
Review: The Battlefield of the Minds?

Reviewed Work(s): Krieg der Philosophen: Die deutsche und die britische Philosophie im Ersten Weltkrieg by Peter Hoeres

Review by: Bettina Koch

Source: *The Review of Politics*, Vol. 67, No. 4 (Autumn, 2005), pp. 792-794

Published by: Cambridge University Press for the University of Notre Dame du lac on behalf of Review of Politics

Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/25046483>

Accessed: 03-07-2017 15:52 UTC

JSTOR is a not-for-profit service that helps scholars, researchers, and students discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content in a trusted digital archive. We use information technology and tools to increase productivity and facilitate new forms of scholarship. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

Your use of the JSTOR archive indicates your acceptance of the Terms & Conditions of Use, available at

<http://about.jstor.org/terms>



Cambridge University Press, University of Notre Dame du lac on behalf of Review of Politics are collaborating with JSTOR to digitize, preserve and extend access to *The Review of Politics*

a viable third way between neo-imperialism and one-worldism? Morefield critiques a few contemporary theorists—Robert Cooper, Robert Kagan, Fareed Zakaria, and Michael Ignatieff—whose imperial leanings remind her of Murray and Zimmern. Diverse as this group is, it hardly represents the entire range of pro-sovereignty liberal internationalist thought. Morefield ignores figures such as Francis Fukuyama and Michael Waltzer (to say nothing of George W. Bush and Tony Blair) who are intent on the actual global liberalization that Murray and Zimmern shirked. She argues as if the only alternative to her vague call for a “global polity” is some kind of repackaging of her duo’s de facto imperialism. This leaves her on the margins of the most important current discussions.

Covenants Without Swords is therefore more successful as a work of intellectual history than as a proposal to save liberalism by means of the establishment of a world community. It is a good study of the bad things that can happen when English liberals get mixed up in German metaphysics. It is also informative about the sources of the weakness of the League of Nations. It is not, however, an especially compelling entry into debates over the nature and viability of a liberal world order. Also, the text contains numerous typographical errors, and seems on the whole to have been poorly edited.

—Andrew J. Bove

THE BATTLEFIELD OF THE MINDS?

Peter Hoeres: *Krieg der Philosophen: Die deutsche und die britische Philosophie im Ersten Weltkrieg*. (Paderborn: Schöningh, 2004. Pp. 646. € 78.00.)

Peter Hoeres’s very thoughtful study *Krieg der Philosophen* is an abridged version of his German doctoral thesis. The author examines the views of British and German philosophers during World War I. The intention of the book is to assist us in understanding the philosophical side of this war. Since Herman Lübbe’s 1963 study *Politische Philosophie in Deutschland*, which includes at least one chapter on World War I political philosophy, the philosophical side of the war has generally been ignored. Peter Hoeres wants to fill this gap not only by studying the prominent British and German philosophers of the era but also by studying the lesser-known philosophers. His study, however, is more than an investigation of political philosophy; he also analyzes the historical-political context. But in addition to the main purpose of the book, Peter Hoeres wants to investigate how the debate over the German *Sonderweg*, which has become more and more neglected in recent decades, is or is not reflected in British and German philosophical debates during World War I. The author, though, concludes finally that there is little to justify keeping the idea of *Sonderweg* as part of present-day German philosophy.

In the introductory chapters, Hoeres outlines first the main philosophical trends prior to the war and, secondly, the specific differences between British and German political and academic cultures. The different academic systems had different consequences for the German and British philosophers’ view of themselves and their relation to the public sphere. For the Germans, state and

society were distinct entities, and the young German nation-state was an end in itself; for the British, on the other hand, the state is viewed as *res publica* and thus the necessary means to the end of society (p. 85).

In the following five chapters Peter Hoeres analyzes the various themes of (a) friend and enemy, (b) state, (c) war, (d) peace, and (e) philosophy and politics. The longest and most complex chapter, on friend and enemy, identifies two different outlooks on Germany among British philosophers—the intellectual and cultural Germany and the military and political Germany. With the exception of Bertrand Russell, the British patriot-pacifist, the author finds the common view among the English to be that Germany must be liberated from its philosophy of power and militarism in order to convert it to democratic and “universal norms of civilization” (p. 325) like individual freedom. The view of Germany that persisted in British political culture during the war was that Germany was a state in political and cultural decline. And though this view of Germany was not new, the theme of militarism was. These views, however, were not based on an examination of the philosophy during the war era, but rather on the philosophical tradition of each country. A lack of knowledge concerning contemporary philosophy is present in both countries. Germans focused almost entirely on utilitarian ideas and what they perceived as egoistic-capitalistic political philosophy. The image of the Germans the British had is mirrored in the image the Germans had of the British.

It would be of interest to this reader to learn more about the reasons for this focusing on the philosophical ghosts of the past, since, as the author outlines in his introductory chapters, many of the British and German philosophers had contacts with one another. Hoeres indicates many sources of disagreement between British and German philosophers; however, though the title of the book implies the existence of a war between philosophers, what we have is more of a squabble than a war. One of the author’s further observations suggests it. Moreover, Hoeres treats this squabble as chiefly part of the German philosophical discourse. Instead of analyzing British philosophy, the Germans investigated their own national and philosophical identity. In their view, the war was the moment of birth for their identity.

While German philosophers were in search of their identity, the British philosophers were confident of theirs. But both sets of philosophers were concerned about the quest for the best development of the state. Neither the British nor the German philosophers had a unified image of the political enemy or of the state. The debate revolved around idealistic, pluralistic, (neo)liberal, and socialistic ideas. Hoeres sees the main difference between the British and the German discussion centered on the German philosophers’ debate over the idea of the nation-state. Even concerning the war itself, the differences between the British and the German philosophers are negligible. Although the German philosophers showed a somewhat more military outlook and pacifist ideas did not appear openly in their thought, pacifism among British philosophers was almost exclusively represented by Russell, who was unique in the British academic scene. The existence of compulsory military service in Germany forced the philosophers to reflect on their contribution to the war, a tension that did not exist to the same degree in Britain since it had, at least at this time, no compulsory military service. Most of the German philosophers were rejected as unfit for service either because of age or some physical defects.

Although the British and the German philosophers’ views on war were not that different, their conceptions of what should come after the war were characterized by a certain kind of rivalry. Both had the intention to frame the

future League of Nations according to their own principles. This aspect is perhaps one of the most interesting for political theorists, since it reveals something about the interaction between political philosophy and practical politics. At least some of the philosophical contributions to ideas about peace after the war found their way into the political debate. In particular Hans Cornelius, Leonard Nelson, Ferdinand Tönnies, and Johannes Verwey used the opportunity to give their opinions regarding a future international order, particularly, the German attempt to use Kant's idea of universal peace. However, both the British and the German philosophers' contributions to a postwar order were based on a discrimination of the political enemy. Neither the German nor the British philosophers considered their actual philosophical colleagues as the enemy. Rather, their critique focused on Germany and Britain in general or on their own philosophical traditions.

All in all, Peter Hoeres's book is the result of excellent historical research. Because of the author's perspective, we learn more about German philosophers than about their British counterparts. For this reason, it would be interesting to have a book on the same subject from a British perspective.

—Bettina Koch

ADAPTING TO DISASTER

Ellen Kennedy: *Constitutional Failure: Carl Schmitt in Weimar*. (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2004. Pp. xii, 258. £17.50.)

Ellen Kennedy has long been acknowledged as one of the foremost interpreters of the writings of Carl Schmitt, with her own translation and introduction to one of his most important works on the plight of parliamentarism in contemporary Germany during the Weimar Republic marking a notable contribution to our understanding of Schmitt's position during this incredible period. Equally, in various important essays, she has (to the chagrin of many) outlined the really rather clear links between the writings of many early scholars of the Frankfurt School with Schmitt's thought, as well as offering crucial insights into the lineage of his ideas about sovereignty and representation. Her new study has been a long time in the making, and in its conciseness and sureness of purpose presents the culmination of many years of study and engagement, both personal and political, with Schmitt and his legacy. The period of the Weimar Republic is central to understanding Schmitt's thought, and it certainly laid the foundations not only for his turn toward Nazism during the *NS-Zeit*, but equally well remains foundational for his rather more expansive and sometimes esoteric postwar writings on international law and the partisan, for example. And while there have been some notable recent studies of Schmitt's corpus focusing on his postwar writings that emphasize the importance of these foundations, detailed study of Schmitt's immersion in the Weimar debates can offer profound insights into his political thought, and that is what Kennedy offers here. Moreover, for Kennedy Schmitt's questions about the irreconcilability of conflicts over values, and hence over conceptions of the legitimate grounds of politics, are as much a part of contemporary and even Rawlsian debates about the fact of pluralism as they are period pieces.

The study begins by locating Schmitt in the world of political and legal intrigue during the early 1930s, when he, along with Johannes Popitz, were