The concept of an international society provides a reference point linking both actors and interactions. It suggests that there is a recognisable external framework which is both intelligible to the actors and provides meaning to their action. Society provides a boundary within which actors pursue their goals; it legitimises certain patterns of conduct and outlaws others. Interactions across national boundaries are social interactions and member units are socialised into acceptable codes of behaviour. This is a preview of subscription content, log in to check access. Cite this chapter as: Williams M. (1989) The Expansion of International Society. In: Williams M. (eds) International Relations in the Twentieth Century. Palgrave Macmillan, London. DOI https://doi.org/10.1007/978-1-349-20081-8_1. Capsule Review Winter 1984/85 Issue. The Expansion of International Society. Edited by Hedley Bull and Adam Watson Reviewed by John C. Campbell. About the Author: Read more by John C. Campbell. In This Review. The Expansion of International Society. Edited by Hedley Bull and Adam Watson. Clarendon Press/Oxford, 1984. 480 pp. $39.95. Purchase. A historical survey of the states system which grew up in Europe and then spread to the entire "civilized" world, only to be challenged after World War II by the anti-colonial revolution and the demands of Third World states for a new internatio...