, and by safeguarding the problem-focused manner of international negotiation at all stages.⁸⁹ But unlike Haas, who had a more analytical interest in the empirical impact of epistemic communities, Salter when heading the Economic and Financial Section also pursued a political goal when he argued in favour of international expert networks that in fact stimulated growth of an epistemic community involving civil servants and bankers. Yet, in spite of his advice, most governments in the 1930s had turned to protectionism and were increasingly reluctant to cooperate with the experts in the League secretariat. Political conflict paralysed the League's technical work, too, and Salter's writings reflect this to the extent that they display an increasing impatience with governments.⁹⁰

Salter nevertheless retained his appreciation of transgovernmental expert administration and his focus on socioeconomic progress well into the early 1930s. At the same time, he became increasingly critical of genuinely supranational schemes for, such as, a global currency, an international authority that would implement a gold standard, or an international police force.⁹¹ They all depended on international agreements that were out of reach – or, if nevertheless reached, in his view likely to remain useless.⁹² Although he admitted that the League's legal and political system

(2014), pp. 894–918; Jörg Spieker, 'Friedrich Hayek and the reinvention of liberal internationalism', *The International History Review*, 36:05 (2014), pp. 919–42; Hagen Schulz-Forberg, 'Die Welt oder wie sie sein sollte – Versuche transnationaler Normenbildung für eine globale Wirtschaftsordnung in den 1930er Jahren', in Jens Steffek and Leonie Holthaus (eds), *Jenseits der Anarchie: Weltordnungsentwürfe im frühen 20. Jahrhundert* (Frankfurt am Main: Campus, 2014), pp. 174–202.

⁸⁷ Jo-Anne Pemberton, *Global Metaphors: Modernity and the Quest for One World* (London and Sterlington, VA: Pluto Press, 2001), p. 93.

⁸⁸ Peter M. Haas, 'Introduction: Epistemic communities and international policy coordination', *International Organization*, 46:1 (1992), pp. 1–35 (p. 3).

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 2.

⁹⁰ Salter, *Memoirs*, p. 201.

⁹¹ Arthur Salter, *Recovery: The Second Effort* (London: G. Bell and Sons, 1933), p. 79; Arthur Salter, 'The conferences of this year: Geneva-Lausanne-Ottawa-London', *The Political Quarterly*, 3:4 (1932), pp. 467–88 (p. 282).

⁹² Arthur Salter, 'Discussion at the third meeting of the Chatham House Study Group called to consider the principle questions affecting the future of the League of Nations and the possible revision of its covenant', *Mitran Papers*, Box 54 (London: LSE Archive, 1936).

was not yet logically complete, Salter urged development of a socioeconomic basis that removed the underlying causes of war as preceding any new legal framework.⁹³

Like other British internationalists of the interwar years, Salter campaigned for international cooperation without being a pacifist. From his chair in Oxford, Salter publicly opposed Chamberlain's appeasement policy and the proposal to hand over colonies or mandated territories to Germany.⁹⁴ Salter tried to organise a multi-ideological resistance to Chamberlain by arranging frequent meetings on foreign policy and defence at All Souls College.⁹⁵ Participants of these meetings were, among others, Norman Angell, Lionel Curtis, Arnold Toynbee, and Gilbert Murray. Salter thus turned All Souls into a gathering place for public intellectuals, meeting in the All Souls Foreign Affairs group, critical of appeasement.⁹⁶ That these critics included leading internationalists such as Angell and Murray shows once more how mistaken the still common stereotype of interwar 'idealism' as naïve pacifism is. Feeling that a new war with Germany was imminent, Salter publicly attacked the government's insufficient preparations against air raids and the equally insufficient storage of food supplies.⁹⁷

The progress of international functionalism

As we have shown above, Salter's work on the AMTC became an important stimulus for the development of functionalist theorising, and he retained his functional approach to domestic and international reform well into the 1930s. However, at the end of the decade, Salter increasingly turned to questions of international security. He did not rework his functionalist ideas for the new world order after 1945.⁹⁸ This is surprising to the extent that other former League officials did precisely that. Frank Boudreau, for instance, suggested that the League's development of the first real international civil service and genuine functional organisations should be used for conceiving of new functional organisations to tackle the social and economic problems of the postwar world.⁹⁹ John Boyd Orr, who became the first director general of the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organisation, equally supported

⁹³ Arthur Salter, 'The economic organization of peace', *Foreign Affairs*, 9:1 (1930), pp. 42–53 (p. 42). Salter also hoped that international experts mandated by the League could play a role in the peaceful conflict resolution, as was attempted with the Lytton Commission, but then became disillusioned. See Arthur Salter, 'The Far Eastern crisis by Henry L. Stimson', Book Review, *Pacific Affairs*, 10:1 (1937), pp. 84–5; Arthur Salter, *Security: Can We Retrieve It?* (London: Macmillan, 1939), p. 130.

⁹⁴ Arthur Salter, 'The colonial question: Raw materials and markets', Record of Royal Institute of International Affairs, RIIA/8/415 (London: Chatham House, 1936).

⁹⁵ Sidney Aster, 'Introduction: Appeasement and All Souls College' and 'Conclusion: "Between resistance and retreat"', in Sidney Aster (ed.), *Appeasement and All Souls: A Portrait with Documents, 1937–1939* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), pp. 1–19, pp. 228–38.

⁹⁶ For international public intellectuals see Cornelia Navari, *Public Intellectuals and International Affairs: Essays on Public Thinkers and Political Projects* (Dordrecht: Republic of Letters Publishing, 2013).

⁹⁷ Salter, *Memoirs*, p. 259; Arthur Salter, *The Dual Policy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1939).

⁹⁸ In his opposition to appeasement and in his security studies, he repeated a need to break down the distinction between executive and advisory bodies and to reduce the powers of parliament to effectively organise defence. Salter, *Security*; Salter, *Dual Policy*; Salter, *Memoirs*, p. 257; on his views on the UN see Arthur Salter, *Dumbarton Oaks Conference* (London: Chatham House, 1944); Arthur Salter, *The United Nations. Reform, Replace, or Supplement?* (London: David Davies Memorial Institute of International Studies, 1957). Salter shares views with the realist John H. Herz since he equally, after opposing world government as a naïve phantasy, came to endorse international federalism in view of the H-bomb. For Herz see Casper Sylvest, 'Technology and global politics: The modern experiences of Bertrand Russell and John H. Herz', *The International History Review*, 35:1 (2012), pp. 121–42.

⁹⁹ Boudreau, 'International Civil Service', p. 85.

a functional approach.¹⁰⁰ Functional international organisation was *en vogue* again in Britain and America during the 1940s, not least due to renewed allied wartime collaboration comparable to that which Salter witnessed during the First World War.¹⁰¹ Salter and Monnet at that time again became key figures in the coordination of allied war supplies, and Salter in particular pressed the US administration to launch a shipbuilding programme, which contributed greatly to the allied war effort as a whole. After the war, Salter briefly worked for UNRRA.¹⁰² But apart from these practical engagements, Salter only chaired one conference on international administration in 1945, which brought together some leading functionalists.¹⁰³ He did not, however, contribute much in writing to the new debate over international organisation, and Mitrany's programmatic defence of functionalism soon overshadowed Salter's earlier contributions.

In order to determine Salter's place in the history of IR theory we investigate in this section to what extent he paved the way for IR functionalism, and to what extent he was an original thinker. First of all, there are some parallels between the work of Fabian internationalist Leonard Woolf and Salter's pragmatic approach. Woolf also was a trained civil servant with international experiences. Like Salter, Woolf sought international administration to deal with the effects of industrial modernity, those being international economic interdependence and vast socioeconomic inequalities. Woolf's *International Government* (1916), set a precedent for other internationalists who, often in association with the Fabian society, considered international administration a necessary response to domestic social problems.¹⁰⁴ Salter, though not being a formal member, was affiliated with the Fabian society, and Fabians often quoted his works on international administration.¹⁰⁵ Salter differed from Woolf in that he did not rely on experiences in colonial administration, rather on his vision of transgovernmental expert administration derived from allied wartime cooperation.

Second, E. H. Carr adapted some functionalist ideas. Prior to his functionalist writings, Carr denounced interwar internationalism as a whole while concealing that it already included thinking about international socioeconomic organisation.¹⁰⁶ David Long thus rightly emphasises, as against Carr's simplification, the heterogeneity of the often highly pragmatic thinkers of the interwar period who tackled the problems of international anarchy and/or needed international economic organisation.¹⁰⁷ For the

¹⁰⁰ Boyd Orr and George D. H. Cole, *Welfare and Peace* (London: National Peace Council, 1945).

¹⁰¹ Philip C. Jessup, 'UNRRA, sample of world Organization', *Foreign Affairs*, 22:3 (1944), pp. 362–73; Leonard Woolf (ed.), *When the Hostilities Cease: Papers on Relief and Reconstruction Prepared for the Fabian Society* (London: Victor Gollancz, 1943); Cornelia Navari, 'Functionalism versus federalism: Alternative visions of European unity', in Philomena Murray and Paul Rich (eds), *Visions of European Unity* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1996), pp. 63–93 (p. 68).

¹⁰² Rickett, 'Salter'.

¹⁰³ Arthur Salter, 'Conference on international administration: Concluding remarks by the Chairman', *Public Administration*, 23:1 (1945), pp. 1–2; David Mitrany, 'Problems of international administration', *Public Administration*, 23:1 (1945), pp. 2–12.

¹⁰⁴ Leonard Woolf, *International Government* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1916); James L. Garvin, *The Economic Foundations of Peace or World-partnership as the Truer Basis of the League of Nations* (London: Macmillan, 1919).

¹⁰⁵ For a Fabian tribute to Salter see, for example, William Arnold-Forster, 'International controls', in Leonard Woolf (ed.), *When the Hostilities Cease*, pp. 43–60 (p. 59).

¹⁰⁶ For a highly interesting comparison of Carr and Woolf see Peter Wilson, *The International Theory of Leonard Woolf* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), pp. 201–4.

¹⁰⁷ David Long, 'Conclusion: Inter-war idealism, liberal internationalism, and contemporary international theory', in David Long and Peter Wilson (eds), *Thinkers of the Twenty Years' Crisis: Inter-War Idealism Reassessed* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995), pp. 302–28 (p. 303); Jens Steffek and Leonie Holthaus, 'Einleitung: Der vergessene "Idealismus" in der Disziplin der Internationalen Beziehungen', in Jens

purpose of this article, it is, however, most important to note that Salter was also a major influence on Carr's functionalist visions. After the (rhetorical) rejection of idealism, Carr showed sympathy for international economic planning in *The Twenty Years' Crisis* and elaborated on that theme, instead of realist power politics, in following publications.¹⁰⁸ Indeed, Carr's 'functionalist' thought is an example proving Salter's contribution to the development of that tradition. Later, pragmatic liberal Inis L. Claude and realist Reinhold Niebuhr also spoke highly of Salter, though Niebuhr considered Salter an 'idealist' in his hope for some higher intelligence contributing to the rational disinterest of those in power.¹⁰⁹

Most importantly, Salter influenced David Mitrany, the most eminent theorist of international functionalism, who in today's textbooks is often depicted as the founding father of this approach. Mitrany, a British citizen of Romanian origin, had published on the Balkans and collective security before turning to international functionalism in the early 1930s.¹¹⁰ He knew Salter in person and was familiar with Salter's works. Mitrany shared a number of research interests and positions with Salter. While Salter studied the AMTC, Mitrany concentrated on domestic wartime government.¹¹¹ Functional organisation along the lines of particular governance problems and the results achieved due to the suspension of parliamentarianism impressed Mitrany. Quite like Salter, he also viewed parliament as an inadequate institution to deal with the modern socioeconomic problems that transcended state boundaries. He equally came to the conclusion that the Great War had functioned as a moderniser that had brought about efficient tools to make use of common resources. And in 1945, Mitrany warned against a repetition of the 1918 experiences when the 'effective inter-allied war controls were hastily broken up on the morrow of the Armistice with total disregard for the needs of reconstruction'.¹¹² Thus, Mitrany appreciated functional organisations for the purpose of socioeconomic reconstruction – such as UNRRA, for which Salter briefly worked.¹¹³ However, in contrast to Salter's transgovernmental vision, Mitrany also drew heavily on the example of International Public Unions and aimed ultimately at functional bodies with supranational authority. For Mitrany, undermining the sovereignty of the nation-state by transferring competences to international organisations was a political goal in and of itself. For Salter, it was not.

Salter's functionalist writings are exemplary in their argument that traditional international cooperation via foreign offices cannot assure the type and degree of

Steffek and Leonie Holthaus (eds), *Jenseits der Anarchie: Weltordnungsentwürfe im frühen 20. Jahrhundert* (Frankfurt am Main: Campus, 2014), pp. 11–24 (p. 14).

¹⁰⁸ For Carr's functionalism and explicit references to Salter see Edward H. Carr, *The Future of Nations: Independence or Interdependence?* (London: Kegan Paul, 1941), p. 47; Edward H. Carr, *Conditions of Peace* (New York: Macmillan, 1947), p. 248.

¹⁰⁹ Reinhold Niebuhr, *Moral Man and Immoral Society: A Study in Ethics and Politics* (Louisville, KY: John Knox Press, 2001 [orig. pub. 1932]), p. xxix; Ines L. Claude, *Swords into Plowshares: The Problems and Progress of International Organization* (London: University of London Press, 1964), p. 379.

¹¹⁰ David Mitrany, *Greater Romania: A Study in National Ideals* (London and Toronto: Hodder & Stroughton, 1917); David Mitrany, 'Italiens Balkanpolitik', *Europäische Gespräche: Hamburger Monatshefte für Auswärtige Politik*, 6 (1927), pp. 329–41; David Mitrany, *The Problem of International Sanctions* (London: Milford, 1925).

¹¹¹ For Mitrany's debt to Salter see Mitrany, 'Political consequences'; and David Mitrany, *The Functional Theory of Politics* (London: LSE, 1975), p. 17. Mitrany also studied wartime developments when he was working for the Carnegie Endowment in the US (1922). For his own studies on functional wartime cooperation see Mitrany, *Effect of the War*.

¹¹² Mitrany, 'Problems', p. 2.

¹¹³ Fabian International Bureau, 'Verbatim Report of a Private Weekend Conference Held at Oxford on January 8th and 9th, 1944, Under the Joint Chairmanship of Lord Faringdon, H. N. Brailsford and John Parker, MP', *Mitrany Papers*, Box 49 (London: LSE Archive, 1944).

international cooperation necessary in the modern world. His scepticism toward politicians is mirrored by his writings on domestic politics where Salter also questioned the adequacy of parliamentary democracy in times of enhanced state interference. For Salter, functional bodies played a vital role in international organisation – but were not sufficient. He still thought that more political organisation coordinating the various functional bodies was necessary. Salter continued viewing functional bodies as a meeting place for national and international officials. Through cooperation in functional bodies, national officials were to develop an international outlook, and then take this outlook back home. His vision of governance beyond the state was thus premised on the existence of states and remained essentially transgovernmental. Unlike Mitrany, Salter also stressed the enduring importance of states in preventing functional organisations from becoming authoritarian.¹¹⁴

Compared to Salter, Mitrany had a broader conception of functional bodies in international cooperation.¹¹⁵ Though he refused to deliver a precise definition of functional bodies, Mitrany envisioned functional agencies with varying degrees of authority; ranging from advisory and coordinating functions to executive control over the distribution of raw materials and mineral oil, to the direct and permanent international administration of international services such as aviation or shipping.¹¹⁶ In particular for the latter, he proposed improved international training and education in order to guarantee that the officials running the functional agencies were competent and maintained an international outlook.¹¹⁷ Unlike Salter, Mitrany dismissed the idea of a political body supervising these functional agencies. The reason for such a decision against a supervisory political body was, besides Mitrany's pessimism about the chances of it being established, his deep-seated scepticism regarding the power politics of states impeding all efforts at constructive problem solving.¹¹⁸ Like David Long, we contend that Mitrany's opposition to (power) politics and his parallel optimism about the possibility of self-coordinating functional bodies stands in the tradition of Cole's earlier anarchist functionalism.¹¹⁹ Cole and Mitrany represent hence a more radical strand of functional thought than Salter, who suggested that functional bodies could only be part of broader political international organisation.

However, Mitrany also recognised a lack of executive control at the international level while agreeing with Salter that an encompassing international organisation with supranational authority was out of reach. The League's failure to effectively respond to aggression through application of sanctions and the subsequent outbreak of the Second World War implied to Mitrany that future peace depended on international control of strategic materials. Mitrany hence suggested these functional bodies perform executive functions in specific issue areas as an alternative to representative

¹¹⁴ Salter, *Personality in Politics*, pp. 128–9.

¹¹⁵ Lucian M. Ashworth, 'A new politics for a global age: David Mitrany's a working peace system', in Henrik Bliddal, Casper Sylvest, and Peter Wilson (eds), *Classics in International Relations: Essays in Criticism and Appreciation* (London: Routledge, 2013), pp. 59–68 (p. 64).

¹¹⁶ Mitrany, 'Problems', p. 7.

¹¹⁷ David Mitrany, 'A world order and patriotism', *The New Era* (April 1945), pp. 68–9.

¹¹⁸ Ashworth, 'New politics', p. 64. Wilson equally noted that Mitrany struggled to clarify the relationship between functional and political bodies. See Peter Wilson, 'The new Europe debate in wartime Britain', in Philomena Murray and Paul Rich (eds), *Visions of European Unity* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1996), pp. 39–62 (p. 44).

¹¹⁹ David Long, 'International functionalism and the politics of forgetting', *International Journal*, 48:2 (1993), pp. 355–79 (p. 370).

world government. Accordingly, Mitrany hailed the approach of the ECSC.¹²⁰ Given the autonomous decision-making power of its High Authority, the ECSC was probably the most ‘supranational’ organisation that ever existed. But when it became clear that the ECSC would serve as a hub for wider regional integration, Mitrany became rather critical of it.

What also distinguishes him from Salter is that Mitrany saw supranational functional bodies as a vehicle to enhance social equality on an international scale.¹²¹ He continued there with the concern of L. T. Hobhouse, who was a liberal internationalist and tutor of Mitrany, for social equality at the international level.¹²² Mitrany doubted that national administrations retained the competencies needed for social planning and argued that in particular, small states would find it impossible to secure all kinds of welfare services. However, if not states but transnational functional agencies provided services and material benefits, even the citizens of small or poor states would eventually profit from higher standards of living.¹²³ Transnational functional agencies could guarantee, for instance, housing and food. In response to receiving these benefits, Mitrany hoped, citizens would retract loyalty from the state and pledge it to international bodies instead. To pinpoint his vision, we can say that he sought to move from the welfare state to a welfare world. Mitrany hence envisioned that the functional agencies’ welfare services would contribute to overcoming the state.¹²⁴

At some fundamental level, Salter certainly shared Mitrany’s commitment to equality – and his lifelong concern for developing countries, such as India, China, and Iraq, or states with financial difficulties testifies to this.¹²⁵ Salter also opposed the immense inequality between peoples lacking the bare necessities of life and those living in comfort in industrial states. Without making a distinction between Western and non-Western states, Salter argued that the most important cause of underdevelopment – even more important than political stability – was a lack of administrative capacity. In order to enhance administrative efficiency and to bring about economic welfare, he in this case also suggested the introduction of economic advisory councils, though with differing degrees of success.¹²⁶ His approach failed especially in Iraq. However, it shows that Salter, unlike Mitrany, thought of international development aid as a means to enable national administrations to do their job and not as a means to weaken the state and divert loyalties away from it.

The most common critique of functionalism is that it places too much power in the hands of an international technocracy and undermines democratic control of government. Realist John H. Herz objected, for instance, to how international civil servants might be corrupt or pursue their own factional interests, and that Mitrany’s

¹²⁰ Cornelia Navari, ‘David Mitrany and international functionalism’, in David Long and Peter Wilson (eds), *Thinkers of the Twenty Years’ Crisis: Inter-War Idealism Reassessed* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995), pp. 214–46 (p. 226).

¹²¹ Jens Steffek, ‘The cosmopolitanism of David Mitrany: Equality, devolution, and democracy beyond the state’, *International Relations*, 29:01 (2015), pp. 23–44.

¹²² Leonie Holthaus, ‘L. T. Hobhouse and the transformation of liberal internationalism’, *Review of International Studies*, 40:04 (2014), pp. 705–27.

¹²³ David Mitrany, *Food and Freedom* (London: The Batchworth Press, 1945).

¹²⁴ David Mitrany, *A Working Peace System* (Chicago: Quadrangle Books, 1966), p. 77; Per A. Hammarlund, *Liberal Internationalism and the Decline of the State: The Thought of Richard Cobden, David Mitrany, and Kenichi Ohmae* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005).

¹²⁵ Arthur Salter, *The Development of Iraq: A Plan of Action* (London: Caxton, 1955); Salter, *China and the Depression*; Salter, *Scheme for an Economic Advisory Organisation*.

¹²⁶ Susanne Kuß, *Der Völkerbund und China* (Münster: Lit Verlag, 2005). p. 142.

praise of international bureaucracies failed to account for this.¹²⁷ Herz is right insofar as Mitrany put a great deal of faith in international civil servants' capacity for utilitarian and fair calculation. In the tradition of the League's civil servants, Mitrany argued that international civil servants are able to determine what would be best from the point of view of the whole world.¹²⁸ His model of functional international organisation broke with the principle of sovereign equality, and suggested instead that those states with the material and epistemic capacities to perform a transnational function should receive participatory and controlling rights.¹²⁹ On the other hand, Mitrany's international functionalism is, like Salter's, sensitive to the problems of democracy. Salter and Mitrany both rejected parliamentary democracy as unfit for modern times – but they did search for alternative means of democratic control. Making another 'international analogy', Mitrany appreciated the rise of international non-governmental organisations (INGOs) as an experiment in representation that was more advanced at the international than at the national level. He suggested that INGOs were important for keeping international organisations in check, but viewed NGOs also as a cure to the decline of domestic democracy. He thought that NGOs might function as sort of an informed citizenry at a time when traditional parliaments lose their influence.¹³⁰ In doing so, Mitrany continued a functionalist tradition founded by Salter with its faith in the virtues of an international civil service and its search for new forms of democratic representation.

Conclusion

In this article, we reintroduced James Arthur Salter's international thought as an instance of pragmatic internationalism that was more inspired by practical experience than philosophical argument. Against the cliché of interwar internationalism as unworldly and naïve, we argued that this kind of reasoning – epitomised by Salter's work – was vital for the development of early IR theory, in particular its functionalist variety. Early experiments with international administration, such as through the AMTC and technical branches of the League, provided important arguments for the internationalists of the interwar years. In particular the allied wartime experiences, rather neglected so far in the historiography of IR, were critical to the evolution of thinking about the possibilities of international cooperation. The Great War, we submit, spawned internationalist thinking not only because of its horrors and destructions, but (almost paradoxically) also through practical experiences with international cooperation. James Arthur Salter made a critical contribution to early IR theory by spelling out the lessons to be learned from wartime cooperation in the AMTC, and by seeking to extend this particular 'transgovernmental' form of expert cooperation to peacetime. As our section on Salter and Mitrany has shown, this transgovernmental functionalism is markedly distinct from the more supranational scenarios that are commonly associated with functionalist thought today.

¹²⁷ John H. Herz, *International Politics in the Atomic Age* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1959), p. 326.

¹²⁸ Boudreau, 'International Civil Service', p. 81. In Mitrany's functionalism this matters with regard to the claims of small states.

¹²⁹ Mitrany, 'World order and patriotism'; Mitrany, *Working Peace System*, pp. 77–8.

¹³⁰ David Mitrany, 'International cooperation in action', *International Associations*, 11:9 (1959), pp. 644–8; David Mitrany, 'The international NGOs: Experiment in representation', *Manchester Guardian* (10 April 1954).

A second reason for rediscovering Salter is his pronounced use of what we called the international analogy; that is, how international institutions have inspired efforts of domestic reform. This was possible because both international and domestic political theory addressed a similar problem: the (perceived) incapacity of traditional political institutions to deal with the complexities of industrial modernity. Internationally, the outdated institution was diplomacy. Domestically, it was parliamentary democracy. The common denominator is governance by lay people, which was perceived as shortsighted, emotional, and obsessed with parochial interests. Rationalising governance under these circumstances required the introduction of functional representation as well as a transfer of competencies to a new class of expert advisers, which sidelined traditional politics and politicians. As Salter's thought in particular demonstrates, international-level functionalism 'trickled down' into domestic political theory to address some very analogous problems – or what was perceived as such. As theorists of modernisation, functionalists did not see a fundamental difference between international and domestic institutional settings, suggesting functional representation and expert advice as a remedy to their shortcomings. While not questioning the value of democracy in principle, they thought that it was in dire need of being adapted to changed circumstances, and that the domestic advancement of expert bodies paired with the transfer of governmental functions to international institutions represented the way forward.