

## A Troublesome Text

**International Politics in a Revolutionary Age**, by Wladyslaw Wszebor Kulski.  
Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott Company,  
1964. xiv+650 pp. \$8.95.

THIS BOOK is an effort to instruct students taking elementary courses in the branch of political science known as "international relations," and the reviewer necessarily must speculate on how well such a volume will do its job. My guess is that the book will do better than most, but has some failures that will make it less effective than it should be. Its chief advantage is shrewd organization. Mr. Kulski, a former Polish diplomat, knows the world of practical affairs and hence comes to the larger points immediately, putting lesser concerns toward the end of his book. (It is fascinatingly true that he puts international organization at the end!) His chapters deal *seriatim* with the nuclear revolution, nationalism, new nations, present-day economic and social changes, the demographic explosion of our time, conflicts of ideas (communism), international law, international organization, and the mechanics of diplomacy. An extremely shrewd order of discussion.

The faults of the book are those of style and of organization within chapters, where Kulski needed more thought and editing. His translation of Clausewitz's apt *Der Krieg ist ein Instrument der Politik* is evidence of the book's rather turgid prose: "War is regarded as nothing but the continuation of state policy with other means." The author is a clever person who doubtless makes a good lecturer and discussant in small groups, but it is one thing to talk and something else to put words on paper, without benefit of gesture and the emphasis of speech. In the latter case the passive-voice verbs fall listlessly, and the student sees a few fairly good expressions covered with superfluous words and unnecessary definitions. One must question whether a student needs a definition of a state, or of the balance of power. He probably does need sharp discussion of how each has worked. Another problem in this book is its dealing with history, which has to come in as a case study, an analysis in depth (favorite phrase of political scientists), or a sort of appendix. This treatment of history is of course one of the prime embarrassments of the new academic discipline of international relations. So many things become clear only through history, but the "I.R."

man is seemingly diffident about poaching in another department's field. Why not come out frankly with the history? To the credit of Mr. Kulski, there is little or none of the disgraceful psychological-sociological jargon which so recently has infected study of international relations. But there is this rambling wordiness of the chapters, and at times almost a kaleidoscopic change from section to section, without clear development of a theme to a conclusion.

These points are worth making because literally thousands upon thousands, even two or three hundred thousand, of young men and women will be taking introductory courses in international relations this year, not to mention future years, and the effectiveness of their text books is a matter of interest to all people in and out of university faculties, to say nothing of the moans and groans of the students themselves. The textbook should set out the factual substance of a course in orderly, lucid prose so that the lecturer can turn to more esoteric topics. The book also should challenge the youngsters to read "on their own," and that means attractively annotated bibliographies where the author does not just dump his titles without explanation but for each chapter of text shows students a half-dozen or so highly readable and fairly short books that will supplement text and lectures.

It sounds simple enough. Unfortunately textbook publishing, rapidly becoming the major part of the book business in this country, is a very tricky enterprise, with high composition costs and also a great dearth not merely of good authors but just of authors. The temptation of publishers is to take on almost any grammatical manuscript and confine the editing to a minimum, knowing that they can break even with a sale of perhaps 10,000 copies or less. With a large course like elementary international relations, often taught by beginning instructors, the harried teacher (himself finishing up his doctoral thesis) will browse through a few gift textbooks and pick one on a hunch, hoping to read the darned thing later. Usually the students—for a year or two before a fraudulent "revised edition" sweeps the used books off the market—can sell the books back to the university bookstore which will sell them to other students. Eventually though, some poor student will have to use his unsellable international relations textbook as a doorstop, or else put it on the single-shelf built-in bookcase next to the *Picture History of Christianity* and the *World Book Encyclopedia*.

Reviewed by ROBERT H. FERRELL