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Fred Halliday:

Achievements, Ambivalences and Openings*

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Towards a provisional assessment

The death of Fred Halliday in April 2010, at the age of 64, has deprived International Relations (IR) of one of its most influential figures. Halliday shaped the field, particularly in the UK, through powerful insights, inspiring pedagogy and a passionate commitment to his subject. His work was conspicuous both for its judicious assessment of complex subjects and its capacity to intertwine analytical, empirical and normative registers. He was a rousing speaker and a captivating writer – clear, lucid and free of bunkum. For all the range of his work over the four decades in which he published, Halliday remained consistent to a kind of ‘empathetic internationalism’, one rooted in a ‘radical Enlightenment’ commitment to critical reason, rights and secularism. Halliday offered unwavering support, sometimes academically, at other times more directly, to those fighting oppression around the world. And he never lost sight of the need to stay resolutely independent of intellectual fads. Fred Halliday was more than an individual; his death represents the passing of an era.¹

In what follows, we look back – in order to look forward – at the most important dimensions of Halliday’s scholarship for an IR audience. The first section traces Halliday’s commitment to ‘empathetic internationalism’ through his engagement with four thinkers: Isaac Deutscher, Bill Warren, Maxime Rodinson and Ernest Gellner. As we argue, Halliday’s internationalism was keenly felt, yet took ambivalent form: at times it focused on resistance (via dissent, collective action and revolutionary struggle) to the coercive, exploitative dimensions of capitalist modernity; at other times it supported the spread of progressive ideas and practices (rights, legal equality, democracy) carried via capitalism and its capillaries. As such, this assessment of Halliday’s understanding of internationalism allows us to unpack some ‘creative tensions’ which underlie his scholarship. The second section looks more

* Our thanks to a number of people who provided comments on this piece: Margot Light, Toby Dodge, Luca Tardelli, Kirsten Ainley, Paul Kirby, Mick Cox, Chris Hill and the editors of *Millennium*.

¹ An appreciation of the range and depth of Halliday’s influence can be gauged by the level of comment which his death prompted. Of the many obituaries about him, those in *The Times* (by Toby Dodge and George Lawson), *The Guardian* (by Sami Zubaida) and *The Economist* (anonymously authored) are good places to start. A wide ranging set of tributes can be found at the *opendemocracy* website: <http://www.opendemocracy.net/anthony-barnett/fred-halliday-1946-%E2%80%93-2010>.

directly at Halliday's impact on IR, concentrating on his interventions in IR theory, gender studies and revolutions. The exuberance, not to mention the sheer volume, of Halliday's *oeuvre* (twenty-seven contributions to *Millennium* alone), precludes easy analysis. As such, our appraisal of his work is necessarily provisional, concentrating as much on the ways Halliday served to open up terrain for others as on his direct impact. Throughout the article, we make no pretence to capture fully, let alone provide any final reckoning of, this most insatiable of careers. Rather, our aim is more modest – to examine critically some of the core strands of Halliday's work in order to provoke comment from those who studied under him, read him or heard him speak, and those who will engage further in years to come. To that end, we close by suggesting a number of openings which Halliday's work prompts for contemporary IR audiences.

Internationalisms: Deutscher, Warren, Rodinson, Gellner

Fred Halliday was born in Dublin in 1946. Like many self-exiled Irish intellectuals before him, Halliday enjoyed an ambivalent relationship with the British establishment. Educated at a prestigious Benedictine boarding school in Yorkshire (Ampleforth College), Oxford (where he achieved a First in PPE), SOAS (where he did an MSc in 1968-9) and LSE (where Halliday did a PhD, albeit one which lasted nearly two decades), Halliday's educational background was one of relative privilege. But this tells only part of the story. Growing up as the third son of a Quaker-Methodist father and a Catholic mother in one of the more dangerous parts of Ireland (Dundalk) during one its more turbulent periods (he vividly remembered the onset of the IRA Border Campaign in 1956), Halliday knew what it was like to challenge received wisdoms and cross restricted divides. The only witnesses to his parent's 'mixed marriage' were, so the story went, some local gravediggers. Thus Halliday was equally at home in the radical hotbed of 1960s SOAS and on the editorial board of *New Left Review* (NLR) (where he served from 1969-83) as when studying – or teaching – at the heart of the British educational establishment.

After an early career spent mainly outside the academy (principally at the NLR, but also including spells at the Transnational Institute in Amsterdam and the Institute for Policy Studies in Washington), Halliday was appointed to the LSE in 1983, first as a Temporary Lecturer in International Relations and, in 1985, as a full Professor. By the time he was elected Fellow of the British Academy in 2002, Halliday was a major figure in British public life. He became Montague Burton Professor of International Relations in 2005 before, in his final years, taking up a post as ICREA Research Professor at the Institut Barcelona d'Estudis

Internationals (IBEI). Unlike many contemporary academics, Halliday reached a substantial public audience via his many talks and media work – he was as comfortable debating on al-Jazeera as he was in seminar rooms and lecture halls. His frequent columns for *opendemocracy*, as well as his regular contributions to the Middle East Research and Information Project (MERIP) and commentaries in the mainstream press, ensured that his work reached a wide audience.² Indeed, Halliday was a voracious writer throughout his adult life, writing over twenty books and producing hundreds of journal and media articles. His first publication, a contribution to an edited volume on student activism at the height of the 1968 uprisings, was written when he was twenty-two.³ As a result, by the time of his appointment at LSE, Halliday was already well known as a prominent public intellectual of the Left.⁴ This did not endear him much to the more conservative members of the LSE hierarchy. Initially the outsider amongst a group of five senior academics interviewed for the post, Halliday won over the committee with his breadth of knowledge, range of languages and overriding ebullience.⁵ They voted unanimously to appoint him. This did not, however, halt noisy discontent from certain members of the LSE faculty, one of whom denounced Halliday as a ‘Trotskyist PLO sympathiser’, an epithet that Halliday may not have taken entirely as an insult.⁶

² Halliday’s columns for *opendemocracy* are collected in: *The World in the 2000s: Political Journeys*, ed. David Hayes (London: Saqi, Forthcoming). Halliday’s catholic tendencies when it came to finding outlets for his work did not always find favour amongst his colleagues. Indeed, he was admonished by Perry Anderson, his colleague at *New Left Review*, for ‘taking the smuggler’s road to socialism’ – the charge was writing for *The Guardian*. Halliday’s retort, as chronicled in his resignation letter from the NLR, was characteristically blunt, ‘the NLR takes itself far too seriously ... there is an element in our discussions and in our themes of a self-appointed general staff without any troops at our command’.

³ Fred Halliday, ‘Students of the World Unite’ in *Student Power* eds. Alexander Cockburn and Robin Blackburn (London: Penguin, 1969), 287-326.

⁴ Key publications before Halliday’s appointment at LSE included an edited volume on the work of Isaac Deutscher: *Russia, China and the West* (Oxford: OUP, 1970); two books on the Middle East: *Arabia Without Sultans* (London: Penguin, 1974); and *Iran: Dictatorship and Development* (London: Penguin, 1978); a co-authored book (with Maxine Molyneux) on Third World revolutions: *The Ethiopian Revolution* (London: Verso, 1982); and a study of the increasing hostilities between the Soviet Union and the United States during the late 1970s and early 1980s: *The Making of the Second Cold War* (London: Verso, 1983).

⁵ As chronicled by the reflections of Meghnad Desai and Lawrence Freedman, both of whom served on Halliday’s appointment committee. Their support was well rewarded. Halliday came, over time, to play a major intellectual and institutional role in the school. And he also loved the place: ‘LSE is unique in the cosmopolitanism and intelligence of its student body, the quality of its intellectual engagement, and the free atmosphere of its teaching and research’. Fred Halliday, ‘IR in a Post-Hegemonic Age’, LSE Public Lecture, 20 January 2008.

⁶ Next to the general level of disquiet at Halliday’s appointment, Hedley Bull’s reference to Halliday as a ‘communist ratbag’, made after they appeared together on a BBC radio show in the early 1980s, seems fairly mild.

In his inaugural lecture at LSE, Halliday set out with characteristic clarity what he understood to be the two core elements of IR as a discipline: ‘One is the question of how and with what concepts to analyse relations between states and across frontiers ... the second is the question of value, of the normative’.⁷ To explain and evaluate international affairs, diagnose and prescribe change in global politics, to combine moral contestation with rigorous analysis (‘protest with perception’) was, for Halliday, the foremost task of academic enquiry. ‘Tension’ and ‘contradiction’ were, for Halliday, recurrent themes in this regard, not just in the actual history of modern international relations, but crucially, also germane in thinking about how to understand, analyse and transform world politics. ‘Internationalism’ was, according to Halliday, pivotal in that it simultaneously captured these tensions and bridged the divide between the analytical and the normative, in other words between aspirations to change and the realities of power. Internationalism offered a means of both recognising the ‘contradictory unity’ of ‘the international’ and marrying analytical clarity with political commitment. Indeed, ‘empathetic internationalism’ acted as a consistent compass for locating Halliday’s work.

Much of Halliday’s internationalism was nurtured through his life-long travels. From the initial teenage trip to Iran to his final years in Barcelona, Halliday remained an incessant globetrotter. This was, however, no mere cosmopolitanism of the frequent flyer lounge, but an expression of a rooted internationalism, driven by the desire to learn about the world and, indeed, *live* international relations *in situ*: be it marching with Dhofari guerrillas in the late 1960s or taking an impromptu visit to the demilitarised zone separating Kuwait and Iraq in 1991. Indeed, for the better part of the 1970s, Halliday acted as a roving correspondent for the *New Left Review*, dispatching informed, vivid and engaged reports on political crises in southern Arabia, Eritrea, the Caribbean, Sri Lanka and Afghanistan. Halliday also contributed a number of book-length studies issued from his journeys in an insurgent Third World.⁸

All this formed the biographical backdrop to Halliday’s later, more self-consciously academic work on revolutions, internationalism, the Cold War and the Middle East. In one of his valedictory – or, as he labelled them, ‘transitional’ – lectures, Halliday insisted that, ‘I would value much more highly a job candidate, or aspirant to promotion, who could read and speak a foreign language, had lived and researched in other countries and cultures, who had sat in a village in Yemen or a favela in Brazil, or worked for a year or two in Moscow or

⁷ Fred Halliday, ‘Three Concepts of Internationalism’, *International Affairs* 88, no. 2 (1988): 187.

⁸ Most notably: Halliday, *Arabia Without Sultans*; Halliday, *Iran: Dictatorship and Development*; Halliday and Molyneux, *The Ethiopian Revolution*.

Rome, than someone who had been cited in a supposedly top ranking meta-theoretical disciplinary journal.’⁹ These experiences also informed Halliday’s political commitments which were, for all their tensions and contradictions, underpinned by a deep personal loyalty to those peoples and individuals with whom he had shared comradeship and hospitality.

Yet it is perhaps by discussing some of Halliday’s principal intellectual influences that we can best grasp the core elements of his ‘empathetic internationalism’. Four individuals – Isaac Deutscher, Bill Warren, Maxime Rodinson and Ernest Gellner – loom large across Halliday’s *oeuvre*.¹⁰ All four were, in their own way, descendants of the radical European Enlightenment, staunch internationalists, ‘area specialists’ of some renown and, in the case of the first three, militantly independent Marxists. At the risk of some stylised contrivance, we can associate each of these thinkers with an aspect of Halliday’s internationalism: from Deutscher, an emphasis on the ways in which distinct forms of domestic order led, in turn, to systemic international competition; from Warren, an understanding of capitalism as the potentially progressive carrier of European Enlightenment; from Rodinson, a materialist critique of culture, identity and claims to regional exceptionalism; and from Gellner, a commitment to rights, equality and ‘radical universalism’ – what Halliday was to call ‘complex solidarity’.

Isaac Deutscher

Although Halliday came of political age in the years surrounding 1968, contributing to the wave of radical activism which characterised the period through his work on the ultra-leftist newspaper *Black Dwarf*, it was his association with the ‘second’ *New Left Review*, under the editorial triumvirate of Perry Anderson, Robin Blackburn and Tariq Ali, which introduced him to the work of Isaac Deutscher. Deutscher was an exiled Polish Marxist, famous among

⁹ Fred Halliday, ‘Social Science and the Middle East: Myths, Pitfalls and Opportunities’, LSE Public Lecture, 7 January 2008. One of Halliday’s *bête-noirs* was the fictional, if disturbingly plausible, publication: ‘The Mid-Atlantic Journal of Inverted Abstraction’.

¹⁰ In keeping with the man himself, Halliday’s influences were a diverse, cosmopolitan bunch. Apart from those detailed in this section, they included the British polymath E.H. Carr, the Hungarian economic historian Karl Polanyi, the French sociologist Raymond Aron, the German anti-fascist Willy Brandt and the man Halliday described as ‘my greatest intellectual hero’ – the Irish politician and academic Conor Cruise O’Brien. It is tempting to see Halliday’s influences as, to some extent at least, offering a mirror to his own character. Hence his description of Cruise O’Brien could just as easily be applied to Halliday himself: ‘restless, cantankerous, independent, polyglot, always courageous, or as we quaintly put it “outspoken”, often brilliantly perceptive, at times plain wrong, he embodied Schiller’s motto to be at once a citizen of his country and a citizen of his age’. Fred Halliday, ‘Legacies of Cold War’, Government and Opposition Lecture, Political Studies Association Annual Conference, 9 April 2009.

other things for his biographies of Trotsky and Stalin.¹¹ Deutscher was adopted by many in the Anglophone New Left as a living link between the interwar Bolshevik generation and the student activists of the period, bringing a strong dose of strategic realism from the former to the revolutionary idealism of the latter. But it was Deutscher's understanding of the Soviet bloc as a flawed, yet substantial, challenger to the capitalist West that informed Halliday's understanding of the Cold War. The 'great contest', Deutscher argued, was an inter-systemic rivalry between two irreconcilable socio-economic systems (communism and capitalism), not merely the product of ideological 'perception' and 'misperception' or the latest round of inevitable Great Power clashes.¹² Rather, the Cold War was the geopolitical expression of rival means of organising polities, economics and societies – the internationalisation of European civil wars after World War II. Deutscher saw the USSR as the geopolitical inheritor of the Bolshevik revolution and insisted that socio-political and ideological transformations *within* that state were having a significant impact on *international* affairs more broadly.

Halliday adopted three of Deutscher's propositions when developing his own interpretation of the Cold War: that the USSR was a revolutionary state when it came to international relations; that radical change *within* states significantly shaped their *external* relations; and that the Cold War was an inter-systemic rather than inter-state conflict, pitting into battle two rival visions of modernity. Deutscher's impact is perhaps most pronounced in Halliday's *Making of the Second Cold War*, in which the intensification of US-Soviet antagonism during the late 1970s and early 1980s are explained with reference to a fresh wave of Third World revolutions and counter-revolutions, and the accompanying emergence of the New Right in the West. This ran contrary to the prevailing views of both the western Left and the international peace movement, who tended to identify the Cold War as an 'imaginary war' defined by the convergence of militarised bureaucracies and oligarchic power-elites within both blocs. Where thinkers such as E.P. Thompson and C. Wright Mills saw the homologous nature of each side's 'military-industrial complex' as tending towards 'exterminism', for Halliday, the Cold War did not endure, nor was it dangerous, because of internal bureaucratic logics shared by both capitals.¹³ Rather, the Cold War was a conflict

¹¹ On this, see Deutscher's: *The Prophet Armed* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1954); *The Prophet Unarmed* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1959); *The Prophet Outcast* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1963); and *Stalin: A Political Biography* (London: Pelican, 1970).

¹² Isaac Deutscher, *The Great Contest* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1960).

¹³ This debate is best captured in: E.P. Thompson ed., *Exterminism and the Cold War* (London: Verso, 1982). Also see: C. Wright Mills, *The Causes of World War Three* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1958); Mary Kaldor, *The Disintegrating West* (London: Allen Lane, 1978); and Mary Kaldor, *The Imaginary War* (London: Basil Blackwell, 1990).

rooted in radically different socio-economic systems and value orientations. As such, it could not end through arms races, Third World Revolutions or peace movements, but only through the decisive victory of one side over the other. Crucially, for Halliday, this was not a victory which the Soviet Union could win – from the late 1970s on, Halliday charted the unequal nature of the great contest, monitoring US superiority across a range of military, political and economic indicators.¹⁴

Bill Warren

Halliday's 'externalist' approach to the Cold War was part of a broader theoretical orientation which saw the modern international system as containing two core dynamics: on the one hand, a universalising tendency towards cooperation and interdependence; and on the other, sharp geopolitical fragmentation and deep socio-economic inequality. The Cold War was, for Halliday, a prime example of this 'contradictory unity', cutting across both 'horizontal' interstate relations and 'vertical' socio-economic antagonisms. These two dynamics – contradictions inherent to the system – were, for Halliday, made starker by the uneven spread of capitalist modernity. That capitalism was, for Halliday, the primary force underlying modern international relations seems hardly controversial, at least not outside the conservative world of mainstream IR. But it does beg some knotty questions about exactly *how* capitalism shaped international processes. Here, Halliday was less sanguine. Earlier studies, such as his *Arabia Without Sultans*, set the tone for much of his work via a lapidary endorsement of what he called 'the law' of uneven and combined development:

[c]apitalism unifies the world into a single market and into a system of political dominations; yet the different sub-sections of this world system remain distinct. In many cases, the differences between them are accentuated by incorporation into a single system. It is because of this unevenness that the weakest links in the capitalist system as a whole may be found not in the most developed countries but in those countries where the retarded impact of capitalism creates contradictions that are all the sharper because these developments carried through elsewhere have not yet been completed.¹⁵

¹⁴ If the ultimate failure of the Soviet experiment was not in question, the timing of its collapse was less certain. In that sense, Halliday was surprised, if sympathetic, to attempts at saving the system initiated by the new generation of Soviet leaders who came to power in the mid-1980s, chief amongst them Mikhail Gorbachev. Indeed, he offered a platform at LSE to a number of Gorbachev's reformers, including Abel Aganbegyan and Tatyana Zaslavskaya. For a broader assessment of the post-Soviet legacy, see: Fred Halliday, 'Third World Socialism: 1989 and After' in *The Global 1989*, eds. George Lawson, Chris Armbruster and Michael Cox (Cambridge: CUP, 2010).

¹⁵ Halliday, *Arabia Without Sultans*, 17.

Yet such emphases on the contradictions and inequalities fostered by the uneven spread of capitalism, with all the prospects for violent conflict that its ‘retarded impact’ generated, sat uneasily with Halliday’s defence of the, at least partially, progressive nature of this spread. In this regard, Halliday was much influenced by the work of Bill Warren, who taught him at SOAS and who had undertaken a systematic critique of ‘dependency’ theory, the theoretical toolkit of choice for those on the Left during the 1960s and 1970s.¹⁶ Warren argued that, misguided by Lenin’s pamphlet on imperialism and hoodwinked by Third World nationalism, leftist denunciations of ‘underdevelopment’ contradicted both the record of progressive socio-economic change introduced by capitalism and Marx’s own cautious celebration of this process, even when this took colonial form. Against the claims made by dependency theorists, Warren saw Third World development as possible under conditions of capitalism. And Halliday’s own work echoed these sentiments. Indeed, running alongside Halliday’s emphasis on uneven and combined development is an unmistakably Warrenite stress on the cosmopolitan thrust of capitalism as first developed in industrialising Europe and then exported to, and replicated by, Third World societies. Halliday saw a number of progressive elements in this process, not least the development of polities, economies and social orders built around principles of rights, equality and the rule of law. At one time, he argued, capitalism had been considered incapable of supporting universal suffrage, the legal equality of men and women, decolonisation and Third World industrialisation. Yet all of these processes had come to pass within, and were possibly even enabled by, an era defined by capitalist expansion.

This notion of capitalism is difficult to square with Halliday’s endorsement of uneven and combined development. Indeed, Halliday appears to see the internationalising dimension of capitalism in two contrasting ways: in the first place, as linear and progressive, the purveyor of a ‘radical universalism’ which carries with it ‘gifts’ of suffrage, rights, legal equality and democracy; and in the second place, as necessarily uneven, the purveyor of contradictions which contained within them the seeds of violent conflict. As such, although Halliday consistently saw capitalism as the prime mover behind modern internationalism, he was less clear about how this relationship was consummated. And there is little doubt that, although Halliday remained an unwavering critic of capitalism’s ‘dark side’, over the course of his career he became more accepting of the capacity of capitalism to adapt itself around a

¹⁶ Bill Warren, *Imperialism: Pioneer of Capitalism*, ed. John Sender (London: Verso, 1980).

reformist agenda. As he put it in a 2006 interview, ‘I feel much happier with a copy of the UNDP Human Development Report than with the *New Left Review*’.¹⁷

Halliday’s path from ‘revolutionary socialist’ to ‘critical liberal’ had several components: first, his broad acceptance of the Warrenite position that capitalism played a leading role in spreading progressive ideas and practices around the world; second, his assessment of the failures of alternatives to capitalist modernity, whether seen in the crucible – and disappointment – of Third World revolutions or in the remnants of ‘actually existing socialism’; third, an inability to support reflex anti-Americanism when he considered the record of that country to be finely balanced between progressive currents such as the civil rights and women’s movements and its disastrous overseas interventions and family planning policies; and finally, his impatience with the leftist tendency to valorize (or at least abide) reactionary regimes and movements, such as Ba’athism or political Islam, in the name of anti-imperialism – as Halliday was fond of saying, ‘the future of humanity does not lie in the back streets of Faluja’.¹⁸ Intriguingly, Halliday claimed that it was not *his* principles which had changed, but fellow travellers on the Left who had failed to learn from the events of the period and who had consistently taken knee-jerk ideological positions out of keeping with a broader critical sensibility. Although it is fair to say that Halliday’s work remained committed to principles of solidarity, universalism and independent judgement, his shift from open advocate of revolutionary socialism to a more disassociated sense of critique was one that many of his former comrades found difficult to accept.

Maxime Rodinson

Halliday’s recognition of capitalism as the concrete manifestation of internationalism in the modern era had its corollary in what we might call his *methodological* internationalism. Here the figure of the French intellectual Maxime Rodinson is, perhaps, the most significant interlocutor. Rodinson’s ‘materialist Orientalism’ profoundly influenced Halliday’s analysis of the Third World, most specifically the Greater Middle East. Rodinson himself had an ambiguous relationship to his specialist region. On the one hand, he unapologetically identified himself as a professional Orientalist and acknowledged the ‘scientific’ contributions of many of his fellow philologists, Islamologists and anthropologists, both past and present. On the other hand, Rodinson rejected ‘the Orientalist’s self-satisfied acceptance

¹⁷ Danny Postel, ‘Who is Responsible?: An Interview with Fred Halliday’, *Salmagundi* 150/151 (2006): www.opendemocracy.net/danny-postel/who-is-responsible-interview-with-fred-halliday.

¹⁸ Fred Halliday, ‘The Jihadism of Fools’, *Dissent*, Winter (2007): 144-7.

of their “academic ghetto” and advocated the application of ‘sociology, demography, political economy, linguistics, anthropology, ethnology or the different branches of general history ... to study peoples and regions in a given historical period and still take into account the specificities of those peoples or regions at a particular moment in time.’¹⁹

This historical-sociological method – an approach which examines the ways in which relatively stable practices (social structures) emerge and develop through time and across space – is the leitmotif of Rodinson’s work. It is a mode of inquiry which takes as its starting point the ways in which *common* social, economic and political experiences find expression within *particular* contexts. In Rodinson’s pithy formulation, ‘The Muslim world is specific, but it is not exceptional.’²⁰ Thus, for Rodinson, the universal dimensions of the Prophet Muhammad’s message are inextricably linked to the specific features of Meccan society at the turn of the seventh century CE and its location within the wider geopolitics and political economy of Arabia and its neighbours. Similarly, the material force of Islam in the Middle East was, for Rodinson, relative to other sources of political, military and socio-economic power. As such, the Muslim faith should not be understood as an unchanging monolith but as a dynamic panoply of experiences within a common core of beliefs and practices.

It is no exaggeration to say that this ‘materialist internationalism’ is axiomatic to Halliday’s work, particularly his writing on the Middle East.²¹ It was materialist in its emphasis on the concrete sources of religious, national or ethnic identities; it was internationalist in that it saw such specificity as comparable to, indeed often the product of, imitation and amalgamation with outside influences. For Halliday, there was no such thing as Islamic banking or Asian values – the former was ‘capitalist banking with a different cover’, while the latter was, at best, a distorting fiction: ‘there are no Asian values, only values in Asia’.²² For Halliday, all economies were concerned with the same things – the supply of money and the balance between profit and redistribution, just as all polities sought to manage the same tensions over legitimate authority and state power. The history of the Middle East, like the rest of the world, was one of resource extraction, state formation, class conflict and cultural fusion.²³ As Halliday was to define his ‘tribe’ of Enlightenment rationality:

¹⁹ Maxime Rodinson, *Europe and the Mystique of Islam* (London: I.B. Tauris, 1987): 117.

²⁰ Maxime Rodinson, *Islam and Capitalism* (London: Allen Lane, 1974): 227

²¹ See, for example: Fred Halliday, ‘The Politics of the Umma’, *Mediterranean Politics* 7, no. 3 (2002): 20-41; Fred Halliday, *The Middle East in International Relations* (Cambridge: CUP, 2005).

²² Fred Halliday, ‘Obiter Dicta and Other Reflections’, Unpublished Paper, 20. Halliday’s view of ‘Asian values’ was influenced by the work of his LSE colleague, Michael Leifer. Indeed, it may be that this line is originally Leifer’s rather than Halliday’s.

²³ Halliday, ‘The Middle East and Social Science’.

This is an approach with an inbuilt presumption against treating any region or culture or people as particular or unique. As far as area studies in general, and the Middle East in particular, is concerned, I therefore start from a set of universal principles, analytic and normative, that would ask to what extent these can help elucidate the particular societies in question.²⁴

Similarly, when it came to understanding ‘Anti-Muslimism in contemporary politics’, Halliday sought to shift analysis away from the essentialising discourse of ‘Islamophobia’ to an explanation of anti-Muslim bigotry within specific socio-historical circumstances, for example those ‘of ethnicity, intra-communal conflict, administrative corruption and inter-state conflict.’²⁵ In short, ‘Islam as an object of study must be dissolved in order to be made concrete in the study of particular events, times and places’.²⁶

In line with the tradition of critical scholarship in which Rodinson and Halliday can be located, such injunctions were deployed not just in analysis of these societies, but also in solidarity with them. Both Rodinson and Halliday championed internationalism as the concrete expression of their scholarly critique of nationalism. And both directed much of their intellectual energies towards the emancipation of Middle Eastern peoples. Indeed, Rodinson’s critique of essentialist understandings of nationalism and religion delivered one of the earliest denunciations of political Zionism and Israeli expansionism. His (and Deutscher’s) stance on these issues, including support for a two-state solution to the Arab-Israeli dispute, was wholeheartedly endorsed by Halliday:

Its essence was an exemplary ‘internationalism’ that recognised the rights of the two national groups, denounced the chauvinism and militarism of both sides, and (most important) rebutted in sharp, secular terms the religious rhetoric emanating from all quarters. Rodinson and Deutscher strongly criticised both the political culture and the authoritarian politics of the Arab world (something the ‘solidarity’ movements of today seem unable to do) and the rabbinical, militaristic culture of Israel. Their committed, secular stance is far removed from the totemic icons of ‘identity’, ‘community’, ‘tradition’, and ‘feeling’ that came to flourish in discussion of the region. It remains of utmost relevance.²⁷

²⁴ Fred Halliday, *Islam and the Myth of Confrontation* (London: I.B. Tauris, 1996): 196. Also see: Stephen Howe, ‘Son of the Bani Tanwir: The Work of Fred Halliday (1946-2010)’, *opendemocracy*, posted on 13 July 2010, available at: <http://www.opendemocracy.net/fred-halliday/son-of-bani-tanwir-work-of-fred-halliday-1946-2010>.

²⁵ Halliday, *Myth of Confrontation*, 193.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 2.

²⁷ Fred Halliday, ‘Maxime Rodinson: In Praise of a “Marginal Man”’, in Hayes ed., *Political Journeys*.

Like Rodinson, Halliday did not negate the agency of Middle Eastern political actors and social forces. For Halliday, as in other parts of the world, the peoples of the Middle East had, within given socio-historical constraints, mobilised, resisted and made choices about their political fate. Some of these had been misguided and counterproductive. Recognising this, and saying so without Eurocentric guilt or sectarianism complex, was for Halliday an elementary component of a ‘complex solidarity’ which underpinned his notion of internationalism. As Halliday saw it, culture was always embedded within wider networks of power. As such, no culture, whatever its pretence to eternal blessing, was free from critique, just as no peoples, under conditions of oppression, were beyond solidarity. Nationalism, for Halliday, was little more than an invented excuse for chauvinism. In contrast, internationalism served as a progressive current in world affairs.

Ernest Gellner

It is in this context that the fourth component of Halliday’s internationalism emerges, one linked to a programme of ‘radical universalism’: ‘[a] perspective on international relations that is both realistic and critical, one that advocates change on the basis of what can plausibly be said to be possible and which denies durability and legitimacy to that which exists at the moment [...] it is possible to suggest three principles that can guide such a perspective: equality, democracy and rights’.²⁸ Most of Halliday’s work on internationalism already implied such a programme. But it is fair to say that, as the contours of the post-Cold War world became better defined, two dimensions of this perspective, both drawn from Halliday’s close appreciation of the work of Ernest Gellner, became especially pronounced.

The first was an uncompromising defence of what, in the face of religious extremism and post-modern perspectivism, Gellner called ‘rationalist fundamentalism’.²⁹

Rationalist fundamentalism, whilst absolutizing no *substantive* conviction – no affirmation that this or that absolutely must be *thus* – does absolutize some formal, one might say, procedural principles of knowledge ... It is a vision that desacralizes, disestablishes, disenchants everything substantive: no privileged facts, occasion, individuals, institutions or associations ... All hypotheses are subject to scrutiny, all facts open to novel interpretations, and all facts subject to symmetrical laws which preclude the miraculous, the sacred occasion, the intrusion of the Other into the Mundane’.³⁰

²⁸ Fred Halliday, *The World at 2000* (London: Macmillan, 2002): 144.

²⁹ Ernest Gellner, *Postmodernism, Reason and Religion* (London: Routledge, 1992). Italics in original.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 80-1.

Like Gellner, Halliday applied ‘rationalist fundamentalism’ consistently in his work, in the process rejecting variants of analytical and normative communitarianism, perspectivism or exceptionalism. Considering that much of his political and academic life had, until then, been dedicated to puncturing invocations of ‘culture’, ‘identity’ and ‘difference’ by international agents – both hegemonic and subaltern – Halliday was especially exercised by the perils of a world in which Huntingtonian ‘fault-line babble’ found communion with various nationalist, regionalist or religious advocates of ‘cultural authenticity’.³¹ The appropriate response to such a challenge was, for Halliday, to develop and approach an IR enterprise which: ‘First ... is empirical, conceptual and, where relevant, critical; Second ... meets the criterion that is central to the social sciences, namely explanation; Third ... locates issues and concepts in their appropriate historical context.’³²

Accompanying these commitments was a second, more concrete expression of ‘radical universalism’, namely rights. While the demise of the Soviet bloc marked the end of the communist alternative to world order, the political legacy of the Age of Atlantic revolutions was still alive after the Cold War. In fact, its aspirations remained a powerful source of mobilisation: ‘a world in which the differences of wealth within and between peoples had been radically reduced, in which education and growth in prosperity and science was broadly equally available to all would be fundamentally different to today’.³³ Halliday’s rights agenda, built around the ideas of its more social democratic exponents such as Amartya Sen and Martha Nussbaum, represented the kind of radical universalism that could challenge the status quo of our ‘flat post-ideological world’.³⁴ Halliday championed this programme institutionally as the first director of LSE’s Centre for the Study of Human Rights, which he established alongside the committed advocacy of Stan Cohen and Margo Picken. Typically, Halliday’s endorsement of rights was decisive: ‘the right to independence, to decent government, to individual security, to education, to basic human respect and equality are as universal as the rising and setting of the sun’.³⁵ For Halliday, support for human rights, which he dubbed (following Cohen) ‘the last grand narrative’, was unequivocal.

For Halliday, therefore, ‘internationalism’ encompassed three core dimensions: a *process* of capitalist-driven interdependence whether understood as the uneven harbinger of

³¹ Halliday, ‘Social Science and Middle East’. Such a conviction led Halliday away from academic boycotts, which he saw as diametrically opposed to the core tasks of the academic endeavour: to listen, argue, contest and, where necessary, disagree.

³² Ibid.

³³ Halliday, *World at 2000*, 147.

³⁴ Ibid., 142.

³⁵ Halliday, ‘Social Science and the Middle East’.

conflict or as the progressive tool of development; a *principle* of human universality centred on rights, equality and democracy; and a *practice* of transnational cooperation and solidarity, particularly when this came to opposing autocratic regimes. It brought together the geopolitical, methodological, analytical and normative aspects of international relations, and underlay the tensions between convergence and fragmentation at the heart of the modern international order. Halliday's commitment to internationalism may not have been free from creative tensions – for example, there was a reluctance to apply to the notion of rights the same ideology-critique and materialist analysis he so ably deployed against identity politics. But his commitment, rooted in Enlightenment values of reason, universalism and secularism, was deeply felt. It also served as the intellectual backdrop for his disciplinary interventions.

International Relations: Theory, Gender, Revolution

As with many others before him, Halliday saw IR as occupying a marginal place in the social sciences: 'International Relations is a supernumerary element, an option for students, a penultimate chapter for the scholar'.³⁶ The problems associated with the subaltern place of IR were multiple, not least because it produced either denial (pre-1989) or exaggeration (post-1989) of the influence of 'the international'. Instead, Halliday made a passionate case for the *constant* ways in which international relations helped to shape historical development:

The "international" is not something out there, an area of policy that occasionally intrudes in the form of bombs or higher oil prices, but which can conventionally be ignored ... the requirements of inter-state competition explain much of the development of the modern state, while the mobilisation of domestic resources and internal constraints act for much of states' success in this competition. Disciplines such as political science and sociology, on the one hand, and IR, on the other, are looking at two dimensions of the same process: without undue intrusion or denial of the specificity of the other, this might suggest a fruitful interrelationship.³⁷

Halliday's theoretical interest in IR, like his work on the Middle East, was concerned with specifying IR's core domain (a broader domain, he thought, than was often taken to be the case) and demonstrating its interrelationship with other disciplines. Indeed, when scholars studied the emergence of modern states, the expansion of the market, or dynamics of war and revolution, they were already studying the ways in which international relations interlaced with domestic processes: 'there can be no purely national history of any states; equally there can be no theory of the economy, the state or social relations that denies the formative, not

³⁶ Halliday, *Rethinking IR*, 2.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 20.

just residual or recent, impact of the international'.³⁸ In short, the 'myth of the bounded society' was as pervasive – and as unscholarly – as that of the stork.³⁹

IR Theory

But what *specifically* did IR offer the social sciences? And on what theoretical terrain was IR to take part in interdisciplinary conversations? On these questions, Halliday was less clear. On the one hand, Halliday saw IR as concerned with a range of analytic concerns (foreign policy, interventions, international law etc.) which it was particularly well placed to examine. Alongside this was a set of distinctive normative challenges (questions over the legitimate use of force, the rights and wrongs of intervention, 'our' responsibility to 'others', and so on). On the other hand, Halliday did not lay out, either theoretically or substantively, what made these domain areas discrete, nor how they were to serve as devices for interdisciplinary interactions. In some ways, no doubt, such an omission was deliberate. After all, if the world was messy, then disciplines could not legitimately guard their terrain like the academic equivalent of homeland security agents. And there is little doubt that, rather than generate a programmatic view of IR replete with hardcore assumptions supported by auxiliary hypothesis, Halliday preferred a more eclectic enterprise couched between the empiricist fallacy of 'facts without theory' and the metatheoretical inclination towards 'abstraction without content': 'IR, like all branches of knowledge, faces two dangers – that of factual accounts devoid of theoretical reflections, explanatory or ethical, and that of theory unchecked in, or untested by, the analysis of history itself'.⁴⁰ In other words, between the twin dangers of a 'futile cult of facts' and a 'pretentious cult of abstraction' lay fertile terrain.⁴¹ This terrain was occupied, for Halliday, by historical sociology.

If historical sociology is conventionally understood as a dialogue between Marx and Weber, then Halliday's thinking straddled both sides of this dialogue, at times uneasily. The Marxist dimension of his work took many forms. First amongst these, as noted in the previous section, was that Halliday saw the emergence of industrial capitalism as the core concern of IR, serving as the central imperative behind processes of state formation and inter-

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 4.

³⁹ Fred Halliday, 'For an International Sociology', in *Historical Sociology of International Relations* ed. Stephen Hobden and John M. Hobson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005): 244-64.

⁴⁰ Halliday, *Rethinking IR*, ix.

⁴¹ In his more uncharitable moments, Halliday described this 'cult of abstraction' as 'Floor 7 disease', referring to the 7th Floor of Clement House at LSE where the offices of *Millennium* are housed. More charitably, he associated such a position with that taken by C. Wright Mills in his, *The Sociological Imagination* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1959).

state competition. Halliday also regularly used class as an analytical category, seeing the emergence of stratification, particularly in its transnational form, as one of IR's principal areas of enquiry. As with other Marxist-inspired scholars, Halliday sought to historicize taken-for-granted assumptions about the world, seeing the emergence of ideas, institutions and associated international practices as embedded within specific historical contexts. At the same time, he shared a Marxist concern with the ways in which conflict in general, and wars and revolution in particular, had shaped the modern international order.

Halliday's Weberian influences were also keenly felt. First, there was his obvious admiration for Weberian scholars such as Raymond Aron, C. Wright Mills, Michael Mann and Charles Tilly, even if Halliday was not always convinced that their rich analysis of the domestic realm was matched by comparable attention to the international sphere.⁴² Second, there was Halliday's endorsement of a Weberian understanding of the state as a set of administrative-coercive apparatuses rather than the legal-territorial unit usually employed in IR.⁴³ For Halliday, the former not only offered greater conceptual clarity, it also drew attention away from a mistaken sense of the state as a pristine, unitary actor towards a more compelling toolkit concerned with how state-society complexes were forged and shaped by the violent intersection of international and domestic processes. The Treaty of Westphalia, Halliday reminded his IR audiences, was one which allowed state leaders to coerce their own people with relative impunity. And states more generally had arisen as administrative bodies which imposed order on their subjects in order to raise taxes which, in turn, were used to fund inter-state wars. Only much later did states become, contingently in Halliday's view, representative. Rather, the history of the modern state was one of violent oppression.

Although Halliday trailed a significant path for historical sociology in IR, it is fair to say that he did not offer a definitive theoretical statement of his own on the subject.⁴⁴ Indeed,

⁴² See, for example, his chiding of Mills along these lines: Fred Halliday, 'The Contradictions of C. Wright Mills', *Millennium* 23, no. 2 (1994): 377-85; and his slightly more guarded challenges to Michael Mann in: Fred Halliday, 'He's Not Finished Yet: Achievements and Challenges in the Work of Michael Mann' *Millennium* 34, no. 2 (2006): 509-16.

⁴³ Fred Halliday, 'State and Society in International Relations: A Second Agenda', *Millennium* 16, no. 2 (1987): 215-29.

⁴⁴ Halliday supervised to completion over fifty PhD's during his time at LSE, including many works of historical sociology. A selective sample includes: Justin Rosenberg, *The Empire of Civil Society* (London: Verso, 1994); Richard Saull, *The State, Military Power and Social Revolution* (London: Frank Cass, 2001); Alejandro Colás, *Social Movements in World Politics* (Cambridge: Polity, 2002); Nick Bisley, *The End of the Cold War and the Causes of Soviet Collapse* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2004); George Lawson, *Negotiated Revolutions* (London: Ashgate, 2005); Maryam Panah, *The Islamic Republic and the World* (London: Pluto, 2007); and Amnon Aran, *Israel's Foreign Policy Towards the PLO* (Brighton: Sussex Academic Press, 2009).

Halliday often appeared as a curiously miscellaneous theorist. He remained wedded to a tripartite understanding of international theory as inter-state (realist), transnational (liberal) and systemic (structural/Marxist) which had held sway at LSE when he joined the department, largely through the influence of Martin Wight.⁴⁵ And he retained an admiration for figures like the conservative parliamentarian Edmund Burke, whom he considered to be one of the only figures to understand the tendency of the international realm towards ‘homogeneity’. But despite Halliday’s tendency to dabble in theoretically diverse waters, two features of his approach to historical sociology were consistently applied: first, the need to denaturalize taken-for-granted understandings and practices of international order, whether this took the form of absolutist monarchy, capitalist modernity or patriarchy; and second, the need to study the success – and failures – of individuals and movements who had challenged these structures of domination. In this fundamental sense, Halliday was concerned with human agency – the ways in which people ‘took mastery’ of their surroundings, ‘emancipated themselves’ from the conditions of their servitude and, thereby, ‘determined their own futures’.⁴⁶ For all his interest in long-run, structural processes (market expansion, state development, cultural hybridity), Halliday was acutely aware of the ‘cunning of history’ – the ways in which accident, contingency and luck played their part in historical processes. Indeed, he was ‘humanist’ in this most basic sense of all, seeing hope, aspiration and the capacity of people to imagine alternatives as the central drama of human history.

Despite this concern with the unexpected in history, and with all due regard for the modesty and caution which he saw this as requiring of social scientists, Halliday saw the true test of a theory as its explanatory power. Indeed, he was scathing of areas of study, particularly post-modernism, which did not see explanation as their core motivation. Halliday’s distaste for post-positivist approaches, however, was not total. He shared with these approaches a desire to destabilise taken-for-granted assumptions, contest status-quo hierarchies and subvert the ‘natural’ order of things. And Halliday was as concerned as any post-structuralist with the fusion of power-knowledge and the disciplinary features of discourse and rhetoric, as apparent in his invocation for all students to learn a language (Halliday spoke twelve languages fluently himself), his interest in etymology (a dictionary of

⁴⁵ Indeed, Halliday was gracious in both conversation and print about the English School – an approach he saw as a major improvement on neo-realism and associated positions, not least in the capacity of its advocates to take history, social change and international hierarchy seriously. Indeed, in the speech given at his farewell dinner in May 2008, Halliday implored his colleagues to tell their more methodologically-infatuated students: ‘let them read Geoffrey Stern’.

⁴⁶ Halliday, ‘For an International Sociology’.

the post-9/11 world was finished shortly before his death),⁴⁷ and his love of jokes (which, like Slavoj Žižek, he took extremely seriously).⁴⁸ Indeed, despite his materialist base, Halliday spent considerable time exploring the ways in which ideas motivated people to action, most notably during revolutions, or in how symbolic tropes were exploited politically. Hence, in his analysis of the end of the Cold War, Halliday claimed that, ‘it was the T-shirt and the supermarket, not the gunboat or the cheaper manufacturers, that destroyed the legitimacy and stability of the Soviet regime. Bruce Springsteen was the late twentieth century equivalent of the Opium Wars’.⁴⁹

However, Halliday’s frustration with post-modernism was deeply felt: ‘if you are being tortured, it makes little sense to be told that you are suffering from Western imperialist influence or totalitarian Enlightenment rationality and should instead appreciate the irony of the situation in which you find yourself. It is rather hard to deconstruct the torturer’s electrodes’.⁵⁰ Halliday’s commitment to rationalism and explanation led him to see post-modernism as lacking the substantive foundations by which to assess rival historical and, indeed, normative claims. ‘Explanation’, he argued, ‘is the only antidote to myth’.⁵¹ Likewise, Halliday’s use of concepts such as progress, universalism and emancipation put him at odds with what he regarded as post-modernism’s slavish regard (or at least apoliticised disregard) for exclusionary beliefs and practices. In keeping with his sense of IR as a *comprador* discipline which ingested the latest fad and passed it on without adding any value to it, Halliday had no time for the recycled way in which post-structuralism in IR was imbibed. What worked as literary critique or aesthetic jape, Halliday thought, turned into something much more serious, and more supine, in IR. His critique of the post-modern ‘zone of half-truth, fabrication and petty mindedness’ was damning:⁵²

Witty incantations about alterity, dissolution and freeze-frames, and exaggerated claims about what has changed about the world are no substitute for a substantive engagement with history or a plausible concept of the alternatives for political and theoretical change. Rather too inebriated with its own phrases, post-modernism in social science runs the risk of becoming the new banality, a set of assertions as

⁴⁷ Fred Halliday, *Shocked and Awed* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2010).

⁴⁸ This is not the place to detail the many ways in which Halliday used humour in order to illustrate serious points, but three of his favourite sayings are worth recalling: ‘history repeats itself: the first time as tragedy, the second time as farce, the third time as a fad in IR Theory’; ‘the ESRC is a four letter word’; ‘one good post-graduate seminar is worth a thousand anti-ageing creams’.

⁴⁹ *Rethinking IR*, 97.

⁵⁰ Halliday, ‘Obiter Dicta’, 20.

⁵¹ Halliday, *Myth of Confrontation*, viii.

⁵² Fred Halliday, *International Relations: A Critical Introduction*, Unpublished Manuscript, 108.

unlocated and useless as the vacuous generalisations – be they balance of power or progressivist teleology – that they seek to displace.⁵³

Gender

Nowhere did Halliday's frustrations with post-modernism boil over more readily than in discussions of gender. The pride Halliday showed in establishing (with Margot Light) the first course on 'Women and IR' in the world and organising the first ever conference on IR and gender was matched only by the frustration he felt with how the field developed subsequently.⁵⁴ Although Halliday's interest in gender issues was long-standing, not least through engagement with the work of his wife Maxine Molyneux, it took novel form during his time at LSE. Halliday's basic motivation was simple – a rebellion against the idea that IR could be 'neutral' in terms of gender. In fact, his challenge to the subject was the reverse: 'there is no area of international relations that does not have a gendered dimension'.⁵⁵ Although Halliday did not take this challenge on in any systematic sense (and did not supervise any PhD's in the area), he was quick to 'mainstream' gender debates in research and teaching, whether this involved discussing colonial attempts at population control or the systematic use of rape in war. And his challenge was taken-on by many of his colleagues, albeit with varying degrees of commitment and, at times, resistance. Halliday also ensured that Cynthia Enloe's *Bananas, Beaches and Bases* became one of the 'great books' taught on the core course for the MSc International Relations at LSE.⁵⁶

Halliday was also much occupied with the 'masculinisation' of discourse in IR. Indeed, he had no trouble identifying that one of the reasons for disquiet over Robert Kagan's contention that 'Americans are from Mars and Europeans are from Venus' was that Kagan's conceit served to effeminise Europeans.⁵⁷ But, in general, Halliday's critique of the post-modern infatuation with discourse crossed over into his work on gender. Indeed, he railed against the 'sabotage' of an 'add epistemology and stir' approach which demonstrated a 'submission to the banalities of intellectual fashion which could lead gender issues to be "hidden" again under a new vapidty'.⁵⁸ This 'epistemological hypochondria', Halliday argued, stripped women of meaningful agency and offered no tools by which to fight gender-

⁵³ Fred Halliday, Review of Rob Walker, 'Inside/Outside', *Millennium* 22, no. 2 (1993): 365.

⁵⁴ Edited proceedings from the conference were later published as: Rebecca Grant and Kathleen Newland eds., *Gender and International Relations* (Milton Keynes: Open University Press, 1991).

⁵⁵ Halliday, *Rethinking IR*, chapter 7.

⁵⁶ Cynthia Enloe, *Bananas, Beaches and Bases* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001).

⁵⁷ Robert Kagan, *Of Paradise and Power: America and Europe in the New World Order* (New York: Atlantic, 2004).

⁵⁸ *Rethinking IR*, 169.

derived inequalities. The result, he argued, was a ‘misplaced anthropological generosity’ towards practises which were anathema to the international women’s movement, let alone goals of universal emancipation.⁵⁹

Overall, Halliday argued that the record was mixed when it came to assessing progress in both the academic study of gender and the substantive positions of women in world politics. On the latter, it was possible to chart tangible advances: the recognition and prosecution of gender-related violence as a war crime; gender issues linked officially to the preservation of international peace and security; and the integration of gender concerns into the work of the World Bank. Likewise, on the former, gender had become a meaningful concept and its associated scholarly pursuit the subject of serious books, articles, conferences and courses, even if many of these took place outside IR. However, Halliday also warned of a ‘backlash’: the limited funding given to gender issues; the cultural conservatism, whether of the White House or the Vatican, which sought to block gender-relevant policies at international conferences; and the 100 million women which Amartya Sen argued were missing in the Third World, something Sen correlated to a dearth of educational and employment opportunities.⁶⁰ Theoretically, Halliday warned both against post-positivist sectarianism, which he saw as immobilising the discussion of gendered structures of oppression, and attempts to neuter gender concerns via a flight to rational choice:

Gender inequality, reinforced through the family, the workplace, the media, religion and the place of study, is a global phenomenon, universally present and transnationally reproduced ... women remain the victims of violence, discrimination and oppression worldwide. That is why the study of this gendered inequality, not least in its international and transnational dimensions, should be a central concern of the contemporary social sciences.⁶¹

Halliday’s interventions on gender and IR were rooted in a familiar orientation – his desire to uphold Enlightenment principles of rationality, critical reason and universality. As such, it is little surprise that he was more at home with the work of Martha Nussbaum and Amartya Sen than he was with post-positivist IR. There were, as ever, unanswered questions

⁵⁹ Fred Halliday, ‘Hidden from International Relations: Women and the International Arena’, *Millennium* 17, no. 3 (1988): 419-28. Halliday’s title was a play on Sheila Rowbotham’s seminal work, *Hidden from History* (London: Pluto, 1993).

⁶⁰ Fred Halliday, ‘Gender and International Relations: Progress, Backlash and Prospect’, *Millennium* 27, no. 4 (1998): 833-46; Christine Sylvester, Fred Halliday, Kim Hutchings, Vivienne Jabri, Margot Light, Ann Tickner and Marysia Zalewski, ‘Roundtable Discussion: Reflections on the Past, Prospects for the Future in Gender and IR’, *Millennium* 37, no. 1 (2009): 153-79. See also: Amartya Sen, ‘100 Million Women are Missing’, *New York Review of Books* 37, no. 20, 20 December 1990.

⁶¹ Halliday, ‘Gender and IR’, 846.

in this engagement. First, at no point did Halliday carry out overtly gender-oriented research on any substantive area of IR, including revolutions – as such, he was not completely successful in ‘mainstreaming’ gender in his own work. Second, although Halliday’s desire to avoid the valorisation of marginal voices and dissident approaches for their own sake was an important corrective, he could have done more to engage with variations within feminist thought, including those originating from a non-Western context. Nevertheless, his reassertion of feminist principles in a time when public discourse was being ‘re-masculinised’ and issues of equal pay, domestic labour and asymmetrical life-chances were increasingly considered as passé meant that his critique retained considerable force. And the pioneering role which Halliday played in introducing gender concerns to IR led, over time, to the establishment of courses, conferences and working groups which could easily, if mistakenly, be taken for granted some twenty years later.

Revolution

Like Hannah Arendt, Halliday saw war and revolution as the two ‘master processes’ of the twentieth century. Although IR paid due attention to the former, Halliday argued, there was no equivalent interest in revolution: no Cromwell Professor of Revolutionary Studies; no Paine Institute for the Study of Revolutionary Change; indeed, very little study of revolution at all.⁶² This omission, Halliday thought, represented a significant aporia, one he hoped to fill with a customary sense of judicious assessment. On the one hand, Halliday sought to rescue revolution from the ‘complacent rejection’ of conservative theorists, particularly after 1989. Hence, ‘there are few things less becoming to the study of human affairs than the complacency of a triumphal age’.⁶³ On the other hand, Halliday was equally determined to pay due heed to the ‘romanticised celebration of blood, mendacity and coercion’ offered by uncritical supporters of revolution.⁶⁴ For Halliday, although revolutions were often heroic, they were also cynical. And for all their power to create novel social orders, revolutions were also deeply destructive.

Halliday wrote extensively on revolution, both before and during his time at LSE, coming to see it as the ‘sixth great power’ of the modern era, equivalent in influence to the pentarchy which Marx saw as dominating international relations during the nineteenth

⁶² *Rethinking IR*, chapter 6.

⁶³ Fred Halliday, *Revolution and World Politics* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 1999): 1.

⁶⁴ Fred Halliday, ‘Revolutionary Internationalism and its Perils’, in *Revolution in the Making of the Modern World*, eds. John Foran, David Lane and Andreja Zivkovic (London: Routledge, 2008): 65-80.

century.⁶⁵ There were two main reasons for this assessment. First, revolution offered an alternative periodisation of the modern international order, recalibrating the sixteenth century as a time of political and ideological struggle unleashed by the European Reformations, re-establishing the central optic of the seventeenth century around the upheavals which followed the Dutch Revolt and the English Revolution, re-centring the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries around the Atlantic Revolutions of France, America and Haiti, and understanding the ‘short twentieth century’ as one in which the primary logic was the challenge – and collapse – of the Bolshevik Revolution and its Third World inheritors.

Second, revolutions offered a ‘dual challenge’ to International Relations. On the one hand, revolutions offered a tangible commitment to an alternative international order. Whether seen in the world revolutionary map of Jean-Baptiste (Anacharsis) Cloots in the 1790s, Lenin’s desire to see a *weltklasse*, *weltpartei*, *weltrevolution* (global class, global party, global revolution) or Cuba’s support for insurrections in many parts of the Third World, revolutions provided a systemic challenge to the existing order. This challenge came from military pressure and the formation of new alliances, the development of alternative trading patterns and modes of development, and through the force of example. Although revolutions did not succeed in exporting their model and reforging the world in their own image, their challenge was multiple in form and systemic in scope. However, Halliday was aware that the relationship between revolutions and the international sphere was not singular. Rather, in order to function in the international realm, revolutionary states had to trade, establish diplomatic relations and make strategic choices, choices which often accommodated rival powers. If this was some way short of domestication or ‘socialisation’, nevertheless revolutionary regimes were caught in an unequal struggle with international forces, one they could not win.⁶⁶ Indeed, the often tenuous nature of revolutionary regimes, besieged from without and within by counter-revolutionary forces, meant that they took claims to domestic sovereignty and state security extremely seriously. As such, they often served to strengthen the very states-system which they sought to undermine.

Halliday did not see revolution merely as an important topic for IR – he also thought that IR had much to offer sociological and historical accounts of revolution. First, international factors (defeat in war, rapid economic change, shifting alliance structures) often precipitated and prompted revolutionary crisis. Second, international actors played a major

⁶⁵ Karl Marx, ‘The European War’, *New York Daily Tribune*, 2 February 1854.

⁶⁶ On revolutionary ‘socialisation’, see: David Armstrong, *Revolution and World Order* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993).

role in encouraging revolutions via arms, aid and demonstration effect. Finally, revolutionary foreign policies attempted to export their revolution, albeit with mixed success. As such, IR scholarship aided the general study of revolution by making apparent the modular features of revolution: the ‘period of grace’ offered to revolutionary regimes as foreign powers assessed its challenge; ‘active confrontation’ as this challenge was met by counter-revolution; and finally, long-term ‘accommodation’ as both sides of the conflict took part in symbiotic, if unequal, exchanges. The history of international relations also demonstrated that, for all the ‘voluntarist delusions’ of revolutionaries from Trotsky to Guevara, the particular context in which revolutions emerged meant that emulation was, at best, a remote possibility.⁶⁷

If Halliday’s work on revolution produced a research agenda brimming with vitality, it also left behind a number of loose ends. First, in keeping with his desire to interlace normative and analytical registers, Halliday was keen to stimulate discussion of the ethical dimensions of revolutions. Criticising the lack of a tradition of ‘*ius ad revolutionem*’ or ‘*ius in revolutione*’ which could match debates around ‘just war’, Halliday argued that such discussion was crucial lest revolutionary excesses be excused by those (advocates and theorists) who saw revolution as inevitable.⁶⁸ This agenda remains to be filled in. Second, Halliday rejected the possibility of generating a theory of revolutionary change – rather, he had a tendency to move from abstract levels of analysis (for example, the dictum (following Lenin) that revolutions took place when ‘rulers could not go on ruling and the ruled could no longer go on being ruled’) to detailed analysis of individual cases.⁶⁹ Some of this analysis was brilliant. But it was also frustrating in its failure to construct a schema, however proximate, by which to study revolutions outside their specific instantiations.⁷⁰ Finally, as with his political orientation more generally, it is fair to say that Halliday’s views on revolutions mellowed over the course of his career: from enthusiastic celebration of emancipatory struggles in the 1960s and 1970s to a more sober acceptance of the ‘dual nature’ of revolutions from the 1980s on. Although convinced that the exploitation, oppression, inequality and waste of the contemporary world left states vulnerable to challenges from below, Halliday was hostile to most forms of contemporary resistance to this order, which he described as ‘a fungible crew of ruckus societies, windbags and conspiracy

⁶⁷ Halliday, *Revolution and World Politics*, 129.

⁶⁸ Fred Halliday, ‘Revolution and the International’, *Millennium* 24, no. 2 (1995): 279-87.

⁶⁹ A point made by several critics, including: Stephen Walt, ‘Nothing Revolutionary’, *Review of International Studies* 27, no. 4 (2001): 687-92.

⁷⁰ Indeed, Halliday’s major statement on the subject – *Revolution and World Politics* – ably illustrates this tendency: its irrepressible empirical synthesis is not matched by a comparable depth of theoretical insight.

theorists'.⁷¹ It is not difficult to understand Halliday's distaste for this 'movement of movements' – he considered contemporary insurgents to be utopian without a concomitant sense of realism, guilty of an amnesia towards the history of revolutionary success and failure, and holding, at best, a fuzzy conception of revolutionary agency.⁷² However, it may be that Halliday's dismissal came too readily. He swept together a number of disparate causes within his critique of contemporary revolutionary movements and there were overlaps between at least some of these movements and his work than he realised.

Achievements, ambivalences and openings

The themes we have discussed in this article only hint at Fred Halliday's panoramic influence. We have left assessment of his work on the Middle East to other, more expert, witnesses. We have not engaged in any great detail with Halliday's role as a public intellectual. Nor have we explored some of his more mischievous projects, such as his list of Cold War Assassinations, a whodunit which runs to nearly ten pages.⁷³ Indeed, a figure like Halliday is impossible to capture fully – he remained a young man in a hurry throughout his life: insatiable, curious and uninhibited. Perhaps his greatest legacy is as an educator in the widest possible sense of the word, a deeply informed guide who would captivate with anecdotes and stories, analytical insights and historical exemplifications drawn from far-off places about which many around him knew little: Yemen, Afghanistan, Ethiopia, Cuba, Tibet and more.

It is fair to say that, for all the brio, range and scope of his work, Halliday did not deliver a 'great statement' or, indeed, write a 'great book'. Although he attempted to reach North American audiences via his IR scholarship, this was, for the most part, in vain; he was much better known in the United States as an area studies specialist.⁷⁴ Politically, too, there were areas where Halliday's stance could be questioned, for example the Soviet invasion of

⁷¹ Fred Halliday, 'Getting Real about Seattle', *Millennium* 29, no. 1 (2000): 123-9.

⁷² Fred Halliday, 'The Challenge for "Revolution" in our Times' in *The Future of Revolution*, ed. John Foran (London: Zed, 2001): 300-9.

⁷³ This was no idle project for Halliday – many of his friends and colleagues were murdered during the Cold War, including Orlando Letelier, the former Chilean Foreign Minister, and Ronni Moffitt, an American political activist, colleagues of Halliday's at the Institute for Policy Studies who died when a car bomb, planted by agents from General Pinochet's secret police, was detonated in downtown Washington in September 1976.

⁷⁴ This may not just be the case in North America – Google Scholar shows that Halliday's books and articles on the Middle East are, in general, more heavily referenced than those on IR. A sense of Halliday's frustration with mainstream IR can be gauged in his interview with Kenneth Waltz: Fred Halliday and Justin Rosenberg, 'Interview with Ken Waltz', *Review of International Studies* 24, no. 3 (1998): 371-86.

Afghanistan, the first Gulf War and the Ethiopian revolution, where his support for forceful state intervention was difficult to square with his commitment to solidarity with the oppressed. Indeed, it was not always clear how Halliday cashed-in his commitment to solidarity or how he adjudicated between rival claims of oppression.⁷⁵ When it came to IR, Halliday felt that he had ‘lost’ on many areas that he cared deeply about: the study of revolutions remained relatively marginal to the discipline, much of IR theory continued to be dominated by methodological narcissists and metatheoretical scholastics, while gender studies became, for all his exhortations, a predominantly post-positivist enterprise. But if Halliday felt a sense of frustration at these ‘failures’, this did not induce resignation. Rather, Halliday fought time and again for his normative orientations, political commitments and disciplinary convictions. Indeed, he saw intellectual life as a vocation – and a fortunate one at that – hence the admonition to the assembled hordes at his final valedictory lecture: ‘scholars of the world unite! You have nothing to lose but your shame’.⁷⁶

Along with Zhou Enlai’s assessment of the French Revolution, therefore, it is ‘too early to tell’ what Halliday’s principal achievements are. Nevertheless, it is possible to provide a provisional ‘balance sheet’ (to use one of Halliday’s favourite terms) about his main contributions – and challenges – to IR. First, the discipline. For Halliday, IR was host to an especially lethal cocktail in which ignorance was matched only by arrogance: ‘the world of international relations is a carnival of the bluff and the philistine’.⁷⁷ The nature of IR as a *comprador* discipline meant that it needed to keep its eyes and ears open to what was going on elsewhere: ‘you can no more work in an academic discipline by looking only at its internal developments than you can write the history of a nation or society, or the life of a person, by looking just at their internal development’.⁷⁸ IR was a social science, no more and no less. And it was one which needed to respond to, as well as explain, big issues and processes. Writing soon after the end of the Cold War, Halliday listed a range of subjects which could constitute a ‘new agenda’ for IR: ecological issues, weapons proliferation, migration, ‘new security threats’ such as AIDS and drugs, terrorism (including the need to divorce it from Islam), and more.⁷⁹ It does not stand as a bad list some twenty years on. Nor does his defence of a resolutely secular discipline oriented towards the critical examination of modernity’s

⁷⁵ Thanks to Mick Cox and Paul Kirby for raising these points.

⁷⁶ This phrase, which appeared in the first Mandarin (mis)translation of the Communist Manifesto in 1910, was one Halliday used to close his final lecture at LSE.

⁷⁷ Fred Halliday, ‘International Relations: A Critical Introduction’, unpublished manuscript, 27.

⁷⁸ Foreword to an unpublished manuscript, written in Barcelona, dated November 2006, 1.

⁷⁹ Fred Halliday, ‘IR: Is There a New Agenda?’ *Millennium* 20, no. 1 (1991): 57-72.

ruptures. This discipline, he hoped, would be governed less by methodological strictures than by a commitment to empirical engagement, explanation and critical reason. Such a view represents both a fertile disciplinary imagination and a potentially fruitful research agenda.

Second, a more general lesson: the need to be open not just to other disciplines but to historical events. Dates played an important part in Halliday's development as a scholar: 1968 demonstrated the challenges and possibilities of concerted collective action against capitalist inequity; 1979 highlighted the challenge that militant Islam posed for the Left; 1989 triggered a rethink of what it meant to be 'Left' after the passing of state socialism; while 9/11 refocused his work on the roles that culture and identity – and their misinterpretation – played in contemporary international relations. Following the end of the Cold War, Halliday argued that it was time to confine three historical legacies to the dustbin of world history: the Soviet Union's bequeathing of ethnic conflict, kleptocracy and inept authoritarianism; the West's history of imperialism, market fundamentalism and arrogance; and the international Left's 'children's crusade of demagogues and recycled bunkeristas'.⁸⁰ In other words, what Halliday wanted to see was a 'worldly social science' in which scholars took seriously their ethical convictions, political motivations and subject orientations – mining each deeply, paying close attention to contestations between them and refining each, often in relation to important events, along the way. The last thing he wanted was anyone to say at his funeral: 'Comrade Haliday never wavered'. Waver in terms of learning from events Halliday may have done. But he never wavered in his campaign against methodological anaesthesia, cultural parochialism or theoretical domestication. Rather, Halliday's lesson was simple, but effective: to conduct research with a critical, engaged and open mind, and to never lose sight of the most important skills an academic can have – curiosity, intuition and judgement.

Third, the most general lesson of all: to take the ambivalences of modernity as the starting point for IR. As we have seen, Halliday took IR seriously, but not too seriously. IR may have had important things to contribute to social science but this was a process of mutual exchange rather than a one-way street. As such, IR needed to share with other social sciences a concern with capitalist modernity, in particular the 'dark side' of this process. When it came to globalisation, for example, Halliday favoured a research agenda oriented around people trafficking, the movement of arms and drugs, and transnational criminality than one geared at bacchanal experiments in global governance or vacuous talk of time-space compression. As he noted, there were many things that could neither be hurried nor done any more quickly in

⁸⁰ Fred Halliday, 'It's Time to Bin the Past', *The Observer* 30 January 2005.

the contemporary world: boiling an egg, falling in love or building a democratic culture. And because Halliday took the word progress seriously, he did not take it for granted. As he knew only too well, there was nothing inevitable about a world built around dynamics of coercion and resistance, and on historical accident as well as broader structural determinations. As such, contemporary international relations was less an 'iron cage' than a 'rubber cage' which contained some degree of 'plastic control' for its actors.⁸¹

A truly international order, in which diversity of culture and pluralism of political community are inserted within a global ethical, institutional and social order, remains on the agenda, a project which may one day be realised. But there is little in the contemporary world to lead us to believe that this is, in any continent, a proximate possibility. There are islands of progress, but this is not sufficient: cosmopolis in one country is not an option.⁸²

Cosmopolis may not have been an imminent option, but it was 'improbably possible' rather than 'probably impossible'.⁸³ Halliday's commitment to achieving such internationalist goals, despite geopolitical turbulence and cultural 'backlash', was one he maintained throughout his life. It is a struggle which retains much pertinence today. The depth of Halliday's scholarship and the learned, charismatic way in which he reflected on, and took an active role in, world politics ensures that his influence in this long-term struggle will be greatly missed.

⁸¹ Halliday, *Critical Introduction*, 30. Halliday was not always sanguine about the extent of this manoeuvrability. In fact, he was fond of citing the former Canadian Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau in this regard. When asked the extent of Canada's room for manoeuvre in foreign affairs, Trudeau is said to have answered, 'about 5%'.

⁸² Halliday, 'Post-Hegemonic World', 26.

⁸³ Halliday used this distinction often. It was one he took from W.C. Runciman, *The Social Animal* (London: HarperCollins, 1998).