

BOOK REVIEW

Constantin Bușe, FROM THE HISTORY OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS. STUDIES, Editura Enciclopedică, București, 2009

From the History of International Relations. Studies by Professor Constantin Bușe is a book that covers a series of international history studies. The author focuses on a wide range of case studies, from Latin America during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, to Europe in the interwar time, the nonalignment movement, and to various Romanian bilateral relations with third countries.

The book is first of all a vivid diplomatic history and enjoyable reading. It reveals the actions, views and perceptions of statesmen and diplomats in diverse contexts of international affairs. The historical narration is based on strong evidences from diplomatic archives, economic data, public speeches, biographic or printed media, being a model of scientific rigor writing on international diplomatic and political history.

In the studies regarding Latin America this book illustrates key moments such as the war of independence against Spain, the position of Latin American states towards the two World Wars, and the European crises during the interwar time (*The Independence War of Latin America, the European Powers and the United States, Latin America and the First World War, Several Features of the New World's Stance on the European Crisis, The Pan-American Solidarity during the Second World War, The Latin American Contribution to the United Nations Victory*). An important value of these studies consists in disentangling the interplay between diverging interests of Latin American states on one hand and the other major players involved in the Western Hemisphere, on the other hand, be they the United States or the European Great Powers.

These studies start with the emergence of new sovereign states in Latin America as a result of the war for independence between Latin American insurgents and Spanish forces. The focus lies on how the European Powers and the United States positioned themselves vis-à-vis the two belligerents of the war for independence in Latin America. The relations between the newly emergent states in Central and South America and the other Powers were far from a clear perspective. The United States and Great Britain positions developed from a cold stance towards the insurgents to the official diplomatic recognition in the end of the conflict, while the European powers from the Holy Alliance failed to advance a mediated solution. The study ends by portraying Bolivar's grand plan of a Latin American confederacy thus the emergence of a new geopolitical reality that is a wide range of nation-states in Latin America.

Regarding the First World War the study describes how non-belligerence was expressed by Latin American states. The author reveals the details of a complex context in which 20 Latin American states defined their attitudes towards the two warring parties based on different and quite antagonistic conditions, e.g. the commercial relations, the ethnic composition, military or political cultural tradition, specific relations with third countries, including the position adopted by the United States, and even the propaganda pursued by belligerent European countries within those states.

The other successive studies focus on how the „New World” or the continental America dealt with the second German efforts for world hegemony, which peaked with the outburst of the Second World War. The author points out how the entire New World – that includes, beside the Latin America states, the United States – reacted to the rising of Nazi Germany on the world stage and then how the pan-American solidarity was forged during the war. The historical narration is dense as the author follows in great details the perspective of the American states in relation to all the international crises

provoked by Germany in Europe. It is not randomly that the author chooses to evaluate and illustrate the inter-American diplomatic background since the United States was facing a real challenge in Latin America posed by a genuine German diplomatic offensive there. The study offers here keys to understand the success of the United States' „good neighborhood policy” in Latin America and the road to the Conferences of Buenos Aires (1936) and Lima (1938), which paved the way to a veritable „pan-American solidarity” during the Second World War.

Key – themes of the international history of the period between the two World Wars are covered in this book by two important studies: one on the international context that generated the Locarno Treaty (*From Versailles to Locarno. Between Illusions and Hopes*) and the other on the Lausanne Conference (*The Lausanne Conference. June-July 1932*). The first study describes how the relations between the victorious allies of the First World War developed after the Paris-Versailles Peace Treaties, culminating with the settlement for Western European security at Locarno. This represents a major contribution for understanding the divergent positions promoted, on one hand, by France and on the other hand, by Great Britain and the United States, towards managing the post-war European security. A central issue that is revealed here represents the war „reparation” payments by Germany and how the victorious powers managed this issue.

Following the convoluted history of the „reparation” payments, the second study moves the focus to the context of the collapse of the world economic order in the 1930s. It focuses on the interconnections between the European war debts to the United States and the German war reparation payments. A central moment of these issues was the international economic conference at Lausanne, where the European nations discussed the ways of removing the impediments to the economic recovery represented by debts. The author investigates in details how the conference developed, illustrating and analyzing the speeches made by key political personalities of those time, from Ramsay MacDonald, Giuseppe Motta, Eduard Herriot to Franz von Papen. It is also very interesting the assessment of the Romanian delegation report on the conference annexed at the end of this study.

The book makes a detailed review of the non-alignment movement during the Cold War time till its fading away during the recent history (*The Non-Alignment Movement, Myth or Reality?*). The author concludes that „despite all efforts made, the generous principles permanently proclaimed, and the objectives and ends that wanted to be accomplished, the movement has failed to become *the third way* as Marshal Joseph Broz Tito stated at Bandung in 1955, meaning the departure from the two main Cold War alignments” (p. 492).

Parts of the Romanian international history are covered in this book in several studies. The author focuses on various stances of Romanian bilateral relations with third countries during the nineteenth century, from *The Beginnings of the Romanian-American Relations and Aspects of the Commercial and Economic Relations between Romania and France (1856 – 1866, 1866 – 1867)* to *The Romanian and Serbian Relations. The 1868 Treaty of Alliance*. An important study is dedicated to the Romanian-Latin American states relations with a special attention directed to the role played by the greatest Romanian diplomat, Nicolae Titulescu, to the development of those relations during the interwar period (*The Chronicles of the Romania and Latin America Relations. The Contribution of Nicolae Titulescu*). In the study *The European Idea within the Vision of the Romanian Political and Intellectual Elites (1919 – 1939)*, we can notice how important Romanian scholar and statesmen approached the project of the united Europe. The description of various stances expressed by Dimitrie Gusti, Vespasian Pella, G. G. Mironescu, Ion G. Duca, Constantin Visoianu, Grigore Gafencu or Nicolae Titulescu are embedded in the context of the wide European debate of the epoch on how the European unity can be achieved (the Coudenhove-Kalergi and Aristide Briand projects, and the Tardieu plan).

From the History of International Relations is an all-encompassing book that deals with major issues of international history. After covering all these issues the reader can miss here, to a certain degree, a chapter (introduction or concluding remarks) in which Professor Buse would make general remarks on his studies. All these topics of international history reveal the author in diverse stances of the historian craft: the American Hemisphere scholar, the interwar time scholar, or the Romanian international history scholar. It would have been a thought-provoking approach for the reader and, for certain, a binding element of this book, if the author illustrated his broad perspective of the

investigated historical periods, pointed out why these themes (epochs, times, geopolitical spaces) inspired him, and showed which are his major historical viewpoints or beliefs. The scholarly community and the students of international history would very much welcome such an approach for the (hopeful) second edition of this book.

From History of International Relations represents a broad historical approach not only from the perspective of the multitude international contexts or geopolitical spaces that are investigated – Latin America, the interwar period, aspects of the Romanian international history – but also due to the vast array of case studies – bilateral relations between states, international conference and treaties, ideas and grand projects, or the evolution of states alignments. The book stands for a major contribution to the Romanian and international history literature.

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