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## Social work and world order: The politics and ideology of social welfare at the United Nations

When Cilento went to work for the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration (UNRRA) in Egypt in May 1945, he left Australia on an aeroplane from Perth, leaving his family behind in Brisbane. In an unpublished memoir of his time at the United Nations, he wrote that, amid fears for the future of 'civilisation', he was 'among the part-realist and part-sentimentalist millions who were eager to silence their doubts and to offer any abilities they might have to advance this long-range bid for altruistic co-operation'.<sup>1</sup> En route to Cairo, he stopped at Colombo, Madras, Hyderabad, Bombay, Ahmadabad, Karachi and Bahrain. Where once Cilento had travelled by train and boat, he now flew above the borders of the globe in a newer manifestation of modernity—one that had posed novel problems for quarantine officials since the early 1930s. On his journey, Cilento confirmed for himself the existence of social and health problems he had observed in Pacific colonies. Flying over Ceylon, he noted that 'areas devoted to the production of the staple crops are tremendous when compared with the straggly areas on which native foodstuffs are cultivated for local consumption'.<sup>2</sup> There was some irony in his comments. Twenty years earlier, Cilento had noted in a report

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1 Raphael Cilento, 'Escape from UN-reality,' Introduction, p. 3, Cilento Papers, UQFL44, Box 18, Item 107.

2 Raphael Cilento, Diary: 1 May – 16 May 1945, Appointment to UNRRA, 5 May 1945, Cilento Papers, UQFL44, Box 12, Item 26.

on medical services in New Guinea that ‘in old established countries, such as Ceylon, it has been recognised that a mere striving towards economic development irrespective of the health of the native population, means disaster’.<sup>3</sup> As in New Guinea and Fiji, he now observed the need for profit from commercial agriculture had sacrificed indigenous agriculture and nutrition.<sup>4</sup>

This critique did not unsettle his belief in the inferiority of non-European peoples. The Indian pilots and crew were ‘inclined to sit down helplessly and hopelessly if anything goes wrong’, while the planes were ‘crowded with every kind of colonial Indian from *café au lait* to *café noir*’.<sup>5</sup> In the wake of news of the German surrender, he noted in his diary:

The ships in the harbour at Karachi were all dressed in flags and there is a sort of sedate glee about the English area. Karachi’s only reaction, however, is ‘What about freedom for India? The war is against imperialism no less than against Fascism’.<sup>6</sup>

In describing both the ruin of the world and the voice of anticolonial nationalism, Ciento felt he was moving through a world that was on the brink of epochal change, for better or worse.

Ciento’s time in international civil service was convoluted. Between 1945 and 1950, he held several positions with UNRRA and the UN Secretariat. He was initially offered a post in the Balkans as a malariologist for UNRRA in January 1945, but his arrival in Egypt came as a surprise to the Cairo office.<sup>7</sup> When it became clear that responsibility for Greece had since passed from the Cairo office to London, Ciento proceeded to Athens. Yet UNRRA officials in Greece were ambivalent about Ciento’s usefulness. When the chief of the UNRRA mission rejected outright his proposals for aerial spraying of dichlorodiphenyltrichloroethane (DDT), it became clear that his expertise would have little outlet.<sup>8</sup> Ciento then went to London to consult with UNRRA’s European Regional Office, which appointed him the UNRRA Director for the British Zone of

3 Raphael Ciento, ‘Medical Progress and Policy in the Territory of New Guinea,’ January 1925, p. 4, NAA: A518, F832/1/3.

4 See Chapters 2 and 3, this volume.

5 Raphael Ciento, Diary: 1 May – 16 May 1945, Appointment to UNRRA, 6 May 1945, Ciento Papers, UQFL44, Box 12, Item 26. Ciento’s emphasis.

6 *ibid.*, 9 May 1945.

7 *ibid.*, 10 May 1945. See also Ciento, ‘Escape from UN-reality,’ p. 9.

8 Ciento, ‘Escape from UN-reality,’ p. 36.

occupied Germany. He thus became responsible for the displaced persons' camps that held hundreds of thousands of refugees waiting for repatriation or resettlement. In May 1946, Cilento joined the Secretariat of the United Nations at Lake Success in New York, where he oversaw the creation of the International Refugee Organization in his capacity as Director of the Division of Refugees and Displaced Persons. Cilento thus acquired a reputation as an expert in administering refugee relief. During the 1948 Palestinian refugee crisis, he was assigned to direct the Disaster Relief Project and, when he presented a paper at the 1949 UN Social Welfare Seminar in Beirut, it was on the topic of the 'Social Aspects of Any Refugee Problem'.<sup>9</sup>

For most of his career as an international civil servant, Cilento was the Director of the Division of Social Activities within the Department of Social Affairs of the UN Secretariat. The Advisory Social Welfare Programme—one of the first operational functions of the new international organisation—was his responsibility. Under General Assembly Resolution 58, member states could ask the UN Secretariat to provide assistance with social welfare through expert consultants, regional seminars and technical documentation. The program also offered fellowships to help social workers from underdeveloped countries observe the work of welfare departments and social work schools in the United States and Europe. The Department of Social Affairs fostered connections to government welfare agencies and schools of social work and social science, which provided personnel and support for the program. The secretariat thus mobilised the knowledge and expertise of social welfare institutions and agencies in the developed world. It became involved in disseminating or consolidating both practices of social welfare and ideas about the relationship between wellbeing, family, the community and the state. In this respect, it was a kind of development project, but one with a tense and critical relationship to forms of technical assistance and economic development that emerged in the late 1940s.

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9 Raphael Cilento, 'The Social Aspects of Any Refugee Problem,' Cilento Papers, UQFL44, Box 17, Item 89.

Renewed interest in international history in general has refocused scholars' attention on the United Nations.<sup>10</sup> Historians have been interested in varieties of internationalism and cosmopolitanism, as well as understanding the connections between imperialism, postwar politics and the social sciences. Many officials and those involved in its foundation believed the United Nations' purpose was to maintain an imperial relationship of tutelage between the 'civilised' white world and the 'coloured' rest. Several studies in history, sociology and anthropology have challenged the distinction between prewar colonialism and post-1940 'development'. On one level, postwar inequality in power, social wellbeing and economic prosperity between the global north and south partly derive from the colonial past.<sup>11</sup> On another, studies suggest the linear progress between 'traditional' and 'modern' prescribed in development discourse preserved imperial ideologies concerning the 'sacred trust of civilisation' or the uplift of 'primitive' peoples.<sup>12</sup> Joseph Hodge, for example, has pointed out that large-scale agricultural development projects after World War II were overseen by scientific experts who had previously worked closely with the British Colonial Office on policies designed to counter colonial unrest in the 1920s and 1930s.<sup>13</sup> Many postwar projects that exemplified large-scale, technocratic development, such as the East Africa Groundnut Scheme of the late 1940s, were late British colonial projects.<sup>14</sup>

At the same time, historians have tried to be sensitive to postwar and postcolonial transformations in ideology and practice. Amy Staples has depicted the birth of postwar international development as a departure from imperialism that was fundamentally positive and infused with

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10 Sunil Amrith and Glenda Sluga, 'New Histories of the United Nations,' *Journal of World History*, 19(3), 2008, pp. 251–74; Alison Bashford, 'Population, Geopolitics, and International Organizations in the Mid Twentieth Century,' *Journal of World History*, 19(3), 2008, pp. 327–47; Connelly, *Fatal Misconception*; Mazower, *No Enchanted Palace*; Sluga, 'UNESCO and the (One) World of Julian Huxley,' pp. 393–418.

11 Uma Kothari, 'From Colonial Administration to Development Studies: A Post-colonial Critique of the History of Development Studies,' in Uma Kothari (ed.), *A Radical History of Development Studies: Individuals, Institutions and Ideologies* (London: Zed Books, 2005), pp. 48–9.

12 Frederick Cooper and Randall Packard argue that enthusiasm for these transformations did not develop within British colonialism until the 1940s; 'Introduction,' in Frederick Cooper and Randall Packard (eds), *International Development and the Social Sciences* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), pp. 17–18. See also Kothari, 'From Colonial Administration to Development Studies,' p. 49. On the importance of these dichotomies in colonial ideology and development, see Anderson, *Colonial Pathologies*, pp. 183–4.

13 Hodge, *Triumph of the Expert*, pp. 7–10.

14 *ibid.*, pp. 209–14.

international idealism.<sup>15</sup> Frederick Cooper has argued more subtly that postwar decolonisation effectively ended the legitimacy of colonial empires but also cautions against obscuring the complexities of continuity and rupture in this period.<sup>16</sup> Sunil Amrith has argued that an increasing emphasis on technology and administration at the expense of visions of rural social progress reflected the transformation, at least partially, of the world into a system of nation-states preoccupied with economic development.<sup>17</sup>

Cilento was a UN official with both colonial experience and an imperial vision of world order. It is important to pay attention to continuities of imperial power relations and colonial culture in postwar development, but it is also important to keep in mind the tensions between different imperial discourses and practices. That Cilento's colonial experience and ideas would prompt him to critique postwar economic development is indicative of this. In other words, continuities between imperialism and development did not stop Cilento from perceiving a major rupture in the postwar period. Moreover, the United Nations offered projects in social welfare to all developing or wartorn countries, not merely those nation-states in Asia and the Middle East that were emerging from recent decolonisation.<sup>18</sup> A close examination of the ideology and practice of UN social welfare services, both at headquarters in New York and in particular national missions, illustrates the way in which colonial representations of backwardness and modernity persisted within an administrative framework that reflected a postcolonial world order of sovereign and equal nation-states.

In late 1948, within a few years of Resolution 58, the United Nations began taking on economic development, just as the United States was beginning to expand its web of bilateral aid under president Harry S. Truman's Point IV program.<sup>19</sup> With the ascent of economic development,

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15 Amy Staples, *The Birth of Development: How the World Bank, Food and Agriculture Organization and the World Health Organization Changed the World, 1945–65* (Kent, OH: Kent State University Press, 2006), pp. 1–2.

16 Frederick Cooper, *Colonialism in Question: Theory, Knowledge, History* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005), pp. 19–20.

17 Amrith, *Decolonizing International Health*, pp. 47–8.

18 Kothari notes also that, despite their colonial genealogy, development projects were not a simple extension of colonial rule, since development projects were not inevitable after decolonisation. Kothari, 'From Colonial Administration to Development Studies,' pp. 49–50.

19 US Department of State, *Point Four: Cooperative Program for Aid in the Development of Economically Underdeveloped Areas* (Washington, DC: Office of Public Affairs, 1950). See also Cooper and Packard, 'Introduction,' pp. 8–9.

social welfare experts sought to negotiate a place for their knowledge. They suggested ways in which they could facilitate the economic and social transformation of underdeveloped communities while simultaneously offering a critique of rapid social change among purportedly backward peoples. Cilento felt that the social welfare work of the United Nations ought to continue the paternal tutelage that he had promoted in the still-colonial Pacific Islands, where improved health and social change should occur away from the effects of rapid and substantial economic transformation. When Cilento resigned from the United Nations, he cited as his biggest grievance not only the in-principle equality of nations and races that was emerging in the general assembly, but also the way in which social progress and the ‘uplift’ of colonial discourse had been trampled under the desire of nation-states to rapidly modernise and develop. Cilento’s career at the United Nations thus underscores how this historical moment, between the war and the early 1950s, saw not simple continuity or rupture, but rather the restructuring of a select set of colonial discourses and practices within a politically transformed world.

## The world in transition

Cilento came to international social welfare by accident, having initially been appointed to UNRRA as a malaria expert. Dr Wilbur Sawyer, a former director of the International Health Board (IHB) of the Rockefeller Foundation and of the Australian Hookworm Campaign from 1919 to 1922, became involved in planning postwar health work for UNRRA.<sup>20</sup> Cilento later recalled that Sawyer phoned to offer him a role in the Balkans to prevent the spread of malaria from Egypt to Greece.<sup>21</sup> After initial British planning for an anticipated postwar humanitarian crisis, a new impetus from the United States led to the formation of UNRRA in November 1943, which took over organising disease control and material relief for displaced persons. The bulk of the resources and experts involved

20 Raphael Cilento, ‘Hookworm Work and Control in Australia,’ *Report of the Federal Health Council of Australia*, 4, 1930, p. 65.

21 ‘Interview with Sir Raphael Cilento, Tropical Medicine Specialist,’ Interview by Mel Pratt, 7 March 1971, Transcript, National Library of Australia [hereinafter NLA], Canberra, pp. 31–2. On the complex history of the 1942–44 malaria epidemic in Egypt, see Timothy Mitchell, *The Rule of Experts: Egypt, Techno-politics, Modernity* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002), Ch. 1.

in its operations also came from the United States.<sup>22</sup> With the cessation of hostilities, UNRRA began providing emergency clothing, blankets, food and shelter to millions of displaced persons in Europe, South-East Asia and China, while also working to prevent epidemics of typhus, malaria and other diseases. After this massive initial distribution of aid, UNRRA took on a broader role in reconstruction. Missions were established in several countries, where UNRRA worked to rehabilitate local economies and institutions by providing child welfare services, occupational training and employment services.<sup>23</sup>

Cilento's first encounter with UNRRA did not impress him. When he arrived at the Cairo office, it had lost all record of his appointment. Cilento eventually made it to Greece in May 1945, just months after British troops and the armed forces of the left-wing National Liberation Front (EAM) had fought in Athens. The size and popularity of the leftist resistance had grown enormously during the war, as it provided infrastructure and social services to many communities.<sup>24</sup> After the withdrawal of German and Italian forces, the British sought a return to the monarchy as the best chance of securing a friendly, anticommunist state, and tried to exclude the EAM from any role in shaping or forming a government. When the British demanded that the Greek People's Liberation Army (ELAS) demobilise while insisting that other minor resistance groups remain armed, the EAM called for a strike and ELAS forces descended on Athens. British prime minister Winston Churchill authorised British troops to actively engage the ELAS, claiming they were seeking to seize power. As Philip Minehan suggests, however, it seems unlikely that this was the case and the British were simply seeking to suppress a left-wing organisation that had enjoyed significant popularity during the war.<sup>25</sup>

In this context of ongoing political tension, Cilento found much in UNRRA's activities to criticise. An agreement in March left UNRRA in a nonpartisan advisory role, giving responsibility for the distribution of

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22 Amrith, *Decolonizing International Health*, pp. 55–6; Daniel G. Cohen, 'Between Relief and Politics: Refugee Humanitarianism in Occupied Germany 1945–1946,' *Journal of Contemporary History*, 43(3), 2008, pp. 437–9; Katerina Gardikas, 'Relief Work and Malaria in Greece, 1943–1947,' *Journal of Contemporary History*, 43(3), 2008, pp. 493–8; Flora Tsilaga, "'The Mountain Laboured and Brought Forth a Mouse': UNRRA's Operations in the Cyclades Islands, c.1945–46,' *Journal of Contemporary History*, 43(3), 2008, p. 527.

23 Cohen, 'Between Relief and Politics,' pp. 439–42.

24 Philip B. Minehan, *Civil War and World War in Europe: Spain, Yugoslavia, and Greece, 1936–1949* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), pp. 148–53.

25 *ibid.*, pp. 210–11.

material aid to the Greek state. UNRRA had insisted on such a position to avoid a popular backlash against an association with British forces, yet its remove from actual operations made its work difficult and its role ambiguous.<sup>26</sup> The Greek Government that had returned from exile in Egypt had little authority in many parts of the country and little capacity to deal with economic reconstruction.<sup>27</sup> Cilento recalled that, in relinquishing a role in providing practical aid with tools, livestock and other materials vital to restarting local production, UNRRA had appeared useless to military authorities, local officials and the public.<sup>28</sup> In the Cyclades Islands, Cilento noted, extreme malnutrition crippled the population, yet in an environment of corruption and inefficiency UNRRA was largely powerless to ease the situation and black markets flourished.<sup>29</sup>

Cilento quickly became redundant. The American chief of the UNRRA mission in Greece rejected outright his proposal for aerial spraying in Crete using DDT. The powerful new insecticide had been used extensively in Sicily, Egypt and Ceylon during the war, but UNRRA balked at prohibitive costs, political ramifications and shortages of personnel.<sup>30</sup> Daniel E. Wright, the Chief Sanitary Engineer for the UNRRA mission in Greece, who had worked in the country for the Rockefeller Foundation in the 1930s, shared Cilento's enthusiasm for DDT and had planned a nationwide house-to-house spraying campaign. Yet Wright was also jealous of the Rockefeller legacy and had argued against taking foreign malaria specialists to Greece in the belief that American philanthropic involvement in the 1930s had left behind a corps of well-trained local personnel.<sup>31</sup>

A frustrated Cilento left Greece to discuss these problems at UNRRA's European Regional Office in London. He encountered resistance there as well, but the London office also needed someone to help coordinate anti-typhus work in Germany. After meeting with the Australian Director-General of the European Regional Office, Commander Robert Jackson, and a long administrative quagmire, Cilento eventually arrived in the

26 Gardikas, 'Relief Work and Malaria in Greece,' p. 502.

27 Tsilaga, "'The Mountain Laboured and Brought Forth a Mouse,'" p. 527.

28 Cilento, 'Escape from UN-reality,' pp. 19–22.

29 *ibid.*, pp. 29–30.

30 *ibid.*, p. 36. On the wartime use of DDT, see Amrith, *Decolonizing International Health*, pp. 48–50.

31 Cilento, 'Escape from UN-reality,' pp. 34–5. See also Gardikas, 'Relief Work and Malaria in Greece,' p. 503.

British Zone of occupied Germany, serving initially as the Chief Health Officer and then as zone director.<sup>32</sup> Cilento was in charge of attempts to manage the flow of displaced persons and typhus, using an array of camps and medical techniques, including dusting people and clothes with DDT as they crossed the *cordon sanitaire*. The favoured policy of the occupying powers for dealing with displaced persons was repatriation, yet not all were convinced that they would be safe or find opportunities for employment in Eastern Europe.<sup>33</sup> While some accepted repatriation, others opted for resettlement in Germany or abroad in the United States and other lands, including Palestine.<sup>34</sup>

Cilento's work in Germany was thus an attempt to manage a problem population and it spoke to modern ambitions of administrative order over life. UNRRA's work in Germany, as Daniel G. Cohen has noted, was part of a shift from voluntary participation in international welfare to organised and professional planning of relief and development.<sup>35</sup> Refugees, soldiers and other displaced persons were, as in the aftermath of World War I, potential bearers of the lice that carried typhus and therefore threatened the spread of epidemics.<sup>36</sup> 'An unorganized mass movement of these people, attempting to return to their homes', stated one UNRRA publication, 'would reduce war-enfeebled transportation facilities to chaos, would clog roads, and would lead to misery, starvation, and the spread of epidemics'.<sup>37</sup> Jewish inmates of labour and concentration camps were also seen as reservoirs of disease. During Cilento's term as zone director, UNRRA developed plans for mobile x-ray teams to survey the extent of tuberculosis among displaced persons.<sup>38</sup> Cilento in fact administered an apparatus of DDT dusting teams, food depots along

32 Fisher, *Raphael Cilento*, p. 181.

33 Raphael Cilento, 'Memorandum: Zone Directive,' n.d.; 'Memorandum: Repatriation of Polish D.P.s,' Col. E. T. Penfold, UNRRA District Director, 30 Corps District, 9 February 1946, S-0422-0011-0003, United Nations Archives [hereinafter UNA]. See also Cilento, 'The Social Aspects of Any Refugee Problem,' p. 24.

34 Some in fact asserted that they were from Palestine, regardless of their real nationality. See Director, UNRRA Team 806, to UNRRA Field Supervisory Officer, 43rd (W) Division, BAOR, 21 May 1946, S-0422-0002-07, UNA.

35 Cohen, 'Between Relief and Politics,' pp. 437–9.

36 On the post-World War I epidemics, see Weindling, 'Introduction,' p. 8; Paul Weindling, *Epidemics and Genocide in Eastern Europe 1890–1945* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), pp. 145–6; Patrick Zylberman, 'Civilizing the State,' pp. 31–2.

37 United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration [hereinafter UNRRA], *UNRRA: Organization, Aims, Progress* (Washington, DC: UNRRA, 1944), p. 2.

38 Dr J. Balfour Kirk, Assistant Director of Relief Services, to Raphael Cilento, 4 October 1945, S-0422-0002-05, UNA.

main routes, assembly centres, camps, selective billeting and repatriation trains—all designed to calculate the health risk of population movements and provide systems of surveillance and medical screening.

The aim of camps in this context was to regulate the movement of people and reintroduce them to orderly, settled life. In a lecture on administering refugee relief, Cilento recommended that refugees in camps be afforded self-government as soon as possible so as to recognise 'the dignity and social consciousness of the individual'.<sup>39</sup> Cilento cited the example of a camp director who prided himself on its discipline and order, only to witness his charges break every window in revolt.<sup>40</sup> UNRRA officials similarly stressed that the displaced persons camps were self-governing. Yet some among the regional and local UNRRA teams saw the displaced persons camps, with their regular sick parades, as sites of surveillance and discipline as well.<sup>41</sup> On one occasion, an UNRRA officer called in local military units to a camp where Polish inmates protested the distribution of Red Cross parcels. While the army enforced martial law for 36 hours to 'restore order', camp officials conducted interrogations, separated families, single men and women and placed 'doubtful characters' in separate sections.<sup>42</sup> A 1955 report of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) similarly stressed the need to subject refugees to these kinds of controls in the interests of managing groups with such potential for disorder.<sup>43</sup> The camps, along with the repatriation trains and DDT teams, were thus part of a larger apparatus designed to regulate the flow of people, thus minimising disruptions and disorder.<sup>44</sup>

Political questions were not completely subordinate to administration. Citizenship status and the demands of communist states in Eastern Europe exerted considerable influence on whether people were granted displaced person status and on patterns of repatriation. Screening processes at displaced persons collection depots and camps sought out former enemy

39 Cilento, 'The Social Aspects of Any Refugee Problem,' p. 11. Cilento's emphasis.

40 *ibid.*, p. 11–12.

41 Mark Wyman, *DPs: Europe's Displaced Persons, 1945–1951* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1989), p. 41; Cohen, 'Between Relief and Politics,' p. 443.

42 C. B. Grier, Director UNRRA Team 800, Augustdorf, to District Director, 460 UNRRA HQ, Iserlohn, 29 June 1946, S-0423-0002-01, UNA. On the disciplinary nature of internal institutional divisions, see Bashford and Strange, 'Isolation and Exclusion in a Modern World,' pp. 9–10.

43 Cohen, 'Between Relief and Politics,' p. 443.

44 UNRRA's work with refugees thus resembles a Foucauldian apparatus of security. Michel Foucault, *Security, Territory, Population: Lectures at the Collège de France, 1977–1978*, trans. Michael Senellart (New York: Picador, 2004), pp. 18–20.

collaborators, who were ineligible for humanitarian aid.<sup>45</sup> Cilento's early experience with postwar political chaos and emergency relief reinforced his right-wing political views. The problems in Greece, for example, were complex. Besides the sheer destruction of the economy, the procedures UNRRA used to measure levels of indigence were inaccurate, leaving many exposed to privation. The opportunistic refusal of local millers in the Cyclades to use all of the relief grain they received also contributed further to malnutrition.<sup>46</sup> Yet Cilento was quick to blame communist agitation and the absence of middle-class leadership. On Greece, he later wrote:

The Communists, cleverly sowing dissension by defaming every local leader who aimed at stability on a national basis, and by glorifying ambitious and impressionable juniors who found a ready welcome in their 'People's National Army', urged the masses ever closer to hysteria and panic.<sup>47</sup>

As discussed in the previous chapter, Cilento's belief that progress depended on expert leadership in medicine, education and social welfare, as well as the cooperation of ordinary citizens, fostered strong anticommunism and indeed a suspicion of democracy itself. The communists in Europe, he wrote, were now conducting a 'ruthless elimination of men of status, and of those who showed any capacity for leadership among the bourgeoisie'.<sup>48</sup> Cilento's emphasis on a strong state and the harmonious arrangement of society under expert, middle-class leadership thus reinforced his political alignment as he waded deeper into international service.

Cilento's resignation from UNRRA took effect in May 1946; he complained that policy directives and conflicts had undermined his authority. He almost immediately received an offer to become the Director of the Division of Refugees and Displaced Persons in the UN Secretariat, where he would be responsible for establishing the Preparatory Commission of the International Refugee Organization (PCIRO).<sup>49</sup> Cilento's hopes of becoming the first director of this organisation were dashed when the American representative Arthur Altmeyer was elected

45 Cohen, 'Between Relief and Politics,' pp. 443–6.

46 Tsilaga, "'The Mountain Laboured and Brought Forth a Mouse','' pp. 527–44.

47 Cilento, 'Escape from UN-reality,' p. 15. Cilento's emphasis.

48 *ibid.*, p. 44.

49 Fisher, *Raphael Cilento*, pp. 215–16; Raphael Cilento to Andrew Cordier, Executive Assistant to the Secretary-General, 20 December 1946; Raphael Cilento to A. D. K. Owen, Acting Secretary-General, 22 January 1947, RAG-2/73/1/01, Box 1, UNA.

executive secretary of the PCIRO at its first meeting.<sup>50</sup> An opportunity for a more permanent and responsible position in international affairs had slipped away. The Secretary-General of the United Nations, Trygve Lie, however, offered Cilento the position of Director of the Division of Social Activities. Charged with administering the United Nations' emerging responsibilities for international social welfare, Cilento occupied this post until he resigned from the United Nations in 1951.

## Social welfare advisory services: Social work, nationalism and international society

The UN Advisory Social Welfare Services, established under General Assembly Resolution 58(1) in December 1946, were initially adopted to maintain the work of UNRRA, which was scheduled to cease operations by 31 December 1946. Yet the welfare work of the United Nations quickly became a larger program. The Social Commission, created to advise the Economic and Social Council, recommended at its first meeting in early 1947 that the UN Secretariat adopt some of the functions of the League of Nations, with an emphasis on establishing a permanent system of fellowships and instructors. It also asserted, however, that the United Nations should take a more 'positive role' than had the league.<sup>51</sup> Adopting a long-range view, the Social Commission aimed to propagate modern, professional and state-run welfare services modelled on those of the developed world and especially the United States. A draft report of the Social Commission declared that it was 'urgent to take immediate steps with a view to promoting international action in welfare work'.<sup>52</sup> It went further, stating that the social welfare program was:

The first experiment by the United Nations in rendering practical field service to the people of the different nations.

... The development of these advisory services in the field of social welfare therefore provides a most important opportunity of demonstrating in a practical manner the interest and concern of the United Nations Organization itself in meeting human needs through an effective service

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50 The United States had been expected to dominate the committee, which comprised only eight small countries, some of them American dependencies. See W. Moderow, Director Representing the Secretary-General, Geneva, to Henri Laugier, 18 February 1947, RAG-2/73/1/01, Box 1, UNA; Fisher, *Raphael Cilento*, p. 226.

51 United Nations [hereinafter UN], *The Yearbook of the United Nations, 1946-7* (Lake Success, NY: UN Department of Public Information, 1947), p. 516.

52 'Social Commission: Draft General Report,' 1 February 1947, p. 7, S-0441-0073-01, UNA.

provided by its Secretariat. The Commission recognized that these advisory services will be the cornerstone of a permanent social welfare service emanating from the United Nations.<sup>53</sup>

In adopting the functions of both the League of Nations and UNRRA, the UN social welfare program revived longstanding international concerns, such as narcotics and trafficking in women and children, and intersected with the more recent ascension of American ambition, money and expertise.<sup>54</sup>

The Department of Social Affairs was part of an institutional structure that implied both the unity and the distinctiveness of economic and social issues. The Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) was the third major body of the United Nations, alongside the General Assembly and the Security Council, and was responsible for shaping operational activities. Separate social and economic commissions, which respective social and economic departments in the secretariat supported, assumed most of this responsibility.<sup>55</sup> Cilento's division worked alongside others dedicated to human rights, narcotics and population, and itself consisted of sections for social welfare, migration, health, refugees, living standards, family protection and social defence. It thus covered a wide field, including housing, child welfare, juvenile delinquency, social security and public assistance, social work training, community organisation, rehabilitation, policy, planning, research and statistics, among other areas. Many of these were inherited from the League of Nations and, in some cases, such as population and demography, the United Nations simply absorbed league personnel and research material.<sup>56</sup> The scope of the social affairs department was thus extremely broad, incorporating many of the interests of other international organisations, including the International Labour Organization (ILO) and specialised agencies of the United Nations such as the World Health Organization (WHO) and UNESCO. Although much emphasis was placed on cooperation, such overlaps could lead to tensions in the field, such as when ILO personnel in Iran claimed the United Nations had been 'trespassing'.<sup>57</sup>

53 *ibid.*, p. 18.

54 Cohen, 'Between Relief and Politics,' pp. 437–9.

55 The Department of Social Affairs also directly served ECOSOC, various other commissions on population, human rights, the status of women and narcotic drugs and the Third Committee of the General Assembly respecting education, demography, human rights, refugees, human rights and other matters. UN, *Yearbook of the United Nations 1946–7*, p. 619.

56 Bashford, 'Population, Geopolitics, and International Organizations in the Mid Twentieth Century,' p. 331.

57 'Minutes of Inter-departmental Meeting on Technical Assistance,' 5 December 1949, RAG-2/336/02(1), Part B, UNA.

A DOCTOR ACROSS BORDERS



Plate 6.1 Cilento in 1947

Source: National Archives of Australia: A1200, L9026.

Advisory services under Resolution 58 fell into four categories, each of which could be provided only on the receipt of specific requests from national governments. First, the United Nations could provide experts in social welfare to act as consultants. Consultants spent anywhere from a month to a few years attached to a government department, providing advice on social security legislation, government policy, the establishment of schools of social work or welfare centres, the initiation of pilot projects in social research or welfare services or the modernisation of administration. Second, it could grant fellowships to nominated social workers, enabling them to travel to study welfare practices and social work curricula in welfare agencies and schools in the United States and Western Europe. Third, it could give advice and demonstrations in the manufacture of prosthetic limbs and provide technical documentation. The secretariat was also responsible for organising regional seminars on social welfare, at which a range of foreign experts and local social workers could meet to learn about and discuss various aspects of welfare in regions thought to have common problems. By 1950, the United Nations had organised multiple seminars in Latin America, Asia, Eastern Europe and the Middle East.<sup>58</sup>

For its part, the social work profession hoped its ideas and methods would find a prominent place in the United Nations on a long-term basis.<sup>59</sup> *The Social Service Review*, a journal for American social workers, kept a close eye on proceedings at the UN Social Commission. Ellen Potter, a doctor and President of the National Conference of Social Work, argued that social workers had:

developed a philosophy and a technical competence [and were] united ... in a quest for that place in the new world order in which social workers individually and collectively shall be able to render their maximum contribution to the welfare of mankind.<sup>60</sup>

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58 United Nations Department of Social Affairs, *Training for Social Work: An International Survey* (New York: United Nations, 1950), pp. 69–72.

59 Smith Simpson, 'International Organization in the Area of Social and Humanitarian Problems,' *The Social Service Review*, 19(1), 1945, pp. 9–12.

60 Ellen C. Potter, 'The Year of Decision for Social Work,' *The Social Service Review*, 19(3), 1945, pp. 297–8.

George F. Davidson, the Deputy Minister of Welfare in Canada, narrated a history of social welfare ascending through levels of government responsibility until it became a national concern. It was only left for it to assume a role in 'predisposing the peoples of the world to peaceful and co-operative ways of life'.<sup>61</sup> Social workers thus felt that their role in providing social 'security' for a national citizenry was relevant to international peace and stability. In July 1946, representatives from several American welfare agencies and the US Department of State met with Henri Laugier, the Assistant Secretary-General in Charge of Social Affairs, and Charles Alspach, an UNRRA official who would later become chief of the social services section under Cilento. The delegation emphasised the desirability of a permanent social commission and a subcommittee of welfare agencies that would meet with Laugier to discuss the ways in which they could assist with providing staff and consultants.<sup>62</sup>

Cilento had long believed that social workers should be involved in a broad and coordinated program of health and welfare. In the interwar years, he had embraced holistic and social notions of health. Diet, housing, working conditions, income and leisure contributed to the energy and strength—the 'positive health'—of individuals and therefore populations and the nation. A medical service that relied primarily on private services and aimed at cure instead of prevention was unsatisfactory. Like many other public health officials across the world, Cilento argued that the state must assume responsibility for developing and coordinating a broad health service that could positively shape the lives of individuals and families beyond the hospital and the general practitioner. The state, in other words, would make a 'deliberate attempt to develop to the full the mental and physical capacities of every individual'.<sup>63</sup> Social workers had a vital role to play in such a public health apparatus. As Cilento argued in *Blueprint for the Health of a Nation*, those professionals who would carry out the work of visiting homes to check on convalescents or to provide advice on the feeding and care of children were vital for such a coordinated attempt at cultivating health.<sup>64</sup>

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61 George F. Davidson, 'International Horizons for Health and Welfare,' *The Social Service Review*, 22(3), 1948, p. 280.

62 'Notes on Meeting of National Committee on International Organisation for Social Welfare,' 16 July 1946, pp. 1–3, S-0544-0009-0002, UNA.

63 Cilento, *Blueprint for the Health of a Nation*, p. 109.

64 *ibid.*, p. 109.

Cilento brought these values with him to the United Nations. In a 1949 paper for the anniversary of the New York School of Social Work, he argued that in the midst of postwar social, political and economic disruptions it was important that methods of reducing poverty and improving standards of living ‘embrace all those activities that lie between the recognized fields of health, education, and labour that we call “social welfare”’.<sup>65</sup> Despite attempts by American representatives in San Francisco to limit the scope of action for a new international health organisation, interwar advocates of social medicine, including US surgeon general Thomas Parran and Croatian health official Andrija Stampar, managed to put diet, housing and working conditions on the agenda of the WHO.<sup>66</sup>

Cicely D. Williams, a WHO official, sent an article to Cilento in 1949, emphasising that medicine must ‘make and keep people healthy’ by looking beyond the patient to ‘his work, his house, his family, his education, and all the variegated factors which have influenced his life and his well being’.<sup>67</sup> Every aspect of the whole life of the individual—usually a man or a boy—was in this view the object of intervention by experts and the state. The social medicine that Cilento had championed throughout the 1930s and 1940s was thus enshrined at the United Nations as the orthodox view of health, the individual and society.

Public health reformers had been urging a closer relationship between social workers, public health services and the state since the 1920s. Richard Cabot, a doctor and former president of the American National Conference of Social Work, suggested in 1919 that social workers should be ‘distinctly recognized as *part of the machinery*’ of hospitals and attached firmly to public health agencies and institutions.<sup>68</sup> Social workers, in contrast, sought to protect their distinctive professional and scientific status and gradually developed their own academic and institutional existence in the interwar years.<sup>69</sup> Despite this, most insisted on the interrelatedness

65 Raphael Cilento, ‘The World Moves towards Professional Standards in Social Work,’ in *Social Work as Human Relations: Anniversary Papers of the New York School of Social Work and the Community Service Society of New York* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1949), p. 228.

66 Amrith, *Decolonizing International Health*, pp. 73–5.

67 ‘Child Health and Child Welfare,’ Cicely D. Williams, Maternal and Child Health Section, World Health Organization, to Raphael Cilento, 5 July 1949, S-0441-0103-05, UNA.

68 Richard C. Cabot, *Social Work: Essays on the Meeting-ground of Doctor and Social Worker* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1919), pp. 3–4. Cabot’s emphasis.

69 Elizabeth MacAdam, *The Equipment of the Social Worker* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1925), pp. 16–22; Mary Antoinette Cannon and Philip Klein (eds), *Social Casework: An Outline for Teaching* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1933), pp. 20–4.

of health, education, employment, housing and other social factors and increasingly recognised the need for the coordination of public health and social work under the aegis of the state.<sup>70</sup> Among the medical and social professionals in the UN Secretariat and specialised agencies, this became the orthodoxy that underpinned their work in the international arena.

Many scholars have argued that, despite the persistence of colonial rule in Africa and the Pacific, the dominant political ideology of the postwar period enshrined the nation-state as the central unit of world order, with all the tensions and contradictions over ethnic diasporas and alternative subjectivities this entailed. The United Nations itself on some level embodied this, yet cultivating a strong central state was also a political priority within postcolonial governments in Asia.<sup>71</sup> Partha Chatterjee has argued that developing Western ‘governmental technologies’ of discipline and surveillance, such as censuses and surveys, became central aspirations of postcolonial governments.<sup>72</sup> Extending this account beyond the nation, Sunil Amrith has argued that the dominant form of internationalism in postcolonial Asia—which finally triumphed at the 1955 Bandung Conference—emphasised cooperative and altruistic circulation of these governmental practices between sovereign states. An alternative vision of Asian cosmopolitanism fell out of favour.<sup>73</sup> Such a relationship to international society and its institutions reflected the emergence of national sovereignty and statehood as the chief priorities of postcolonial states across Asia, especially after the political and human crises of Indian Partition and various armed conflicts in late 1947.<sup>74</sup>

The need to equip developing states with the tools of modern government underpinned the UN social welfare program. ‘International aid should be so planned as to enable the recipient country eventually to face by herself her urgent need for well-organized and well-equipped social services’, read one early report.<sup>75</sup> The United Nations framed the Advisory Social Welfare

70 MacAdam, *The Equipment of the Social Worker*, pp. 156–8; Cannon and Klein, *Social Casework*, pp. 35–7, 44–6. See also Kathleen Woodroffe, *From Charity to Social Work in England and the United States* (London: Routledge & Keegan Paul, 1962), pp. 158–60.

71 Kelly and Kaplan, *Represented Communities*, pp. 4–6.

72 Partha Chatterjee, *The Politics of the Governed: Reflections on Popular Politics in Most of the World* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2004), pp. 34–7.

73 Sunil Amrith, ‘Asian Internationalism: Bandung’s Echo in a Colonial Metropolis,’ *Inter-Asia Cultural Studies*, 6(4), 2005, pp. 558–60.

74 Amrith, *Decolonizing International Health*, pp. 79–82.

75 ‘Assumption by the United Nations of Certain Advisory Social Welfare Functions of UNRRA: Report and Recommendations of the Secretary-General,’ 7 November 1946, p. 5, S-0441-0073-01, UNA.

Programme as one of long-term national development, in which a society of neighbourly nations would provide support to each other. Material that Cilento's division submitted for the secretary-general's report to the Social Commission stated:

Social questions constitute an immense series of subjects of constantly increasing importance in the international sphere. This results from an increasing willingness on the part of nations to assist their nationals, as individuals or groups, to attain more satisfactory relationships and higher standards of living in accordance with their desires and capacities, and in harmony with the community in which they live.<sup>76</sup>

In short, the aim was to 'help recipient countries help themselves'.<sup>77</sup> By requiring that national governments request assistance from the United Nations and identify the specific fields—such as child welfare, juvenile delinquency, social legislation, training or administration—in which it was needed, the UN social welfare program reinforced the primacy and autonomy of the nation-state in the postwar world.

To provide expert consultants and fellowships, the Department of Social Affairs developed ties with a variety of schools of professional social work and social science, such as the New York School of Social Work, and with government social welfare agencies around the world, such as the US Federal Security Agency and the South African Council for Child Welfare.<sup>78</sup> The UN Secretariat used these contacts to attach fellows to various agencies and to secure expert personnel. Harry M. Cassidy, the Director of the School of Social Work at the University of Toronto, Henning Friis, an official from the Danish Ministry of Social Work, and Elizabeth Clarke, an employee of the US Children's Bureau, for example, all worked as consultants for the United Nations abroad.<sup>79</sup> In drawing personnel directly from institutions and agencies primarily concerned

76 Raphael Cilento to Henri Laugier, 5 June 1947, S-0544-0011-11, UNA.

77 United Nations Department of Social Affairs, *International Advisory Social Welfare Services* (Lake Success, NY: United Nations, 1949), p. 1.

78 Martin Hill, Special Adviser to Secretary-general, to Katherine Lenroot, Children's Bureau, Federal Security Agency, Social Security Administration, 23 September 1948; Lenroot to Martin Hill, 3 September 1948; Charles Alspach to Dr William Haber, University of Michigan, 23 September 1948; Miss L. M. MacKenzie, South African Council for Child Welfare, to Raphael Cilento, 25 May 1948, S-0441-0090-08, UNA; Katherine Lenroot to Raphael Cilento, 13 June 1947, S-0472-0075-0003, UNA. See also Raphael Cilento to General Omar Bradley, Director, Veterans' Administration, Washington, 16 June 1947, S-0472-0075-0003, UNA.

79 See Egypt reports, S-0441-0092-01, UNA; Charles Alspach to Russell Cook, Bureau of Personnel, Federal Security Agency, 23 August 1948, S-0441-0090-0008, UNA.

with local or national welfare in developed countries, the UN program thus aimed to transfer concepts and practices of social work and welfare around the world.

UN social welfare consultants were typically embedded within a government agency, where their primary task was to advise governments on legislation, personnel training and other aspects of social welfare. Egypt assigned Cassidy and Friis to the Ministry of Social Affairs. Cassidy was to carry out a complete review of social work training in the country, while Friis—although he was interested in population, child welfare and rehabilitation of the disabled—spent much of his time developing a social security scheme at the request of the government.<sup>80</sup> In Ecuador, Anna MacAuliffe, George Narensky and Clarke were attached to the Ministry for Welfare and Labor. MacAuliffe conducted a complete review of existing welfare conditions and services. With the aim of drawing a ‘good view of real status of living standards of the people: salaries, housing, food, family relations, family problems; economic basis of behaviour problems’, she interviewed local officials and academics, examined legislation, toured institutions and even considered model villages.<sup>81</sup>

The Philippines mission included an especially diverse group of consultants working on a broad range of fields in a country that had suffered during the war and had recently emerged from US colonial rule. The consultants there were associated with the social welfare commissioner Asuncion Perez, who held a degree in sociology from the University of Wisconsin. Perez, and agencies such as the Philippine Relief and Trading Rehabilitation Administration and the National Development Company, was particularly involved in shaping the work of UN personnel. In this early phase of UN social welfare assistance, consultants often blurred the line between what were considered economic and what were considered social matters. Irene Murphy, the American chief consultant, had previously worked for the Detroit Department of Public Welfare and the Detroit Council of Social Agencies. In the Philippines, she helped draft social security legislation and plans for home industries designed to supplement rural incomes.<sup>82</sup> Most of the work, however, focused on

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80 ‘Report of the United Nations Adviser on Social Welfare to the Government of Egypt,’ 1 April – 15 May 1950, S-0441-0092-01, UNA.

81 Anna MacAuliffe, ‘Report,’ 28 September – 28 October 1948, pp. 5–6, S-0441-0091-07, UNA.

82 Irene Murphy, ‘Field Report of the United Nations Social Affairs Office in the Philippines,’ 16 August – 15 September 1947; Irene Murphy, ‘Rehabilitation of Home Industries,’ 27 September 1947, S-0441-0095-01, UNA.

recognised matters of social welfare. Maria Albano, a Brazilian graduate of the New York School of Social Work, taught short courses in social casework for existing Philippines welfare personnel. Andree Roche, from France, worked on developing vocational and physical rehabilitation through hospitals and welfare institutions, while Theresa Wardell, from Australia, specialised in juvenile delinquency.<sup>83</sup> The consultants—part of a global network mobilising social welfare experts—all reported to Cilento, who was responsible for providing them with support in the form of documentation and materials.<sup>84</sup> He would also on occasion request that expert personnel collect information on the general state of social work training and welfare provision.<sup>85</sup> UN consultants thus provided a service to sovereign states while also helping the United Nations to construct a picture of the state of social welfare on a global scale.

Continuities between colonial rule and post-independence development were manifest in UN social welfare work in the Philippines in several ways. The consultants themselves had backgrounds in colonial service or society. Roche, for example, had previously served as a government inspector in Algeria.<sup>86</sup> Murphy had worked with the American Philippines War Relief, a private philanthropic organisation, yet she was also the sister-in-law of Frank Murphy, the Governor-General of the Philippines in the mid-1930s, and her personal representations of society and culture in late colonial Asia drew familiar images. Her description of the governor's mansion at Baguio, for example, was a familiar colonial tableau: 'Five houseboys in their white uniforms with red crest on the coat, served the grand dinner.'<sup>87</sup> Elsewhere, she described arriving in Shanghai en route to the Philippines:

As soon as the ship anchored in the dirty, yellow river the little junks came clamoring around. Whole families with babies and grandmothers live all their lives on these dirty barges.

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83 Asuncion Perez, 'Circular,' attached to Asuncion Perez to Irene Murphy, 2 October 1947, S-0441-0095-01, UNA.

84 Andree Roche to Raphael Cilento, 21 April 1948, S-0441-0095-02, UNA.

85 Irene Murphy, 'Field Report of United Nations Senior Consultant on Social Affairs,' 16 November – 15 December 1947, pp. 5–6, S-0441-0095-01, UNA; M. Josephina R. Albano, 'Field Report of UN Consultant on Social Affairs,' 16 December 1947 – 15 January 1948, p. 2, S-0441-0095-02, UNA.

86 Henri Laugier to Alberto Tarchiani, Italian Ambassador to the United States, 27 June 1947, S-0544-0009-13, UNA.

87 Irene Murphy to Aunt Irene, 26 December 1933, Papers of Irene Ellis Murphy [hereinafter Murphy Papers], 851917 Aa 2, Box 1, Bentley Historical Library, University of Michigan.

Like other observers, Murphy highlighted how non-Europeans not only ignored hygiene boundaries between the clean and the contaminated, but also seemed content with low standards of living:

It's a matter of the survival of the fittest and if a baby lives more than a few weeks I guess it lives to be a hundred. They drink the river water, throw their waste into it and swim in it!<sup>88</sup>

Murphy thus, like Cilento, brought to postwar social welfare direct experience of colonial social relations and distinctions between hygienic backwardness and modernity.

The Philippines mission marginalised the broader community and nonstate agencies, including the Catholic Church and charities, in favour of the state and professional experts. The political context in which they worked was largely absent in the consultants' reports, especially the armed Hukbalahap guerillas active in rural areas, whom the right-wing government of president Manuel Roxas sought to repress.<sup>89</sup> In the Philippines, as in Egypt, agrarian unrest stemmed from dissatisfaction with the concentration of landownership among a few elite families, yet land reform was largely off the table in postcolonial politics.<sup>90</sup> UN welfare consultants were sometimes uncomfortable, however, about the large-scale agricultural and industrial development projects that became the defining features of international development and which left a litany of social disruption and failure.<sup>91</sup> Irene Murphy, in fact, warned against the mechanisation of agriculture in the Philippines, which, given its impact on rural labour, would be 'socially revolutionary' in areas where patterns of land tenure already produced 'daily bloodshed and civil war'.<sup>92</sup> As Timothy Mitchell has suggested, modern development's claims about leading societies through periods of violence to one of ordered rule often obscures ongoing violence.<sup>93</sup>

88 Irene Murphy to Helen Ellis, 27 November 1933, Murphy Papers, 851917 Aa 2, Box 1.

89 Benedict J. Kerkvliet, *The Huk Rebellion: A Study of Peasant Revolt in the Philippines* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1977), pp. 143–50; Dennis Merrill, 'Shaping Third World Development: US Foreign Aid and Supervision in the Philippines, 1948–53,' *The Journal of American–East Asian Relations*, 2(2), 1993, p. 137.

90 Merrill, 'Shaping Third World Development,' p. 142. On Egypt, see Mitchell, *The Rule of Experts*, pp. 38–9.

91 James Ferguson, *The Anti-politics Machine: 'Development,' Depoliticization, and Bureaucratic Power in Lesotho* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1994), pp. 8–9; Mitchell, *The Rule of Experts*, pp. 41–2; Sluga, 'UNESCO and the (One) World of Julian Huxley,' pp. 410–11.

92 Irene Murphy, 'Field Report of United Nations Senior Consultant on Social Affairs Philippines,' 15 October – 15 November 1947, pp. 3–4, S-0441-0095-01, UNA.

93 Mitchell, *The Rule of Experts*, p. 79.

That social welfare was ideally a state service, with professionally trained personnel, was a core understanding of the permanent staff of the secretariat and consultants in the field. Cilento told an audience of social workers in New York in 1949 that the separation of social work from voluntary, charitable and religious institutions was most advanced in the United States. In contrast, wealthy elites and religious leaders in Latin America, the Middle East and elsewhere resisted the development of state-based, professional social welfare services. Cilento noted, however, that there were others in developing countries who felt the need to adopt 'organized social welfare services based on New World concepts of social work',<sup>94</sup> in which the chief aim was

the constant and enlightened endeavour to insure that the influence of the individual upon the community, and of the community upon the individual, shall be toward a constantly improving standard of living.<sup>95</sup>

He finally placed social work in an international frame:

The eyes of the world are upon social work, and the heavy responsibility that rests upon its advocates and practitioners is to show first that it is truly 'social' and, secondly, that it 'works'; and, moreover, that it has within itself the flexibility and the potentialities to cope successfully with all the problems of human life and endeavour, as one by one they emerge, more and more definitely, from the social confusion of our present period of transition.<sup>96</sup>

Cilento had initiated a global survey of concepts of social work in that year. The resulting report, *Training for Social Work: An International Survey*, described the United Nations' efforts to increase knowledge about social services around the world as an extension of the work of the League of Nations and other interwar international organisations.<sup>97</sup> It noted that there were no established standards for the training of social workers anywhere, even in the United States. The ultimate development of social welfare, however, was a professional service for 'broad social planning for the prevention of economic insecurity and for the promotion of social well-being', available to each individual '*to assist him in achieving his full potentialities for productive and satisfying living*'.<sup>98</sup> Other countries and

94 Cilento, 'The World Moves towards Professional Standards in Social Work,' p. 231.

95 *ibid.*, p. 237.

96 *ibid.*, p. 239.

97 United Nations Department of Social Affairs, *Training for Social Work*, pp. 2–3.

98 *ibid.*, p. 10. Original emphasis.

professions were coming around to the importance of investigating and intervening in emotional and physical development, education, work and family life:

[T]here is demonstrably an inherent logic in the movement from unorganised personal 'charity' available to disadvantaged members of the community, towards professional 'service' potentially available to all members of the community.<sup>99</sup>

Social work was integrative, seeking to tie together the school, clinic, hospital, employment office, court and community centre, and seeking to see each individual's health and emotional life in relation to their whole 'pattern of social relationships'.<sup>100</sup>

UN welfare consultants shared this understanding of their work as cultivating values, personnel and institutions of state social work in the field. In Ecuador, Anna MacAuliffe reported to Cilento in 1948: 'The profession of Social Worker is rather new in the country and therefore not yet well understood.'<sup>101</sup> Her meetings with the Department of Labor had become opportunities for in-service training in 'professional social service'.<sup>102</sup> In Egypt, Cassidy gave lectures at Alexandria on the professionalisation of social work while conducting a survey on social work training in the country. The program of the first Conference of Social Workers in the Philippines reiterated the UN definition of social policy, which 'must be intimately concerned with the life of the whole community and not only with particular sections of it'. The standard of living across the whole community was central:

The standard to be attained is the well-being of all members of the community so as to enable each one to develop his personality, in accordance with the needs of the community, and at the same time to enjoy, from youth to old age, as full a life as may be possible.<sup>103</sup>

In an explanatory note to a draft bill for provision of assistance to dependent children, Irene Murphy wrote that Western nations had for the past 50 years:

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99 *ibid.*, pp. 13–14.

100 *ibid.*, p. 14.

101 Anna MacAuliffe, 'Report,' 28 September – 28 October 1948, p. 14, S-0441-0091-07, UNA.

102 Anna MacAuliffe, 'Monthly Report,' October 1949, p. 1, S-0441-0091-07, UNA.

103 'Program,' 1st Conference of Social Workers, 16–31 October 1947, S-0441-0095-01, UNA.

Assumed the responsibility for adequate and regular assistance to their economically dependent citizens, particularly the children, through public assistance, social security, or social insurance. The modern tendency has found expression in the replacement of the casual charity of the earlier centuries with a stable and democratic social security program organized and maintained along scientific lines.

Appealing to the government, she declared:

The Republic of the Philippines cannot remain indifferent to these progressive movements abroad. The enactment of this bill would give the Philippines the distinct honor of being the first country in Asia to have adopted a social security program for children.<sup>104</sup>

There was thus a clear insistence on modernising the role and apparatuses of the state in the way they provided for a polity that was explicitly national.

Developing the state's capacity to govern appealed to Filipino politicians and bureaucrats for whom a modern and independent Philippines had been a long-term goal. US colonial policy in the Philippines had emphasised the importance of education, including medicine and nursing, from the beginning, while the incorporation of trained indigenous elites in government accelerated in the 1920s. American officials always reserved the right, however, to judge whether Filipinos had attained the capacity for self-government. Some, in fact, claimed that Filipino deficiencies in knowledge of hygiene and administration were profoundly racial, making national independence a distant prospect.<sup>105</sup> Yet trained Filipino officials worked hard to challenge dismissive American discourse by divorcing ideas about modernity from race. In this way, they could frame perceived backwardness in the Philippines as a matter of class difference and education.<sup>106</sup> In nursing and community work through welfare centres, for example, women found a role in nation-building that was for the most part a Filipino initiative. If such work partly augmented the surveillance capacities of the American colonial state in the Philippines, indigenous nurses and welfare officials also framed it as both liberating and service to the developing nation.<sup>107</sup>

104 'An Act to Grant Aid to Dependent Children, Explanatory Note,' n.d., S-0441-0095-02, UNA.

105 Paul Kramer, *The Blood of Government: Race, Empire, the United States and the Philippines* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2006), pp. 308–12.

106 Anderson, *Colonial Pathologies*, pp. 187–203.

107 See Catherine Ceniza Choy, *Empire of Care: Nursing and Migration in Filipino American History* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2003), pp. 31–2; Bonnie McElhinny, 'Producing the A-1 Baby: Puericulture Centers and the Birth of the Clinic in the U.S.-occupied Philippines, 1906–1946,' *Philippine Studies*, 57(2), 2009, pp. 219–60.

When UN experts arrived there had thus been a long history of Filipino officials seeking progressive national development. Asuncion Perez sent a circular letter to private welfare agencies after the arrival of the UN consultants:

For many of us who would have liked to have had foreign study in order to modernize our programs in accordance with prevailing world standards these consultants bring to our door a cross-section of international experience.<sup>108</sup>

UN consultants also reported a thirst for knowledge among local social workers. Delegates at the first Conference of Social Workers, although 'untrained', were, wrote Irene Murphy, 'hard-working people who had grappled with the complexities of a war-destroyed society. They felt a prestige in the title of "social worker" which had been conferred on them'. Conference discussions were 'filled with riotous, eager animation'. 'A controversy about a rejected child, marital problems, insufficient income, etc., became a subject in which all wanted to speak pro and con.' At the end of the conference, the students 'responded to us with the warmth and gratitude of those who cherish their teachers'.<sup>109</sup>

In developing state welfare institutions and capacities, UN consultants were continuing a longer process. In 1921, Filipino officials organised the first National Conference on Infant Mortality and Public Welfare and established the Office of Public Welfare. By 1930, there were over 350 puericulture centres providing services to local communities. Modelled on French institutions, these centres performed functions familiar in Britain, the United States and Australia. The staff measured and weighed babies and children to monitor physical development, gave lectures on hygiene and made house-to-house visits to survey family size and health, diet, income, expenditure, housing and other aspects of domestic life.<sup>110</sup> In many ways, UN consultants were simply reconstructing these trends in personnel and institutions interrupted by the war. Maria Albano established the Institute of Social Case Work, which offered popular short courses in social work methodologies, including homes visits, interviews,

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108 'Circular,' attached to Asuncion Perez to Irene Murphy, 2 October 1947, S-0441-0095-01, UNA.

109 Irene Murphy, 'Field Report of United Nations Senior Consultant on Social Affairs—Philippines,' 15 October – 15 November 1947, pp. 2–3, S-0441-0095-01, UNA.

110 McElhinny, 'Producing the A-1 Baby,' pp. 231–48.

record keeping and family histories.<sup>111</sup> Andree Roche hoped to set up more organised and extensive record keeping at hospitals, including the trial employment of a social worker at a major hospital.<sup>112</sup>

A census undertaken of the towns of Lipa and Vigan in late 1947 and early 1948 is an especially interesting case of the continuities between US colonial administration and the UN program in the Philippines. Murphy suggested the census might demonstrate the importance of social data in a country lacking postwar information on population, urbanisation, dependency, infirmity and income. She also suggested that students from the local high school conduct the census, in which they would collect information on family size, income, schooling, daily rice consumption, mortality, physical defects and other data.<sup>113</sup> The project would, Albano reported, 'provide a practical exercise in citizenship for high school students in the fields of social studies and social research'.<sup>114</sup> In these respects, this demonstration census bore a strong resemblance to the American colonial census undertaken between 1903 and 1905. As in the case of Vigan and Lipa, the US Government employed Filipinos to perform the census in local areas. Foreshadowing Albano's language, General William Howard Taft had declared that the census would 'therefore form a test of the capacity of the Filipinos to discharge a most important function of government'. As Vicente Rafael observes, the 1903–05 census was both an exercise in colonial tutelage in the technical work of self-government and:

A stage upon which Filipinos were to be represented as well as represent themselves as subjects of a colonial order: disciplined agents actively assuming their role in their own subjugation and maturation.<sup>115</sup>

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111 Maria Albano, 'Field Report of UN Consultant on Social Affairs—Philippines,' 2 October – 15 November 1947, S-0441-0095-01, UNA.

112 Andree Roche, 'National Emergency Hospital: Proposal for a Programme on Social Work and Occupational Therapy,' n.d., S-0441-0095-01, UNA.

113 Irene Murphy, 'Field Report of United Nations Senior Consultant on Social Affairs—Philippines,' 15 October – 15 November 1947, p. 5; Social Census Form, n.d., S-0441-0095-01, UNA.

114 Maria Albano, 'Prospectus of Social Census of Vigan–Lipa,' n.d., in 'Field Report of United Nations Consultant on Social Affairs—Philippines,' 16 November – 15 December 1947, S-0441-0095-01, UNA.

115 Vicente L. Rafael, *White Love and Other Events in Filipino History* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2000), p. 26.

There is also a strong echo here of the values underpinning the Project Club Day at Esk High School in Queensland, described in the previous chapter, in which students were asked to speak about the contributions they could make to national development. Cilento was at the same time seeking to increase the legibility of the population for the state in Queensland. The entwining of citizenship with disciplined participation in cultivating social welfare thus underscores the entanglement of colonial and national frameworks in these postcolonial UN programs.

Ambitions for national statehood were perfectly compatible with the internationalism of the peaceful exchange of developmental knowledge between sovereign nation-states. Indeed, this view of sovereign nation-states sharing technologies of governance flourished among many postcolonial governments in Asia in the late 1940s and 1950s.<sup>116</sup> As McElhinny argues in the context of the Philippines, independent engagement by colonised peoples with an international community of scientific and technical knowledge suggests that historians should avoid a simple conflation of colonial and national biopolitics.<sup>117</sup> UN personnel in the Philippines hoped that the census, as an instance of such exchange, might encourage internationalism and goodwill towards the United Nations. The consultants in the Philippines had hoped to present the students involved in the Vigan and Lipa censuses with UN certificates, yet reports suggest that headquarters at Lake Success balked at this. While Murphy agreed with headquarters on some of the technical issues, she also reported that ‘students and officials are still anxious to have a United Nations Certificate in order to feel a personal participation in an otherwise abstract world organization’.<sup>118</sup> Yet it is clear that, for many Filipinos, the aspiration to nationhood demanded engagement with international institutions and norms. At a public ceremony celebrating completion of the Lipa census, J. Alex Katigbak, a teacher at the Mabini Academy, remarked that the teachers and students were ‘duty bound’ to assist the consultants as citizens of a member nation of the United Nations:

It is an honor and a distinction to have worked for the United Nations and feel that you have done a bit [to] help the United Nations realize one of its big humanitarian aims.

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116 Amrith, ‘Asian Internationalism,’ pp. 558–9.

117 McElhinny, ‘Producing the A-1 Baby,’ p. 252.

118 Irene Murphy, ‘Field Report of United Nations Senior Consultant on Social Affairs—Philippines,’ 16 November – 15 December 1947, p. 7, S-0441-0095-01, UNA.

He further noted:

For the first time, the great bulk of our people heard of the United Nations or see it work actually, with their own eyes. The United Nations has gone home to them to prove to us all that the United Nations Organization is alive, dynamic, and vital.<sup>119</sup>

The United Nations and recipient nations thus framed the social welfare program in terms of a world order of sovereign nation-states sharing strategies for positively shaping the lives of individuals and families, improving standards of living and cultivating the happiness and political stability of populations. At a conference of social workers, Roche told her audience that 'your presence here today, coming from all parts of the Philippines, is a picture of unity of your nation, for studying [the] best solutions of your social problems'.<sup>120</sup> The titles of consultants' radio addresses also stressed international cooperation and the role of social welfare in preserving peace.<sup>121</sup> Albano told her audience that the United Nations acted because it was 'aware that peace cannot be built in a world inhabited by hungry and unhappy individuals'.<sup>122</sup> In an earlier broadcast, Albano echoed the rhetoric of neighbourly international society:

We, the people of the world, realized that war brings 'untold sorrow to mankind' and got together in an effort to create a better world. We all belong to this organization—the United Nations—and we have a great contribution to give to the advancement of all people.<sup>123</sup>

The UN social welfare program was thus aimed at developing an international harmony of social and economic progress. In doing so, the program internationalised the ethos of social medicine that Cilento and many others had elaborated in the 1930s.

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119 J. Alex Katigbak, Speech, in Maria Albano, 'Field Report of UN Consultant on Social Affairs—Philippines,' 16 February – 31 March 1948, S-0441-0095-02, UNA.

120 Andree Roche, Address to Conference of Social Workers, attached to 'Summary of Activities,' 15 October – 15 November 1947, S-0441-0095-01, UNA.

121 Andree Roche, 'A Picture of Social Security Plans among United Nations Members,' Radio address, 22 September 1947; Teresa Wardell, 'Your Neighbours Australia and New Zealand,' Radio address, 29 September 1947; Maria Albano, 'Brazil—Your Neighbour is 15 Thousand Miles Away,' Radio address, 13 October 1947, S-0441-0095-01, UNA.

122 Maria Albano, Radio address, in 'Field Report of UN Consultant on Social Welfare,' 16 January – 15 February 1948, S-0441-0095-02, UNA.

123 Maria Albano, 'Brazil—Your Neighbour is 15 Thousand Miles Away,' Radio address, 13 October 1947, p. 1, S-0441-0095-01, UNA.

## Empire, population and world order

Cilento at times expressed the purpose of the social welfare program in the same idealist terms of postwar liberal internationalism. Yet his ideological framework also reflected imperial conceptions of world order. Cilento had previously worked with international organisations to coordinate colonial government in the Pacific Islands, where states framed cooperation in health as meeting an obligation to improve and uplift indigenous people. Perhaps more importantly, coordination of preventive health measures also aimed to ensure healthy indigenous labour and prevent immigration of ‘coloured’ races that might threaten ‘white’ civilisation. Cilento had imagined indigenous people in the Pacific as nations, yet the idea that they were ready for independent statehood was, to him, absurd. Racial hierarchies and tutelage of ‘backward’ peoples by the ‘civilised’ were thus at the centre of Cilento’s internationalism.

The core development concept that national communities must progress from a premodern and ‘traditional’ form of social organisation and government to a civilised modern one had roots in colonial discourse. Frederick Lugard, for example, as Governor of Hong Kong before World War I, insisted that advanced states were obliged to accelerate development in return for the colonial resources that underpinned European and American progress.<sup>124</sup> By the 1930s, trained indigenous personnel had administered public health in the Philippines for decades and, although they eschewed racial explanations for disease and poverty, they maintained an emphasis on the need to educate and transform the ‘masses’ through forms of surveillance, education and discipline.<sup>125</sup>

For Filipino social workers trained in the colonial period, such as Asuncion Perez, modernisation along international guidelines was the guiding principle for postcolonial development. The voices of Filipino social workers in the late 1940s reveal how the traditional–modern distinction informed their practices. In a final paper written for Maria Albano’s short course on social casework, one student described visiting the family of a boy who was found sleeping with 24 others under a church.

124 See Far Eastern Association of Tropical Medicine, *Transactions of the Second Biennial Congress, held at Hong Kong, 1912* (Hong Kong: Noronha & Co., 1914), pp. 3–4.

125 Anderson, *Colonial Pathologies*, pp. 191–3.

In a manner familiar from texts on sanitation in nineteenth-century Britain and twentieth-century tropical medicine, Filipino social workers linked morality, disease and the spaces the working classes inhabited:

Their house is a make-shift affair, nestling amidst unshapely houses that squeeze in one upon the other, giving little space for the entrance of fresh air and direct sunlight ... [whilst most] of the residents in the neighborhood seem to belong to the lowest strata of social life.

This was especially disturbing given their proximity to better residences on Avenida Rizal:

It is, indeed, strange to find only a few steps from that center of culture and pretension, a glaring contrast where no drop of civilization seems to have been extended.<sup>126</sup>

The nationalist preoccupation with development thus reproduced many of the discursive constructions, relationships of power and forms of government that had taken shape under colonial rule.

Recent histories have shown that many internationalists saw intergovernmental organisations as the best way to preserve the imperial relationship between white civilisation and the rest of the world.<sup>127</sup> Mark Mazower has highlighted how many architects of the League of Nations and the United Nations, such as the South African politician and military leader Jan Smuts and the liberal scholar Alfred Zimmern, sought to preserve an imperial world order. Despite some differences, Smuts, Zimmern and others agreed on the need for moral world leadership and a measure of international cooperation in benevolent governance of 'primitive' territories. International organisations, in their understanding, ought to protect and disseminate 'civilisation', which they understood to be the democratic freedoms and obligations in which non-European people needed tutelage.<sup>128</sup> Glenda Sluga has similarly shown how the early cosmopolitanism of UNESCO, under the leadership of Julian Huxley, continued to insist that the 'white race' had special responsibilities that came with its 'civilised' status to uplift backward races. Indeed, cosmopolitan models of internationalism that emerged during World War II sought to expand citizenship and rights through existing empires.<sup>129</sup>

126 Fortunata del Rosario, 'Final Paper,' February 1948, pp. 1–4, S-0441-0095-02, UNA.

127 Morefield, *Covenants without Swords*, pp. 105–7.

128 Mazower, *No Enchanted Palace*, pp. 22, 40–1.

129 Sluga, 'UNESCO and the (One) World of Julian Huxley,' pp. 405–7.

These visions of the beneficent endowment of backward peoples with modern knowledge, education and government had long been at the heart of imperial discourse, in a way that also assumed that the whole world should benefit from empire.<sup>130</sup> Such ideas were very much alive in the United Nations. Henri Laugier, the Assistant Secretary-General in Charge of Social Affairs and Cilento's immediate superior, wrote that, around the world, there were likely to be reserves of unexploited resources that were of 'paramount' concern for underdeveloped countries and for 'the whole of mankind'.<sup>131</sup> For Laugier, the role of the United Nations, beyond diplomacy, was to generate knowledge of the world's resources and maximise their exploitation. The imperial relationship between 'civilisation' and backward peoples would thus continue:

When there are regions and nations whose physical, intellectual, and moral development lags behind the general pace of civilization, immediate concrete measures can doubtless be taken to help them along the path of human progress.<sup>132</sup>

Important members of the permanent staff of the United Nations thus framed the operational activities of the secretariat in terms that were common in imperial discourses of indigenous transformation, uplift and improvement.

Cilento's imperial internationalism rested on ingrained belief in racial hierarchy and concerns about postwar threats to the 'civilised' world order and the paternalist traditions of empire. For him, the UN social welfare programs should reflect colonial tutelage and pursue gradual development. He shared with Zimmern and Smuts a commitment to an internationalism that insisted on the need for 'civilised' nations to aid the development of 'backward' peoples. Cilento's reference to the gulf in civilisation between colonising and colonised peoples in the 1920s and his assertion of the latter's incapacity for self-government echoed strongly the imperialism of British liberalism, as did the writings of Hubert Murray and Edmund Piessé.<sup>133</sup> Yet Cilento's vision of world order was far less sanguine about international relations than the liberal internationalism of

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130 Lugard, *The Dual Mandate in British Tropical Africa*, p. 617.

131 Henri Laugier, 'The First Step in the International Approach to the Problems of Underdeveloped Areas,' *Milbank Memorial Fund Quarterly*, 26(3), 1948, p. 257.

132 *ibid.*, p. 256.

133 See Chapter 2, this volume. See also Mehta, *Liberalism and Empire*, pp. 81–5; Morefield, *Covenants without Swords*, pp. 105–7.

thinkers such as Zimmern.<sup>134</sup> Cilento explicitly rejected hope for ‘universal reconciliation between nations’ in favour of a more martial understanding of international relations rooted in his preoccupation with population and its relationship to conflict.<sup>135</sup>

The writings of Thomas Malthus had shaped Cilento’s thinking since the 1930s and, in public lectures and articles, he imposed a cyclical metanarrative on history that hinged on a Malthusian account of population and subsistence. Population, Cilento reminded his audiences, always outstripped subsistence. This in turn put pressure on available land and encouraged various deliberate restrictions on population growth or attempts to relieve population pressure through migration or expansion. In a 1936 lecture on ‘Some Problems of Racial Pressure in the Pacific’, Cilento argued that Japanese expansion and the threat of war in the region rested on such population pressures on agricultural land and productivity. Drawing on Japanese scholarship, Cilento noted that a ban on contraception and an increase in food production after the Meiji Restoration had caused a surge in population growth. Faced with a choice between decreased living standards, population control and expansion, ‘Japan has chosen the only alternative consistent with her exalted nationalism—she has extended to the Equator in the South’.<sup>136</sup> Cilento thus explained the Pacific conflict that many thought was inevitable within a framework of natural laws and social science.

Cilento’s understanding of the postwar world and the responsibilities of the United Nations in it remained grounded in these concerns about population growth. In a 1948 paper for a Milbank Memorial Fund roundtable discussion, Cilento framed the UN social welfare program as an effort to ameliorate the effects of growing populations on standards of living in Asia and their geopolitical consequences. ‘The problem of civilization is definitely the problem of population’, he wrote, and: ‘The problem of population is the accessibility or availability of subsistence.’<sup>137</sup> In New Guinea, he claimed, the encroachment of European commerce, law and culture disrupted systems of child sacrifice that had maintained demographic equilibrium for generations. At the same time, malnutrition and disease had caused drastic demographic decline in many areas. Pacific

134 Mazower, *No Enchanted Palace*, pp. 71–7.

135 Cilento, *Nutrition and Numbers*, p. 69.

136 Cilento, ‘Some Problems of Racial Pressure in the Pacific,’ p. 46.

137 Cilento, ‘Underdeveloped Areas in Social Evolutionary Perspective,’ p. 292.

populations were recovering but in a transformed society. America had opened Japan to the global economy in the 1850s and 1860s, particularly to new modes of agricultural production that, along with cessation of official contraceptive policies, caused the population to jump from 28 million to 68 million by 1938. ‘The population graph, however, drawn from 1810 to 1940,’ Cilento wrote, ‘shows in the most graphic form not only the rise and fall of populations, but the history of every nation indicated, and the pre-factors of every major war’.<sup>138</sup> History was thus ‘the story of a succession of balanced economies upset from time to time by a new factor making for a massive increase in productive power’—a cyclical narrative of stable equilibrium and chaotic transition.<sup>139</sup>

The Middle East and South-East Asia were areas of particular concern regarding postwar population growth. Cilento listed Pakistan, Indonesia, Malaya, Indochina, the Philippines and China, among others, as areas where World War II had not restricted this growth:

[W]hatever procedures are introduced at this stage to limit population or to rationalize the population/subsistence ratio, cannot prevent the growth of population within the next fifty years to a critical and explosive degree.

Many of these countries had only gained independence from colonial powers in the late 1940s, their people ‘infused with a new stimulus, a new inspiration towards individualism, and an aim at all costs to protect these new-found freedoms’.<sup>140</sup> Cilento claimed to have talked to rickshaw pullers and plantation workers in Asia who freely expressed their own confidence and the West’s lost prestige. These demographic tendencies would, if not seriously addressed, ‘necessarily become a threat to every specialized frontier of culture and civilization’.<sup>141</sup> When this happened, the ‘solemn stupidities of treaty obligations’ would mean little.<sup>142</sup> The social scientific lens that Cilento brought to bear on the early postwar years thus linked anticolonial and postcolonial political movements to dangerous tendencies in population biology.

Cilento was here reiterating old anxieties about the threat ‘the East’ posed to peace and white civilisation. Politicians, scholars, scientists, labour leaders and the press had, since the mid-nineteenth century, represented

138 *ibid.*, pp. 298–9.

139 *ibid.*, p. 295.

140 *ibid.*, p. 296.

141 *ibid.*, p. 299.

142 *ibid.*, p. 296.

Asian societies as swarming, unclean ‘hordes’ that threatened to descend on Europe, America and Australia, bringing disease, immorality and degradation.<sup>143</sup> Christian Geulen has examined how visions of global order developed at the apex of modern imperialism and racial thought. Race, Geulen argues, provided a complete way of understanding the world, not just Self and Other, as European empires expanded and interacted with one another.<sup>144</sup> Such racial discourse—particularly anxiety about the ‘yellow peril’—was thus increasingly transnational in character, seeming to bind together the Anglo-Saxon worlds.<sup>145</sup> Of course, there was more to debates and population science than this vision of racial conflict. As Alison Bashford notes, interwar organisations such as the International Institute of Intellectual Cooperation were concerned with the more general global relationship between population growth, land and geopolitics, especially in the context of German, Italian and Japanese claims to territorial expansion and the Nazi notion of *lebensraum*, or living space.<sup>146</sup> When demographers after World War II argued for the removal of immigration restrictions, which had been fundamental to some visions of imperial world order, the relationship between population, land and war remained an important conceptual underpinning.<sup>147</sup> Few after the late 1940s took expectations of a race war seriously, especially since the postcolonial hardening of national boundaries and political divisions in Asia made the notion of a ‘swarming’ East look outmoded and pan-Asian internationalism beaten.<sup>148</sup>

Confidence in the ability of the social sciences to manipulate the natural laws of global geopolitics had not, however, faded. Postwar demographers still feared population growth and its potential to cause new wars, while abandoning the explicit racism of Nazi conceptions of living space and the interwar discourse of the yellow peril.<sup>149</sup> Cilento appealed to the authority of international organisations, arguing that the United Nations must address the looming threat of population growth in underdeveloped countries to peace and ‘civilisation’. If the range of social welfare services available in the UN social welfare program was intended to enlarge the

143 Evans, ‘Pigmentia’, pp. 103–24; Connelly, *Fatal Misconception*, pp. 33–5.

144 Geulen, ‘The Common Grounds of Conflict’, pp. 69–72.

145 Lake and Reynolds, *Drawing the Global Colour Line*, pp. 289–90.

146 Bashford, ‘Population, Geopolitics, and International Organizations in the Mid Twentieth Century’, pp. 337–8.

147 *ibid.*, p. 344.

148 Amrith, ‘Asian Internationalism’, pp. 559–61; Mazower, *No Enchanted Palace*, pp. 186–7.

149 Connelly, *Fatal Misconception*, pp. 116–18.

capacity of nation-states to provide for their populations, they were also part of a broader effort to shape the outlook of peoples who were achieving political independence:

It is the obligation to direct the activities, the intentions and the ideas of the peoples of these huge undeveloped areas in such a way that when they become a dominant factor in the scheme of things, as they will, their actions will be along lines that experience has proved to be the most progressive socially.<sup>150</sup>

Like UN welfare consultants, Cilento saw the provision of social welfare as an effort to build the capacity of states to govern their populations and improve standards of living. At the heart of this work was the confidence that expertise and knowledge would allow the United Nations and member states to reduce or ameliorate poverty. As seen in the examples of Ecuador, Egypt and the Philippines, this was largely a technical enterprise focused on social security legislation, surveys, record keeping, education and employment services. But Cilento was also suggesting that, while international assistance in social welfare operated on a national basis, its most important aim was to address the same regional population growth that had agitated so many scientists and political figures in the preceding decades.

The UN Advisory Social Welfare Services shared many of the characteristics of later development projects. They were not monolithic, but instead were made up of a shifting network of personnel, institutions and agencies, giving them the kind of multivalent and dispersed character that Frederick Cooper and Randall Packard have described.<sup>151</sup> The ideas and objectives of consultants were not necessarily the same as Cilento's and local elites were often the ones who set the agenda for the welfare program. Yet there were conceptual elements shared across both the welfare program and postwar economic development, especially between the 1940s and the 1970s. UN officials and recipient governments preferred to deploy expert knowledge to help strengthen centralised states that would be responsible for the wealth and wellbeing of their people. Government would be technical and administrative, focused not on politics but on official interventions in health, education, employment and wellbeing.

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150 Cilento, 'Underdeveloped Areas in Social Evolutionary Perspective,' p. 298.

151 Cooper and Packard, 'Introduction,' pp. 1–41.

In affecting this transformative growth, the United Nations and international society were beneficently guiding underdeveloped nations along a path to modernity.<sup>152</sup>

## Competing projects: Social welfare and economic development

It may have been only a matter of time, but, by 1949, the spotlight that social welfare had enjoyed for a few years had shifted to economic development. In December 1948, the UN General Assembly passed Resolution 200(III): 'Technical Assistance for Economic Development'. Like Resolution 58, this one established a program of expert missions, fellowships, local technical training and seminars. Yet it signalled, as Amrith has suggested, a shift away from social objectives to a preoccupation with increasing economic productivity above all else.<sup>153</sup> 'The United Nations' entry into economic development prompted discussions on how the departments of economic and social affairs could collaborate more closely. In February 1949, Cilento prepared a memorandum on social welfare services that rejected rigid distinctions between the economic and the social: 'All forms of economic development have social improvement as their ultimate goal; all forms of social improvement finally contribute to economic development.'<sup>154</sup> US president Truman had just called for an internationally coordinated effort to reduce poverty and promote economic development in underdeveloped regions. After hearing a proposal from the United States, ECOSOC resolved in March to instruct secretary-general Lie to report on a 'comprehensive plan for an expanded co-operative programme of technical assistance for economic development ... paying due attention to questions of a social nature which directly condition economic development'.<sup>155</sup> It was anticipated that a larger, comprehensive program of development would emerge from the United Nations.

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152 These characteristics of the work of UN social welfare services are echoed in many later development projects. See Ferguson, *The Anti-politics Machine*, pp. 9–10; Cooper and Packard, 'Introduction,' pp. 17–18; Mitchell, *The Rule of Experts*, pp. 39–42; James Scott, *Seeing Like a State: How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition Have Failed* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1998), pp. 4–6.

153 Amrith, *Decolonizing International Health*, pp. 84–6.

154 Henri Laugier to David Owen, Assistant Secretary-General in Charge of Economic Affairs, 25 February 1949, RAG-2/335/01 Part A, UNA.

155 United Nations Economic and Social Council, 'Technical Assistance for Economic Development,' Resolution of 4 March 1949, 8th Session, RAG-2/335/01, Part A, UNA.

Voices in the Social Commission, General Assembly and the Department of Social Affairs were all at pains to emphasise consideration of social matters alongside economic growth. Alva Myrdal, the new Director of the Department of Social Affairs, reminded staff that ‘the social programme must be conceived as an integral and inseparable part of the total programme, in each region and in each project’.<sup>156</sup> In an informal statement made to the Social Commission in May 1949, she portrayed economic development as a social project: ‘The objectives of all economic development are largely and predominantly social. Economic development is only a means of achieving improvement in the social welfare of all people.’ Economic development, implicitly conceived of here as industrialisation, must be made ‘in harmony with social objectives’.<sup>157</sup> Concern about the disruptive social consequences of industrialisation and urbanisation became a common refrain of social affairs officials. A secretariat memorandum for the Social Commission in March 1950 stated that urbanisation tended to ‘breed disease, delinquency and other social evils’.<sup>158</sup> In proposing a conference on social problems encountered in the course of economic development projects, Donald McGranahan, from the cultural activities section of social affairs, similarly noted that such projects threatened the disintegration of community and family life, the breakdown of old mores and an increase in juvenile delinquency.<sup>159</sup> Laugier reminded Lie that the resolution of the ECOSCO had stated how important it was to ‘take account of the probable consequences of proposed projects for economic development in terms of the welfare of the population as a whole’.<sup>160</sup>

If social welfare officers at the United Nations harboured concerns about the social consequences of economic development, the ‘social questions’ with which they were concerned often referred to welfare services that would actually facilitate industrialisation and urbanisation. Development projects often aimed at the social and cultural transformation of peasants and ‘traditional’ communities, which represented a blockage in the way

156 Alva Myrdal to All Directors, 15 March 1949, p. 3, RAG-2/335/01, UNA.

157 Alva Myrdal, ‘Technical Assistance: Informal Statement of Views Made by Mrs Alva Myrdal,’ Social Commission, 4th Session, 17 May 1949, p. 2, RAG-2/335/01 Part A, UNA.

158 ‘Social Projects to be Provided by the United Nations under the Expanded Programme of Technical Assistance for the Economic Development of Under-developed Countries,’ Memorandum by Secretariat for Social Commission, 6th session, 14 March 1950, p. 8, RAG-2/184/4/02, UNA.

159 ‘Proposed Conference on Social Problems Encountered and Methods Found Effective in Raising Standards of Living in Under-developed Areas,’ n.d. p. 7, attached to Donald McGranahan to Alva Myrdal, 16 November 1949, RAG-2/184/4/02, Box 1, UNA.

160 Henri Laugier to Tygvie Lie, 28 October 1949, RAG-2/335/01 Part A, UNA.

of modern political, social and economic organisation.<sup>161</sup> When the Department of Social Affairs suggested contributions it could make to the expanded program of technical assistance, Gustavo Duran advised that his section could prepare social scientific studies of ‘rigid tribal and kinship organization, ignorance, superstition, ancient habits’ and other ‘major social conditions that impede modern economic development’.<sup>162</sup> McGranahan’s proposed conference was intended to investigate social conditions that impeded development, such as ‘uneconomic customs and taboos’, ignorance and ‘backwardness’.<sup>163</sup> General Assembly Resolution 222(IX) stated that the Expanded Programme of Technical Assistance required projects that ‘mitigate the social problems ... that may arise as a concomitant of economic change’. The secretariat thus felt that some social institutions and customs were ‘holding back development’ and that ‘effective economic development may depend upon the introduction of certain social reforms’.<sup>164</sup> Despite their misgivings about economic development, social welfare personnel at the United Nations clearly wanted to give their expertise to a larger project of transformation, in which the social sciences would become instruments for spreading modern, ‘civilised’ modes of production, property and culture.

Texts on imperial medicine and governance in the early twentieth century had stressed the civilising impact of European rule. Empire, it was claimed, had stopped constant tribal war and oppression in primitive society.<sup>165</sup> Warwick Anderson, for example, has shown how medical discourse in the Philippines constructed a dichotomy of ‘primitive’ and ‘modern’, between which there was a single trajectory. For American colonial officials, it was the duty of civilised nations such as the United States to slowly guide backward peoples between these two poles.<sup>166</sup> As shown in previous chapters, Cilento’s colonialism had similarly imagined a gulf between the Pacific Islands and the attainments of European civilisation. The reformist

161 Cooper and Packard, ‘Introduction,’ pp. 17–18. See also Chatterjee, *The Politics of the Governed*, pp. 31–3; Kothari, ‘From Colonial Administration to Development Studies,’ p. 49.

162 Gustavo Duran to Henri Laugier, 28 February 1949, RAG-2/335/01 Part A, UNA.

163 ‘Proposed Conference on Social Problems Encountered and Methods Found Effective in Raising Standards of Living in Under-developed Areas,’ n.d., pp. 5–6, RAG-2/184/4/02, Part A, UNA.

164 ‘Social Projects to be Provided by the United Nations under the Expanded Programme of Technical Assistance for the Economic Development of Under-developed Countries,’ Memorandum by Secretariat for Social Commission, 6th session, 14 March 1950, pp. 10–12, RAG-2/184/4/02, UNA.

165 See Lugard, *The Dual Mandate*, p. 617; Pearson and Mouchet, *The Practical Hygiene of Native Compounds in Tropical Africa*, p. viii.

166 Anderson, *Colonial Pathologies*, pp. 182–4.

discourse of empire that informed the creation of the League of Nations mandates stressed the importance of suppressing the kinds of customs that were deemed ‘repugnant to the general principles of humanity’.<sup>167</sup>

Despite these affinities between colonial and development discourse, Cilento instead saw the emergence of technical assistance as a break from an earlier imperial internationalism and he left the United Nations in disgust in 1950. At the heart of Cilento’s discontent was rising anticolonialism and antiracism in the General Assembly.<sup>168</sup> In particular, Cilento felt that economic development as practised through the technical assistance program trampled on the best traditions of British imperialism, while simply replacing colonial governance with the kind of economic hegemony he traced to the mid-nineteenth-century Pacific.<sup>169</sup> In a letter to Australian prime minister Robert Menzies, Cilento related how, in the anticolonial atmosphere of the General Assembly: ‘It was impossible for most people with experience of British territories to hear without impatience and anger the emotional rubbish produced by speakers in many of these meetings.’ He attacked theories of colonial underdevelopment as ‘jeune’, writing:

Any reference to the great steps taken towards the development of native races in such areas, or any sane recognition of the need to progress by slow stages when introducing backward populations to industrialization and its manifold perils, were viewed with suspicion and denounced by the USSR, the USA, and all the minor states of Middle and Latin America, and of the Middle and Far East.<sup>170</sup>

In his letter, Cilento echoed the likes of Jan Smuts, Alfred Zimmern and others who had modelled a civilised world order on the British Empire. He especially railed against American and Soviet attempts to break down the ‘solidarity and status of the British Commonwealth of Nations’.<sup>171</sup> Indeed, Cilento argued, American money and ambition influenced the United Nations to the extent that the new world order simply promised entrenched American domination:

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167 Commonwealth of Australia, *Report to the League of Nations on the Administration of the Territory of New Guinea, 1921–2* (Melbourne: Commonwealth of Australia, 1923), p. 47.

168 Mazower, *No Enchanted Palace*, p. 185.

169 See Chapter 2, this volume.

170 Raphael Cilento to Robert Menzies, 11 September 1950, p. 1, Cilento Papers, UQFL44, Box 4, Item 11.

171 *ibid.*, p. 2.

The policy for Technical Assistance, though giving lip-service to social development and safeguards, seems likely in practice to tend only towards the establishment of an economic hegemony for the international financier on the ruins of the British and other empires.<sup>172</sup>

In defending British imperialism, of course, Cilento ignored the British colonial development projects of the late 1940s and early 1950s that epitomised the imperial capitalism he had critiqued in the 1920s.<sup>173</sup> Yet Cilento was not merely objecting to attacks on the British Empire. The drift towards American hegemony, he argued, undermined the cultivation of an internationalised social scientific improvement in standards of living. In his account, American capital flowing through bilateral arrangements, rather than a truly international program, had fostered suspicion that the United Nations' work was cover for American intrusions designed to protect private investment and maximise returns.<sup>174</sup> If a UN project, he wrote, 'disguises the economic ambitions of another country, it is not only unnecessary but it may be politically corrupt in the international sense'.<sup>175</sup> Cilento's critique of the technical assistance program, and the increasing dominance of American capital, thus reflected his earlier criticism of imperial capitalism. In New Guinea, Fiji and while flying over Ceylon, he had condemned over-alienation and exploitation of land for commercial agriculture for sacrificing the health and wellbeing of indigenous peoples. At the United Nations, therefore, his critique of technical assistance as one form of imperialism rested on his commitment to another.

Cilento remained a critic of the United Nations on his return to Australia. In 'Escape from UN-Reality', he wrote that he 'had salvaged at least some shreds of my intellectual sincerity, sapped by six years of attrition'.<sup>176</sup> During a 1952 debate on ABC Radio on the subject of 'Is the United Nations Worth While?', Cilento spoke in the negative. He was quick to assert that he did not wish to attack the ideal of international cooperation in the maintenance of peace. Rather, he focused his attack on the United Nations' structure and prevailing ideals. The equality of sovereign nation-states was an especially bad defect to Cilento, who had long insisted that racial hierarchies were obviously real. 'Could you agree', he asked

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172 *ibid.*, p. 2.

173 Hodge, *Triumph of the Expert*, pp. 209–22; Sluga, 'UNESCO and the (One) World of Julian Huxley', pp. 410–12.

174 Hodge, *Triumph of the Expert*, p. 3.

175 *ibid.*, p. 5.

176 Cilento, 'Escape from UN-reality', p. 1.

rhetorically, ‘that Liberia or Costa Rica should have a casting vote as to whether there should be peace or war in the world? Of course not—neither could anyone else’.<sup>177</sup>

The Soviet Union had stymied progress with its veto in the Security Council and voting in the General Assembly had degenerated into political bloc voting.<sup>178</sup> As shown in previous chapters, Cilento had long believed that individuals who were trained, afforded an elevated status as professionals and dedicated to a life of service were the true source of progress. Improvements in welfare came not from democracy or human rights, but from expertise, initiative and centralised authority. For Cilento, the United Nations represented, in its capitulation to notions of rights and racial equality, a rupture with an ideal world order in which international cooperation would maintain and extend a progressive imperial governance.

Reflecting on his postwar international service, Cilento commented that one of the ‘tragedies’ of the early years of the United Nations was that its most capable staff were ‘elbowed aside by opportunists’ or ‘reluctantly decided that their work still lay in the national fields they had tilled for so long and so lovingly’.<sup>179</sup> This was obviously self-referential and perhaps a way of dealing with his frustration at being prevented from reaching a higher position at one of the specialised agencies, especially the WHO.<sup>180</sup> Despite his criticism of ‘job-seekers’, he had always been ambitious himself. Yet here was also the genuine dismay of a former colonial official who was deeply invested in the social mission of empire and committed to a segregated world order predicated on racial and cultural hierarchy. Cilento had previously entertained a kind of cultural relativism. Writing in 1933 against climatic theories of race, he noted how past civilisations had lost themselves in the conceit that their climate was ideal: ‘this national belief in national superiority has been a universal delusion’, as were a string of related beliefs:

The white man degenerates as he approaches the equator; that heat and cold rule character and govern the destiny of races; that skin colour is a sure guide to intellect; and, most emphatically, that the land of his

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177 ‘Is the United Nations Worth While?’ The Nation’s Forum of the Air, Australian Broadcasting Company, 3 December 1952, p. 3, Cilento Papers, UQFL44, Box 18, Item 99.

178 *ibid.*, p. 4.

179 Cilento, ‘Escape from UN-reality,’ Preface.

180 Fisher, *Raphael Cilento*, p. 203.

forefathers was, is, and always will be the ideal and unique source for the production of ideal men and the original repository of civilization and culture.<sup>181</sup>

‘Civilisation’ is here not intrinsic but ‘ephemeral’—‘a matter of maintained accord between man and his environment’.<sup>182</sup> Yet it was also self-evident to Cilento that the ‘white’ man—understood as something more than Anglo-Saxon—had attained cultural and scientific heights that outstripped the ‘coloured’ peoples of the world. This insistence on the gulf between modern white society and backward peoples underpinned his belief that an empire of protection and tutelage was the only moral and practical way of ordering the world.

The social welfare program at the United Nations was for Cilento an opportunity for international cooperation in this kind of empire. He had consistently criticised the dominance of commercial interests in imperial governance in the 1920s and 1930s. The rapid integration of ‘primitive’ peoples into a world economy was, in his view, perilous for all concerned. The duty of civilised societies was to shield those peoples from the socially disintegrating effects of global capitalism while also gradually transforming them culturally, socially and politically. Cilento’s critique of the UN technical assistance program—an element in the lopsided development of agriculture and industry that, since the 1950s, has largely failed to reduce poverty—was thus based on his commitment to a paternalistic stream of imperialism.

There were obvious continuities between colonial administration and social development programs. The notion that there was one linear trajectory towards modernity had been a feature of colonial discourse generally and found frequent expression in the UN social welfare program. Moreover, many post-independence governments sought to consolidate powerful centralised states capable of providing for and governing populations through the known mechanisms of surveillance and discipline that national and colonial states had developed over the previous 50 years. The structure of the program, however, assumed the sovereignty and independence of many peoples who imperialists such as Cilento and Smuts had previously claimed lacked the capacity for self-government.

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181 Cilento, ‘The Conquest of Climate,’ p. 424.

182 *ibid.*, p. 424.

Colonial ideology and practice, in other words, were maintained within a new political world order that represented a rupture with older imperial internationalisms.

By the 1950s, the world seemed to be leaving people like Cilento behind. Walter Crocker, another Australian in the UN Secretariat, noted that he, Cilento and a number of other idealistic types left the United Nations around the same time, conscious that they had largely been 'defeated'.<sup>183</sup> Marilyn Lake, Henry Reynolds and Mark Mazower have noted that people such as Smuts and Cilento, who valued an international order predicated on racial hierarchy and the moral leadership of the British Empire, were increasingly pushed aside within the United Nations as it became a forum for anticolonialism and development. The United Nations became, in other words, an arena for a political, economic and ideological struggle that increasingly pushed Smuts and Cilento to the margins.<sup>184</sup>

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183 Walter Crocker, *The Role of Sir Raphael Cilento at the United Nations* (Brisbane: University of Queensland Press, 1985), p. 3.

184 Lake and Reynolds, *Drawing the Global Colour Line*, pp. 343–53; Mazower, *No Enchanted Palace*, pp. 183–5.

This text is taken from *A Doctor Across Borders: Raphael Cilento and public health from empire to the United Nations*, by Alexander Cameron-Smith, published 2019 by ANU Press, The Australian National University, Canberra, Australia.