

Buber in Rhodesia: The United Nations Dag Hammarskjöld Library

Óskar Arnórsson

In another file are the contents of the briefcase that he took with him to Ndola: his New Testament and a book of psalms. Here too are Rainer Maria Rilke's *Elegies and Sonnets*, in German; a novel by Jean Giono, in French; Martin Buber's *I and Thou*, in English, borrowed from the UN library; and the same book in the original German, inscribed to Hammarskjöld by Buber himself. Dag had also packed the writing pad on which he had started to translate Buber's book into Swedish.¹

So goes historian Susan Williams's remarkable inventory of Dag Hammarskjöld's briefcase, found at the crash site of his aircraft, the *Albertina*, in her book about Hammarskjöld's death on September 18, 1961 in Northern Rhodesia, present-day Zambia.² The briefcase's contents, perhaps befitting his role as the second secretary-general of the United Nations (UN), are a veritable humanist library, an idealistic image of the Western intellectual canon at the height of decolonization.

This library was curiously unfit for the task at hand, not unlike another library that Hammarskjöld was involved with in those days, the Dag Hammarskjöld Library (DHL), dedicated on November 16, 1961. Both reveal a contradiction at the heart of the UN project. They represent a misplaced faith in the written word, and by extension, the Western literary tradition, a faith that, whether through ignorance or defiance, does not recognize the limits of its own relevance. Ultimately, both the briefcase and the building remain precisely that: representations of the "republic of letters," a seamless communicative web that aspired to govern the world at the same time as this republic was coming undone.



Dag Hammarskjöld's briefcase, found at the site of the crash of the *Albertina* in 1961. Courtesy of the Dag Hammarskjöld Foundation/Annika Östman.]

Even before it existed as a building, the library performed a symbolic role for the UN. Its founders of the late 1940s, as well as the international Board of Design Consultants (BoDC) for its New York headquarters during that period, thought of the UN's nascent library as a modern-day Library of Alexandria—where books and documents from all over the world would be collected, facilitating communication between delegates from all nations.³ According to George Dudley, author of an unconventional but thrilling account of the design of the UN Headquarters, the group focused on the library, above other things, at their very first meeting—not because it provided them with an anchor of security among their peers, but



The “humanist library” of Hammarskjöld’s briefcase: Rilke’s *Elegies and Sonnets*, Giono’s *Noe*, Buber’s *I and Thou* in both English and German, and the New Testament. Courtesy of the Dag Hammarskjöld Foundation/ Annika Östman.]

because libraries and internationalism go hand-in-hand and serve as metaphors for each other.⁴ To the BoDC, the library was assumed to be the most important aspect of international life, anchored in language and history, mediated through translation.⁵

While there was some contention around the precise constellation of the library, everyone involved in its initial conception—be they the UN’s designers, diplomats, or advisors—outdid each other in boosting the library’s mandate to ecumenical proportions. Le Corbusier declared that it should become a “tremendous world library.”⁶ Some of this ambition made it into the fully illustrated 1947 report to the General Assembly. Here the library was supposed to be located on the four lowest floors of the Secretariat Building and contain 1,500,000 volumes in 171,000 square feet:

For the great amount and variety of research it must carry on, the Secretariat should have at its disposal a well-stocked and well-equipped library. If it includes the collections of the specialized agencies, it may well contain a million or more volumes. The delegates and their advisers, as well as some private scholars, should also have ready access to the library. Small specialized branches or depots may be established among the various departments and specialized agencies, and pneumatic or other mechanical means for rapid delivery should be envisaged.⁷

Because of this initial enthusiasm for the library, it is ironic that when \$20 million dollars were shaved off the headquarters’ total costs in 1947, the library was eliminated from the scheme. After the BoDC had disbanded and gone home, the library was relocated to the new, if undistinguished, Housing Authority Building until a better solution could be provided and funding secured.⁸ This funding only surfaced ten years later in the form of a \$6.5 million-dollar donation from the Ford Foundation. The fundraising campaign was pursued energetically by Hammarskjöld himself, who in a letter to Henry Ford II claimed that he was “convinced that the use of the library facilities

contributes much toward providing a solid basis for progress and constructive growth in international affairs. A good library should always be at the center of any sound international development.”

This library when realized housed 500,000 books in 60,000 square feet, a third of its 1947 scope.⁹ The DHL is a handsome, if unremarkable, three-story, late-modern building with a penthouse and three underground levels, for a total of six floors. Its exterior massing and detailing are derivative of other UN buildings, especially the Secretariat. It is effectively a three-story Secretariat, complete with similar dimensions (although slightly pudgier), rotated ninety degrees, wrapped with a band of marble on the short ends and glass curtain walls on the long ends, again replicating the material disposition of its model. Other details vary slightly. The Secretariat’s spandrel glass is replicated on the southern façade of the library, but on the northern façade this is omitted (per instructions by Hammarskjöld himself, more on which later) to achieve a more “vertical” effect from the *cour d’honneur*. The penthouse roof is slightly curved, according to one description to “conform with the lines of the General Assembly building,” thus completing the library’s mimicry of the surrounding buildings. One can see the library as almost a mini-Secretariat with a mini-General Assembly on top.¹⁰

The first floor was originally connected to the Secretariat via a glass corridor.¹¹ This floor comprises the main public spaces of the library—a generous entrance lobby, the “public lounge,” and the main reading room. The double height entrance lobby leads down to the concourse level, through which library users can exit via a corridor towards the west of the building. This space is the multimedia floor, with a 210-person auditorium, audio and microfilm rooms, a periodical reading room, and periodical stacks. The second floor houses the library’s most generously designed space, the Woodrow Wilson Reading Room, which is dedicated to research on the League of Nations, the UN, and other international organizations. The room features a curving white pine ceiling and a wall-card catalog made of African wenge. In addition to the ecumenical aspirations of the reading room, the floor houses the “full documentation of the United Nations and all of its special agencies,” as well as a map room providing “topographic, geographic, climatological, and other related information for all regions of the world.”¹² The third floor houses the offices of the director and deputy director of the library. The second and third basements are the main stack areas of the library, with the third basement also housing its mechanical equipment. The penthouse offers a spacious lounge intended for receptions and most prominently features the famous mural by Swedish artist Bo Beskow.

At the dedication ceremony of the library, doubling as a memorial service for the recently deceased secretary-general, then-acting secretary-general U Thant claimed that Hammarskjöld was an “intellectual whose training and daily work embraced history, economics and the law, and whose private pleasures included philosophy and poetry. He read Kierkegaard and Sartre and Buber, Eliot and Perse, as he listened to Bach and looked at Picasso”:

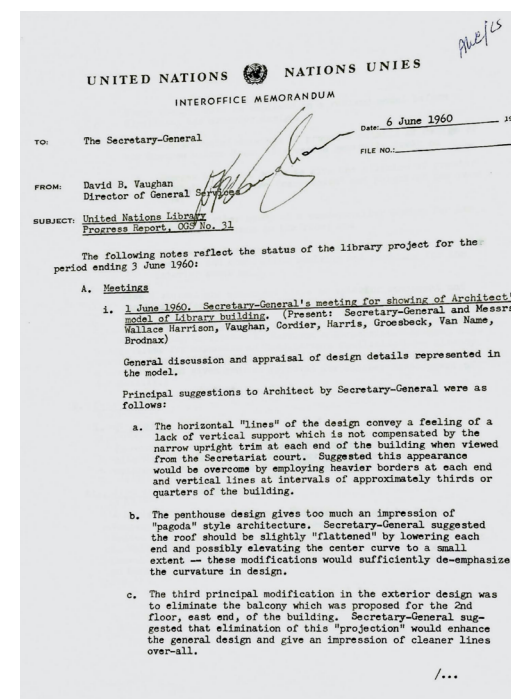
For such a man, architecture’s combination of precise physical and mathematical principles with the most subtle aesthetic harmonies was a most congenial combination. It is not surprising, therefore, that the late Secretary-General

took a close personal interest in every detail of the Library's design, from its general outline to the texture of the fabric on a single chair. He looked at plans, drawings, models, samples of wood and marble and leather; he requested construction of model rooms to display alternate lighting fixtures and flooring materials; he expressed opinions and took final decisions on such questions as the curve of the roof, the color of the draperies, the dimensions and the design of a mural. And he did these things with delight, as a relaxation from the daily responsibilities of his office, and with such good humor and evident taste that, far from annoying the professionals—the architects, designers, engineers, artists—he won their immediate respect and their admiring co-operation.¹³

This is a strange combination of endearment and dismissal of architecture's importance. Thant presents the library design as the convenient dabbling of a dilettante, something freeing Hammarskjöld's mind from the anxiety of the real world.

Indeed, this narrative is borne out in Hammarskjöld's correspondences. Hammarskjöld was engaged in a lively exchange about the design of the library at least as late as July 8, 1960 in a meeting with the architects of record, Wallace Harrison of Harrison & Abramowitz & Harris (see note 4) and the partner in charge, Michael Harris. Hammarskjöld and the architects reviewed comments the secretary-general had made about the penthouse roof in a meeting a month earlier on June 1, 1960. During that meeting, while examining an architectural model, Hammarskjöld complained that “the penthouse design gives too much an impression of ‘pagoda’ style architecture,” suggesting that “the roof should be slightly ‘flattened’ by lowering each end and possibly elevating the center curve to a small extent—these modifications would sufficiently de-emphasize the curvature in design.” He had also suggested that the “horizontal ‘lines’ of the design convey a feeling or a lack of vertical support which is not compensated by the narrow upright trim at each end of the building when viewed from the Secretariat court.”¹⁴ In the July 8 meeting, the architects and the secretary-general decided “that the south wall follows the general design details used for the Secretariat building.” Further, “on the north wall, ‘spendrel’ [sic] lines are to be omitted, and the glass will extend from floor to ceiling (at each floor). The effect of this design has been to modify an apparent lack of vertical ‘support’ observed in the original model as well as to improve the appearance of the Woodrow Wilson Room.”¹⁵

“Humanist, scholar, poet, philosopher, international statesman, and world citizen”—sure.¹⁶ But designer? His attempts to counteract the apparent lack of “vertical support” (as enabled by the curtain wall-hung steel frame, the sine qua non of modern architecture) suggest that Hammarskjöld was trying his best to turn the façade of the library into a sort of Greco-Roman temple, to say nothing of his distaste for whatever he saw to be the “pagoda style.” Discussions of style notwithstanding, the whole episode deflates architecture's agency in an international setting. As Thant suggests above, the secretary-general delighted in his design duties even during what was at that point the greatest international crisis in the UN's history—the meeting was held ten days after Congo had declared its independence from Belgium, the day before the Belgian government began its intervention in the Congo, and two days before



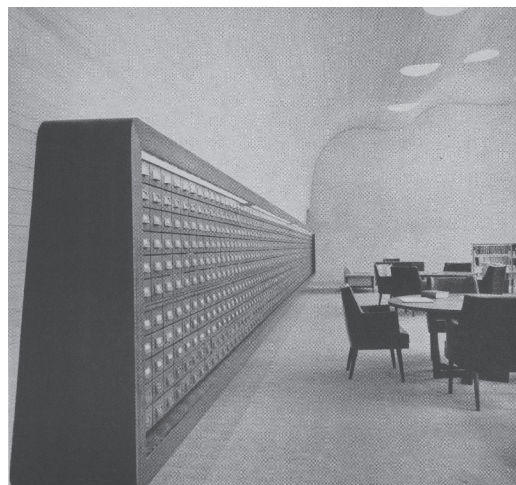
Meeting notes from David B. Vaughan, director of General Services, to the secretary-general, June 6, 1960. Andrew Wellington Cordier Papers, 1918–1975, box 90, no. 4078651 (n.d.).

the Katanga secession.¹⁷ The suggestion is that architecture is not important, that it is a delightful distraction at best. But instead of seeing architecture as a distraction, I would like to challenge Thant's point, to open the library doors and let the Cold War in.

Modern architects had long dreamt of overcoming cultural specificity through the establishment of an autonomous, universal design language, which we will refer to as architectural internationalism; and the DHL is a perfect, if late, example. The international mobility of architectural form overcame two paradoxes—that any architecture, however “international,” was built *in* a place, and that it was made of materials coming *from* a place—through the digging and filling of holes: the filling of a hole in one place with materials excavated from another (however dispersed across the globe the latter hole was). Modern architecture's internationality therefore came through the negation of any local architectural form (“pagoda”) as well as the recognition that any such form has to be made of materials local to some other place. A screw and a bolt can come from iron mines on opposite sides of the planet, but ultimately they have to conform to an abstract and often arbitrary standard to fit together (as in the case of the sixty degree angle of the American screw thread). Architectural form, however, only aspires to standardization metaphorically—there is no such thing as a standardized architectural *form* (in contradistinction to standardized architectural *construction*). Fifty years of architectural history and post-structuralist critique have taught us that form is always contaminated by a vernacular/representational/ideological residue, as is manifest in Hammarskjöld's barely subliminal classicism.

The only review of the library building came in an issue of *Interiors*. This review focuses on the “rare woods” aspect of the Woodrow Wilson Reading Room and again testifies to the secretary-general-as-designer: “when he looked at a chair, he knew instantly if he wanted it or not.”¹⁸ According to *Interiors*, in “each of the library's major areas woods are used to create entirely different effects.” In the Woodrow Wilson Reading Room—named after the

notoriously racist president—“one has the feeling of monumental wood sculpture” where the “informal planking of the Idaho white pine ceiling and wall contrast with the dark African wenge wood of the card catalog which follows the sloping line of the wall. The end walls are of Peruvian travertine almost the same color as the pine ceiling. Tables and chairs are also of African wenge. Carpeting is a soft blue-green.”¹⁹ Hammarskjöld thus rejected the cultural specificity of architectural form through his aversion to “pagoda style” architecture while specifying something like a United Nations of Rare Woods. He remained a faithful subject of modern architectural internationalism, one that claims that if volumes are reduced to subtle, conservative impressions such as “clean,” “flat,” and “stable,” their materiality can reflect their internationality through slabs of marble and wenge.²⁰



The African wenge card catalog in the Woodrow Wilson reading room meets the slope of the Idaho white pine ceiling. Photograph from “Rare Woods from Three Continents for the UN’s Dag Hammarskjöld Library,” *Interiors* 122 (April 1963).

It is hard not to see this theory of design as somehow related to the secretary-general’s vision of geopolitics and the UN’s role within them, so tragically on display in the Congo crisis. To Hammarskjöld, the UN was the “vertical support” of the “clean lines” governing the world. Within these “heavy borders,” the world’s nation-states would have to be fitted together while maintaining their inner homogeneity, not unlike the way in which the celebrated African wenge card catalog was fitted to the slope of the Idaho white pine ceiling.²¹ In fact, the more contrast across borders the better, if its co-existence is regulated from outside by the secretary-general-as-designer.

It was precisely this regulatory capacity of the UN that the first prime minister of independent Democratic Republic of the Congo (then Republic of the Congo) challenged on July 14, six days after Hammarskjöld’s last design meeting. Patrice Lumumba found to his horror that the secretary-general had no intention of protecting the newly independent nation-state’s borders against the machinations of the Katangese rebels and the Belgians. Instead of placing all of the UN’s resources at the disposal of Lumumba’s government, Hammarskjöld inserted the UN as a “neutral organization.”²² It was as if the card catalog was coming unglued, and instead of allowing Lumumba to re-glue it, the secretary-general was asking him to step aside as his Belgian friends claimed the best pieces for salvage.

No wonder that the library-qua-library was something of an afterthought. The library went from being the icebreaker for the BoDC to the first thing that got cut when budgets needed to be trimmed. When it came to the planning, Hammarskjöld was more

interested in the appearance of the library than how it worked—at least we do not have any evidence of him giving anything other than aesthetic directions. As for the function of the library, its director, Josef Stummvoll, was not even included in these design meetings. Stummvoll wrote to another UN official, Andrew Cordier, that:

1. I have just learned that on 8 July the architects exhibited a revised model of the Library building at a meeting at which there was discussion of the Secretary-General’s suggestions concerning the general exterior aspects of the building.
2. Granted that the exterior design of the building and its harmonization with the other buildings on the site are not my particular concern, nevertheless I am interested, naturally, in every step of the planning. I request, therefore, that I be permitted to attend all such future meetings, if only as an observer.²³

There is no evidence that there was another meeting at such a high level. Stummvoll promptly went on leave and never appears to have come back. After the Congo Crisis began, it consumed the secretary-general: first his time and then a year later his life, as it did so many other lives during the years the “Global Cold War” raged.²⁴

The thinly veiled resentment of Stummvoll’s letter attests to the tensions around the library from the very beginning. Physical libraries were important for delegates in the immediate aftermath of World War II, but despite their initial importance for the intergovernmental organization, the DHL never became the “tremendous world library” Le Corbusier dreamt of. Delegates speaking at the library’s opening in 1961 emphasized the need for objective facts in the early days of the organization; there were many stories of delegates gathering against the backdrop of ominous historical events with documents guiding the way to solutions. Still the library was cut out of the budget, languishing in an inopportune building. And because security concerns meant the library could never become public, UN documents were duplicated in “depository libraries” across the globe, which were more accessible to the general public, thus making the library redundant to all but delegates and UN officials.²⁵ On top of that, “in response to General Assembly resolution 52/214 ... the Dag Hammarskjöld Library began its digitization programme to preserve fragile UN documents and to provide online access to



Photograph from a 2015 *New York Times* article on the security threats to the Hammarskjöld Library thanks to its proximity to the 42nd Street off ramp from the FDR Drive.

people all over the world” in 1998. This program went even further in doing away with the need for original paper copies and made the physical library redundant even to delegates and staff.²⁶

In more recent decades, the DHL has not been able to repurpose itself in the same ways that other institutional libraries have been able to in the digital age—with their emphasis on workspace away from home—or in the ways that American public libraries have, with their computer terminals, children’s story times, and spaces of respite for the homeless.²⁷ This has never been more apparent than today, when the library’s physical role has been greatly limited due to security threats. Today the library is but a shell, merely a stand-in for a library or a representation of one.

Even so, if not for a single article in the *New York Times* published in September 2015, nobody who is not a delegate or staff would even know that the library has been so compromised.²⁸ At that point, the entire south side of the library had been completely emptied; it was being used only for storage. The penthouse reception room and auditorium were indefinitely closed. Though the Woodrow Wilson Reading Room has since reopened, the library is nevertheless a pale shadow of its original ambition. Perhaps Hammar skjöld was right about one thing: The design and its representation were more important than the library’s day-to-day functioning, since so much of it could be obviated through a contemporary version of “pneumatic means”—materialized after all in the form of the DHL’s new website, affectionately dubbed “Dag.”²⁹

One cannot help but to read Hammar skjöld’s role in the Congo Crisis and his rigorous reading schedule as similarly symbolically potent but functionally obsolete. The books in his briefcase were an anachronism in a decolonizing world, just like the library. His idea that the UN could act as a “neutral organization” between the West and the East by occupying a decolonizing country to buttress what it called “moderate elements” was a hopelessly Eurocentric policy that proved that the UN was not up to the task that it had been forged around.

Postscript: Library under the Capital Master Plan

The political world the UN was operating in changed significantly between Kofi Annan’s proposal of the renovation of the headquarters through the auspices of the Capital Master Plan in 1998 and its acceptance by the General Assembly in 2006. Not only had the attacks of September 11 displaced the scene of political violence into a major US city, but humanitarian organizations were increasingly targeted all over the world. While the DHL was among the structures recommended for renovation by the Office of the Secretary-General in 2000, the deteriorating geopolitical climate of the early aughts, and the subsequent global “war on terror,” threatened the original premises of the plan. The resultant re-evaluation of the UN’s security procedures informed the plan through the introduction in 2009 of security standards that “apply a single system throughout the United Nations security management system, making no distinction between headquarters, field, or missions.”³⁰ These “enhanced security measures” were implemented throughout the headquarters while leaving the DHL as the odd one out, an ugly duckling—or in architectural jargon, a duck without a shed.

Óskar Örn Arnórsson is a doctoral candidate in Architectural History and Theory at Columbia University’s Graduate School of Architecture, Planning, and Preservation (GSAPP). His dissertation examines how architecture governs transnationally, and uses the mechanism of the Marshall Plan in Post WWII Western Europe to tell this story. In his thesis for the Master of Science in Critical, Curatorial, and Conceptual Practices, also at GSAPP, he compared the renovation of the United Nations Headquarters in New York, completed in 2015, to the initial buildings, planned and built mid-century. Originally from Reykjavík, Iceland, Arnórsson studied architecture at the Royal Danish Academy of Fine Arts in Copenhagen and the Cooper Union in New York, and has practiced architecture with the studios of Diller Scofidio + Renfro in New York and PK Arkitektar in Iceland.

1. Susan Williams, *Who Killed Hammar skjöld?: The UN, the Cold War and White Supremacy in Africa* (London: C. Hurst & Co Publishers, 2011), 26–27.
2. Williams’s breathtaking study led the UN to re-open Hammar skjöld’s case in the fall of 2017, fifty-six years after the crash. See Alan Cowell and Rick Gladstone, “Theory That Hammar skjöld Plane Was Downed Is Bolstered by UN Report,” *New York Times*, October 25, 2017, <https://nyti.ms/2h7sk2G>.
3. For comparisons between the DHL and the Library of Alexandria, see for example a speech delivered by the “Spanish representative” at the plenary meeting of the UN General Assembly, 85th meeting, November 3, 1959, and another delivered by then-acting secretary-general U Thant in The United Nations, *The Dag Hammar skjöld Library, Gift of the Ford Foundation* (United Nations, 1962), 27 and 47, respectively.
4. See George A. Dudley, *A Workshop for Peace: Designing the United Nations Headquarters* (New York: The Architectural History Foundation, 1994), 51, 79, 261. The international BoDC is a well-known, if somewhat overdetermined, subject. Its members were N. D. Bassov of the Soviet Union, Gaston Brunfaut of Belgium, Ernest Cormier of Canada, Le Corbusier representing France, Liang Seu-cheng of China, Sven Markelius of Sweden, Oscar Niemeyer of Brazil, Howard Robertson of the United Kingdom, G. A. Soilleux of Australia, and Julio Vilamajó of Uruguay. The director of planning, Wallace K. Harrison, founding partner of Harrison & Abramovitz, had final say on all design decisions, and Harrison & Abramovitz were the architects of record.
5. For the best, most sustained discussion of architecture and internationalism to date, see Mark Crinson’s *Rebuilding Babel: Modern Architecture and Internationalism* (London: I. B. Tauris & Co. Ltd, 2017).
6. Crinson, *Rebuilding Babel*, 241.
7. United Nations, *Report to the General Assembly of the United Nations by the Secretary-General on the Permanent Headquarters of the United Nations, July 1947* (Lake Success, NY: United Nations, 1947), 22.
8. Before the site was designated as the UN’s permanent headquarters in late 1946, the New York Housing Authority had planned a four-story building on the site. The building had not yet been completed when John D. Rockefeller Jr. purchased the site for the headquarters, and the architects of the BoDC discussed at length whether to tear it down or incorporate it into the design. Ultimately, they chose to retrofit the building, first serving as a drafting office and later becoming a temporary library after work on the buildings was completed. For an in-depth discussion of the Manhattan Building, see Dudley, *Workshop for Peace*, 100–102 and 113–115.
9. Hammar skjöld to Henry Ford II, January 18, 1959.
10. *The Dag Hammar skjöld Library*, 129–165.
11. The glass corridor was supplanted by a building commonly known as the “South Annex” in the late 1970s.
12. *The Dag Hammar skjöld Library*, 143.
13. *The Dag Hammar skjöld Library*, 43–44.
14. United Nations Library Progress Report. OG 31. June 6, 1960. Andrew Wellington Cordier Papers. Rare Book and Manuscript Library. Columbia University. Sub-subseries V.3.2: Dag Hammar skjöld Library.
15. United Nations Library Progress Report. OG 36. July 11, 1960. Andrew Wellington Cordier Papers, Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Columbia University, sub-subseries V.3.2: Dag Hammar skjöld Library.
16. *The Dag Hammar skjöld Library*, 67.
17. Ludo de Witte, *The Assassination of Lumumba* (New York: Verso, 2002), 7.
18. Harrison & Abramovitz & Harris, “Rare Woods from Three Continents for the UN’s Dag Hammar skjöld Library,” *Interiors* 122, April 1963, 102.
19. Harrison & Abramovitz & Harris, “Rare Woods from Three Continents,” 103.
20. In his recent book, *How to Hide an Empire: A History of the Greater United States* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2019), Daniel Immerwahr tells of how the United States divested itself of its pre-World War II empire precisely because WWII revealed that most of the materials the US did not have within its continent-spanning polity could be synthesized from oil (indeed, the draperies in the Woodrow Wilson Reading Room were produced by the Eastman Chemical Company’s “Verel” and Dow Chemical Company’s “Rovana” fabrics). Wood such as Idaho white pine and African wenge appear to be the limit case of synthesizing of materials. But the uranium excavated from Congolese mines by Congolese workers employed by Belgian mining companies, just like the cobalt used in 60 percent of today’s smartphone lithium batteries (also excavated from Congolese mines by Congolese workers employed by multinational mining companies), could not be synthesized.
21. Note how one of the least populated states in the US is designated as the origin of the white pine, while wenge is identified with an entire continent.
22. De Witte, *The Assassination of Lumumba*, 14.
23. Letter from Josef Stummvoll, library director, to Andrew Cordier, executive assistant to the secretary-general, 13. July 1960. AD 515/3(1) Lib bldg. Cordier was undersecretary in charge of the General Assembly and related affairs from 1946–1961.
24. The other most publicized and lamented casualty was Lumumba, so chillingly chronicled in Ludo de Witte’s *Assassination of Lumumba*.

25. "Since 1946, the DHL has arranged for the distribution of UN documents and publications to users around the world through a network of depository libraries. At present, there are 355 depository libraries located in 136 countries and territories. They include national, parliamentary, public, and university libraries, as well as libraries at research institutes and think tanks." Dag Hammarskjöld Library, "United Nations Depository Library Programme: About the Programme," <https://library.un.org/content/united-nations-depository-library-programme>.
26. Dag Hammarskjöld Library, "Update on UN Digitization Programme," May 2, 2017, <https://library.un.org/content/update-un-digitization-programme>. Although the occasion did not let them spell it out, the speakers at the fortieth anniversary of the library in 2001 suggest as much, with half emphasizing the importance of the human in face of the machine and the other half emphasizing the storage potentials of CD-ROM format. See Dag Hammarskjöld Library, *Fortieth Anniversary of the Dag Hammarskjöld Library: Legacy of a Secretary-General* (New York: United Nations, Dag Hammarskjöld Library, 2003), 32–33, 71.
27. For the alternative uses of libraries, see Susan Orlean's non-fiction bestseller *The Library Book*. Through a popular ethnography of the Los Angeles Public Library, she shows how that library's role has changed in its first 150 years.
28. David W. Dunlap, "UN's Makeover Sacrifices Hammarskjöld Library for Security," *New York Times*, December 21, 2017, <https://www.nytimes.com/2015/09/03/nyregion/uns-make-over-sacrifices-hammarskjold-library-for-security.html>.
29. Dag Hammarskjöld Library, "New Library Website: 6 Languages & New URL," July 29, 2016, <https://library.un.org/content/new-library-website-6-languages-new-url>. For "pneumatic means," see note 12.
30. "Safety and Security of Humanitarian Personnel and Protection of United Nations Personnel," A/64/336, states: "Through cooperation and consultation with the Inter-Agency Security Management Network, streamlined minimum operating security standards were established, which now apply a single system throughout the United Nations security management system, making no distinction between headquarters, field, or missions. Minimum operating security standards are the primary mechanism for managing and mitigating the security risk based on security risk assessments," 12–13.

The research in the "Postscript" is derived from my 2015 MsCCCP thesis in the program for Critical, Curatorial, and Conceptual Practices at Columbia University's Graduate School of Architecture, Planning, and Preservation (GSAPP), titled "LINES / REDLINES: Universalism at the UN HQ 1952 / 2014." My thesis advisor was Professor Felicity D. Scott, to whom I owe tremendous gratitude for her support and inspiration. The project was conducted over the course of the year 2014–2015, through traditional historical research in combination with a review of contemporary UN documents as well as a series of observatory visits and interviews. For these visits I owe special gratitude to Peter Smith, special assistant of the assistant secretary-general, for his time and interest in my project, but also to Kathy Farbod, project architect of the CMP and Michael Adlerstein, assistant secretary-general, for their help and enthusiasm. An earlier version of this paper was presented at the Graduate Student Conference in Translation Studies: Translation and (De)colonization at Glendon College, York University, Toronto, in 2018. Thanks to Caitlin Blanchfield and Farzin Lotfi-Jam for inviting me to participate in this volume; to Dennis Pohl for reading the manuscript; and to Columbia Books on Architecture and the City, especially Jesse Connuck, for their generous feedback and imaginative contributions.