INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS: AN ACADEMIC DISCIPLINE

PREPARED FOR THE WINDSOR MEETING ON THE UNIVERSITY TEACHING OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

By

Professor C. A. W. Manning,

Montague Burton Professor of International Relations in the University of London

1 *The object of the Windsor meeting*

Written at M. Vernant's request, this note is designed as a basis for discussion at the meeting, planned for 16–20 March 1950, of persons specially interested in the university teaching of International Relations. The ISC having been established in 1928, as a " Conference of institutions for the scientific study of international relations," its continuing interest in the question of the teaching of International Relations dates almost from its earliest years. Moreover, with the resumption, after World War II, of the Conference's normal activities, the retention of this topic on the agenda was accepted by common consent. It was thus in accord with an established routine that at its 14th Session in September 1949 the Conference devoted a day's discussion to the question of university teaching.

Meanwhile, at Utrecht, in August 1948, there had met under UNESCO auspices a Conference of Representatives of Universities in almost all the countries of the world. That Conference, where the ISC had its observer, resolved, in particular: " that all those Universities not already possessing Chairs or Departments, and not otherwise providing for teaching and research on the subject of International Relations, be urged as soon as possible to establish such Chairs or Departments, or make other provision for such systematic teaching and research."

And so, on 3 September 1949, the ISC, " bearing in mind its own long tradition of active interest in the subject of the University Teaching of International Relations, and having regard more particularly to the relevant resolutions adopted by the Preparatory Conference of Representatives held under the auspices of UNESCO at Utrecht," accepted a resolution instructing its Secretariat to " examine the possibility of convening, preferably during the course of 1950, a small meeting of specially interested persons, for the purpose of formulating a concise statement of what would appear to be the more important points of view on the desirability, or otherwise, of making more general provision for the inclusion of International Relations, as an independent discipline, in the curriculum of university students."

In the terms of reference thus defined the character and purpose of the proposed meeting are, it seems, clearly enough laid down. It is to be a small meeting, of persons themselves specially interested in the teaching of a specified academic discipline, and its function is, not to determine a policy, but simply to assemble the considerations in view of which, at the proper times and places, the policies of teaching institutions on one particular issue may come to be decided.

Numerous aspects of the question of university teaching were examined at ISC meetings between the Wars. For the emergence of International Relations as a distinct academic discipline had raised questions on which the persons teaching it were thankful for an opportunity to pool experiences with confrères from other lands. No one however who attended these debates could fail to be struck by one significant fact: though the list of countries " represented " (albeit not of course formally so) in the membership of the Conference was yearly enlarged, as further institutions were created for the study of international affairs, the number of centres of higher education in which, as an independent discipline, International Relations was receiving positive recognition, continued relatively small.

It is not now, nor was it then, the business of the ISC to be an agency for the active promotion of any particular cause. But the fact that the new discipline was not being more generally received into college curricula could not but constitute for the Conference a matter of vocational interest if not of strictly official concern. And, now, when, for sundry reasons—the Utrecht resolution among them—many universities may doubtless be facing the question anew, it seems well that the ISC should be thinking to have available, in convenient form, a summary of the main arguments bearing upon their decision.

2 *How the question arises*

In forming a picture of the present state of things it seems relevant to approach it from the student's point of view. For there exists a type of man—and he by no means the least deserving of esteem—who enters the University imbued with a desire to understand his world and to perfect his capacity for construing his experience. This desire may of course reflect itself in a willingness to work at Modern History, or at Economics, or at general Sociology: but it may equally appear as an urge to make enquiry into the nature of the relations between States, and peoples. A generation or two ago such a student might not have found it open to him, at a given University, to select either Economics or Sociology as his field. Today, in many Universities, either or both of these subjects may be chosen. But with International Relations the broad position is as yet still somewhat as it was with Economics a generation back. The question is whether the moment has not now come, as with Economics it eventually did, for this state of things to be reconsidered. Putting the thing at its lowest: Is there any good reason why a student with the disposition here described should not be able to follow his bent? Will there not

be positive advantage, in point of educational technique, in letting him make his entry into the realms of academic thinking at precisely the point where he is most ready to move in? Is it a matter of indifference whether the young man bent on studying the society of States is to find what he wants within the University at all?

3 *Modes of possible response to the demand*

There seem to be some four different ways in which a University may react to the challenge set by the presence of such a student:

a the response may be wholly negative, as far as official teaching arrangements, as opposed to formally extra-curricular goings-on, are concerned;

b it may extend simply to an increased emphasis on the " international " aspects of subjects traditionally taught;

c it may involve the grouping, into a distinctive category of so-called " international studies," of the more appropriate portions of such subjects as Modern History, Economics, Political Institutions, and the like; or

d it may include the recognition of the independent discipline, International Relations, with which this paper, and the proposed discussions in March, are concerned.

4 *The case for a wholly negative response*

Now, it is of course very obvious that the conditions in which Universities may confront the choice between the above possibilities are not everywhere the same. And it is, in particular, relevant to observe that Universities have, heretofore at any rate, been divisible into those having full autonomy in their academic policy and those whose teaching processes are amenable to official influence from without. In the opinion of some, the writer included, the fact that in a given University the lines on which a certain subject must be taught could never be merely a matter for the teachers themselves, might well be a sound and sufficient reason for not having it at all.

5 *The lessons of the London Conference of January 1949*

So far as this note is concerned, the assumption will be that the problem, as it interests the ISC, is the problem of those Universities where the choice of subjects to be treated and the methods to be used are for settlement by the Universities themselves. The question therefore is whether, in this possibly limited category of Universities, rather too much, just about enough, or, rather too little, place is at present being allowed to the teaching of International Relations. It was mainly upon this question that so wide a variety of standpoints were revealed at a conference which was arranged by the British Co-ordinating Committee for International Studies at the London School of Economics in January 1949, of representatives of almost all the Universities and University Colleges in the United Kingdom. It is to the report on those proceedings, and also to the article, based

on that report, by Mr P. A. Reynolds, in *India Quarterly*, Vol. V, No. 2, that an inquirer can perhaps most usefully be referred for light on at least the theoretical obstacles to a wider adoption of International Relations as a subject for teaching in the earlier stages of a student's career. The present note, in its attempt to bring those obstacles into clear relief, will be inspired in part by a reading of that article and that report.

6 *Doubts concerning the subject itself:*

a *As to its very existence.* A part of the article and the report reflects the position of those who, while generally alive to the claim of " international studies," have yet to be persuaded that " International Relations," as a discipline in itself, has, ought to have, or might have, any separate existence at all. Indeed, at the London Conference, those present who could answer for its existence out of their personal experience as its teachers formed a numerical minority from the start. And the present note, by one of that minority, had better not, perhaps, in the circumstances, be taken as voicing a strictly unprejudiced view. For, in common with M. Vernant, the writer assumes, as the ISC has never hesitated to assume, that International Relations is a subject whose existence it is " really not possible to deny."

b *As to its nature.* Less easy to dismiss is the scepticism of those who have failed to discover just what the new subject is about. For the answers they are given to this question will not be invariably the same. In a concourse of International Relations teachers, it might quite easily happen that some from different countries, or different institutions, would differ in the accounts they could offer of what in detail they were trying to impart. There might even be divergencies as between those dealing with the subject within a single institution. There cannot, of the content it should have, be anything in the nature of an " orthodox " definition. Nor, strictly speaking, can there be any " undiscussable " formula for the aim to be pursued. It is nevertheless a premise of this paper that, among those who in autonomous Universities themselves have academic freedom in their presentation of the subject, a proportion, if not all, would subscribe to the following criterion of what to include, and why: namely, that the object is to meet the needs of a student who wants to achieve a progressively deeper insight into the nature of international relationships—the relations, that is, between peoples, and states—and an ever improving aptitude for appreciating an international situation as it presents itself to the experienced statesman's eye. The purpose, in a word, is to support the student's efforts towards an understanding of life—as life goes on in the society of states.

c *As to its social value.* To have said that students would like to be taught something is perhaps not in itself to have justified for it a high place in the scale of a University's requirements. So it should be

useful to know if society, as such, has also any interest in the matter. In the present instance it appears that it has. Even were International Relations as a subject to be judged on nothing except its claims as a mental gymnastic, the benefit it could bring to a bewildered modern world should be great. To follow the work of a physicist, one requires, in a sense, to exclude, for the nonce, the mental imagery, and the light, of common day. To learn to think in the terms of technical Economics is likewise notoriously a matter of training, and of time. Yet the context and the implications of the diplomatic process seem commonly assumed to be self-revealing to the naïvely undisciplined eye. On those essentially supra-national problems, however (of western Europe, for instance, or the Atlantic community, or the British Commonwealth, or in general the western world), which a group of countries must tackle either in common or not at all, it may be only by a species of mental *tour de force* that parochial man, for all his reputed years of discretion, can ever get to thinking in the relevant extra-national terms. For in that long process of self-orientation on which every one in his infancy embarks, there is a point at which the ruling opinion in his social milieu may become inimical rather than conducive to his further advance. Thereafter it is only by taking due thought that a man may add even a little to his mental stature. Failing which, he can, so to say, get a view of things only by craning his neck; of this he soon gets tired. And this must surely be regretted since, in ventures such as these, public interest in the countries concerned is often of the essence of the contract. What is popularly lacking in such matters is not access to the facts, but the pre-established context of ideas in terms of which the freely accessible facts make sense.

It is doubtless too much to expect that the coming generation should want to say thank you for the world they inherit. The most that their elders can hope to do is to give them better reason to be grateful than they will admit. How better may we do this than by fortifying them with an insight, rather deeper than ours has commonly been, into the essentials of international life? It is the diffusion, rather than the attainment, of this insight that is chiefly required. The gulf is great between what is supposed by the many and what reflection has revealed to the few. Relatively little effort gets made, under existing academic arrangements, to ensure that those who follow shall not need, for themselves, to learn the ancient lessons of man's experience all over again. Each man's life seems to be relied on to teach him all he needs to know. And there surely is much that it can teach. No one remains entirely ignorant of international affairs. Like that of Medicine, the teaching of International Relations seeks to give a person more of a species of knowledge of which he will anyhow have some, but of which in principle he can never have more than he needs. And, as a teacher, life has a trick of teaching people much about one thing while leaving them very ignorant, and unconsciously so, on almost everything else. Such men are dangerous, even to others, though chiefly, of course, to themselves.

So little in our day do most men of average, or better than average, education understand the world, that they actually have not got beyond the stage of assuming that, *qua* men of education, they understand it fairly well. They may even fail in their own case to distinguish between having understanding of a matter and holding about it a virtuous and vividly articulate view—though sometimes, in the case of someone else, they will recognise the difference.

d *As to its unitary character.* But, all this perhaps may lead only to a further doubt. Suppose it agreed that the citizen's understanding of international life is not yet all that it might be, and that, towards providing a remedy, the Universities are to do their share. Is not the so-called new " discipline " but a bundle, after all, of bits and pieces of subjects lumped into one? Does not each invite a study to itself?

This point is relatively hard to dispose of: or rather, the answer may seem less than easy to accept. Yet an answer there is: namely, that an understanding of life is a unitary achievement; and not just a concurrent understanding of so many unconnected themes, economic life, religious, political, social life, and possibly more. A purported understanding which conceived all these facets of existence as presented in dissociation from one another would scarcely be an understanding at all. Essential, surely, to any genuine insight is the principle of wholeness, of integrality, answering to the irreducible altogetherness of the many aspects of existence in the universe of things as they are. An understanding of life, though nourished with a variety of foodstuffs, is for all that a unitary affair. So, also, is an understanding, that is, any deep understanding, of life in the society of states. And it is for the fostering of such an integral understanding that a unitary discipline, whose name we know, is in process of being accommodated in the University scheme. This, it is suggested, is the kind of answer that a relatively credulous inquirer might, at least provisionally, entertain.

e *As to its necessity.* To accept such an answer would presumably mean to acknowledge as invalid what may well be among the most confidently advanced of all the objections to be met. " Is the new subject really necessary? Is not the student's need already provided for? By all means let him give an international focus to his view of things. After collecting from the existing courses in Economics, History, International Law, what is germane to his particular interest, let him proceed then to make a synthesis of his own. For the so-called ' discipline ' of his desire is not a single subject, but a collection of subjects, and in each of these, independently undertaken, we can give him all the teaching he requires." To be sure, a unitary subject would be one thing; a mere synthesis of the parts of several subjects, another. Yet the above is the sort of reply which many might be tempted to offer—if only on its specious merits as a line of least resistance.

One also may notice a subtler expression of somewhat the same idea. Historians have been heard to commend the part that a teacher

of International Relations may play, not in minding his own business only, but in keeping his colleagues on their toes with respect to certain aspects of theirs. So salutary, it seems, is the effect of his presence upon the tone and tempo of work in departments other than his, that on the strength of this " gad-fly " function only, he is held to be worthy of his hire. On this opinion an International Relations teacher will hardly be expected to comment. He cannot himself be the best person to judge how his efforts must look in the perspective of " History."

Meanwhile there is another footing on which the necessity of separate provision for International Relations may be put in doubt. Some there are who, while duly favouring the academic approach to international problems, rather tend to maintain that the young man, wishful to study International Relations, will, if properly advised, reach more readily his desired destination by doing something different. " Let him take up *my* subject with the necessary application, and he will pick up as he goes along all that he can ever need to know about international affairs." Though this claim might perhaps equally be imagined in the mouth of some other sort of specialist, it comes perhaps with the biggest effect from the teacher of some phase of modern history. Nor can it by any means be rejected out of hand. There is no saying what solid instruction in some other subject may not be secreted in the interstices of a historian's approach. What holds, in this respect, of International Relations might be similarly said of Theology, or Political Geography, or perhaps even of the less recondite levels of Economics. There is, to be sure, no point in denying the linkage between International Relations and International History. International Relations is at once independent of and interdependent with a number of other disciplines, and History is one of these. But, in the sense in which Economics, though dependent on, is yet distinct from, Economic History, International Relations is as independent of International History as it is of International Law.

f *As to its academic merits.* Another serious misgiving with which International Relations may be regarded is that which dwells on what it calls the " superficiality " of its method. There are two ways in which this shortcoming may be said to appear: first, in the very pretension to make something of a subject the mastery of which must presumably presuppose a command of every other subject from which light on some international issue may be sought; and secondly, in the apparent habit of approaching some particular problem from the angle, so to say, of the man-in-the-street. On the first point, it is true that, if the initial steps in International Relations could properly be taken only after proficiency was reached in everything on which the subject was at all parasitic, few could qualify for the course. But between a purely theoretical perfectionism on the one hand and plain abdication on the other there may, in these things, be intermediate possibilities, not all of which need be rejected in advance. Between knowing nothing of a subject and knowing all there is to know, lies

the midway position of one who knows enough at least to understand on precisely what points it may for a particular purpose be necessary to know more. Even a layman may have enough of Economics, of History, of Law, to see how essential in the judging of an issue his recourse to divers categories of expert must remain. That, in general, is what the statesman himself is content, and entitled, and obliged, to do. In appraising the statesman's acts, the citizen, like the statesman himself, has to do the best he can with a technical equipment which can never be fully adequate to his need. The purpose of a man's self-education is to minimise so far as he can the disabilities attaching to a relative paucity of information, no less than to a comparative immaturity of mind. The question is whether the University need disdain to furnish the future citizen with what help it can in his efforts to help himself.

Actually, of course, there is no suggestion that International Relations be studied in isolation from everything else. Other subjects, the under-pinning, foundational, disciplines, will be, and certainly should be, taken concurrently with it. The contention is, not that they can be neglected, but that they need not be "completed" (!) before International Relations is begun; and that, if the list of them is so long that all cannot be studied at once, their existence and their value are themselves a fact which the careful student of International Relations will have constantly impressed upon his mind. His "underpinners," Law, History, and the like, he will be following on the accustomed lines. And if, for making his initial approach to his subject by the way of an inclusive look at the international chessboard, as a whole, he is to be taxed with superficiality, he asks if, in looking at life—in this case, international life—there can indeed be any other way to begin. Certainly, as a baby, his mother never told him to learn his Economics first, along with sundry other subjects, and only afterwards to find his way about.

The fact is that for particular purposes, the synoptic vision of a subject may be just what is needed. In some inquiries, the surface aspect of things may be the most revealing pointer to whatever lies below. For what discoveries is not modern archaeology indebted to that bird's-eye impression of a country's surface which can only be got from the air? And, as with the total chessboard, so also in the tackling of a limited problem, it may be difficult, except by becoming airborne, to get a bird's-eye view. Not long ago it was as rare a thing for someone to become physically airborne as, mentally, it remains today. Even as it is, most men spend none of their time, and few men much of their time, in the air. It is a man's eye, not a bird's eye, view that comes natural to a man. Human flight involves putting man's knowledge of nature to a humanly unnatural use. This perhaps is one of those points at which the lag can best be remarked between what the physical, and the social, sciences have accomplished. The man of common sense is still inclined to set the promptings of his common sense against the insights of a social science. And as against the proposed teaching of International Relations there has no doubt been a deal of common sense applied on college councils up to now.

Whereas in conventional disciplines it may be sensible to start at basement level and build up toward the sky, in International Relations the apposite image is rather that of one who, his attention captured by the outward aspect of a problem, finds the need, as he works upon it, to probe ever more deeply into the economic, the psychological, the strategic, the historical, subsoil from which it sprang. And he knows that his study of International Relations at the University level is only the beginning of a process in which, as a seeker after insight, he will normally wish to persevere to the end of his time. All that the University can offer him is contact with some like-minded fellow-seeker, who, having been longer on the way, though still short of that ideal which is a perfect understanding, may yet have something to give which may speed him on the road. And if this does not chime with one's conception of education, it is the latter perhaps that had better be revised.

7 *Doubts as to its technical feasibility*

The subject, as a possible teaching-subject, having been provisionally accepted, difficulties may yet be felt over the question of printed material. In the main centres, the books and documents may be conveniently at hand; but what of those Universities lying further afield? Is it any use admitting students to a subject for which the literature is beyond their reach? In this matter all is a question of degree. Even in the big cities not everything can be seen. And even at the back of beyond, the man whose interests are attached to a given set of problems will generally find something on which to ruminate. Suppose a prison camp, with no facilities at all. Can there be any assurance that some of the captives will not presently be forming themselves into, amongst other things, a class in International Relations? For International Relations is not essentially the looking up of facts or the storing of information: essentially it is a process, a discipline of the mind. And in qualified hands, it can be made instructive on just whatever documents there may be. Besides, once a start has been made, the library position should, in course of time, improve. Even with ideal facilities, the study of this subject looks only in the second place to the formulating of conclusions on the issues of the day: in the first place what it looks to is the schooling of a man's capacity to appreciate for himself just what those issues are. It looks, that is, to the fostering of a method of approach, a habit of mind, a feeling for realities and a sense of the relative values. All this of course supposes the presence of teachers who themselves are alive to the purpose of their subject.

8 *Doubts as to staffing possibilities:*

a *What can* one *do?* In the preceding section, while books were treated as ultimately not altogether indispensable, the presence of a

teacher was assumed. But what manner of man is this teacher, and where can he be come by? Even with every other doubt disposed of, may not a given University fight shy, after all, of the problem of getting such a subject worthily taught? The interest in it may indeed be single, but the sources on which it depends form an indefinitely extensible list. What can one man expect to do among so many sorts of expertise? Can anyone hope to handle such a subject with authority if he be not himself an economist, a jurist, a geographer, a historian, a demographer and some other things as well? Can anyone who claims to be teaching such a subject avoid becoming suspect as a charlatan? This is a crucial point: and partly depends on what the term "charlatan" is taken to mean. The teacher who knows his individual limitations, while conscious of the limitless nature of his field, may well reject the charge. He only is a charlatan who represents his qualifications as better than they are. As merely a student among students, though having the formal status of a teacher, he will know, and teach, the general layout of the territory as a whole, while restricting his systematic and detailed exposition to those areas and ways of approach for which he personally is less imperfectly equipped. He will co-ordinate his activity with that of teachers in adjacent fields, exponents of the underpinning disciplines. And he will look forward to the time when, within the territory which is *par excellence* that of International Relations rather than, say, of Geography, or Military History, or Child Psychology, or Political Institutions, his too complex assignment will be portioned out among a nicely balanced team. *Le mieux*, which implies a combined operation, should not be permitted to play the enemy to *le bien*, which is a modest but sound beginning, in untiring hands and in the light of a wise conception of what in such a subject the function of the teacher is to be.

b *Where shall the needed wisdom be found?* It is proper to acknowledge that, for a University wishing to introduce the new subject, by far the biggest problem may well be that of finding its minimum requirements in qualified teaching personnel. Assume that a post is created. By whom will it be filled? Anxiety on this point may take either of two forms: that which hesitates to buy a pig in a poke, and that which says, in effect, "Thanks, we have seen this animal before, and frankly, we are not much impressed." For there are those who claim to know from experience what occurs when a professedly academic treatment of international problems is allowed to imperil the standards so rightly maintained by all the older subjects within the hallowed ambit of the college walls. But is the doubter, in this case, sufficiently differentiating between what is and what could be? Is he allowing for the fact that, in present conditions, the teaching of International Relations is conducted under at least two disabilities: the subject itself is still in the making, and the teachers heretofore available can rarely have had their own basic training in this field. For the person expounding International Relations may be someone who has found his vocation only in middle life. It would be odd to infer either that the right man, enlisted at the right age and given the right

opportunity, would fail to make the conventional grade, or, that the subject, as a subject, is, by its nature, out of place in a University setting. Even had Adam Smith discoursed with far less wisdom on the themes of political economy, that could hardly have detracted from the intrinsic importance of those themes. That a subject vital in itself is somewhere being amateurishly handled is a poor argument for having it henceforth no longer handled at all. If the Universities know what they want, let them make attractive the prospects for the able young graduate eager to invest his talents in such a teaching career. And let them give him time to supplement, as he proceeds, the scholarly equipment with which, in the first instance, he has offered himself for the job. The shortage of qualified personnel may at present be a serious problem, but it is not obviously insurmountable, and has little to do with the main argument on whether the subject is a good one in itself.

c *Whom could we trust?* The most impressive, in the writer's view, of the reasons adduced at the London Conference for caution as touching the new subject, was the warning note sounded by Professor Butterfield. Would not the teaching, by mere mortals, of International Relations degenerate, as if automatically, into polemics, partisanship, and all that? Would it not be wiser to re-direct the interest of a student towards something more remote from the objects of his day-to-day emotional concern?

On the virtues of a study of Diplomatic History it seems enough here to remark that it may well have all the advantages claimed for it; but that there continue to be students who do not choose to take it up. In the interests at least of these it may be submitted that the uses of International Relations should be openmindedly explored. For teaching to become merely polemical would, it is true, be a grievous fault. That teachers, being human, may all too easily come short of the glory of their true vocation is a sobering comment and founded in fact: but it bears hardly less upon the fitness, for academic purposes, of almost every other modern subject, History as much as any, than upon that of the subject with which this paper is concerned. And a tendentious teaching of Economics, or Political Science, will, one would think, be recognized as reflecting, not on the educative value or public importance of the subject in question, but on the qualifications of the teachers involved.

Nor, in some instances, is the objector quite certainly asking for impartiality as such. He might perhaps not take such exception to a teaching in which, on the contentious current issues, his own opinion was certain to be put: it is the other fellow's judgment which he fears might pass without reply.

There may be many answers to the Butterfield objection: but the main thing is to insist that it could be likewise raised against almost any branch of social science. For most, if not all, of such sciences it is, one would think, the acid test of a teacher's integrity that he presents the controversial points as indeed controversial. But why single out International Relations as particularly lending itself to the

debasement of standards? There seems no reason why we should be prepared to venture all, in the hope of winning much, in one field, while daring nothing, with the consequent certainty of forgoing everything, in another. If the man we happen to know about cannot be trusted to present International Relations in the academic spirit, let us pass him over and go further afield to find the man who will. For it is an assumption of this paper that within the circle of the social sciences the educative ideal to be served is the fostering, not of "correct" political attitudes, but of a steadily more realistic insight into the nature of things.

In so far as the University takes it in all seriousness upon itself to influence the student's elaboration of a basic philosophy of life, let this side of its work be anxiously and independently planned. A student's, like anyone else's, position on political issues is, in a deep sense, a function of his fundamental philosophy. Intercourse with others, including his teachers, is capable of bringing changes, whether by attraction or otherwise, in a person's basic outlook. It is, however, a point for the professional conscience of the individual teacher as to how far he will use his special opportunities to press upon the student, whether by suggestion or by forthright avowal, the claims of his, the teacher's, personal interpretation of reality. But if, ostensibly, he is there so to open up the subject of International Relations as not to prejudge the deeper issues: if, that is, he purports to be making his analysis in the strict spirit of science; then let him remember those words of S. H. Bailey: "When politics and science are drunk together, only the taste of politics remains."

9 *Postgraduate, or first degree?*

Enough perhaps has now been said to suggest that access to the study of International Relations need not necessarily be withheld from the University student even in his earlier, as distinct from his post-graduate, years. What does, however, invite consideration is whether, taken respectively at the first degree, and the postgraduate, levels, the International Relations discipline is in every way the same. Clear thinking on the teaching problem may perhaps require that the two levels be somewhat sharply differentiated. It is true that post-graduate courses can include teaching of an elementary nature; just as, on the other hand, some kind of dissertation may be demanded of the candidate for a first degree: but in principle the two sorts of student have two sorts of need. Typically, the teaching for a post-graduate will bear upon his participation in research—even if he still have something to gain from courses aimed at clarifying the pre-suppositions of an undergraduate's thought. The field, or subject-matter, remains at both levels the same, namely, the relations between states, and peoples: but the tasks, of introducing the beginner, and of supervising the researches of someone whose orientation in his chosen line of country has already been determined, are two different under-takings and not simply aspects of an identical task. It seems useful to stress this distinction, lest persons conversant with the curriculum

in some centre of postgraduate training be tempted to suppose that this precisely, and this alone, is what proponents of International Relations, as a subject for undergraduate education, must be taken to have in mind. Before declaring the subject unsuited for the relatively youthful, the doubters should make themselves familiar with the lines along which, for those of tender years, it is intended to be taught. In resisting its introduction at the less advanced level, impressions derived from experience of what happens further up are not necessarily in point.

10 *Its place in the scheme of undergraduate studies*

Given then the distinction between International Relations as fit for the postgraduate and for the undergraduate levels, the question arises whether a further distinction should next be made between the subject as one for men in their final year towards a first degree, and, on the other hand, as something for the curriculum of the novice. To this the answer seems to be that there is in principle no distinction; whether he begin it in his first, or only in some subsequent year, the kind of benefit the undergraduate should draw from his study of International Relations is by and large the same. Best is it for him to have it in his time-table from the very start. For then, throughout his studies, his approach to all he does can, one would hope, be made with that sort of awareness of the wider perspective, that sense of the oecumenical setting, which it is in the nature of the new discipline to encourage. A certain anxiety has, in our day, been finding expression at the seeming inability of University studies, in some at least of their forms, to give to the citizens of the future, along with whatever they officially do, a sense of why they do it and an adult aptitude for plotting their personal position within the context of man's experience as a whole. Phrases are heard such as the fragmentation of knowledge, the need for "general" education, for integration, for cultural subjects, for aid in the formulation of a philosophy of life—in short, for some corrective to the unduly narrowing influence, as it is called, of courses commonly followed.

Let us suppose for a moment that, at the back of all this talk, there is an element of truth. Let us suppose that, for the broadening of mental horizons, there was to be envisaged the introducing of some new, ancillary subject, its relation with the older subjects to be such that it might serve as a spur rather than a disincentive to their more serious pursuit. The subjects proposed as fit for this role might be many and of unequal merit. But few, one imagines, would promise as well for the purpose as a suitably conceived presentation of the elements of international affairs. And this irrespective, within limits, of what a student's other subjects might happen to be. Given the availability of such an option, and proof of its educative virtue, the extent to which, in proper cases, an altered emphasis might eventually be allowed, as between International Relations and the other heads in a student's syllabus, could be left for the future to decide. What would matter for the individual beginner would be less the point to

which in his undergraduate years his progress in International Relations should be pushed, than the fact of being assisted, and the earlier the better, to begin to take his bearings in the field. To have the subject throughout within his purview, even could it monopolize only a fraction of his time—this is what will count, far more than will the fact of being required, possibly on the very eve of his "finals," to get up, for examination purposes, the content of certain books prescribed as furnishing all that he needs to know. For the service he may expect of this subject lies not just in fitting him to produce answers to a particular paper, but in helping him to see the whole of what he has to do as bearing upon a disciplined preoccupation with the condition of all the world.

11 *The psychology of inaction*

As was seen at the outset, the determining of what a University is to teach, and in what manner, is not always the affair of the University alone. It may partly be for decision by some authority external and, in a sense, superior to the University itself. And in that case the broad choice on this issue of policy presumably lies between those who see the public interest as demanding the insulation of indoctrinated minds from the free impact of possibly dangerous thoughts and, on the contrary, those who rather believe in the good to be got by a raising of the mean level of popular understanding of what everything is all about. And either of these contrasting positions is intelligible in its way. Less easy to account for is the apparent dubiety with which the new discipline is often viewed even in places where full freedom exists to do for the students what is best. It is as though people were shy to commit themselves on whether, for arriving at a knowledgeable outlook on world affairs, an academic training in the subject should be of any conceivable use. Of their own judgment in such matters (as distinct very often from that of their average fellow-man) they are apt, at most times, to have a fairly good opinion: and they, to be sure, have lacked the particular form of training. But whether, if fortified in their very youth with a scholar's grasp of certain fundamentals, they might not in the end have become even wiser than they are, is what they do not choose to discuss: and it is almost as if they were really not quite so sure as they seem of being really quite so wise as they sometimes like to think. So, by way of avoiding argument on whether the new subject can effect any positive good, they retort, as it were, with the hint of a doubt as to whether at the best it can do aught but positive harm. Their suggestion seems to be that before the young man, however eager, is permitted to go into International Relations, sound method must let him acquire, from those who have it, the secret of sifting the wheat from the chaff. Persuaded, as for instance they are, of the advantage of viewing the present in the light of the past, they fail to reflect on the possible value of seeing the past in the light of the present. Yet a man may know much, even of the past, while comprehending little. Or so at least the devotees of International Relations are prone to believe. The

fact, however, inevitably is that, in the counsels of a University where this discipline is not as yet being taught, those, its devotees, are, by hypothesis, rather unlikely to be present in strength—if indeed they are represented at all. And—*les absents ont toujours tort.*

12 *The point to be determined*

The question of academic policy to which, in the writer's submission, the autonomous Universities might well be addressing themselves now, can be put either from the standpoint of the claims of the individual student's education or from that of the interests of society—in the time to come. Is the individual student's desire for academic guidance towards a fuller understanding of his world forever to be met with an uncompromising no? (Even in a seller's market there is surely something to be said for serving the customer's consciously experienced need.) The student gripped by the complexity of world affairs is not likely to renounce his active interest in them without a sigh. If the indulgence of such an interest is relegated to the category of forbidden fruits, there is no assurance that they will not still be consumed, unofficially, between meals and off the premises. Young Englishmen, for example, in the 1920's, were not entirely without interest in matters international when entering college, nor without opinions upon them when they left. In so far as the follies, in the 1930's, of the western democracies were in part ascribable to the sentimentalisms, and the gullibilities, of the young, the virtual absence in the Universities during the 1920's of provision for teaching on the contemporary layout of the diplomatic scene, will presumably have had something to do with the case.

It is probably not very safe to assume that we today are so very much wiser than we were in the 1930's. True, we have learnt, or ought to have learnt, a thing or two since then. But anyhow it was not just plain stupidity that led good-hearted peoples into war. Rather it was the fact that their intelligence had not been focused, as had that of their enemies, upon the dynamics of man's existence here below. The insight which the good men might have employed to better purpose was left for the bad to monopolize and use to worse. For it was knowledge, rather than ignorance, of the ways of the world that enabled Hitler to inflict so much sorrow, before others became wide enough awake to combine and put him down. And part of the world's way, as he correctly construed it, was to slumber on, while the bad pursued their study of international affairs. When the future writes its final word on what made necessary the "unnecessary" war, it will be surprising if academic complacency does not occur in the catalogue of contributory causes.

Looking back now, and trying to recapture the mental atmosphere of that period, especially in its cloistered manifestations, there is a question one is tempted to put: Suppose the idea had then been mooted so to amend the syllabus as to see, so far as possible, that the student made the most of any talent he might have in him for reading, internationally, the signs of the times, what chance of general adoption

would such an idea have stood? And if, as one suspects, the socio-historical context may well have been such that the scales of decisive opinion would be weighted against the triumph of so revolutionary an idea, is it to be confidently assumed that the position is different now? Do British Universities, for example, regard themselves today as having any very important responsibility for the degree of mental grip with which those now passing through their hands will have presently to appreciate for themselves the international issues of tomorrow?

The fact that in some United Kingdom Universities a beginning has indeed been made with the development of departments of International Relations is an encouraging sign, but is testimony at least as much to the vision of a single man of wealth, public spirit and imagination as to any particularly strong conviction in the matter on the side of the colleges themselves. The notion that a University might do great honour to itself, and a service to mankind, by giving in this matter a considered, confident and unequivocal lead, with the instituting on spacious and rational lines of a well-rounded department for the organically co-ordinated treatment of the subject in all its principal aspects, may nowhere have been rejected, for in all likelihood it has seldom if ever been proposed. Not until its authenticity and promise have won the full-hearted acceptance of those who have to consider a University's interests and responsibilities as a whole, can a new and unfamiliar-looking subject be expected to find in development-plans a position appropriate to its worth. For of colleges officially including International Relations there seem, in general, to be only two types: those where the subject's immense possibilities are neither suspected nor denied, and those, on the other hand, which sustain it, so to say, in spite of themselves, as a gift horse whose teeth will not be too closely examined if its mouth be not opened too wide.

Few men would send their sons into business without the rudiments of arithmetic. Why should an understanding of their environment be withheld from the citizens of tomorrow? Outside the Universities—in the schools, in the Services, in adult education—things are being done, as conditions permit, towards meeting this need. But somehow from the Universities the response to it has on the whole been less. True, it might not have been easy to create the kind of model department imagined above. As may happen with any expansion of curriculum, practical difficulties might have been met—of finance, of administration, difficulties in the recruitment of personnel. But by far the most formidable impediments to the letting-in of what is novel are those arising automatically in the inner consciousness of cautious men. Given the settled policy, and the strong desire, to see the new discipline functioning in its own right on its independent merits as a going concern, the difficulties of a merely material character would, one must dare to hope, be progressively overcome.

30 November 1949 C. A. W. Manning