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Who killed the International Studies Conference?

DAVID LONG*

Abstract. This article considers the rise and fall of the first institution of international academic cooperation on international relations, the International Studies Conference (ISC), which was established in 1928 and continued activities into the 1950s. Its formation preceded by decades the present ISA as well as the international organisation of political scientists. The demise of the ISC was a result of the failings of the ISC itself, the influence of UNESCO especially its Department of Social Sciences, and the challenge posed to the ISC by the formation of the International Political Science Association.

This article documents the rise and fall of an international academic organisation. The title of the article will probably engender bewilderment among scholars of International Relations. 'What does he mean,' the likely response will be, '*killed* the International Studies Conference?' The International Studies Association (ISA) conference is very much a going concern, of course, with its large and steadily growing annual programme.[1] It is not widely recognised, however, that there was an academic organisation for international relations that preceded the existence of the present ISA. It is even less well known that the international academic organisation of International Relations (IR) predates the international organisation of political scientists by decades. Yet both of these are so; established in 1928 and continuing into the 1950s with an interruption during the Second World War, the International Studies Conference (hereafter, ISC) was the first institution of international academic cooperation on international relations. Indeed, the ISC was one of the few League of Nations organisations to persist into the postwar era, surviving even its sponsoring organisation, the International Institute for Intellectual Cooperation which was superseded by UNESCO after the Second World War.

The forgotten existence and demise of the ISC pose a series of puzzles: If there was an international studies organisation, whatever happened to it? Why would it disappear, only to have an American organisation with a very similar name and academic mandate appear a few years later? And if the demise of the ISC comes well

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[1] Here, in place of the American ISA whose name is closest to the ISC's, one might substitute any of the national associations of academics dedicated to the study of international relations. However, the organisation that comes closest in fact in terms of its vision and mandate to the ISC is the recently created World International Studies Committee.

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after the end of the Second World War, what is one to make of the 'common knowledge' that the war had conclusively demonstrated the folly of the majority of earlier IR scholarship? Intriguing questions in themselves, answering them is important not only in terms of disciplinary history. It also has ramifications for the current organisation of the scholarly study of international relations, that immediately on the telling of this story becomes less self-evidently logical and more clearly socially and politically constructed.

In the following I describe the International Studies Conference and seek to explain the timing of and the reasons for its demise. I consider the failings of the ISC itself, the influence of UNESCO especially its Department of Social Sciences, and the challenge posed to the ISC by the formation of the International Political Science Association. I conclude with a consideration of some of the implications that arise from the history of the ISC.

What was the International Studies Conference?

Created in 1928, the ISC was a non-governmental grouping of academics mainly from across Europe, though including significant numbers of participants from the United States, as well as elsewhere. It was formed initially under the auspices of the League of Nations International Institute of Intellectual Cooperation (IIIC) based in Paris and the underlying motivation behind the ISC was the same as the IIIC: international cooperation of peoples in cultural and scientific affairs would better the chances of peace, and this was particularly important in international relations.[2] The Conference of Institutions for the Scientific Study of International Relations, as it was initially and more accurately named, was formed on the prompting of German and French institutes but included in all eight different national and four international institutes. A non-official body made up of academic representatives from across the League of Nations as well as the non-member United States, the 'conference' met annually for private, closed discussions, changing its name to the International Studies Conference in 1933. The ISC itself had no central organisation but was rather a loose aggregate of national coordinating committees, as they were called, that used the IIIC's secretariat in Paris for its central administration. For example, there was a British Co-ordinating Committee led in the main by representatives from the London School of Economics and the Royal Institute of International Affairs. In the United States, while there was at this time also an American Institute for Intellectual Cooperation, the Council on Foreign Relations acted as the American coordinating committee for international relations. If, from the perspective of today, the ISC looks like a predominantly European organisation, this would be

[2] See Secretariat of the League of Nations, 1930: 322–3, where it states that 'At its session in 1923, the Committee [the International Committee on Intellectual Co-operation] adopted a general resolution recommending that universities should attempt to remove misunderstandings between nations by means of courses on political, economic and moral conditions in other countries'. In 1925 a resolution was adopted to encourage cooperation between existing national and international institutions concerned with international studies.

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akin to considering the League of Nations a European organisation. In fact, the reported membership of the ISC rose to 44 countries from across the world.[3]

The main activity of the ISC was its annual conferences which met in various European capitals.[4] These conferences and the ISC itself were deliberately interdisciplinary and the League of Nations reported that 'permanent and autonomous bodies, like the International Studies Conference, involve frequent meetings of technical committees of professors of political economy, sociology, history, international law, and racial geography, and of writers specialising in the study of international relations.'[5] Originally intended as little more than a meeting place for specialists to discuss issues in and the teaching of International Relations, from 1930 onwards the International Studies Conference changed approach and adopted a format already deployed in the conferences of the Institute of Pacific Relations, where there was a general theme and a published record after the fact, though the meetings themselves were still closed.[6] Meetings grew from small gatherings to major conferences with delegates sometimes numbering over a hundred from many different countries.

The first ISC conferences particularly focused on the study and teaching of International Relations, conferences which in the UK were subsequently called Bailey Conferences after a prominent early member. During the 1930s the conferences focused on a series of themes, changing every second year, with preparatory publications and a published record of the second of the paired conferences. Two conferences were devoted to 'The State and Economic Life', two to 'Collective Security', two to 'Peaceful Change', and one to 'World Trading Systems'. The reason for the single conference in the last case was that the 1939 conference was scheduled in Bergen, Norway, from August 31 to September 2, just as the Second World War was breaking out.[7] The real world of international relations had impinged on ISC activities the year before in Prague, when a scheduled appearance at the conference by the Czechoslovak President was cancelled due to events. At the Prague conference, the ISC returned to the study of International Relations itself, work that continued after the interruption of the world war in a small number of themed workshops continued in the 1940s and 1950s.

The largest lasting contribution of the ISC comes from the publication of the themed biennial conference volumes. Not surprisingly, the subject matters of these volumes and the way they were discussed – the involvement of the state in national

[3] League of Nations, *The Committees of the League of Nations* (Geneva, 1945). The list included South Africa, the US, Argentina, Australia, Belgium, Bolivia, Brazil, the UK, Bulgaria, Chile, China, Czechoslovakia, Cuba, Denmark, Dominican Republic, Egypt, Ecuador, Finland, France, Greece, Haiti, Hungary, Iceland, India, Iran, Latvia, Lebanon, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Mexico, the Netherlands, Peru, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Salvador, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Syria, Uruguay and Yugoslavia.

[4] See appendix of meeting sites and dates. The meetings on Peaceful Change attracted the largest number of participants at over 120. The meeting on the University Teaching of International Relations included observers from Japan and Brazil.

[5] League of Nations Information Section, *Intellectual Co-operation* (Geneva, League of Nations, 1937).

[6] Edith Ware, *The Study of International Relations in the United States* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1934), p. 448.

[7] The conference was cut short ending on 30 August. The title of the planned conference volume was 'An Alleged Source of Peace and War: The Unregulated System of International Economic Relations'. See *Report on the Work of the League of Nations 1938/39* (Geneva: League of Nations), pp. 142–3.

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and international economic relations, collective security, peaceful change – were a reflection of the interwar era. And so was the understanding of international relations implicit in the discussions. Publications such as Bailey's *International Studies in the Modern Curriculum* and indirectly Edith Ware's *Study of International Relations in the United States* were early products of the ISC's focus on the development of the academic study and curriculum of international relations.[8] There were also a number of reports of seminars and monographs on topics relating to the biennial conference themes. Often these are now not easy to identify as related to the business of the ISC, such as for instance, C. A. W. Manning's edited collection on peaceful change or F. S. Dunn's American study on the same subject, both of which were stimulated by the ISC's attention to that topic. After the war, the ISC conducted a few studies at the behest of its new sponsor, UNESCO, but the output in terms of publications certainly fell off.

Unfortunately, the published output of the ISC is rather uneven. The conference volumes varied in the method that was used to compile the final published product from the conference papers, presentations and discussions.[9] They were generally, if looked at as a research publication though, messy, incoherent, long-winded reportage. Morgenthau acerbically noted the 'voluminous proceedings' of the ISC were amorphous and vague, marked by 'an incoherent collection of fragmentary knowledge ranging the whole gamut of academic disciplines and having only one thing in common: that they transcend the boundaries of a particular nation.'[10] Indeed, the inchoate character of the conference discussions led the ISC at its Prague Conference to directly address the nature of IR; a response – an intellectual one, to be sure – to the problems that the ISC was having in grappling with its subject matter and giving it any overall sense of coherence and focus. This volume also reflects the tensions within the ISC involved in the shift from the study of IR as a practical normative peace project associated with the League to an analysis and understanding of IR and its subfields as an object of study.

Another problem was that the conduct of ISC conferences and its business generally reflected an elitist approach inherent in League-era intellectual cooperation. The priority for the International Committee on Intellectual Cooperation was primarily intellectual cooperation and exchange involving the great and the good, as can be seen in its membership and activities and particularly the meetings and

[8] See S. H. Bailey, *International Studies in Modern Education* (London: Oxford University Press, 1938); Ware, *The Study of International Relations*.

[9] The conference volumes were International Institute of Intellectual Cooperation (IIIC), *The State and Economic Life* (IIIC, 1934); Maurice Bourquin (ed.), *Collective Security* (IIIC, 1936); International Studies Conference, *Peaceful Change* (IIIC, 1938); and Alfred Zimmern (ed.), *University Teaching of International Relations* (IIIC, 1939). The two conferences on *The State and Economic Policy* resulted in two conference volumes translating and reproducing a summary of the discussions with exactly the same name. Other volumes reproduced abbreviated versions of memoranda produced for the conference, while Zimmern's volume on International Relations is his rapporteur's report on the ISC conference.

[10] Morgenthau, 'Area Studies and the Study of International Relations', *International Social Science Bulletin*, 4:4 (1952), p. 648, reprinted with minor modifications as 'International Relations as an Academic Discipline', ch. 5 in his *Dilemmas of Politics* (University of Chicago Press, 1958). A parallel diagnosis of the problems of multidisciplinary studies can be found in W. T. R. Fox, 'Interwar International Relations Research: The American Experience', in his *The American Study of International Relations* (University of South Carolina: Institute of International Studies, 1968), pp. 5–6, first published in *World Politics*, vol. 2, October 1949.

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conversations of luminaries such as Einstein and Freud.[11] Another elitist aspect of the IIIC was its focus on what might be described as high culture, such as cooperation with respect to museums. The ISC incorporated and reflected this high society understanding of academic cooperation on academic international relations.

Along with the League of Nations and its agencies, the ISC fell into abeyance during the Second World War. The winding up of the League of Nations and the creation of UNESCO to replace the functions of the IIIC did not spell the end of the ISC, however. After the war, UNESCO established relations with a variety of already established academic organisations as well as some cultural and scientific organisations. The ISC was one of a small number of international nongovernmental organisations – along with the International Council of Museums and a few others, including the International Statistical Institute and the International Institute of Administrative Science – with which UNESCO had an agreement in its early stages.[12] With UNESCO's proclaimed intention of building up the disciplines of social sciences as that organisation got underway in the decade after the war, the ISC settled in to its new relationship with UNESCO's Bureau of Social Sciences. It was shortly joined by a roster of academic organisations sponsored by UNESCO itself, including the International Economics Association, the International Sociological Association, and the International Political Science Association, as well as the International Committee of Comparative Law and the International Union of Scientific Psychology.[13]

When UNESCO's Department of Social Sciences asked each of the academic associations to conduct a survey and evaluation of the state of research and teaching in their subject area, this appeared to those involved in the ISC to be an invitation to continue the work done before the war and to build towards a definitive description of international relations as an academic discipline. Unfortunately, while there were undoubtedly controversies elsewhere, there was immediately a problem concerning international relations since it was claimed not only by the ISC but by the fledgling IPSA. While the ISC itself conducted a study of international relations, the rivalry and overlap led to the need for compromise and cooperation between the ISC and the IPSA in the conduct of the UNESCO-sponsored study of IR. Nevertheless, as the well established embodiment of international cooperation among academics studying international relations, a clearly stated priority for UNESCO, the ISC's future must have seemed bright in the late 1940s. In fact, within a decade of the end of the war, increasingly starved of either private or public funds to support its activities, the ISC was wound up in 1954.

The International Studies Conference was an anachronism that imploded

The first explanation of the demise of the International Studies Conference focuses on the character of the ISC itself. It was in various ways an anachronism that

[11] While the IIIC was concerned with broadcasting and peace, the bias of school textbooks, as well as the fate of public libraries and museums, it also featured prominently the 'conversations' and 'open letters' of the great and the good. For example, Gilbert Murray and Rabindraanath Tagore, *East and West* (League of Nations: IIIC, 1935).

[12] See the discussion of the agreements of the Economic and Social Council and the Specialised Agencies with respect to the UN Charter's Article 63 at ⟨http://untreaty.un.org/cod/repertory/art63/english/rep_orig_vol3–art63_e.pdf⟩, para.222.

[13] 'The Activities of UNESCO's Department of Social Sciences in 1953–54', *International Social Science Bulletin*, 5:3 (1953), p. 603.

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persisted past its 'sell-by date' and finally imploded from a lack of interest, lack of funds and from disorganisation. In this version of events what needs to be accounted for is not so much the demise of the ISC as that its death throes were so protracted. According to this account, one significant problem for the ISC was its association with the failed IIIC. The problems with the IIIC start with its mandate. Even though it is sometimes regarded as the League of Nations forerunner of UNESCO, it was subject to severe criticism that was the rationale for UNESCO's creation and its orientation to a different, more practical and broader focus. The model of intellectual cooperation begun during the interwar period focusing on elite level exchange and meetings of the great and the good was no longer in vogue. In general, UNESCO shifted to broader concerns with mass education and culture.[14] In terms of intellectual cooperation more narrowly, UNESCO looked to an alternative model for international academic organisation, broadening the base in terms of the professional associations and conventions we know today. The ISC as a loose aggregation of national and international organisations – universities, think-tanks, associations – from different disciplines, did not fit this template.

Though UNESCO and most of its academic disciplinary products such as the IPSA were also headquartered in Paris, the ISC was hindered by its association with the IIIC's French connection, legal status and interwar origin and particularly being primarily a European dominated organisation. Because the shape of the UN and its organs such as UNESCO were more clearly influenced by the general hegemony of the US combined with elements of British intellectual hegemony, the European cast and French influence played against the ISC.[15] The European character of the ISC was exacerbated after the war as American interest seems to have waned. Just as American foundations withdrew from the ISC, so did the American academics who had participated during the interwar period, thus making the ISC, already legally a creature of French law, in reality even more of a European organisation. The American academic move away from the ISC parallels the shift of League activities in Geneva to the United Nations in New York, as exemplified in the resignation of ISC Chairman, Malcolm Davis, an American who had been a representative of the Carnegie Endowment in Geneva.[16]

More generally, declining American participation and the withdrawal of support by American foundations seriously undermined the ISC. During the League period there had been significant American participation: John Foster Dulles had chaired sessions, Eugene Staley and other early pioneers in international political economy had taken part,[17] while Carnegie and Rockefeller had provided funding and the

[14] For discussions of the origins of UNESCO and its relationship to the IIIC, see Richard Hoggart, *An Idea and Its Servants: UNESCO from Within* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1978), pp. 24–5; James L. Henderson, *UNESCO in Focus* (New York: Freedom Pamphlets, 1949), pp. 18–22; James P. Sewell, *UNESCO and World Politics* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1975), p. 33ff; and Walter H. C. Laves and Charles A. Thomson, *UNESCO: Purpose, Progress, Prospects* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1957), pp. 10–24.

[15] For US concerns on the French location and influence at the beginnings of UNESCO, see Luther H. Evans, *The United States and UNESCO* (New York: Oceana Publications, 1971), pp. 61–3. For a discussion of French opposition to the end of the IIIC, see Peter Lengyel, *International Social Science: The UNESCO Experience* (Oxford, Transaction Books, 1986), p. 9.

[16] 'The Fourteenth Session of the International Studies Conference', *International Social Science Bulletin*, 1:3–4 (1949), p. 93.

[17] The ISC had attracted a number of American participants, among them Arnold Wolfers who was the rapporteur for the conference on The State and Economic Life. Among the other notables at

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Social Science Research Council's research programme fitted with the broad ambit of the ISC's work. Ironically, the creation of UNESCO and the rise to global dominance of the US in the early UN period was to be a disaster for the ISC. The ISC's European origin and continued European predominance within the organisation does not appear to have sat well with a superpower thrust into a Cold War with its Soviet adversary. Certainly American foundations redirected the funds that had underwritten the activities of the ISC in the interwar period. This was not only a consequence of changed geopolitical context and American foreign policy priorities but also, as we will see shortly, a product of the organisation of the American social science academy that was to dominate intellectually and personally in UNESCO's Department of Social Sciences.[18] At the same time as American anti-communist concerns hampered the ISC, the new regimes in Eastern Europe meant that academics from the region were suddenly less flexible partners in the ISC's academic project.

With the removal of American foundation support, the ISC seems not to have been able to maintain itself on its own funds. This may have been a function of the method of financing which was by institution (such as university, think-tank, research unit) rather than individual subscription. However, money was perhaps less important than what the removal of financial support indicated. The decline of private and public external funding would have been less significant had the ISC not been completely dependent on those funds. While it attempted to raise finances from its membership there was little financial or intellectual groundswell to keep it going once other sources were removed.

Finally, those involved with the ISC, loosely connected as they were, were apparently simply not up to the task of moving the organisation forward in the changed times of the Cold War international system and the new requirements of UNESCO. There was something of a generational change, with the ISC largely populated with the older, already established academics, while younger academics making their name were looking elsewhere. Whatever might be said of the ISC's model of international academic organisation and cooperation, there is little doubt that some of its difficulties also resulted from a lack of discernable product and activity. In the 1940s and increasingly in the 1950s, there seems to be very little going on if one considers ISC publications and meetings. And what there was focused on the rather abstract and transparently self-interested conversation about the formation of and support for the study of International Relations as an academic discipline in its own right. In other areas, the ISC did not lead on projects for which it seemed to have been tailor-made, such as the study of international tensions or the consideration of the conditions of peaceful co-existence.[19] A new conference theme

ISC meetings were Harold Innis, Jacob Viner and William Beveridge at conference on The State and Economic Life, and Staley, E. H Carr, David Mitrany and Quincy Wright at the conference on Peaceful Change, to which Grayson Kirk was also an invited participant.

[18] On this dominance, its foundation in anti-communism and the intellectual vacuum resulting from the relative lack of influence of other nations, see Lengyel, *International Social Science*, pp. 25–9. An anonymous reviewer of this article suggested, correctly, that UNESCO is nowadays unlikely to be considered a bastion of American influence. The influence I am discussing here relates to the social sciences in the period of the 1940s and 1950s.

[19] The former was led from within UNESCO's Department of Social Sciences with primarily a social psychological approach, while the latter became the business of the International Political Science Association. See *International Social Science Bulletin*, 1:3–4 (1949), pp. 127; and 8:1 (1956), p. 196.

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on 'The Sovereignty of Nations in Modern International Life' seems to have come to naught, as did a proposed monograph series on national character and attitudes to international relations that had been supported by UNESCO.[20]

Ultimately, the International Studies Conference appears to have simply faded away, though those closely involved in the organisation were surprised that it should be wound up as it was. C.A.W. Manning suggests that the ISC was only finally shut down after the funding decision by UNESCO, yet there was a 'strange situation in which UNESCO could officially have the impression that the ISC itself was by way of wanting to wind itself up'. Manning denies this and hints that 'particular individuals, particular discontents' were at the heart of the decision.[21] Manning was apparently referring to his LSE colleagues, William Robson, of the Government Department, who was very much involved in the creation of the International Political Science Association, and T. H. Marshall, of the Sociology Department, who during this time chaired a UNESCO working party deciding on programme priorities for the organisation and was later Director of UNESCO's Department of Social Sciences.[22] At a UNESCO general conference meeting, Marshall referred to 'the Working Party's doubts about the financial stability and future prospects of [the ISC]. The question of its dissolution had been mooted, but had been left in abeyance pending the execution of certain reorganisation plans.'[23] This was enough to cut the funding to the ISC, and though it did not eliminate it altogether, it was enough to precipitate the very crisis that Marshall had suggested already existed.

UNESCO, social science disciplines and an interdisciplinary ISC

The second factor in the demise of the ISC was the conduct of UNESCO's Department of Social Sciences which worked alongside departments concerned with natural sciences and culture to develop international collaboration in the social sciences. Despite UNESCO's mandate to build and institutionalise international academic cooperation and the imperatives to improve international understanding in the wake of a second cataclysmic war in a generation, the relationship of UNESCO and the International Studies Conference was troubled and fraught with tensions. As the American foundations cut their financial support to the ISC after the Second World War, UNESCO stepped in to fill the gap but mostly with small grants for specific projects, such as the survey on research and teaching in international relations. Despite having an initial agreement with the ISC and having funded it equally with other international associations, UNESCO reduced its funding from a high of $5,000 per annum to $3,500 to $1,750, and ultimately to zero. It decided not

[20] See Jacques Vernant, 'The Work of the International Studies Conference', *International Social Science Bulletin*, 2:1 (1950), pp. 58–9.
[21] Manning, 'Out to Grass – and a Lingering Look Behind', *International Relations*, 2:6 (1962), p. 355.
[22] See Peter Lengyel, *International Social Science*, p. 23.
[23] *Records of the UNESCO General Conference, Seventh Session* (1952), pp. 426–7. What is interesting about this statement is that Marshall seems to have said something very similar about the Institute of Sociology with very similar consequences, the removal of support by UNESCO and the demise of the organisation. See David Evans, 'Le Play House and the Regional Survey Movement in British Sociology 1920–1955', M.Phil thesis, City of Birmingham Polytechnic, 1986, ch. 9, available at ⟨http://www.dfte.co.uk/ios/postwar.htm⟩.

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to renew its agreement with the ISC after 1952. There was clearly a decision that the ISC was no longer worth funding at this time.

While the funding cut certainly can be attributed to failings on the part of the ISC and also to the need at the time to institute a 7–8 per cent budget cut,[24] this hardly tells the whole story since at the time that the ISC was being cut other initiatives were maintained or begun. The trouble for the ISC was at once more conceptual and fundamental: the disciplinary approach to the development of the social sciences taken by the UNESCO Department collided with the interdisciplinary character of the ISC. The Department had decided that the social sciences needed to be based on a series of international academic associations, organised along specific disciplinary lines. And thus, UNESCO set about promoting the creation of the International Economics Association, the International Sociological Association, the International Committee for Comparative Law, and the International Political Science Association.

The Department of Social Sciences' approach was underpinned by a quintessentially atomistic and essentialist understanding of disciplines, that is, that disciplines were separate and distinct units unified by a single identifiable subject matter and an agreed set of methods, concepts and theories. Following the perceived model of the academic organisation of the natural sciences, there was a desire to see the grounding of the social sciences as sciences, and thus there was an emphasis on empirical and behavioural aspects of the subject matter of each of the associations. Not only should the approach to the subject matter be scientific, though; so should the divisions among the social sciences. While these disciplinary conceptions mimicked the natural sciences, they divided the newly formed international social science associations exactly along the lines of the distinctions made among the national associations in the United States. Thus, the International Political Science Association in its focus, subfields, organisation of conferences and membership closely resembled the American Political Science Association.

As one of the leftovers from the interwar period the ISC was doubly disadvantaged, first by its association with the *ancien régime* of international cooperation that UNESCO was seeking to supersede, and second and more critically by the fact that it did not fit the Department's model of the social sciences. It was an outlier in the roster of disciplinary academic organisations. But at least there were a number of associations – some from the inter-war period – that were interdisciplinary and/or of practical or more specific focus than the broad based disciplinary associations. Unfortunately, the interdisciplinary character of the ISC led to concerns in UNESCO not so much about whether it fitted in than about its coherence and effectuality. This is reflected in the views of a UNESCO official, Arvid Brodersen, who suggested that while UNESCO had wanted to build upon the already existing structures of international academic cooperation, this foundered because:

> [I]t soon became clear that this type of organisation, a rather loosely co-ordinated task force composed of members from a variety of disciplines according to the requirements of the current projects, was hardly the model on which [the UNESCO scheme for international academic cooperation] should be patterned. The basis would rather have to be a comprehensive network of what our staff jargon referred to as 'single discipline bodies', i.e. separate international associations for each professional specialisation (economists,

[24] As discussed at the 1952 General Conference of UNESCO, p. 425.

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political scientists, sociologists, etc.). Co-operation among colleagues in such a setting was expected to be both easier of achievement as a permanent feature, and also in some respects more productive than that involving scholars from different disciplines.[25]

From UNESCO's point of view the interdisciplinary character of the ISC made it ill-suited to implementation of projects of a comparative nature, such as studies of national attitudes or educational systems, studies which ended up being taken on by other organisations or simply implemented directly by a section of UNESCO's Department of Social Sciences. The ISC's problems were partly organisational and partly intellectual. Because the ISC was made up of loosely affiliated organisations of varying character there was inevitably unevenness in capacity and performance. The intellectual challenge was more serious: the ISC was composed of academics interested specifically in international relations rather than the sociological or national political emphasis of such studies. Indeed, one might suggest that the ISC was primarily oriented to the generation of knowledge that UNESCO did not feel it needed, that is, the study of international relations as a practice and as a discipline. International relations were everywhere in UNESCO's business – as is evident in the naming of all the international associations for example – and officials were interested in results from what seemed to be more malleable issues that made up the context and content of international relations, such as ideologies, national attitudes and international tensions, as well as the nuts and bolts of international administration. They were much less concerned with trying to comprehend, let alone critique, the underlying assumptions upon which its work rested or the basic concepts of international relations as an academic study.

The wisdom of Brodersen's assessment is questionable, however, given that the explicitly interdisciplinary US-based International Studies Association was established just a few short years after the ISC ceased operations. The ISA has for years fulfilled the function of a surrogate international organisation for academic international relations. The need for interdisciplinary work in this area has generally been regarded – at the least, rhetorically – as a positive reason to create other national academic organisations for the study of international relations that have proliferated since the creation of ISA.

Besides, it is somewhat disingenuous of Broderson to suggest that UNESCO simply discovered the frailties of the ISC. UNESCO sponsored, helped found and funded the new international associations for other social sciences, support that was initially forthcoming to the ISC but which was then limited and ultimately terminated.

The International Political Science Association, disciplinary consolidation and the challenge of a discipline of International Relations

The frailties of an interdisciplinary organisation and the disciplinary direction of UNESCO are insufficient to explain the demise of the ISC. To fully explain the fate of the ISC, we need to examine disciplinary competition and consolidation in the social sciences. The creation in 1949 of the International Political Science Association within the framework of the UNESCO Department of Social Sciences posed a

[25] Arvid Brodersen, 'UNESCO's Tenth Anniversary: A Retrospective Sketch', *International Social Science Bulletin*, 8:3 (1956), p. 403.

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different and altogether more serious challenge to the ISC. Even if itself ineffectual and marginalised by UNESCO, the ISC might have been reconstructed had it not been for the competition from the IPSA – a rivalry that was as personal as it was intellectual. Decisions on funding made by the American foundations and UNESCO were undoubtedly coloured by the fact that these decisions were taken by American political scientists prominent in those organisations.

The IPSA was created at a series of meetings culminating in a conference in Paris in 1949 and began with four founding national associations from the US, France, India and Canada. There was a good deal of heterogeneity among these four organisations and the academies from which they emerged. The French association was built on a very different notion of the academic pursuit of the political sciences from that in American political science. The Canadian association was an inter-disciplinary amalgam of political science and economics and was to remain so for decades to come. However, there were quickly more associations, deliberately created in the wake of and often in the shape of the IPSA/APSA model. For instance, at the formation of the IPSA, there was no British Political Studies Association as it was called into existence in good part to participate in the UNESCO process as a result of the work of proponents like William Robson.[26]

At its establishment, the constitution of the IPSA outlined what it understood to be the subfields of the study of political science, including among these international relations. It is important to be clear that this nomenclature did not necessarily indicate a problem. After all, words often have more than one meaning and this is as true in academic organisation as it is elsewhere.[27] Unfortunately, the flexible attitude required for different organisations to share the same term with different meanings did not exist between the ISC and IPSA. This was because of the imperatives in both political science and international relations towards disciplinary consolidation. A number of those involved in the ISC believed that the time was now ripe for the development of an autonomous discipline of international relations, something that was more coherent than the interdisciplinary combinations of courses related to international issues or interdepartmental committees of international studies. The specific impetus was a UNESCO conference of Representatives of Universities held in Utrecht in 1948 where a resolution was adopted to the effect 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 . . .' On the basis of this resolution and its own previous work, the ISC decided to convene a meeting to consider the desirability of 'making more general provision for the inclusion of International Relations, as an independent discipline, in the curriculum of university students.'[28]

[26] On the development and heterogeneity of political science, see for instance Johan Heilbron, 'The Tripartite Division of French Social Science', and Malcolm Vout, 'Oxford and the Emergence of Political Science in England 1945–1960', both in Peter Wagner, Björn Wittrock, and Richard Whitley (eds.), *Discourses on Society: The Shaping of Social Science Disciplines* (Norwell, MA: Kluwer, 1991).

[27] One need only consider the multifarious usage of the word global today to see that one word can have many sometimes mutually contradictory meanings.

[28] Geoffrey L. Goodwin, 'Preface', to his edited ISC volume, *The University Teaching of International Relations* (International Studies Conference, 1951), p. 5, and C. A. W. Manning, 'International Relations: An Academic Discipline' in the same volume, p. 11.

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At the same time, political scientists were looking to guarantee the status of political science as a coherent and distinct discipline and, in a related concern, as a science rather than one of the arts, humanities or policy or professional studies. As we will see, the concern for coherence and consolidation in political science implicated international relations because whichever was chosen as central concepts of politics to hold political science together not only included international matters but made them an integral part of politics and thus the study thereof.

The gathering clouds of a conflict between the ISC and the IPSA were evident even before the IPSA was formally established. At the Fourteenth Session of the ISC in 1949, the Director-General of UNESCO, Jaime Torres Bodet, drew attention to the need for the ISC to work with the international associations being formed for economics, political science, law, and sociology. Noting specifically the relationship with the yet to be formed IPSA, Torres Bodet suggested that there could be 'a rational demarcation of your respective spheres of interest' and encouraged collaboration with the nascent organisation of political scientists. The delegates at the conference responded to this by reaffirming the function of the ISC as a meeting point for specialists and institutions devoted to the study of international relations and that 'international relations represent a specific branch of research and education'.[29]

The hopes for collaboration between the IPSA and ISC were shortlived and not tremendously productive. At a meeting of the Secretaries of the International Social Science Associations, UNESCO initiated a Survey of Instruction in the Social Sciences, involving the survey of the various social sciences in a variety of countries, to be followed by a series of monographs in which each of the social science associations, including the ISC, reported on the state of research and teaching in political science, economics, law, and international relations respectively.[30] The ISC oversaw the discussions and sponsored the final report on international relations. The discussions involved a number of American political scientists and in some ways this was simply a continuation of American involvement in ISC activities from the interwar period. Yet, the final report and the discussions are notable as much for the diversity of opinions and disagreements on the status of IR as they are for the consensus expressed on certain aspects of teaching the subject. While these differences are also a continuation of schisms that were clearly evident in the interwar period and reflected in Alfred Zimmern's summary report of the Prague ISC conference, the differences were more portentous.[31]

While the first IPSA President, Quincy Wright, appreciated the importance of various approaches to the study of international relations (as manifested most clearly in his encyclopaedic book, *The Study of International Relations*), in his address as the first President of the IPSA he tried to set out the coherence, scientific credentials and

[29] 'The Fourteenth Session of the International Studies Conference', *International Social Science Bulletin*, 1:3–4 (1949), p. 94. This session of the ISC met in Paris two weeks *prior to* the Constituent Conference of the IPSA, yet the need for collaboration is already evident to UNESCO's Director-General. It is intriguing that the report on the ISC comes *after* the report on the IPSA in the *ISSB*.

[30] 'The Meeting of the Secretaries of the International Social Science Associations', *International Social Science Bulletin*, 3:1 (1951), pp. 116–17.

[31] Alfred Zimmern, *The Study of International Relations* (International Studies Conference, 1939); C. A. W. Manning, *The University Teaching of the Social Sciences: International Relations* (New York: UNESCO, 1954).

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disciplinary status of political science.[32] The key to this attempt was placing at the centre of the study one key concept, conflict. Understanding conflict was the route to mitigating it, he argued, and this attempt was important at all levels of human existence. Wright places international relations within political science in this speech because political science was, for Wright, particularly concerned with conflict among people and groups, and ultimately among peoples and states, the subject matter of IR. In his later work, however, Wright argues for a broader meaning of IR and a distinction between it and the term international politics.[33]

In contrast to Wright, William Robson, the second president of IPSA, was strongly opposed to the view that international relations could be constituted as a separate discipline and decried UNESCO's decision to allow the separate ISC study of international relations alongside that being conducted by the IPSA. Robson's reasoning was simple: political science focused on politics and policies of the state; international relations was simply the external aspect of that study.

> [I]nternational relations should be considered as an indivisible part of political science. The fundamental concepts of political science, the concept of sovereignty, the concept of power, likewise formed the starting point for the teaching of international relations. It was completely illogical to divide State politics into two separate subjects, according to whether they concerned internal questions or relations with foreign countries.[34]

Robson went on to note that an international meeting of political scientists had come to similar conclusions and that international relations was generally taught in departments of political science, especially in the US. In a report to the IPSA, he also addressed the concerns with the limits and frailties of political science. Outside of the US where it had been taught as a separate discipline for decades, political science was commonly not recognised as a distinct academic subject. That these matters were raised together by Robson is no coincidence: the project to solidify and universalise the predominantly American perspective on political science as an academic discipline included removing the threat of disciplinary fragmentation that a separate study of IR posed. Robson was personally aware of these dangers and opined that 'the foundation of separate departments or schools . . . was most regrettable'.[35] He knew what he was talking about: at LSE, where he was a Professor of Government, international relations was (and still is) taught in a separate department and his department did not teach the subject. At the time Robson wrote these words, the Head of the LSE Department of International Relations was C. A. W. Manning, a leading light in the ISC. Apparently, this was an intensely personal as well as intellectual battle for both men.

Robson's argument is an exemplar of the those made in political science at this time. These arguments place international relations completely within political science following a logic of political science itself. But as Manning observed, this involves not one but two moves: first, that IR was a part of political science; and

[32] Quincy Wright, 'The Significance of the International Political Science Association', *International Social Science Bulletin,* 3:2 (1951), pp. 275–80.
[33] For the controversy that this caused, see Wright, *The Study of International Relations* (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1955), p. ix.
[34] Jean Meynaud, 'The Teaching of Political Science', *International Social Science Bulletin*, 5:1 (1953), pp. 105–6.
[35] Meynaud, p. 106.

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second, that IR was *only* a part of political science and nothing more.[36] Interestingly, as with Robson's argument concerning political science as the study of the state and its policies, other attempts at centering a conception of political science, assert the first and assume the second. For instance, during the UNESCO discussions on international relations, an American political scientist, Walter Sharp, who was the chairman of the Preparatory Committee that helped found the IPSA and later Director of UNESCO's Department of Social Sciences, argued for a conception of international relations as a 'policy science', which was the primary focus of departments of political science.[37]

As influential as each of these arguments for disciplinary consolidation were, the most significant for international relations was undoubtedly the one advanced by Hans Morgenthau. Morgenthau was at the forefront of a group of political scientists who argued that power was the key variable in and the litmus test to secure disciplinary status for political science. The implications for international relations are striking and portrayed forcefully in his 1952 article for UNESCO's *International Social Science Bulletin*.[38] Morgenthau argued that international relations lacked intellectual discipline, had no intellectually valid focus and no common method. This was a result of a failure to 'distinguish between the need for multidisciplinary knowledge without which international relations cannot be understood, and the requirement of a principle of order or focus for intellectual curiosity without which no academic discipline can exist.'[39] Order in the scientific study of international relations was only possible, he argued, if there was a ranking of the significance of the various disciplinary knowledge and a focus on a core of necessary knowledge. For Morgenthau, the particular ranking was obvious since 'most institutions and students have turned to the study of international relations because of their interest in world politics'.[40]

Though Morgenthau finds coherence in international relations in the core provided by international politics, this is underpinned by an assumption regarding the nature of politics and thus the necessary characteristics of political science. The argument in favour of international politics is clear '[f]or all those at least whose general philosophy of man and society suggests the paramount importance of politics, conceived as a struggle for power among individuals and groups.'[41] But Morgenthau's lack of confidence in the current state of political science itself as an academic discipline is revealed in his prescription for the academic organisation of international relations which was not, perhaps surprisingly, necessarily subordinated within Departments of Political Science. Instead, in a clear echo of his concern with the unfocused character of international relations, he advocated separate, dedicated departments, schools or institutes of international politics in cases where the present Departments of Political Science 'offer a disparate collection of courses whose

[36] C. A. W. Manning, 'Naughty Animal – A Discipline Chats Back', *International Relations*, 1:4 (1955), pp. 133–5; 'Out to Grass', *International Relations*, 2:6 (1962), pp. 365–6.
[37] Manning, *International Relations*, p. 60.
[38] Morgenthau, 'Area Studies and the Study of International Relations'. The timing and venue of this publication marks it out as an important intervention in the consideration of the status of the ISC with respect to UNESCO.
[39] Morgenthau, 'Area Studies and the Study of International Relations', p. 647.
[40] Ibid., p. 654. Indeed he was so confident of this he suggested (at p. 655) that 'the primacy of politics over all other interests . . . needs only to be mentioned to be recognized'.
[41] Ibid., p. 655.

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common denominator is a vague and general relation to the activities of the State'.[42] Morgenthau's argument for coherence in the study of international relations rests on an argument for the coherence and future direction of political science which he worries is at that time itself disparate and unfocused.

As impressive these arguments might be, however, they cannot represent a compelling case for the termination of the ISC. Why did the political science viewpoint as expressed by the IPSA, that it had a monopoly on international relations and that as a corollary, the ISC was redundant, win through? The intellectual debate could, surely, have gone either way. Indeed, with the prior existence of the ISC and the hugely increased salience of international concerns, one might have expected a magnified echo of the earlier postwar disciplinary development of chairs, departments and institutes of international relations. The course of history rarely follows purely logical dictates, however, and the political science position seems to have won out as a result of a combination of personal, disciplinary and power political factors.

Though a new organisation, the IPSA had a number of advantages over the ISC. First of all, though it was new, it had the backing of both UNESCO itself, being a creature of UNESCO, as well as being underpinned by APSA. ISC had no such international or national support. In a sense both ISC and IPSA were products of a top-down process. The ISC was a manifestation of intellectual cooperation among an elite selection of academics based on a variety of national arrangements. IPSA as a creature of UNESCO had a mandate to encourage the creation of new national political sciences associations in its likeness in a world where political science was far from universally acknowledged as a separate academic discipline and in a world where political studies (for example, in the UK) and political sciences (for example, in France) rivalled political science. IPSA's top-down model thrived; the ISC's more variable approach withered.

Second, given its breadth of interests, IPSA rapidly became a much larger organisation than the ISC, although not immediately in terms of international coverage or institutional membership. Third, the creation of IPSA, deliberately or not, generated competition between IPSA and ISC because, at the very least, there was a significant overlap of the membership of the two organisations. For instance, Quincy Wright who became the first President of the IPSA had attended an ISC conference before the war. This overlap of membership contributed to the impression that the wider scope of the IPSA rendered the ISC redundant, even though this ignored the different broader range of the ISC.[43] The sheer size of the American academy working on international relations also contributed to the ascendancy of the view of IR as a political science subfield.

Fourth, the IPSA benefited from the leadership of prominent academics, a number of whom specialised in international relations. That the international organisation of political scientists should prominently feature those interested in international relations is hardly surprising. Among political scientists who would be interested in the international cooperation of political scientists, it should be expected that a good number would be those whose research and teaching involved a focus on

[42] Ibid., p. 655.

[43] One testament to the interdisciplinary breadth of the ISC is that American representation at one of the interwar ISC conferences was made up almost entirely of economists.

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international politics. As well as Wright, the early development of the IPSA involved among others, Raymond Aron, who chaired the first meeting that founded the organisation.

Finally and of critical strategic importance, the IPSA had the good fortune to be well represented in UNESCO's Department of Social Sciences. That American political scientists, such as Walter R. Sharp, should be centrally involved in the Department should not surprise anyone. This was important for the fate of the ISC, though, because it meant that the view that international relations was intrinsically a part of political science, and no more than that, was well represented in UNESCO decisions regarding the ISC. The decisions reflected not only American global reach as manifested in this case in UNESCO, it was conditioned by disciplinary politics including the overwhelming presence of APSA in the IPSA as well as attitudes on the place of international relations in American academe.

Conclusion

There were range of causes and a number of 'villains' in the demise of the International Studies Conference. The ISC was a victim of being rather out of time after the Second World War, and indeed from the perspective of today it very much looks like a relic of a bygone era of international academic organisation. It suffered from a certain ineptitude with respect to its organisation. But it was also unfortunate to be tied so closely to the International Institute of Intellectual Cooperation and the League of Nations. It was caught running against the tide of academic and financial currents in the US that prior to the Second World War had supported the ISC and other international academic initiatives but which were now redirected to American national interests, ironically precisely because the US had until that time not been fully engaged in global international organisation. However, the ISC's fate was not only in its own hands and the force of circumstance. The disciplinary direction adopted by UNESCO quickly thwarted and thereafter stifled an organisation that might have thrived otherwise. Furthermore, UNESCO's direction regarding the social sciences was made all the more deadly for the ISC through the competition for funding, material support and, most of all, academic integrity from the International Political Science Association.

So what does the fate of the first experiment in international academic organisation on international relations tell us? Did it matter? Does its termination have any special significance? There are things to learn from the existence of the ISC, its demise and the timing of its demise, and even that the ISC is now almost completely forgotten. Why this part of disciplinary history is almost completely lost is an important story that cannot be told here. But three implications of the existence and demise of the ISC make it more than a footnote in the disciplinary history of IR.

First, the International Studies Conference precedes the creation of the International Studies Association. That ISA was founded very shortly after the end of the earlier organisation undercuts the suggestion that it was an interdisciplinary organisation created in order to remedy disciplinary limitations; interdisciplinary international academic cooperation already had already existed. Indeed, a comparison to the ISC demonstrates that the ISA was not only not novel, it also highlights

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its American-centric and political science-dominated character. For academic IR, the ISA amounts to the recreation of the wheel with the American flag branded on it.

Remembering the existence and global scope of the ISC gives a new context and significance to the first World International Studies Conference held in Turkey in 2005 and the committee of a number of national international studies associations behind it. This may not be the first global international studies association, as has been claimed, but it is reviving an important effort and the fact that the impetus came from Europe is another parallel with the ISC. At the same time, remembering the ISC also casts a somewhat different light on the ISA's attempts to become a global association that foundered during the 1990s. And the fate of the ISC at the hands of UNESCO has implications for the relations of the global academic IR community with UNESCO. As a national association, ISA could never claim the same status as IPSA, the International Economics Association and the International Sociological Association in UNESCO's International Social Science Council (ISSC). But what happened to the ISC suggests that even the World International Studies Committee (WISC) would remain an affiliate rather than a full member.[44]

In the case of the UK, the ISC national committee, the British Coordinating Committee for International Studies, significantly influenced the direction of academic organising in international relations. Its conferences, subsequently called the Bailey Conferences after an early luminary, were a forerunner of the conferences of the British International Studies Association. And the fact that the funding of those conferences by grants from the Rockefeller Foundation and the Carnegie Endowment was redirected in the decades after the Second World War to the closed meetings of the British Committee on the Theory of International Politics suggests some American origins of the English School of International Relations.[45]

Second, the ISC complicates the story of the relationship between international relations and political science. In terms of international academic organisation, the ISC precedes the creation of the IPSA by two decades. This means that the story of a disciplinary political science upon which interdisciplinary international relations (or studies) might then be based will not hold water. The story of the ISC shows that interdisciplinary IR was undermined by disciplinary competition from the IPSA. At the time of the IPSA's formation, securing disciplinary coherence of a singular political science relied on the inclusion of international politics, named conventionally international relations, and interdisciplinary organisation of

[44] A key organisational promoter of the WISC has been the Standing Group for International Relations of the European Consortium for Political Research. Apparently, ISA is ready to hand over membership of the ISSC to WISC but the near moribund nature of the ISSC leaves many in both organisations feeling this is far from being a critical issue.

[45] The model of intellectual cooperation of the British Committee follows much more closely that of the ISC in its limited and closed group character than do BISA conferences, but there was no pretence that this would be an organisation representing the British International Relations community. In fact, the British Committee arguably does a better job of being genuinely interdisciplinary than does ISA; the dominance of historians such as Butterfield and Wight is evident. The exclusion of Charles Manning from the British Committee, a bone of contention among historians of the English School, also looks different when one realises that Manning was a leading light in the earlier committee, only to be excluded from the later one's meetings. For some of the controversy, see *Cooperation and Conflict*, Symposium on International Society, 35:2 (2000). Suganami has claimed that when BISA was first being formed, Manning suggested that there be a European organisation. His involvement in the ISC might be a reason why. See Hidemi Suyanami, 'C. A. W. Manning and the Study of International Relations', *Review of International Studies*, 27:1 (2001), p. 93.

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international relations was viewed as a challenge and/or as academically dubious. The demise of the ISC is a corollary of the construction of what Stanley Hoffmann might more accurately have described as the American political science of international relations and the narrowing of international relations from its earlier interdisciplinary origins.

Finally, explaining the timing and nature of the demise of the ISC has important implications for the disciplinary history of International Relations as a scholarly pursuit. The traditional story has it that the Second World War revealed the false optimism and misplaced idealism of the earlier phase of IR scholarship, even if a few prescient scholars, such as Carr, were already warning their colleagues. The story of the ISC up until the war seems to fit into this traditional realist account very well. The reality of international politics intruded into its utopian discussions of collective security, peaceful change and world trading systems in Prague in 1938 and Bergen in 1939, ultimately overrunning the organisation itself in Paris in 1940. But the ISC didn't cease to function between 1939 and 1945. It continued into the postwar period, generating a serious anomaly for a realist account of the end of the ISC.[46]

One alternative to realist historiography suggests that, rather than merely reflecting on the realities of the international system, the content and concerns of the academic study of IR are directly shaped by the events of and power in the international system. IR is not simply the science of power politics as realists have it but power politics determines academic politics too. This externalist account highlights the importance of the rise to dominance of American power in postwar international relations and the Cold War context.[47] Often this is taken to be exemplified by the argument presented in Stanley Hoffmann's reading of International Relations as an American social science: dominance of American views of and approaches to International Relations is a function of US dominance of the real world of international relations.[48] The fate of the ISC certainly shows how external factors and forces, specifically US power and interests, shape disciplinary currents and organisation. But it also shows that intermediary factors – academic institutions as well as ideas of the nature and status of academic disciplines – also matter a great deal, creating problems for a purely externalist account and suggesting that understanding the ISC requires understanding academic disciplinary developments as much as or more than the geopolitical or global economic contexts.

The history of the ISC shows that US dominance of academic international relations was conditioned by the status and power of academic organisations and individuals to influence the course of events. What mattered was not simply crude military and political power but influence in national and international institutions, norms and mores concerning the role of academics and academic institutions, as well as ideas and beliefs about the substantive content of academic studies. The

[46] And adding to the problems that this account has more generally. For a critique, see Peter Wilson, 'The Myth of the First Great Debate', *Review of International Studies*, 24:5 (1998).

[47] For an explanation of external and internal explanations in disciplinary history, see Brian Schmidt, 'The Historiography of International Relations', *Review of International Studies*, 1994.

[48] This is an especially narrow reading of Hoffmann's article, however, which is actually as much about the particular disciplinary development of International Relations as it is about the importance of factors associated with the Cold War.

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dominance, then, of American views of international relations is clear but how that played out has to do with institutional settting, standards of behaviour and concepts of social scientific disciplines.

Brian Schmidt has argued for what he calls a critical internal approach to disciplinary history: a satisfactory explanation of the development of academic International Relations has to address the actual conversations and currents within the academy itself.[49] In this view, the fate of the ISC must be wrapped up not in the dominance of American military power but the dominance of American political science and political scientists and their views of what IR was, as well as the relative frailty of the alternative views of IR. But even Schmidt's internal approach is not sufficient if we concentrate our attention on disciplinary conversations as manifested in published books and articles.[50] The story of the ISC shows the importance of institutional setting; the ISC, IPSA and UNESCO are all international organisations. The story of the ISC suggests that disciplinary history must pay attention to institutions, especially academic institutions. While the ISC was only one small part of the institutionalisation of academic International Relations, consideration of this organisation points to a curious lacuna and inconsistency in the disciplinary history of International Relations. Schmidt has challenged the traditional story of IR's origins after the First World War in the Chair of International Politics at Aberystwyth.[51] It would seem evident that the contested story of origins must be told with reference to academic institutions: departments, chairs and so on. Unfortunately, the focus of disciplinary history has mainly been on the authors and the academic texts of the 'prehistory' of IR. Disciplinary history is not just an unencumbered conversation among academics through the medium of their published work but is as much a story shaped by power struggles, rent-seeking behaviour, institutional path dependency, historical inertia, and personal animus pure and simple. It is explained by disciplinary discourses, disciplinary and political power, and institutional setting.

Besides the historiographical implications, International Relations scholars still live with the decisions made in the late 1940s and early 1950s of which the story of the ISC is a part. A discipline is a set of concepts, theories and methods, a subject matter and an institutionalised academic community using the theories, concepts and methods to study that subject matter. Without institutionalisation, a discipline can barely be said to exist. Rediscovering the forgotten ISC should allow IR scholars to take stock of where IR came from and why it is as it is. And it should make us reconsider whether staying within disciplinary confines established after the Second World War still makes sense, if it ever did; what the scholarly, institutional and bureaucratic/disciplinary political costs of disciplinary subordination have been; and what might now be done about it.

[49] Brian Schmidt, *The Political Discourse of Anarchy* (New York: SUNY Press, 1998); and Brian Schmidt and David Long, 'Introduction', to Long and Schmidt (eds.), *Imperialism and Internationalism in the Discipline of International Relations* (New York: SUNY Press, 2005).

[50] To be clear, an externalist account of academic institutions is certainly also possible, in which those institutions are interpreted solely as reflections of power and interests.

[51] For example, David Long and Peter Wilson, *Thinkers of the Twenty Years' Crisis* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1995).

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Meetings of the International Studies Conference

1928 Berlin
1929 London
1930 Paris
1931 Copenhagen
1932 Milan
1933 London
1934 Paris
1935 London
1936 Madrid
1937 Paris
1938 Prague
1939 Bergen
1946 Paris
1949 Paris
1950 Windsor*

*ISC Meeting on the Study of International Relations. This list of conferences does not record executive committee and administrative meetings.

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