CHAPTER 8

From the Shoulders of Giants: Harold Nicolson’s Peacemaking 1919 and the Congress of Vienna

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‘If I have seen further, it is by standing on the shoulders of giants.’

Sir Isaac Newton

1 Introduction

I was elated to be asked to contribute an essay to this volume honoring my epic colleague and mentor, Roger Clark, with whom I’ve had the pleasure of working these past five years at Rutgers School of Law–Camden. I was further delighted to be asked to write on two works by Harold Nicolson: Peacemaking 1919 and The Congress of Vienna, which Festschrift coordinator Suzannah Linton has described as ‘two of Roger’s favourite works on diplomacy and the formation of international organizations.’ Nicolson has long been a subject of interest for me because he (like myself on a much smaller scale) was a diplomat turned writer and brought the two together so well.

In titling this piece, I was struck by the apropos of Newton’s ‘From the Shoulders of Giants’ quote. It reflects how, learning from our mentors and

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1 I would like to thank Librarian Genevieve Tung for her extensive research assistance with this project.
3 Harold Nicolson, Peacemaking 1919 (Grosset & Dunlap 1965) (‘Nicolson, Peacemaking 1919’).
5 Email from Suzannah Linton (2 October 2013).
6 I first read Peacemaking 1919 during my post-graduate studies at Cambridge, where I wrote my thesis ‘Race Relations Between Japan and the West 1895–1925’ focusing on the rejection of the racial equality clause from the League of Nations covenant at the Paris Peace Conference.
7 Prior to studying law, I was a Foreign Service Officer with the United States Department of State.
8 I am the author of seven novels and one short story in an anthology, set primarily in Europe during the first half of the 20th century.
9 Letter from Isaac Newton to Robert Hooke (n 2) 416.
benefitting from their years of experience, we can see further and understand more.\textsuperscript{10} It reflects how more junior scholars such as myself can benefit from the perspective of ‘giants’ like Roger Clark. And, it reflects how Harold Nicolson, as a junior diplomat serving the world’s leaders, was able to gain a bird’s eye view and unique perspective on the Paris Peace Conference, in a way that would influence not just his writing of \textit{Peacemaking 1919}\textsuperscript{11} but all of his future writing, government service and other endeavors.

Interestingly, despite his affinity for Nicolson’s work, Roger himself has not actually cited to Nicolson in his work. However, Roger describes Nicolson as influential on his own vast body of scholarship, teaching, and work with governments and international organizations. Roger has taught a course on international organizations for many years.\textsuperscript{12} He has written extensively on international organizations.\textsuperscript{13} He had a role in creating the International Criminal Court.\textsuperscript{14} He has appeared before the International Court of Justice in the \textit{Nuclear Weapons} case.\textsuperscript{15} As a Non-Governmental Organization representative in the 70s and 80s, he worked to make the United Nations organizations on human rights and decolonization more effective.\textsuperscript{16}

Nicolson’s works are instructive to a scholar and leader in international law and diplomacy such as Roger, not only for their historical content, but for the insight they provide into many of our present global challenges. Indeed, Roger, like Nicolson, has undoubtedly been influenced in his writing by the many international endeavors to which he has been a contributor. Honoring Roger with this essay, I will endeavor to give a brief overview of \textit{Peacemaking 1919} and \textit{The Congress of Vienna} and the way in which Nicolson’s view in them was shaped and changed by his experiences.

\textsuperscript{10} Indeed, I have often borrowed the ‘shoulder of giants’ quote to describe my own experiences as Special Assistant to the Secretary of the Army at the Pentagon, where I had the opportunity to travel the world and witness operations at the most senior levels of government—experiences which have subsequently influenced my own writing.

\textsuperscript{11} Nicolson, \textit{Peacemaking 1919} (n 3).

\textsuperscript{12} Roger teaches a wide array of international courses at Rutgers Law. Rutgers School of Law, Camden, Faculty Biography for Roger S. Clark, <https://camlaw.rutgers.edu/directory/rsclark/> accessed 16 June 2014.


\textsuperscript{14} Faculty Biography for Roger S Clark (n 12).

\textsuperscript{15} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{16} Ibid.