

I have little to add to Silvia Salvatici's generous and thoughtful review. The move, as she and others have pointed out, from ideas to institutions, coincides with an impoverishing of horizons and a focus on the Anglo-American power nexus as the motor of actually realized internationalism. It also coincides, especially in the later chapters with a move from encomium to polemic, and perhaps also from history to a form of journalism. Could this have been avoided? For me, perhaps, only by cutting short the periodization and ending the story in some historically respectable epoch [but which one?]. And I did want to engage both with current practices and current theories of international relations, not least because what I regard as their deficiencies and hypocrisies drove much of the original project.

Salvatici makes two points, both surely correct. One is that the continuities, especially on the technical side, between international policy-making in the 1920s and that after 1945 are becoming more and more evident. I should perhaps have made more of these than I do; others are doing so very effectively in studies of institutions such as the WHO and the IMF. We could perhaps do with more biographical studies of figures such as Ludwik Rajchman and Per Jacobsson – or rather, since more scholarly and critical studies of their careers across the long twentieth century and either side of the Second World War. Her other point, is that too much is made of the US and not enough of the way nationals from other, smaller, countries [Poland and Sweden would be good examples] flourished within and shaped international institutions. True, again, but I think I have an answer to explain my choice of focus. What I wanted to understand [again, taking us back to the originary Concert of Europe] was not how international institutions work, but rather why they came into existence in the first place. To get at that question involved understanding debates among American policy-makers since what was and remains far from clear was why a country in such a commanding position in the world in 1945 should have done something so extraordinary as to define its interests in these internationalist terms.

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