



PALGRAVE MACMILLAN HISTORY OF INTERNATIONAL THOUGHT

IAN HALL

**RADICALS AND
REACTIONARIES IN
TWENTIETH-CENTURY
INTERNATIONAL
THOUGHT**



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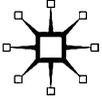
*Radicals and Reactionaries in
Twentieth-Century International Thought*

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RADICALS AND REACTIONARIES IN TWENTIETH-CENTURY INTERNATIONAL THOUGHT
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Softcover reprint of the hardcover 1st edition 2015 978-1-137-44725-8

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First published in 2015 by
PALGRAVE MACMILLAN®
in the United States—a division of St. Martin's Press LLC,
175 Fifth Avenue, New York, NY 10010.

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this is by Palgrave Macmillan, a division of Macmillan Publishers Limited,
registered in England, company number 785998, of Houndmills,
Basingstoke, Hampshire RG21 6XS.

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ISBN 978-1-349-68597-4 ISBN 978-1-137-52062-3 (eBook)
DOI 10.1007/978-1-137-52062-3

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data is available from the
Library of Congress.

A catalogue record of the book is available from the British Library.

Design by Newgen Knowledge Works (P) Ltd., Chennai, India.

First edition: May 2015

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

Contents

<i>Note from the Series Editors</i>	vii
<i>Preface</i>	xi
1 Introduction: Radicals and Reactionaries in Twentieth-Century International Thought <i>Ian Hall</i>	1
2 Geopolitics and Nationalism: Interpreting Friedrich Ratzel in Italian, 1898–1916 <i>Or Rosenboim</i>	17
3 A Forgotten Theorist of International Relations: Kurt Riezler and His <i>Fundamentals of World Politics</i> of 1914 <i>Andreas Osiander</i>	43
4 Democratic Socialism and International Thought in Interwar Britain <i>Lucian M. Ashworth</i>	75
5 The IR That Dare Not Speak Its Name: The French Extreme (and Not so Extreme) Right in the 1930s and Its Lessons from and to the History of Thought in International Relations <i>Andrew Williams</i>	101
6 Prussianism, Hitlerism, Realism: The German Legacy in British International Thought <i>Leonie Holthaus</i>	123
7 Toward Eurafrica! Fascism, Corporativism, and Italy's Colonial Expansion <i>Jens Steffek and Francesca Antonini</i>	145

8	Two Regional Orders in the East and the West: E. H. Carr's "New Europe" and the Japanese "Greater East Asian Community"	171
	<i>Hitomi Yamanaka</i>	
9	"Mephistopheles in a Saville Row Suit": V. K. Krishna Menon and the West	191
	<i>Ian Hall</i>	
	<i>Notes on Contributors</i>	217
	<i>Index</i>	219

Note from the Series Editors

As editors of the Palgrave Macmillan History of International Thought series, we aim to publish highest quality research on the intellectual, conceptual, and disciplinary history of international relations. The books in the series assess the contribution that individual writers—academics, publicists, and other significant figures—have made to the development of thinking on international relations. Central to this task is the historical reconstruction and interpretation that recovers the intellectual and social milieu within which their subjects were writing. Previous volumes in the series have traced the course of traditions, their shifting grounds on common questions, exploring heretofore neglected pathways of international theory, and providing new insight and refreshed context for established approaches such as realism and liberalism. The series embraces the historiographical turn that has taken place within academic International Relations (IR) with the growth of interest in understanding both the disciplinary history of the field and the history of international thought. A critical concern of the series is the institutional and intellectual development of the study of international relations as an academic pursuit. The series is expressly pluralist and as such is open to both critical and traditional work, work that presents historical reconstruction or an interpretation of the past, as well as genealogical studies that account for the possibilities and constraints of present-day theories.

The series is interdisciplinary in outlook, embracing contributions from IR, International History, Political Science, Political Theory, Sociology, and Law. We seek to explore the mutually constitutive triangular relationship of international relations, theory, and history. We take this to mean the appreciation of the importance of the history in the theory of international relations, of theory in the history

of international relations, and even of international relations in the history of international thought! In this last case, we hope that the series can become more broadly intercultural, including scholarship from outside Europe and North America as well as delving into more of the non-Western context of the development of international relations theory, though we acknowledge that the Eurocentric/ethnocentric character of the field is presently mirrored in its disciplinary history.

Ian Hall's edited volume *Radicals and Reactionaries in Twentieth-Century International Thought* goes a long way in helping to move the history of international thought project beyond the traditional English-speaking, Anglo-American focus. While the History of International Thought series has published a number of volumes that have contributed to the historiographical turn, Hall is correct that insufficient attention has been directed to non-Western thinkers and to non-English language works. John Hobson's powerful *The Eurocentric Conception of World Politics* has forced scholars to examine the extent to which so-called international theory has been put in the service of defending the narrative of Western European, and to a lesser extent, white, supremacy. A novel feature of Hall's volume is the inclusion of both neglected thinkers on the European continent who challenged some of the central ideas found in the Anglo-American tradition as well as thinkers beyond Europe in India and Japan. Another distinguishing feature is that rather than focusing on the standard realist and liberal traditions of international thought, the contributors reconstruct a marginalized radical and reactionary tradition.

The chapters in the volume demonstrate the need for disciplinary historians and intellectual historians to look farther afield to understand the history of international thought. The analyses of texts hidden and forgotten from monolingual Anglophone IR, of the writings and diplomatic and political practice of intellectuals in continental European settings, and of the nascent postcolonial outlooks bring not only much-needed diversity and pluralism to our study but also offer significant insight and marshal empirical evidence for historians of ideas in IR to confront the cumbersome and ultimately unsatisfactory frameworks such as realism/idealism and instead consider radicals and reactionaries. We learn that rebellion against European domination does not always mean outright rejection of European

political thinking, but rather the creation of a hybrid and the modification of ideas to circumstances and needs. Finally, *Radicals and Reactionaries in Twentieth-Century International Thought* is a major step forward in our understanding of the challenge of the linguistic barrier that not only hinders the disciplinary history of IR, but also shapes the theory and practice of international politics more generally.

DAVID LONG AND BRIAN SCHMIDT

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Preface

This book can trace its origins back to another project—one on the traditions of British international thought—that Mark Bevir and I organized, and that ended up as a special issue of the *International History Review* in 2014. As that project went on, some of the contributors began to ask certain questions about how we might apply similar approaches to non-Anglophone and non-Western international thought. This book provides specific answers to those questions, but is also intended as a starting point for other researchers interested in moving beyond English-language, Anglo-American scholarship into other areas of the global field of International Relations.

As editor, I am most grateful to the contributors to this volume, who were both cooperative and patient during the process of pulling the various parts together. I am also grateful to the Department of International Relations at the Australian National University in Canberra—my institutional home for the period during which the book was written.

An earlier version of my chapter on Krishna Menon was presented at a panel at the Oceanic Conference on International Studies in Melbourne in 2014. Thanks are due to the panelists and the contributors to the discussion. A special word of thanks is also due to Andrew Williams, who made the very long trip from East Fife to Victoria to present his chapter, and to James Cotton, for finding us an excellent venue for our post-panel lunch.

Finally, I would like to thank the series editors, David Long and Brian Schmidt, and the commissioning editor at Palgrave, Brian O'Connor, for their efficiency and forbearance in dealing with this volume.

CHAPTER 1

Introduction: Radicals and Reactionaries in Twentieth-Century International Thought

Ian Hall

The emergence of the history of international thought as a major subfield of International Relations (IR) is one of the most significant developments within the discipline in the past 20 years. Scholars working in the area have transformed our understanding of the origins and evolution of the discipline and the thinking about international relations that occurred prior to the coalescence of IR in the mid-twentieth century. Textbook caricatures of canonical thinkers and key texts have now been replaced with nuanced, historically sensitive interpretations of the work of major figures—from Raymond Aron and Hedley Bull to Hersch Lauterpacht and Alfred E. Zimmern (see, e.g., Davis 2009; Ayson 2012; Jeffery 2006; Markwell 1986). The evolution of important traditions of thought are now understood far better than they once were, as is their influence on various theorists and practitioners in far greater detail (see, *inter alia*, Ashworth 2014; Clark and Neumann 1996; Hall 2006a, 2012; 2014; Hall and Hill 2009; Haslam 2002; Holthaus 2014a, b; Keane 2002; Long and Wilson 1995; Navari 2013; Onuf 1998; Rosenboim 2014; Schmidt 1998; Rosenthal 1991; Williams 2007). As a result, we now have a much more robust and accurate account of the development of the discipline of IR and the wider development of non-disciplinary thinking about the subject. We now know, for

instance, that the “Great Debates” of Anglo-American IR were more complicated than some theorists have suggested and, indeed, that at least one of those debates—the “First Great Debate” between “idealism” and “realism”—did not happen in the way that some remembered and others chose to represent it (Ashworth 2002; Long and Wilson 1995; Quirk and Vigneswaran 2005; Thies 2002; Wilson 1999).

There is, however, a great deal more work to be done on the history of international thought. So far, in the main, scholars have tended to focus on mainstream realist and liberal internationalist thinkers, and especially on English-speaking ones—or, like Aron or his contemporaries, the German-born thinkers Henry Kissinger or Hans J. Morgenthau—thinkers who made their most important contributions to IR in English. But, although it is true that the center stage of IR has, for the past century, been dominated by realists and internationalists, it is also true that many others have made significant contributions from the fringe—whether radical or reactionary—and that those contributions have stimulated realist and internationalist thought. Karl Mannheim’s radical sociology of knowledge, for example, was central to the shaping of E. H. Carr’s version of realism in his iconic *The Twenty Years’ Crisis* (Carr 1939; cf. Hall 2006b; Jones 1998; Molloy 2003). Moreover, it is now well-established that Carl Schmitt’s thought played a key role in the development of Morgenthau’s thinking (see, *inter alia*, Frei 2001; Müller 2003; Pichler 1998; Scheuerman 1999).

To understand the evolution of international thought over the past century, as these examples show, we need to look at these fringe provocations as well as the canonical texts of the mainstream consensus. This book thus moves beyond realists and liberals to radicals and reactionaries and tries to escape the Anglo-centricity of the history of international thought. It also looks beyond the English-speaking world to those thinkers who flourished on the European continent—in French, German, and Italian—as well as thinkers beyond Europe, in India and Japan.

To date, only a handful of non-English language works have been widely cited in the field and the work of only a handful of non-“Anglo-spheric” scholars have been analyzed in any detail (see, e.g., Fawcett 2012). The notorious and, for some, dangerously attractive Carl Schmitt looms large among them (see Hooker 2009; Odysseos and Petito 2007; cf. Hall 2011b; Teschke 2011), but the work of

a few others—notably, the Frenchman Raymond Aron (Anderson 1998; Davis 2009; Hoffmann 1985)—has also been explored. When it comes to non-Western thinkers, the literature is even thinner. Some important exploratory works on non-Western IR theory have appeared (see, e.g., Acharya and Buzan 2010), but few in-depth historical studies. Similarly, there is an emerging corpus on Chinese IR theory, but most of it is focused on ancient writers rather than modern ones, let alone twentieth-century and twenty-first century thinkers (Qin 2006, 2006; Yan 2011; Zhang 2012, 2014). But, with the exception of some excellent studies by Ryoko Nakano (2013), Giorgio Shani (2008), and Robbie Shilliam (2006, 2010), few other major works on non-Western thinkers have appeared in English.

This book aims not just to make an important contribution to the history of international thought, but also to encourage other students of past international thought to move beyond realists and liberals and beyond the Anglophone world. It urges them to look at the radicals and reactionaries that flourished during the twentieth century, against whose ideas, after all, the great realists and liberals framed their theories. Furthermore, it urges them to look at thinkers who did not live and work in the English-speaking, Anglo-American world. To those ends, it explores the work of a range of non-mainstream thinkers from across Europe and Asia, from British Labour Party radicals of the interwar period to Indian practitioners, like Krishna Menon, whose thinking was influenced by them, and from the French fascists of Vichy to the Japanese imperialist writers inspired by the work of E. H. Carr.

In this way, this book is intended to complement work ongoing in the history of political thought on what has been called “comparative political philosophy” (Parel and Keith 1992) or “comparative political theory” (Dallmayr 1999, 2004; March 2009; Thomas 2010) as well as work done by postcolonial theorists and others on non-Western political ideas (see, e.g., Chatterjee 2011 [1986] or Parekh 2000). This work aims to extend the study of political theory beyond the Western canon to explore not merely non-Western texts, but also the reception and interpretation of Western texts by non-Western thinkers. For advocates like Fred Dallmayr and Farah Godrej, these kinds of activities entail “fusions of horizons” in Gadamerian style and might underpin a more democratic political theory (Dallmayr 2004: 254; Godrej 2009). More narrowly, the work

of comparative political theorists has focused on understanding the work of non-Western thinkers influential on the practice of states, communities, and individuals, especially in the Islamic world (e.g., Euben 1997), but also, increasingly, in Asia (e.g., Gray 2014). This book proceeds in that spirit: exploring the work of non-Anglophone and non-Western thinkers in an attempt to better comprehend their positions and the policies that flow from them.

Approaches

A vigorous argument rumbles on about how best to study the history of international thought. The earliest histories, like F. Melian Stawell's *The Growth of International Thought* (1929), tended to take the form of grand narratives or "epic" histories, to use John Gunnell's term (Gunnell 1978). They tended also to emphasize traditions of thought—principally, "realism" and "idealism" (or utopianism), although some, like Martin Wight, included "rationalism" (Wight 1991; cf. Donelan 1990)—and to interpret the work of canonical thinkers and key texts in terms of how they exemplified, modified, or departed from those traditions (Bull 1969; Carr 1939; Herz 1950, 1951; Thompson 1952; cf. Jeffery 2005). In the 1960s, this approach was supplemented by one that drew especially on the work of Thomas S. Kuhn on the history of science that used the concept of "paradigms" to describe particular sets of beliefs and theories existing at particular times in the past and present (Kuhn 2012 [1962]). This approach shifted the focus of historians of international thought from political positions to the different methodologies employed by scholars at different stages of the discipline's development, exploring especially how the discipline shifted from "traditionalist," mainly historical approaches, to "scientific" methods (Banks 1984; Holsti 1985; Smith 1987).

In the 1990s, both of these approaches—the first that relied on using "traditions" and the second that relied on "paradigms"—came under increased scrutiny. A new wave of historians of the field argued that neither were ideal for explaining its evolution and the nature of the thought of particular thinkers. Some of this new group were inspired by the work of Quentin Skinner, John Pocock, and the wider "Cambridge School" of the history of political thought (see Pocock 1971; Skinner 2002; Tully 1988). They argued that the

use of “traditions” and “paradigms” risked anachronistic readings of past texts and insisted that they be set aside in favor of painstaking reconstructions of the political languages of the periods in which texts were written that then formed the basis for accounts of the intentions of a text and its author (Bell 2001, 2009a; cf. Bevir 2011). Using this approach, David Armitage, Duncan Bell, Tim Dunne, Jonathan Haslam, Casper Sylvest, and a number of others provided a series of reinterpretations of past international thought (see Armitage 2012; Bell 2009b; Dunne 1997, Haslam 2002; Sylvest 2009; cf. Holden 2002).

Alongside the contextualists, two other groups also argued that inherited approaches to the history of international thought were flawed, and offered alternatives. First, drawing on the work of Gunnell in particular, one group advocated the writing of what they called “internal discursive” histories of disciplines, focusing on debate among mostly university-based scholars with regard to key concepts. They argued that the key debate in IR concerned the concept of “anarchy,” and that the best disciplinary history should focus on the discourse about that idea (Schmidt 1994, 1998, 2002). Second, another group advocated a range of approaches drawing upon critical theoretical and postmodern philosophies of history. This group drew mainly on Michel Foucault, but also on a number of other historians and thinkers, and generated a significant body of work on Anglo-American and other theorists and practitioners in IR (see, e.g., Cavallar 2002; Der Derian 1987; Molloy 2006; Odysseos and Petito 2007; Scheurman 2011, Vigneswaran and Quirk 2010).

These differences over the best approach to the history of international thought remain unresolved—or, to put it more positively, remain in a state of creative flux. The chapters in this volume reflect that situation: all display consciousness of the weaknesses of earlier epic histories and the need to avoid anachronism, in particular, in the interpretation of past texts, but they also push and pull the newer approaches in different directions. Some—including those by Leonie Holthaus and Ian Hall—employ versions of Mark Bevir’s modified contextualism, bringing the concept of “traditions” back into their approaches (see also Bevir 1999; Hall 2012). This work is predicated on the argument that the concept of “tradition” is an essential tool for historians of thought, allowing them to evaluate the intellectual inheritances of thinkers and the evolution of their own

thinking as it draws upon, modifies, and rejects elements of those inheritances (see Bevir and Hall 2014). Others take a more orthodox contextualist approach, including the chapter by Or Rosenboim, or utilize elements of the other approaches that have emerged in the last 20 years.

Altogether, they move beyond older, somewhat stale, understandings of “realism” and “idealism” as traditions and devices for explaining the development of international thought. Instead, they explore new traditions—notably, the radical and the reactionary—and intellectual genealogies that connect international thought to areas of political thought, geography, sociology, and philosophy, as well as political practice.

Radicals

Notoriously difficult to define, radicalism has, nonetheless, played a central role in shaping both Anglophone and non-Anglophone thinking about international relations in the past century. For that reason alone, it demands much more attention from historians of international thought than it has hitherto received (but see Sylvest 2014), as well as an attempt at identifying some common features of radical thought.

One helpful starting point in that journey is provided by A. J. P. Taylor, whose book *The Trouble Makers: Dissent over Foreign Policy, 1792–1939* (1957) remains one of the few major studies of the English radical tradition and the approaches of its various adherents to international relations. Taylor argued that the thought of English radicals was marked by four common traits. First, they were not merely contemptuous of those in authority, they were also acutely skeptical of the concept of authority itself. Second, they were straightforwardly hostile to what Thomas Paine called “kingcraft” and “priestcraft”—to the offices of monarchy and clergy that they believe corrupt the holders and to the means by which those offices are sustained. Third, they are sensitive to the influence of so-called “sinister” or “special interests” in politics and in society more broadly, particularly to the influence of minority constituencies—like aristocracies or corporate elites—with disproportionate power or wealth, whose interests clash with the general will of the demos. Last but not least, they believe in limited government, coming close to anti-government anarchism

or libertarianism, believing that governments corrupt rulers and the ruled, and convinced of the virtue of uncorrupted human nature.

Four chapters in the book address the work of thinkers that inherited the intellectual legacies of the radical tradition, whose ideas were shaped by it, or who accepted, modified, or rejected aspects of radicalism, or ran in parallel to its core ideas. Or Rosenboim's chapter (2) is a study of the latter, of the work of Italian socialist Cesare Battisti, and, in particular, of his interpretation of the German doyen of geopolitics, Friedrich Ratzel. Rosenboim argues that Battisti considered a sound comprehension of geopolitics as central to the project of establishing democratic socialism in Trentino, and in Italy more broadly—or, as Rosenboim puts it, “a body of knowledge in the service of socio-economic and political progress.”

Lucian Ashworth's chapter (4) explores the evolving, keenly debated positions taken by figures associated with the British Labour Party in the interwar period. As he demonstrates, some of these figures saw themselves, as did Taylor, as inheritors of the radical tradition and with the tradition of Liberal dissent. But others found the radical inheritance wanting, and turned to socialist concepts and arguments derived from Karl Marx and other continental thinkers as well as from the British socialist tradition. They departed from the radical tradition in envisaging stronger and broader roles for the state in reforming international relations as well as domestic societies, albeit, for most, only in the short to medium term. They clashed over the role of that great liberal institution—the interwar League of Nations—with some seeing it as a mere pawn of special interests, especially those of global capital. Moreover, they agonized over the role of force in international relations, some striking straightforwardly pacifist positions, as some radicals had earlier done, and some taking a more indulgent line, conceiving circumstances in which violence might have to be used by states in the settlement of disputes.

Leonie Holthaus, in her chapter (6), turns to the ways in which British radicals interpreted German thinking and political practice from the period prior to the First World War into the 1940s. She focuses particularly on a series of influential thinkers whose work was shaped by radical and, sometimes, socialist ideas—including Leonard Hobhouse, Goldsworthy Lowes Dickinson, Norman Angell, and E. H. Carr—and who sought to grapple with the peculiarities, as

they saw it, of “Prussianism” and the “German theory of the state.” Holthaus shows how these thinkers, when faced by the “dilemmas” posed by German ideas and practices, drew upon, changed, and even abandoned radical theories of international relations, variously seeking to shore up the tradition or to replace it, as in Carr’s case, with what he perceived to be a more robust approach to the study of international relations.

Ian Hall’s chapter (9) examines the work of a thinker and practitioner—from a quite different context—who was, nonetheless, another inheritor of the English radical tradition: V. K. Krishna Menon. Having read widely in English political thought at school and then at university in India, Menon was first attracted to the unusual radical and socialist ideas of the theosophist and campaigner for Indian Home Rule Annie Besant, and then steeped in interwar radical and socialist ideas by his teacher and mentor at the London School of Economics, Harold Laski. Menon put what he gleaned from this tradition to work: first, in framing his arguments for Indian independence and, then, in shaping his approach to diplomacy and international relations as India’s first High Commissioner to the United Kingdom and, for much of the 1950s, its representative at the United Nations. Like Mohandas Gandhi and Jawaharlal Nehru, Menon’s international thought demonstrates the ways in which Anglophone ideas were transmitted and translated into non-Western contexts for non-Western uses. Moreover, Menon’s case demonstrates the persistent appeal of the radical tradition beyond the West, where it is offered as a means of anticolonial and postcolonial resistance to Western dominance in international society.

Reactionaries

By its very nature, because it is reactive, responding to the theories and practices of others, reactionary thinking is arguably even harder to define than radical thought. It can look backward to an idealized past or forward to an idealized future. It can be near-anarchist and strongly statist, but it generally shares some core features with realist thinking—especially in its emphasis on the centrality of power and violence in politics, and in international relations in particular. Most of the reactionaries considered here are nationalists, of one sort or another, and some held views that bordered on straightforward conservatism.