

Apr 26 2017

Foundation and History of the International Relations Department

Blog editor

The 75th Anniversary Year of the IR Department was launched on 26 November 2002 with a special lecture by the then Montague Burton Professor of International Relations, Christopher Hill. You can read the text of Professor Hill's 75th Anniversary Lecture [What is to be done? Foreign Policy as a site for political action](#), published in *International Affairs*, March 2003, Vol 79, No 2.



Professor Michael Leifer CMG

We continued it with the endowment of 75th Anniversary Scholarships for research students, to be continued thereafter as [Michael Leifer Research Scholarships](#) in memory of Professor Michael Leifer CMG (pictured above), a member of the Department from 1969 until his death in 2001 and Pro-Director of the School 1991-1995, who had himself been a research student here in the 1950s.

This Library exhibition will also accompany the publication of the book called "International Relations at LSE: A History of 75 Years", edited by Harry Bauer and Elisabetta Brighi, and published by Millennium: Journal of International Studies, to mark the 75th Anniversary.

Below you can see scans of some of the documents and photographs from the display in the Library.

Between 1923 and 1930 a series of 'firsts' occurred.

Professorial Council minutes of 20 March and 18 June 1924 record the decision to advertise the Sir Ernest Cassel Chair of International Relations and the appointment of Philip Noel-Baker for five years from 1 August 1924.



Philip Noel-Baker, Photo courtesy of the Library of the Religious Society of

Friends

He was one of 29 members present when on 2 February 1927 the Professorial Council took the next step and created a new Department:

"In accordance with the Memorandum submitted by four of the teachers most directly concerned in International Studies it is proposed to group the work of these teachers and of others in the same field together to form a single co-ordinated "Department of International Studies" with a unity of its own within the School, though in continuous contact with all the rest of the work of the School.

"The Chairs of International History and of International Relations and the Readership in International Law will form the nucleus of this Department, and there will be a Committee of the teachers concerned to formulate common plans for teaching..."

"As building development permits, it is hoped to provide accommodation for the teachers most concerned in close connection with one another and with a special department of the Library and attached classrooms.

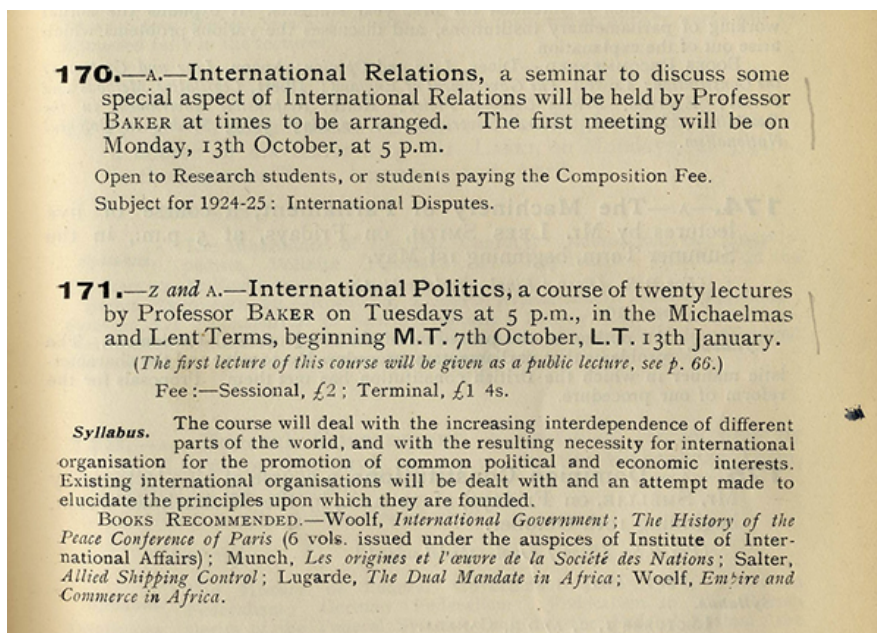
"The Governors should be asked to consider the formation of an Advisory Committee of distinguished persons interested in International Studies."

Minute 5 continues with the Director's assurance to Hugh Dalton, the future Chancellor of the Exchequer,

"that the Advisory Committee would be drawn up to include both men of academic distinction and distinguished men of practical affairs."

Beveridge announced the new Department in his annual report on Oration Day, 24 June 1927.

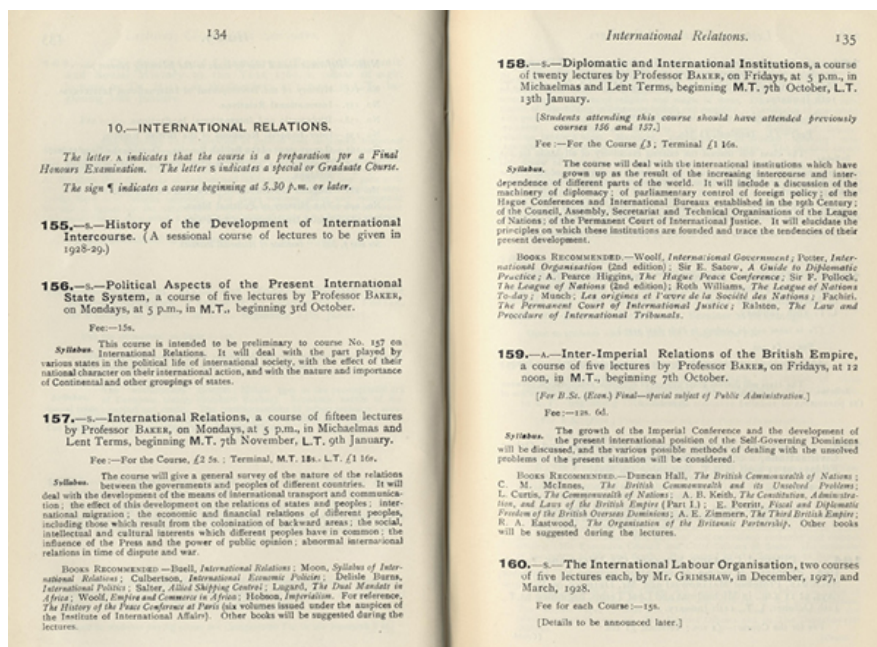
INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS and INTERNATIONAL POLITICS made their first appearance in the Calendar for 1924/25 (**below**). Philip Noel-Baker's courses were listed between those of Sir William Beveridge and Harold Laski under the general heading of Politics and Public Administration.



from the Calendar 1924-25

In 1926 the same two Noel-Baker courses were among the first identified in a new list of Graduate Courses. (The Professorial Council drew up a "tentative list" in Minute 11 of 19 May 1926.)

The 1927/28 Calendar saw courses listed under International Relations for the first time. A specimen two pages from the Calendar (**below**) shows part of the range of courses offered by the new Department, which was more commonly called International Studies. It is first referred to as the Department of International Relations in a Professorial Council minute of 26 February 1930, but not consistently thereafter.



from the Calendar 1928/28 – [BIGGER VIEW OF CALENDAR](#)

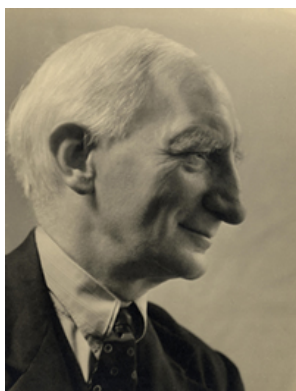
International Relations made another significant advance into the LSE curriculum in 1927. A committee chaired by R H Tawney proposed a revision to the BSc (Econ) which LSE had been teaching as its flagship degree ever since the reorganisation which followed the 1898 University of London Act. The Professorial Council accepted the Tawney Report and approved new regulations under which the first students would graduate in 1930. International Law and Relations now appeared in the list of Special Subjects (and would eventually become International Relations alone in 1943).

Alfred Zimmern had already set the scene before Noel-Baker with THE LEAGUE OF NATIONS AT WORK, a course of eight lectures which he launched on 12 November 1923:

“These lectures, while dealing principally with the aims and achievements of the League, will treat also of the general international situation and of the position which the League can and should occupy in international politics.”

This strong emphasis on the League and international institutions was reflected in publications and research. In 1925 Noel-Baker published The Geneva Protocol and in 1926 the first of many books on Disarmament, the lifelong cause for which he would receive the Nobel Peace Prize in 1959. As early as 1924 Edward Berrington Behrens received the degree of PhD (Economics) for his thesis on “Aspects of International Administration raised in connection with the early development of International Labour Organisation”, then just five years old. In 1927 Noel-Baker was supervising seven research students in the new Department.

On 5 November 1928 Don Salvador de Madariaga came to give a lecture on Disarmament, having directed since 1923 the Disarmament Section in the League of Nations Secretariat. By this time economic aspects of International Relations were also beginning to receive attention. New regs for BSc (Econ) for students graduating in 1930, show the new list of Special Subjects including International Law and Relations.

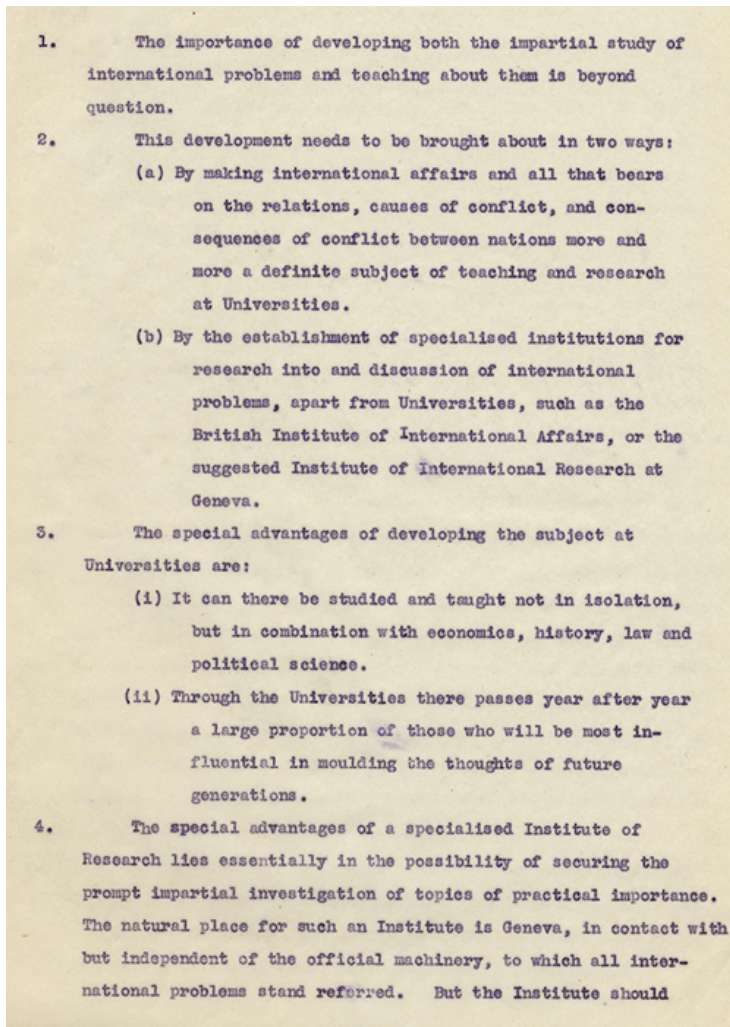


Sir William Beveridge

Sir William Beveridge’s (pictured above) support for International Relations is traced through his 1928 announcement of a scholarship for its best student, with the prize of a visit to Geneva. This matched the visit to The Hague attached to the International Law Scholarship. Both would take place in August and would include attendance at academic courses, in the League of Nations Secretariat’s Palais Wilson at Geneva and the Peace Palace at The Hague respectively.

There followed his success in persuading the Cassel Trustees to renew their funding of the Chair at £800 per year for a further five years from 1 August 1929

Beveridge's undated manuscript notes (**see below**) show plans for expansion, if possible in cooperation with the new Institute of International Studies at Geneva (which has been celebrating its own 75th anniversary as IUHEI). He saw LSE as preferable for "prolonged" study of International Relations because "international research concentrated at Geneva might tend to become simply a study of official methods and documents and minds" presumably because of the dominant presence of the League of Nations.



not attempt to do all its work at Geneva, or necessarily all through its own regular staff:

- (a) The materials for study are not in Geneva but in the various countries represented there. International research concentrated at Geneva might tend to become simply a study of official methods and documents and minds.
- (b) The subjects of advanced study are often such as to call for experts in some of the related sciences - economics, politics, law, history.
5. A specialised Institute at Geneva, again, while it might be a very valuable means of bringing graduate or even undergraduate students of economics, politics and history for short periods into contact with the practical treatment of international problems, could not probably with advantage aim at being a centre for prolonged full-time study by any considerable numbers of such students.
6. Both in research and in the training of students the Institute should co-operate with the Universities of the various countries. On the side of research, it should be financially in a position to secure the investigation of particular problems either by employing its own regular staff or by inducing a teacher at a University to take that as the subject of his next book. On the side of teaching, it should be equipped with scholarships making it easy for selected students from Universities to come to it for short periods.
7. The two lines of development named in the second paragraph are not alternative to one another, but complementary. Each has its special advantages and each its special weakness. Success depends upon progressing on both lines simultaneously.

Sample of Beveridge's undated manuscript notes

But Beveridge was limited by space constraints. The LSE site was expanding within the angle of Houghton Street and Clare Market, but not as fast as student numbers, which were thought to be at the maximum tolerable. 'Regular' students increased by almost 30% from 782 to 1014, in just the four years 1923-1927.

The c1927 photograph (**below**) shows the west side of Houghton Street: the houses awaiting demolition had been acquired so that the School could join up its new (1922) Main Building, seen on the left, with its earlier (1900) site on the corner of Clare Market. The east side of Houghton Street was still occupied by the Holborn Estate Grammar School for Boys, but the East Building which LSE would put up in its place in 1931 was to become the Department's eventual home for many years up to 1980.



West side of Houghton Street, c1927

How fast International Relations could grow would depend upon Beveridge's success in tapping the Laura Spelman Rockefeller Memorial Fund for the building work in Houghton Street.

Beveridge celebrated in his 1926 Oration Day report the "great value" of the Cassel Chair of International Relations. He saw LSE as about to "be equipped to deal with international affairs from all the three angles of law, history and administration."

Though, however, the Chair of International Law is not filled, the study of International Law and of international problems generally is of growing importance in the School. The Chair of International Relations established two years ago on a temporary basis by a grant from the Sir Ernest Cassel Trustees has proved of great value. As from the beginning of next session the staff of the School in this field will be still further strengthened by the assigning to it by the Senate of the Chair of International History in the University of London founded by Sir Daniel Stevenson. The School will thus be equipped to deal with international affairs from all the three angles of law, history and administration.

1926 Director's Report

Writing in 1971, Professor F S Northedge commented:

"The last of these three 'angles' presumably reflected the general assumption in the 1920s that an international community of states already existed: what remained to be accomplished being to furnish that community with appropriate administrative organs, the most important of which had already been set up in the form of the League of Nations."

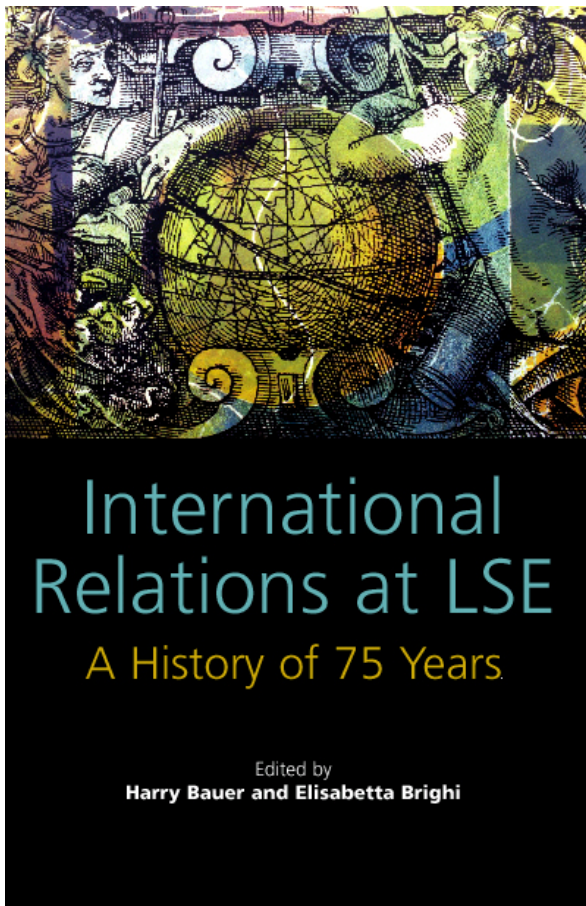


Professor F S Northedge

1971 also saw Northedge's vision realised with the launch of MILLENNIUM as a learned journal edited and produced by graduate students of the Department. It has come a long way from then: Vol I No 1 is a rarity. Now established as a charitable trust, which runs conferences as well as a journal, MILLENNIUM is still run by graduate student teams from an office in the Department.

Its own 25th Anniversary conference was the first major event organised in Clement House after its reopening as an LSE building. The Department moved there in September 1996 after sixteen years at the back of the Main Building, in the old W.H.Smith Memorial Hall vacated by the Library in 1978.

Northedge's 'Brief History of the Department', which had lain unpublished since 1971, now appears in print for the first time in 'International Relations at LSE: A History of 75 Years', published by MILLENNIUM to celebrate this 75th Anniversary.



book front cover: published by Millennium

Text: Nicholas Sims

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