

100 YEARS OF MULTILATERALISM IN GENEVA

FROM THE LoN TO THE UN

THE
HISTORICAL
REFERENCE
BOOK



CENTENARY OF THE LoN

The foundations of the UN and its peacebuilding efforts

HISTOIRE
EDITIONS SUZANNE HURTER



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ABOUT THE BOOK

This compilation of articles by historians, practitioners and experts in international organizations has 3 distinct parts.

The first part brings to life the forces of change that produced the League of Nations (LoN) and the International Labour Organization (ILO) in 1919. Both were born out of the First World War but had been envisioned in certain circles since the late nineteenth century. This part describes the activities of the two organizations in the interwar period and their programmes for preserving peace and achieving humanitarian, economic and social goals. For example, there are details of their efforts to fight drugs and slavery and to assist refugees. The LoN's powerlessness to prevent the Second World War provided stark evidence of its failed efforts at peacebuilding. Yet, several chapters explain how the original intentions and ideas survived and were incorporated into reconstruction plans even before the war ended.

Part two of the book describes multilateralism at work after the Second World War, as the former major powers settled into a new, bipolar world and adjusted to the changes brought by decolonization and its effects on multilateralism. While matters of peace and security were addressed at the new United Nations' (UN) headquarters in New York, many of the topics covered by this book were debated in Geneva thanks to the specialized agencies headquartered there. Matters of international trade, the environment, disarmament, development, and human rights were all debated in various fora on Swiss soil.

The third part addresses the resurgence of a multipolar world with new and universal political and security unknowns. It outlines the new challenges facing the UN and multilateralism and explores the role Geneva and Switzerland can play as pillars of multilateralism.

The League of Nations: a singular experience in multilateralism



The LoN Secretariat was originally housed in the Palais Wilson, now the home of the OHCHR.

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This 2-volume publication celebrating the centenary of the LoN and the ILO retraces and illustrates the history, trajectory, and global influence of the two organizations. It presents the principal achievements of the ILO, the LoN and then the UN in Geneva over the past one hundred years.

This generously illustrated reference work presents a panorama of the UN's diverse fields of action. Learn about the complex developments and key turning points in these institutions as they evolved and diversified to encompass the major humanitarian, economic, social, environmental and development issues of our times. This fascinating account also contains insights into some of the prominent figures who fostered and supported multilateralism.

Geneva's undisputed and essential role in the rise of the global multilateral system and preserving peace and the balance of power pervades the book from start to finish.



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Edited by
Olga Hidalgo-Weber
& Bernard Lescaze



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