

Faculti Summary

<https://faculti.net/branding-the-united-nations/>

The speaker is writing a book on national flags and has explored various related topics, including a particular focus on the United Nations (UN) flag and symbols of internationalism. They note that while some scholars have touched on the topic, there were very few in-depth studies available, prompting the speaker to fill that gap.

The narrative traces the origins of the UN flag back to discussions among internationalists during World War II. These individuals, dubbed "popular internationalists," began designing flags for a potential UN structure, representing a shift towards structured international governance unlike the previous League of Nations, which lacked its own flag or emblem due to reluctance from major powers.

In contrast to the designs proposed by grassroots individuals, the UN emblem was ultimately created by a professional team from the advertising and branding industry, resulting in a familiar logo-like design symbolizing neutrality and peace, but lacking distinct ideological elements. The emblem features a world map surrounded by olive branches and was developed in 1945 in the lead-up to the San Francisco Conference, which formally established the UN.

The speaker argues that despite being intended as an international symbol, the UN emblem and flag largely emerged from an American context, influenced by American branding practices. The original designs aimed for neutrality to avoid alienating diverse member states, reflecting the international makeup of the UN. From its adoption in 1946 and 1947, the emblem served practical purposes, enhancing the visibility and protection of UN personnel operating in conflict zones.

Overall, the speaker highlights the complexities of the genesis and significance of the UN flag and emblem in the context of international diplomacy and identity.