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PART ONE

THE SCIENCE OF INTERNATIONAL POLITICS

CHAPTER I

THE BEGINNINGS OF A SCIENCE

THE science of international politics is in its infancy. Down to 1914, the conduct of international relations was the concern of persons professionally engaged in it. In democratic countries, foreign policy was traditionally regarded as outside the scope of party politics ; and the representative organs did not feel themselves competent to exercise any close control over the mysterious operations of foreign offices. In Great Britain, public opinion was readily aroused if war occurred in any region traditionally regarded as a sphere of British interest, or if the British navy momentarily ceased to possess that margin of superiority over potential rivals which was then deemed essential. In continental Europe, conscription and the chronic fear of foreign invasion had created a more general and continuous popular awareness of international problems. But this awareness found expression mainly in the labour movement, which from time to time passed somewhat academic resolutions against war. The constitution of the United States of America contained the unique provision that treaties were concluded by the President " by and with the advice and consent of the Senate ". But the foreign relations of the United States seemed too parochial to lend any wider significance to this exception. The more picturesque aspects of diplomacy had a certain news value. But nowhere, whether in universities or in wider intellectual circles, was there organised study of current international affairs. War was still regarded mainly as the business of soldiers ; and the corollary of this was that international politics were the business of diplomats. There was no general desire to take the conduct of international affairs out of the hands of the professionals or even to pay serious and systematic attention to what they were doing.

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The war of 1914-18 made an end of the view that war is a matter which affects only professional soldiers and, in so doing, dissipated the corresponding impression that international politics could safely be left in the hands of professional diplomats. The campaign for the popularisation of international politics began in the English-speaking countries in the form of an agitation against secret treaties, which were attacked, on insufficient evidence, as one of the causes of the war. The blame for the secret treaties should have been imputed, not to the wickedness of the governments, but to the indifference of the peoples. Everybody knew that such treaties were concluded. But before the war of 1914 few people felt any curiosity about them or thought them objectionable.<sup>1</sup> The agitation against them was, however, a fact of immense importance. It was the first symptom of the demand for the popularisation of international politics and heralded the birth of a new science.

### *Purpose and Analysis in Political Science*

The science of international politics has, then, come into being in response to a popular demand. It has been created to serve a purpose and has, in this respect, followed the pattern of other sciences. At first sight, this pattern may appear illogical. Our first business, it will be said, is to collect, classify and analyse our facts and draw our inferences; and we shall then be ready to investigate the purpose to which our facts and our deductions can be put. The processes of the human mind do not, however, appear to develop in this logical order. The human mind works, so to speak, backwards. Purpose, which should logically follow analysis, is required to give it both its initial impulse and its direction. "If society has a technical need", wrote Engels, "it serves as a greater spur to the progress of science than do ten universities."<sup>2</sup> The first extant text-book of geometry "lays down an aggregate of

<sup>1</sup> A recent historian of the Franco-Russian alliance, having recorded the protests of a few French radicals against the secrecy which enveloped this transaction, continues: "Parliament and opinion tolerated this complete silence, and were content to remain in absolute ignorance of the provisions and scope of the agreement" (Michon, *L'Alliance Franco-Russe*, p. 75). In 1898, in the Chamber of Deputies, Hanotaux was applauded for describing the disclosure of its terms as "absolutely impossible" (*ibid.* p. 82).

<sup>2</sup> Quoted in Sidney Hook, *Towards the Understanding of Karl Marx*, p. 279.

<sup>2</sup>

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practical rules designed to solve concrete problems: 'rule for measuring a round fruitery'; 'rule for laying out a field'; 'computation of the fodder consumed by geese and oxen'.<sup>1</sup> Reason, says Kant, must approach nature "not . . . in the character of a pupil, who listens to all that his master chooses to tell him, but in that of a judge, who compels the witnesses to reply to those questions which he himself thinks fit to propose".<sup>2</sup> "We cannot study even stars or rocks or atoms", writes a modern sociologist, "without being somehow determined, in our modes of systematisation, in the prominence given to one or another part of our subject, in the form of the questions we ask and attempt to answer, by direct and human interests."<sup>3</sup> It is the purpose of promoting health which creates medical science, and the purpose of building bridges which creates the science of engineering. Desire to cure the sicknesses of the body politic has given its impulse and its inspiration to political science. Purpose, whether we are conscious of it or not, is a condition of thought; and thinking for thinking's sake is as abnormal and barren as the miser's accumulation of money for its own sake. "The wish is father to the thought" is a perfectly exact description of the origin of normal human thinking.

If this is true of the physical sciences, it is true of political science in a far more intimate sense. In the physical sciences, the distinction between the investigation of facts and the purpose to which the facts are to be put is not only theoretically valid, but is constantly observed in practice. The laboratory worker engaged in investigating the causes of cancer may have been originally inspired by the purpose of eradicating the disease. But this purpose is in the strictest sense irrelevant to the investigation and separable from it. His conclusion can be nothing more than a true report on facts. It cannot help to make the facts other than they are; for the facts exist independently of what anyone thinks about them. In the political sciences, which are concerned with human behaviour, there are no such facts. The investigator is inspired by the desire to cure some ill of the body politic. Among the causes of the trouble, he diagnoses the fact that human beings normally react to

<sup>1</sup> J. Rueff, *From the Physical to the Social Sciences* (Engl. transl.), p. 27.

<sup>2</sup> Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason* (Everyman ed.), p. 11.

<sup>3</sup> MacIver, *Community*, p. 56.

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certain conditions in a certain way. But this is not a fact comparable with the fact that human bodies react in a certain way to certain drugs. It is a fact which may be changed by the desire to change it; and this desire, already present in the mind of the investigator, may be extended, as the result of his investigation, to a sufficient number of other human beings to make it effective. The purpose is not, as in the physical sciences, irrelevant to the investigation and separable from it: it is itself one of the facts. In theory, the distinction may no doubt still be drawn between the role of the investigator who establishes the facts and the role of the practitioner who considers the right course of action. In practice, one role shades imperceptibly into the other. Purpose and analysis become part and parcel of a single process.

A few examples will illustrate this point. Marx, when he wrote *Capital*, was inspired by the purpose of destroying the capitalist system just as the investigator of the causes of cancer is inspired by the purpose of eradicating cancer. But the facts about capitalism are not, like the facts about cancer, independent of the attitude of people towards it. Marx's analysis was intended to alter, and did in fact alter, that attitude. In the process of analysing the facts, Marx altered them To attempt to distinguish between Marx the scientist and Marx the propagandist is idle hair-splitting. The financial experts, who in the summer of 1932 advised the British Government that it was possible to convert 5 per cent War Loan at the rate of 3½ per cent, no doubt based their advice on an analysis of certain facts; but the fact that they gave this advice was one of the facts which, being known to the financial world, made the operation successful. Analysis and purpose were inextricably blended. Nor is it only the thinking of professional or qualified students of politics which constitutes a political fact. Everyone who reads the political columns of a newspaper or attends a political meeting or discusses politics with his neighbour is to that extent a student of politics; and the judgment which he forms becomes (especially, but not exclusively, in democratic countries) a factor in the course of political events. Thus a reviewer might conceivably criticise this book on the ground, not that it was false, but that it was inopportune; and this criticism, whether justified or not, would be intelligible, whereas the same criticism of a book about the causes of cancer

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would be meaningless. Every political judgment helps to modify the facts on which it is passed. Political thought is itself a form of political action. Political science is the science not only of what is, but of what ought to be.

### *The Role of Utopianism*

If therefore purpose precedes and conditions thought, it is not surprising to find that, when the human mind begins to exercise itself in some fresh field, an initial stage occurs in which the element of wish or purpose is overwhelmingly strong, and the inclination to analyse facts and means weak or non-existent. Hobhouse notes as a characteristic of "the most primitive peoples" that "the evidence of the truth of an idea is not yet separate from the quality which renders it pleasant".<sup>1</sup> The same would appear to be conspicuously true of the primitive, or "utopian", stage of the political sciences. During this stage, the investigators will pay little attention to existing "facts" or to the analysis of cause and effect, but will devote themselves whole-heartedly to the elaboration of visionary projects for the attainment of the ends which they have in view—projects whose simplicity and perfection give them an easy and universal appeal. It is only when these projects break down, and wish or purpose is shewn to be incapable by itself of achieving the desired end, that the investigators will reluctantly call in the aid of analysis, and the study, emerging from its infantile and utopian period, will establish its claim to be regarded as a science. "Sociology", remarks Professor Ginsberg, "may be said to have arisen by way of reaction against sweeping generalisations unsupported by detailed inductive enquiry."<sup>2</sup>

It may not be fanciful to find an illustration of this rule even in the domain of physical science. During the Middle Ages, gold was a recognised medium of exchange. But economic relations were not sufficiently developed to require more than a limited amount of such a medium. When the new economic conditions of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries introduced a widespread system of money transactions, and the supply of gold was found to be inadequate for the purpose, the

<sup>1</sup> L. T. Hobhouse, *Development and Purpose*, p. 100.

<sup>2</sup> M. Ginsberg, *Sociology*, p. 25.

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wise men of the day began to experiment in the possibility of transmuting commoner metals into gold. The thought of the alchemist was purely purposive. He did not stop to enquire whether the properties of lead were such as to make it transmutable into gold. He assumed that the end was absolute (i.e. that gold must be produced), and that means and material must somehow be adapted to it. It was only when this visionary project ended in failure that the investigators were prompted to apply their thought to an examination of "facts", i.e. the nature of matter; and though the initial utopian purpose of making gold out of lead is probably as far as ever from fulfilment, modern physical science has been evolved out of this primitive aspiration.

Other illustrations may be taken from fields more closely akin to our present subject.

It was in the fifth and fourth centuries B.C. that the first serious recorded attempts were made to create a science of politics. These attempts were made independently in China and in Greece. But neither Confucius nor Plato, though they were of course profoundly influenced by the political institutions under which they lived, really tried to analyse the nature of those institutions or to seek the underlying causes of the evils which they deplored. Like the alchemists, they were content to advocate highly imaginative solutions whose relation to existing facts was one of flat negation.<sup>1</sup> The new political order which they propounded was as different from anything they saw around them as gold from lead. It was the product not of analysis, but of aspiration.

In the eighteenth century, trade in Western Europe had become so important as to render irksome the innumerable restrictions placed on it by governmental authority and justified by mercantilist theory. The protest against these restrictions took the form of a wishful vision of universal free trade; and out of this vision the physiocrats in France, and Adam Smith in Great Britain, created a science of political economy. The new science was based primarily on a negation of existing reality and on certain artificial and unverified generalisations

<sup>1</sup> "Plato and Plotinus, More and Campanella constructed their fanciful societies with those materials which were omitted from the fabric of the actual communities by the defects of which they were inspired. The Republic, the Utopia, and the City of the Sun were protests against a state of things which the experience of their authors taught them to condemn" (*Acton, History of Freedom*, p. 270).

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about the behaviour of a hypothetical economic man. In practice, it achieved some highly useful and important results. But economic theory long retained its utopian character; and even to-day some "classical economists" insist on regarding universal free trade — an imaginary condition which has never existed — as the normal postulate of economic science, and all reality as a deviation from this utopian prototype.<sup>1</sup>

In the opening years of the nineteenth century, the industrial revolution created a new social problem to engage human thought in Western Europe. The pioneers who first set out to tackle this problem were the men on whom posterity has bestowed the name of "utopian socialists": Saint-Simon and Fourier in France, Robert Owen in England. These men did not attempt to analyse the nature of class-interests or class-consciousness or of the class-conflict to which they gave rise. They simply made unverified assumptions about human behaviour and, on the strength of these, drew up visionary schemes of ideal communities in which men of all classes would live together in amity, sharing the fruits of their labours in proportion to their needs. For all of them, as Engels remarked, "socialism is the expression of absolute truth, reason and justice, and needs only be discovered in order to conquer all the world in virtue of its own power".<sup>2</sup> The utopian socialists did valuable work in making men conscious of the problem and of the need of tackling it. But the solution propounded by them had no logical connexion with the conditions which created the problem. Once more, it was the product not of analysis, but of aspiration.

Schemes elaborated in this spirit would not, of course, work.

<sup>1</sup> "L'économie politique libérale a été un des meilleurs exemples d'utopies qu'on puisse citer. On avait imaginé une société où tout serait ramené à des types commerciaux, sous la loi de la plus complète concurrence; on reconnaît aujourd'hui que cette société idéale serait aussi difficile à réaliser que celle de Platon" (Sorel, *Réflexions sur la violence*, p. 47). Compare Professor Robins' well-known defence of laissez-faire economics: "The idea of a co-ordination of human activity by means of a system of impersonal rules, within which what spontaneous relations arise are conducive to mutual benefit, is a conception at least as subtle, at least as ambitious, as the conception of prescribing each action or each type of action by a central planning authority; and it is perhaps not less in harmony with the requirements of a spiritually sound society" (*Economic Planning and International Order*, p. 229). It would be equally true, and perhaps equally useful, to say that the constitution of Plato's Republic is at least as subtle, ambitious and satisfying to spiritual requirements as that of any state which has ever existed.

<sup>2</sup> Engels, *Socialism, Utopian and Scientific* (Engl. transl.), p. 26.

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Just as nobody has ever been able to make gold in a laboratory, so nobody has ever been able to live in Plato's republic or in a world of universal free trade or in Fourier's phalansteries. But it is, nevertheless, perfectly right to venerate Confucius and Plato as the founders of political science, Adam Smith as the founder of political economy, and Fourier and Owen as the founders of socialism. The initial stage of aspiration towards an end is an essential foundation of human thinking. The wish is father to the thought. Teleology precedes analysis.

The teleological aspect of the science of international politics has been conspicuous from the outset. It took its rise from a great and disastrous war; and the overwhelming purpose which dominated and inspired the pioneers of the new science was to obviate a recurrence of this disease of the international body politic. The passionate desire to prevent war determined the whole initial course and direction of the study. Like other infant sciences, the science of international politics has been markedly and frankly utopian. It has been in the initial stage in which wishing prevails over thinking, generalisation over observation, and in which little attempt is made at a critical analysis of existing facts or available means. In this stage, attention is concentrated almost exclusively on the end to be achieved. The end has seemed so important that analytical criticism of the means proposed has too often been branded as destructive and unhelpful. When President Wilson, on his way to the Peace Conference, was asked by some of his advisers whether he thought his plan of a League of Nations would work, he replied briefly: "If it won't work, it must be made to work".<sup>1</sup> The advocate of a scheme for an international police force or for "collective security", or of some other project for an international order, generally replied to the critic not by an argument designed to shew how and why he thought his plan will work, but either by a statement that it must be made to work because the consequences of its failure to work would be so disastrous, or by a demand for some alternative nostrum.<sup>2</sup> This must be the spirit in which the alchemist or

<sup>1</sup> R. S. Baker, *Woodrow Wilson and World Settlement*, i. p. 93.

<sup>2</sup> "There is the old well-known story about the man who, during the Lisbon earthquake of 1775, went about hawking anti-earthquake pills; but one incident is forgotten — when someone pointed out that the pills could not possibly be of use, the hawker replied: 'But what would you put in their place?'" (L. B. Namier, *In the Margin of History*, p. 20).

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the utopian socialist would have answered the sceptic who questioned whether lead could be turned into gold or men made to live in model communities. Thought has been at a discount. Much that was said and written about international politics between 1919 and 1939 merited the stricture applied in another context by the economist Marshall, who compares "the nervous irresponsibility which conceives hasty utopian schemes" to the "bold facility of the weak player who will speedily solve the most difficult chess problem by taking on himself to move the black men as well as the white".<sup>1</sup> In extenuation of this intellectual failure, it may be said that, during the earlier of these years, the black pieces in international politics were in the hands of such weak players that the real difficulties of the game were scarcely manifest even to the keenest intelligence. The course of events after 1931 clearly revealed the inadequacy of pure aspiration as the basis for a science of international politics, and made it possible for the first time to embark on serious critical and analytical thought about international problems.

## *The Impact of Realism*

No science deserves the name until it has acquired sufficient humility not to consider itself omnipotent, and to distinguish the analysis of what is from aspiration about what should be. Because in the political sciences this distinction can never be absolute, some people prefer to withhold from them the right to the title of science. In both physical and political sciences, the point is soon reached where the initial stage of wishing must be succeeded by a stage of hard and ruthless analysis. The difference is that political sciences can never wholly emancipate themselves from utopianism, and that the political scientist is apt to linger for a longer initial period than the physical scientist in the utopian stage of development. This is perfectly natural. For while the transmutation of lead into gold would be no nearer if everyone in the world passionately desired it, it is undeniable that if everyone really desired a "world-state" or "collective security" (and meant the same thing by those terms), it would be easily attained; and the student of international politics may be forgiven if he begins by supposing that his task is to make everyone desire it. It takes him some

<sup>1</sup> *Economic Journal* (1907), xvii. p. 9.

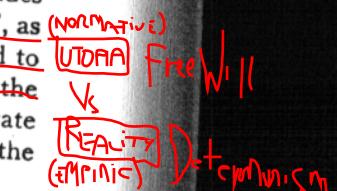
time to understand that no progress is likely to be made along this path, and that no political utopia will achieve even the most limited success unless it grows out of political reality. Having made the discovery, he will embark on that hard ruthless analysis of reality which is the hallmark of science; and one of the facts whose causes he will have to analyse is the fact that few people do desire a "world-state" or "collective security", and that those who think they desire it mean different and incompatible things by it. He will have reached a stage when purpose by itself is seen to be barren, and when analysis of reality has forced itself upon him as an essential ingredient of his study.

The impact of thinking upon wishing which, in the development of a science, follows the breakdown of its first visionary projects, and marks the end of its specifically utopian period, is commonly called realism. Representing a reaction against the wish-dreams of the initial stage, realism is liable to assume a critical and somewhat cynical aspect. In the field of thought, it places its emphasis on the acceptance of facts and on the analysis of their causes and consequences. It tends to depreciate the role of purpose and to maintain, explicitly or implicitly, that the function of thinking is to study a sequence of events which it is powerless to influence or to alter. In the field of action, realism tends to emphasise the irresistible strength of existing forces and the inevitable character of existing tendencies, and to insist that the highest wisdom lies in accepting, and adapting oneself to, these forces and these tendencies. Such an attitude, though advocated in the name of "objective" thought, may no doubt be carried to a point where it results in the sterilisation of thought and the negation of action. But there is a stage where realism is the necessary corrective to the exuberance of utopianism, just as in other periods utopianism must be invoked to counteract the barrenness of realism. Immature thought is predominantly purposive and utopian. Thought which rejects purpose altogether is the thought of old age. Mature thought combines purpose with observation and analysis. Utopia and reality are thus the two facets of political science. Sound political thought and sound political life will be found only where both have their place.

## CHAPTER 2

### UTOPIA AND REALITY

THE antithesis of utopia and reality — a balance always swinging towards and away from equilibrium and never completely attaining it — is a fundamental antithesis revealing itself in many forms of thought. The two methods of approach — the inclination to ignore what was and what is in contemplation of what should be, and the inclination to deduce what should be from what was and what is — determine opposite attitudes towards every political problem. "It is the eternal dispute", as Albert Sorel puts it, "between those who imagine the world to suit their policy, and those who arrange their policy to suit the realities of the world".<sup>1</sup> It may be suggestive to elaborate this antithesis before proceeding to an examination of the current crisis of international politics.



#### *Free Will and Determination*

The antithesis of utopia and reality can in some aspects be identified with the antithesis of Free Will and Determination. The utopian is necessarily voluntarist: he believes in the possibility of more or less radically rejecting reality, and substituting his utopia for it by an act of will. The realist analyses a pre-determined course of development which he is powerless to change. For the realist, philosophy, in the famous words of Hegel's preface to his *Philosophy of Right*, always "comes too late" to change the world. By means of philosophy, the old order "cannot be rejuvenated, but only known". The utopian, fixing his eyes on the future, thinks in terms of creative spontaneity: the realist, rooted in the past, in terms of causality. All healthy human action, and therefore all healthy thought, must establish a balance between utopia and reality, between free will and determinism. The complete realist, unconditionally accepting the causal sequence of events, deprives himself of the possibility of changing reality. The complete utopian, by rejecting the causal sequence, deprives himself of the possibility

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<sup>1</sup> A. Sorel, *L'Europe et la Révolution Française*, p. 474.