

**Cultural Dimension of International Relations During Interwar
Period: International Institute for Intellectual Cooperation and the
Scientific Study of International Relations**

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Abstract: Our understanding of the past is highly influenced/leaded by the “lens” (readings, ideologies, etc.) that have guided us through approaching realities of a specific period of time. In this article, we will discuss the cultural dimension of international relations characteristic for the interwar period, emphasizing, while tracing back on Romanian historiography, the aspects regarding the role that the International Institute of Intellectual Cooperation had in organizing the scientific study of IR and the specific participation of Romania within this *League of Nations’ body activity*.

Keywords: League of Nations; International Institute of Intellectual Cooperation; idealism; realism

The idea regarding the confrontational debate between interwar liberal idealism and realism and its new disproof are almost common places for those who study the organization of the academic discipline of international relations (Biro, 2006, p. 78). After 1989, with a Romanian state barely out of the communist sphere/camp, while being confronted as well with the issue of redefining its foreign policy objectives and its reposition on an international level, it was preferred to translate the works reflecting the status on which the domain’s research has reached, basically the fundamental works belonging to realism’s representatives respectively to political neorealism¹. The offered perspective of these projects mediated for an entire generation of researchers the way in which the idealist paradigm has been understood.

¹ It was either a determined preference by affinities, construction, contacts of those involved, either determined by the accessibility of the texts or perception of that time’s needs, an analysis would be interested to realize. The thing is that Polirom Publishing House of Iasi published in Collegium Colection – International Relations a Manual for Political Science in 2005 and another one for International Relations in 2006 (tools by which it is tried that beside connecting to discipline, synchronization as well) the main works signed by Hans Morgenthau, Kenneth Waltz etc.

The approach used vis-a-vis the interwar period from the perspective of one of the main organizations of the League of Nations' activity, the Organization for Intellectual Cooperation, favored the understanding and practical access towards some documents of the International Institute for Intellectual Cooperation, which helped in understanding from a new perspective this period of the autonomous discipline of International Relations.

Considering the following information, we will approach the international context of the League of Nations' establishment and the status of the International Institute for Intellectual Cooperation in the general framework and its philosophy so that the discourse will be afterwards focused on the extent of scientific study of international relations within the institute's grounds. Conclusions will be drawn vis-a-vis reflections illustrated in examined documents of the main issues of international relations available during that era, and references will be made on the contributions and the meaning of Romanian's representatives' activity within the League of Nations in the broader context.

Coming back to this problematic, is highly useful given the fact that *idealism – or utopic liberalism* – contains vital subjects of contemporary world politics (Richardson 1997, p.5, *apud* Biro, 2006, pp. 79) given the fact that it is considered as the "first phase of liberal characteristics. It is followed by a second one, developed in the 50s' and the 70s', being represented by Karl Deutsch, David Mitrany, known by connection to functional theory of integration, Ernest Haas associated with neo-functionalism, followed by Robert Keohane and Joseph Nye, initiators of the complex interdependency theory and neoliberal institutionalism which opposed them, in the 80s', to Kenneth Waltz's neoliberalism, by the 90s', which present influences, assisting to democratic peace theory. (Jackson, Sørensen, 2003, *apud* Biro, 2006, pp. 78-79)

In the same time, although the problem of activity that Romania had within the League of Nations was illustrated in numerous monographs with valuable conclusions, taking into consideration the era, even since 1975, respectively 1988, (Bărbulescu, 1975; Mihai Iacobescu, 1988) or by volumes dedicated to the activity of contemporary political figures (Buzatu, 1982), after the revolution, the Romanian historiography records only occasional approaches by the developed studies and projects dedicated to the problematic of the elites, educational history or by publishing volumes of correspondence or monographs of that time's known personalities (Cărbunaru, 2013; Bragaru, 2013).

The First World War has profoundly shaken the humanity, and the Versailles System of treaties had to correspond to the need for a sustainable peace promoting organization as well as to the emergence of a new international order which would eliminate the possibilities of the new war. A prominent role in this sense was given to the League of Nations, conceived/ as the organization/ institutional representative body that would judicially organize the partnership among states (Iacobescu, 1988, p. 47; Maftei, 2010, p. 22). The League of Nations was an instrument to peace keeping, having its basis on a particular philosophy, the one focusing on the interwar liberal internationalism. What was desired was to surpass the international anarchy, which practically led to (former) war by creating this institution which would guarantee the guidance of the rule of law.

The Treaty of the League of Nations had the purpose of becoming a “constitution of all constitutions”, which would ensure the reorganization of international relations on the principle of “regulated freedom”, extrapolating the similar principle within domestic, national politics, to an international level and applied at that point, to states. (Laqua, 2011, p. 226; Daşcovici, 1935, pp. 37-38) National sovereignty is limited to a new international judicial order. New connections were established, as Nicolae Dascovici mentioned: “above the individual the society, above the state organized human kind, international community.” (Daşcovici, 1935, p. 38)

The political dimension of peace instauration was doubled by a cultural perspective, a moral one, of a new order that would ensure solidarity for this ambitious construction. The democratic aspect was emphasized within the structure of the League of Nations through representative roles, equality and inclusive character. Even if extending the rule of law’s role and surpassing anarchy was realized by the existing authority of the “confederation” represented by the League of Nations, a new war took place and the liberal idealism failed. As Daniel Laqua stated, the difficulties that it faced came as a result of the fact that it had to serve as the starting point of a new international order, based upon structures that would relate to the previous, older order, the states. (Laqua, 2011, pp. 246-247)

Within the League of Nations, the Organization for Intellectual Cooperation was founded, which had a Commission for International Intellectual Cooperation (constituted in 1922), with 17 members named by the Council of League of Nations and which would have an Executive Committee from 1930 (Daşcovici, 1935, p. 64). On a national level, this Commission corresponds to National

Commissions for Intellectual Cooperation. The National Commission for Intellectual Cooperation of Romania was founded in 1925 by the initiative of Romanian Academy, with governmental support and it was reorganized in 1929. (Iacobescu, 1988, p. 243; Carbutaru, 2013, p. 138) First, it was managed by Vasile Parvan, then by Gh. Titeica, as for the commission's secretary, the role was taken by Dr. Gh. Marinescu, replaced afterwards by Al. Busuioceanu. Among the members, also, Nicolae Iorga, Alexandru Lapedatu, Elena Vacarescu, Ovid Densusianu, Ioan Dragu, DimitieGusti, Constantin Chiritescu, Emil Racovita, etc were representative (Iacobescu, 1988, p. 244). At the meetings, rectors of the four universities in Iasi, Bucuresti, Cernauti and Cluj joined. (Carbutaru, 2013, p. 13)

Corresponding to the League of Nations' Assembly, the Organization for Intellectual Cooperation had an individual organization called the International Institute of Intellectual Cooperation. Created in 1924, this would have its headquarters in Paris and it was the main executive body of the Commission for International Intellectual Cooperation.

In the main publication of the International Institute for Intellectual Cooperation, entitled "La Cooperation Intellectuelle/The Intellectual Cooperation", of January the 15th, 1929, Julien Luchaire, director of the Institute, was referring at "the world as an intellectual construction", emphasizing that "the world of tomorrow would be a single structure build upon three structures: political organization, economic organization, intellectual organization". (Luchaire, 1929, p. 196)

When it came to intellectual cooperation, its content as a reference for transforming the international order, Daniel Laqua insists in its research, proposing a multiple structured approach which would allow drawing an intellectual order in definite support to a systematic structure that encompasses international relations, classification of ideas and a specific attribute offered to intellectual as a whole (Laqua, 2011, p.226). In this given context, the author emphasis the fact that intellectual cooperation was based upon the exact structures that was supposed to transform. He mentioned, in relation to the organization of the first series of meetings upon the problematic of peace, organized in august 1926 by the Geneva Institute, the fact that in the opening ceremony, Alfred Zimmern talked about "The development of the International Mind", a process that was determinate by attitudes which resemble to "a life in a room with windows which open o larger perspective upon the world." (Laqua, 2011, p. 223) In the same sense, Paul Valery stated in 1932 that "a society of nations assumes a society of spirits" (*List of*

Publications of the International Institute of Intellectual Cooperation (IICI), 1925-1946, p. 2) and Gilbert Murray, the president of the Commission for International Intellectual Cooperation emphasized the fact that he expected a wise world governing processes as a result from intellectual cooperation.

The International Institute of Intellectual Cooperation organized the Permanent Conference of International Studies in 1934, where it was underlined that "in regard to psychology, social sciences or even *this mixture of social sciences and psychology called the science of international relations* almost everything is to be made." Toynbee observed then that moral progress did not keep up with material progress. He also pointed out that the issue of creating human security against human himself was perceived as a task of spiritual science, a soul's science. (Intellectual Cooperation, no. 37, 1934, p. 193)

The first conference of institutions which had the purpose of scientifically studying the international relations took place in Berlin in March 1928 (Intellectual Cooperation, no. 15, January, 1929, p. 88).

A set of questions sent by the International Institute of Intellectual Cooperation was about to be completed and a report containing recommendations of the conference lead to adopting of a resolution in June 1928 by the International Commission for intercultural Cooperation, which would prepare the second conference dedicated to "The High International Studies (political and economic sciences)".

This one took place in London between 11-14 March 1929, Each country who possessed one or more institutions for international higher studies sent its delegate. On Romania's side, the representative of the Romanian Social Institute participated. In 1929, Simion Mehedinti's work was published, entitled *The School of Peace. The pacifist Spirit of the Romanian School* (Intellectual Cooperation, no. 15, January, 1929, p.324). The problems of international cooperation were debated in reference to the exchange of publications, the bibliography, research centers, academic exchanges, recognition of diplomas in the domain of study. The discussion emphasized the problems of organizing further contacts between institution and it was debated the initiative of an international conference, of international relations academicians, where the Royal institute of International Affairs and the London School of Economics and Political Sciences would play a major role. (Intellectual Cooperation, no. 15, Jan., 1929, p. 88)

At the conference participated the Hague International Law Academy the Geneva International Studies Institute, The Pacific Relations Institute from Honolulu, 33 national institutes for scientific study of international relations from Germany, Austria, Canada, Denmark, USA, France, Great Britain, Japan, Poland, Romania, Switzerland, Czechoslovakia, (Intellectual Cooperation, no. 15, January 1929, p. 154)

Before the Conference from 1928, a similar problematic subject was analyzed only by the two representative, biggest schools activating in the area, the Political Sciences Liberal School of Paris, founded in 1871, as an expression of the national effort of scientific reflection on the French-German war and the Consular Academy of Vienna.

In November 1925, the European Center Carnegie Endowment organized under the name of Carnegie Chair, an assembly of conferences, courses and free debates on "current relations among nations". The main subjects were focused on reorganizing the Danubian Europe, the new Polish state, the problematic of the Black Sea and its Straits, the problematic of the Baltic Sea. The same institution organized by 1928-1929 series of conferences on "the after War ethnic minorities' regimes and treaties." (Intellectual Cooperation, no. 15, Jan. 1929, p.155)

Within the League of Nations, universities were considered forces that could help the international spirit and in this sense the Committee of Experts would suggest the creation within each university of special chairs, dedicated to the study of international relations in order to create a nucleus of specialists in the domain of international organization.

The idea is supported as well by the Conference of institutions for scientific study of international relations from London. It was focused on the conceptualization of international relations, not as "a simple subject of study and special research but as an object of preoccupation for students of each specialization, in other words nation's intellectual elite." (Intellectual Cooperation, no. 15, January 1929, p. 277). It was recommended to organize within universities of one or multiple special courses, each of at least six conferences followed up by all students, held by prominent professors, in such a way that the interest for the problematic of international relations would become a preoccupation for a larger number of students. In the same sense, the League of Nations secretary published a brochure entitled the *Objectives of the League of Nations*, communicated to all governments of the member states which was divided in two parts, a commentary added for the

Pact and a presentation of the League of Nations' historical emergence, of its objectives, the working methods as well as of the International Permanent Court of Justice as well as of the International Organization of Labor. It was stated that the specific problematic could be taught separately or as a chapter in the history courses. (*Intellectual Cooperation*, 1930, p. 293) Also, a political terms dictionary was initiated by Haas

The preoccupation for the knowledge of the League of Nations' objectives and activities is proved by the simulation of League of Nations' activities realized within the amphitheater of University of South California, on the initiative of the University of International Relations from Los Angeles (*Intellectual Cooperation*, no. 15, Jan. 1929, p. 294).

The Institute of Pacific Relations which had the purpose of studying life conditions of the riparian people of Pacific, in order to improve their relations, it represented the people and not the governments and it had its headquarters in Honolulu. Problems such as the migration of populations, economic resources, commercial relations, the administration of Pacific states, diplomatic relations, cultural relations as well as contemporary political issues.(issues of Manciuria), the disarmament processes taking place in the Pacific area were debated within the same scientific environment (Hooper, 1988, p. 100).

Its first two congresses were organized in Honolulu in 1925 and 1927 and the third took place in Kyoto in Japan in October 1929. The fourth congress took place in Batavia, between 15 and 28 May, 1931 and the fifth one took place in Canada, in 1932. (*Intellectual Cooperation*, January 1929, p. 294)

A significant role in the field of IR studying processes is given to the Higher International Studies Institute of Geneva, founded in 1927, managed by Paul Matoux, author of a course on international problems in New Europe and by W. Rappard, author of conferences about contemporary economic problems. (*Intellectual Cooperation*, no. 15, Jan. 1929, p.448)

An inventory of the representative institutions for the study of international relations were announced in the publication of the International Institute of Intellectual Cooperation (IICI) that registered 40 research centers and higher education institutions of political sciences, economics international law from Europe and the United States, which was about to be published in three editions:

French, German and English (*Intellectual Cooperation*, 15 December, 1929, p. 867).

It can be easily observed that idealism/ interwar liberal internationalism was emphasizing especially the study of international law as an instrument that would regulate the relations between states in the sense of peace keeping and international security. Collective security conferences and disarmament conferences took place in conditions where diplomats and law representatives commonly joined forces in trying to reach the concrete practical results. The contribution of the Romanian diplomat Nicolae Titulescu, who called himself one of the “idealist accomplishees/*idealisti faptuitori*” would bring him international recognition proved with his election of 1926 as the vice-president of the Diplomatic Academy of Paris, established at Gh. Marinescu’s proposal, but also as a permanent delegate of Romania and president of League of Nations’ Assembly with two successive mandates, in 1930 and 1931 (Titulescu, *Discursuri/Discourses*, p. 319).

In order to build that “society of spirits”, as mentioned by Paul Valery, IICI realized publications that would reflect its efforts and contribution in that direction, under the circumstances of a “changing world”. The *List of Publications of the International Institute for Intellectual Cooperation* (IICI) 1925-1946 prepared by the UNESCO Archive Section starting from the *List* issued by IICI in 1945 mentioned the *Collections* (the known “Entretiens” and “Correspondence” but also “Cahiers”, Collection of Dossiers of International Cooperation and Scientific Collections, the “Volumes” (among which, Social Sciences and International Relations, Danubian Studies) and Periodical publications¹ Even just by enouncing its highest accomplishments, one could illustrate the relevance of its involvement towards the problematic of scientific study for international relations of the time as well as the role that the International Institute of Intellectual Cooperation assumed in this domain.

The most important *Collections* by their influence and echo were those on *The Future of the Culture*, organized in Madrid, between 3th and 7th of May 1933 and *The Future of the European Spirit*, organized at Paris from 16th to 18th of October by the French Committee for European Cooperation and chaired by Paul Valery. Among the *Collections* Correspondence, the most relevant are the volumes entitled

¹ *List of Publications of the International Institute of Intellectual Cooperation*, 1946, Paris, p. 3, [online] <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0009/000928/092853fb.pdf>.

For a society of spirits (1933), *Why war?* (1933), *Spirit, Ethics and War* (1934), *Civilizations: East –West, Genius of North Latinity* (1935) etc.

For the history of the ideas promoted by the IICI very important are the descriptive abstracts on the activity in all areas of the Institute (1931-1938), entitled *The Year of the Intellectual Cooperation*. More applied to the realities of the International relations were the *Volumes* as: *Handbook of Institutions for the scientific Study of International Relations* (1929), *Centers of Reference for International Affairs* (1931), *Collective Security* (1936), *The International Studies Conferences* (1937) *The International Study in the Contemporary Education* (1938), *International Relations in Higher Education* (1938), or *Peaceful Change of the International Relations* (1939).

Chronology of the political and economic events in the Danube Basin 1918-1936 for Romania, Yugoslavia, Bulgaria, Austria, Hungary , Czechoslovakia were published and also some useful volumes concerning the international relations at the higher education level.¹

Conclusions

The systematic study of international affairs and the delimitation of the new scientific discipline of International Relations was a response to the First World War hoping that by analyzing the causes of war it will be possible to prevent the outbreak of a new war.

Society of Nations by the Intellectual Cooperation Organization with its executive organ, International Institute of Intellectual Cooperation assumed the task of doubling the political dimension of peace instauration with a cultural dimension, intellectual one that would assure strength to the new construction.

The importance given to the supporters of idealism/interwar liberal internationalism upon the study of international law as an instrument that would regulate inter-state relations, in the sense of peace keeping and international security was invoked by the “representatives of the realist project”, in order to underline the advantages of its own vision that would highlight the international politics study. (Biro, 2006, p. 86)

¹ *List of Publications of the International Institute for Intellectual Cooperation (IICI) 1925-1946*, pp. 2-12, <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0009/000928/092853fb.pdf>.

The idealist/interwar paradigm showed the liberal understanding of the previous century from an international point of view, trying to overcome the specific anarchy of the space by judicial regulations of the freedom of actions that states have.

This initiative to create a new order based on the most important actors of the old one justified, partially, the failure of the project and the emergence of the Second World War.

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