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Nicholas Stargardt. *The German Idea of Militarism: Radical and Socialist Critics 1866-1914.* Cambridge England: Cambridge University Press, 1994. xiv + 232 pp. $59.95 (cloth), ISBN 978-0-521-42010-5; $37.99 (paper), ISBN 978-0-521-46692-9.

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It is altogether appropriate that a study of militarism in Imperial Germany would begin with a discussion of the "Captain of Koepenick" incident made famous by Carl Zuckmayer's play of the same name. It is also not surprising that such a study would conclude with the fateful decision by the Social Democratic Party's Reichstag caucus to vote for war credits on 3 August 1914. Yet Professor Nicholas Stargardt aims at far more than a reiteration of well-worn themes concerning Wilhelmine militarism on the one hand and the consequences of the SPD's "negative integration" on the other. Mainly he hopes to present, by closely examining the challenges posed by militarism, a more nuanced and open-ended history of the SPD's attitude toward war than the standard argument that the war credit vote was an inevitable result of a long, steady, and irreversible process of accommodation to mainstream German values.

Stargardt divides his book into two main parts. In the first, he shows how the newly created SPD inherited the radical democratic critique of absolutist military institutions. Though allowing for national defense, the SPD argued that a citizens' militia, and not a professional army, would best provide it. Such a militia would also foster democracy at home and avoid the need for crushing, regressive taxes while supposedly providing greater military efficiency. The author also takes pains to note how early and how deeply Russophobia pervaded the SPD. Long before Bethmann Hollweg shrewdly exploited such fears in the summer of 1914, the SPD from the leadership downward was susceptible to arguments about the need to defend the Fatherland from the "Cossacks."

The Socialist leadership sought to integrate this older anti-militarism with the Marxism that became party doctrine after the Erfurt Party Congress of 1891. Orthodox Marxism, says Stargardt, could never create an adequate theory of militarism; it tended to relegate it, like imperialism, to a secondary result of the primary concern - the impending crisis of capitalism. One consequence of the subordination of the anti-militarist critique to the theory of crisis was the inability to develop policies to combat German society's growing militarist mood. Policy, such as it was, continued past strategies: the widening of party strongholds; the avoidance of any provocation that could trigger a government-launched *Staatsstreich*; and the wait for capitalism's collapse, which the "reddening" of the conscript army in the industrial age would allegedly hasten. Stargardt concludes the first part of the book with an examination of how Karl Kautsky, the party's chief theoretician after 1891, was forced on the eve of war to question these assumptions. Kautsky concluded that militarism was in fact a political choice, not an inevitable result of a certain stage of capitalism.

Kautsky's reevalutation foreshadows the book's second part, which explores how the synthesis between orthodox Marxism and the radical democratic anti-absolutist critique collapsed in the years just prior to 1914. The disastrous 1907 elections, mounting evidence of right-wing pressure group success in mobilizing public opinion toward an aggressive foreign policy, and growing doubt in Marxist crisis theory all compelled socialist intellectuals to rethink their analysis of militarism. Stargardt gives pride of place to the evolution in Karl Liebknecht's ideas. Liebknecht's concern with militarism's psychological roots led him to reject the idea that class was the only social relationship that mattered in the analysis of domination and oppression. Thus, rather than passively relying on the "reddening" of the army, a phenomenon which showed no clear signs of transpiring, Liebknecht supported an active campaign of pacifist proselytizing among army recruits.

Although it shied from the confrontation Liebknecht had in mind, the SPD did embrace an active pacifist strategy starting with the Second Moroccan Crisis. As Stargardt usefully reminds us, the peace demonstrations staged by the SPD in 1911 and 1912 were "the biggest gatherings ever organized by the pre- war SPD" (133). Of course Stargardt also reminds the reader that the peace campaign collapsed rapidly after 1913, owing partly to overconfidence that it had indeed defused international tension. In addition, Russophobia remained prevalent among socialists, and the author places most of the blame for the war credit vote on this trend.

At times the discussion is rough sledding thanks to somewhat wearisome circumlocution and to unclear references. The treatment of Liebknecht's contributions to the social psychology of militarism, for example, is disappointedly vague. The only psychological concepts mentioned in this connection are "mass hypnosis" and "mass pyschosis," and these phrases illuminate very little. The author also seems occasionally to measure his subjects' ideas against a universal theory of militarism that could explain all of its multiple aspects. Compared with such an ideal standard, the theories of Kautsky, Liebknecht, and others naturally fall short, or as Stargardt is perhaps overly fond of saying, there is "slippage" - as if somehow social theories could be tightened like nuts or screws. These criticisms, however, are minor. Stargardt has written a very solid monograph on an important topic, filled with useful and even surprising information. The book will be welcome to specialists, and though it is too demanding to be used at the undergraduate level, it is quite appropriate for graduate seminars.

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