

# Peace Diplomacy, Global Justice and International Agency: Rethinking Human Security and Ethics in the Spirit of Dag Hammarskjöld

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Stahn, Carsten and Henning Melber (Eds.) (2014) *Peace Diplomacy, Global Justice and International Agency: Rethinking Human Security and Ethics in the Spirit of Dag Hammarskjöld*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, ISBN 978-1-107-03720-5, 617 pages.

The extensive volume *Peace Diplomacy, Global Justice and International Agency: Rethinking Human Security and Ethics in the Spirit of Dag Hammarskjöld*, edited by Carsten Stahn (professor of international criminal law and global justice at Leiden University and program director of the Grotius Centre for International Legal Studies) and Henning Melber (senior advisor and director emeritus of the Dag Hammarskjöld Foundation), was initiated in part at a 2011 conference and reexamines the second secretary-general of the United Nations (UN) and contextualizes the relevance of his approach and principles for the modern era. The contributors include not only a number of Hammarskjöld experts but also an array of new voices and perspectives from across disciplines. After an overview introduction by the editors, the twenty-four chapters are organized into five parts: 1) personal reflections on Hammarskjöld, 2) his intellectual legacy and leadership, 3) Hammarskjöld and the UN in the Congo, 4) the role of the UN secretary-general, and 5) re-thinking internationalism, before concluding with a reprinting of Hammarskjöld's final annual report to the General Assembly and his last address to the staff, given shortly before his untimely death in a plane crash in September 1961.

The volume is designed to provide a detailed consideration of Hammarskjöld's legacy as well as his present-day significance. While often imparting very positive reviews of his place in history, the book represents, as the editors express, both a "tribute" and a "critical review" (p. 10) that includes the limits to Hammarskjöld's efforts and ideals. This approach allows for a stronger base of inquiry into the relevance of Hammarskjöld's activities and principles for contemporary international affairs. Hammarskjöld is noted as an inspiration for the UN secretaries-general that followed. Kofi Annan, seventh secretary-general, states in his contribution, "I believe the Secretary-General has no choice. He has to follow in the footsteps of Hammarskjöld" (p. 38). Hammarskjöld is also described as an influence on a range of actors and institutions within and beyond the UN system. More broadly, the book promotes a clearer understanding of the question, in the words of Pieter Kooijmans, "Why is it that we are so eager to know what Hammarskjöld's views and position on our present world problems would have been?" (p. 53) across a range of venues and issues.

Including different author perspectives is a strength of the volume. Along with diverse backgrounds, the contributors support their arguments with varied forms of material. Demonstrating the ongoing power of Hammarskjöld's writing, a number of contributors rely primarily on close readings of Hammarskjöld's own words—his speeches, annual reports, and personal reflections particularly employed in *Markings*—or, in the case of Roger Lipsey's chapter, pon-

dering the form and implications of what Hammarskjöld *would* have written. Analyses of these texts holds clear value, but it is also inherently limited since this only explores Hammarskjöld's outlook on issues. So the inclusion of chapters using other material (such as deeper archive material and legal analysis) and viewpoints (especially in relation to the Congo and broader theme of decolonization) offers a valuable counterbalance and understanding of the broader story in which Hammarskjöld was enmeshed. At the same time, many of the accounts offer a compelling case for the need to fully understand Hammarskjöld as an individual who brought to the office certain views, ethics, traits, and experiences.

The dedicated effort to not just look back at Hammarskjöld but to embed the analysis of his ideas and actions in different historical contexts and modern perspectives also makes the volume more relevant to understanding international relations. Many of the authors are careful to dictate both where the world is similar and different from Hammarskjöld's time as they consider the related potential relevance of his principles and approach to global events. The coverage of the Congo, both in the distinct section and in material ranging through the book, does a particularly good job of justifying and bridging the situation under Hammarskjöld to the ongoing UN engagement in the country. For building a broader understanding of the role of the UN secretary-general beyond Hammarskjöld, the analysis is limited to mostly comparing with Annan. But there are also some initial interesting in-roads elsewhere in Aoife O'Donoghue's chapter pointing briefly to the Commonwealth and World Trade Organization and especially in Steven Blockmans' exploration of implications for the European Union.

The book provides an impressive set of material but serves more as a collection of chapters than a fully analytically linked volume. The editors could have pushed the critical value of the book further by providing a more conceptually based, instead of overview focused, introduction and by reflecting across the contributions in a concluding chapter. For example, the reader might be jarred when moving from part two, which often emphasizes Hammarskjöld's ethical importance, into part three, which in places raises some serious questions regarding the degree to which Hammarskjöld might have been ill-informed or lacking in judgment in relation to the Congo. This represents the value of having such divergent author views but utilizing an editorial voice to assist with making relative sense of these approaches. Melber tackles this to a degree in relation to the Congo in his individual chapter, but an extension of such comparative reflection is encouraged. Analyzing across the chapters could also highlight and consider the overlap of ideas and findings as well as how these reinforce the overarching picture of Hammarskjöld across history and current day. For example, Anne Orford delivers a compelling account of the importance of Hammarskjöld's economist background and thinking, so how does her coverage in relation to the Congo and decolonization mesh with the examination of these areas across other chapters?

Since the book is rather long, the selection of what to include could have been more judicious. For example, several chapters, including most of part one, were previously published elsewhere and could be left aside to focus on the new contributions. In addition, there is a tendency to repeat certain basic material or facts across the chapters. Reducing the first section would open up the space to supply the reader with central facts and a timeline, allowing the substantive chapters to focus on analyzing instead of a degree of reiterating. The chapters are well supported through citation via voluminous footnotes, but the book does not have an overarching bibliography. As the latest addition to a sizeable literature on Hammarskjöld, bringing together the preceding publications in this fashion would better demonstrate the relative placement of this volume. Whether for Hammarskjöld die-hards or more general readers, the value this volume adds and the degree to which the book acts as the most up-to-date reference on the subject must be closely considered in relation to other works. For example, the comparable collection of Sten Ask and Annan Mark-Jungvist's (2005) *The Adventures of Peace: Dag Hammarskjöld and the Future of the UN*.

Overall, Stahn and Melber have achieved their “hope” to “provide a modest contribution to keep Hammarskjöld’s principles and legacy alive in their relevance for today” (p. xv), and it will be interesting see how Hammarskjöld’s ongoing significance continues to shape our understanding of and approach to world affairs.