



## The apostle of internationalism: Stephen Duggan and the geopolitics of international education



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### ABSTRACT

Stephen Duggan, the educator and director of the Institute of International Education (IIE) between 1919 and 1946, has been described as an 'apostle of internationalism'. Duggan's work as the director of a new international agency in the co-ordination of educational exchange sought to position the United States of America as the centre of international education. Duggan's writings during this period reflect the articulation of a geographical vocabulary which positioned the United States as a steward of an 'international' space of education despite Duggan's continual disparagement of cultural imperialism. This paper explores the geographies of Duggan's discursive rendering of American responsibilities for the security of 'the international', the potential for America to act as a beacon of educational exchanges, and as the 'rational' space to counteract threats to an imagined American educational hegemony. This outline was shot through with the anxiety of alternative internationalisms and the possibility for education to be used in opposition to the 'virtuous' international education proposed by Duggan and his contemporaries. An exploration of Duggan's writing provides a backdrop to the development of international educational agencies in the interwar period as critical technologies of an American geopolitical power.

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### Introduction

Described as the 'Apostle of Internationalism', Stephen Duggan (1870–1950) was a lynchpin of the Institute of International Education (IIE) during the interwar era and was a prominent voice in the context of interwar international education within the United States of America (Condon, 1978). The IIE was an educational agency created in 1919 following on from the Paris Peace Conference, by Duggan, alongside the Columbia University President Nicholas Murray Butler (1862–1947), and the US Secretary of War Elihu Root (1845–1937). The aim of the IIE was to promote America as the central point of educational exchanges in the era of international (re)construction, 'a clearing house of information and advice for Americans concerning things educational in foreign countries and for foreigners concerning things educational in the United States' (Duggan, 1920a, 2).

The IIE was part of a maelstrom of new educational agencies emerging in the 1920s, which were designed to promote scholarly interchange and support the movement of foreign students across national borders (De Wit, 2002, 10). In the United States,

international education in the form of exchange had been in existence since the mid-nineteenth century, as American students travelled to Europe to finish their degrees in European universities (Anderson, 2004; Charle, 2004). Similarly students from China had been involved in exchange with the United States since the 1870s, intensified under the Boxer Indemnity Scholarship Programs between 1909 and 1929, which converted Chinese reparations to scholarship funds following the Boxer rebellion (1899–1901) (Ye, 2001, 8–11). International exchanges were becoming an established part of academic institutions by the 1920s, with the popularisation of the Rhodes Scholarships providing a model of international, and in some cases imperial, co-operation and citizenship through the movement of selected students and professors (Ashby, 1963; Pietsch, 2011).

From its earliest years, the IIE derived its support for its activities entirely through philanthropic grants, firstly from the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace (CEIP) until 1923, and then from the Carnegie Corporation of New York that replaced the CEIP as the Institute's largest stakeholder. The IIE used this philanthropic support to function as an associative agency to co-ordinate an 'international education' through the management of fellowship and scholarship schemes, as well as serving as a representative institution for American colleges and universities dealing with international activities. The movement of bodies across borders was

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complemented by the transnational circulation of publications, such as the IIE's *News Bulletin*, and pamphlets on educational exchanges.

Importantly though it was Duggan's definition of internationalism that provided the backdrop and constitution of exchange as a valuable geopolitical mechanism. Duggan (1919a, 13) noted a set of conditions under which he suggested internationalism could thrive, namely that, 'given peace and security, reliance may be placed upon the force of necessity, the instinct of imitation, and the growth of rationality, to develop a better and juster world organization'. Using the archives of the IIE and its philanthropic supporters, this paper seeks to explore how this construction and definition of internationalism as a discursive and material architecture was conceived as a means to globalise educational programmes inflected with an American geopolitical identity. Where internationalism was produced and practised was dependent on the productive discourses of those proclaiming to be its exponents and guardians. Duggan's geographical imagination of internationalism was hyper-vigilant, and laden with an anxiety of alternative internationalisms that threatened the virtuous positioning of international educational exchange. As this paper argues, Duggan conceived of America as a space of affirmative and transformative values, which could be fostered through the individual, and transposed globally, as an instinctive, rational and necessary force of internationalism.

#### *The geopolitics of international education*

The extent to which international education activities constituted an important geopolitical arrangement of internationalism is the core focus of this paper. As Gramsci (2000, 348) noted, 'every relationship of 'hegemony' is necessarily an educational relationship' as norms and practises are routinized and forged in spaces of education and across society. Liping Bu's (2003) study of the IIE, the most significant work exploring the organisation, argues that the Institute was ostensibly about cultural projection. As geographers have shown, the diffusion of economic ideas through corporations and international regulations was important in embedding American capitalism as a geoeconomic and geopolitical superpower (Cowen & Smith, 2009; Kearns, 2009; Smith, 2005). This diffusion was fuelled by the discourse of a 'Manifest Destiny', a threatening gesture aimed towards geopolitical foes, and an idea which coded overseas expansion with a geographical grammar to advocate intervention and violence outside of domestic borders (Tyrrell, 2011, 5). As Ekbladh (2010) argues, American-led international programmes during the interwar period into the Cold War sought to impose alternative programmes of modernisation to counteract the threats of Soviet state planning, thereby transposing American cultural views and technical knowledge to reconstruct a world in its own image (Farish, 2010; Sharp, 2000).

Duggan cultivated what Iriye (2002, 11) has described as an *international imagination*, an understanding of the world through universalist ideas and holistic conceptions of 'the international'. The idea of universality was a cornerstone of Victorian liberal thought and alternative internationalisms such as anarchism and socialism (Bell, 2006; Bell & Sylvest, 2006). As Marshall Berman (1982, 15) has argued such discourses provided a 'unity of disunity', an expression of early twentieth century modernity to homogenise and prescribe a vision of the modern.

In the shadow of the First World War, it was expected that the proliferation of international institutions would contribute to a space of transnational harmony and assuage the territorial aggressions of war and imperial avarice (Ninkovich, 1999, 12). This paper argues that Duggan's internationalism was seen as integral to a definition of a virtuous model of global recuperation. This

definition of internationalism was cut through with its own brand of cultural imperialism, alongside a desire to construct a peaceful, and cosmopolitan globalist future. In part this was done by defining it in opposition to Soviet and imperialistic ideas, which also served to distance the situation of the IIE as an American institution from accusations of imperialism or even collusion with communism. The term 'international' was therefore not just used adjectivally but also served as a programme for prescription. As Navari argues (2000, 3), internationalism has periodically been defined by governments 'with specific political objectives in mind', meaning that it is always a provincial exercise taking on the geography of its cultural and political setting (Robbins, 1999, 6).

Educational exchange was considered a useful technology to materialise a recuperative internationalism with a remit to focus particularly on 'young men and women who are still in their educational period and charged with the stewardship of the future' (Waite, 1922, 559). Exchange schemes could provide a scalar geopolitics linking the education of the individual to global political relations. IIE exchange schemes also focused on intellectuals and scholars who could assist in inter-cultural relations with Latin America in particular (as an adjunct arm of the 'Good Neighbour Policy' of the 1930s US government) and in the traditional exchange schemes already in place with the universities of Europe. As an early IIE report argued, exchange was 'a change or transition from one place, condition, or experience to another' and 'to give or part with something in return for something regarded as an equivalent' (Douglass, 1934, 6–7). This was not an exchange in the sense of commodity markets, but as a productive process to oxygenate society, in which its directors and participants could act as crucial conduits in what Legg (2012, 649) has referred to as the 'transnational circulation of norms and advice'.

Geographers, sociologists and historians have begun to analyse the nature of the transnational spaces of education, in particular with regard to the production and circulation of scientific knowledge (Charle, 2004; Taylor, Hoyle, & Evans, 2008). These approaches have tended to focus on individuals and institutional sites of learning such as particular university centres (Ben-David, 1992; de Ridder Symoens, 1996). This has included prosopographical research based on the 'imperial careering' of influential academics and quantitative analyses of fellowship schemes (Heffernan & Jöns, 2013; Jöns, 2008, 2009; Pietsch, 2013, 2010). These quantitative analyses of fellowship schemes and sabbatical programmes reveal the significant impact on geopolitical relations due to the formation of transnational and imperial knowledge networks through the mobility of students, researchers and academics. However the focus on the transnational mobility of delimited academic communities can obfuscate the broader contexts and conditions of possibility that have shaped the formation of international education patterns and schemes, in particular the significant political and foreign policy questions which emerge from international programmes of education (Deutsch, 1972, 15).

The IIE has played a prominent role in global educational programmes from the early twentieth century to the present day, but surprisingly there has been a dearth of work exploring the organisation (Brooks, 2015; Bu, 1999; Walton, 2010). The IIE was one of several major educational organisations funded by American philanthropic foundations which took their place in the moral and social re-building of the interwar years and in defining the contours of an 'international' space of education (Kohler, 1987). According to De Wit (2002, 21), international education during the interwar period was shrouded in a discourse of 'mutual understanding and peace' which acted as a recurrent rhetorical trope to signal the connectivity between different nation-states. As the historians Cambridge and Thompson (2004, 161) note, these values constituted an ideology of international education and became a

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