Catherine H. Zuckert, ed.
Political Philosophy in the Twentieth Century: Authors and Arguments.
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This collection of essays provides an overview of the work and lives of eighteen thinkers who made significant contributions to the development of political philosophy in the last century. The first part discusses liberal John Dewey, conservative Carl Schmitt, and communist Antonio Gramsci, outlining the major ideological alternatives available in the first few decades of the century. The next part covers Leo Strauss, Eric Voegelin, Yves Simon and Hannah Arendt, representing the 'émigré responses to World War II.' It is followed by a third and longest part devoted to the postwar revival of 'liberalism' broadly conceived, encompassing conservative Friedrich Hayek and Michael Oakeshott, centrist Isaiah Berlin and H. L. A. Hart, and left-leaning John Rawls and Richard Rorty. The concluding part discusses internally diverse voices of dissent against this hegemonic group of thinkers, covering both liberalism's sympathetic critics (Jürgen Habermas and Charles Taylor) and more uncompromising challengers (Jean-Paul Sartre, Michel Foucault, and Alasdair MacIntyre).

The editor Catherine Zuckert assembles an impressive cast of contributors and does a fine job of quality control. The book maintains an overall high standard and includes particularly good chapters by Joseph Buttigieg on Gramsci, Dana Villa on Arendt, Michael Bacon on Rorty, and Arthur Madigan on MacIntyre. An excellent introduction to the field, this edited volume is more comprehensive than single-authored books of similar orientation such as Michael Lessnoff's *Political Philosophers of the Twentieth Century* (Blackwell 1999); and it is more accessible than the encyclopaedic *Cambridge History of Twentieth-Century Political Thought* (edited by T. Ball and R. Bellamy, Cambridge University Press 2003). Also, the author-by-author approach of Zuckert's volume nicely complements the growing literature on the intersection of intellectual history and political history, such as Jan Werner-Müller's *Contesting Democracy: Political Ideas in Twentieth-Century Europe* (Yale University Press 2011).

Political Philosophy in the Twentieth Century does not exactly form a seamless whole and ought in a sense to be read as a collection of independent essays. For example, while Strauss and Simon are discussed in the part entitled 'émigré responses to World War II', the relevant chapters scarcely consider Strauss's and Simon's work in those terms. John Finnis's chapter on Hart sits even more oddly in the volume. Finnis's criticism of Hart's work is so severe that those who have no prior knowledge would wonder why Hart, whose work and popularity in Finnis's view epitomise the social and cultural 'decay' that Europe and Britain went through in the preceding century, should be included in the volume in the first place (182–183). In addition, consistency should have been observed in the chapters' suggestions for further reading. Provided that the book is meant to be used as a university textbook, each chapter should list a selection of the most important primary and secondary sources.

Despite these minor problems and oddities, the book is undoubtedly more than the sum of its parts. Its central message, which clearly emerges in Zuckert's lucid introductory essay, is an attack on a diminishing myth about the history of political philosophy in the last six decades or so: that the discipline was 'dead' in the 1950s and 1960s and 'resurged' in 1971 with the publication of John Rawls's *A Theory of Justice*. This myth still keeps reproducing itself, not least because it appears in popular textbooks such as Adam Swift's *Political Philosophy: A Beginners' Guide for Students and Politicians* (Polity Press 2006) and Will Kymlicka's *Contemporary Political Philosophy: An Introduction* (Oxford University Press 2001). Of course, a number of scholars have argued that the quarter-century following the end of World War II was in fact a fertile period for political philosophy, and that it came to be considered 'dead' because most of the then influential thinkers neither did conform nor had to conform to the currently conventional analytic and normative style of theorising. However, this argument has often been unsupported by an actual demonstration of the substance of the purportedly 'rich' twentieth-century work. It is this omission that Zuckert's edited volume collectively corrects with brilliant success.

As the volume conveys a degree of anti-Rawlsian message in this way, it is regrettable that Paul Weithman's chapter on Rawls is arguably the weakest one. This is by no means due to Weithman's lack of enthusiasm. On the contrary, disagreeing with Zuckert's verdict, he expresses his doubt that anyone discussed in the book is 'a greater philosopher' or 'a better person than John Rawls' (197). These claims, however, are hardly substantiated in Weithman's chapter, which makes various 'tentative and highly speculative' remarks on Rawls's motivations for constructing his theory of justice, while offering a highly incomplete discussion of the theory itself (194).

Most of the contributors are based in the United States and the book registers certain geographical biases. It unequivocally follows the West-centric convention of the discipline and does not, unlike *The Cambridge History of Twentieth-Century Political Thought*, devote even a small section to political ideas outside the West. Another and more peculiar bias is the treatment of émigré scholars. While a sound decision is made to devote one part to the émigré contribution, that part excludes those who found home *outside* the United States. We thus find Isaiah Berlin not in the 'émigré responses' but in the 'revival of liberalism' category, though his whole work may be seen as a response to Europe's twentieth-century disasters that he glimpsed in Russia before migrating to England in 1921. We likewise find Hayek – a naturalised British citizen born and educated in Vienna – in the 'liberalism' category, while his influential political work was in an important way a reaction to what he regarded as the general tendencies towards central planning that spread beyond the Axis-Allies divide in the 1930s and 1940s. Karl Popper, another renowned émigré philosopher in England from Vienna, is not only excluded from the volume but is not even mentioned as one of the 'other authors who could and perhaps should have been included' (15).

Of course, as Zuckert acknowledges, the task of compiling a list of the greatest twentieth-century political philosophers necessarily entails a degree of arbitrary exclusion. This fact by no means indicates the book's weakness. On the contrary, it testifies to Zuckert's view about the vigour of the discipline during the last century. That said, the only serious omission to my mind is that of Max Weber, whose political thought falls into none of the major early twentieth-

century alternatives represented by Dewey, Schmitt, and Gramsci. While one may disagree with Lessnoff's strong claim (*Political Philosophers of the Twentieth Century*, 2) that Weber's work 'above all others' identifies crucial twentieth-century problems and the underlying social and cultural trends, it is difficult to deny that some of Weber's key ideas repeatedly emerge in a number of subsequent thinkers' work in several distinct ways. For example, Weber's deep ambivalence towards modernity recurs in the work of Arendt, Foucault, Habermas, and MacIntyre; and his notion of 'the wars of gods' resurges, albeit in less existentialist forms, in both Berlin's value pluralist liberalism and Rawls's political liberalism. These themes are in fact extensively discussed in recent work, especially in Keith Breen's *Under Weber's Shadows: Modernity, Subjectivity and Politics in Habermas, Arendt and MacIntyre* (Ashgate 2012) and Peter Lassman's *Pluralism* (Polity Press 2011). There is something to the view that twentieth-century political philosophy developed in a largely Weberian paradigm.

Finally, there is one important set of questions that has not been addressed in Zuckert's edited volume or, to my knowledge, in any other work: how did the myth of 'the death of political theory' emerge in the first place? Did it emerge immediately after the publication of *A Theory of Justice*, whose rigour, boldness (so bold that Rawls himself could not keep up with it in his later years), and architectonic quality made postwar work look vastly inferior in comparison? Or did the myth emerge later, perhaps in the 1980s, when the liberal-communitarian debate became the focal centre of professional interest, such that the more de-centralised form of scholarship characterising the previous period began to look like an anomaly? In other words, did mid-twentieth-century political philosophy actually die in the 1950s, or was it retroactively killed amid the hyperinflation of the post-Rawlsian development? And what are we to make of the common reference to Berlin's 1961 essay 'Does Political Theory Still Exist?' to allegedly support the 'death' thesis – while Berlin's argument is precisely that to postulate 'ages without political philosophy' is 'an absurd notion'?

These and other relevant questions ought to be answered one day. A genealogical study must be conducted to explain how the myth of 'the death of political philosophy' was *born*. In the meantime, Zuckert's volume deserves a wide readership to help us acquire a better sense of the discipline's past, keeping the post-Rawlsian achievement in perspective.

Kei Hiruta
University of Oxford