An International Anomaly

It is often assumed that only sovereign states can join the United Nations. But this was not always the case. At the founding of the United Nations, a loophole drafted by British statesmen in its predecessor organisation, the League of Nations, was carried forward, allowing colonies to accede as member-states. Colonies such as India, Ireland, Egypt, and many more were afforded a tokenistic representation at the League in Geneva during the interwar years, decades before their independence. Thomas Gidney unites three geographically distinct case studies to demonstrate the evolution of Britain's policy from a range of different viewpoints, exploring how this policy came into being, and why it was only exploited by the British Empire. He argues that this membership shaped colonial norms around sovereignty and international recognition in the interwar period and to the present day. This title is also available as open access on Cambridge Core.

Thomas Gidney is a historian of international and colonial history, and a research fellow at the University of Geneva, and the Global Governance Centre, Graduate Institute Geneva.

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An International Anomaly

Colonial Accession to the League of Nations

THOMAS GIDNEY
Graduate Institute Geneva

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CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS

Shaftesbury Road, Cambridge CB2 8EA, United Kingdom

One Liberty Plaza, 20th Floor, New York, NY 10006, USA

477 Williamstown Road, Port Melbourne, VIC 3207, Australia

314–321, 3rd Floor, Plot 3, Splendor Forum, Jasola District Centre, New Delhi – 110025, India

103 Penang Road, #05-06/07, Visioncrest Commercial, Singapore 238467

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www.cambridge.org
Information on this title: www.cambridge.org/9781009584449

DOI: 10.1017/9781009584432

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When citing this work, please include a reference to the DOI 10.1017/9781009584432

The open access publication of this book has been published with the support of the Swiss National Science Foundation.

First published 2025

A catalogue record for this publication is available from the British Library

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data
NAMES: Gidney, Thomas, author.
TITLE: An international anomaly : colonial accession to the League of Nations / Thomas Gidney.
DESCRIPTION: Cambridge, United Kingdom ; New York, NY : Cambridge University Press, 2024. | Series: Global and international history | Includes bibliographical references and index.
IDENTIFIERS: LCCN 2024042247 (print) | LCCN 2024042248 (ebook) | ISBN 9781009584449 (hardback) | ISBN 9781009584418 (paperback) | ISBN 9781009584432 (ebook)
SUBJECTS: LCSH: League of Nations–Membership–History. | Great Britain–Colonies–History–20th century. | India–History–British occupation, 1765-1947. | Ireland–History–War of Independence, 1919-1921. | Egypt–History–British occupation, 1882-1936. | Imperialism–History–20th century. | Sovereignty–History–20th century. | World politics–1919-1932.
CLASSIFICATION: LCC JZ4871 .G53 2024 (print) | LCC JZ4871 (ebook) |
DDC 341.22/309171241–dc23/eng/20241118
LC record available at https://lccn.loc.gov/2024042247
LC ebook record available at https://lccn.loc.gov/2024042248

ISBN 978-1-009-58444-9 Hardback

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