

Statelessness in International Political and Legal Thought, 1921-1935

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The Author

Mira Siegelberg is a Lecturer on Social Studies at Harvard University. She holds a BA in History and Human Rights (Columbia University 2006), an M.A in International History (Harvard University 2009), and will defend her PhD dissertation 'Statelessness: An International History' in May 2014. Her article 'Things Fall Apart: Hannah Arendt and J.G.A Pocock on the Politics of Time' appeared in *Modern Intellectual History*, and she has published a second article 'Unofficial Men, Efficient Civil Servants: Raphael Lemkin in the History of International Law' in the *Journal of Genocide Research*. Her first book will be a study of the idea of statelessness from the end of the First World War to the present, and will be published by Harvard University Press. In September 2014 she will join the Princeton Society of Fellows as a Perkins-Cotsen Postdoctoral Fellow.

The Paper

Statelessness, or the condition of being without a legally recognized nationality, first became a category of international legal analysis and an object of humanitarian action after the First World War. This paper examines the role of statelessness in political and legal arguments in the interwar period. It argues that liberal internationalist legal scholars presented statelessness as fundamental to their theoretical reconceptualization of law and political order and that it was particularly important for the argument that individuals—rather than states—could be the direct subjects of international law. In their efforts to stabilize the postwar order bureaucrats at the League of Nations, by contrast, codified legal categories, including refugees and the stateless to manage population upheaval but sought to check cosmopolitan ambitions.