

As much as Ingram deftly communicates these diverse discourses traversed by Habermas, they remain very much ensconced within the Western tradition. Although it is implicit in Ingram's discussion of Habermas's consideration of multiculturalism, immigration, human rights, and global democracy, this text never makes explicit where Habermas stands *vis-à-vis* non-Western discourses in the manner of comparative political theory. The type of integration of Western and non-Western ideas that characterizes for instance Sen's *The Idea of Justice* (Harvard University Press, 2009) simply is not found in Ingram's text. Especially given the growing number of discourses that are characterizing twenty-first-century politics, Ingram needs to discuss—perhaps in a subsequent work—whether Habermas's discursive rationality includes and engages these non-Western contributions in a way that does not privilege the Western heritage. Exploring the basis on which people of diverse cultural heritages can even begin to engage in equal discourse is certainly germane to Habermas's discursive project, yet it remains undeveloped in this text.

Overall, this text is primarily directed at graduate students and professors of philosophy, political theory, social theory, and law. Not unlike Habermas's arguments, Ingram's presentation can be quite dense. Still, contemporary political theorists will find Ingram's constructive criticisms provocative. For those less initiated in Habermas's ideas, this volume integrates the different stages of his work as well as his positions on democratic participation and policy.

—John Francis Burke

THE MOVEMENT IN ITS PHASES

Justin Vaïsse: *Neoconservatism: The Biography of a Movement*. Translated by Arthur Goldhammer. (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2010. Pp. 366. \$35.00.)

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I can already hear the groan, “Not another book on neoconservatism!” And though the groan is not unjustified—there have been many books devoted to telling the story of neoconservatism and its baleful influence on American foreign policy—I think it should be suppressed in the case of Justin Vaïsse's new book, which manages to be more comprehensive, balanced, and dispassionate than any other book on neoconservatism so far. Vaïsse, a Frenchman who currently serves as a foreign policy expert at

the Brookings Institution, introduces his “biography” by revisiting a speech delivered by George W. Bush at the American Enterprise Institute on 26 February 2003, less than one month before the invasion of Iraq. In this speech, Bush sounded a number of neoconservative themes—the danger of appeasing tyrants, the transformative power of democracy, and the universal appeal of democracy—all of which proved to be seriously misguided in relation to Iraq, according to Vaisse. The failure of Bush's policy in Iraq, he argues, can be understood as the failure of neoconservatism, or more precisely “of a certain version of neoconservatism” (3). The last clause suggests the main argument of Vaisse's book: namely, that the version of neoconservatism that received expression in Bush's 2003 speech had nothing to do with the original neoconservatism of the 1960s, which focused on domestic issues and was staunchly anti-ideological.

How did neoconservatism mutate from the original, nonideological version associated with Irving Kristol to the highly ideological version associated with his son William Kristol? This is the question Vaisse's book seeks to answer, and it does so by distinguishing three different phases or “ages” of neoconservatism. The first age revolved around the figures of Irving Kristol, Daniel Bell, Nathan Glazer, Daniel Patrick Moynihan, and Norman Podhoretz, and around publications such as *The Public Interest* and *Commentary*. The story of this first age of neoconservatism is one that has been often told, going all the way back to Peter Steinfels's seminal 1979 account in *The Neoconservatives: The Men Who Are Changing America's Politics*. Vaisse tells the story well, from the Trotskyist alcoves at City College through the anticommunist liberalism of the 1940s and 1950s, the creation of organizations such as the Americans for Democratic Action and the Congress for Cultural Freedom, the rise of the New Left, the reaction against the hedonism of the sixties, and the founding of *The Public Interest* by Bell and Kristol in 1965, but overfamiliarity makes even his well-researched narrative a bit stale. The large point is that the neoconservatism of the first age was born of reaction against the kind of liberalism embodied in Lyndon Johnson's Great Society and the counterculture of the sixties. Against the former, neoconservatives developed a subtle critique of state intervention and social engineering; against the individualism and hedonism of the latter, they insisted on the importance of moral foundations and civic virtue to the health of a liberal democracy.

In contrast to the first age, the neoconservatism of the second age was dominated by foreign policy concerns. Vaisse devotes considerable attention to this phase in the evolution of neoconservatism, which he dates from the founding of the Coalition for a Democratic Majority (CDM) in the immediate aftermath of George McGovern's crushing electoral defeat in 1972. The CDM's manifesto, “Come Home, Democrats,” written by Norman Podhoretz, Midge Decter, and Jeanne Kirkpatrick, urged Democrats to reject the isolationist foreign policy of McGovern and the New Left and to return to the party's core principles of containing communism and defending America's role in

the world. Senator Scoop Jackson, whose staff included Richard Perle, Paul Wolfowitz, and Elliot Abrams, became the political standard-bearer of this group of hawkish Democrats, who were opposed not only to McGovernite isolationism but also to Henry Kissinger's policy of détente under Presidents Nixon and Ford. Jackson was the CDM's favored candidate for the Democratic nomination in 1976, but he lost to Jimmy Carter. Immediately after Carter's election, a new and even more hawkish group formed, the Committee on the Present Danger (CPD), under the leadership of Eugene Rostow and Paul Nitze. Concerned that the United States was falling behind the Soviet Union in the arms race, this group published numerous alarmist reports that warned about and seriously exaggerated the Soviet threat. Emblematic of the CPD's "astonishing divorce from reality" (202), the last of these reports appeared in 1991, after the fall of the Berlin Wall and the dissolution of the Soviet Union.

The CDM and the CPD became increasingly disillusioned with Carter's accommodationist foreign policy during his term as president, and in 1980 many members—Kirkpatrick, Abrams, and Perle, for example—finally cut the cord with the Democrats and joined the Reagan camp. With respect to the relationship between neoconservatism and Reagan, Vaisse raises two important questions. First, was Reagan's foreign policy from 1981 to 1989 truly neo-conservative? And second, what really brought about the end of the Cold War? Vaisse answers the first question in the negative, pointing to Reagan's evolution from being an ideological hawk to adopting a more pragmatic and compromising position in his second term. This suggests to him that the end of the Cold War was not caused simply by pursuing the neoconservative line in foreign policy. In this regard, Vaisse contrasts Reagan's flexibility with the intransigence of the hawks of the CPD, who seemed "frozen in time" (197).

This brings Vaisse to the third age of neoconservatism, which he dates from the founding of the *Weekly Standard* in 1995 by William Kristol. This age differed from the second in that it confronted a changed international situation in which the Soviet threat had disappeared and the United States constituted the sole remaining superpower. Also, the neoconservatives of this age—Kristol and Robert Kagan chief among them—were not former radicals, liberals, or even Democrats but original and unambiguous conservatives. According to Vaisse, the distinctive feature of the neoconservatism of the third age was its belief not merely in the defense of democracy but in the active promotion of democracy around the world. After September 11, 2001, this belief led to the central pillar of the Bush Doctrine—that the solution to the problem of Islamist terrorism lay in the spreading of democracy to the Middle East—and eventually to the war in Iraq. It is here that Vaisse's tone, which up to this point in the book had been quite neutral, becomes sharply critical. He characterizes the errors of third-age neoconservatives that came to sight in the Iraq War as a combination of wishful idealism, naïveté, arrogance, and (anathema to their hero Albert Wohlstetter) "intellectual laziness" (262).

It is a devastating indictment, and one not easily dismissed, given the thoroughness, scrupulousness, and even-handedness of Vaisse's analysis. Francis Fukuyama, himself a recovering neoconservative, provides a fitting encomium on the back of the book: "Sometimes we need a non-American to see American politics in a proper perspective." And one from "old Europe" at that.

–Paul Franco

THE FRACTIOUS COALITION

George H. Nash: *Reappraising the Right: The Past and Future of American Conservatism*. (Wilmington, DE: ISI Books, 2009. Pp. xix, 446. \$27.95.)

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Conservatives and historians of conservatism should be grateful to George Nash whenever he shares his bountiful wisdom and knowledge with us, for he has studied and cogitated about the history of the American Right, and has had more useful things to say about it than perhaps anyone else. Nothing in this lengthy volume of reviews, speeches, essays, and short articles on the history of American conservatism, despite its at times slightly uneven quality, should change that view. Mr. Nash still has much to teach us.

If there are themes running through this book, they are, first, that even after the 2008 electoral victory of Barack Obama, conservatism in America is not dead. As Nash argues, throughout its history, the Right's opponents have written its obituary many times. They were always wrong before, and they are now. The rise of the so-called Tea Party movement and the rapid growth of conservative opposition to the Obama administration demonstrate this.

Nash's second theme is that the history of conservatism is important for reminding the Right of their heritage, which informs all Americans about the present. Nash does this well. He demonstrates, for example, how Whittaker Chambers's life, especially his deep religious faith and his fears that America was losing its belief in God, echoes the divide many conservatives see between the religious and the secular in American society today, manifested in the angry debates we still see concerning school prayer or abortion.

Nash explains the important role played by conservative intellectuals such as Richard Weaver or Russell Kirk, both in past years and still today. He notes how the different factions of conservatives, be they traditionalists, neoconservatives, or paleoconservatives, wield their ideas as weapons in their