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RESEARCH ARTICLE

The International Studies Conference, peaceful change, and the transformation of international studies in the United States during the prewar and wartime years

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Abstract

This article examines the relationship between the International Studies Conference (ISC), the question of peaceful change, and the study of international relations (IR) in the United States. It argues that the prewar and wartime years constituted a pivotal moment in the disciplinary history of American International Relations, particularly in terms of the transformation of the field from prewar international studies into postwar IR; and that the ISC and its American committee offer a valuable vantage point for observing the dynamics and stakes involved in this transformation. The growing urgency of peaceful change during the 1930s imbued the ISC and its American committee with unprecedented significance for U.S. scholars in the field, promoting in the process a framework for international studies that favoured international and interdisciplinary collaboration as well as multi-conceptual perspectives. Disappointment with the results of ISC deliberations on peaceful change, however, undermined the ISC-associated framework, boosting in the process another framework centred in and on the United States as well as on 'power politics'. The growing ascendency of this second framework would mark IR in the United States, providing fertile terrain for the postwar emergence of realism.

Keywords: Historical International Relations; International Studies Conference; peaceful change; realism; United States

Scholars working in Historical International Relations (HIR) have rediscovered the International Studies Conference (ISC). An international non-governmental organization founded in 1928 and loosely linked to the League of Nations, the ISC fostered cross-national collaboration between 'national institutions engaged in the scientific study of international affairs'.[1] The organization was notably active during the 1930s, falling into somnolence during the Second World War before undergoing a brief but ultimately unsuccessful revival after 1945. Attention to the ISC allows HIR scholars to underscore several features of international studies during the interwar years. One is its multi-disciplinary nature: ISC participants represented a broad range of expertise, including politics, law, economics, geology, and demography. Another is the field's international and especially transatlantic scope: participants came from North America, Europe, and occasionally beyond. A third feature is conceptual diversity. Peter Wilson and Brian Schmidt among others have debunked the myth of a first great debate in international relations (IR) during the interwar years from which realism supposedly emerged in reaction to idealism. In line with this debunking,

[1] F. Chalmers Wright, *The International Studies Conference: Origins, Functions, Organisation* (Paris: IIIC, 1937), pp. 11–13.

the ISC encompassed a panoply of perspectives on international politics, none of which can be neatly categorized as realist or idealist.[2]

To be sure, some scholars cast a more critical gaze on the ISC. Building on the work of Robert Vitalis and others on the racist and imperial origins of IR as a field during the interwar years, Tomoko Akami characterizes the ISC as Western-centric, working to disqualify 'non-Euro-American' thinking about IR despite the occasional presence of non-Westerners. Likewise, Peter Marcus Kristensen considers the ISC as 'a site for uncovering the imperial-colonial legacies on the institutionalisation of IR', before concluding that its activities 'were entangled with the imperialist and racialised policies of the inter-war period'.[3] An intersecting research current enlarges the canon of international studies' forerunners to include marginalized and excluded voices, especially those of women, visible minorities, and non-Westerners. Given its overwhelmingly male, white, and Western membership, the ISC undoubtedly contributed to processes of silencing.[4] Nevertheless, for all its evident limits, prejudices, and exclusions, international studies during the interwar years – as seen through the ISC – appears to have been a remarkably international, inter-disciplinary, and conceptually diverse enterprise.

If so, we are left with a puzzle regarding the history of international studies in the United States. How did a flourishing interwar field of study, notable for its multi-disciplinary, multi-national, and multi-conceptual aspects, become postwar IR, a discipline Stanley Hoffmann famously described as '[b]orn and raised in America', closely associated with political science, and with realism as its dominant paradigm?[5] Admittedly, Americans never possessed a monopoly on IR – a point IR's recent 'global turn' underscores.[6] That said, since 1945, American influence on IR has been considerable, even predominant, a product of the United States' immense power in the international realm, the abundant resources of its higher education system, and the growing ubiquity of English. Developments in the United States thus were (and remain) hugely consequential for IR in general.

Notwithstanding this importance, the transformation of the American field from international studies to IR has received little attention in HIR. One reason is that disciplinary histories of IR tend to enfold the United States into a larger transatlantic or Anglosphere, effectively obscuring national particularities.[7] Another and probably more weighty reason is the tendency to view IR's postwar disciplinary consolidation as a natural outgrowth of international politics, with IR riding

[2]Jan Stöckmann, *The Architects of International Relations: Building a Discipline, Designing the World, 1914-1940* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2022), pp. 136–40, 186–93, 267–74; Jo-Anne Pemberton, *The Story of International Relations, Part Two: Cold-Blooded Idealists* (London: Palgrave, 2019) and *Part Three: Cold-Blooded Realists* (London: Palgrave, 2020); Michael Riemans, 'International academic cooperation on international relations in the interwar period: The International Studies Conference', *Review of International Studies*, 37:2 (2011), pp. 911–28; and David Long, 'Who killed the International Studies Conference?' *Review of International Studies*, 32:4 (2006), pp. 603–22.

For the first great debate, see Peter Wilson, 'The myth of the first great debate', *Review of International Studies*, 24:5 (1998), pp. 1–15; and Brian C. Schmidt, 'Lessons of the past: Reassessing the interwar disciplinary history of International Relations', *International Studies Quarterly*, 42:3 (1998), pp. 433–59.

[3]Tomoko Akami, 'Missed opportunities to be global: Conversion and diversion of the scientific knowledge of international relations of the International Studies Conference and the Institute of Pacific Relations', *Mondes(s)*, 19 (2021), pp. 183–202; and Peter Marcus Kristensen, 'Subject matters: Imperialism and the constitution of international relations', *Review of International Studies*, 49:3 (2023), pp. 448–70 and 450 and 468. More generally, see Robert Vitalis, *White World Order, Black Power Politics: The Birth of American Foreign Relations* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2015); and Jessica Blatt, *Race and the Making of American Political Science* (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania, Press, 2018).

[4]Patricia Owens, Katharina Rietzler, Kimberly Hutchings, and Sarah C. Dunstan (eds), *Women's International Thought: Towards a New Canon* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2022); and Patricia Owens and Katharina Rietzler (eds), *Women's International Thought: A New History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2021).

[5]Stanley Hoffmann, 'An American social science: International relations', *Daedalus,* 106 (1977), p. 59.

[6]Amitav Acharya and Barry Buzan, *The Making of Global International Relations: Origins and Evolution of IR at its Centenary* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019); and Ole Weaver, 'The sociology of a not so international discipline: American and European developments in international relations', *International Organization*, 52 (1998), pp. 687–727.

[7]This tendency is notable in general histories of IR. See Torbjørn L. Knutsen, *A History of International Relations Theory* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2016), pp. 242–312; and Lucian M. Ashworth, *A History of International Thought: From the Origins of the Modern State to Academic International Relations* (London: Routledge, 2014), pp. 134–248. For a similar

to prominence on the coattails of the United States' ascendence to superpower status during the 1940s. The argument is often instrumentalist: with the Cold War's onset, Americans required a discipline capable of explaining and justifying their country's global activism. Referring to policymakers, Hoffmann thus wonders at the 'remarkable chronological convergence between their needs and the [IR] scholars' performance'.[8]

In spotlighting the transformation of international studies into IR in the United States, this article takes a different tack. Rather than a second-order effect, the transformation, it argues, was the product of dedicated political entrepreneurship during the prewar and wartime years. The ISC, it further contends, holds the key to understanding the dynamics and stakes involved. One reason the ISC does so is because its American committee embodied two competing frameworks for international studies: one framework, associated with the ISC, privileged multi-disciplinary, multi-national, and multi-conceptual approaches; the other, centred in and on the United States as well as on 'power politics', prefigured Hoffman's description of postwar IR. Another reason for the ISC's centrality concerns the question of peaceful change – of how to revise the international order, or major elements of it, by means other than war. The question animated the ISC's 1937 conference in Paris, the organization's premier activity during the decade. While HIR scholars have not ignored the ISC-peaceful change nexus, their interest is predominantly presentist oriented. With the 'liberal international order' facing mounting opposition, not least from supposedly revisionist powers such as China and Russia, peaceful change appears to be more relevant than ever. And if so, much supposedly can be learnt from earlier efforts to grapple with the challenge of revising an international order.[9]

Although there is nothing wrong with plumbing history for useful insights, in this particular case a search for contemporary relevance risks shrouding two noteworthy points: the vital contribution made by the question of peaceful change to international studies' transformation into IR in the United States; and the problematic nature of the question of peaceful change itself. On the first point, during the 1930s peaceful change increasingly preoccupied American specialists, provoking debate over how to revise the international status quo. Equally pertinent, the U.S. debate distinguished itself from others in its primary focus on the underlying processes and driving forces of international politics. It amounted to a far-reaching enquiry into the nature of the latter. Convincing answers, however, proved elusive: while recognizing the imperative of peaceful change, specialists failed to propose practical means to achieve it. The resulting impasse fuelled an immense investment in the ISC and its American committee under the direction of James Shotwell, a preeminent academic-policy entrepreneur, which in turn boosted the prospects of the ISC-associated framework for international studies.

The 1937 Paris ISC, however, dealt a powerful blow to this budding framework for international studies in the United States. Disappointment with the results of the Paris conference prompted the American committee to overhaul its membership and to distance itself from the ISC. One result is that the American committee began promoting a more U.S. and power political-centred framework for international studies. The question of peaceful change, moreover, proved central to this framework's growing appeal beyond the confines of the ISC's American committee. The article explores this relationship through the activities of Frederick Dunn, now largely forgotten but at

tendency among historians, see Or Rosenboim, *The Emergence of Globalism: Visions of World Order in Britain and the United States, 1939-1950* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2017).

[8]Hoffmann, 'An American social science', 47. Also see Jonathan Haslam, *No Virtue Like Necessity: Realist Thought in International Relations since Machiavelli* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2002), pp. 183–246.

[9]Torbjørn L. Knutsen, 'Peaceful change: The interwar era and the disciplinary context' in T.V. Paul et al. (eds), *The Oxford Handbook of Peaceful Change in International Relations* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2021), pp. 29–46; Peter Marcus Kristensen, 'Peaceful change after the World Wars' in ibid, pp. 47–66; idem, "Peaceful change' in international relations: A conceptual archaeology', *International Theory*, 13:1 (2021), pp. 36–67; and T.V. Paul, 'Recasting statecraft: International relations and strategies of peaceful change', *International Studies Quarterly*, 61:1 (2017), pp. 1–13.

the time a skilled academic operator.[10] Working through the ISC's American committee, Dunn helped to clarify the terms of the peaceful change debate in an influential 1937 study, which used the question to assess three conceptions of international politics: one centred on the state, one on world government, and one on international organizations. For Dunn, the comparison clearly favoured a state-centred conception that effectively ruled out peaceful change because no state, obliged to rely on 'self-help' for its security, could accept revision of the status quo at its expense. Afterwards, Dunn became a leading proponent of a U.S. and power-political-centred framework for international studies, mobilizing an expanding network of collaborators in support. By 1945, this framework appeared to be ascendant in the United States.

The U.S. and power politics-centred framework Dunn championed bore more than a family resemblance to what after 1945 became classical realism. Both proposed a state and power-politics oriented conception of international politics. These similarities, in turn, raise the question of the relationship between the two. In accounting for realism's genesis, HIR scholars have explored the contribution of an array of actors, among them: key thinkers, especially among émigrés, such as Hans Morgenthau; transatlantic networks going back to the early 20th century; conservative scholars reacting against the behaviouralist turn in the social sciences; and think tanks and private foundations.[11] Given this scholarship, it is tempting to present Dunn as another and underappreciated founder of realism. But Dunn himself is far less important than the framework for international studies he and others promoted. As the course of the debate on peaceful change elucidates, this framework, which embraced a state-oriented approach to international politics, prevailed over its rivals oriented more towards world government and international organization. This proved to be a pivotal development, for it cleared the conceptual space for classical realism's rapid emergence after 1945 within the crystallizing field of IR.

On the second point, that of the problematic nature of the question of peaceful change, much of the difficulty stems from the elusiveness of convincing answers. As the debate during the 1930s makes clear, devising means to revise the international order on a peaceful and voluntary basis proved impractical. The obstacles were/are enormous. And if so, it is perhaps work asking whether a useful purpose is served in approaching contemporary international politics through the vantage point of peaceful change.

Preparing for the ISC

Although Americans participated in the ISC from its founding in 1928, their active involvement dates from 1931 and the arrival of James Shotwell as chair of the U.S. committee to the International Committee on Intellectual Cooperation, a League of Nations sponsored organization under which the ISC operated. A Canadian-born professor of history and international politics at Columbia University, Shotwell was a consummate academic-policy entrepreneur endowed with boundless energy and ambition, well-honed diplomatic skills, and an international web of contacts. For much of the 1920s, he had pursued the twin goals of strengthening collective security and of implicating the United States more directly in this effort. Accordingly, Shotwell and his transatlantic

[10]William T.R. Fox, 'Frederick Sherwood Dunn and the American study of international relations', *World Politics*, 15:1 (1962), pp. 1–19.

[11]For émigrés, see Felix Rösch (ed), *Émigré Scholars and the Genesis of International Relations: A European Discipline in America?* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2014); and Alfons Söllner *Deutsche Politikwissenschaftler in der Emigration. Ihre Akkulturation und Wirkungsgeschichte. Mit einer Bibliographie* (Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag, 1996). For transatlantic networks, see Matthew Specter, *The Atlantic Realists: Empire and International Political Thought Between Germany and the United States* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2022). For behaviourism, see Nicolas Guilhot, *After the Enlightenment: Political Realism and International Relations in the Mid-Twentieth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017). For think tanks and foundations, see Guilhot (ed), *The Invention of International Relations Theory: Realism, the Rockefeller Foundation, and the 1954 Conference on Theory* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2011); David McCourt (ed), *American Power and International Theory at the Council on Foreign Relations, 1953-54* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2020); and the multiple contributions to the *International History Review*, 42:3 (2020).

collaborators lobbied to outlaw war by tying the definition of inter-state aggression to mandatory arbitration, while also urging greater discretion for states in the application of military and economic sanctions against an aggressor. Their most notable achievement came in 1928 with the Kellogg–Briand Pact whose signatories, the United States among them, renounced recourse to aggressive war. Despite the absence of any enforcement provisions, the Pact was valuable, Shotwell explained, because it would bolster the peaceful settlement of inter-state disputes by sharpening the risks of international ostracism for, and even sanctions against, any state tempted to resolve its disagreements with another state through war.[12]

Soon after the Pact's signature, Shotwell began to speak of peaceful change as an indispensable complement to collective security and dispute resolution. His justification for doing so varied: sometimes, he pointed to change as a defining element of modernity; at other times, he described IR as a dynamic realm, warning against static approaches while insisting on the need for alternatives to war. In invoking peaceful change, though, Shotwell had a more precise project in mind: to get the United States into the League. As director of the League of Nations Association during the 1930s, he campaigned to amend the League's covenant to make its collective security provisions more voluntary and less universal – and thus presumably more attractive to Americans. In this context, peaceful change offered a means of pre-empting resistance from League opponents. Shotwell thus proposed to decouple the Covenant from the peace treaties, which would absolve the League from the charge of acting as an enforcer of the postwar international status quo. More generally, the language of peaceful change helped to naturalize Shotwell's project of U.S. membership in the League by presenting it as a common-sensical adaptation to changing realities. If IR were constantly evolving then the League, together with member and non-member states, must evolve with them. 'There is only one way out,' he affirmed in a 1936 book. 'It is the readjustment of the nations to a readjusted League.'[13]

Missing from Shotwell's project, however, was a sense of how peaceful change would work in practice. And here is where the ISC could contribute. As Charles DeBenedetti showed, Shotwell had long been interested in developing a 'science of international politics' melding vigorous research with policy-oriented perspectives.[14] By the 1930s, moreover, Shotwell believed that no question was more in need of research than the 'processes of change'. As he explained in the introduction to a 1934 survey on international studies in the United States: 'The problems to be studied are those which arise from the changing social, economic, and political organization of the modern world and those are fully as much the product of a growing consciousness of the changed situation as they are of the material facts in the actual shift of relationships.'[15] In this context, the ISC offered overlapping advantages: it could, through international collaboration, stimulate the needed research on peaceful change while helping to amplify American voices (and priorities).

In promoting the ISC, Shotwell could rely on an ally with deep pockets: the Rockefeller Foundation (RF). As a thriving scholarship makes clear, during the 20th-century private foundations and think tanks not only became influential foreign policy actors but also shaped the development of social sciences in the United States. For the RF, the ISC increasingly became a priority for funding during the 1930s. As a result, Katharina Rietzler remarks, the ISC figured as the 'Foundation's European flagship programme in international relations'.[16] From the beginning, Shotwell lobbied Rockefeller officials to invest more heavily in the American committee, insisting

[12]James T. Shotwell, *War as an Instrument of National Policy and its Renunciation in the Pact of Paris* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Co., 1929). Also see Oona A. Hathaway and Scott J. Shapiro, *The Internationalists: How a Radical Plan to Outlaw War Remade the World* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2017), pp. 115–24.

[13]James T. Shotwell, *On the Rim of the Abyss* (New York: Macmillan, 1936), p. xiii and passim.

[14]Charles DeBenedetti, 'James T. Shotwell and the science of international politics', *Political Science Quarterly*, 89:2 (1974), pp. 379–95.

[15]Edith E. Ware (ed), *The Study of International Relations in the United States: Survey for 1934* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1934), pp. 16–17.

[16]In addition to Rietzler, 'American foundations and the 'scientific study' of international relations in Europe', pp. 209–22, see Emily Hauptmann, *Foundations and American Political Science: The Transformation of a Discipline, 1945-1970* (Lawrence, KS: University of Kansas Press, 2022); Ludovic Tournès, *Les États-Unis et la Société des Nations: Le système international face*

it could play a vital role not only in energizing the ISC but also as a coordinating agency for international studies in the United States. Significantly, the 1934 survey mentioned above, prepared under Shotwell's auspices, delineated a burgeoning field lacking in 'intelligent direction'.[17] The goal of providing overall guidance resonated with the RF which, as Ke Niu recounts, shared with other funding organizations the belief that interwar social sciences were sorely in need of 'planning' in order to impose some measure of coherence. As Foundation officials privately commented, international studies required 'a degree of concentration in the research activities of certain bodies'. More concretely, the RF envisioned international cooperation as a concerted project whose principal members were national committees capable of coordinating research in each national field. Increased funding for the American committee soon followed.[18]

With Rockefeller support, Shotwell set out to invigorate the ISC and to centre its activities more squarely on issues of international politics – and on peaceful change.[19] After an initial gathering on the 'state and economic life' in 1933, the ISC in June 1935 held a conference in London in which some 50 participants discussed 'collective security'. Significantly, the U.S. participants lobbied to place peaceful change on the agenda, describing it as an essential accompaniment to collective security. Allen Dulles, the chairman of the study sessions (and future CIA director), remarked that Americans were suspicious of collective security, viewing it as a stratagem to ensnare their country in attempts to 'maintain a particular *status quo* rather than to maintain the peace'. The latter, Dulles added, required some means to adjust an 'international settlement' rendered 'obsolete' by changing circumstances – or what he and others termed 'peaceful change'.[20] In a study submitted to conference participants, Philip Jessup, an international law professor at Columbia who was close to Shotwell, maintained collective security fostered 'an emphasis on procedure [the "elaboration of plans for checking resort to violence"] at the expense of the fundamental causes of conflict'. 'The "stabilization of peace" is not synonymous with "freezing the *status quo*"' Jessup expounded. 'International relations are not static …. Possibilities for peaceful change are essential to collective security.'[21] Thanks to American insistence, the ISC decided to devote its next conference, scheduled for 1937, to peaceful change.[22]

Significantly, the American committee's campaign in London was not simply a product of Shotwell's influence but reflected a larger trend: the growing interest in the United States in peaceful change. The Google N-Gram below (Figure 1) for 'peaceful change' citations in U.S. English captures something of this trend, indicating a steady rise beginning in the early 1930s that peaked in 1940 or so before gradually tailing off. Concrete examples abound. In *International Politics*, first published in 1933 and widely viewed as one of the best textbooks of its time, Frederick Schuman, a political science professor at Williams College, described international politics as a recurrent struggle between status quo and revisionist states in which 'procedures of pacific settlement' were largely irrelevant because they merely resolved conflicts 'which would never be fought'. 'The essence of the

à l'émergence d'une superpuissance (Bern: Peter Lang, 2016); and Inderjeet Parmar, *Foundations of the American Century: The Ford, Carnegie, and Rockefeller Foundations in the Rise of American Power* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2012).

[17]Ware (ed), *The Study of International Relations in the United States*, pp. vii–viii. A successor survey in 1937 spoke of 'the need of coordination and planning'. See idem, *The Study of International Relations in the United States: Survey for 1937* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1938), p. 3.

[18]Ke Niu, 'The SSRC and the founding movement of area studies in the America, 1943-1953', *China International Strategy Review*, 1:2 (2019), pp. 298–300; and Rockefeller Archive Center, Rockefeller Foundation Records, Sleepy Hollow, NY [hereafter RAC, RFR], Series 100.2, Box 109, folder 983, 'American Coordinating Committee – General Budget', undated.

[19]League of Nations Archives [hereafter LONA], R3974/5B/3630/318, 'American National Committee on International Intellectual Cooperation: Provisional Memorandum', 5 April 1933.

[20]Maurice Bourquin (ed), *Collective Security: A Record of the Seventh and Eighth International Studies Conferences, Paris 1934 – London, 1935* (Paris: IIIC, 1936), Dulles, pp. 40–44, 462–64.

[21]LONA, R 4009-5B-14891-2, 'The United States and the Stabilization of the Peace: A Study of Collective Security', Philip Jessup, pp. 110–14, 148.

[22]Library of Congress, Washington, D.C. [hereafter LOC], Waldo G. Leland Papers, Box 82, 'Report to the American National Committee on Intellectual Cooperation …', Leland, 31 July 1935; and Pemberton, *The Story of International Relations, Part Three*, pp. 509–13.

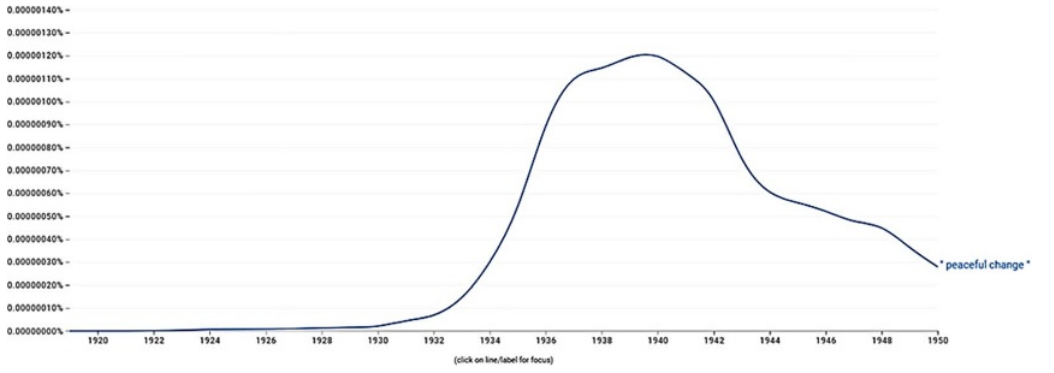

Figure 1. Google Ngram for "peaceful change", 1920–1950: https://books.google.com/ngrams/graph?content=%22peaceful+change%22&year_start=1920&year_end=1950&corpus=en-US&smoothing=3.

problem', Schuman concluded, 'lies in the lack of any effective procedure whereby conflicting power interests can be reconciled and pacific adjustments of power relations can be brought about'.[23] Raymond Leslie Buell, the research director of the Foreign Policy Association (FPA), an organization dedicated to educating Americans about international politics, struck a similar note in his prolific writings. The 'great problem in international relations', Buell affirmed in a 1930 pamphlet, 'is the problem of establishing machinery whereby the *status quo* may be peacefully changed'.[24]

Schuman and Buell were hardly exceptional. Indeed, not just political scientists and public commentators but jurists, economists, geologists, geographers, and journalists among others addressed the question of peaceful change during the 1930s. For international lawyers, for example, peaceful change became a preoccupying concern in the face of Germany, Italy, and Japan's denunciations of the international legal order. No 'problem' loomed larger today than that of 'peaceful change', Clyde Eagleton, a New York University law professor, remarked as early as 1932, for 'if there is no other way to change an unsatisfactory situation, it will be changed by force, or by violation of the unsatisfactory situation …'.[25] Similarly, Jessup, a delegate to the 1935 London ISC, pushed the American Society for International Law to consider peaceful change. As chair of the Society's program committee in 1936, he succeeded in placing the question prominently on the agenda of its annual meeting, recruiting an impressive panel of jurists to discuss 'International Law as a Hindrance and as an Aid to Peaceful Change'. As one participant assured Jessup, the 'subject promises to be one of the most interesting and important that the Society has taken up in recent years'.[26]

Admittedly, interest in peaceful change was not the preserve of Americans. In other countries, however, immediate policy issues tended to dominate discussion of peaceful change: in Germany and Italy, the need to justify concrete revisionist demands, and in Britain and France, the pros and cons of satisfying these demands.[27] Americans, by contrast, associated peaceful change with a search for the underlying causes of international conflict and war. As Jessup explained at the 1935 London ISC, the 'field of peaceful change, this whole question of adjustment, is very much broader than the particular aspects of it which fall within our agenda'.[28] No doubt a desire to avoid

[23]Frederick L. Schuman, *International Politics: An Introduction to the Western State System* (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Co., 1933), pp. 510–11, 664, 728–29.

[24]George Washington University, Washington, D.C. [hereafter GWUL], Carnegie Peace Pamphlet and Microfilm Collection, Box 6, Buell, *League of Nations* (New York, January 1930), pp. 11–12.

[25]Clyde Eagleton, *International Government* (New York: Ronald Press Co., 1957 edn.), p. 199.

[26]LOC, Philip C. Jessup Papers, Box A73, 'Program. The Role of the International Law in Peaceful Change. Thursday, 23 April 1935 [sic]'; and Albert Roden (Denison University) to Jessup, 23 February 1936. Also see *Proceedings of the American Society for International Law at Its Annual Meeting* 30 (April 1936), pp. 26–178.

[27]See Pemberton, *The Story of International Relations, Part Three*.

[28]Bourquin (ed), *Collective Security*, Jessup, pp. 269–70.

the fraught issue of U.S. actions in a future war steered Jessup and others away from precise policy questions. But so too did the conviction that only Americans could rise above the fray, that they alone could grasp the decisive dynamics of international politics. '[M]ost of the nations over here', Malcolm Davis, associate director of the Carnegie Endowment's European office, wrote to Shotwell on the eve of the 1937 Paris ISC, 'find themselves either in a group representing states that want to keep what they have or in a group representing states wanting to get something they have lost or never had. The only large nation whose spokesmen may take a comparative (not completely) disinterested position is the United States'.[29]

With peaceful change squarely on the ISC's agenda, Shotwell formalized the ISC's American committee, hitherto an ad hoc body, while also broadening it to better reflect the diverse field of international studies in the United States. Soon after the London ISC, he pushed the Council on Foreign Relations (CFR), which officially oversaw the committee, to form a 'representative American coördinating committee which would assume responsibility for the American participation in the [1937] Conference'.[30] Here, Shotwell benefited from the vigorous backing of Buell who chafed at what he perceived to be the CFR's imperious attitude. The RF, meanwhile, needed little persuading, with one official underscoring the need to 'provide for a more adequate representation of American organizations, other than the Council on Foreign Relations, in the work of the Conference'.[31] More generally, as mentioned, RF officials were intrigued by the idea of a coordinating agency for the field of international studies in the United States. Under this combined pressure, the CFR agreed to create a 'coordinating committee' which, while officially under its aegis, would in fact be largely independent, with Shotwell as chair and with members coming from multiple organizations: the FPA, the Institute of Pacific Relations (IPR), the Social Science Research Council, the Carnegie Endowment, as well as academics from several universities. In response, the RF allocated additional funding over 2 years to the new committee, now named the American Coordinating Committee (ACC), as well as smaller sums to several other ISC national committees.[32]

Quickly getting to work, the ACC divided the question of peaceful change into three broad groups (population, migration, and colonization; markets and raw materials; and political, legal, and social problems of change) and composed a sub-committee for each one. Each sub-committee assembled an impressive mix of expertise and political savvy. The chair of the markets and raw materials sub-committee was Charles Leith, a leading geologist who had spent the previous 15 years educating Washington on the significance of global strategic raw material sources; other members included Jacob Viner, a University of Chicago economist, Edwin Nourse, a Brookings Institution economist and future chair of the Council of Economic Advisors, and Alvin Hansen, on his way to becoming the country's foremost Keynesian economist. The political, legal, and social problems of change sub-committee featured Shotwell and Jessup as members as well as Hamilton Fish Armstrong, the editor of *Foreign Affairs*, and Walter Lippmann, the prominent foreign affairs columnist; its chair was John Foster Dulles, an international lawyer and Republican foreign policy heavyweight who in 1939 would publish a book-length plea for peaceful change.[33] The population, migration, and colonization sub-committee was chaired by Edwin B. Wilson, a Harvard-based mathematician/statistician, and included Isaiah Bowman, the renowned geographer, Warren S. Thompson, an equally renowned demographer, and J. Ralston Hayden, an historian, former vice-governor of the Philippines and recognized colonial expert.[34]

[29]LOC, Waldo G. Leland Papers, Box 88, Malcolm Davis to Shotwell, 11 March 1937.

[30]RAC, RFR, Series 100.2, Box 109, folder 983, Tracy Kittredge (RF) to Sydnor Walker (RF), 14 November 1935; and LOC, Waldo G. Leland Papers, Box 88, Shotwell to Isaiah Bowman, 12 December 1935.

[31]LONA, FR PUNES AG 1-IICI-K-I-4, Tracy Kittredge (RF) to Henri Bonnet (IIIC), 3 December 1935.

[32]RAC, RFR, Series 100.2, Box 109, folder 984, Norna Thompson (RF) to Walter Mallory (CFR), 27 March 1936; and State Historical Society of Wisconsin, Madison, WI [hereafter SHSW], Foreign Policy Association, Box 99, Sydnor Walker (RF) to Shotwell, 22 May 1936, with attachment.

[33]John Foster Dulles, *War, Peace and Change* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1939).

[34]LONA, FR PUNES AG 01-IICI-K-I-15.d, 'American Committee of Experts for the International Studies Conference on 'Peaceful Change'', undated.

The first two sub-committees prepared substantial reports published by the CFR and widely circulated in the United States. They would also provide the bases for discussions at the Paris ISC. Written by Eugene Staley, a University of Chicago trained economist, the report for the markets and raw materials sub-committee predictably focused on economic access, a topic of concern not only in the United States but in many countries during the interwar years.[35] More pertinent to this article is the report by Frederick Dunn, a Yale professor, for the political, legal, and social problems of change sub-committee. Although trained in international law, Dunn approached peaceful change as a political more than legal question. Like many commentators, he expressed doubts about the sincerity of Germany, Italy and Japan's revisionist demands while accepting that their claims to 'have-not' status could not simply be dismissed. More generally, Dunn emphasized a basic obstacle to peaceful change. Because the 'international community' was based on 'self-help', states, in the end, had to rely on their 'own strength to defend their rights and possession or to obtain what they want'. This reality all but precluded meaningful peaceful change as no state could be expected to accept voluntarily revisions of the international status quo that weakened its relative 'national power and security'. Efforts to devise new or improved means of peaceful change were grossly inadequate because they targeted the symptoms rather than the root-cause of the problem. 'It is idle to spend time devising procedures and institutions of peaceful change which would work if only nations were more rational or less nationalistic than they are,' Dunn drily noted. 'If they were, the procedures would not be necessary.'[36] The report nicely encapsulated the impasse reached on the question of peaceful change at the time: international politics urgently required some means of peaceful change yet the necessary conditions appeared unattainable.

It was this impasse that spurred an impressive investment in preparations for the 1937 ISC in Paris, bolstering in the process the American committee's potential as a coordinating agency for international studies in the United States. Equally pertinent, this investment enhanced the saliency of a framework for the field favouring international cooperation, inter-disciplinary perspectives, and conceptual diversity as well as policy-relevant research. In some ways, Shotwell incarnated this framework: although a trained historian, he was fascinated with the social sciences in general, co-piloting for example a sprawling multi-national and multi-disciplinary project, funded by the Carnegie Endowment, on the economic and social history of World War I.[37] But beyond Shotwell, from the start the framework's contours and prospects were closely intertwined with continued American engagement with the ISC. Indeed, for Shotwell, the ISC's Paris conference would demonstrate the value of this framework not only for the question of peaceful change but also for the field of international studies. An 'important conference this summer' will examine 'the most difficult of all problems in international relations, that of peaceful change', he explained to a scholarly gathering in spring 1937. '[I]f we are to apply intelligence to save civilization, there is no other place to apply it so effectively as in this study of the ways and means by which change can be brought about peacefully.'[38]

The Fallout from the Paris Conference

The ISC in Paris gathered 150 participants from some 20 countries in North America, Europe, and Asia for a week-long conference in the summer of 1937. The American delegation arrived in force, numbering 15 members (13 men and 2 women) representing various organizations and elite universities. Each delegate was armed with a weighty stack of documents, which included Dunn's

[35] Eugene Staley, *Raw Materials in Peace and War* (New York: CFR, 1937). For general interest, see Andrea Westermann, 'Inventuren der Erde. Vorratsschätzugen für mineralische Rohstoffe und die Etablierung der Ressourcenökonomie', *Berichte zur Wissenschaftsgeschichte*, 37:1 (2014), pp. 20–40.

[36] Frederick S. Dunn, *Peaceful Change: A Study of International Procedures* (New York: CFR, 1937), pp. 9–13, 49, 125–26.

[37] Katharina Rietzler, 'The war as history: Writing the economic and social history of the First World War', *Diplomatic History*, 38/4 (2014), pp. 826–39.

[38] James T. Shotwell, 'Mechanism for peace in Europe', *Proceedings of the Academy of Political Science* 17 (May 1937), pp. 22–23.

report pre-circulated to all the delegations. The conference program consisted of four study sessions on aspects of peaceful change, chaired by John Foster Dulles, together with roundtables and plenary discussions. Throughout the proceedings, the American delegates worked hard to coordinate their efforts, meeting regularly in the Paris office of Dulles' law firm.[39]

HIR scholars have called attention to the wide-ranging and conceptually rich discussions at the Paris ISC among delegates whose disciplinary affiliations varied widely.[40] Many participants themselves, however, were struck by the meagre results. Summing up the proceedings, Maurice Bourquin, a Belgian jurist and conference reporter, offered little but banalities: 'Stability on the one hand, movement on the other'.[41] Dissatisfaction was particularly strong on the American side. 'The delegates to the Paris meeting with whom I have talked to', a CFR official reported, 'seemed rather disappointed with what was accomplished at the conference. There was more preparatory work than ever before, but the meetings themselves were not as well planned, apparently, as they might have been'. An early assessment from the ACC confirmed this impression, criticizing the failure to grapple seriously with the question of peaceful change: it deemed the conference format to be overly formal, the discussions 'on the whole very general' and 'superficial', and the documentation of uneven quality, especially when compared to that of the Americans, which supposedly left 'little to be desired'.[42]

Dissatisfaction, in turn, prompted the RF to reconsider its support of the ISC. In response to a request for renewed funding from the ACC, the Foundation in September 1937 solicited the opinion of several delegates to the Paris conference on whether the ISC served 'a useful purpose'.[43] The replies reinforced the impression that the conference had hampered the productive study of peaceful change. While Charles Leith regretted the 'emphasis placed on protocol', the FPA's Vera Micheles Dean deplored the tendency of non-American delegates to identify with the 'official views of their government' as well as the lack of 'real discussion of the living issues of international relations'. Dulles was the most damning: 'I should doubt whether the results of the Studies Conference justify the amount of money which is required to sustain them.' While not ruling out further funding, he urged the RF to make any grants conditional on major revisions to ISC procedures.[44]

For the RF, the inquiry confirmed brewing doubts about the ISC's usefulness as a vehicle for international intellectual cooperation and policy-oriented research. Soon after the Paris gathering, it ceased funding other ISC national committees and vetoed proposals to hold the next ISC conference in the United States. Future financing, the head of the RF's Paris office informed the ISC, was 'improbable' as the 'International Relations Program of the Foundation is under serious consideration ….'[45] In addition to redirecting funding to the Geneva Research Center, an American-staffed, pro-League of Nations public information bureau, the RF pushed the American committee to reassess its priorities. In return for renewing the ACC's grant, awarding it $24,000 over 2 years, the Foundation directed the committee to concentrate more squarely on international studies within the United States. Writing in February 1938, Raymond Fosdick, its president, explained that the RF had hitherto pursued two goals: to encourage cross-national cooperation in the field of international studies and to 'further cooperative undertakings among those groups and individuals in the United States particularly concerned with research in international relations'. If the first goal

[39]University of Wisconsin-Madison Archives [hereafter UoW], C.K. Leith Papers, Series 7/13/12-2, Box 7, William C. Scroggs to Leith, 1 June 1937; and LONA, R4605/10C/20960/9854, 'International Studies Conference … Paris, June 28th–July 3rd, 1937. Provisional Calendar of Meetings'.

[40]See footnote no. 9.

[41]ISC, *Peaceful Change*, Bourquin, pp. 587–88.

[42]UoW, C.K. Leith Papers, Series 7/13/12-2, Box 7, William C. Scroggs to Leith, 7 September 1937; and LOC, Waldo G. Leland Papers, Box 61, 'The International Studies Conference Paris 1937 … The Discussion in Paris', Peter Boris, undated.

[43]SHSW, Foreign Policy Association, Box 99, Sydnor Walker (RF) to Carl Alsberg, 24 September 1937.

[44]LONA, FR PUNES AG 1-IICI-K-I-4.b, Tracy Kittredge (RF) to Henri Bonnet, 3 January 1938 and attachments.

[45]LONA, FR PUNES AG 1-IICI-K-I-4.b, Tracy Kittredge to Leo Gross (IIIC), 4 April 1939; and Rietzler, 'American foundation and the 'scientific study' of international relations in Europe', pp. 225–32.

had been satisfactorily achieved, the second one had not. 'We do not wish to abandon this second objective', Fosdick pointedly added, 'nor subordinate to it the first ….'[46]

The RF's reassessment kicked off a struggle within the ACC over its orientation. Buell, in close contact with Foundation officials, proposed a 'reorganization' of the committee: three organizations, the CFR, the IPR, and Buell's own FPA, would jointly direct the ACC, coopting members from 'universities or [other] research institutions' and coordinating the activities of centres in five or six major cities. As for peaceful change, Buell reconceived it as a terrain for unilateral action by the United States rather than as a challenge inviting international cooperation. 'The American group', he advised, 'should ask itself what concrete changes in the economic policy of the United States are necessary to give effect to the accepted principles of peaceful change'.[47] Resisting this inward turn, Shotwell hoped to maintain cooperation with the ISC as well as the broader perspective on peaceful change. Ironically, though, the ISC's executive undermined his efforts with its decision in late 1937 to move on from peaceful change in favour of 'economic policies in relation to world peace'. An angry Shotwell resigned as chair of the American committee, protesting that 'he personally objected to turning aside to a new subject for future study before this one [peaceful change] was more adequately treated'.[48] Though remaining on the ACC, Shotwell soon found himself sidelined. The committee, meanwhile, distanced itself from the ISC, barely participating in preparations for the next conference scheduled for August 1939 in Bergen (Norway). As it detached from the ISC, the American committee's purpose became unclear.

The advent of war in Europe in September 1939 seemingly opened promising vistas. Espying an opportunity, Henry Wriston, the ACC's interim chair (and president of Brown University and CFR stalwart), proposed to redirect its activities towards planning for the postwar international order from a decidedly American viewpoint. All studies, a draft report read, 'would be conducted specifically from the standpoint of interests, obligations and opportunities of the United States in relation to the realities of the International situation'.[49] In response, the RF agreed to fund a 2-day conference in November 1939 in Rye, New York, at which 30 scholars, all of them U.S. based, discussed ways to 'stimulate and coordinate research in the United States on the problems of American interest in the post-war settlement'.[50] Following the conference, the RF awarded the American committee $40,000 over 2 years (to December 1941), which led to the appointment of Edward Mead Earle, a professor at Princeton's Institute of Advanced Studies (IAS), as chair. The IAS now shared formal administrative oversight of the committee with the Social Sciences Research Council (SSRC).[51]

In Earle, the committee found an academic entrepreneur almost on a par with Shotwell. Like the latter, Earle believed in policy-oriented research, but unlike Shotwell his perspective had long been unambiguously American-centric. For several years, Earle had striven to make Princeton the locus of strategic/security studies, a project inspired by an expansive understanding of national security and a belief in the importance of readying the United States – and Americans – to wield global power.[52] Not surprisingly, he evinced scant interest in the ISC: the committee not only changed its name to better reflect its American focus (American Committee for International Studies) but

[46]RAC, RFR, Series 100.2, Box 109, folder 985, Raymond Fosdick (RF) to William Scroggs, 16 February 1938.

[47]LOC, Raymond L. Buell Papers, Box 42, file 8, Buell to Willam O. Scroggs, 17 February 1938.

[48]LOC, Waldo G. Leland Papers, Box 61, 'Minutes of the Meeting of the American National Committee on Intellectual Cooperation, 10 December 1937'. Also see James T. Shotwell, 'International peace', *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society*, 78 (31 March 1938), pp. 547–48.

[49]RAC, RFR, Series 100.2, Box 109, folder 986, 'Proposal for a Research Project on the Present War and the Next Peace', undated but October 1939. Also see Henry S. Wriston, *Prepare for Peace* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1941).

[50]University of California, Berkeley, Bancroft Library [hereafter UCBL], J.B. Condliffe Papers, C-B 901, Box 1, 'Agenda for the Meeting … Rye, New York, November 3–4, 1939'; and 'Memorandum on the Meeting at Rye, November 3–4, 1939'.

[51]UCBL, J.B. Condliffe Papers, C-B 901, Box 1, 'Minutes of the Meeting of the Committee for International Studies … 28 March 1940'. Also see Vitalis, *White World Order*, pp. 107–108.

[52]See Dexter Fergie, 'Geopolitics turned inwards: The Princeton Military Studies Group and the National Security Imagination', *Diplomatic History*, 43:4 (2019), pp. 644–70; and David Ekbladh, 'Present at the creation: Edward Mead Earle and the depression-era origins of security studies', *International Security*, 36:3 (2011/2012), pp. 107–41.

in July 1940 Earle vetoed any idea of moving the ISC's secretariat to the United States in the wake of Germany's victories in Western Europe. Having effectively cut ties to the ISC, Earle envisaged the American committee as a general staff for policy-oriented research in the United States on the postwar international order, directing and coordinating the activities of various academic and non-academic actors.[53] As for possible frameworks for international studies, Earle's differed from that of Shotwell's ISC-associated one less in its policy relevance than in its American-centredness as well as in its notably competitive and militarized understanding of international politics conceived principally through the lens of national security.

Under Earle, the American committee languished. One problem was Earle himself, whose myriad commitments and fragile health left him little time. As one committee member intimated to a Rockefeller official in May 1941, '[s]he didn't feel that Earle knew where it [the Committee] was heading or gave it guidance or was a good chairman'. But another problem was the RF's own questionable commitment, which meant the committee had little to offer potential collaborators. As Earle was repeatedly compelled to explain, it possessed no research funds to distribute and would not serve as a fund-raiser for others.[54] Not surprisingly, interest in the committee waned, and by late-1941 it was effectively moribund. Fittingly, its final wartime activity appears to have been a conference on North Atlantic relations in September 1941 in Maine, best understood as an early attempt to imagine the postwar world from an American-led Atlanticist perspective.[55]

Soon after the war ended, European scholars floated the idea of resurrecting the ISC as part of a larger effort to restart the International Committee on Intellectual Cooperation – an effort which led to the creation of UNESCO. Writing to the RF in June 1946, Earle reported that 'European groups are now very eager to revive the International Studies Conference and are equally eager to have active American participation.' The American committee, he added, 'was a constituent member' of the ISC, 'a project in which the Rockefeller Foundation was enormously interested over a long period of years and to which the Foundation contributed substantial support'. Preliminary organizing meetings were held in London in November 1945 and in New York in April 1946, but the requisite enthusiasm was lacking on the American side.[56] Instead of the ISC, the International Political Science Association (IPSA) would be founded in Paris in 1949 in affiliation with UNESCO. Although a handful of American scholars took an active interest in the new organization, the IPSA never came close to rivalling either the American Political Science Association (APSA) or the International Studies Association, created in 1959 as a breakaway group from the APSA.[57]

The ISC's demise should not obscure the importance of the pre-war and wartime years as a pivotal moment for international studies in the United States. The argument is not that the ISC or its American committee was decisive in themselves but rather that together they embodied something larger – a framework for international studies oriented towards international, inter-disciplinary, and multi-conceptual collaboration. During the 1930s, the American committee emerged as a principal vehicle for this ISC-associated framework. As part of the preparations for the 1937 ISC conference on peaceful change, Shotwell, with RF support, overhauled the Committee, making it more representative of international studies in the United States. Indeed, both Shotwell and the RF imagined it acting as a coordinating agency for the field as a whole. As the committee's

[53]Brown University Library [hereafter BUL], Henry M. Wriston Papers, Box 31, folder 11.10, 'The American Committee for International Studies', Earle, 10 June 1940.

[54]RAC, RFR, RG 12, Joseph H. Willits, 1939–1941, 'Thursday, 29 May 1941 Mrs. Vera Dean …'; and RFR, Series 100.2, Box 109, folder 989, William Lockwood to Frederick Pollock (Institute of Social Research), 15 October 1940.

[55]See the file LONA, C1780/165/2. During the war, Earle would pursue Atlanticist constructions within the CFR. See Stephen Wertheim, *Tomorrow the World: The Birth of U.S. Global Supremacy* (Harvard, MA: Belknap Press, 2020), pp. 80–144.

[56]RAC, RFR, Series 100.2, Box 109, folder 992, Earle to Joseph H. Willits, 11 June 1946; and 'Possible Formation of an American Committee for the International Studies Conference', BW, 19 March 1948. Also see Pemberton, *The Story of International Relations, Part Three*, pp. 427–97.

[57]GWUL, American Political Science Association Archives, Box 259, Quincy Wright to APSA Executive Council, undated, and attached report: 'Summary Report of the Constituent Conference held at UNESCO House, 12–16 September 1949', Paris, 10 October 1949.

prominence grew, moreover, international studies in the United States promised to become more closely enmeshed with the ISC and its framework.

To be sure, the American committee was not the sole organization active in the field of international studies at the time. Significantly, however, none of the others possessed its breadth and potential. The FPA was principally interested in public education while the CFR focused on policy; both moreover were predominantly if not exclusively American, as was the SSRC. The IPR, with its mix of policy and research, arguably came closest to the ACC, but the IPR's regional focus, together with its growing preoccupation with U.S.–Japanese tensions, limited its usefulness.[58] During the 1920s, Shotwell had been active in all these organizations (the FPA aside), chairing the IPR's international research committee and serving on the SSRC's IR committee. Intriguingly, however, Shotwell reduced his involvement in all of them in the early 1930s, precisely at the moment he took over the ISC's American committee. For Shotwell, the ACC offered something the other organizations did not.

Following Shotwell's eclipse, it possible to detect in the American Committee's activities and outlook the outlines of another framework for international studies – one centred in and on the United States and favouring a competitive and militarized understanding of international politics. Unlike its rival, the fate of this framework did not depend on the ISC or its American committee. Its growing appeal, though, would remain entwined with the question of peaceful change.

The Rise of the Power Politics Paradigm

To understand the relationship between peaceful change and the more U.S. and power politics-centred framework for international studies, it is useful to return to Frederick Dunn's report for the 1937 ISC. Widely circulated within the United States, the report provided the clearest summary of the stakes involved in the peaceful change debate for international studies at the time. Dunn used peaceful change as a foil to assess the cogency of three different conceptions of international politics. The conception the most favourable to peaceful change was the one centred on world government: the latter could presumably determine what changes were required to the international order and then apply them. Employing what Hidemi Suganami would call the 'domestic analogy', however, Dunn explained that world government required international institutions equivalent to those existing in the national realm (elections, legislatures, courts, police), an option he dismissed as utopian.[59] A second conception, centred on international organizations like the League of Nations, hardly appeared more promising. The League had failed to bring about peaceful change, leaving little reason to think that a replacement would be any more effective. This left the state-centred conception in which sovereign states found themselves compelled to interact with one another on the basis of 'self-help'. If Dunn believed this to be the conception corresponding most closely to the realities of international politics, he admitted that it all but precluded significant peaceful change on a voluntary basis. 'All proposals for changes in the status quo', he remarked, 'regardless of the grounds on which they are based, are bound to be assessed first and foremost in terms of their effect upon the power relationships of the nations concerned'.[60]

Working within this tripartite schema, a handful of American political scientists argued for some form of world government, often invoking federalism as a constitutional form that drew on a home-grown domestic analogy – that of the United States and its federal system. Once again, Frederick Schuman provides an instructive example. During the 1930s, to recall, Schuman cast

[58]Tomoko Akami, *Internationalizing the Pacific: The United States, Japan and the Institute of Pacific Relations in War and Peace, 1919-45* (London: Routledge, 2002), pp. 112–13, 133. For the FPA, see David Allen, *Every Citizen a Statesman: The Dream of a Democratic Foreign Policy in the Twentieth Century* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2023); and for the SSRC, see Donald Fisher, *Fundamental Development of the Social Sciences: Rockefeller Philanthropy and the United States Social Science Research Council* (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 1993).

[59]Suganami, *The Domestic Analogy and World Order Proposals* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 94–113.

[60]Dunn, *Peaceful Change*, p. 12.

international politics as a realm dominated by 'power politics' between status quo and revisionist states. Effective means of peaceful change were imperative to reconcile 'order' ('security for established rights') with 'justice' ('redress of legitimate grievances').[61] Like Dunn, he judged peaceful change to be unworkable under the present conditions of international 'anarchy'; but unlike Dunn, he advocated the creation of a 'single super-state' along federalist lines whose first step would be a 'full federal union' of the United States and the British Commonwealth. Practicing what he preached, Schuman became an activist in Clarence Streit's *Federal Union* movement founded in 1939 to lobby for a federation of the North Atlantic democracies. The abolition of war, he publicly declaimed, 'is impossible without the abolition of power politics. The abolition of power politics is impossible without the abolition of anarchy among rival sovereignties'.[62] Although eventually breaking with Streit's movement, Schuman would remain a visible proponent of international federation. That said, he was no idealist, recognizing in 1941 'that anything so sane and sensible [as federal world government] hasn't a ghost of a chance of adoption until it's too late'.[63]

Unsurprisingly, given Schuman's own doubts, world government found few takers among international studies specialists. A seemingly more mainstream conception centred on international organizations and on the League of Nations in particular – a conception also labelled international government. The League's creation had spurred considerable interest in international organizations, which quickly became a flourishing research subject in the United States. Writing in the early 1920s, Pitman Potter, a scholar and League enthusiast later active in the ISC, confidently predicted that international organization would dominate research in the field of international studies because of its self-evident relevance.[64] One result was a steady stream of studies on the League, which, mirroring Pittman's work, often combined advocacy with analysis. By the mid-1930s, however, rising international tensions, combined with the League's evident frailties, had undermined enthusiasm for a conception of international politics centred on international organizations.

In this context, prominent scholars seized on peaceful change in order to renew the appeal of international organizations. Among the more active was Quincy Wright, a long-time University of Chicago professor, participant at the Paris ISC and Schuman's *Doktorvater*. Like Dunn, Wright rejected world government as unrealistic. And like Shotwell, he presented peaceful change as an indispensable counterpart to collective security: a stable international system, Wright explained in November 1936, 'depends upon the coordination of procedures of collective security and of peaceful change'.[65] To achieve both, he contended, required a more robust League endowed with effective and mandatory sanctions against aggressors. In addition to eliding the reality of declining political and public support for the League in the United States during the 1930s, this proposal cloaked without resolving the tensions between collective security, which seemingly favoured the status quo, and peaceful change whose starting point was revision of the international order. In truth, Wright prioritized collective security, insisting any revision of the status quo be conditional on consensus, a condition which, if met (as Dunn had remarked), would obviate any need to create the means for peaceful change.[66] Basically, Wright equated peace with collective security and

[61] Federick L. Schuman, 'The Dismal Science: World Politics: The Year's Books on International Affairs', *The American Scholar*, 6:2 (1937), pp. 170–79; and Williams College Archives, Williamstown, MA [hereafter WCA], Frederick Lewis Schuman Papers, Box 16, folder 9, 'Reflections on Peace as a Problem of Power', Schuman, undated.

[62] WCA, Frederick Lewis Schuman Papers, Box 11, folder 27, 'Design for a People's Peace', Schuman, undated but wartime. Also see Schuman, *Design for Power: The Struggle for the World* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1942). For Streit's movement, see Talbot C. Imlay, *Clarence Streit and Twentieth-Century American Internationalism* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2023).

[63] WCA, Frederick Lewis Schuman Papers, Box 1, folder 6, Schuman to DR, 1 June 1941.

[64] Pitman B. Potter, *An Introduction to the Study of International Organization* (New York: The Century Co., 1922); and idem, *The World of Nations: Foundations, Institutions, Practices* (New York: Macmillan, 1929).

[65] University of Chicago, Hanno Holborn Gray Special Collections Research Center [hereafter UoC], Quincy Wright Papers, Box 39, folder 8, Wright to Kate L. Mitchell, 24 November 1936.

[66] See Quincy Wright, 'Article 19 of the League Covenant and the doctrine 'rebus sic stantibus'', *Proceedings of the American Society of International Law at its Annual Meeting*, 30 (April 23–25, 1936), pp. 55–72.

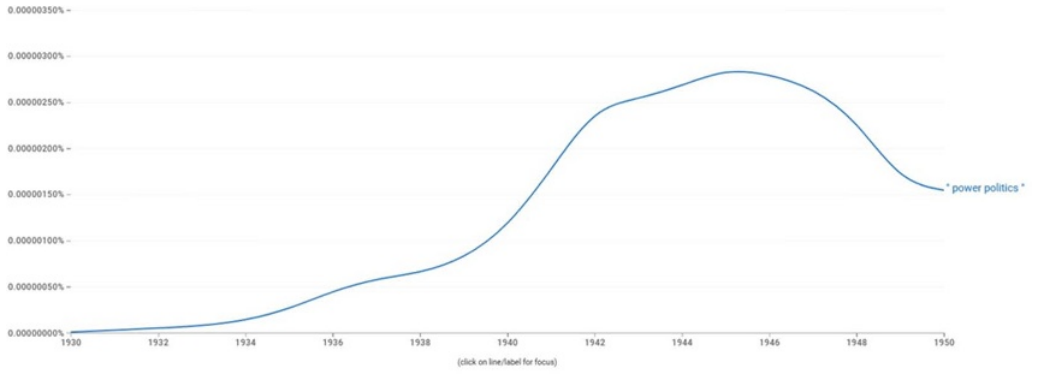

Figure 2. Google Ngram for "power politics", 1930–1950: https://books.google.com/ngrams/graph?content=%22power+politics%22&year_start=1930&year_end=1950&corpus=en-US&smoothing=3&case_insensitive=false.

the latter with a stronger and more coercive international security organization. Not surprisingly, Potter, Wright's friend and ally, argued this very position in his 1937 study, *Collective Security and Peaceful Change*.[67]

World War II would offer Wright (and others) an opportunity to realize their conception of international politics centred on international organizations. Both as a State Department advisor and as a member of several para-official groups, Wright worked to design a postwar international institution imagined as a more effective version of the League. In this endeavour, he collaborated with Shotwell among others, principally in the Commission to Study the Organization of Peace, a semi-public organization created in 1939 and bringing together much of the country's liberal internationalist elite.[68] However, as it became clear that the projected United Nations Organization (UNO) would not differ fundamentally from its predecessor, Wright responded in two ways. First, he held out hope that the UNO might eventually evolve into something more robust, admonishing Schuman in April 1945 not to overlook 'the evolutionary possibilities of political institutions'. And, second, he turned increasingly to 'human rights' as a possible means of restraining state sovereignty.[69] Neither reaction, however, could disguise the UNO's evident weaknesses. Tellingly, research into international organizations became something of backwater in the United States after the war as scholars looked elsewhere for the beating heart of international politics. Only in the 1970s would the subject re-emerge as an attractive research current in IR in the form of liberal institutionalism.[70]

With world government judged unattainable even by fervent advocates like Schuman and with a UNO-centred option a disappointment, considerable space existed for Dunn's state-centred conception of international politics in which states competed with one another for security and advantage. One sign is the upsurge in talk of 'power politics' in the United States during the prewar and especially wartime years as reflected in the Google N-gram above (Figure 2), which shows a steady rise in citations beginning in the 1930s through to the mid-1940s.

Crucially, this upsurge did not occur simply on its own. Instead, it was the product of concerted efforts on the part of activist scholars, prominent among them Dunn himself, who used the term repeatedly in his 1937 study of peaceful change. More generally, Dunn sought to rehabilitate 'power

[67]Pitman B. Potter, *Collective Security and Peaceful Change: The Relations of Order and Progress in International Society* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1937).

[68]Robert P. Hillmann, 'Quincy Wright and the Commission to Study the Organization of Peace', *Global Governance*, 4:4 (1998), pp. 485–99.

[69]UoC, Quincy Wright Papers, Box 57, folder 1, Wright to Frederick Schuman, 3 April 1945.

[70]J. Martin Rochester, 'The rise and fall of international organization as a field of study', *International Organization*, 40:4 (1986), pp. 777–813.

politics', a term often freighted with pejorative connotations during the interwar years. The goal was to naturalize 'power politics' by promoting the idea that competitive relations between the principal states/powers constituted the core of international politics.

Dunn was in a position to wield influence. In 1940, he became director of Yale's Institute of International Studies (YIIS), founded in 1935 with Rockefeller funding. The timing of his appointment proved propitious. Earlier, the YIIS had been embroiled in internal debates about the wisdom of appeasement. During the 1930s, Nicholas Spykman, its forceful first director, criticized collective security as inherently biased towards the status quo, insisting the international community urgently required 'a procedure that will bring about change when change is due' in order to redress the understandable grievances of the revisionist states. Others, like Arnold Wolfers, a YIIS co-founder, went further, fusing together peaceful change and appeasement. Major concessions to Nazi Germany in Europe and the colonial world, Wolfers maintained in 1938, offered 'the only alternative to war' and 'may pave the way for a better settlement of European affairs than the one which was reached at Versailles'.[71] Shortly before he died in 1943, Spykman published a much-discussed study of international politics as geopolitics that distanced itself from any hint of appeasement while framing peaceful change in terms of power politics – of an unsteady balance between the great powers configured along regional lines. By then Dunn was firmly in control of YIIS.[72]

Under Dunn's direction, YIIS figured as a leading voice for more American-centred and power political perspectives on international politics. Indeed, it became known as the 'Power School'. In a 1941 request for renewed Rockefeller funding, Dunn outlined the Institute's dual emphasis 'upon the clarification of problems that arise in the conduct of American foreign policy' and 'upon political questions, and particularly upon questions of power'. 'It is certain', he added, 'that no plan of international order will endure which is not based on a thorough understanding of the role of power in international affairs'. Significantly, Dunn contrasted this research program with one focused on international organizations like the League of Nations and on what he dismissed as the interwar period's quixotic search for permanent peace. '[W]e have left to other [research] institutions,' he remarked, 'the study of the schemes for world peace and have concentrated upon the study of national policies in a world in which power politics plays a vital role'.[73]

A 1944 book by William T.R. Fox, an up-and-coming scholar and YIIS assistant director, encapsulated the Institute's message. In the book, which began as a YIIS memorandum, Fox maintained Americans must learn to accept 'power politics' as an intrinsic element of IR that could not be wished away by conjuring a make-belief 'world of no-power politics'. To be sure, he did not claim that war was inevitable: following the Axis' defeat, the three superpowers (the United States, Britain, and the Soviet Union) could continue to collaborate if their leaders 'should come to believe that it "pays"' to do so. Nevertheless, such collaboration would always be fragile, demanding constant vigilance as well as remarkable self-restraint. Significantly, Fox urged readers to put aside the question of peaceful change because it posed too ambitious a challenge. Instead, the United States should concentrate on managing superpower relations, toiling prosaically to preserve peace. Power politics, defined as great power diplomacy, effectively absorbed peaceful change. 'Super-power collaboration', Fox suggested, 'provides a method for eliminating lesser disputes while they are still "lesser"'. The emphasis on great power relations left little role for a postwar international

[71]Nicholas J. Spykman, 'States' rights and the league', *Yale Review*, 24:2 (1935), pp. 274–92; and Yale University Library, Manuscripts and Archives, Arnold Wolfers Papers, Series 1, Box 7, folder 101, 'The Rise of the Fascist Powers', Wolfers address, 1938.

[72]Nicholas J. Spykman, *America's Strategy in World Politics: The United States and the Balance of Power* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Co., 1942), p. 25, 460–65. Also see Olivier Zajec, *Nicholas John Spykman: L'invention de la géopolitique américaine* (Paris: Presses de l'Université Paris-Sorbonne, 2016), pp. 230–50, 261–66.

[73]RAC, RFR, SG.1.1, Series 100-257, Box 418, file 4996, 'Program for the Second Five-Year Period, 1 July 1941–20 June 1946', YIIS, 5 March 1941; and Paulo Jorge Batista Ramos, 'The Role of the Yale Institute of International Studies in the Construction of the United States National Security Ideology, 1935-1951', PhD, University of Manchester, 2003, 120–24, 247.

organization akin to the League of Nations.[74] Revealingly, in memoranda privately circulated to the American foreign policy elite in 1944, YIIS highlighted the weaknesses of the proposed UNO that left it ill-equipped to counteract the anticipated return of power politics among the principal victorious powers.[75]

With Rockefeller funding, Dunn and YIIS' expanding network of allies assiduously propagated their understanding of international politics. Grayson Kirk, a Columbia University professor who had attended the 1937 Paris ISC, offers an illustrative example. In a co-authored textbook on international politics first published in 1940, Kirk followed Dunn in placing peaceful change at the centre of the analysis. A basic reality in the international realm, it read, is that '[t]here is no effective *super*national agency either to secure observance of existing international agreements or to assure their *orderly* revision against the stubborn insistence of one or more nations that the *status quo* must remain undisturbed – long after it has begun to breed trouble'. Consequently, the 'vital points of conflict in the world community are, in the last resort, still resolved by *power* politics'.[76] During the war, Kirk regularly collaborated with YIIS, penning several of its privately circulated memoranda. In March 1945, he attended a YIIS weekend conference along with Dunn, Fox, Earle, and others on a 'security policy for postwar America'. The conference's publicly issued statement disparaged both 'isolationists' and 'utopian internationalists', locating the middle ground in a 'power politics … [that] maintained a proper distinction between the necessary use of power and its misuse'.[77] A year later Kirk spearheaded a series of meetings across the United States, organized under CFR auspices, of international studies scholars to discuss the 'nature, purpose, and content' of teaching and research in the field. Distilling the results in a 1947 volume, Kirk claimed international studies had become IR and that the 'study of the politics of power' between states now 'constitutes the nucleus of the modern study of international relations'. His point was not that other disciplines (geography, economics, psychology) had nothing to offer, but rather that IR now formed a separate field requiring 'a special method and approach'.[78]

Dunn, meanwhile, sought to amplify Kirk's message. In the opening issue of *World Politics*, the IR journal founded in 1948 by YIIS, he distinguished the field as a 'policy science' of inter-state relations concerned above all 'with the questions that arise in the relations between autonomous political groups in a world system in which power is not centered at one point'. The following year, Dunn employed a systemic perspective to explain that politics in the international and national realms operated in distinct ways. The 'conduct of political relationships is different in a community in which power is centralized in a single point at the top and one in which it is not', he wrote. 'The security of the individual unit becomes a profoundly different problem and the possibility of the resort to force is always in the background. In a world of independent states with widely different power potentials and different value systems, there are bound to be constant rivalries and conflicts of interest.'[79] By then, Dunn, YIIS, and their allies could credibly claim to occupy the mainstream of the rapidly developing field of IR in the United States.

This framework shared noteworthy affinities with what soon became known as classical realism, not least the emphasis on power politics and on the primacy of the great powers – and in 1945 no power stood greater than the United States. This is not to say that they were one and the same.

[74]William T.R. Fox, *The Super-Powers: The United States, Britain, and the Soviet Union – Their Responsibility for Peace* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Co., 1944), p. 4, 8–9, 158, 161.

[75]For example, see McGill University Library, Percy Ellwood Corbett Papers, Container 1, file 17, 'The Outlook for a Security Organization', YIIS, Corbett and Grayson Kirk, 15 June 1944.

[76]Walter R. Sharp and Grayson Kirk, *Contemporary International Politics* (New York: Farrar & Rinehart, 1944 edn.), preface, April 1940, pp. 4–7. Emphasis in original.

[77]LOC, Philip C. Jessup Papers, Box A36, 'A Security Policy for Postwar America', 8 March 1945.

[78]Grayson Kirk, *The Study of International Relations in American Colleges and Universities* (New York: CFR, 1947), pp. 8–11, 106–12.

[79]Dunn, 'The scope of international relations', *World Politics*, 1:1 (1948), pp. 144–45; and idem, 'Education in foreign affairs: A challenge for the universities' in Joseph E. McLean (ed), *The Public Service and University Education* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1949), pp. 132–35.

If nothing else, the framework lacked the more schematic and programmatic features with which Hans Morgenthau, among others, would soon endow realism. Instead, the affinities between the two point to the importance of context. Put simply, the growing attraction of the U.S. and power politics-centred framework for international studies offered an extremely conducive environment for realism to flourish. To the extent that it undermined confidence in world government or in a more robust alternative to the League of Nations, the understanding of international politics promoted by Dunn, YIIS, and their allies cleared the conceptual space for realism. From this perspective, the postwar articulations of realism can be seen as elaborations of this framework. If realism, as Duncan Bell rightly noted, was always open to 'multiple meanings', the U.S. and power politics-centred framework that had established itself by 1945 would provide the parameters in which these meanings would be elaborated.[80]

Conclusion

The peaceful change debate in the United States during the interwar and wartime years directed attention to the nature of international politics, to their animating forces and underlying trends. Specialists readily agreed that international politics, like all social relations, were dynamic and not static. Change was seen as an omnipresent fact of life and, unless international politics could accommodate the recurring pressures for revision of the reigning order, renewed war would be the predictable result. Accordingly, nothing seemed more counter-productive than to try to block change, and nothing more foolish than to equate peace with the maintenance of the international status quo. 'There has been grave misconception of the nature of peace,' John Foster Dulles expounded in 1939. 'Peace has been identified with the *status quo*, stability with rigidity. Exponents of force are the inevitable product of a society within which change can occur only through force.'[81] For Dulles and others, it followed that some means of peaceful change urgently had to be found.

At the same time, as Dulles was well placed to appreciate through his involvement in the ISC's activities, the question of peaceful change eluded answers. In his 'conceptual archaeology' of the peaceful change debate during the 1930s, Peter Marcus Kristensen highlights its richness and diversity, its 'neglected multiplicities', which, he argues, IR scholars need to contextualize if the concept's potential for theorizing contemporary international politics is to be realized.[82] Yet if the debate demonstrated anything it is that it proved far easier to identify the problem than to come up effective remedies. The domestic analogy pointed to some form of world government as one solution, with peaceful change akin to the periodic replacement of governments by elections within states; but for all its logical consistency, world government appeared to most specialists to lie beyond the realm of practical politics. So too, as it turned out, did another possibility, that of a more effective League of Nations. No more than the League was the UNO equipped to effect meaningful peaceful change.

And this largely remains the case today. For all the differences between the interwar years and the contemporary period, peaceful change does not seem any more practicable now then it did then. In a world of sovereign states, with some far more powerful than others, it is difficult to imagine consensus on the means for revisions on a concerted, voluntary, and peaceful basis. If so, it is perhaps worth considering whether peaceful change is a useful question for today. The question arguably sets the bar for success too high, and, in so doing, stacks the deck in favour of state-centred and power political perspectives. As Dunn's example suggests, if the ability to devise effective means of peaceful change is taken as a test of an international order's health and legitimacy, the result is just as likely to foreclose as to encourage thinking about alternative perspectives.

[80] Duncan Bell, 'Introduction: Under an Empty Sky – Realism and Political Thought' in Bell (ed), *Political Thought and International Relations: Variations on a Realist Theme* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), pp. 1–25.

[81] Dulles, *War, Peace and Change*, pp. ix–x.

[82] Kristensen, "Peaceful change' in international relations', 39 and passim.

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