

The Palgrave Macmillan History of International Thought

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Molly Cochran • Cornelia Navari
Editors

Progressivism and US
Foreign Policy
between the World
Wars

palgrave
macmillan

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The Palgrave Macmillan History of International Thought
ISBN 978-1-137-58433-5 ISBN 978-1-137-58432-8 (eBook)
DOI 10.1057/978-1-137-58432-8

Library of Congress Control Number: 2017953555

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Cover illustration: Chronicle / Alamy Stock Photo

Printed on acid-free paper

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The registered company is Nature America Inc.
The registered company address is: 1 New York Plaza, New York, NY 10004, U.S.A.

SERIES EDITOR'S PREFACE

As Editors of the Palgrave Macmillan History of International Thought series, we aim to publish the highest quality research on the intellectual, conceptual, and disciplinary history of international relations (IR). 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 IR. Central to this task is the historical reconstruction and interpretation that recovers the intellectual and social milieu within which their subjects were writing. Volumes have also traced the course of traditions, their shifting grounds, or common questions, exploring heretofore neglected pathways of international theory and providing new insight and refreshed context for established approaches such as realism and liberalism. And the series embraces the historiographical turn that has taken place within academic 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 IR as an academic pursuit. The series is expressly pluralist and as such 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 IR, theory, and history. We take this to mean the appreciation of the importance of the history in the theory of IR, of theory in the history

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

Molly Cochran and Cornelia Navari have gathered together an impressive range of experts to examine the work of a number of contributors to American progressive thought on IR. Progressivism arose in the first half of the twentieth century and remains an important facet of American political and social thinking. In this volume, Cochran and Navari take the history of international thought forward in a number of respects.

First, the book presents the work of many of the most important early American thinkers on IR in a systematic way. Many of the names will be familiar, such as Dewey, Addams, Lasswell, Lippmann, and Morgenthau. These names appear alongside those who would have been well known in their time, such as Elihu Root and Nicholas Murray Butler, and also those whose influence was more behind the scenes, like Leo Pasvolsky.

Second, the book is a complement and important critical antipode to Long and Wilson's Anglo-centric *Thinkers of the 20 Years Crisis*. In the growing field of disciplinary history, the dominance of American thinking has long been recognized, but it has rarely if ever been explicated with such care and attention to its key themes and attendant controversies. We now have a solid basis on which to construct an assessment of the thinking on IR in the Anglosphere in the first half of the twentieth century. Of course, this should make us all eager for more work that goes beyond this range, but this book is a significant step forward in disciplinary history.

Cochran and Navari mostly eschew the realism against utopianism or idealism cliché, though the terms do appear in the text on occasion. And the explicit connection to political thinking in, and about, the domestic situation in the USA is an important supplement to the common IR over-concentration on developments in the international arena. The editors outline a tripartite division among their subjects that serves to organize the volume. There are what one might call traditional progressives who continued to rely on international law and organization and who hoped to see developments in that regard. There are also social progressives who believed that the nature of democratic politics and social factors were critical for the future of international order, refusing to rely merely on the mediation of the interactions of sovereign states. And finally, in Cochran

and Navari's schema, there are the post-progressives, that is, those authors whose progressive ideas or reactions to such ideas took them beyond the pale of their colleagues to arguments that foretold versions of realism and more critical theories of international relations.

There are several fascinating threads that run through the book besides the main theme. We read about responses to the American rise to power and explore different views of world order that emerged and were debated. We see gender, the influence of activist-scholars, and unfortunately also their continuing marginalization in our telling of the history of international theory. There are also lessons in the ways in which scholars, activists, and officials negotiated the policy-academic relationship. And despite the individual focus of the various chapters, the volume as a whole brings to light the mutual influence of these writers and the cross-fertilization of their ideas.

This superb volume opens the door to more research in this area, and as such, it is a welcome addition to the History of International Thought Series. We welcome and encourage further work as we look to broaden and deepen the range of scholarship in the burgeoning field of disciplinary history.

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