Fascism's Doppelgänger: Trafficking, Underworldmaking, and the Imaginative Geography of Liberalism

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Abstract This article investigates the role of trafficking narratives in early-twentieth-century liberal internationalist worldmaking. Focusing on the League of Nations' anti-trafficking campaign, I demonstrate how these efforts contributed to such liberal worldmaking through what I call *under*worldmaking. I use Edward Said's notion of imaginative geography to explore the League's fixation with the relationship between global civility and global criminality, treating it as an adaptation of imperialism's Manichaean geopolitics for the new internationalist age. I focus on the Traffic in Women and Children's committee's process of knowledge production, arguing that the parallel trafficking underworld they worked so hard to capture also shared figurative entailments with antisemitic conspiracy theories. At the same time, it appealed directly to fascists in Europe. I conclude with some thoughts on anti-trafficking narratives today and suggest that rather than approaching fascism as a discrete response to the failures of liberal capitalism, we should look more closely at the figurative and aesthetic qualities that fascism and liberalism share.

Keywords liberalism, fascism, worldmaking, underworldmaking, liberal internationalism, imperialism, Edward Said, imaginative geography, traffic in women and children, League of Nations, blood libel, conspiracy theories, Manichean.

In a 1929 essay penned for *Zeitschriftfur Judische Wohlfahrtspflege* (*Journal of Jewish Welfare*) entitled "Zur Psychologie des Mädchenhandels und seiner Bekämpfung" ("On the Psychology of Sex Trafficking and its Suppression"), a young Erich Fromm wondered why "certain circles should insist with all their energy on the prevalence of a crime which leading criminologists assure us is non-existent or virtually non-existent."[1] Why, given the lack of evidence, he continued, had the League of Nations "devoted a costly inquiry to it" and granted its suppression "privileges in international legal agreements that surpass those of most other serious crimes"? In the rest of the essay, Fromm reflected on the utility of what he termed "the fantasy of trafficking"

for political psychology, "a fantasy," he continued, "whose connection to the fantasy of blood libel"—and to the figure of the trafficker–as–wandering-Jew—"is quite obvious."

In the late 1920s, however, Fromm's analysis of sex trafficking as an antisemitic "fantasy" that did ideological work for capitalism was a minority perspective. Even within the same special issue of *Zeitschriftfur Judische Wohlfahrtspflege,* fellow contributors like British activist Samuel Cohen—longstanding assessor to the League of Nations' Traffic in Women and Children Committee (CTWC) and president of the Jewish Association for the Protection of Girls and Women—insisted that, despite exaggeration, the "horrific trade" in women and girls was very real.[2] From Cohen's perspective, fascists were crassly taking advantage of a real human tragedy to further their antisemitic cause. And yet, in reality, Fromm's framing was probably more accurate. While there was undoubtedly an uptick in international migration during the interwar years that, when combined with poverty, violence, the exchange of populations, and racist and sexist border policies, exacerbated the conditions that made women and children more vulnerable to sexual exploitation and forced labor, the League of Nations consistently failed to produce data proving the existence of an organized, worldwide traffic in women and children. They did, however, demonstrate that women were often migrating internationally *for* sex work.[3] And yet, this lack of evidence—or evidence of a different kind—did not stop other League activists from declaring that trafficking was a "gigantic evil" being carried out "on a huge scale" by transnational "members of the underworld" who, according to League reports and internal documents, frequently communicated in Yiddish, or what some anti-trafficking activists referred to as "the slang of the trade."[4]

In the spirit of Fromm's essay, this article considers what ideological work the always-inflated and frequently antisemitic "traffic in women and children" problem did for international politics during the interwar era. But whereas Fromm treated trafficking as a fantasy whose primary political and psychoanalytic function was to "divert attention" from what he saw as the economic and psychoanalytic problems associated with sex work, this article takes a slightly different tack.[5] Rather than focus on the deflective qualities of trafficking, I consider what the League of Nations' anti-trafficking work can tell us about its liberal internationalist conception of global order: what liberal intellectuals at the time referred to as "international life."[6] Unlike the imperial order of the pre-war period, this new understanding of internationalism (predecessor to today's "liberal world order") was supposed to be grounded in the rule of law, collective security, free trade, humanitarianism, and what Democratic president and League co-founder/

champion Woodrow Wilson referred to as the "equality of nations."[7] At the same time, advocates of this emerging world vision were equally committed to preserving imperial capitalism and the existing global color line.[8]

Forged through an ongoing process of rhetorical circle-squaring, the League's liberal internationalism relied on a novel fusion of universalism, national self-determination, global racial hierarchy, and the economic system of imperial extraction.[9] And while this approach bore a notable resemblance to nineteenth-century rhetorical practices of liberal imperial circle-squaring, its simultaneous commitment to the "internationalization of imperialism" and "the self-determination of nations" was unprecedented in the history of international politics.[10] Thus, the liberal internationalism of the League wasn't merely "Janus-faced" (in Duncan Bell's words).[11] It was, rather, an inherently unstable ideological project that had to be invented from the ground up and sustained through an inveterate campaign of education, knowledge production, and propaganda, a campaign in which the League's humanitarian and "technical and non-political" work played a crucial symbolic role.[12]

The "traffic in women and children" is a particularly evocative example of the "non-political" issues League liberals championed precisely because they claimed to represent the universal "interests of humanity as a whole" without threatening entrenched imperial politics.[13] The League did this again not just by deflecting attention from ongoing imperialism but by helping to shift what Edward Said might call the "imaginative geography" of imperialism in a putatively non-imperial direction. In other words, whereas nineteenth–century imperialists might describe world order in terms of "two unequal halves" associated with civilization and barbarism—or "West" and "East," white and black—the topographical common sense of League internationalism recast that polarized division along a different axis.[14] The core distinction striating the imaginative geography of the interwar era, I argue, was not *civilized* versus *uncivilized* but *civility* versus *incivility/criminality*: what one liberal internationalist called "the great common interests of mankind" versus "the blind and selfish forces of exploitation."[15] The League, in this double vision, was the "common possession of all mankind," locked in an eternal fight with globe–spanning criminal forces it both opposed and revealed in part through its humanitarian and "non-political" work, including its fifteen–year campaign against trafficking.[16]

Inspired by a surge of scholarship on the League of Nations "as a colonial, imperial, and power-political enterprise," as well as new feminist work on the fraught history of twentieth-century anti–trafficking movements, this article treats the League's campaign against

the "traffic in women and children" as an expression and elaboration of interwar internationalism's emerging imaginative geography.[17] "The traffic in women and children," I suggest, played a role—along with other humanitarian issues—in interwar liberal "worldmaking." While popularized within the political theory literature (in the context of anticolonial and Black radical thought) by Adom Getachew in 2019, the term "worldmaking" has been used by literary theorists and philosophers since the 1970s to describe the construction of shared worlds through symbolic practices.[18] These practices, for Nelson Goodman, entail "dividing wholes into parts" by "drawing distinctions" while also "combining features into complexes, and making connections."[19] Here, I interpret League trafficking efforts as part of a larger assemblage of liberal worldmaking practices associated with the emergence of a post-imperial imaginative geography that mirrored the divisions and distinctions of imperialism.

In essence, an analysis of the League's anti-trafficking work makes visible the symbolic construction of liberal internationalism through the symbolic construction of a parallel, nominally *ill*iberal internationalism, linked to the secretive dealings of a robust criminal network, attached to a blood-libel-soaked narrative about trafficked women and children.[20] It thus powerfully exemplifies the practice of liberal worldmaking through *under*worldmaking. This framing of civility versus criminality provided symbolic scaffolding for a League internationalism that acted in the name of "a humanity which transcends all differences," even as the League generated anti-trafficking protocols that, in practice, reinforced racial borders.[21] At the same time, the "machinery" of the CTWC produced power knowledge about trafficking that proved useful to fascists and amplified a vision of the global underworld that often looked distinctly like an antisemitic conspiracy theory. Read through this lens, the ease with which fascists adapted their anti-trafficking politics to the League's vision of the world might prompt us to think differently about fascism as a process, both in the interwar era and today. Rather than assuming, with the Frankfurt School, that fascism is primarily a psychologically driven, antisemitic response to the failures of liberal capitalism, a closer look at anti-trafficking politics suggests that, with respect to the imaginative geography of global order, it is worth considering the figurative and aesthetic qualities that fascism and liberalism share.[22]

Part One begins with a brief overview of the ideological challenges unique to the League moment, reading the ascendence of a liberal, "non–political" vision of "international life"—and its champions' metaphorical use of the "white slave traffic"—through a Saidian approach to the bifurcated "geopolitical awareness" of imperialism. Part Two examines the methodological orientation of the League's

work on trafficking, focusing on what Said might call the "poetic process" by which the CTWC and the 1927 Special Body of Experts on the Traffic in Women and Children elaborated an interwar common sense about the global reach of the trafficking underworld. Part Three interrogates League anti–trafficking activists' explicit and implicit reliance on antisemitic tropes to construct their imaginative geography of crime, tropes that both resembled and influenced the anti–global conspiracy theories of fascists in Germany and Britain. I conclude with some reflections on what the League's work on trafficking can tell us about both the ideological binaries of the post-1992 "liberal world order" and about the emergence of a contemporary fascist movement breathed into being, in part, through an online campaign to "save the children" from a global cabal of predatory sex traffickers.

Liberal worldmaking: The imaginative geography of international life

At the Versailles Conference in February of 1919, most of the fifteen-member commission tasked with drafting the Covenant of the future League of Nations understood the complex political project before them. The horrors of World War One had given rise to a vocal global constituency convinced that the only way to "redeem the world" was to create a permanent organization devoted to international cooperation.[23] At the same time, the war had damaged the reputation of European imperialism as a civilizing force while anticolonial struggles were gaining liberal support for the principle of "national self-determination."[24] Additionally, the rise of Pan–Africanism and the success of the 1917 Bolshevik Revolution highlighted for the uniformly liberal group of representatives in Geneva that the internationalism they wanted was hardly the only game in town.[25] In sum, facing both domestic and international pressure, the Commissioners in Geneva understood that the international order they created must distinguish itself from both imperial and non–liberal global ideologies *and* embrace the terms of self-determination.

At the same time, commissioners knew that self-determination as a principle was not intended to be enjoyed universally.[26] Informal discussions among leaders of the Great Powers prioritized excluding the Bolsheviks from the League, affirmed that the Allied states would retain their empires, and planned to redistribute colonies formerly ruled by the Axis powers to League member states through the Mandate system.[27] Finally, the Commission rejected Japanese delegate Baron Makino Nobuaki's proposal to add a clause to the Covenant affirming the League's commitment to a mild legal form of racial equality.[28] Thus, the ideological challenge faced by the League's

founders was this: to create a "quasi–universal" vision of international cooperation that avoided any universal commitment to material or political equality between races or peoples.[29]

Later dubbed the "metaphysicians at Geneva" by E. H. Carr, the most influential founders of the League often squared this complicated political circle by drawing on an internationalist language—developed by British liberals during the war—that extracted internationalism from the realm of politics altogether, locating it instead in something called "international life" (or "international society") which they associated with the legal, social, cultural, and economic connections forged over time between European states and between non–state actors.[30] For these thinkers, internationalism "already exists."[31] "The modern world is international to the core," argued Alfred Zimmern, and "its internationalism lies in the nature of things": in the work of international voluntary associations, for instance, or in the details of international law.[32] The goal for the "new international order" of the post–war world, they argued, must be to create a permanent international body capable of coordinating what Leonard Woolf called the "interconnections of international life."[33]

Wartime British liberals like Woolf and Zimmern illustrated this idea by drawing on various extant and historical examples of such "interconnections" at work, from international maritime law to global fashion.[34] Of particular interest to both, however, was the international campaign against the "white slave traffic," a movement with origins in the 1880s that had, by World War I, inspired several international conferences and the passage of the 1904 and 1910 International Conventions for the Suppression of the White Slave Traffic.[35] This global movement, they argued, demonstrated that "modern life tends to run along international lines," but those lines ran in two different directions.[36] On the one hand, anti–trafficking efforts demonstrated the kind of international cooperation and coordination that was possible between voluntary organizations and states. On the other hand, the sheer existence of "white slavery" revealed that there was international cooperation and coordination between criminal traffickers. As Zimmern put it: "The White Slave traffic is international; so is the Anti-Slavery Society."[37] Internationalism, he continued, "is neither good nor bad in the abstract: it depends on the nature of its manifestations." Woolf made a similar argument, noting that both anti–traffickers and traffickers were inclined to coordinate internationally, pointing as proof to a 1913 "international congress" of traffickers held in a "night café" in Warsaw, attended by "eighty-nine representatives" from criminal cartels in "all the different countries."[38]

When Woolf and Zimmern argued that the world was "international to the core" because the forces of both good and evil operated internationally, they were effectively restating and reframing the

predominant global cartography of the nineteenth century: what Said, in *Orientalism,* referred to as the "geopolitical awareness" of empire.[39] For Said, eighteenth- and nineteenth-century European imperialism relied, in part, on an imaginative geography that divided the world ideologically and figuratively into two cultural, aesthetic, and political realms: the civilized and transparent West, and the barbarous and mysterious East. Elaborated through power knowledge associated with the "aesthetic, scholarly, economic, sociological, historical, and philological" interventions of Orientalist intellectuals and imperial administrators, these "great complementary opposites," according to Said, were co-constituting "geographical entities" that "support[ed] and to an extent reflect[ed] each other."[40] Together, these co-constituting geographies amounted to a single "geopolitical awareness" of a world divided between those who rule ("the West") and those who "*require* and beseech" rule ("the East").[41]

The "geopolitical awareness" developed by British liberal internationalists similarly imagined a global terrain cloven into two spheres, one associated with "the common life of mankind in the world," and the other devoted to "the blind and selfish forces of exploitation."[42] Unlike the imperial culture Said described, however, this worldview appeared to split along moral and civil lines rather than geographic and racial lines. This distinction between good and evil—between an overworld and an underworld—resembled the contrast between the enlightened West and the "imaginative demonology" of the Orient, but appeared to transcend geographic and racial specificity.[43] The goal of any future League, these thinkers argued, must be to promote "internationalism in its better [while] counteracting it in its worse, manifestations."[44] Transforming a world of chaos into a world of peace required "men and women of goodwill to see that the good manifestations prevailed over the evil" through the formation of a "consciously devised machinery" able to amplify good international interconnections and thwart bad ones—to flood the dark of the night café with the light of "common humanity."[45]

The imaginative act of fissuring this "non–political" sphere along the "civil" vs. "uncivil" divide mimicked the form, if not the exact content, of imperialism's imaginative geography, and then naturalized that form as an inevitable part of "international life." In this liberal global vision, the constitutive distinction between white and black, East and West, receded into the background—lurking somewhere in the peripheral vision—setting the stage for an international politics in which "the rule of colonial difference" (in Partha Chatterjee's words) could express itself (as it did with "the traffic in women and children") through non–racial signifiers like "culture" and "climate."[46] It also allowed white and imperial states to police their racial borders through international conventions and League protocols that rationalized the

expulsion of foreign sex workers or women they simply accused of sex work.[47]

At the same time, the new internationalism transformed those global "interconnections" forged throughout the age of empire into organic expressions of an inevitable move toward "international life" by shedding the legal, political, and economic entanglements of imperial competition. It is thus hardly a coincidence that these liberals developed their dualistic worldview at the exact moment when socialist and anticolonial intellectuals were laying the blame for World War I squarely at the feet of imperial capitalism.[48] In a discursive gesture not uncommon to liberal imperialists, liberal internationalists extracted pre–war "interconnections" from any material or political grounding in imperial capitalism, refiguring the problems of international politics as a battle between global good and the "eternal things which unite, to the rock-bottom level of our common humanity."[49] In this upside-down world, the causes of war became the foundations of peace.

One can thus see why an approach that decoupled the new internationalist order from power politics would be hugely appealing to the liberal founders of the League of Nations as they cast about for discursive strategies by which to reconcile universality with imperial hierarchy. Indeed, by the time many of these future founders were formalizing plans for a post–war peace in the summer of 1918, the depoliticized phrase "international life" had become the linguistic taproot of League internationalism.[50] Simultaneously, throughout 1918 and 1919, influential liberals began vocally associating the idea of League internationalism with upholding the permanent "interests of humanity as a whole."[51] When the Belgian delegate closed the First Assembly in 1920, he declared that the "interests of humanity and the interests of the world are universal interests," interests which the League now firmly set in opposition to those "evils" like sex trafficking that debased humankind.[52]

Thus, the transformation of the liberal imperial imaginary during the interwar years often manifested most glaringly in the refiguring of global humanitarian issues such as trafficking. In 1919, not only did the Covenant's drafters make the League responsible for the "general supervision over the execution of agreements" relating to sex trafficking and enshrine that responsibility in Article 23, they also stripped the term of its racial referent.[53] The League's work on what was now known as "the traffic in women and children" thus represents not just the first time in history that an international organization devoted itself, on an ongoing basis, to a humanitarian problem; but also the first time that such an organization publicly portrayed this problem as universal, as applying to "women and children of all races and colors."[54]

Crucially, claiming that the League had a stake in "safeguarding" the interests of women and children, "whatever their race or color," required neither a commitment to the legal equality sought by the Japanese delegate nor the political and economic equality demanded by Pan–African activists.[55] This "evil of such a thoroughly international character" did, however, graft particularly well onto an idea of "international life" understood in bifurcated, non–political terms associated with "the interests of humanity."[56] Over the years, as the League's political failures in other arenas became more apparent, its champions would often evoke the "non-political and purely humanitarian" campaign against "the traffic in women and children" as proof of the organization's success.[57]

In sum, as a "non-political" issue, "the traffic in women and children of all races and colors" expanded the notion of humanity associated with the League while reinforcing racial borders and avoiding the broader implications of racial equality. More pertinent to this article, it also opened an enormous conceptual and institutional horizon for producing knowledge about the very bifurcated international topography upon which liberal activists built the League. Dreaming that imaginative geography into reality entailed populating it with characters who fell into two categories: criminals associated with the global underworld and innocent victims who must be protected in the name of humanity by an international organization like the League, which was "eminently suited" for the job.[58]

Liberal underworldmaking: The imaginative geography of trafficking

At the first meeting of the first League Assembly in 1920, Danish Feminist Henni Forchhammer introduced "the trafficking in women and children" to the assembled delegates as a problem that "cannot be solved except by international cooperation and by means of the League of Nations."[59] Shortly after that speech, the Assembly passed a motion authorizing the Secretariat to send questionnaires to all League member states asking them "what legislative measures have been taken by them to combat the traffic," and recommending that an International Conference on trafficking be convened before the next Assembly to "coordinate" replies and secure "a common understanding" about future action.[60] A year later, the first International Conference on the Traffic in Women and Children was held in Geneva, attended by representatives from thirty-four nations and fourteen voluntary organizations. Although often plagued by simmering disagreements between abolitionist activists (for whom there was a clear link between state-regulated prostitution and trafficking) and

delegates from states with systems of licensed houses (for whom "trafficking" meant coercion and forced sex work), delegates enthusiastically agreed that the League should be praised for putting trafficking "at the forefront of its social work."[61] In addition to formally rejecting "white slave" language, delegates also recommended the creation of "an International Standing Committee to advise the Council on all matters connected with the Traffic in Women and Children." This Committee (the CTWC) was initially comprised of delegates from nine countries and six permanent, non-voting "assessors" from voluntary associations.[62]

The methodological orientation immediately adopted by both committee members and assessors mirrored similar efforts at "rationalization" within the League's other "technical and non–political" sections, addressing a range of issues from industrial policy to the formalization of health and welfare standards.[63] By the 1930s, over half of the League's annual budget was devoted to this "technical and non–political" work and, within its various sections, committee members, activists, employees, volunteers, and other "institutional entrepreneurs" (in Susan Pederson's words) devoted themselves to growing and consolidating the League as an international organization.[64] For many of these activists, this "machinery" was ideally suited to accumulating vast amounts of previously unattainable information about the world and developing "uniform methods in the compilation" of that information for the future.[65]

Throughout the 1920s and early '30s, the CTWC's work on the "non–political" issue of trafficking mirrored this larger tendency toward "rationalization." In addition to coordinating the replies of what would become a yearly questionnaire to member states, the CTWC's remit entailed gathering and interpreting data about what was always referred to as "the problem" of global trafficking—or simply "the problem"—which, delegates argued, was taking place on a "huge scale" but for which there was little evidence.[66] And yet no one associated with the CTWC ever claimed that this lack of evidence meant the "traffic in women and children" either didn't exist or wasn't a sufficiently global phenomenon; instead, they explained it by pointing to two factors. First, they maintained, up until that point, there had been no major social scientific studies on "the extent and seriousness of the evil."[67] Second, because trafficking was a "hidden form of slavery," it was difficult to detect.[68] The methodological mission of the CTWC, therefore, wasn't merely to gather available data about this transnational phenomenon but also to *unearth* that data and make the phenomenon visible to the world. The League's approach to trafficking was thus both excavative and curatorial, devoted to the cause of "bringing to light" (or "throwing a light on") a globe-spanning, stubbornly

opaque humanitarian crisis by first probing the world for "official and accurate information regarding the existence and nature of the traffic in women and children," and then organizing and presenting this information to the "public opinion of the world" as proof of trafficking's pre–existence as a global phenomenon.[69]

In their striving to reveal this preexisting phenomenon, the CTWC's methods most closely resembled the naturalizing impulse toward "international life" that infused League internationalism of the era. Just as liberal internationalists emphasized that "international life" (in its good and bad iterations) was built into "the nature of things" and could only be revealed and activated through an international organization like the League, so too did the CTWC devote the efforts of the League's machinery to drawing out a global phenomenon implicit in "international life," but largely unseen. Delegates and activists on the Committee were thus engaging in what Said might call the "poetic process" of global space-making: transforming previously invisible pathways across "vacant or anonymous reaches of distance" into a recognizable imaginative geography. As with the nineteenth-century Orientalists that Said describes, they did this by relying heavily on a "ponderous style of expertise."[70] They were, for instance, keen to distance their work from that of an earlier generation of (primarily women) activists who relied on "extravagant and baseless stories" which "mislead others and produce[d] mischievous results."[71] The current dearth of hard evidence about trafficking, some members argued, was a reflection of that previous generation's lack of methodological rigor.[72]

Members of the CTWC thus spent much of the 1920s producing vast amounts of power knowledge about the trafficking underworld, often by relying on an approach resembling one Said attributes to Orientalism: by combining "old ideas with new methods." Thus, in much the same way that imperialist scholars, public intellectuals, and administrators often took pre-existing cultural tropes about "the East" and transformed them into objective truths which they appeared to discover through their scientific methods, so too did the CTWC rely extensively on a language of social science expertise to repurpose numerous old ideas about sex trafficking leftover from the anti-white-slavery campaign. Despite their vociferous rejection of a previous generation's methodology, the Committee simply assumed the validity of presumptions brought to it by well-established abolitionist organizations like the British National Vigilance Association (NVA).[73] For instance, along with the longstanding abolitionist belief that licensed houses contributed to trafficking, assessors identified music and dance halls as prime sites where a woman might find herself lured, in the words of a 1912 tract, to become "the slave of the man who uses her as

merchandise."[74] This understanding of music halls as vectors of trafficking expressed itself as a piece of common sense so unassailable that in 1926, the CTWC asked the International Labor Organization (ILO) to conduct a comparative study of League nations focused on the "material and moral protection" of "artistes touring abroad.[75] Two years later, a representative of the ILO presented a report to the committee arguing that "because the number of young women artistes touring abroad … represented only a microscopic part of the whole field of women's employment" it was impossible for the ILO to "isolate this particular occupation in its examination."[76] The Committee refused to accept this conclusion. They wondered whether the ILO's findings were "in agreement with the facts" and whether "the scope of the problem" was "really so limited."[77] Ultimately, they decided it would be prudent to survey the problem themselves by circulating questionnaires (which they created) to member states and then examining the results.[78]

While members of the CTWC originally considered beginning their questionnaire to governments with leading questions—e.g., "Is there a great influx of foreign artists in your country?"—the final version avoided numbers altogether and instead asked governments to provide information on public safety and vice laws.[79] The CTWC then assembled this information in a lengthy 1929 report—weighed down with fold-out charts and annexes detailing these legal restrictions—that ultimately appeared to respond to a pre-existing, explicitly *international* problem without ever proving its existence in the first place.[80]

Arguably, however, the most powerful illustration of how the CTWC combined "old ideas with new methods" to produce power-knowledge about trafficking's imaginative geography is the 1927 Report by the Special Body of Experts. Created in 1923 and funded entirely by a $75,000 grant from the American Social Hygiene Association (ASHA) of New York City, this first social–science–like analysis of global crime reflected the growing influence of a state that never joined the League on the League's "non–political" functions.[81] The Special Body's study combined both old abolitionist ideas with new methods championed by the ASHA, including the recruitment of undercover agents to infiltrate crime syndicates.[82] Over three years, these agents conducted fieldwork in 112 cities in 28 countries across Europe, the Americas, and the Middle East.[83] Led by the controversial social reformer Paul Kinsie, they interviewed "[n]o fewer than 6,500 persons believed to be able to afford information," including "about 5,000 persons connected with commercialized prostitution, a large number of whom were either prostitutes or *souteneurs*" (the preferred name for "pimp" in both the English and French transcripts of League committee documents).[84]

While two Special Body members with connections to the ASHA coordinated the fieldwork component of the investigation, representatives and assessors from the CTWC were involved in conducting the study throughout.[85] Once the three-year inquiry was completed, members of the Special Body, with the assistance of the ASHA, transformed the mountains of "source material"—accumulated field notes, interviews, and additional information gathered from governments and police—into a report that went through multiple revisions that were hashed out during several contentious meetings.[86] Members of the Special Body described their process in rigorously social-scientific terms, claiming to conduct their inquiry, in the words of the British representative, like "a panel of jurymen expressing our conclusions on the evidence before us."[87]

The voluminous archives associated with the Special Body's three-year investigation offer a rich window into the humanitarian environment of the interwar era, which scholars have only just begun to examine in earnest.[88] While much of this recent scholarship probes the archives for what they can tell us about the extant politics of migration, race, sexuality, gender, and the influence of American "purity" groups on US foreign policy, my interests focus more narrowly on the "poetic process" of constructing a global trafficking underworld that both reveals itself throughout the archive (particularly the minutes of the Special Body and the notes and reports of investigators from the field), and pops off the pages of the final Report. Indeed, it is within the three-hundred-page, two-volume Report of the Special Body that the word "underworld" appears for the first time in any of the League's published works on the "traffic in women and children."[89]

The Special Body's investigation is particularly notable for its fantastical qualities (in Fromm's sense) and for the visible disconnect that haunts the final Report between the statistical findings of the investigation and the conclusions drawn by the agents and authors. While contemporary scholars like Jaqueline Ross draw our attention to internal communications revealing how the ASHA intended to "channel the investigators' findings into politically acceptable conclusions" that condemned the system of licensed houses, the inventions of the Special Body's work are apparent even in the published Report itself.[90] Indeed, what makes the Report of the Special Body of Experts so revealing and so different from other studies, such as the Report on Music Halls, is the in-plain-sight quality of this disconnect. In essence, the 1927 Report discloses the process by which League investigators bridged the realms of fact and fiction, and it does so in a way that can feel uncomfortable to read, like watching a magician painstakingly break the fourth wall to explain how the trick works to his audience.

For instance, early in the Report, the authors explain that "we do not wish to give the impression that all or most of" the sex workers

they interviewed, "were unsuspecting and defenceless women who had been decoyed to a foreign country in ignorance." Instead, they note, "we have been able to establish that practically all the women in question were already prostitutes in their own country."[91] And yet, they conclude, even though "[no] complete figures are available…. reliable information has been obtained from certain countries which justifies the belief that a traffic of considerable dimension is being carried on."[92] The Report enacts this bait and switch repeatedly, right in front of our eyes, often through that same, passive formulation (e.g., "information has been obtained," "international traffic has been found"). More often—and despite the Special Body's claims of social science objectivity—the Report smooths over the disconnect between fact and conclusion with a tidal wave of descriptive anecdotes and rumors. The authors offer multiple, terrifying stories (supposedly gleaned by investigators from informants) of young girls, often traveling alone, forced to work in music halls and licensed houses or lured into sex work through a grift the Report refers to as "false marriages" or "the marriage method."[93]

The bulk of the Report thus elides the disconnect between the absence of proof that trafficking exists and an absolute conviction that it must, through an underworld-making process that painstakingly layers descriptive observations and anecdotal evidence onto comparative statistics about prostitution in member states, onto tables of country–specific laws, and onto excerpts from interviews. The final palimpsest of meaning draws disparate, dispersed, and often competing nodes of criminal activity into a single spatial and temporal frame.[94] Frequently, it does so by linking individual traffickers (whose names were replaced by a letter–number combination that investigators and members of the Special Body had in a key or "Code Book") to an "elaborate organization" of transnational criminal activity.[95] The reader of the 1927 Report can follow these repeat–offender traffickers—often connected through familial and ethnic ties from one major city to another—through their various designations that striate the text's internal references. "The brother of the proprietor of [a] Buenos Aires club," note the authors, "was arrested in 1925 in Florence, Italy, where he had attempted to recruit… young girls to act as entertainers at the cabaret (see report on Italy)."[96] In this instance and elsewhere, the Report sews together connections between traffickers within its pages, as if following the cartographic outlines of an already well–established network.

The tone of the Report vacillates between social science surety and narrative flourish. Still, the investigation itself is always described—in simultaneously grandiose and granular terms—as a voyage of expert–driven discovery. Wherever their investigators went, the authors

maintained, they were determined "to get into touch with the underworld" so as "to ascertain what was going on behind the scenes."[97] The Report is replete with revelatory language. It refers to its investigation as a "drag–net which has been drawn across the underworld" that aimed to "throw a light on," "withdraw the veil on," and "disclose" the clandestine activity of global traffickers.[98]

All told, the Report's elaboration of the "sinister business" of trafficking provides a robust picture of a globe-spanning underworld populated by weary sex workers, spectral victims, and wily *souteneurs* "cynically" seeking "to supply a demand with the greatest possible gain for themselves."[99] The coherence of this picture reflects the tendency of CTWC members to naturalize "the traffic" by talking about it as a single, living, coherent network: as an "it." "We know that the traffic has *its* secret agents in all social spheres," observed the Swiss delegate in 1927, "that *it* has *its* international address book."[100] Likewise, the Report refers to "the underworld" as a unified network that acts and speaks as a single mind: e.g., "the underworld claimed," "the underworld considers," "the explanation of the facts given by the underworld."[101] In effect, the underworld was a single, globe-spanning, dark corollary to the "international life" embodied in the League, visible only when experts "withdraw the veil which has covered in recent years, especially since the war, the activities of those who traffic in women."[102]

For Said, the "veiled" quality of "the Orient" is precisely what reinforced its near distance. "The relation between Orientalist and Orient," he argued, "was essentially hermeneutical" because "the Orient" was both the constant object of knowledge and the unknowable object, the "great Asiatic mystery," that remained "barely intelligible," peeking out coyly "from behind the veil of an Eastern bride."[103] The Report of the Special Body did something similar. Its investigators may have infiltrated the underworld and claimed proximity, but they always stood outside as expert observers, never entirely privy to its inner workings. The trafficking underworld could be mapped and revealed, but it would always remain what Said called a "hard-to-reach-object."[104] At the same time, the very fact that the object was "hard-to-reach" was proof of the need to keep reaching for it.

The crucial difference, however, between the imaginative geography of Orientalism and the imaginative geography of trafficking's underworld was that, for imperialists, "the Orient" represented both cultural/racial distance *and* "geographical distance." By contrast, the Special Body described an underworld that circulated both abroad *and* right alongside the legitimate, League world of organized humanity. Indeed, its otherness was heightened throughout the text by its very proximity. "The veil" that emerges within the Report and the archives

was meant to be "withdrawn" precisely because the underworld was both invisible and underfoot. "The veil" simultaneously created distance even as its thinness reinforced its nearness. Young women, the CTWC and the Experts agreed, were being lured into prostitution through "thinly veiled advertisements appearing in certain newspapers," and female entertainers fell prey to "thinly veiled methods."[105] At any point in time, the Report emphasized, a hand could reach from behind that veil to snatch unsuspecting women and children from their communities. Brief glimpses into the underworld, gleaned in the process of "investigating the actual extent and scope of the situation," revealed the terrifying closeness of a fully coherent criminal counter–society that coexisted in time and space with our own.[106] In country after country, investigators heard rumors, as they did in Yugoslavia, of "strange abductions" of young girls, creating "the suspicion that there exists a secret and perfectly organized gang, who are spreading their activity" all over the country.[107] The overworld and the underworld were tethered to each other in the Report of the Special Body of Experts: one open and cooperative, the other secretive and powerful. And the more the authors drew that secretive, powerful underworld into focus while acknowledging they could never entirely plumb its depths, the more it began to look like what it was: a global cabal.

A world of parasites

Fromm's 1929 essay on trafficking is notable for its treatment of trafficking as a "fantasy" that does deflective work for domestic and international politics. But, again, it was also somewhat unique at the time, both for its insistence on treating trafficking as a "virtually non–existent" crime and for its interpretation of the role antisemitism played in both liberal and fascist trafficking panics. For Fromm, the "fantasy of trafficking" and the "fantasy of blood libel" both had roots in the "fantasy of the Jewish trafficker who travels the world with his 'merchandise.'" "The reason why so many people are so passionately interested in a crime that barely exists," he concluded, "and why this non-existent crime is especially blamed on the Jews, is one and the same: the role played by the crime of the stolen and abused child in the infantile fantasies and daydreams of adults."[108]

What is most startling about Fromm's interpretation of "the Jewish trafficker," from my perspective, is not his psychoanalytic reading of the trope, but his strong sense that the rhetorical fusion of blood libel narratives and trafficking panics worked similarly within popular German cinema, the yearly reports of the League, and the pages of *Der Angriff*. Like his bold assertion that trafficking "barely exists," Fromm's refusal to differentiate between the antisemitism of liberals and fascists

was most likely a polemical overstatement. As Cohen's long-term presence on the CTWC suggests, the League's work on trafficking was rarely explicitly antisemitic in the way that "Mädchenhandels" appeared in German popular culture in the 1920s, or in the pages of England's *Black Shirt* a decade later.[109] And yet, the 1927 Report *was* explicitly and intentionally antisemitic, in part for historical reasons and in part because the figurative language inherited from that history overlapped substantially with the Report's *modus operandi*. It's overall goal, in other words, was to reveal a shadowy underworld populated by what the authors consistently referred to as "underworld characters" who were both ingenious and degenerate, familiar yet foreign, and whose influential yet perverse culture existed underneath, alongside, and within the everyday workings of domestic and international society.

Of course, the widely held prejudice that Jews were overrepresented in "the white slave traffic" was already well established in Europe by the end of the nineteenth century, and the 1920s were awash in antisemitic, anti–trafficking tracts like Joseph Bannister's *Jews and the White Slave Traffic*.[110] It is therefore hardly surprising that these narratives would inflect the methodological orientations of some members of the Special Body of Experts and the CTWC. More directly, the ASHA was the product of an intense moral panic about immigration in America in which it was commonly assumed "as an absolute fact" that "corrupt Jews" were responsible for "the white slave traffic," a belief held by some of the lead investigators involved with the 1927 Report.[111] Antisemitic biases thus shaped the methodological orientation of many investigators, who not only relied on contacts already formed with the Jewish underworld but also used only three primary languages in their investigations: English, French, and Yiddish.[112] These antisemitic assumptions are most evident in their choice of the targeted underworld interlocutors populating their copious, country-specific fieldnotes that often focus tightly on shady characters, with names like "Samuel," "Yukelson," and "Moise," or simply (when referring to sex workers) "Jewesses."[113] In Constantinople, investigators sought out connections in the underworld from Cairo and Rio and met them in a Kosher restaurant "crowded with pimps."[114] In Rio de Janeiro, investigators spent considerable time observing "hardened dyed–in–the–wool prostitutes" in the red light district, "seven thousand" of whom "were said to be foreigners," who spoke "English, German, and Yiddish."[115]

Somewhere in the transition from "source material" to the final Report, however, most explicit references to Jewish underworld characters faded into the background. This erasure happened, in part, in the process of removing all identifying information about individual

informants and interviewees and replacing them with number–letter designations, although one glimpse at the Committee's "Code Book" reveals that many, if not most, of the criminal traffickers with whom they were interested had Jewish last names.[116] Moreover, some members of the Special Body expressed evident discomfort with using specific words and phrases that sounded too ethnic or too crass.[117] Most importantly, however, the muting of the Report's most obvious antisemitic features was an artifact of the explicitly liberal, universal orientation of the League, the desire of some CTWC members to avoid associating League states (like Poland) with antisemitism, and the fact that Cohen, one of the most respected assessors on the CTWC, was able to ensure that the worst instances of antisemitic biases were removed from the Report.[118]

Cohen and his allies were not always successful in this regard, however. For instance, during a contentious meeting of the Special Body in November of 1927, CTWC members argued over the wording of an example illustrating the phenomenon of "false marriages." In this narrative, a trafficker brought a young girl from Lodz to "the Rabbi" in Berlin, who "married" her to a man who turned out to be a *souteneur.* During the Committee's deliberation, the Head of the Social Section and Secretary to the CTWC, Rachel Crowdy, conveyed to the Special Body that Cohen and his organization took "great exception" to the wording of the Report, arguing that the example was both ridiculous on its face and that the Rabbi "in a big town like Berlin would mean the chief Rabbi, and this casts great suspicion on a very senior ecclesiastic."[119] She suggested that the wording be changed from "*the* Rabbi" to "*a* Rabbi." Chairman Snow, however, disputed this interpretation since "the facts" in the case "come from an official of the German Government" who also confirmed that most of the traffic into Germany came "particularly from Lodz"—the second largest Jewish community in Poland.[120] "The Jewish People," he continued, "are not in a position to know the merits of this particular case." In the final version of the Report, "the Rabbi" remained, but the reference to Berlin was replaced with "a large German town."[121]

Primarily, however, the antisemitism of the 1927 Report was an antisemitism of nudges and winks. The figurative language that appeared and reappeared in the Report describes the trafficking underworld through a series of tropes about a global conspiracy theory that rarely referred explicitly to Jews but, nonetheless, would have been familiar to anyone with a passing knowledge of *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion*. *Souteneurs* and traffickers were frequently referred to as vermin, "regular parasites and social pests" who prefer "to live an idle life on women's earnings" by following some "easy profession in order to disguise their real occupation."[122] "These pests of society"—these

"real parasites"—trawl the world for victims and then feed "on the body as well as on the soul of their host."[123] The traffic itself is portrayed as "a sinister business" meant to "supply a demand," a subterranean, alternative economy in which the motto "each for himself" is "the guiding principle."[124]

Reflecting all the rhetorical inconsistencies of antisemitic, "globalist" conspiracy theories more generally, traffickers in the Report are described as both degenerates and hyper-talented. Traffickers are both lazy and ambitious. They are readily identifiable, and they hide in plain sight. The head of one cartel is characterized as a man "of long and varied experience in prostitution in many countries" who holds his leadership "not by virtue of any formal election but because of his wide experience and fearless cunning," who "shows flashes of genius."[125] He makes "corrupt alliances" with local officials, pulls political strings, moves often, and, "in the matter of capital," frequently acts as a "money lender." Crucially, the Report stresses, "real parasites" like this man are connected to an international network of other traffickers in constant circulation:

> These men are continually on the move. In the past six months, it is reported that more than sixty *souteneurs* have passed through Paris on their way to different destinations. Some idea of the activity of the *souteneurs* as regards bringing in women and of the fact that they know of each other's movements may be shown from the following remarks of 160-P: 'one has got something (girl) with him. They are all coming in on the X… I only got a letter three days ago and 136-P has got everything fixed so they will all get in without any trouble.'[126]

The subeconomy of trafficking, this example suggests through its number-lettered designations, sews the underworld together across chains of criminal depravity. It circulates in a state of perpetual, unseen motion alongside the overworld, "hidden" in the shadows like Hitler's description in *Mein Kampf* of Jewish prostitutes furtively plying their trade in the alleys of Leopoldstadt.[127] Like the global cabal of so many antisemitic fever dreams, the underworld is both global and local, and we could see it if we knew where to look—if we just opened our eyes.

This global vision was obviously intriguing to the world public opinion the CTWC was so keen to enlighten. In a 1927 speech on the Report, for instance, Crowdy noted approvingly that "the Press of every country has been full of [it]." "I am told," she continued, it has "established a League record for sales."[128] The popularity of the Report globally also coincided with the rise of fascist parties in Europe, who often strategically used trafficking as a wedge issue to appeal to the middle class.[129] Thus, at roughly the same time the Report was

released, and Fromm wrote his essay, *Der Angriff* (edited by Goebbels) ran several pieces accusing Weimar officials of protecting "Jewish traffickers" from prosecution.[130]

It is tempting, at moments like these, when reactionaries take up seemingly "non–political" issues like trafficking for their own purposes, to think of that process as a kind of capture—embodied, for instance, in the way QAnon "hijacked" the "Save the Children" hashtag in 2020-21.[131] A close reading of the League's work on trafficking and the Special Body's Report, however, suggests that by the late 1920s, fascists and League liberals were imagining the global underworld in not just similar but identical terms and that their efforts were increasingly entangled, even at the level of personnel. Dr. Ernst Kundt, for instance, the Secretary of the German branch of the NVA, was also an avowed Nazi. In 1928, he served as a delegate to the Seventh International Congress for the Suppression of Traffic in Women and Children in London, where he reported that new anti–trafficking measures had been passed in the Reichstag with support "by all parties from the right to the left."[132] That same year, he produced an internal report in Germany claiming that the list of traffickers currently in police custody consisted of "overwhelmingly Jewish names."[133] In 1933, the year Hitler withdrew Germany from the League, the country hosted the Ninth International Congress for the Suppression of the Traffic in Women and Children, and its National Committee reported that, in Germany, "the increase in the activities of traffickers during the last three years has reached terrible dimensions."[134] They were the only country that year, except for Uruguay, to report an overall *increase* in the "traffic in women and children."[135]

The German Government continued to participate actively in the work of the CTWC up until 1933. In 1934, the Report on the CTWC's annual meeting noted with regret the absence of the German delegate even as they singled out Germany's annual response to the questionnaire for special commendation. "Attention may be specially called," the Report notes approvingly, to the "number of institutions" Germany had created to rehabilitate prostitutes, many of whom "were found to be mentally defective" and summarily "withdrawn from prostitution."[136] Of course, the authors of the CTWC's 1934 report could not have known the dark turn Nazi policies toward the "mentally defective" would soon take. But whether they could have predicted the genocidal potential of Germany's prostitution laws is beside the point. Not only did the German government use the League's apparatus to produce power–knowledge about trafficking that furthered their internal antisemitic agenda, but Nazi policies about prostitution and sex trafficking resonated positively within the Committee itself. In essence, by 1934, liberal internationalists and fascists were using

the same language to describe the global trafficking underworld as an imaginative geography populated by innocent girls, "mentally defective" women, and clever, mobile, money–lending, parasitical men.

When a few years later, in the pages of *The Black Shirt*, British fascists linked the scourge of "Jew traffickers" directly to the League of Nations—which they claimed had "proved of such value to Jews"—it was clear that liberal internationalist worldmaking as underworld-making had come full circle.[137] Conceived by its founders through an imaginative geography grounded in the perennial battle between good and evil, civility and criminality, transparency and opacity, the League of Nations itself was now transformed in the minds of fascists into an enabler and abettor of the very global forces of darkness it was supposedly "eminently suited" to combat. This revisionism may be ironic, but it is hardly surprising. It was, after all, the League that generated both the knowledge about global trafficking and the methods for accruing and assembling this knowledge, which fascist governments and movements would find so helpful. It was the League that published materials mainstreaming a descriptive logic of trafficking that, at times, postulated an underworld whose details could rather ominously resemble an antisemitic conspiracy theory.

The League of Nations' approach to trafficking thus captures, in global miniature, the political stakes of liberal internationalist circle squaring. In their efforts to avoid disrupting the imperial status quo, the League's liberal founders constructed a world vision in which "international life" could be broken down along a good/evil axis. Within this world, the imaginative geography of trafficking found fertile ground. If the same League activists who included "the traffic in women and children" in the Covenant's Article 23 were genuinely interested in the root causes of women and children's sexual exploitation—"whatever their race or color"—they would have had to exit that imaginative geography to critique the system of imperial capitalism that made poverty, mass migration, economic instability, the exchange of populations, and violence an everyday reality for the very women and children who now concerned them. But they didn't. Instead, the pages of the CTWC's voluminous reports focused on the dangers of dance halls, false marriages, and shadowy criminal networks. Out of these pages emerged a semi-deracinated "fantasy of blood libel" in which defenders of civility attempted to shine a light on an invisible network of Yiddish-speaking traffickers, crisscrossing the world, hiding in plain sight. At the end of the day, fascists didn't need to "hijack" or appropriate that polarized world vision. League liberals built the house. Fascists just moved into this familiar environment—and rearranged the furniture.

Conclusion: "Open your eyes."

In December of 2000, Secretary General of the United Nations Kofi Annan penned a forward to the recently ratified *Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons Especially Women and Children* (the Palermo Protocol), the first international anti-trafficking trafficking agreement since 1949. Looking out at the post-Cold War landscape, Annan observed that one of "the starkest contrasts in our world today" is the gulf that exists between global "civil society" and "the forces of what I call uncivil society."[138] On the one side, argued Annan, stood international institutions, democratic states, and citizen groups organized to defend the values of "pluralism and respect." On the other side loomed "terrorists, criminals, drug dealers, traffickers in people and others" representing "entrenched interests and the clout of a global enterprise worth billions of dollars."

Annan's words are powerfully illustrative of that moment in international history, both for the symbolic environment they describe and the political changes they inaugurated. On a metaphorical level, his description of a world divided into two negatively charged global "forces"—one civil and open the other criminal and secretive—neatly reflected the core binary at the heart of what was now called the "liberal world order," a global imaginative geography that had, by the 1990s, firmly established itself as the *lingua franca* of both the post-Cold War American foreign policy establishment and international organizations. That the Manichean vocabulary associated with this order bore a distinct resemblance to the binaries of League internationalism was no accident. Many of the foreign policy experts charged with helping Bill Clinton establish his influential foreign policy vision in the 1990s described themselves as "neo-Wilsonian" and frequently cited 1919 as a historical touchstone for their worldview.[139]

More importantly, the liberal imaginative geography these "neo-Wilsonians" described did much of the same ideological work as the interwar version. In 1992, as in 1919, the major architects of the international system had a choice. They *could* commit themselves to transforming the material conditions of a world brutally divided between competing military "spheres of influence" (and disfigured by hundreds of years of imperial capitalism) by demilitarizing the American security state and reinvesting in domestic and global public spending.[140] *Or*, they could lean into a ginned-up liberal imaginative geography intended to square racial hierarchy and extractive economic practices with a moral commitment to human rights, democracy, and civility.[141] In the early 1990s, as in 1919, the leaders of the world's "liberal democracies" chose the latter and embraced a liberal order imagined, in part, through the division between world and underworld.

On the other hand, the new Palermo Protocol, introduced by Annan, ushered in a sprawling global policy agenda—spurred by a surge in government and advocacy work worldwide and accompanied by a rapidly expanding discursive environment—devoted to combating what was now called "human trafficking."[142] Over the last twenty five years, what sex worker activists have since dubbed the "anti-trafficking industrial complex"—that is, the massive expansion of funding for NGO's doing anti-trafficking work coupled with the explosion of interest in the topic by the world's media and the emergence of bipartisan public awareness campaigns in multiple countries—has transformed a term very few people knew existed before 2000 into a household fear.[143] From UN-sponsored public service announcements to signs on the bathroom stalls at Heathrow, from international "abolitionism" to international protocols, from Bush to Obama, from Trump to Biden (and Trump again), the anti-trafficking industrial complex reinforces the bifurcated vision of global "forces" that Annan describes. It repeatedly draws our attention to the secret networks circulating within the "forces of uncivil society." In response, public service announcements around the world demand hypervigilance of *you,* the reader, traveler, and consumer. These messages stress that criminals are stealing children for sale in a foreign brothel right in front of you. Traffickers lurk, in Obama's words, "in dark corners," but they also operate "In Plain Sight," and you would see them if, as the title to one 2008 United Nations video implored, you would just "Open Your Eyes to Human Trafficking."[144]

When, in 2021, a staff writer at *The Atlantic* asked how it was that a blood-libel-inflected narrative about sex trafficking, Democratic, deep-state-supported pedophiles had suddenly become so popular among so many Americans, she seemed genuinely bewildered.[145] She gestured correctly toward QAnon's appeal to the "Save the children" hashtag. Still, she could not understand how such a "deluded understanding of child trafficking" had so quickly gained popularity among such solidly middle-class soccer moms, real estate brokers, and lawyers. It didn't occur to this reporter to wonder if perhaps the figurative seeds hadn't already been planted by a global and national anti-trafficking campaign sponsored by some of the most reputable organizations and liberal democratic states in the world. It didn't occur to her to wonder if perhaps the tone of all those public service announcements demanding that we turn our attention to the traffickers operating "in plain sight" might not sound eerily similar to the way QAnon boosters described their own version of the traffickers' shadow-world. It didn't occur to the reporter to wonder about this even as she huddled at a church picnic next to #Savethechildren activists, squinting into a phone with them to watch the latest video making its way along the 8-Chan-to-Facebook

pipeline: a film about a global cabal of pedophiles stealing thousands of children each day off American streets for adrenochrome harvesting entitled "Open Your Eyes to Human Trafficking."[146]

How are we to interpret historical moments like this when conspiratorial, fascist-sounding, antisemitic conspiracy theories mirror the language of respectable liberal internationalist narratives about trafficking? My working thesis throughout this article has been to approach such moments not merely as examples of rhetorical hijacking but as indications of what liberalism and fascism share. With Alberto Toscano and Angela Davis, I identify fascism not with a single historical event or a particular congeries of interwar European ideologies but rather with "a protracted social process."[147] Fascism, from this perspective, is a process of confinement and boundary-making tethered to everyday practices of counter-revolutionary racial violence against subaltern populations—intended to rationalize extraction and protect the core from the worst abuses of capitalism—that takes place along the fissures of liberal democracies: in the prisons, at the borders, in the colonies. Revanchist mass political movements emerge at historical moments of material and political crisis when circle-squaring rationales no longer work and racial violence overflows its container, flooding the political landscape of so-called liberal democracies with anti-democratic, ethno-nationalist venom.[148]

The ease, however, with which fascists in the 1920s and 2020s adopted the same anti-trafficking language as liberals suggests something even more profound about the relationship between liberal internationalism and fascism. It highlights that when thinking globally, liberals have historically squared the circle between imperial capitalism and universalism by engaging in a process of worldmaking through underworldmaking that mirrors the boundary-reinforcement and aesthetic entailments of fascism's imaginative geography. In other words, a world divided into competing realms of the civil and the uncivil, the good and the evil—a world in which the forces of darkness are always near and can reach out from the shadows—is already structurally fascist. Thus, while the contested politics of sex trafficking can be read as the symbolic expression of any number of racist and gendered political anxieties—about, for instance, the porosity of borders or shifting attitudes towards sexuality—they almost always express themselves through a Manichean worldview that liberal internationalists and fascists share. In our current moment of fascist ascendence, as people of good will around the world contemplate effective forms of resistance to the precipitous unraveling of democracy, it behooves all of us to remember that now, as in the 1920s, liberalism is not the antidote to fascism. Indeed, liberalism might just be fascism's doppelgänger.

Notes

1. Erich Fromm, "Zur Psychologie des Mädchenhandels und seiner Bekampfung," *Zeitschriftfur Judische Wohlfahrtspflege, Jahrg 1, Heft 6* (1929), 294–303 [trans. Katharina Laszlo, 2022].
2. Samuel Cohen, "Zur Diskussion des Problems des Internationalen Madchen - und Frauenhandels," *Zeitschriftfur Judische Wohlfahrtspflege* (1929), 288.
3. Liat Kozma, *Global Women, Colonial Ports: Prostitution in the Interwar Middle East* (SUNY Press, 2017). Jean-Michel Chaumont, *Le mythe de la traite des blanches* (La Découverte, 2009).
4. Comments on scale from minutes of International Conference on the Traffic in Women and Children, 1921 (League File R655-12-13895-18324), 26, 32. Reference to underworld in Report of the Special Body of Experts on the Traffic in Women and Children, Part Two, 1927 (League File 766738), 136. For "language of the trade" references, see The Vigilance Record: The Organ of the National Vigilance Association, 1919, in Traffic in Women and Children, Correspondence with Other Associations, 1920–21 (League File S154/9/1), 76. Critically, references to Yiddish as the major language of trafficking appear throughout League files on the 1927 Report. See, for instance, The Traffic in Women and Children Enquiry, Poland, 1925 (League File S177/32/3); The Traffic in Women and Children Enquiry, First Enquiry on Traffic in Women and Children, Miscellaneous, 1924-25 (League File S181/36/5). Please note: the entire archive of the League of Nations can now be found online, https://archives.ungeneva.org/lontad.
5. Fromm, "Zur Psychologie des Mädchenhandels," 303.
6. Leonard Woolf, *International Government* (Brentano's, 1916), 129.
7. Woodrow Wilson, "A World League for Peace" speech, January 22, 1917, https://millercenter.org/the-presidency/presidential-speeches/january-22-1917-world-league-peace-speech#:~:text=The%20equality%20of%20nations%20upon,and%20those%20that%20are%20weak. Liberal IR scholar John Ikenberry refers to League internationalism as "liberal internationalism .5." John Ikenberry, "Liberal Internationalism 3.0: America and the Dilemmas of Liberal World Order," *Perspectives on Politics* 7.1 (2009).
8. For more on the preservation of imperial hierarchy, see Mousab Younis, *On the Scale of the World* (University of California Press, 2022). Megan Donaldson, "Ventriloquism in Geneva: The League of Nations as International Organisation," in A. Brett, M. Donaldson, and M. Koskenniemi, eds., *History, Politics, Law: Thinking through the International* (Cambridge, 2021).
9. On the League and circle squaring, see Jeanne Morefield, *Empires Without Imperialism* (Oxford, 2014). Mark Mazower, *No Enchanted Palace* (Princeton University Press, 2003).
10. Susan Pedersen, *The Guardians: The League of Nations and the Crisis of Empire* (Oxford, 2015).
11. Duncan Bell, *Reordering the World: Essays on Liberalism and Empire* (Princeton, 2016), 264.
12. Roth Williams, "The Technique of the League of Nations," *International Journal of Ethics*, 34.2 (1924).

13. On "humanity as a whole," see League advocate and British statesman Robert Cecil, quoted in "International Notes," *Advocate for Peace*, 81. 1 (Jan. 1919): 23.
14. Edward Said, *Orientalism* (Vintage Books, 1979), 12.
15. Alfred Zimmern, *Nationality and Government* (Chatto and Windus, 1918), 37.
16. Newton Rowell, "The League of Nations and the Assembly at Geneva," *International Review of Mission* (University of Iowa Press, 1921), 402.
17. Joseph Maiolo, Laura Robson, *The League of Nations* (Cambridge, 2025), 4. On the League's trafficking work as support for ongoing, legal structures of imperial governance see Stephen Legg, *Prostitution and the Ends of Empire: Scale, Governmentalities, and Interwar India* (Duke University Press, 2014). Liat Kozma, "Regulated Brothels in Mandatory Syria and Lebanon: Between the Traffic in Women and the Permanent Mandate Commissions," *The League of Nations and Social Issues*, eds. Magaly Rodríguez García, David Rodogno and Liat Kozma (The United Nations, 2016). See also Philippa Hetherington and Julia Laite's account of "trafficking" as a malleable historical category, in "Editorial Note: Special Issue: Migration, Sex, and Intimate Labor," *Journal of Women's History*, 33.4 (2021).
18. Adom Getachew, *Worldmaking After Empire* (Princeton, 2019). Nelson Goodman, *Ways of Worldmaking*, Vol. 51 (Hackett Publishing, 1978). David Herman, "Narrative ways of worldmaking," in *Narratology in the Age of Cross-Disciplinary Narrative Research* 20 (2009): 71.
19. Nelson Goodman, *Ways of Worldmaking* (Hackett, 1978), 7.
20. For more on the antisemitic racialization of Jews in twentieth century Europe, see Sander Gilman, *The Jew's Body* (Routledge, 2013).
21. Closing speech, "Report of the Seventh International Congress for the Suppression of the Traffic in Women and Children," London, Tuesday, June 28th to Friday, July 1st, 1927, Caxton Hall (National Vigilance Association, 1928), National Vigilance Association Collection, International Bureau for the Suppression of Traffic in Women and Children, Box 108 S88P. 112 [LSE Women's Library], 112–113.
22. Theodor Adorno, "Freudian Theory and the Pattern of Fascist Propaganda," *The Frankfurt School Reader*, eds., Andrew Arato, Eike Gebhardt (Bloomsbury Academic and Professional, 1982). Also, Max Horkheimer and Theodor Adorno on antisemitism as "the hated mirror of capitalism," *Dialectic of Enlightenment* (Seabury, 1973), 171.
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28. Draft Texts of Covenant and Minutes of Drafting Commission [League File S585/15/1], 180–182, 230–234.
29. Megan Donaldson, "Ventriloquism in Geneva: The League of Nations as International Organisation," in Brett, Donaldson, and Koskenniemi, eds., *History, Politics, Law: Thinking through the International* (Cambridge, 2021), 253.
30. E. H. Carr, *The Twenty Years Crisis* (MacMillan, 1941), 56. On Woolf's influence, see Peter Wilson, *The International Theory of Leonard Woolf: A Study in Twentieth-Century Idealism* (Palgrave, 2003). On Zimmern: Peter Yearwood, "'On the Safe and Right Lines': The Lloyd George Government and the Origins of the League of Nations, 1916-1918," *The Historical Journal* 32.1 (1989): 131–155.
31. Woolf, *International Government*, 149.
32. Zimmern, *Nationality and Government*, 36.
33. Woolf, *International Government*, 129.
34. "The hats that are worn in Paris one season are worn at Athens and Bucharest the next." Zimmern, *Nationality and Government*, 39.
35. Jean-Michel Chaumont, "The White Slave Trade Affair (1880–1881), A Scandal Specific to Brussels?" *Brussels Studies* 46 (2011): 1–9; Jean Allain, "White Stave Traffic in International Law," *Journal of Trafficking and Human Exploitation* 1.1 (2017): 1–40.
36. Woolf, *International Government*, 263.
37. Zimmern, *Nationality and Government*, 36.
38. Woolf, *International Government*, 167.
39. Edward Said, *Orientalism* (Vintage, 1979), 12.
40. Said, *Orientalism*, 5.
41. Edward Said, *Culture and Imperialism* (Vintage, 1994), 11.
42. Zimmern, *Nationality and Government*, 163, 37.
43. Said, *Orientalism*, 26.
44. Zimmern, *Nationality and Government*, 37.
45. Zimmern, *Nationality and Government*, 36. Woolf, *International Government*, 127.
46. Partha Chatterjee, *The Nation and Its Fragments: Colonial and Postcolonial Histories* (Princeton, 1993), 16–18. Ashwini Tambe, "Climate, Race Science and the Age of Consent in the League of Nations," *Theory, Culture, And Society* 28.2 (2011): 109–130.

47. One journalist described the League's 1921 anti trafficking Convention as a way of "tightening the previous control" on immigration. See Arthur Sweetser, "The First Ten Years of the League of Nations," *International Conciliation* 13 (1930): 54. There is important recent work on the disciplining and exclusion of immigrant sex workers in the interwar era. See Liat Kozma, "The League of Nations and Colonial Prostitution," *The Routledge Companion to Sexuality and Colonialism*, eds. Chelsea Shields, Dagmar Herzog (Routledge, 2021), 188–198.
48. W.E. B Du Bois, "The African Roots of the War" (1915); *W.E.B. Du Bois: International Thoughts* (Cambridge, 2022), Vladimir Ilyich Lenin, *Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism* (Pluto Press, 1996).
49. Zimmern, *Nationality and Government*, 62.
50. See, for example, references to "international life" in: "Final Report of the Committee on the League of Nations," in *Draft Texts of Covenant, 14.* Jan Smuts, *The League of Nations: A Practical Suggestion* (Hodder and Stoughton, 1918), 8. Roth Williams, "The Technique of the League of Nations," *International Journal of Ethics* 34.2 (1924): 127.
51. James Bryce, *Essays and Addresses in War Time* (Macmillan, 1918), 204.
52. Plenary Minutes, 1920, The Records of the First Assembly [League File BI], 761. See Woodrow Wilson on "evils" in, "Address at Columbus Ohio, September 4, 1919," *Addresses of President Wilson* (Government Printing Office, 1919), 13.
53. Article 23, Covenant of the League of Nations, https://avalon.law.yale.edu/20th_century/leagcov.asp.
54. Barbara Metzger, "Toward an International Human Rights Regime During the Inter-War Years: The League of Nations' Combat of Traffic in Women and Children," *Beyond Sovereignty*, eds. Kevin Grant, Philippa Levine, Frank Trentmann (Palgrave, 2007), 73. International Conference 1921, 58.
55. Final Act, International Conference 1921, 270. Jeanne Morefield, "Equally Vulnerable: Liberal Internationalism, the Traffic in Women and Children, and the Non-Politics of Race," *Humanity: An International Journal of Human Rights, Humanitarianism, and Development* 16.1–2 (2025): 1-24.
56. International Conference 1921, 54.
57. See 1922 letter from Rachel Crowdy on appointing an American member to the CTWC in Traffic in Women and Children, Correspondence with various organisations and associations, 1922 [League File S154/9/3], 299. Arthur Balfour, at the Imperial Conference, identified the League's work on trafficking as one of the few examples of its functionality. Mr Balfour's Speech to the Imperial Conference, July 1921 [League File R1594/40/17581/17581].
58. The League of Nations Social and Humanitarian Work (The Information Section, Geneva, 1926), 25–26.
59. First Assembly Plenary Meeting, Geneva, 1920 [League File A-PLENARY-MINUTES-1920_BI), 546.
60. Motion to Assembly from Council Committee 11, 15 Dec. 1920 [League File R636-12-647-9547].

61. International Conference, 1921, 27. The "abolitionists" predominated in Britain and the US with several European states (most notably, France) favoring regulation.
62. International Conference 1921, 26. By 1934, that were twelve voting delegates and seven accessors. This is the first historical example of an international committee giving legal recognition/status to voluntary association (Metzger, "Toward an International," 73).
63. Joanne Pemberton, "New Worlds for Old: The League of Nations in the Age of Electricity," *Review of International Studies* 28.2 (2002): 31–336.
64. Paul Knepper, "International Criminals," *Media History* 20.4 (2014): 405; Susan Pedersen, "Back to the League of Nations," *The American Historical Review* 112.4 (2007): 1092.
65. On the League's "technical and non–political" work, see William Glenn Gray, "What did the League Do, Exactly?" *International History Spotlight* No. 1 (2007). On "uniform methods" see *Proceedings of the International Conference Related to Economic Statistics, 1928* [League File c.I83.M.84.1929. II], 5.
66. At their first meeting, members of the Committee referred repeatedly to "the problem of the suppression of the traffic," "future developments of the problem," or sometimes simply to "the problem." Advisory Committee on the Traffic in Women and Children, Minutes of the First Session, 1922 [League File 766725].
67. Advisory Committee for the Protection and Welfare of Children and Young People - Committee on Traffic in Women and Children—5th Session, 926 [League File R652/12/50429/13720/Jacket1], 5.
68. Comments of Representative from the International Women's Associations, International Conference 1921 [League File R647/12/13720/13720], 126. Note: the word "hidden" still appears frequently in contemporary anti-trafficking literature. For example, "trafficking is largely a hidden social problem" ["Toolkit to Combat Trafficking in Persons" (United Nations, 2008), 284], or "child trafficking victims may be hidden in plain sight" ["Global Report on Trafficking in Persons, 2020," (United Nations, 2020), 83].
69. International Conference 1921, 53. Advisory Committee on the Traffic in Women and Children. Minutes of the Second Session 1923 [League File C-225-M-129-1923-IV_EN], 27. For some on the CTWC, the goal was also to encourage "an informed and active public opinion" about "all forms of commercialized vice." Resolutions Adopted by the Advisory Committee… Traffic in Women and Children, 1927 [League File R654/12/63233/13720], 16.
70. Said, *Orientalism*, 55, 89, 27. For more on the League's "application of technocratic expertise," see Maiolo and Robson, *The League of Nations*, 6.
71. Third session of Advisory Committee on Traffic in Women and Children, 1924 [League File R651/12/35340/13720]. For more on the committee's quest for social science respectability, see Jean–Michel Chaumont, "How to Establish the Reality of Trafficking in Women? The Selective Disqualification of Sources by the Special Body of Experts of the League

of Nations (1924–1927)," in *Trafficking and Sex Work: Gender, Race and Public Order, ed. Mathilde Darley* (Routledge, 2022), 18.

72. The CTWC devoted time in its earliest meetings to identifying a process for screening anecdotal information about trafficking by having it pass first through official channels within the committee before being relayed to the Assembly. See "Method for Dealing with Information," Advisory Committee…1922 [League File 766725], 63.
73. From 1919, the NVA had an outsized influence on the committee, flooding Crowdy's office with its publications. See Associations for Moral and Social Hygiene Transmits Copies of the "Shield" 1920 [League File R636/12/4616/647].
74. W.N. Willis, *The White Slaves of London* (Stanley Paul and Co., 1912), 70. On licensed houses, see Jessica Pliley, "Claims to Protection: The Rise and Fall of Feminist Abolitionism in the League of Nations' Committee on the Traffic in Women and Children, 1919–1936," *Journal of Women's History* 22.4 (2010): 90-113.
75. Advisory Committee…1922 [League File 766725], 128. Advisory Commission for the Protection and Welfare of Children and Young People, Traffic in Women and Children Committee, Report of the Seventh Session, 1928 [League file: R3037-11B-2776-2915], 2. For more on music halls and trafficking narratives see Julia Laite, "Between Scylla and Charybdis: Women's Labour Migration and Sex Trafficking in the early Twentieth Century," *International Review of Social History* 62.1 (2017).
76. Traffic in Women and Children Committee, Report of the Seventh Session, 1928, 49.
77. Advisory Commission for the Protection and Welfare of Children and Young People, Traffic in Women and Children Committee, Minutes of the Seventh Session, 1928 [League File C. 184. M. 59. 1928. IV], 9.
78. Letter from Secretary General to the Committee, July 14, 1928, Employment of Artists [League File R3021-11B-288-2677], 8.
79. Draft Questionnaire, Employment of Artistes to be Employed in Music Halls, etc. 1928–32 [League File R3021-11B-288-288], 15.
80. Summary of Reports on Music Halls, 1929 [League File R3022-11B-288-11590].
81. The ASHA was financed entirely by John D. Rockefeller (see Paul Knepper, "Measuring the Threat of Global Crime: Insights from Research by the League of Nations into the Traffic in Women," *Criminology* 50.3 (2012): 779). The Rockefeller Foundation's connections to the Special Body are detailed in a lengthy memo prepared by the Foundation. Files of Sir James Arthur Salter - Rockefeller Foundation - Relations between League and Rockefeller Foundation 1927 [League File S118/68/4]. Grace Abbot served as the unofficial American representative irregularly on the CTWC from 1922—1934. See Jessica Pliley, "Ambivalent Abolitionist Legacies: The League of Nations' Investigations into Sex Trafficking, 1927–1934," in *Fighting Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking: History and Contemporary Policy*, eds., LeBaron Pliley, Blight (Cambridge University Press, 2021), 106n29.

82. Jacqueline Ross, "American Activists' Efforts to Export Their Undercover Tactics and Their Abolitionist Agenda to the League of Nations," *Urban Vice Regulation Compared* (Springer, 2024), 55–63.
83. Jean Michel Chaumon, Magaly Rodrigues Garcia, Paul Servais, *The Trafficking in Women, 1924–1926: The Paul Kinsie Report for the League of* Nations (United Nations Publications, 2017), 9.
84. Report of Special Body, Part One, 6.
85. League of Nations, Official Journal, Resolution of the Council to Appoint a Special Body of Experts on the Traffic in Women and Children, 1924 [League File C-L-61-1924-IV].
86. An assistant from the ASHA was present in meetings of the Special Body to provide "knowledge in connection with any questions which might arise with regard to the source of the material." First Meeting of Special Body of Experts, 1927 [League File S149/4/1], 15.
87. Meeting of Special Body of Experts - Minutes of the Fifth Session [League File S169/24/6], 20.
88. For instance, Eva Payne, *Empire of Purity* (Princeton, 2024). See also the work of Kozmo, Legg, Chaumont, Pliley, and Knepper.
89. References to a criminal underworld appear in dossiers of information gathered from studies of individual states. See, for instance, Traffic in Women and Children—Enquiry—Italy, 1921–26 [League File S176/31/4], and Traffic in Women and Children - Enquiry—England 1921–26 [League File S174/29/4].
90. Ross, "American Activists' Efforts," 61.
91. Report of Special Body, Part One, 42.
92. Report of Special Body, Part One, 43.
93. The Report devotes an entire section to explaining this method of entrapment.
94. Said, *Orientalism*, 150.
95. To do this, investigators were "given introductions from members of the underworld in one country to those in another" who guided them toward "either the same traffickers" or "friends of these same characters." Report of the Special Body, Part Two, 18.
96. Report of the Special Body, Part Two, 13.
97. Report of Special Body, Part One, 6,
98. Report of Special Body, Part Two, 11, 39; Report of Special Body, Part One, 10.
99. Report of Special Body, Part One, 43.
100. International Conference 1921, 67.
101. Report of Special Body, Part Two, 7, 28, 69.
102. Report of Special Body Part One, 9.
103. Said, *Orientalism*, 44, 222.
104. Said, *Orientalism*, 222.

105. Sixth Session of Committee on Traffic in Women and Children, 1927 [League File R672/12/59795/28269] 34. Report of Special Body Part One, 18, 46, 29.
106. Minutes of the Director's Meeting, Confidential Circular No. 6, Memorandum to Under Secretaries–General and Directors, 1923 [League File DIRMTG-6-1923], 10.
107. First Enquiry on Traffic in Women and Children—Yugoslavia, 1924 [League File S181/36/2], 5.
108. Fromm, "Zur Psychologie des Mädchenhandels," 299.
109. On the portrayal of Jews in Germany's interwar anti–trafficking discourse, see Dietmar Jazbinsek, *Der internationale Mädchenhandel: Biographie eines sozialen Problems* (Wissenschaftszentrum Berlin für Sozialforschung, WZB Discussion Paper No. FS II 02-501, 2002).
110. Joseph Bannister, *Jews and the White Slave Traffic: or, Lords of the Hells of Gomorrah* (The Britons, 1921). Edward Bristow, *Prostitution and Prejudice: The Jewish Fight Against White Slavery, 1875–1939* (Oxford University Press, 1983).
111. Ernest Bell, *Fighting the Traffic in Young Girls: Or War on the White Slave Trade* (n.p., Chicago, 1910), 188. See Chaumont, Rodríguez García, and Servais on lead investigator Paul Kinsie's antisemitism, The Paul Kinsie Report, 15.
112. Knepper, *The Invention of International Crime*, 85–86.
113. First Enquiry on Traffic in Women and Children - Uruguay [League File S180/35/1]. Also Report on Traffic in Women and Children - Special Body of Experts, With Notes and Working Papers From Several Countries in the Americas [League File S148-A/3/5].
114. Report on Traffic in Women and Children—Special Body of Experts 1925 (field notes) [League File S148-A/3/4].
115. First Enquiry on Traffic in Women and Children—Brazil [League File S172/27/5].
116. First Enquiry on Traffic in Women and Children - Code book, 1924–26 [League File, File S171/26/5].
117. During a drafting meeting, the British representative inquired about the word "suschicker" and the ASHA representative replied, "it is a Yiddish word meaning sender of girls." "Is it an ordinary or a low-meaning word?" asked the British representative. "I think we should omit it." Verbatim Report of the 9th Meeting of the Sixth Session of the Special Body of Experts [League File S170/25/9], 40. Note: "suschiker" does not appear to be a Yiddish word for pimp, although the word "schicker" does mean drunkard. Thanks to Talia Cohen for her translation help.
118. The 1926 Report on trafficking authored by the Jewish Association for the Protection of Women and Girls was distributed among members of the Committee the same year as the Special Body's Report. Application For Documents by Jewish Association for the Protection of Girls and Women, London [League File R1797/49/62478/62478].
119. Meeting of Special Body of Experts—Minutes of the Eight Meeting, Seventh Session, 1927 [League File S149/4/8], 33.

120. Meeting of Special Body of Experts—Minutes, 34.
121. Report of the Special Body Part One, 34.
122. Questionnaire on Traffic in Women and Children (1924)—Reply of The Argentine [League File R685/12/37431/35160], 16. Report of Special Body Part One, 14.
123. Report of Special Body Part One, 12, 28.
124. Report of Special Body Part Two, 43; Part One 1927, 9.
125. Report of Special Body Part Two, 17.
126. Report of Special Body Part One, 28.
127. "If a person walked the streets and alleys of Leopoldstadt in the evening, all along the way you could see things which remained hidden from the great majority of the German people." Adolph Hitler, *Mein Kampf*, trans. Ralph Mannheim (Houghton Mifflin, 1971), 124.
128. Rachel Crowdy, "The Humanitarian Activities of the League of Nations," *Journal of the Royal Institution of International Affairs* 6.3 (1927): 156.
129. "The Nazis were keenly aware of the propagandistic potential of the issue of prostitution…" Julia Roos, "Backlash Against Prostitutes' Rights: Origins and Dynamics of Nazi Prostitution Policies," *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 11(1): 68.
130. Julia Roos, *Weimar Through the Lens of Gender* (University of Michigan Press, 2010), 206.
131. Kevin Roose, "QAnon Followers Are Hijacking the #SaveTheChildren Movement," *The New York Times*, Aug. 12, 2020.
132. Report of the Seventh International Congress for the Suppression of Traffic in Women and Children, Caxton Hall, June 28th to July 1st, (London, 1927), 24.
133. Roos, *Weimar Through the Lens of Gender*, 207. For more on Kundt's role in the London conference, see Dossier on Seventh International Congress for the Suppression of Traffic in Women and Children, London, June-July 1927 [League File R637/12/58389/647].
134. See Sybille Nevill–Rolfe's summary of the Congress in "Economic Conditions in Relation to Prostitution," *Poverty and Prostitution* (British Social Hygiene Council, 1933), 10.
135. Knepper, *The Invention of International Crime*, 111.
136. Traffic in Women and Children Committee, Report of the Work of the Thirteenth Session, 1934 [League File, R4667/11B/10601/7290), 11.
137. "Candid Commentary," *The Black Shirt*, Dec. 3, 14. British Union of Fascists: Newspapers and Secret Files, 1933–1951, 14, National Archives, London.
138. Kofi Annan, Address at the Opening of the Signing Conference for The United Nations Convention Against Transnational Organized Crime, Palermo, 12 December 2000, https://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/about-unodc/speeches/speech_2000-12-12_1.html
139. In 1995, for instance, Clinton's national security advisor, Anthony Lake, described himself as a "pragmatic neo-Wilsonian." Jason De Parle, "The

Man Behind Bill Clinton's Foreign Policy," *New York Times Magazine*, Aug. 20. 1995. See also Tony Smith, "The Rise of Neo–Wilsonianism," *Why Wilson Matters: The Origin of American Liberal Internationalism and Its Crisis Today* (Princeton University Press, 2017), 188.

140. Michael Brenes, "Abandoning the Peace Dividend: Bill Clinton and the Political Economy of Defense Conversion, 1989–2000," *Rethinking U.S. World Power: Domestic Histories of U.S. Foreign Relations*, eds. Daniel Bessner, Michael Brenes (Palgrave 2024).

141. See Bill Clinton's comments on the plan to "make the world's new economy work for us." This entailed extending neoliberal policies of forced privatization into every old, new, and "emerging" market in the world. The President's Radio Address, July 10, 1993, https://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/documents/the-presidents-radio-address-547

142. The success of trafficking as an issue worth of attention reflects years of lobbying by not just the usual collection of Christian "abolitionist" organizations and human rights activists, but also the advocacy of some the world's most mainstream liberal feminists associated with the world's most powerful state (e.g., Hilary Clinton and Madelein Albright). See "Twenty Years of Trafficking: Taking Stock of the World the Palermo Protocol Built," https://www.opendemocracy.net/en/beyond-trafficking-and-slavery/twenty-years-trafficking-taking-stock-world-palermo-protocol-built/

143. Carol Leigh, "Anti-Trafficking Industrial Complex Awareness Month," 2015 https://glc.yale.edu/sites/default/files/pdf/anti-trafficking_industrial_complex_awareness_month_2nd_edition_with_images_carolleigh_stori.pdf . See Jennifer Lynne Musto, "The 'NGO-ification' of the Anti-trafficking Movement in the United States: A Case Study of the Coalition to Abolish Slavery and Prostitution," in *Sex Trafficking, Human Rights, and Social Justice*, ed. T. Zheng (Routledge, 2010).

144. Barack Obama, "Remarks by the President to the Clinton Global Initiative," White House Press Release, September 25, 2012, https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/the-press-office/2012/09/25/remarks-president-clinton-global-initiative. "Hidden in Plain Sight" is on the logo, for instance, of the International Center for Missing and Exploited Children (https://www.icmec.org/trafficking/) and is the title of countless book, conferences, and talks devoted to the subject of human trafficking. See U.N. public service announcement at: https://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/multimedia/un.gift-psa-open-your-eyes.html

145. Kaitlan Tiffany, "The Great (Fake) Child Sex Trafficking Epidemic," *The Atlantic*, Dec. 9, 2021. https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2022/01/children-sex-trafficking-conspiracy-epidemic/620845/

146. This video circulated on Patriot Hub, BitChute, and other conspiracy websites: https://www.patrihub.com/open-your-eyes-to-human-trafficking

147. Angela Davis, "Political Prisoners, Prisons and Black Liberation," *If They Come in the Morning* (Verso, 2016). Alberto Toscano, *Late Fascism* (Verso, 2023), x.

148. Toscano, *Late Fascism*, 43.