

questions, c'est plutôt vers d'autres ouvrages qu'il faut se tourner, et peut-être aussi vers d'autres auteurs.²

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Notes

- 1 La bible de cette orientation idéologique reste aujourd'hui encore, selon Suleiman (74), l'ouvrage de David Osborne et Ted Gaebler : *Reinventing Government. How the Entrepreneurial Spirit is Transforming the Public Sector*, New-York, Plume, 1992.
- 2 Ainsi, à titre d'exemple et dans une perspective relativement sympathique à l'évolution post-classique : Jacques Chevalier, *Science administrative*, Paris, PUF, 3^e éd. refondue, 2002; *L'État de droit*, Paris, Montchrestien, 3^e éd., 1999, et *L'État post-moderne*, Paris, L.G.D.J., 2^e éd., 2004.

Economics as Ideology: Keynes, Laski, Hayek, and the Creation of Contemporary Politics

Kenneth R. Hoover

Rowman and Littlefield, 2003, pp. xv, 329

Although it was published two years ago, this book remains relevant to many contemporary debates about the optimal relationship between market and state institutions, especially if we want to set these debates within a historical context. To provide an account of the development of economic thinking in the twentieth century, Hoover carefully examines the lives, personalities and writings of three emblematic thinkers: Harold Laski, John Maynard Keynes and Friedrich A. Hayek. The title is somewhat misleading in the sense that it refers to a particular meaning of the term "ideology" that may not be shared by all those who come across this book, but the author justifies it by explaining that he takes ideology to mean a set of a priori contestable propositions that are posed as being unchallengeable or, in other words, have been "decontested." Thus the question he is interested in is: "Why did these thinkers decontest ideas about government and the market in the way they did?" (4).

On the one hand, Hoover treats Laski, Keynes and Hayek as lenses through which one can peer into the ideological constellations of, respectively, democratic socialism, left-of-centre liberalism and neo-liberalism. On the other hand, he is also quite informative about the creative ways in which these original thinkers contributed to the articulation and dissemination of these three paradigms. The relative popularity and pragmatic success of these paradigms has waxed and waned over the years but they continue to inform on-going discussions about the boundaries between, and the proper roles of, market and state institutions.

Laski and Keynes were deeply immersed in the worlds of politics and public administration. Laski played a key part in the rise to power of the Labour party; in fact, Aneurin Bevin, the leader of the left-wing of that party during that era, credited Laski's work in political education as one of the principal causes of Labour's electoral victory in 1945 (201). Hoover also gives a detailed account of Keynes' work at the British Treasury during both world wars. Hayek was more reclusive and less visibly engaged but he certainly stepped outside of the proverbial ivory tower on a number of occasions and in a quite deliberate manner. His role in establishing the Mount Pèlerin Society, which today we would describe as a means of "networking" among like-minded, influential intellectuals, is telling in this regard. While all these facts are well known, Hoover's narrative is filled with interesting and revealing anecdotal stories and erudite observations. (Keynes' rich and complex life offers plenty of such anecdotes but Hoover manages to find much to say about the two other protagonists.) He also manages to recount not only the intellectual exchanges in which these

thinkers took part but also the more personal ties that united (and sometimes divided) these remarkable men.

Although these biographical notes keep the narrative going at a lively pace, the principal merit of the book is the attention that Hoover pays to the complex dialectic between agency and commitment that sustained these thinkers' life works. Each in their own powerfully creative ways, they helped to shape the ideas that so profoundly influenced politics and public policy throughout the twentieth century. Yet, at the same time, their thoughts are marred by certain forms of "intellectual blindness" (xii) that owe much to the ideological choices they made. Hoover also grapples with the difficult question of how to analyze the extent to which unique individuals can guide social or political movements toward new goals while, at the same time, they are themselves motivated by the beliefs that these movements embody. This tension between text and context offers new insights about how each one of these thinkers came to define the political and economic priorities they passionately defended and ended up being identified with.

Hoover manages to be fair to all three thinkers. However, he shows a clear preference for Keynes, whose paradoxical moderation with respect to political economy—paradoxical, that is, because in his private life Keynes showed no penchant for moderation—he finds most prudent and sensible. But perhaps it is no paradox at all because Hoover advances the psychological hypothesis that Keynes had developed a very complex but well-balanced personality that allowed him to navigate skilfully between extremes without having to find peace and comfort in any particular ideological or policy position from which he would never dare to deviate. In a sense, Keynes moved constantly from one challenge to the next, articulating ideas and programmes relevant to each new situation (221–225). Hoover also analyzes the relationship between Laski's rebellious character and his socialist commitment, on the one hand, and explains how Hayek's relentless critique of the power of the administrative state was influenced by two rather traumatic events in his life: the fateful end of the liberal Austrian Empire of his youth followed not much later by Austria's complicity in Nazism, but also his decision to abandon England because he could not be granted a divorce under the restrictive English law of the time. These intriguing analyses could also be the most evident weaknesses in the book had Hoover stated them categorically; he is careful, however, to present them as very tentative hypotheses that find their place in a much broader canvass. It is the complexity of the picture he sketches out that makes Hoover's book worth reading, even if it might in the end leave the reader somewhat confused about what exactly he or she is looking at. Is this a contribution to the history of ideas, to the sociology of political economy, or to developmental psychology?

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American Power and World Order

Christian Reus-Smit

Themes for the 21st Century

Cambridge, UK: Polity Press, 2004, pp. xii, 184

This book begins and ends with analogies between the United States and Rome. The analogies are familiar ones. The remarkable military, economic and technological preponderance of America are acknowledged. The fatal flaws of hubris and "immoderate greatness" are asserted and warned against. In between, Christian Reus-Smit weaves a narrative of decline, in which he attempts to explain why America is unable to exercise international influence commensurate with its material preponderance in the world.