

# The League of Nations and its work on social issues

Symposium from 31 October to 1 November 2013

United Nations Office at Geneva

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UNIVERSITÉ  
DE GENÈVE

FACULTÉ DES LETTRES  
Département d'histoire générale



Vrije  
Universiteit  
Brussel

u<sup>b</sup>

UNIVERSITÄT  
BERN

This symposium will focus on the League of Nations efforts on social issues, which deserve more scholarly attention in spite of the recent publications on international crime and human trafficking for prostitution. In the post-war historiography, the political failure of the League was predominant but in recent works, its contribution to 'peacekeeping', to sovereignty issues and in dealing with social questions have become more visible.

The symposium will go beyond the work of the Social Section of the League and will analyze the organization's global effort on social issues from two different perspectives: the League's internal work on social affairs, and the national implementations of its proposals. Papers presented will hence deal with initiatives against sexual trafficking, with the promotion of child welfare, and with other social questions such as health, slavery, refugees, drug trade and intellectual cooperation.

Labour issues will not be included in this symposium as being the competence of the powerful and quasi-independent International Labour Organization (ILO). However, related social issues such as forced labour, overlapping with the work of the ILO, will be included in the programme.

## Location

United Nations Office at Geneva  
Palais des Nations  
Library Events Room  
Building B, Door B.20, 1<sup>st</sup> Floor

## Registration

People wishing to attend the symposium are requested to register by e-mail at:

[libraryarchives@unog.ch](mailto:libraryarchives@unog.ch)

Deadline for registration:

**15 October 2013**

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*No travel and accommodation costs can be provided by the symposium organizers.*

Papers will enter in one or more of the following sections:

## **Section I**

### **The League's initiatives around social issues**

This section will analyze the League's work on social issues focusing first on the interactions, conflicts and alliances between the actors involved and their relations with the Assembly, the Council and the Permanent Secretariat. Secondly, it will study the debates and activities of the various bodies of the League working on social issues: the Advisory Committee on the Traffic in Women and Children, the Child Welfare Committee, the Health Organisation, the Advisory Committee on Opium and other Dangerous Drugs, the Slavery Commissions, the Commission for Refugees, and the Committee on Intellectual Cooperation. The ideologies such as humanitarianism, feminism, abolitionism, regulation, prohibitionism, nationalism, class, as well as the gender dynamics between male and female representatives will also receive attention.

## **Section II**

### **The League's impact within global-local relationships**

This section will deal with the implementation of the League's proposals on social issues in national and/or local settings. Research works will help understand the interplay between state and non-state actors in the shaping, implementation, or opposition to reforms proposed by supranational institutions. This section will focus on the developments in individual states to gauge the impact of the Geneva-based organization on national and local social policies and vice-versa.

**Individual presentations will last 15 minutes and will be followed by general discussions.**

Papers will be available to the symposium participants from September 2013 onward at : <https://www3.unog.ch/events/lonsymposium2013>

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### **Symposium organized by**

#### **Blandine Blukacz-Louisfert**

Chief, Institutional Memory Section, Library of the United Nations Office at Geneva.

#### **Sandrine Kott**

Professor of Modern European History, Head of History Department, University of Geneva.

#### **Magaly Rodríguez García**

Postdoctoral Fellow, Research Foundation Flanders, Vrije Universiteit Brussel.

#### **Elife Biçer-Deveci and Edith Siegenthaler**

Doctoral students, SNSF Research Project "Was There a Human Rights Turn in International Gender Politics of the Interwar Era?", directed by Regula Ludi and Brigitte Studer, Institute of History, University of Bern.