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From Geneva to Washington: The lived internationalism of Walter Kotschnig between the League of Nations and the United Nations, 1925–45

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ABSTRACT
This paper explores the career of the internationalist Walter Kotschnig between the two world wars. Born in Austria in 1901, Kotschnig spent much of the 1920s and 1930s working in Geneva with a range of international bodies before he moved to the United States in 1936, where he would later work with the State Department planning the establishment of the United Nations. Across these decades, Kotschnig developed a critique of dominant liberal internationalist thought on both sides of the Atlantic; his thought was the result of a 'lived internationalism', and rooted in the material practicalities of living a life that straddled international borders; these ideas in turn became deeply influential in the wartime planning of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) and its Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC).

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On 12 December 1945, Walter Maria Kotschnig addressed an audience of the Council for Education in World Citizenship (CEWC) at Caxton Hall, London. Born in Habsburg Austria at the dawn of the twentieth century, Kotschnig was in the British capital as part of the US State Department delegation to the recently-concluded international conference that drafted the constitution for the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO). In his Caxton Hall speech, Kotschnig spoke as someone whose life, lived between Europe and the United States (where he moved in 1936) gave him a particular stake in UNESCO; he was 'born and nurtured in Europe', which had given the world the thinkers who 'have given meaning to human life and dignity to men.'[1] 'Because I am both a European and an American', Kotschnig argued, 'UNESCO is important to me.' As the world faced a 'moral, intellectual, and spiritual crisis' at the end of the Second World War, Kotschnig expressed his hopes that the new international organisation would ensure that 'whether in Iran or in the United States, in Australia or Soviet Russia, no young person should be allowed to remain ignorant of the fact that he was born into an interdependent world, interdependent economically, politically and even culturally.'[2]

Walter Kotschnig lived internationalism as both subject and agent in the decades following the First World War. His experience of the collapse of empire, post-war humanitarian crisis, and work at the heart of international organisations shaped his thinking and resulted in an outlook that pushed back against dominant modes of contemporary liberal internationalist thinking. Bolstered by decades of work at the heart of international cooperation, Kotschnig was unusually well-placed to contribute to the creation of the nascent United Nations during the Second World War and, in the process, critique prevailing thought about internationalism. The article deals with

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Kotschnig's life – and the challenge of living, doing, and thinking internationalism – between 1925 and 1945 in a broadly chronological manner, beginning with his time in Geneva in the 1920s, his work with refugee scholars in the 1930s, and ultimately his move to the US and war-time work with the State Department.

Kotschnig's life and career sheds light on three important and related issues. First, his interwar trajectory demonstrates how experience of the failures of the post-First World War peace settlement were formative for those which followed in 1945. Kotschnig lived through post-1918 reconstruction as a student, received aid in the midst of widespread hunger, and then became a key figure in the international student movement and the coordination of refugee relief in the 1930s. By the time he joined the State Department in 1944, few people could speak of educational reconstruction and cultural cooperation with the direct authority and personal experience of Walter Kotschnig. This article will demonstrate how Kotschnig's role in the creation of UNESCO and the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) at the United Nations directly applied his lived experience of the preceding decades and was the culmination of his interwar internationalist life.

Second, Kotschnig's experiences elucidate how the liberal international organisations created in the aftermath of the First World War were reconceptualised during the 1939–45 conflict, or, in short, the path from League to UN.[3] While recent research has highlighted the many continuities – of people, practices, and infrastructure – that linked these two organisations, Kotschnig's career demonstrates that this process was far from linear. Kotschnig only worked formally for the League of Nations for a relatively short period of time between 1934 and 1936, when he was employed by its High Commission for Refugees. However, he spent eleven years of his life (1925–36) living in Geneva, the seat of the League of Nations, where he worked for a humanitarian student organisation, the International Student Service (ISS, 1925–34) and was, as a result, deeply connected to a wide range of scholarly networks, philanthropies, and international organisations operating adjacent to the League. Throughout his career, he problematised international cooperation in his public engagement and published work and was thus in high demand during the Second World War when new international organisations were developed to replace the old League system.

Finally, Kotschnig's life poses important questions about identity as Europe transitioned from multi-ethnic empires to nation states. Kotschnig was a member of 'international society' who led a self-styled international life in the interwar years.[4] He lived in the Republic of Austria for only three years and, in his published and private writing, reflected little upon Austria or his own sense of being Austrian. Instead, he was preoccupied with the conceptualisation of international identities and analysis of international society. He insisted that his family's move from Geneva to the United States in 1936 was voluntary and that the US constituted the best place to bring up his multi-lingual family. As much historiography of the intellectual migration in the 1930s has emphasised the transfer and reception of nationally-framed modes of thought, Kotschnig's example suggests that international thought and expertise, acquired by thinking, doing, and living internationalism, was also part of this broader migration, and subsequently crucial to post-war institution building.[5]

Contexts for an international life

Walter Maria Kotschnig was born in 1901 in Judenburg, a Habsburg town which became part of the Austrian republic in 1918.[6] This was a turbulent time where national identities were in flux. Stefan Zweig famously said of the new state: 'a country that did not wish to be got its orders: you must exist!'[7] Gripped by spiralling inflation and widespread hunger, the new state was the recipient of a controversial economic bailout from the League of Nations in 1922.[8] The Austrian republic was a site where conflicting thought about national and international identities converged. Glenda Sluga has argued that the multinational Habsburg Empire helped to create 'international imaginaries that reached into different corners of society and politics' during the First

World War and after. In Austria, early advocacy of the League of Nations built upon the multinational past of many of its supporters.[9] Within the Habsburg Empire, Austria had been seen as synonymous with multinationalism, multilingualism, and geographic diversity, all of which seemed to disappear in 1918 with the collapse of the monarchy and Treaty of Saint-Germain-en-Laye.[10] The former Habsburg Empire provided fertile ground for the development of far-reaching ideas. Tara Zahra has shown how anti-globalism flourished in the former Austro-Hungarian territories, while Quinn Slobodian has highlighted the emergence of neoliberalism in Austria in the same period.[11]

The collapse of the Habsburg Empire sparked much discussion about the past, present, and future of Austria.[12] Kotschnig lived through the disruption that followed the demise of the empire which he would, later in his life, describe as a 'very restless time.'[13] His father, Ignaz Kotschnig, hailed from Mahrenberg, and the family often visited relatives there while Walter was a child. Following the collapse of the Habsburg Empire, Mahrenberg became part of the new Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes.[14] As a young student in Graz, Kotschnig received aid from American organizations as part of the wider humanitarian intervention into impoverished Austria.[15] He threw himself into student politics and travelled widely across Europe when time permitted. In his unpublished memoir he recalled how 'living conditions during the first years after the war were miserable' and that he sided with conservative students during a riot that involved Communists and trade unionists.[16] Despite, or perhaps because of the turbulent world into which he came of age, Kotschnig wrote little, publicly or privately, about Austria or his own sense of being Austrian.

Kotschnig seems to have viewed himself as an internationalist. He believed deeply in the liberal internationalist project and practiced it by living a self-fashioned internationalist life. A student at the University of Graz between 1919 and 1922, Kotschnig completed a PhD entitled 'Univeral Oekonomie und Weltwirtschaft' (Universal Economics and the World Economy) at the Institut für Weltwirtschaft (Institute for the World Economy), University of Kiel, between 1922 and 1924.[17] He then worked with the International Student Service from 1925, took a position with the League of Nations High Commissioner for Refugees in 1934, before he moved to the United States in 1936. Kotschnig lost his Austrian citizenship following the Anschluss of 1938 and became an American citizen in 1942. He married a Welsh woman, Elined Prys, whom he met at an international conference in Austria in 1921.[18] A fellow internationalist, she worked with the international student movement in Romania and was part of a Welsh peace delegation that travelled to the United States in 1924 to encourage the US to join the League of Nations.[19] Walter and Elined, both of whom were Quakers, raised three Swiss-born children in Geneva and maintained a multilingual household before their move to the United States. As he stated in 1953 interview with the State Department, with a family 'composed of an Austrian father, a Welsh wife, and three children born in Switzerland … I concluded that the only place where I could pull that family together was in the American melting pot.'[20] Kotschnig claimed that, unlike many German and Austrian refugees who settled in the United States in the 1930s and 1940s, his move was voluntary. In the same interview he stated that 'I am not a refugee. I have never been a refugee. I didn't have to come to this country …. It was not a question of need; it was a question of choice that I came to the United States.'[21]

The international thought of Walter Kotschnig

Kotschnig's career straddled the Atlantic and saw him move from the epicentre of European internationalism, Geneva, to the State Department and the heart of American planning for post-1945 international organisations. Intellectually, this placed him between two broad internationalist traditions, both of which he challenged in different ways. The first of these was the American idea of the International Mind, made famous in a 1911 publication by Nicholas Murray Butler, the President of Columbia University in New York and, from 1925, president of the Carnegie

Endowment for International Peace (CEIP).[22] Butler defined the International Mind as a mode of thinking that viewed the 'nations of the civilized world as friendly and co-operating equals in aiding the progress of civilization, in developing commerce and industry, and in spreading enlightenment and culture throughout the world.'[23] Under Butler's influence, the CEIP pursued a number of initiatives to further these goals, such as the 1918 creation of International Mind Alcoves at libraries in the US (and around the world) which had the purpose, in the words of Steven W. Witt, to 'replace nationalism with internationalism by nurturing cosmopolitan perspectives that transcended political boundaries.'[24] The idea of the International Mind was distinctly American and built upon progressive reformist notions of the perfectibility of public opinion.[25]

Across the Atlantic Ocean in Geneva, a similar idea was promulgated following the establishment of the League of Nations in 1920. Widely invoked but rarely defined, the concept of the Spirit of Geneva established the Swiss city as a space where international cooperation flourished and where rational and peaceful mindsets could thrive in ways that were, it was implied, impossible elsewhere.[26] The Spirit of Geneva was described by the Australian journalist C. Howard-Ellis in 1928 as 'the absence of a national atmosphere and the growth in its place of a sense of world issues and international perspective.'[27] In 1929, Robert de Traz described it as akin to a religion: 'from all parts there flock to Geneva people who can be best described as pilgrims awaiting a revelation or a confirmation of some belief'[28] Recently, Stella Ghervas has argued that in mobilizing this idea, authors such as de Traz sought to turn Geneva into a 'symbolic place', distant from the real city.[29] Both the International Mind and the Spirit of Geneva were idealised, optimistic, and theoretical visions of internationalism that urged the cultivation of international identities over their national counterparts. In so doing, they broadly overlooked the tangible practicalities of *doing* international cooperation.

Kotschnig began writing and speaking about internationalism once he began work with the ISS in 1925.[30] He moved to the ISS at a transitional point in its history; founded by the World Student Christian Federation (WSCF) as European Student Relief in 1920 to address the post-war humanitarian crisis, it reorganised itself into a permanent body dealing with international student welfare and mobility by the mid-1920s.[31] Unlike many international organisations, the ISS was not constituted of national organisations that fed into the international centre; instead, it was conceived of as an international movement, whereby students were linked by commonalities.[32] This form of international cooperation owed much to ecumenical Christian internationalism, and pushed back against cooperation based upon the interaction of nation states.[33] Between 1925 and 1936, Kotschnig took 83 international trips, including 16 visits to Germany, 14 to France, 11 to Britain, and ten to his future home, the United States.[34] Work with the ISS, of which Kotschnig became General Secretary in 1927, was varied and brought him into close collaboration with a range of international organisations.

The tension between nationalism and internationalism was a common issue for many international organisations in the period and one with which Kotschnig grappled.[35] In his work with the ISS, he asserted the importance of a strong position for national identities and pushed back against their erosion in the face of supranational sentiment. Kotschnig's internationalism was also deeply rooted in material realities; drawing upon his experiences in post-war Austria, he stated that international cooperation would only succeed where it built upon stable social and economic conditions in the states concerned and, moreover, that it was incumbent upon internationalist organisations to foster better material conditions in order to stimulate international-mindedness.

Kotschnig's experiences with the ISS led to his first critiques of prevailing liberal internationalist thought. He agreed with the general premise of the International Mind that, as he stated in an address to the ISS general conference in 1928, 'men shall learn to think internationally, just as in the past, and even more in the present, they have thought and think nationally.'[36] However, he frequently asserted that the promotion of internationalism needed to be built upon solid national foundations.[37] He wrote in 1926 that 'the future of the world should be in the direction

of developing the qualities that go to make up the "personality" of the various nations' in order to lead 'away from imperialism.'[38] Elsewhere he argued that 'we must first be truly English, or German, or French, before we can come to an understanding of internationalism.'[39] Kotschnig wrote of his antipathy for 'a bloodless internationalism whose apostles look with contempt on their own people and see in the neighbouring nation the incarnation of all virtues' which would, in sum, lead to 'nothing but a sum of colourless units, all the same size.' His critique of internationalism encompassed the wider world of the League of Nations and Geneva, where, he claimed, 'one finds numbers of advocates of the shallow internationalism I have described.'

> It is the silent contempt for the national ideal which brings about these sad results. People do away with all distinctive national characteristics in order to become international, but they only succeed in getting thoroughly artificial. They lose more or less the connection with their people and by this they become incapable of understanding what real internationalism means.[40]

Kotschnig was not alone in his criticism of the Spirit of Geneva, with authors such as George Bernard Shaw and the ILO-worker Albert Cohen later satirising the culture that developed around the League's headquarters.[41] Some contemporary critics saw the Swiss city as provincial and conservative, while others agreed with Kotschnig that the international sociability that the League wished to cultivate in Geneva would erode national characteristics.[42] Kotschnig also argued, moving away from the Euro-Americanism that often dominated internationalist thought, that the ISS could play an important role in generating greater knowledge of world cultures and act as an 'intermediary between the future leaders of the nations.'[43]

> We pioneers of the intellect, we know exactly the kind of dress the favourite film star wears, but of the Spiritual and material needs of our brothers in India, South Africa, Russia we know nothing! We know nothing of the wonderful writings of a people like the Jews, which has preserved its nationality through a two-thousand years dispersion; nothing of the new movements of thought that are sweeping through the ranks of our Mohammedan fellow students all over the world.[44]

International life between thought and action

Kotschnig's thought was influenced by his experiences as both an object and agent of internationalism. Two crises in the early 1930s posed a potentially fatal challenge to the world of internationalism that had built up in the preceding decade: the Great Depression and the rise of National Socialism in Germany. Both were not only occasions for intellectual reflection, but challenges with which Kotschnig had to grapple in his professional life.

The coming to power in Germany of the National Socialists in 1933 posed a deeply divisive challenge to the internationalism of the student movement and much beyond.[45] In response to the infamous April 1933 law that removed Jewish scholars and political opponents from the civil service, the ISS set up a department (chaired by Kotschnig) to assist students fleeing Germany and place them at institutions elsewhere in Europe.[46] He visited Germany in May 1933 and called for moderate attitudes, warning that 'if the world maintains its attitude of antagonism and hostility there is only one possibility – a new war which in its consequences will probably mean the end of Western civilisation.'[47] This position was controversial; Francis Miller, chairman of the World Student Christian Federation, wrote privately that Kotschnig's positioning of the ISS was 'perfectly absurd' and that he had 'no respect whatever' for it.[48]

Kotschnig's inclusive position was put to the test almost immediately. In late January 1933, prior to Hitler's appointment as German Chancellor, the ISS Assembly agreed that its annual conference would take place at Ettal, in the Bavarian Alps.[49] As the conference drew nearer, Kotschnig came under pressure to move it elsewhere, but remained steadfast in his vision of inclusive internationalism and that it should take place in Germany.[50] The Austrian Socialist Student Organization wrote an open letter to him and asked rhetorically 'do you really not know, Dr Kotschnig, why people disdain Hitler's Germany?' Referring to conditions at Dachau concentration camp, it stated

that 'any socialist and any decent person' would keep a distance from the ISS conference in Germany. The Austrian group broke with the ISS as a result of Kotschnig's determination to stage the conference in Germany.[51] Despite this internal opposition, the conference went ahead as planned in late July 1933 and was attended by 160 participants from 24 countries. Heinrich Himmler and Ernst Röhm attended the opening session.[52] In London, *The Times* praised the event as the 'only international cultural conference which was allowed to meet on German soil' in 1933. It lauded Kotschnig's 'courage and tact' for organising an event where 'opinions ranging from Fascism to the most extreme forms of Communism were openly expressed', noting that such freedom of speech would not have happened elsewhere in Germany.[53]

The controversies surrounding the ISS relationship with Germany came to a head in June 1934 when Fritz Beck was murdered by the SS during the Night of the Long Knives. A Roman Catholic, Beck was a key figure in the student self-help movement in Munich in the early 1920s and a leading organiser of the Ettal conference. Beck's murder made the front page of the European edition of the *Chicago Daily Tribune/Daily News, New York* which bore the headline: 'America's Friend Shot.'[54] A recent analysis argues that Beck was murdered for a number of related reasons, including his connection to Röhm (with whom Beck had no personal relationship but who took over responsibility for the Vereins Studentenhaus in Munich from 1933), his opposition to the Nazi regime, his relationship with the pacifist F.W. Foerster, his Catholicism, and his sympathy for Jewish scholars.[55]

The murder revived the controversy about Germany's place in the ISS. In response, the ISS Standing Committee – of which Kotschnig was a member – suspended relations between German government institutions and the ISS on 9 July 1934, a decision that was upheld by the ISS Assembly in August. The German committee wrote of its 'astonishment and indignation' at the decision which proved to be highly divisive within the ISS and for which Kotschnig was largely held responsible.'[56] He wrote privately to his friend Edward Murrow that 'we are as anxious as anyone can be to work with the positive elements in Germany' and 'we are simply concerned with the fate of our very best friends for whom we are not prepared to sign the death warrants.'[57] Having come under huge personal pressure within the ISS not to sever ties with Germany, Kotschnig left the organisation after almost a decade of employment. This was not, however, an abandonment of internationalism; he dedicated the years that followed – both in his thinking and his action – to its reconstruction.

Kotschnig worked with a series of refugee scholar committees and organisations that aided students and professors fleeing Germany.[58] By the end of the decade, he claimed to have written 'hundreds if not thousands of letters' on behalf of refugee intellectuals – with mixed results.[59] Kotschnig first addressed the issue through his work as ISS General Secretary. By the time of his departure from the ISS, he had already agreed to take up a post at the League of Nations in Geneva as Director of the High Commission for Refugees from Germany (HCRFG) where he worked under James McDonald, the High Commissioner.[60] Kotschnig's international connectedness was an asset in this role, and he became an important point of contact between different scholar rescue schemes.[61] McDonald resigned as High Commissioner in December 1935, disheartened by the willingness of national governments to respond effectively to the wider problem in the name of 'common humanity.'[62] This also led to the cessation of the work of the HCRFG in January 1936.[63]

McDonald's resignation led Kotschnig to take a third position related to refugee scholars. Having declined a post as secretary in a new International Office for Academic Refugees in Geneva, he departed for the United States in early 1936, where he worked on behalf of the Notgemeinschaft deutscher Wissenschaftler im Ausland (Emergency Committee in Aid of Displaced German Scholars) and the Institute of International Education (IIE). In this position, Kotschnig investigated opportunities available to displaced intellectuals in the United States, reported on the experiences of those who had already been placed there, and acted as a liaison between the many scholar rescue organisations active in the field.[64] Kotschnig's time in the US – where he

visited 38 educational institutions – was an important opportunity to not only promote refugee assistance schemes, but to forge connections with key educational thinkers who would shape the next decade of his life. [65] While the post in the United States only lasted a few months in the spring of 1936, it seems to have been part of a bigger plan to consolidate nascent relationships with individuals and organisations before moving there permanently.

Intellectual unemployment and comparative education

Kotschnig's international thought was reshaped by the flight of Jewish and other scholars from the Reich as well the consequences of the Great Depression for intellectual communities. Rather than seeing the contemporary crisis of intellectual life as having immediate roots, he traced its origins to decades-old issues in international cooperation and developed a major research interest in the unemployment of university graduates.[66] Given the nature of its work, the ISS held a longstanding interest in this issue; Walter and Elined Kotschnig, then co-editors of the ISS newsletter *Vox Studentium*, oversaw the production of a themed edition concerning the 'over-production of intellectuals' in February 1927.[67] Unsurprisingly, this interest accelerated in the aftermath of the Great Depression. In 1932 the ISS commenced a major research project into intellectual unemployment which was led by Kotschnig and funded by the Carnegie Corporation of New York.[68] In a speech at the ISS annual conference in Brno in 1932, he warned of the potential radicalisation of unemployed graduates, claiming that 'many turn from the university to prophets in the streets whose apocalyptic visions or entrancing descriptions of the promised land lift them out of their physical and mental misery.'[69]

Kotschnig published three substantial works on this topic in the 1930s: *The University in a Changing World* (1932, co-edited with his wife Elined), a 1935 report called *Planless Education*, and *Unemployment in the Learned Professions* in 1937.[70] These works directly linked education and its organisation in different countries with the rise of totalitarianism. *Unemployment in the Learned Professions* argued that intellectual unemployment was responsible for revolutionary violence of both the right and left and that in Germany unemployed university graduates were at the vanguard of National Socialism. Kotschnig warned that 'not only political systems but the very basis of western civilization seem to be threatened to-day.'[71] Cumulatively, these works focused on the challenges facing different national educational systems and their social consequences and, in so doing, underscored the material challenges to student internationalism.

In addressing the issue of professional unemployment, Kotschnig utilised the tools of comparative education, in which he was strongly influenced by his colleague Isaac Kandel of Teachers College, Columbia University, New York.[72] Kandel argued that a comparative approach to the problems of education required analysis of education and its wider social and political contexts in other countries.[73] His vision of comparative education extended beyond what happened in the classroom to encompass humanity – organised into national groups – rather than strictly pedagogical issues. Comparative education as set out by Kandel was an implicitly multi-disciplinary endeavour that required expertise in languages, political theory, anthropology, economics, sociology, as well as educational theory and practice.[74]

Kotschnig utilised comparative frameworks in *Unemployment in the Learned Professions* to highlight the challenges to liberal internationalism. He argued that the study would highlight problems 'which arise most clearly only in the light of international comparison' and set out to 'overcome the departmentalization of knowledge in education and the social sciences.'[75] Kotschnig saw comparative education not strictly in terms of pedagogical practices, but as a means to understand wider social and political phenomena such as the influence of unemployed graduates on the rise of authoritarianism in Europe. His analysis was also rooted in the relationship between material conditions, intellectual life, and political conditions, all of which he could speak of with direct experience following his experiences as a student in Austria.

By the mid-1930s, Kotschnig had begun to map out a vision for the internationalism and international education of the future. This was undoubtedly a response to, on the one hand, the rise of European totalitarianism and, on the other, the wide-ranging research that underpinned *Unemployment in the Learned Professions*. In a 1936 lecture at Mount Holyoke College he argued that the preservation of democracy was fundamentally an educational matter and that democracies could learn much from the educational achievements of totalitarian countries. These states had, Kostchnig asserted, created 'a new type of man, ready and able to sacrifice everything for the attainment of the goals for which the totalitarian regimes exist.'[76] Accordingly, he argued that democracies should reorient their own education 'in the light of economic, social, national and international facts.'[77] These ideas would be at the heart of his public lectures, publications, and professional activities in the decade that followed which saw him at the centre of US planning for the post-war international order.

Slaves need no leaders

Kotschnig moved to the United States with his family in 1936. He was, by that point, a frequent traveller to the US and deeply-connected into North American academic networks. Both he and Elined, his wife, who had visited the US in 1924, decided that was where they wished to raise their family, although Walter's outspoken anti-Nazism may have made remaining in Europe a challenging proposition.[78] On arrival in the United States, he was soon appointed Professor of Comparative Education at Smith College in Northampton, Massachusetts, and also taught at Mt. Holyoke College. The outbreak of war in Europe in 1939 – and the spread of this war to encompass the United States in 1941 – accelerated the development and urgency of his internationalist thinking. He was motivated by his comparative analysis of the rise of totalitarianism, reflection upon his internationalist work in the 1920s and 1930s, and his frustration with the development of post-war planning in wartime. In February 1940, Kotschnig wrote privately that 'an enormous educational effort was needed to implant in the conscience and the understanding of the democratic nations those political concepts which are essential for the survival of the democratic way of life.'[79] In January 1941, he wrote with frustration that there was a 'universal lack of emphasis on educational and psychological problems' in much discussions of post-war planning where 'an understanding of basic cultural values will be essential if we are ever to emerge from this period of lawlessness.'[80]

The experience of war brought to mind the failings of the interwar period. In a 1941 publication, he returned to a longstanding criticism of interwar internationalist education which often took the form of 'a vague cosmopolitanism which refused to see that the very word internationalism presupposes the existence of individual nations and of national differences'; instead, it produced a 'flat, superficial egalitarianism which, having no counterpart in reality, was bound to lead to disillusion.'[81] And in 1943, with the United States now at war, Kotschnig used a line which he repeated often, telling a meeting of post-war educational planners how his experiences in Geneva led to his realisation that 'all our treaties and pacts and covenants were futile since we did not have the proper educational foundations laid in the various countries.'[82] The Second World War inspired the publication of Kotschnig's definitive work on international cooperation while, at the same time, he sought to put these ideas into practice.

The publication of *Slaves Need No Leaders: An Answer to the Fascist Challenge in Education* in 1943 was the culmination of Kotschnig's experiences and thinking across two decades. It was dedicated to three key collaborators in his life representing his past and future: James Shotwell's Commission to Study the Organization of Peace (CSOP), the International Student Service, and Fritz Beck.[83] *Slaves Need No Leaders* subjected European education systems to comparative analysis, sharply critiqued post-1918 reconstruction, and set out a detailed agenda for the world after the Second World War. Speaking from personal experience, Kotschnig warned that 'the mistakes made during the reconstruction period following the last war must not be repeated' and argued

that the provision of aid should be a means of creating new attitudes amongst the recipients, which had not happened in the early 1920s.[84] He was highly critical of the elitism of post-1918 educational reconstruction which often focused upon select individuals rather than wider populations.[85] *Slaves* established Kotschnig as an authority on the issues of post-war educational reconstruction, and he was soon invited to join committees that had formed to plan the post-war settlement. Grayson Kefauver, Dean of the School of Education at Stanford University, listed Kotschnig's plan as one of the four key proposals for an international educational authority, and subsequently invited him to participate in the meetings of his Liaison Committee for International Education (established 1943) while frequently citing his work on other occasions.[86] When Kotschnig was unavailable to attend particular meetings in the United States, another delegate quipped that 'I suppose I came in here because I reviewed Mr. Kotschnig's book.'[87]

Like others at the time, Kotschnig argued in *Slaves* for the creation of an international education organisation.[88] The creation of an international organisation dealing with education was not a new to the Second World War, but had been promoted by a variety of educationalists and peace activists over the preceding decades. It was proposed by a number of actors, including the American educationalist Fannie Fern Andrews, at the Paris Peace Conference in 1919 as part of the new League of Nations but ultimately not integrated into the League's covenant.[89] Thereafter, the League established the International Committee on Intellectual Cooperation in Geneva (ICIC, 1922) and the International Institute on Intellectual Cooperation in Paris (IIIC, 1926).[90] Both of these bodies addressed educational matters to an extent but did so as part of organisations that had much wider remits, thus lacking the clear educational focus that Kotschnig desired. Boasting a more explicitly educational focus, the International Bureau of Education (IBE) was established in Geneva in 1926, but separate from the League of Nations.[91] Kotschnig criticised each of these institutions for not reaching the individual school or teacher.[92] The lesson of the interwar years was that 'international education failed because it was never attempted in a manner equal to the unquestioned difficulties of the undertaking.'[93] This meant that it needed to be integrated into planning for the peace from the outset.

The first task of such an international educational agency, Kotschnig argued, should be humanitarian; it would assist in and direct 'rebuilding of the cultural and educational life of Europe and other parts of the world.' Beyond its immediate humanitarian task, this agency would play a crucial role in the post-war settlement where education would be essential to building an international society 'whose stability will be based on understanding consent within the family of nations rather than on pacts and treaties.'[94] *Slaves* set out a vision that, drawing on his experiences in post-war Graz, envisaged material reconstruction and the battle for minds as going hand-in-hand; there was little sense, he argued, 'in talking about higher education to students who collapse from exhaustion in lecture halls, as many did in the early twenties in Austria.'[95]

Building the United Nations

American planning for the creation of the United Nations began around 1943, gathered pace through the Dumbarton Oaks conference of 1944 and culminated at the San Francisco conference of 1945 where the UN Charter was finalised. Stephen Wertheim has argued that American support for an international organisation was the result of a 'revolution in American thinking' that took place between 1940 and 1942 which envisaged American global pre-eminence being asserted via a commitment to internationalism. [96] Within this wider drive towards the creation of a new international organisation, many educationalists made plans for the creation of an international education agency as part of the wider international organisation. This development is usually dated to October 1942 and the first meetings of the Conference of Allied Ministers of Education (CAME) in London.[97] Representatives of eleven governments attended CAME meetings by mid-1943 and, while they were not formal participants, the United States, China and the USSR had all sent observers by the summer of 1943.[98] In the Spring of 1944 an American delegation

led by William Fulbright travelled to London where it formally joined the CAME discussions, officially uniting planning in Europe and the United States.[99]

Many of the actors involved in discussions that led to the creation of UNESCO had, like Kotschnig, been thinking about these issues long before the war.[100] The challenge in wartime, however, was not just in refining ideas, but in getting proximity to power in order to have these ideas heard and acted upon.[101] Kotschnig was well-connected into planning networks on both sides of the Atlantic. In the summer of 1941, he was one of the signatories to the seven point programme ('a statement of American proposals for a new world order') published by CSOP and its chairman, James Shotwell.[102] He was also closely aligned with educational planners based in the United Kingdom and was, as early as October 1942, invited to London by Charles Judd of CEWC to represent American thinking on post-war educational rebuilding.[103] Only recently naturalised as an American citizen, Kotschnig felt that it would 'be better to have a one hundred per cent American go whose forefathers came over on the Mayflower', but retained close links with the work of CEWC thereafter.[104] In collaboration with the London International Assembly (LIA, an unofficial grouping of representatives of Allied governments), CEWC published *Education and the United Nations* in 1943, a report which foresaw a key role for education in the peace settlement – and cited Kotschnig.[105] Judd, who was secretary to the CEWC/LIA committee, wrote of his regret that they did not receive a copy of *Slaves* in time to discuss as part of their deliberations, and claimed that Kotschnig would find the report 'very small beer beside your own great book.'[106]

American educational planning for the post-war settlement built momentum in the summer of 1943 through the work of several rival committees as well as the State Department.[107] Kotschnig was allied to a group that drew together figures (including Shotwell, Isaac Kandel and Virginia Gildersleeve) who had been discussing these issues for almost a decade via the wider League of Nations ecosystem, the American National Committee for Intellectual Cooperation (ANCIC) and the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace (CEIP). This group emphasised analyses drawn from comparative education and was populated by figures with longstanding experience in the field. Grayson Kefauver led a second group, which established the Liaison Committee on International Education in the spring of 1943.[108] Finally, the German *emigré* Reinhold Schairer, like Kotschnig a veteran of the student self-help movement of the 1920s, sought to lead his own movement for an international educational organisation from his base at New York University.[109] Kotschnig and his allies were critical of both Kefauver and Schairer for their lack of subject-specific knowledge, their relative inexperience in the area, and Schairer's tendency for self-promotion.[110]

The essential prerequisite for shaping the post-war order was attaining influence at the State Department, and in this Kotschnig was only partially successful. His first contact with the State Department came in late 1939 when the secretary of state, Cordell Hull, invited him to a conference on Inter-American educational relations.[111] In the summer of 1942 he attended an event at the Department of State's Division of Cultural Relations and later wrote to his host Charles Thomson that he was 'getting a little bit tired sitting out the war on the sidelines' and wondered whether there was 'some place in Washington where I might be more useful.'[112] By January 1943, Ralph Turner put forward Kotschnig's name as a potential State Department recruit to coordinate the various proposals emerging for international collaboration of educators; Turner noted privately that, compared to other candidates, he preferred Kotschnig 'on the basis of his knowledge.'[113]

Kotschnig was appointed to the State Department on D-Day, 1944, where he took a post as Divisional Assistant in the Division on International Organization and Security at the State Department (and declined an offer from the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration [UNRRA]).[114] Despite a number of direct overtures to him to work on educational matters, his appointment was delayed because of internal restructuring at the State Department and Kotschnig's reluctance to push his own candidacy given his Austrian heritage.[115] In the meantime, Grayson Kefauver was appointed to the Division of Cultural Relations to lead on educational reconstruction.[116] Kotschnig wrote that he was 'rather surprised' that Kefauver had been appointed

as 'a consultant on problems of education in foreign countries. This is not his field and I know of several other people, real experts in the field of comparative education, who are equally perturbed.'[117] Thereafter, Kefauver became the leading figure in the State Department's planning for an international educational organisation.

Kotschnig's recruitment to the State Department leveraged his vast experience and knowledge of international organisations rather than focusing solely on education. He was part of the US teams at the Dumbarton Oaks, San Francisco and London conferences, and, in each case, was the only representative who came to the US in the midst of the wave of emigration from European totalitarianism.[118] As an assistant secretary to the delegation at Dumbarton Oaks, Kotschnig was tasked with drafting documents for Chapters IX and X (International Economic and Social Cooperation and ECOSOC) of the UN Charter. This draft formed the basis of discussions at San Francisco, which were overseen by the US delegate Virginia Gildersleeve, with whom Kotschnig worked as a principal technical expert.[119] The United Nations Charter, he wrote privately from San Francisco, might read as a 'disappointing document' because it did not significantly develop the Dumbarton Oaks proposals, and instead left it up to the new organisation 'to build a structure of commissions and specialist organisations necessary to engender and develop international cooperation in these fields.'[120] Recent observers have praised the ambition of the ECOSOC articles noting its commitment, in particular, to human rights.[121]

UNESCO

Kotschnig's institution-building work culminated with the creation of UNESCO at the London Conference of November 1945, where he was first appointed secretary, then technical secretary (because of illness), to the American delegation.[122] Issues relating to education and culture had been discussed in negotiations relating to the creation of ECOSOC at San Francisco, where it was decided that these issues were best covered in a separate institution.[123] The establishment of UNESCO brought together two of Kotschnig's longstanding interests, namely the role of education in democracy-building, and the wider organisation of international cooperation. As a technical secretary, Kotschnig was tasked with the coordination of 'the substantive aspects of preparation and the technical work of the delegation' and sat on commission III, chaired by the Belgian jurist Charles de Visscher, which created the UNESCO secretariat.[124]

The American team inherited a difficult situation at the London Conference; having agreed to a draft constitution for a new international educational organisation with CAME representatives in May 1944, the State Department backtracked on its support for educational reconstruction – central to the planning of Kotschnig and others – as part of the institution's responsibilities. In November 1945, the American delegation had to seek agreement to a constitution that omitted educational reconstruction in the face of claims from countries such as Greece that had suffered widespread destruction to educational institutions.[125] Having stated in *Slaves Need No Leaders* that 'adequate and intelligent distribution of food will be the first step towards educational reconstruction', the official State Department position placed Kotschnig and many of his colleagues in a tricky position; however, he dutifully toed the line in London meetings, arguing that UNRRA and private organisations should take the lead in educational reconstruction.[126]

Kotschnig's major contribution to the creation of UNESCO came after the conclusion of the London conference when he was appointed Deputy Executive Secretary to its Preparatory Commission. This appointment caused a tug of war at the State Department, where William Benton and Archibald MacLeish wrote to Dean Acheson that Kotschnig's appointment to the Preparatory Commission was 'vitally important.' Meanwhile Alger Hiss, Kotschnig's direct manager, resisted the appointment as he viewed Kotschnig as one of the 'six or seven key people' at the State Department working on ECOSOC.[127] Kotschnig's work with the Preparatory Commission initially entailed him ensuring that the various sub-committees were set up and populated legally.[128] He visited both the International Institute of Intellectual Cooperation in Paris and the International

Bureau of Education in Geneva, leveraging longstanding connections from the 1920s and 1930s in order to discuss the future relationship of these organisations to UNESCO. The IIIC was ultimately dissolved as part of these discussions. Kotschnig's importance as a representative of American interests became even more pronounced in January 1946 following the sudden death of Grayson Kefauver and a serious illness of the commission's executive secretary, Sir Alfred Zimmern. Consequently, Kotschnig and Valère Darchambeau (former Belgian Ambassador to London) were delegated full authority for the conduct of the commission's work, meaning that Kotschnig was tasked with 'all matters concerning relations between UNESCO and the United Nations Organisation, as well as other specialised agencies.'[129]

Kotschnig remained steadfast in his position that UNESCO learn the lessons of interwar organisations, as he had argued in *Slaves Need No Leaders*. In a January 1946 cable to Washington, he argued that UNESCO 'should foster the study of UNO, its purposes and achievements through the preparation of teaching aids, the organization of conferences on the teaching of international relations, the organization of youth contests, etc.' He was adamant that this differed 'from the practice of the League of Nations, where the preparation of similar materials had been overseen by a number of competing bodies.' UNESCO needed to be central to 'any long-range efforts at educating the world in the ideas and ideals of the United Nations', building international understanding of the purpose and function of the new organisation.[130]

The major issue facing Kotschnig in his role at the Preparatory Commission was educational reconstruction, which he characterised as 'one of the most difficult problems that I have confronted in twenty years.'[131] There were two problems to surmount: the first was getting accurate information about the needs of different countries while the second was the vexed issue of an agreement between UNESCO and UNRRA to manage reconstruction.[132] Discussions between UNESCO and UNRRA proved to be fraught and time-consuming.[133] Established in 1943, UNRRA had a general mission to bring relief to those in countries devastated by the war but to stop short of reconstruction. Chronically underfunded, its potential closure was mooted as early as August 1945.[134] A joint UNESCO-UNRRA agreement was drafted by Kotschnig and representatives of both sides on 6 February 1946, which envisaged UNRRA as the instrument through which aid would be distributed while the UNESCO Preparatory Commission would be the source of information regarding national needs as well as some supplies and funds.[135] The joint UNRRA-UNESCO agreement meant that UNRRA would bear the cost of shipping to UNRRA 'receiving countries' any materials that were contributed for educational relief purposes.[136]

UNESCO achieved only modest success in the field of educational reconstruction. Much of this was undertaken on a bilateral basis and depended upon the specific resources that states were willing to make available for this purpose. For example, Britain proposed to print and distribute 50,000 copies of a 'Teachers' Map of Europe', Danish university laboratories offered to host scientists from other countries as a relief measure and the Czechoslovak government prepared wall charts for educational training. The United States chose to work through private organisations as part of its response.[137] In his final meeting of the UNESCO preparatory commission in March 1946, Kotschnig claimed that UNESCO was something that he hoped 'would come into existence even twenty years ago' and, while he was satisfied to have played a part in bringing the organisation into being, its contribution to educational reconstruction must have been a disappointment.[138]

Conclusion

The creation of the United Nations was neither the end of Kotschnig's interactions with international organisations nor his involvement with the State Department. The conclusion of the Second World War marked a turning point in Kotschnig's life whereby, with UNESCO established and him a permanent employee of the State Department, his focus shifted away from international education to ECOSOC. In 1947, he was appointed Chief of the Division of the Office of United Nations Economic and Social Affairs. Kotschnig participated in 47 out of 49 sessions of

the Council until 1971, earning himself the nickname 'Mr ECOSOC.' Kotschnig's non-American birth and history of dealing with a range of international organisations with the ISS meant that he came under (misplaced) suspicion during the red scare of the early 1950s led by Senator Joseph McCarthy.[139] In 1962, President Kennedy gave him the personal rank of Minister during the period of his appointment as Deputy Representative of the US at the UN's ECOSOC and from 1965 until his retirement in 1971, he held the post of Deputy Assistant Secretary of State.[140] He died in 1985.

The emergence of the United Nations and its constituent organisations was a long-standing process that drew upon interwar experiences in a range of networked international organisations. These included but extended beyond the League of Nations to encompass the wider world of international non-governmental organisations. The connections between them were not linear. Many of those who collaborated on the creation of UNESCO, for example, had not only thought about the matter for decades, but had longstanding acquaintances with each other from the world of international organisations and the wider civic culture of internationalism. People such as Walter Kotschnig not only thought about internationalism, but also lived it in their personal lives and sought to shape it through their professional work. Kotschnig's career highlights the disparities between the idealised 1920s liberal internationalism of the International Mind and the Spirit of Geneva against the real world, day-to-day practice of internationalism of the interwar years, as international cooperation was beset by a range of existential crises. Kotschnig's life experiences were, in some respects, atypical; he was highly fortunate that he was not among the thousands of refugee scholars forced to flee Europe in the 1930s and exceptional as the only representative of that period's wider intellectual migration to serve as part of the American teams at Dumbarton Oaks, San Francisco, and London. These episodes provide important insights into the lived experience of internationalism, the making of policy, and the creation of international organisations, as well as well as defying the dominant tendency of the age to see individual trajectories solely through the lens of nationality.

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