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Lineages of Indian International Relations: The Indian Council on World Affairs, the League of Nations, and the Pedagogy of Internationalism

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ABSTRACT


Despite a vibrant literature on the intellectual lifeworlds of anti-colonial international thought, the development of the formal study of International Relations in postcolonial states is frequently described as derivative of European or American practices. In India a privileging of the moment of India's independence in 1947 has obscured pre-independence literature and sustained the notion that the origins of Indian 'IR' were atheoretical, utilitarian, or simply absent. This paper challenges this understanding by playing closer attention to deeper intellectual lineages of Indian international thought and their institutionalization through the League of Nations Societies in India and the Indian Council of World Affairs – India's first independent international affairs think tank. Drawing upon archival material and postcolonial theory the article shows how Indian intellectuals and activists knowingly navigated the epistemic terrain of international thought, frequently discussing the 'international' as a realm of instruction allowing India to escape the constraints that imperialism had foisted upon Indian intellectuals: a 'pedagogy of internationalism'. Rather than standing apart from the world, Indian international affairs thinking was part of a global shift towards the systematization of knowledge, a process driven not just by states, but by international organizations and globally connected think tanks.

KEYWORDS

India; international thought; League of Nations; ICWA; pedagogy

1. Introduction

In 1954 Angadipuram Appadorai submitted a report to UNESCO on 'University Teaching in International Relations in India'.¹ Published in *India Quarterly* – the journal of India's first independent international affairs think tank, the Indian Council on World Affairs – the report documented the scope and content of International Relations (IR) teaching across India. Appadorai was a major figure in Indian international affairs at this time. A founding President of the ICWA and prominent player in the Indian Political Science Association, he was a regular observer at international conferences including the Bandung conference of 1955. In a career that spanned the independence era, in many ways Appadorai provides an exemplar of the worldly internationalism that defined Indian international thought and scholarship at this time, as well as the intellectual tensions that marked the transition from colonization to decolonization.

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Appadorai's report reflects these tensions. On the one hand the very presence of an Indian International Relations tradition goes against the common supposition that IR was purely a 'western' or imperial social science dedicated to the furtherance of imperial power, colonial administration, or American geopolitical interests. On the other, the technocratic nature of the report, its stress on India's relative underdevelopment in this field, hints at something else. The study of international affairs in India in the first half of the twentieth century is often described as absent, atheoretic, or merely derivative of a western, European, or North American disciplinary traditions.² This is puzzling, given the rich tradition of international thought that shaped the anti-colonial worldviews of India's independence leaders.³ The criticism of Indian IR as overly technocratic, or merely providing a resource of 'useful knowledge' for the newly independent state bureaucracy appears to reflect what Benedict Anderson termed the 'double bind' of post-colonial modernity.⁴ Accordingly, Indian international affairs thinking is criticized for becoming that which it sought to oppose – an avatar of a western, post-imperialist, modernist, technocratic field of knowledge rather than the more emancipatory field that drove India to independence in the first place. This is a critique that rests upon a severing of two traditions of knowledge. Firstly, the deep tradition of international thought that emerged amongst Indian intellectuals and activists largely as a response to imperialism and its forms of knowledge. And second, the formal discipline of 'Indian IR', that was more clearly constituted through think tanks, political science communities, and international scholarly institutions such as the League of Nations' International Committee for Intellectual Cooperation. The question that this paper addresses is not so much 'why is there no Indian IR', or even 'why is there no Indian IR theory', but rather what developments in the history of international affairs knowledge allowed such questions to be posed in the first place? The answer I suggest lies in the formalization of international affairs knowledge in postcolonial states. The intellectual tensions that arose in the transition to independence in terms of defining postcolonial political subjecthood are well understood in the literature.⁵ Instead this article offers a contribution to thinking through the tensions that arose in defining *international* political subjecthood through international affairs knowledge.

This article looks across some of the different sources for the twentieth century origins of Indian international thought, and the roots of the formal study of international affairs in India pre and post-independence. We might refer to these sources as individual, institutional, and technocratic forms of knowledge. In so doing, the article highlights how individual scholars often traversed multiple worlds and categories of knowledge that are often held in analytical separation. These transversal movements were often necessary intellectually, or as a means of mobilizing resources and intellectual capital for wider political or scholarly projects, complicating simple categorizations of 'nationalist', 'socialist', 'internationalist', 'scholarly', 'anarchist', and 'revolutionary' forms of international thought. Crucially, the article sketches out the analytical concept of a 'pedagogy of internationalism', that links these different sites in the formation of international affairs knowledge.

The discourse of pedagogy, or the pedagogical mode, elaborated by postcolonial scholars, offers some explanation for the tensions raised by postcolonial transitions. Accordingly, the post-colonial subject required instruction in a modernist (read European) political order to sever ties with a pre-modern, 'traditional', supernatural, or archaic worldview.⁶ The processes of acquiring and developing modern international affairs knowledge in India, and the practices and conduct of 'being international' can be read through this pedagogic discourse. As a result, for instance, the Bandung conference becomes less a moment of post-colonial solidarity and world-making, and more of a carnivalesque performance of a modern interstate order. The Asian Relations Conference of 1947, organized by the ICWA, that gave rise to Bandung is in some ways read through a similar teleology. These events thereby signal the victory of a modernist international, political, and intellectual order shaped by European norms. The forms of knowledge that they gave rise to are thus also seen as derivative, or resulting from the diffusion of knowledge, in

denial of intellectual covealness. The pedagogical mode of postcolonial subjecthood offers a vector therefore for the double bind of postcolonial modernity.

What I want to do is complicate this story of postcolonial transitions as it applies to international thought in India. I sketch out a concept of the pedagogy of internationalism that pays closer attention to the specificity of international thought as a field for the development of knowledge. As we shall see, although pedagogical modes were in evidence in the crafting of India's post-colonial international thought, the form and practices of the international were at this time more contested. From the cosmopolitan internationalisms of anti-colonial thinkers and activists, to the quasi-imperial logic of the League of Nations, to the rise of the philanthropy-backed network of international affairs think tanks – the 'international' exhibited a variety of knowledge forms and practices that gave knowledge entrepreneurs a greater range for pedagogical modes. The pedagogy of internationalism was not purely instructional but often resembled a deliberate process of learning, of 'brain irrigation', of travel, encounter, and escape from the confines of certain imperial knowledge frames.⁷ This gave greater latitude for intellectual agency to those who engaged in it. The international was a canvas upon which the colonised could sketch their imagined futures, and recover their forgotten pasts.⁸ In this sense, these scholars were not merely observers, but active participants in the reimagining of international order in the first half of the twentieth century.

2. The anti-colonial roots of Indian international thought

The first two decades of the twentieth century provided a seedbed for the growth in radical visions of future world order. Indian international thought was no exception and in many ways was in the ascendance at this time. Whilst anti-colonial internationalism enjoyed a deeper lineage, the Curzon-era policies of partition in northeast India, and the associated reform of Indian universities had a part to play. As Kris Manjapra has shown, the fury that met partition in 1905 galvanized anti-colonial movements across India and mobilized the search for alternative intellectual hubs through which Indian students and scholars could transcend the imperial frame – a process he terms '*Swadeshi* internationalism'.⁹ Pull factors were also at play. As the colonial state in India took on an increasingly assertive and violent form in response to opposition, Indian intellectuals – and particularly those associated with subversion – found safer operating environments in the United States, Japan, Germany, Italy, and elsewhere.¹⁰ Japan was a particularly attractive destination in light of its stunning defeat of the Russian navy in 1905 and what was perceived as a modernizing spirit from which other Asian nations could learn.¹¹

The Calcutta University-based sociologist Benoy Kumar Sarkar, was one of many scholars who traversed these newly energizing intellectual networks. On an overseas research trip that lasted over a decade, between 1914 and 1925 Sarkar spent time in Cairo, Dublin, London, Shanghai, Japanese-occupied Manchuria, Berlin, Rome, Cologne, Paris, and New York City.¹² In keeping with the logic of '*Swadeshi* internationalism' Sarkar's scholarship was partly about the broadcasting of India's historical and contemporary intellectual achievements, critiquing the logic of what he termed 'occidental reason' and the 'race psychologies' of Eur-America which systematically denigrated the 'orient'.¹³ In the United States he published in leading political science journals interpreting ancient Indian texts alongside their European equivalents to extract 'Hindu' theories of International Relations, statecraft, and statehood.¹⁴ In these works his association with the 'Greater India' Society of historian Kalidas Nag was telling. Their drawing upon Kautilya's *Arthashastra* and Vedic texts, gave form to their claim on the historical intellectual vitality of India, and her deep history of 'internationalism'.¹⁵ In an early *American Political Science Review* article Sarkar adopted a typically comparative strategy, placing Kautilya alongside the works of Hobbes, Grotius, and Machiavelli, and describing Kautilya's *mandala* system as a 'Hindu' variant of balance of power theory.¹⁶

Sarkar's intellectual voyages can be seen as an exemplar of a worldly Indian internationalist spirit that both sought to broadcast 'Young India', as well as extract lessons for a home population frequently represented as cloistered and parochialized through colonial rule. There was a pedagogy of internationalism at play here. Upon his return to India in 1925, he called for 'Young India to think of and lay the foundations of a vigorous and systematic foreign policy ... [an] intimate intermixing with the greatest nations of the world ... [and] a thorough-going and all-embracing internationalism'.¹⁷ But as he was well aware, this was a call already being heeded.

One example of this was the periodical *Young India*, distributed by the US-based Indian Home Rule League of America (IHRLA) that had published Sarkar's work during his time in the States. More than a forum for the growing Indian student population in America, the General Secretary of the IHRLA, N. S. Hardikar, proposed to the All India Congress Committee in 1922 a working programme for 'publicity work in America', drawing upon a country-wide survey of Canada and North America. As Hardikar wrote: 'India must create and control public opinion in Foreign Countries at her own expense in order to safeguard the interest of her sons and daughters and to let the World know of India's ideals'.¹⁸ The system envisaged not only an information and propaganda arm backed by the Indian student community, but also a scholarship scheme for 'First class students, now studying in Foreign Countries' to be 'trained for such work by us at the cost of India – so that they will be able to strengthen hands of propagandists both in and out of India'.¹⁹ Hardikar identified Political Science and Economics as a key area for scholarship funding.

The status of Indian education overseas was indeed an ongoing concern for the Indian intelligentsia. As the pages of the Calcutta-based periodical *Modern Review* demonstrate, throughout the opening decades of the twentieth century Indian scholars were increasingly taking up educational opportunities overseas, particularly across North America and East Asia. As the journal reported in 1912, one of its regular contributors, Sudhindra Bose, became the first Indian to teach Political Science in an American University, delivering classes at Iowa University on 'Oriental Politics and Civilization' including 'consideration of the political relations between China, Japan, and the United States'.²⁰ His earlier writings provided travel reportage on his journeys through rural America extracting lessons for India on America's press development.²¹

But Bose saw too in the 'Color Caste' that afflicted the Southern States an implicit comparison between the plight of the African Americans of the south and freedom struggles elsewhere, particularly in India.²² Bose's correspondence with the famed black internationalist American sociologist W. E. B. Du Bois drew precisely this comparison.²³ Here, was a solidarity born out of shared oppression, and yet a horizon of future possibility that seemingly linked the racially oppressed with the colonised.: The 'negroes', he wrote, 'are pressing on the firing line and vigorously working out their own salvation ... steadily marching onward. They have a definite purpose, a constructive programme. ... building up schools and colleges ... living and working not alone in terms of yesterday and to-day, but also of to-morrow and day after'.²⁴

In this process of international instruction for India, Bose's work paralleled that of more celebrated 'freedom fighters' Lala Lajpat Rai, Har Dayal, and Bhai Parmanand, all of whom were publishing on similar instructional projects at this time, drawing upon overseas international travel, and sharing the outputs in the pages of *Modern Review* and elsewhere.²⁵ As these examples show, frequently such trips did not result in the unthinking assimilation of 'European' or 'western' ideals, but rather processes of radicalization and reawakening. Har Dayal's diaries provides a glimpse of this. As he sat in Southmoor Road, Oxford in the summer of 1907, studying political economy and public finances whilst his wife prepared for entrance exams in politics and history, it was the writings of Henry David Thoreau, 'On the Duty of Civil Disobedience' that garnered his attention. His later voyages through North Africa, and Algeria reaffirmed his belief in the value of anti-colonial resistance – 'I find the town and the suburbs interesting' he wrote of Algiers. 'But it is all just like Europe. These people have [been] colonized so quickly!'²⁶ Drawing upon these experiences, in his 'sketch of a complete political movement for the emancipation of India' Har Dayal named alongside the 'destructive' and 'constructive' elements, the need for an

'educative and academic' part to the struggle, in particular, 'instruction in the history of the movement for liberty in other lands' and 'instruction in the principle of politics and economics'.²⁷

For Har Dayal, as with many of his collaborators, an urgent task for the decolonization struggle in India was to strip Indian minds of the 'social conquest' of the European races. His 1909 *Modern Review* article, subsequently banned by colonial authorities under the Postal Act, advanced a proto-theory of epistemic imperialism that sought to obtain 'control over the hearts and minds' of imperial subjects.²⁸ The educational reformer and former Governor of Bombay, Mountstuart Elphinstone, was given as just one example of the colonising effects of education, a type of dominance without hegemony, made all the more odious for its carrying out by 'high caste Brahmans' and 'well-to-do Hindu leaders' who had themselves bought into the social hierarchies that colonialism fostered.²⁹ The social realm, was thus one to be defended, and this was a struggle that had important international dimensions.

Among Har Dayal's correspondents was Singh Rao Rana, connecting him with the Europe-based revolutionary network of Madame Cama in Paris and the editor of *Indian Sociologist*, Shyamji Krishnavarma, with whom he had stayed in London.³⁰ Both had been instrumental in the recruitment and hosting of promising young Indian students to the anti-British cause including the later affiliate of the League Against Imperialism Virendranath Chattopadhyaya and the *doyenne* of later Hindu nationalists, V. D. Savarkar. These affinities had not escaped the attention of the British security services at this time. Through Krishnavarma, a public association with the India House network had necessitated Har Dayal's escape overseas following his association with the assassination of a British Army officer in London. Fleeing to America, Dayal soon assimilated into new networks.

The popularity of America as a destination for exilic figures was closely connected to shifts in transnational labour movements. The opening up of Pacific maritime routes in the early twentieth century provided a cheaper alternative to travelling *via* the Cape of Good Hope. Punjabi Sikhs, decommissioned from the Indian Army and seeking work elsewhere provided a sizable chunk of the immigrant communities beginning to populate the East coast of North America, fuelling competition and racial tensions amongst labour groups there.³¹ It was into this maelstrom that Har Dayal arrived, reaffirming his advocacy of labour movements demonstrated in his work for the Pacific Coast Hindi Association, a forerunner to the militant Ghadar movement.³² Indian diaspora groups prospered in this sometimes fraught environment and garnered the attention of imperial agencies. A British intelligence report of 1914 put the number of Indian settlers on the Pacific coast at this time at 5,000 warning of 'a promising field for seditious propaganda'.³³ The Hindusthan Association of the United States, whose President was Sudhindra Bose, was just one organization on the British watchlist producing literature helping to forge a diasporic public sphere for Indians overseas. Here again, the virtues of an internationalist education for the purposes of instructing India in its independence struggle were clear. In one of its bulletins Har Dayal built on his imperative to counteract the 'social conquest' through an internationalist instruction. Pointing to the example of the 'Russian youths' who through their European travels had 'brought back the light of new ideas and ideals to their benighted people', so India too needed a 'a mighty exodus of her sons and daughters before she can develop a healthy social spirit. ... If a young man does not return to India with a love of liberty and a sense of social justice, he has learned nothing abroad'.³⁴ The Hindusthan Association's sister publication *The Hindusthane Student* provided an additional outlet for such work. In a demonstration of the intersecting nature of the intellectual worlds of Indian international thought at this time, among its authors was Benoy Kumar Sarkar.³⁵

Increasingly, America was becoming a site for the incubation of a highly mobile breed of internationalist anti-colonial thinkers and activists, taking advantage of an American education, and the more permissive operating environment the country offered. The Bengali exile Taraknath Das whose connections with Har Dayal were forged in the West Coast America Indian

movements, provides a further example. Having trained in Political Science at the University of Washington, Das became deeply embroiled in the Ghadar networks of the Pacific Coast, at one point leading to his imprisonment in connection with the 'Hindu-German Conspiracy', in which the German foreign ministry sought to use Indian revolutionaries as part of a gun-running operation to destabilize north-west India.³⁶ Taraknath Das moderated his views and activities throughout the 1920s, and published works on Japanese expansion and the geopolitics of the Indian ocean, but here too new intellectual networks were in evidence. His works on Indian geopolitics owed an intellectual (and financial) debt to Karl Haushofer, the German pioneer of geopolitics and progenitor of the Nazi-adopted concept of *lebensraum*.³⁷ Haushofer's own vision of geopolitics had itself been crafted through time spent in Japan studying the 'sea-nomads' of the Malay archipelago and the 'pan-Pacific'.³⁸ The intellectual societies of the Tokyo-based Japanese Geopolitics Society, and the Pacific Society that funded the translations of Haushofer's works led to their adoption by Japanese politicians crafting the Asian co-prosperity scheme – Japan's own *lebensraum* concept. It was to these world ordering projects that Benoy Kumar Sarkar's neo-Hegelian concept of *visva-shakti* or 'world forces' pointed when he sought to imagine a world that had moved on from the imperial moment and the 'race-psychologies' that he observed as shaping the arts and humanities in the early twentieth century. No doubt Sarkar's time spent in Germany and Japan cemented these views. But these networks too present Greater India as a process not only of historical recovery, but a manifest intellectual network of colonial, anti-colonial, and imperial connections of international instruction to be imported back to India.

3. Dialogues of internationalism: India and the League of Nations

The transversal intellectual worlds of individual scholars are not the only vector for the development of international thought in India. The role played by international organizations such as the League of Nations in forging international thought in the interwar period is well understood from the perspective of European states, but the somewhat ambivalent relationship the League held with extra-European states, including India, is overlooked. Indeed, in certain ways, the League presents an odd location for the cultivation of Indian international thought. India's status within the League was anomalous. Officially a member of the League, delegates to the General Assembly were selected by the Government of India and chosen on the basis of their moderate views on British rule. India's role was therefore marked by a hierarchical relationship of power, which played into pre-existing understandings of world order put forward by many Indian scholars – Benoy Kumar Sarkar and Taraknath Das among them. This in turn generated widespread scepticism and in some cases outright antipathy towards the League within India itself, demonstrated for example in the connections that independence leaders, including Jawaharlal Nehru, forged with the anti-imperial avatar of the League of Nations, the League Against Imperialism.³⁹ A number of League of Nations Unions existed in India from the 1920s onwards, but as League officials noted these tended to reflect the views of the Governments from which they derived their funds.⁴⁰ Efforts to spread League 'propaganda' through these organizations were made, but often met with limited success.

One dynamic that sustained a negative view of the League within India were the failed attempts made by Indian interest groups to petition the League for its support in condemning the oppression of the colonial state, its imprisonment of political activists, and its treatment of minorities. Domestic groups, including those associated with swadeshi internationalism such as Bhai Parmanand's Hindu Mahasabha, the Indian States' Peoples Conference (chaired by *Modern Review* editor Ramanand Chatterji), and the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry, all submitted petitions and protests. The range of petitioners reflected too the transnational scale of India's independence struggle, and the vitality of networks established through and maintained by swadeshi internationalists. The Tokyo-based Pan-Asiatic League of Rash

Behari Bose, the Dublin-based Indian-Irish independence League, and Indian student groups in America were among those who submitted protests against, for instance, the treatment of Indian prisoners, and the hypocrisy of British appeals to the League for international justice whilst perpetrating outrages on the peoples of Asia.⁴¹

These petitions did on occasion fall under the purview of League competencies, as with the example of the 1933 appeal by the Hindu Mahasabha under Article XI of the League Covenant for the protection of minorities. However their application was refused on the grounds that the legal appeal only applied at times of war and to those states with specific treaties and declarations relating to specific minorities in place. More commonly, petitioners were reminded that the attention of the League could only be seized by a member state. Often, subjective grounds for overlooking these appeals were also offered, such as the 'unbalanced' or 'violent' nature of the language, as with A. W. Tarzi's protest over the 1935 British occupation of the Indo-Afghan frontier. Even the low status of interest groups in Indian politics, such as the All India Bahmana Maha Sabha, were grounds for non-reply.⁴²

As Susan Pedersen has observed then, the idea of the League as an 'imperial club' did not exhaust its functions. Through petitions, the League also offered an 'arena in which a variety of claims and schemes for ordering the world emerged and clashed'.⁴³ Even when claims went unheeded, their refusal resonated in the countries from which they originated in the press and amongst civil society groups, reaffirming the injustices of the existing world order that many Indian scholars and activists had already identified. In turn, the call for India to develop its own independent foreign policy, to instruct itself in the pedagogy of internationalism, grew louder. The League offered a forum for civil society groups to make internationalist claims, and receive lessons on the imperial hierarchies imbued within the post-WWI international order.

But the League also functioned as a pedagogical actor in its own right. This highlights the way that international affairs knowledge could be used as a means of shaping public opinion. The non-cooperation movements and boycott campaigns of the 1920s and 1930s that generated appeals to the League underscored how cycles of negative publicity could take hold by virtue of the League's limited recourse to representing public interest groups. The League's image problem was indeed a long-standing concern, and some form of representation in India had been proposed as far back as 1926 as a means of disseminating League propaganda and promoting the virtues of internationalism amongst youth groups and members of the intelligentsia. Crucially, despite reticence over the sources of funding the initiative had the support of the Government of India whose officials acknowledged the suspicion that a government-backed organization would raise.⁴⁴ But a shared interest in counteracting the nationalist tendencies that both League and Government officials identified also helped to advance the project. As one Gol official put it: 'I would first deal with the colleges, getting hold of the young men before they get swept into party organizations'.⁴⁵ Disagreements over the location and number of League offices forestalled the initiative, but thanks in part to the initiative of an employee of the League Secretariat's Information Section, Amulya Chand Chatterji (himself a prominent figure in the Indian press)⁴⁶, a Secretariat Branch Office in India became a reality in 1932.

Government of India and League officials continued to be in agreement over the need for the office as a means of instructing the Indian public in League activities, and the broader values of 'international cooperation and fellowship'.⁴⁷ Bombay was the preferred initial location since as one Gol official put it 'Delhi resembled Washington in some of its worst features ... a small, close and conventional society of officials in which the Head of the League office would find it difficult to make his way'.⁴⁸ The office later moved to Delhi in 1938 with the principal task of promoting League activities to the Indian public, one that carried an important educational dimension. As Chatterji put it to the Secretary General in 1930, this entailed confronting the 'separatist tendency' that he believed was in the ascendance and presented 'a menace to the future good relations between the League and India'. The League, like its imperial forbears, needed an agent 'on the spot', Chatterji argued, to keep public opinion 'correctly informed'. In

particular, he stressed the importance of impressing upon the younger generation of idealists the 'international implications of true patriotism' to divert them away from 'the call of narrow nationalism'.⁴⁹

A key dimension to this was reaching out to schools and colleges to ensure the dissemination of League publications and education in its activities. Here, the purposes of the India branch of the Secretariat overlapped significantly with the duties of the League's International Committee on Intellectual Cooperation, which at this time was working to promote the 'scientific' study of International Relations amongst member states in Europe, Japan, and America – an effort that extended to India too. One report to the ICIC described public opinion in the nationalist Press in India as 'ignorant and impatient of the limitations and constitutional character of the league'. In light of the absence of instruction on the League's duties, the report noted that the universities, as one of the bulwarks of the nationalist movement, were incubators for an 'apathetic attitude' towards the League's work and its ideals of international cooperation.⁵⁰

Such imperatives would lead the President of the ICIC, Gilbert Murray, to open a correspondence with Rabindranath Tagore on developing the ICIC's 'cultural and scientific connection' with India. Mentioning his conversations on the topic with Tagore, (Srinivasa) Sastri, and Gandhi, Murray expressed their shared distress that 'young intellectuals are all going off into political agitation and even terrorism, leaving aside the great cultural contribution which India has to give to the world'.⁵¹ However, the Government of India was more reticent on this matter, fearing the costs and benefits to university and school instruction. Here, the shaping of India's intellectual development by nested imperial hierarchies was clear. A 1933 ICIC request for information on the 'scientific study' of international relations in India, fell prey to Gol indifference. As one Gol official responded: 'at the present stage of educational development in this country, nothing of much value can be contributed to the elucidation of this and other similar problems' that would be 'commensurate with the labour involved'.⁵²

The impact of the ICIC on Indian international affairs education was therefore limited, a reminder of the fact that the development of the discipline in its early decades was partly a function of imperial hierarchies. However key to this story were intellectual go-betweens both in Geneva and India that signalled the thriving community of international affairs knowledge that was nonetheless growing within India at this time. The League functioned as a quasi-imperial organization whose pedagogy of internationalism in some ways imposed a particular rendering of international order, but this was a reality that Indian intellectuals were aware of, and operated within. Alongside A. C. Chatterji of the Information Section was Vangala Shiva Ram, who for 14 years was the Head of Department of Political Science at Lucknow. Ram had a brief career with the India office of the League's Secretariat between 1936 and 1937, but nonetheless a productive one. Alongside his colleague Brij Mohan Sharma, Ram gave radio addresses and published in Indian newspapers on the League's activities.⁵³ These research activities complemented papers submitted to the nascent Indian Political Association, whose 1938 conference included an international affairs section, and whose inaugural 1939 journal included a paper by V. S. Ram on reform of the League of Nations.⁵⁴

By August 1938 a renewed push to improve India-League ties was in evidence. Abdul Waheed, of the League's Political Section, and a former Head of Department at the Islamic College, Peshawar, was commissioned to write a report on improving liaison with India. Amidst continuing difficulties in broadening the League's reach throughout India one proposal was for more correspondents, in addition to those at Calcutta, Lucknow, and the secretariat office (recently moved from Bombay to Delhi). Extra correspondents were proposed in Bombay, Madras, Pondicherry, Hyderabad, and Lahore. But Sudhindra Nath Ghose, of the Information Section suggested a 'big drive' for popularising the league was likely to have the 'contrary effect'. 'The Congress Party', he wrote, 'is likely to misinterpret our efforts – as something inspired by the India Office and the Government of India'.⁵⁵ A decision was made instead to

liaise with the Indian delegation at the forthcoming assembly. But as a section on 'Nationalism and the League's opportunity' suggested, new avenues were opening up:

This new spirit and awakening is absorbing the energies and devotion of the majority of her people. 'The Land', as Lord Samuel has recently remarked, 'is full of movements of all kinds – political, economic, social, religious, Leagues, institutes, societies and congresses, conferences and committees serving many purposes are to be found everywhere. ... India, nowadays is alive and alert'. Before this dynamic energy crystalizes itself and finds an outlet in an aggressive nationalism pledged to hatred and war, it must be our sacred duty to utilise that force to constructive ends. And if this unmistakable force is to be forged into an effective weapon for the furtherance of the lofty ideals of the League, there is no time for inaction.⁵⁶

As the report acknowledged, however, it remained the case that Whitehall rather than New Delhi was the 'active agent in the conduct of India's external affairs' where 'close collaboration' with the Foreign Office and the India Office would be needed if the ends were to be achieved. But it was also London's status as a networked capital that was key, benefitting from 'a constant stream of Indian visitors' of mostly 'high social standing and influence'. The report pointed to the thousands of Indian students residing in London, Oxford, Edinburgh, and elsewhere; the associations, 'mosques, temples and business organisation which serve as common ground for social intercourse and exchange of ideas'; and the several periodicals published in the UK. 'To cultivate the good-will of them all will greatly strengthen our hands in India' it was noted. Part of this required the League's headquarters at Geneva becoming 'the Mecca of all Indian visitors to Europe'.⁵⁷

Leveraging networks of Indian students, scholars, and publicists abroad was therefore the aim. Just as anti-colonial movements operated through Indians overseas – 'Greater India' – so the League of Nations sought to internationalize India through these networks too. But by this point multiple organizations were beginning to operate in Delhi and elsewhere. The records of the League of Nations Office in Delhi amply demonstrate this fact. Amongst the interviewees and attendees at the branch office library were the chief organizer of the Asian Relations Conference, and founding director of the ICWA Angadipuram Appadorai – a regular visitor to the library. The Secretary of the INC's Foreign Department, Dharam Yash Dev; ICWA contributors and Indian diplomats with the post-independence Indian state, K. M. Panikkar, P. N. Saprú, and P. S. Lokanathan all attended talks and events. Indian Political Science Association members V. S. Ram, Appadorai, and B. Shiva Rao all featured. By 1947 the League Office was being wound up amidst a transition to the UN system, whilst the ICIC became what is now known as UNESCO.

The interface between the League of Nations, particularly its propaganda and intellectual agencies, shows how the League operated as both a venue for, and an agent of, the development of international affairs knowledge in India. On the one hand appeals to the League's General Assembly provided an institutional venue for the airing of internationalist views and grievances against what was seen by independence activists as an imperial world order. Individual Indian intellectuals also used the league as a grist to their own scholarly mills, as with V. S. Ram and B. M. Sharma's work. But the League also demonstrates the hierarchies of knowledge that were shaping the pedagogy of internationalism at this time. League propaganda presented a vision of international order that was pedagogic in its own right, attempting to develop within India, and other colonial states, a more internationalist sentiment that would further its own organizational objectives.

4. Reforming international India: The ICWA and the Asian Relations Conference

In December 1943 P. N Saprú delivered the Presidential Address the Nineteenth All-India Educational Conference in Jaipur. Speaking to the 'Internationalism, Peace and Geopolitics Education Section', Saprú extolled the virtues of a resolute internationalism. Abolition of the colonial system, and an end to empire would not lead to international anarchy he argued, but to 'a new conception of human relationship', shorn of the insidious 'psychological factor' that

inhibited educational development and reinforced racially defined hierarchies of rule.⁵⁸ Sapru's speech therefore reflected deeper traditions of Indian international theory that placed imperial world order as a societal factor in the centre of its analysis. India's social malaise was a reflection of an international malaise. Educational progress was dependent on a 'sound international order', and overcoming 'cultural imperialism' demanded greater 'cultural contact', particularly between Asian states. Channelling arguments familiar to the 'Greater India Society' of Indian historians, anthropologists, and sociologists (including Benoy Kumar Sarkar) these 'cultural contacts', Sapru acknowledged, could not bring about international solidarity in the absence of the settlement of economic and political issues, but they could at least 'promote a better appreciation of the contribution which each racial group has made to the progress of man'.⁵⁹ Educationists and universities, with the help of the state, could do most to foster international harmony through such means, he argued.

Only a month prior to his Jaipur speech, Sapru had overseen the establishing of the Indian Council for World Affairs, with his father the Right Honourable Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru, as founding President. It was on contemporary world politics that the Council's constitutional justification naturally focused, noting the 'urgent need' for the study of questions raised by the war, particularly over how to ensure 'post-war reconstruction based on national freedom and international collaboration'. Equally important was the representation of India at any resulting conferences 'by delegations capable of voicing the views and aspirations ... of the people'.⁶⁰ The ICWA was clearly set up for the purposes of providing 'useful knowledge' to a decolonising Indian state. But it is in this drive towards re-education that the pedagogical modes embodied by the ICWA are apparent, and where its objectives overlapped with the wider scientification of international affairs knowledge reflected in the activities of the League's ICIC.

Scholars have recently turned attention to think tanks as incubators of new ways of thinking about the international, shaping foreign policy through public and private agenda-setting, and privileging certain forms of knowledge over others.⁶¹ Important work by Davis, Thakur, and Vale on empire and international affairs think tanks, including the ICWA, has exposed the imperial origins of IR, the pre-history of the Bandung movement, and the entangled nature of third-world internationalisms.⁶² But to these processes of institutionalization we can add an appreciation of how organizations such as the ICWA built upon deeper foundations of international thought in India, including critiques of colonial and imperial knowledge orders. As the first edition of the ICWA journal *India Quarterly* put it: 'it appears as though, politically, economically and socially, we are still groping our way to those ideas and institutions which will enable us to be *ourselves*. In international affairs'.⁶³ This 'loss of self',⁶⁴ so central to the postcolonial condition, once more highlights how the struggle against empire held a formative influence on Indian international thought, linking the ICWA with the critiques of 'epistemic imperialism' to which earlier activists and thinkers had pointed.

As we have seen, whilst the ICWA was India's first *independent* international affairs think tank, it was far from the only organization in India dedicated to such study. British observers viewed it as a 'tolerably bone fide imitation' of the Royal Institute of International Affairs,⁶⁵ which had an Indian avatar in the pro-British Indian Institute of International Affairs (IIIA), an organization that the ICWA was founded partly in opposition to.⁶⁶ The ICWA's founding members reflected the thriving international affairs community that existed within Delhi and beyond. These included P. N. Sapru, H. N. Kunzru, and B. Shiva Rao, who had formed a splinter group from the floundering IIIA.⁶⁷ The distinguished Political Scientist, Angadipuram Appadorai, and Kunzru were both major figures in the Indian Political Science Association, and would go on to set up the School of International Studies at Delhi University (later moving to Jawaharlal Nehru University). Vijayalakshmi Pandit, another ICWA contributor was at the beginnings of a distinguished diplomatic career, and the lesser-known P. S. Lokanathan would soon be part of the Indian delegation to the UN's Hot Springs conference in 1945. Joining him would be the former League of Nations official, and Indian Journal of Political Science contributor, P. P. Pillai, who later represented India

at the 1947 UN General Assembly alongside his colleague K. M. Panikkar – both were involved in the birth of ICWA. As such, the ICWA sat at the nexus of an emerging Indian foreign policy elite, providing a resource for the founding and development of post-independence Indian foreign policy expertise.

The ICWA's 1947 Annual Report illustrates its location in a broader network of think-tanks in North America, Australia, South Africa, and the UK. Indeed one of the first tasks facing its Managing Director, Appadorai, was to gather resources from affiliates including Chatham House in London; a trip which attracted the attention of the British security services who tipped off the Royal Institute of International Affairs, fearing his links with the London-based India League.⁶⁸ At least fifteen ICWA affiliates were established right across India from Chennai to Karachi, and by 1948 a Malaya Council of World Affairs was in operation, much to the alarm of British Officials, who regarded it as 'another step in India's Pan-Asian journey'.⁶⁹

The paranoia of the British Government regarding the ICWA has underscored the perceived political dimensions of its founding purpose. The organizing committee that put together the Asian Relations Conference (ARC) of 1947 featured a host of celebrated independence activists associated with the Indian National Congress, not least Jawaharlal Nehru himself, Sarojini Naidu (who hosted the conference), Krishna Menon, Hansa Mehta, and Kamaladevi Chattopadhyay, who all sat on the organising committee.⁷⁰ These political motivations cannot be ignored, and they heralded the move towards an independent foreign policy for India, but this should not obscure the wider agendas and ideas that motivated the move towards an independent international affairs community. The Asian Relations Conference can read as a staging post on the path to the state-centric wrangling of the Bandung conference, but can also be read in ways that are not captured by the teleology of an interstate world order; as a reminder of the connected history of Indian international thought that transcended imperial and state centric orders.

The invitation list underscores this point. Cultural organizations and civil society groups featured prominently: The Ceylon Society of Arts, the Sino-Indian Association and New Asia Society of Nanking, the Cultural Committee of the Arab League, the Indo-Iranian Cultural Society of Teheran, the Siam Society of Bangkok, and the History and Literature Institute of Bishkek, to name a few. Women's civil society organizations were a particular target, with over 40 special invitations being sent to groups including the All-Burma Women's Freedom League, the Women's League of Cairo, and the Lebanese Feminist Union of Beirut. Learned societies, scholars, and university departments – especially Political Science departments – from right across Asia, the USSR, and the Middle East also featured prominently. International affairs think tanks and associations from Australia, Manila, Nanking, Shanghai, Seoul, London, and New York were invited.⁷¹

Part of this emphasis derived from the organizers' explicit desire to avoid 'political' matters. The disputes that opened up between Palestinian and Jewish groups, as well as between the Tibetan and Chinese delegates at the conference revealed the challenges of this. Nonetheless this objective served to largely dispel official disquiet on the part of the Government of India, allowing the conference to proceed unimpeded. More importantly, the emphasis on 'cultural contact' reflected the wider discourses of pan-Asianism and 'Greater India' that were once again in the ascendance. Nehru's address to the Bombay branch of the ICWA prior to the conference reflected these traditions, calling for attention to the specific problems faced by Asian countries and the 'psychologically revolutionary' effects that greater Asian cooperation could yield.⁷²

But it was Nehru's inaugural address that best encapsulates his recovery of the *zeitgeist* expressed by earlier proponents of 'Greater India', and pan-Asianism. 'Asia, after a long period of quiescence, has suddenly become important again in world affairs', he remarked. Historical recovery and futurist visions of anti-colonial internationalism were central.⁷³ It was in Asia that 'civilization began'; a 'dynamic Asia, from which great streams of culture flowed ... gradually becoming static and unchanging'.⁷⁴ 'Cultural contact' therefore provided a means of cleansing Asian society of colonising influences, 'demolishing the centuries old walls of isolation' as the

Times of India put it, reconnecting the region through those networks that had been severed or left dormant by the impact of rival imperialisms, allowing a rediscovery of 'Greater India'.

The Greater India Society founder, Kalidas Nag, now with the Royal Asiatic Society of Bengal, contributed a paper to the section on 'Cultural Problems' that underscored this need to roll back what Har Dayal had previously called 'social conquest'. 'Scientific researches in our own specific domain are still under the domination of the West', he wrote. 'India is in urgent need of comparing notes with the independent sovereign or quasi-sovereign states of Asia who are striving to nationalise their scientific research services'. This was a pedagogy of internationalism that set itself against ideas of European mimicry or derivativeness recentring on an Asian geographic imaginary. A preoccupation with the histories of Europe and America apparent in university syllabi had to end, as the 'living museum' of Asia was rediscovered along with a 'new and dynamical [sic] conception of history where every clan, race, and nation would be assigned its proper place in the grand symphonic orchestra of Asian humanism'.⁷⁵

Such expressions of Asianist solidarity carried, naturally, an Indian perspective. Geography, for Nehru in his opening address, was a 'compelling factor'; India was 'the natural centre and focal point of the many forces at work in Asia'.⁷⁶ This was particularly evident in the conference themes of 'racial problems with special reference to racial conflict' and 'inter-Asian migration and the status and treatment of immigrants'. The treatment of 'Indians overseas' had been a long-running theme, in the struggle for Indian independence. The plight of the Indian diaspora in East Africa, South Africa, and North America – in particular their racial persecution, as documented in the pages of *Modern Review* – provided a continued justification for Indian representation at the international level. Indeed the Indians Overseas department of the All India Congress Committee had been the prototype for what became known as the INC's 'Foreign Department'.

The status of Indians overseas also found a regular editorial section in the ICWA's journal *India Quarterly*, often reaffirming the racial underpinnings of international order that Indian scholars had already identified through the racialization of labour populations by colonial authorities. As the British empire sought to reform in its twilight years, it often bought off settler populations, and indigenous independence movements by defining political representation in racial terms. In East Africa this meant 'Asian' populations dropping down a racialized political hierarchy, affecting their political representation and crucially their land-owning rights. A similar process had been observed with the passing of the immigration act in certain American states in the 1920s. A development that had fuelled anti-imperial movements, particularly in California and the East Coast. Added to this, and closer to India's borders, the treatment of Indian refugee populations generated by the Second World War, including decommissioned Indian National Army troops across Southeast Asia, had prompted official visits to Malaya from H. N. Kunzru on behalf of the Government of India, and later Nehru on behalf of the INC.⁷⁷

The alignment of Asian states' immigration policies explored at the Asian Relations Conference wasn't therefore a minor policy issue around which agreement could be more easily reached, but was an expression of the way in which imperial orders and labour diasporas had instructed Indian activists and scholars on the nature of twentieth century world order. This was an agenda pursued through the vast network of Indians overseas organizations, developed under the tutelage of the INC's foreign department and soon to be taken forward by the newly independent Indian state.

But the manner in which these issues were explored and documented signalled a departure from previous activist agendas. The Asian Relations Conference marked a turn towards more data-driven and survey-driven pedagogical practices of international governmentality.⁷⁸ The conference 'souvenir book' carried images of 'Asian types' and numerical data that would instruct delegates on their less familiar Asian cousins. The section on racial problems and inter-Asian migration reported the need for administrative and economic drivers of racial discrimination to be addressed through 'education' and 'social contacts'. The assimilation of 'aboriginal tribes' and 'backward communities' meanwhile would, according to the report, require a 'scientific

anthropological study' and cooperation at an international level.⁷⁹ An institute was proposed, comprising representatives from all the Asian countries that would 'build up libraries' of modern literature and issue a journal in which 'Eastern' questions could be discussed in a spirit of understanding and cooperation.⁸⁰ A reference book *Asia in the Modern World*, edited by Appadorai, and distributed through the ICWA reflected a new pedagogy of internationalism, rooted in 'cultural contact' between Asian states, and formalised through data collection and sequestering.

5. Conclusion

The pedagogical discourse of developmental politics that postcolonial theorists have explored suggests a style of politics in which citizens of postcolonial states needed to be educated in the habits and customs of modern (western) nation states. This pedagogical discourse was certainly in evidence in the forging of an Indian sense of internationalist spirit, reflected in the writings of anti-colonial scholar activists and the justifications for their travels that suggested a form of instruction in the norms and practices of internationalism. In addition, there was a developmentalist aspect to preparing for international life in which 'scientific' knowledge (of the international) would 'catch up' with more developed nations, as with the agendas pursued by the League of Nations in India, the ICWA, and the Asian Relations Conference of 1947. In many ways the ICWA provided a vehicle for the pursuit and development of precisely this type of expert knowledge, and its inculcation in a professionalized cadre of diplomats. But something that sets the pedagogy of internationalism apart from more developmentalist forms is the somewhat unrealized form of the 'international' as such. Whereas anti-colonial elites could point to examples of modern and modernizing countries, the international order they envisaged remained more aspirational. Bandung, the Asian Relations Conference, and the forms of knowledge upon which they rested therefore played a performative role. They sought to conjure up dreams of future order, as yet undetermined, and whose form remained up for debate.⁸¹ There was greater latitude in the crafting of new international order, and accordingly, its intellectual lifeworlds were more permissive, at least for a time.

Accordingly, entrepreneurs of Indian international thought discussed the 'international' as a realm of instruction, partly as an opportunity for India to escape the cloistered frames of colonial knowledge and the 'loss of self' that imperialism had foisted upon Indian intellectuals. This aspect of the 'pedagogy of internationalism' is important because it shows how Indian intellectuals and activists actively navigated the epistemic terrain of international thought. Rather than being victims of its inherently colonized forms of knowledge, or radical outsiders offering 'non-western' alternatives as some recent 'global IR' proponents and decolonial theorists seem to suggest, this pedagogic discourse suggests a knowing engagement with various hierarchies of knowledge, bestowing greater intellectual and political agency upon Indian international thinkers. Here too, we can complicate the colonial/post-colonial transition. As Christopher Lee reminds us: 'Rather than simply signaling a linear, diplomatic transfer of power from colonial to postcolonial status, decolonization equally constitutes a complex dialectical intersection of competing views and claims over colonial pasts, transitional presents, and inchoate futures'.⁸² As a result Indian international thinkers operating within this dialectical realm shifted their positions, sometimes in tactical or opportunistic ways.

International Relations as a discipline was partially founded amidst processes of 'scientification' and transition to what Ralf Dahrendorf called the 'applied enlightenment': a need for useful knowledge for both empires and states.⁸³ The founding debates of disciplinary IR often revolved around precisely the question of the validity of a 'scientific' study of peace and war.⁸⁴ Edward Hallett Carr, Gilbert Murray, Charles Manning, Alfred Zimmern, Hans J. Morgenthau all dealt with this question in their work. What has been neglected in the disciplinary origins story is the participation of decolonizing states in this process. India was part of this global process in

the ordering of international affairs knowledge, an insight that has been overlooked through an absence of sustained attention to the histories of Indian international thought. The League of Nations agencies, whose International Committee for Intellectual Cooperation pursued projects of intellectual capacity-building across the humanities and sciences, including on questions of the 'scientific study of International Relations', provides a reminder of how Indian international thinkers knowingly intersected with more hierarchical modes of global international affairs knowledge-making.

Where does this leave the question over the lineages of Indian International Relations? By challenging the notion that IR, and IR theory must be a universal rhetoric that corresponds only to states, we can recover a vibrant community of intellectuals and activists who provided the prehistory to international affairs knowledge on the eve of India's independence. This depends on reversing the often-artificial and ahistorical severing of IR (the discipline) from international thought more broadly. A severance which is often used to delegitimize the knowledge practices of postcolonial states. I suggest that Indian international affairs was shaped through global processes of knowledge ordering into a more systematic 'purified' interstate understanding, one that erased the entangled histories of international thought that provided the international backdrop to India's domestic independence struggle. This process of purification was not an experience unique to India, but was also occurring in the 'west' at this time. Here too processes of erasure were underway, as demonstrated in the recent recovery of the racial underpinnings of American International Relations, or the roots of British IR in colonial administration and imperial reform.⁸⁵ In this sense, India was present at the 'birth' of international affairs knowledge.

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