METADIPLOMATICS FOR THE MODERN MAN

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'WHILE everyone well knows himself to be fallible, few think it necessary to take precautions against their own fallibility.' Though written a century ago, that sweeping judgment may even now be not entirely without its point.

There are spheres of risky enterprise — the pools, for instance, and the gaming-tables — where it might be hard, even by taking all precautions, to lessen the fallibility of one's *tact des choses possibles*. But others there are — the stock market, polar exploration, politics, poker — of which this is not so true. In these the practised hand may have the surer touch.

Recently, on a reading party, students of International Relations considered three principal themes. All concerned the 'Structure' addict — seen as an ideal type. Your 'Structure' addict is one who in the days of his youth has opted for a grounding in those diplomatic elementals, imprecision in respect of which is such a source of fallibility, more especially in situations where no given line of policy is necessarily right.

With the reading party, and incidentally the Suez affair, alike so freshly in one's mind, it is congenial to be parading once again, in these respected pages, the horse of one's beloved hobby, to be consulted on what International Relations teaching, for undergraduates, is all about.

First, a semantic side-note: the distinction between 'International Relations', as the subject, and 'international relations' or 'relationships' as the matter of its concern. For it is, of course, clear that 'out there', in the fabric of the socially real, international relationships do exist, whether or not we notice them 'in here' within the circle of our academic preoccupations. Just as economic problems had been present before economics began to be taught, so have international issues existed even though no attention has been paid to them by universities and though it be still a question whether they are proper to be appreciated in universities at all. However, it is not at all a question with the likes of me, as may presently appear.

What I next would mention, though to lay it aside, is whether the term 'international relations' is not sometimes just a name for something else. Is it not sometimes, in effect, a part of History, or Political Science? For are its methods not similar to theirs? The relevant distinction is, however, not between methods of study, but between the foci of interest with which subjects are variously pursued. And Political Science in the past has, I would think, been pre-eminently concerned with the *polis*, as such: the focus of its official interest has been specifically the State. This is why some of us so stubbornly believe in the right of International Relations to recognition as a subject independent and distinct. For International Relations has so evidently its particular focus, the relationships between states, as opposed to the workings of the individual state — Government, even Comparative Government, being one thing and International Relations another. But, while committed personally to our subject as a discipline in itself, I am certainly very far from supposing that those only who so see it are entitled to my regard! For who indeed could not vindicate an interest in such a subject? Who, among the social scientists at any rate, is not properly concerned, so far as may be, to understand the social cosmos? And what is that, if it be not mankind as a whole, considered globally, and grouped, for relevant purposes, in our day, into what are broadly identifiable as 'nations' — though conceived of rather, politically, as of a plurality of 'states', describable, as a rule, and perhaps even typically so, as '*nation*-states'?

This society, this international 'family', if you will, this grouping of international 'persons' — on this planet, at this juncture — where, and by whom, is its study to be pursued? Where not? Yet in many British universities, among them some of the more ancient and famous, it has as yet no place. There are those, nevertheless, who see this subject as having in these times more importance than ever before. Even had the World Wars not marked already an epoch in history, the future, looking back, might be likely to distinguish a pre-atomic, and a post-atomic, era. For we now are apparently in for a period when our very survival is destined to depend, not so much upon the question of war, as upon the problem of the kind of peace that might bring it about. It is the question of co-existence, of social living. To this problem we have not, even in our parochial systems, yet found a full reply. Internationally, it is likewise still unsolved. But is it not becoming more urgent than ever that, of the best minds available, more shall give their best attention to this matter, of social living in the world-wide society of states?

What, then, of International Relations as an academic subject? What sort of subject may it be? Sir Alfred Zimmern, who is so famous in this field, may have tended, I am afraid, to send some of us astray by the humility of his opinion on this point. Like us others, he sees how, to be equal to our task, we must want to be something of a historian, an economist, a philosopher, and more besides. But, not content with that, he suggests that International Relations is therefore not strictly single; but rather a 'bundle' of subjects — not one, but a bundle. And how often has he not been cited as if so having settled the matter beyond dispute! To my thinking, however, and in my experience, International Relations is a unitary subject, if only in that it exists as responding to a single need, as serving to satisfy a unitary appetite, the desire of *homo sapiens* to appreciate the kind of social world in which it is his to live. (And we can see what kind this is, namely, a world which has, diplomatically, the structure of a society of states.)

Not that the student does not, with a view to this appreciation, bring together, or depend on someone else's having done so, a multiplicity of lights, convergent from a diversity of angles. White light, we know, though resoluble into the colours of the spectrum, is none the less distinctively white: and International Relations, though revealing, on analysis, a multiplicity of ingredients — amongst others the historical, political, economic, sociological, philosophical and psychological aspects — has yet an identity of its own. There exists for adult man a distinctive need: to see, and comprehend, his social world, the situations within it, and the problems they present, not in their aspects only, but each as an integral whole: and, as this need is single and distinctive, single also is the subject, International Relations, whose role it is, so far as possible, to satisfy this need.

It has, I admit, been suggested that International Relations is so complex a matter that it ought not to invade the curriculum at less than graduate level, by which time, it is seemingly supposed, the student should have covered — sufficiently — the subjects of history, and economics, and law. To this I can but reply that my experience is all the other way. My question is not, subsequently to what, but along with, concurrently with, what other 'underpinning', 'companion', disciplines should International Relations be studied, in what undergraduate year should such study begin, and in what relationship

with such other disciplines should it be put in train? At what point in the programme can it first be with benefit brought in?

In London, we provide for it, not at one level, or at two, only, but at three. Everyone is aware that universities exist for the promotion and conduct of research; and many seem therefore to assume that there must already exist, in academic circles, persons duly equipped to be researchers in this field. Yet, I doubt if there necessarily will, unless, antecedently, they have had International Relations in their course of study when up for a first degree, or unless, not then having had it, they have afterwards made it their business so to equip themselves as if they had. Be that, however, as it may be, we do in point of fact make provision, in London, for the conduct of research.

Secondly, there is the category of those who, working for a first degree, take International Relations as their 'Special Subject', a practice known in America as 'majoring' therein. Such are our 'specialists', and for them let us hope we may always have plenty of room. But mine in this paper is a different theme: the need and, as I dare to believe, the great future for this subject as a 'subsidiary', to be taken, from the outset of their college course, by any who would wish not entirely to dismiss the world's affairs, as by simply saying that they cannot attempt to understand them. I do not ask that this subject become compulsory, for there always will, I am sure, be plenty of worthy people to take it, if it be but open to them to do so. Let them adopt, as their specialism, either Economics, or History, or what seems best; and take International Relations, concurrently, at the elementary stage. In what form? In the form of what in London we call 'The Structure of International Society'. This assumes the theoretical distinction between 'structure' and 'functioning'. We put at the beginning the main emphasis on the structure, with less immediate and systematic attention to examples of how the society works; later, as specialisers, we may concentrate rather on the functioning, though without therefore losing sight of the structure: but the first stage is — to use a big word for it — the 'cosmology', the elementary lay-out, of the social universe.[1]

[1] The London Syllabus for the subject of *The Structure of International Society.*

Context of the Study. The relevance and necessity, in the study of international relations, of the companion disciplines of history, economic geography, political theory and international law.

Basic Ideas. The notion of the State as 'person' — its perils, uses and implications. The notion of an international society — forms and bases of social solidarity on an international scale. The notion of international right and wrong — standards of propriety — legal, moral, ethical — in the relations between States; the role of jurisprudence and of moral philosophy in the appreciation of international affairs. The notion of a single world order — the relations between sovereignty, order and international law; theories of world-wide constitutional integration.

International Politics. The behaviour of States — the needs, aspirations and anxieties of States; and the responsibilities of statesmen: motivations of State behaviour; traditional and environmental factors conditioning the outlook of States. Internal elements — the interplay and interdependence of politics at the domestic and international levels. The mutual impact of States — means and methods of pressure in the relations between States. The grading of the Powers — the ever-shifting balance of influence and authority in diplomatic exchanges, and the factors on which it depends. States of relationships between States — points of contact, and of friction, between peoples: the conditions of misunderstanding; the basic beliefs and the ruling enthusiasms of mankind and their influence upon the attitudes of States: man's urge to make a better world and the conflicting modes of its expression.

Institutional Elements. The nature of international institutions: the architecture of institutionalized international co-operation, including devices for the attempted consolidating of peace.

With what purpose? For the purpose, not least, of primary orientation — of getting his elementary bearings within that universal milieu in which his life is to be lived. It is, I may say, rather astonishing to discover how lacking such an orientation still can be even in such as have emerged without discredit from their secondary schools. A main purpose, in a word, of our teaching of this subject is to make men's minds less socially immature. For, as Bertrand Russell has put it, the teacher is a sort of medical man, whose business it is to cure the patient of childishness. And, linked with this, as an added point in our subject's favour, is its virtue as a possible corrective to what is sometimes called the 'fragmentation' of knowledge. It is, of course, a commonplace that the more specialized a man, the less fit may he be to give judgment on anything not in his espoused field. In this he has, for example, been contrasted with the politician.

The premiss, then, for the apologetics of our study is that the citizen need not be content to resemble either the mere specialist or the mere politician. He may wish to become, not just a specialist in something, but also what in America they call a 'generalist' — for want, presumably, of a less deterrent word.

It is not merely, however, a question of housing professors of various subjects together, or having their lectures announced in a single list. It is a matter rather of encouraging the individual student to retain, although he specialize, his pristine, holistic, synoptic, vision of life, and all its problems, as a whole. Man, in his integrality, encounters his every situation in its wholeness and, if he does his

thinking on it with a half of him only, and with a half only of the situation in view, he will not be squarely facing up to life. Action, to be adequate, requires recognition of problems as complex wholes, in their context as itself a whole, and his disposition so to confront things is not a foible of which the student should in effect be required to rid himself from the start. He should not, in effect, be told: since you are proposing to specialize, you must for that purpose shut your mind to the larger aspects of things. He must not be warned that, if he fail to do this, his approach will of necessity be superficial. Superficial, of course, it yet may be, but this will be due, not to the nature of his problem, but to his teachers, and to him.

Another claim, an ambitious one, to be made for this subject, touches its value, as education, in an even deeper sense. It is the sign someone must surely have remarked, of an educated man, that he has understood to call in question his fundamental beliefs. He has been brought, in other words, to the overhauling of his premisses. Now our subject might count for relatively little were it not that, when coming to it for the first time, the student, as a type at least, may be taken as having, not an empty mind, but one replete with ideas, preconceptions, that is, and assumptions dogmatically entertained. On tricky points of morals and metaphysics, of theology and jurisprudence, no less than of strategy and psychiatrics and law, there will be surmises and suppositions claiming status as indubitable truth. It would be not least among the benefits of an education if it required a person to consider where he got his 'basic acceptances' from, and how he came to have them — those positions, namely, which he assents to without reflection, almost unknowingly, it may be. They are the premisses from which his thinking — if that must be the word for it — starts. This process is, I would hold, an element in any true education. And I am therefore, of course, not by any means suggesting that ours is the only subject in which such an exercise is desirable; I am merely saying it is one where it is virtually inescapable, in which the need for it is obvious, and accepted, from the start.

And hence the further, formidable question: By whom will such a discipline be taught? The other day, by someone speaking of a proposed new post in 'Race Relations', it was said: 'What it calls for will be someone with knowledge of economics, of biology, of history, and of sociology too: in fact a Superman. And it will be hard to find him.' I ventured to reply: 'You will indeed need a superman, but I would hardly hope to *find* him. Like the one foreseen by Nietzsche,

he will have to be bred. You want someone sufficiently aware that the individual qualified to handle the subject really does not exist, someone who appreciates what it will take if, from among the new generation, there is *eventually* to appear that category of the superman who will truly be qualified to teach.' For there is a difference between asking what person is ripe for the study of this? and what sort of person would one need to be, to teach it? Given the authentic ambition to think more realistically — whether on race questions or on matters international — you are *prima facie* fit for your chosen study: though one must hope you may have in this the aid of other, more experienced, persons themselves still perennially engaged in becoming the better equipped. Which means, of course, that they too must be students to the end.

There may — though I doubt it — exist some subjects in which, once being made a professor, it is not so very terribly important to remain alert to new insights from day to day. But in the International Relations field we shall never know, we shall never understand, enough to rest content with our existing fitness for the teaching. So as yet this will best be done by someone who, while seeing that he himself is not really the man required, knows nevertheless the standard at which to aim, and will labour to limit his disabilities more and more. Find your man of promise, be sure he desires the chance, and launch him, if need be, in a relatively minor way. That, if my advice were wanted, is the sort that I would give. Let the right man begin in the right conditions, with freedom to develop the subject as he sees it — even if on unconventional lines. There is room for various approaches: and the teacher may understand his subject differently according as his be the training of a historian, a lawyer, a philosopher or what you will. Whatever his foundational equipment, he still, having now come to this subject, can seek progressively to supplement those resources with which he has come: only let us hope that he may not for very long have to plough a lonely furrow. One must hope he may soon be enabled to enlist some fellow-cultivators of the field, each to contribute something individual, so that, in the end, they may all indeed be offering an identical subject, but doing it as a team, in the light each of his distinctive expertise.

And in what temper? Must our teacher be 'detached'? This question can arise, more or less insistently, throughout the social sciences. It is true, I believe, of Treitschke, that he had no desire for 'anæmic objectivity'. As a historian, he was content, if not proud, to

show his bias. He would not see the archives of countries other than his own, lest the purity of his interpretations should suffer harm. Now that is an understandable position. At the opposite extreme is the untenable idea that it is possible for anybody to be objective on international issues. Objectivity is not a thing one achieves. It is a standard one can aim at. It is an ideal. And the most objective teaching will be provided by him who, while aware, and not ashamed, of his prejudices, will endeavour, in his appreciations, to keep them under control. For, if he have any scientific self-esteem, he will know how to differentiate between the teacher's role and that of the salesman of a political line. So, while one may manage a certain degree of detachment, it had better be open-eyed, realistic and sophisticated, and not just a form of self-deceit.

With what expectations is your man to proceed? What, for instance, of the notion that instruction in this subject should make the novice wise. Is this a safe assumption? I doubt it. The most that can reasonably be hoped for is that the study may evoke, and help the student to develop, that share of wisdom with which he may by nature have been endowed. One cannot sow wisdom from a lecture platform or even from a study chair: but one may encourage a pupil to use what wisdom he has. And what applies thus to his judgment in general holds particularly, in its way, of his judgment in questions of morals, in matters of right and wrong.

A further point: in which of its dimensions is the subject to be advanced? How far is it to be treated as if unequivocally a 'science'? The scene of my professional activity is known as a 'school of the social sciences'; and some, I suppose, might tend from this to infer that International Relations, as with us understood, must presumably be a science and, purportedly, nothing further. But with such a doctrine I, for my part, could not be content. To my mind, it does indeed belong within the social sciences 'field'; but, while including its scientific component, it has other, philosophical, aspects also. It is as well a branch of humanistic study as of science. Yet, in so far, for example, as the teaching of it does turn on issues which demand, say, a diagnostically analytical approach, to that extent the treatment should, of course, proceed in the spirit of science. So, while the subject may well be considered scientific from the nature of what it mostly has to do, it must also be more than merely that; it is also concerned, for instance, with what is justice, what is truth, and what is man?

Question last but one: in the face of what misgivings, what resistances, and even of what vested interests must this subject make its way? The truth is that the older British universities have their inherited conceptions of their task. 'What was enough for our fathers, and for us. . . .' Is not this, in effect, the attitude of rather many? There are all kinds of qualms and hesitations conspiring to retard the wider introduction of our subject. I even have heard it questioned whether its encouragement could in practice do very much to countervail the 'fragmentation of knowledge'. I have heard it questioned; but only in a dogmatic manner: I have seen no documented argument on the point. However. It is certainly in the face of considerable scepticism that this still largely unheard-of subject is bidding for further acceptance and development in the universities of today.

And now, my final question: with what urgency? It was at Utrecht, more than eight years back, that a world conference of universities gave its urgent blessing to the advice that all universities not already providing, by chairs or otherwise, for the study and teaching of our subject should as soon as possible so provide. I have, from one of the greater figures in the fight against malaria, words curiously in point. Kipling, he recalled, had judged that it was useless trying to hustle the East. His own experience, he said, was that this was true equally of the West. And that, I rather fear, is our position also, even today. We are obliged to be patient — we who believe that there is need, among the coming generation, for those who will seek to understand the world. And this requires that a man shall all his lifetime have this subject on his plate. While I would not ask for very many to be specialists in the subject, I would certainly suggest that more other sorts of students, in more of the best endowed centres, be permitted, and enabled, to make an earlier start towards an elementary awareness of the universal set-up, to serve them in the future as the basis and the context for their day-to-day appraisal of the movement of affairs. Meanwhile, when in an agonising hour the elders of the tribe get down, as in a seminar, to a case-study on a matter of vital concern, and notabilities, new, by the look of things, to 'Structure', contribute, not infallibly, to the flow of advice, it would, no doubt, on democratic assumptions, be unbecoming to raise even an eyebrow at their *hardiesse*.

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