Introduction

from Marius S. Ostrowski (ed.), *Eduard Bernstein on Social Democracy and International Politics: Essays and Other Writings* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018)

Eduard Bernstein (1850-1932) is arguably one of the most significant, and unjustly neglected, thinkers of the late-19th and early-20th centuries. A self-taught theorist, sometime journalist, lifelong socialist campaigner, and in later years a parliamentary deputy for the Social-Democratic Party of Germany (SPD), Bernstein rose to prominence first as Friedrich Engels' designated successor as the 'guardian' of the hard-won Marxian hegemony within German socialist thought, and then as the architect of the revisionist tendency within the socialist tradition that—albeit largely unintentionally—brought that same hegemony to an end. It is this theoretical *volte-face* that overwhelmingly defines Bernstein's reputation, since at the time it represented one of the first—and by far the most prominent—new responses to a specific and widely-acknowledged problem within socialism, namely how to deal with the growing gulf that was emerging between the demands of Marxian theory and social-democratic practice towards the end of the 19th century. In light of the failure of the much-heralded imminent collapse of capitalism to materialise, despite the economic depression of the 1870s and 1880s, SPD parliamentarians—who, despite the best efforts of Bismarck's repression, had won representation (however disproportionately meagre) in the Reichstag throughout the Reich's existence—and trade unionists sought to use their positions to achieve more immediate improvements in the conditions of the working class, including increased wages, maximum working hours, more democratic industrial employment laws, and less restrictive enfranchisement.[1] But this was anathema to socialist theory in its Marxian conception, which viewed all such incremental ameliorations as inadequate partial mitigations of the worst effects of capitalism—and poor imitations of bourgeois liberal welfarist and charitable programmes—that merely postponed the moment where these effects would become so extreme as to provoke the socialist revolution that would completely remove them.

Bernstein initially developed what has become known as the 'revisionist' position over the course of the 1890s in a series of articles, notably in the SPD's most important theoretical journal *Die Neue Zeit* under the title 'Problems of Socialism', as an attempt—unprecedented at the time—to overcome this impasse.[2] In comparison, most of Bernstein's contemporaries were content either to entrench resolutely around 'scientific' orthodox Marxian precepts regarding the determinant primacy of economic conditions, the internal contradictions of capitalism, and

[1] Manfred B. Steger, *The Quest for Evolutionary Socialism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), p.72.

[2] See, for instance, Eduard Bernstein, 'The Social and Political Significance of Space and Number', 'Problems of Socialism', 'The Theory of Collapse and Colonial Policy', and 'A Statement', in Henry Tudor and J.M. Tudor (eds.), *Marxism and Social Democracy: The Revisionist Debate, 1896-1898* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), pp.83-107, 159-70, 191-3.

the need for social revolution led by the proletarian class to bring about a transition to socialism—such as Bernstein's long-time colleague and sparring-partner Karl Kautsky, or his most acerbic critic Rosa Luxemburg—or quietly abandon all but the most outward commitment to the conceptual niceties of a calcified and decreasingly relevant Marxism in favour of a more pragmatic, even *anti*-theoretical approach to solving immediately pressing questions of the working class, especially on issues of cooperating with other parties and ideologies—such as the so-called SPD (and trade unionist) *Praktiker*, including luminaries of the later Weimar-era party like Friedrich Ebert, Philipp Scheidemann, Otto Landsberg, and Hermann Müller. In other words, although they too recognised the problem, they were content to let it lie. Bernstein, however, uniquely sought to bridge the theory-practice divide. In *Die Voraussetzungen des Sozialismus* (*The Preconditions of Socialism*), easily his best-known work, in which he summarised and elaborated his emergent revisionist position, Bernstein argued that socialism should steer away from what he perceived as the traps of Hegelian dialectics—especially its stubborn historicism and naïve eschatology—and towards a greater appreciation of a Kantian ethical framework of rights, justice, and humanity, which also meant a greater preparedness to learn from liberal strands of thought, especially in its then-emerging social liberal form.[3] On this basis, Bernstein suggested that socialists embrace parliamentary reformism not merely on an instrumental basis—i.e., as a mechanism to elevate class consciousness, or an incidental prelude to more comprehensive social revolution, characterised by a strategy of oppositional, isolationist *attentisme*—but as a significant political good in its own right.[4]

Ultimately, Bernstein's attempt to reunite socialist theory and practice proved unsuccessful, and the growing gulf finally culminated in a series of acrimonious fragmentations of the German (and wider European) socialist left in the late 1910s and 1920s—with Bernstein himself at the very centre of these fragmentations. Nevertheless, he never wavered in his commitment to the revisionist position he had carved out in *Preconditions*, and he spent the last three decades of his life defending and elaborating his ideas in parliamentary speeches, journal and newspaper articles, private correspondence, and a number of published works, including those presented here. Revisionist socialism itself came to be regarded only by a small and relatively powerless minority of Bernstein's contemporaries as a long-overdue update to orthodox Marxian analysis—perhaps most prominently Eduard Heimann, Hermann Heller, Leonard Nelson, Hendrik de Man, and Emil Lederer—although he also found a few allies among the SPD *Praktiker*—including Eduard David, Konrad Schmidt, Wolfgang Heine, and Heinrich Peus.[5] Instead, the overwhelming majority either condemned his views as the most supreme betrayal of the life's work of 'the founders', or seized on his challenge to the Marxian doctrinal monolith to catalyse a far more comprehensive shedding of socialist theoretical commitments than Bernstein had ever envisaged. Overall, the result of this was that, in his lifetime, Bernstein was easily one of the best-known figures within European socialist

[3] Eduard Bernstein, *The Preconditions of Socialism*, Henry Tudor (ed.) (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993). On social liberalism see, for instance, Leonard T. Hobhouse, *Liberalism* (London: Williams and Norgate, 1911); John A. Hobson, *The Crisis of Liberalism: New Issues of Democracy* (London: P.S. King & Son, 1909). [4] [Present volume, pp.TBC.] Bernstein 1993, pp.33ff, 145ff; Steger 1997, p.73. [5] See Thomas Meyer, 'Elemente einer Gesamttheorie des Demokratischen Sozialismus und Hinderung ihrer Durchsetzung in der Weimarer Republik', in Horst Heimann and Thomas Meyer (eds.), *Reformsozialismus und Sozialdemokratie* (Berlin: Dietz, 1982), pp.413-40; Steger 1997, p.83.

politics, but also at the same time one of the most-misunderstood and most-maligned. In the wake of the revisionist controversy within Marxian thought for which he is undoubtedly best known, his ideas were the subject of several successive SPD party congresses—at Stuttgart in 1898, Hannover in 1899, Lübeck in 1901, and Dresden in 1903—and later he was influential, even instrumental, in the drafting of the SPD's noticeably revisionist 1921 Görlitz Programme.[6] Yet paradoxically, Bernstein's record in influencing social-democratic thought and practice, unrivalled except for Karl Marx, Friedrich Engels, and Ferdinand Lassalle, fell quickly into unrecognition. The Görlitz Programme was soon replaced by the far more orthodox 1925 Heidelberg Programme, and by the time this one came to be succeeded by the 1959 Bad Godesberg Programme, Bernstein's legacy was so forgotten that only a few social-democratic intellectuals such as Carlo Schmid and Bruno Kreisky remained aware of the intimate connection between his revisionism and reformism and the SPD's final rejection of Marxian socialism.[7] Now, especially outside the German-speaking world, Bernstein's name rarely meets with acknowledgment even in academic circles, and even when it does, it is usually only in passing within the somewhat confined context of debates over the core tenets of Marxian theory, typically with overtones of either disparaging hostility, or the superficial interest generally reserved for historical curios.

Although it is difficult to pin down a clear reason for this dramatic decline in Bernstein's fame, there are some clues to be found within the conventional wisdom surrounding his life and work. Firstly, the conventional wisdom is that Bernstein was a man caught between the extremes of his time. As a practice-oriented revisionist, he is deemed no longer Marxist enough to count as a serious contributor to the Marxian tradition of thought or strategy on the same level as Antonio Gramsci, Vladimir Lenin, György Lukács, and the various critical theorists of the Frankfurt School. Yet he is also seen as still too Marxist to count as having instigated a new and innovative ethical, liberal-leaning strand within wider socialist thought, as compared to the Fabians, G.D.H. Cole, John Neville Figgis, Harold Laski, the Pankhursts, or John Maynard Keynes. Meanwhile, as an active politician, journalist, and campaigner, Bernstein is perceived as no longer theoretically-minded enough to count as one of the greats of high-calibre socialist thought, on the level of Kautsky, Luxemburg, Rudolf Hilferding, or Georgi Plekhanov. But he is also still considered too cerebral and philosophical to have been an effective propagandist, public speaker, or party strategist of the stature of August Bebel, Wilhelm and Karl Liebknecht, Hugo Haase, Wilhelm Pieck, or Ernst Thälmann. In short, neither Bernstein's theoretical nor his practical positions are held to be as original or distinctive as those of many of the other leading figures in socialist history and in the socialist canon. Instead of bridging the theory-practice divide that had plagued the SPD for decades, Bernstein was thus caught squarely in the middle of it. Along with Haase, Kautsky, and many of his fellow-members of the short-lived Independent Social-Democratic Party of Germany (USPD), Bernstein found himself 'between the chairs': simultaneously too reformist and parliamentarist for the Spartacist left, which later split off from the USPD into

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[6] Steger 1997, pp.83-5, 155, 168, 226-9.

[7] Helmut Hirsch, preface to Eduard Bernstein, *Ein revisionistisches Sozialismusbild: Drei Vorträge* (Berlin and Bonn-Bad Godesberg, 1978), p.13; David W. Morgan, 'The Father of Revisionism Revisited: Eduard Bernstein', *The Journal of Modern History* 51(3) (1979), pp.525-32; Dieter Wild, Erich Böhme, and Bruno Kreisky, 'Bei uns gehen die Uhren anders', *Der Spiegel*, 4 April 1983.

the communist KPD, and too Marxist and partisan for the *Praktiker* right, which remained the dominant 'majority faction' within the SPD.

Secondly, the other part of the conventional wisdom about Bernstein is that his theoretical life and most salient contribution, such as it was, began and ended with his gradual exposition of the revisionist position over the course of the 1890s, and that he added little of substance to his position between then and his death. Instead, the overwhelmingly dominant view of Bernstein's later life is that of a moderately popular and successful elected politician who successfully weathered the storms of late-Wilhelmine and Weimar politics—a not insignificant achievement in light of the several current and former party comrades who were the attempted targets or actual victims of assassination attempts, including the younger Liebknecht, Luxemburg, Haase, and Scheidemann, as well as several leftist colleagues such as Kurt Eisner and Eugen Leviné. Sure enough, Bernstein crowned his long political career with the office of Assistant Secretary to the Reich Treasury (*Reichschatzamt*) in the Council of the People's Deputies (*Rat der Volksbeauftragten*), the SPD-USPD coalition that acted as the *de facto* provisional government of Germany during the early stages of the 1918-19 German Revolution. After rejoining the SPD in 1919, he enjoyed the position of a moderately revered 'elder statesman' in the fledgling German republic until his death. At the same time, he kept up his work as a writer, especially during and immediately after WW1, publishing articles and books in quick succession on issues in socialist economic theory, such as the socialisation of industries and 'mixed economy' models, the early history of the Weimar Republic, and his memoirs from his years in exile.[8] In these, he consciously sought to defend his revisionist position and apply it piecemeal to specific social problems and conditions as and when he saw them present themselves to the socialist movement. He even revisited the question of the theory and practice of socialist reformism in a series of lectures, compiled under the title *Sozialismus Einst und Jetzt* (*Socialism Past and Present*), as well as a revised and expanded second edition of *Preconditions*, both published in 1921—although neither of these statements of his "mature" revisionism provoked anything near the level of interest (or vitriol) conferred on his earlier revisionist texts.[9] Despite these late efforts, his position is not seen as comprehensive, well-developed, or rich enough to act as the foundation for an ideological strand within left thought. There is—and, in the view of the conventional wisdom, there will forever be—no possible or credible ideological strand of 'Bernsteinism' within (or even outside) Marxism, as compared to the various rich seams of Luxemburgism, Leninism, Trotskyism, or Maoism that have emerged over the last century.

While there is a degree of truth in both parts of this conventional wisdom, they have become so embedded as tropes within the reception of Bernstein that they have fed a systematic underestimation of his capacities as a socialist theorist. Furthermore, they obscure the fertile radical potential of the project of an independent social-democratic theory that he introduced—that is, a line of ideological thinking that consciously sought to navigate the treacherous terrain at the intersection of 'pure' socialist thought and 'messy' SPD party practice. Consequently,

[8] Eduard Bernstein, *Aus den Jahren meines Exils: Erinnerungen eines Sozialisten* (Berlin: Reiß, 1918), translated as *My Years of Exile: Reminiscences of a Socialist*, Bernard Miall (tr.) (New York: Harcourt, Brace, and Howe, 1921); Eduard Bernstein, *Die Deutsche Revolution* (Berlin: Gesellschaft & Erziehung, 1921); Eduard Bernstein, *Wirtschaftswesen und Wirtschaftswerden: Drei gemeinverständliche Abhandlungen* (Berlin: Vorwärts, 1920); [9] Eduard Bernstein, *Sozialismus Einst und Jetzt: Streitfragen des Sozialismus in Vergangenheit und Gegenwart* (Berlin: J.H.W. Dietz, 1922); Steger 1997, pp.225-6; Henry Tudor, 'Editor's Note', in Bernstein 1993, p.xi.

Bernstein has tended to be dismissed as a mere commentator on Marx, and his theoretical positions and works treated as unstable, schizophrenic hybrids of more orthodox Marxian socialism and *fin-de-siècle* bourgeois social liberalism (especially of the English variety), rather than as the foundation of a new intellectual strand in its own right. Granted, some attempts have been made to overcome these underestimations, but they have been few and far between, and largely confined to the German-speaking literature on Bernstein—and, all told, they have so far largely failed to elevate Bernstein to the position of prominence he properly ought to occupy within contemporary receptions of the socialist canon.[10] Within the Anglophone literature, only Manfred Steger and perhaps Peter Gay have tried to steer the reception of Bernstein towards an appreciation of his role as a foundational thinker, while only Sheri Berman, and maybe John Dunn, Hans Keman, and Thomas Meyer have defended the idea of taking social democracy after the influence of Bernstein's revisionism seriously as a separate political ideology.[11] In contrast to the conventional wisdom, they present Bernstein's position as more than just a 'neither-one-thing-nor-the-other' negative, and take pains to highlight that his theoretical contributions extended well beyond (and continued well after) his 1890s revisionist writings. Instead, they have sought to emphasise the extent to which the formation and development of his theoretical views played a constant role in his socialist activism alongside his practical campaigning (especially with and for trade unionists) and more routine journalistic engagements.

It is the aim of this collection to help reinvigorate the moves to restore Bernstein to his former preeminent position. It brings together several of Bernstein's later works, written and published in quick succession during one of his most prolific periods in later life. Throughout his life, Bernstein remained a voracious reader and avid watcher of the events and current affairs of his time and—*contra* the second part of the conventional wisdom—constantly sought to use what he learned and saw to refine a theoretical outlook and programme that—*contra* the first part of the conventional wisdom—he continued to see as a faithful application of the fundamental principles of scientific socialism, as originally expounded by its founders.[12] Until well into his final years, Bernstein was still fighting many of the same battles as those that marked the disputes which motivated his original exploration of revisionist ethical socialism. However, he was doing so against the backdrop of drastically changing conditions, both within a social-democratic movement that was being stretched to breaking-point by the gulf between *Praktiker* and an ossifying *stratum* of oracles of Marxian orthodoxy, and within and beyond the wider German and European political landscape. The aim in what follows here is to give some indication of the continuity and development of Bernstein's ideas in his later years after the initial outbreak of the revisionist controversy.

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[10] See, for example, Francis L. Carsten, *Eduard Bernstein, 1850-1932: Eine politische Biographie* (Munich: C.H. Beck, 1993); Helmut Hirsch, *Der "Fabier" Eduard Bernstein: Zur Entwicklungsgeschichte des evolutionären Sozialismus* (Bonn: Dietz, 1977); Hans-Peter Jäger, *Eduard Bernsteins Panorama: Versuch, den Revisionismus Zu Deuten* (Frankfurt: Peter Lang, 1982); Thomas Meyer, *Bernsteins konstruktiver Sozialismus: Eduard Bernsteins Beitrag zur Theorie des Sozialismus* (Bonn: Dietz, 1977).

[11] Sheri E. Berman, *The Primacy of Politics: Social Democracy and the Making of Europe's Twentieth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006); John Dunn, *The Politics of Socialism: An Essay in Political Theory* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984); Peter Gay, *The Dilemma of Democratic Socialism: Eduard Bernstein's Challenge to Marx* (New York, NY: Octagon Books, 1959); Hans Keman, *Social Democracy: A Comparative Account of the Left-Wing Party Family* (London: Routledge, 2017); Thomas Meyer, *The Theory of Social Democracy* (Cambridge, Polity, 2007).

[12] [Present volume, pp.TBC.] Bernstein 1993, pp.28, 35, 107ff, 193ff; Steger 1997, pp.71-85, 91-108, 151-7, 163-8.

1. *Bernstein's war years: militarism and the collapse of socialist internationalism*

The works presented in this collection start out, just as *Preconditions* did over 15 years previously, from another specific, immediate problem that had arisen for socialist theory and practice. The wider context for the arguments Bernstein presents in them was provided by the tensions that emerged in the left sections of German society between contrasting pulls of (German) nationalism and (socialist) internationalism in the early years of the 20th century. These became intensified by repeated and increasingly close-run instances where all-out European war was only narrowly averted in successive crises over specific regions and localities in and around Europe during the early 1900s and 1910s: the Morocco crises of 1905-06 and 1911, the Balkan crisis of 1908-09 and Balkan Wars of 1912-13, and the Italo-Turkish war of 1911-12. After the 1907 Reichstag election, in which the SPD lost nearly half its parliamentary seats to liberal and conservative parties that supported the Reich government's overtly nationalist foreign policy—against the backdrop of the formation and solidification of the Triple Entente, and the growing armaments (especially naval arms) race between Britain and Germany—an initially small but vocal strand emerged within the party that demanded a greater recognition of the importance of the 'national question'. Initially comprising many *Praktiker* who were highly sympathetic to Bernstein's revisionist ideas, such as Joseph Bloch, Gustav Noske, and Max Schippel, this strand launched a sustained critical assault on the SPD's theoretical commitments and practical strategy. Combined with the rising chauvinist atmosphere in Germany as a whole, this gradually succeeded in pushing the SPD party establishment away from its long-held internationalist principles, and towards increasing obsequiousness before the institutions of the German Reich—away from Bebel's mantras about the "common identity of the international proletariat", and towards defending "German civilisation" and the "national interests" of the German working class.[13]

These nationalist-internationalist tensions within the SPD, which initially seemed to mirror the already well-established revisionist-orthodox divide, became concentrated very abruptly when yet another international diplomatic crisis did, in fact, spill over into war. This was the July Crisis between the major European powers, provoked as a result of the dispute between Austria-Hungary and Serbia over the assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand by the Serb nationalist Gavrilo Princip in Sarajevo on 28 June 1914. It is clear that the exorbitant demands in Austria-Hungary's ultimatum to Serbia on 23 July, and its refusal to subject the dispute to any form of mediation by third parties or arbitration by an international tribunal, were essentially designed to make some form of conflict inevitable.[14] Meanwhile, the limited efforts by other states with direct or indirect claimed interests in the dispute (notably Germany, Russia, and France) to either clearly oppose war or critically intercede with their respective allies meant that any outbreak of war between Austria-Hungary and Serbia could immediately trigger

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[13] Stanley Pierson, *Marxist Intellectuals and the Working Class Mentality in Germany 1887-1912* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1993); Steger 1997, pp.189-97.

[14] Fritz Fischer, *Germany's Aims in the First World War* (New York, NY: W. W. Norton, 1967), p.56; David Fromkin, *Europe's Last Summer: Why the World Went to War in 1914* (London: Heinemann, 2004), pp.165, 177. See also Thomas Otte, *July Crisis: The World's Descent into War, Summer 1914* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014); Hew Strachan, *The First World War* (London: Viking, 2004).

the invocation of an intricate complex of European alliances and hostilities.[15] As had been the case with the previous crises, the context that underpinned the tensions within the SPD over the prospect of war was thus the concern that what started as a comparatively manageable provincial dispute might rapidly spiral out of control, taking on the proportions of an all-engulfing continental conflagration.

The tensions came to a head in the decisive moment of the Reichstag vote on 4 August 1914 on whether to approve war credits to the German government. Over the course of July, it had become clear from the sparse details of the diplomatic manoeuvres that had filtered through to the German public that a war between Austria-Hungary and Serbia would inevitably also provoke a war between Germany and Russia—a war that the German government under Reich Chancellor Theobald von Bethmann-Hollweg actively sought to portray as a war of *defence*. Sure enough, in the wake of Austria-Hungary's declaration of war on Serbia on 28 July, Russia ordered first partial and then general mobilisation against Austria-Hungary (and pre-emptively Germany) on 29 and 30 July, to which Germany responded by declaring war on Russia on 1 August. Insisting that his government was still primarily interested in preventing the impending war, the Kaiser—through Bethmann-Hollweg—invited the Reichstag party fractions, including the SPD, to put aside their differences on domestic policy and their economic antagonisms, and join a general *Burgfrieden* ('party truce') in the patriotic interest. Faced with the prospect of an imminent invasion of German territory by an enemy that socialists of all stripes had long considered the most egregious example of uncivilised oppression and reaction in Europe, the SPD opted to join the *Burgfrieden*.[16] On 2 August, the General Commission of German Trade Unions declared its intention to suspend industrial action for the duration of the war, and on the same day the SPD party executive voted 4 to 2 to approve the war credits. The next afternoon, 92 of the 110 SPD Reichstag deputies gathered for a caucus and, accepting Bethmann-Hollweg's claims about the defensive character of the war, also voted to approve the credits 78 to 14. Mere hours later, Germany declared war on France in anticipation of its support for Russia, suddenly expanding the remit of the war well beyond just a response to Tsarist aggression. And on 4 August, after the government of neutral Belgium refused the German government's request to permit its troops to cross its borders *en route* to invading France, Germany declared war on Belgium as well, which Bethmann-Hollweg announced in a speech to the Reichstag deputies. Despite these dramatic developments since the caucus, the SPD deputies, bound by the party's policy of *Fraktionszwang* ('party discipline'), still sided with the German government in the ensuing vote, joining the deputies from all the other liberal and conservative parties to approve the war credits unanimously. Only after the vote had taken place, in the evening of 4 August, did Britain finally also declare war on Germany in response to the German invasion of Belgium.[17]

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[15] Fisher 1967, pp.66-73; Fromkin 2004, pp. 188-91, 195-208. See also Holger Herwig (ed.), *The Outbreak of World War I* (Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin, 1997).

[16] See, for instance, Susanne Miller, *Burgfrieden und Klassenkampf: Die deutsche Sozialdemokratie im Ersten Weltkrieg* (Düsseldorf: Verlag Droste, 1974).

[17] [Present volume, pp.TBC.] See also Sean McMeekin, *July 1914: Countdown to War* (New York, NY: Basic Books, 2014); David Stevenson, *Cataclysm: The First World War as Political Tragedy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004); Jeffrey Verhey, *The Spirit of 1914: Militarism, Myth, and Mobilization in Germany* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000).

By the time of the vote, Bernstein had achieved a goal long denied him by decades of enforced exile in Switzerland and Britain, and been elected as a Reichstag deputy for the constituency of Breslau-West, a position he occupied more-or-less continuously from 1902 to 1928. In this capacity, despite his opposition to the war at the caucus on 3 August, he voted with the other deputies on 4 August to approve the German government's war credits. But almost from the moment of the vote, Bernstein's decision to side with a government he had spent his entire career opposing weighed heavily on him. In particular, he was aghast at Germany's flouting of Belgium's neutrality and Britain's consequent entry into the war, and he felt passionately that, in abiding by the *Burgfrieden*, he and his SPD colleagues had been duped—both by the German government and right-leaning SPD members, such as David, Heine, and Noske, as well as Ludwig Frank, Heinrich Cunow, and Albert Südekum—into endorsing a very different kind of war to the one they had originally been persuaded to support.[18] In part, Bernstein was personally upset at the way he had been obliged to vote, on account of his own long-standing pacifist and internationalist sympathies.[19] Soon convinced of the German government's war guilt, not just because of its brutal war conduct, but also because of its duplicity in presenting its aggressive and annexationist war aims inaccurately as a 'defensive war', Bernstein came to see his decision not to oppose war credits as the "darkest day" in his political life. Dramatically breaking with David, Heine, and many other revisionist allies on the right of the SPD, who were now full-throated supporters of the German war effort, Bernstein sought out new opportunities for collaboration with his former orthodox Marxian opponents Kautsky, Haase, and Georg Ledebour, and soon became a crucial figure within the party's anti-war faction—which unusually placed him on the radical left of the SPD, alongside his erstwhile theoretical detractors Luxemburg and Liebknecht.[20]

But Bernstein's frustration with the SPD's decision to approve the war credits went well beyond his personal misgivings, and took on a much more broadly political dimension. He foresaw—correctly, it transpired—that one of the major effects of his party's vote, and even more of its subsequent supportive stance towards the German government's war conduct, would be a significant worsening of the SPD's reputation in the minds of their former comrades across the wider European socialist movement. That the SPD deputies had been entitled to support their government when the war was still (or still appeared to be) a war of defence was not in doubt, although other socialist fractions, such as the Russian Bolsheviks or later the Italian socialists, opposed their own governments in similar votes. Some of the more charitable European social-democratic observers, such as Emile Vandervelde, were even inclined to extend this entitlement to the SPD's vote for war credits, on the basis that the precise war aims and diplomatic manoeuvrings of the German government were still unclear or unknown at the time.[21] Yet what the other European socialists could not forgive was the SPD's continued support for the German government at the point when the latter's aggressive imperialist and annexationist war aims had become fully transparent with

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[18] [Present volume, pp.TBC.]

[19] Henry Tudor is too cavalier when he suggests that Bernstein's pacifism, and his consequent alliance with the left Opposition in the SPD, was in any way "artificial". See Tudor, 'Introduction', in Bernstein 1993, p.xxxv.

[20] Steger 1997, pp.217-23.

[21] [Present volume, pp.TBC.]

the leaking of the German government's heavily expansionist *Septemberprogramm*.[22] The SPD displayed abject sluggishness in manifesting any form of meaningful plenary opposition to the German war conduct: at the second Reichstag session to approve further war credits on 2 December 1914, Liebknecht cast a lone vote against the motion, while at the third session on 20 March 1915 he was joined only by his later fellow Spartacist Otto Rühle. The remaining SPD deputies, Bernstein included, continued to bow to *Fraktionszwang* in their plenary votes—even though, behind the scenes, many of them had begun to express growing opposition to the war in party publications and correspondence.[23]

However, it was the SPD's failure to change its official position on support for the war that resonated with other European socialists, so much so that the French Socialists (SFIO) responded to the German invasion by entering the French governing coalition under their own policy of *union sacrée*. The SFIO also demanded that the SPD be straightforwardly excluded from all future international socialist congresses for being in hock to German militarism, and refused to participate in any international efforts to which German delegates were also invited. This included the attempts by the executive committee of the International Socialist Bureau to organise meetings with delegates of the socialist parties in all the belligerent nations in the Hague in January and February 1915, as well as the British Independent Labour Party trying to invite the German and Austrian social-democratic parties to the conference held in London on 14 February 1915, which was ultimately only attended by parties from the Entente powers. In response to this sudden ostracism, the German, Austrian, and Hungarian parties organised their own conference for socialists from the Central Powers in Vienna on 12-13 April 1915, opening the door to a rapid proliferation of several rival congresses (and their attendant factions), each of which sought unsuccessfully to inherit the mantle of the Second International and offered different prescriptions for how the problems raised by the war should be addressed. As a result, little over half a year after the SPD's war credits vote, the networks of international collaboration that socialists had carefully constructed in the half-century before the war were facing a spectacular and comprehensive collapse in the face of Franco-German hostilities. This came as a particular blow for Bernstein because, as he repeatedly observed, it was the cooperation between the French socialists and the SPD that had been integral to the reformation of international socialist networks and organisations in the wake of the Franco-Prussian War of 1870-71. But what, in his eyes, made the blow even harder to bear was that it was the German delegation—which had, over time, risen to become one of the acknowledged leading players in the International Workingmen's Association and the Second International—that had clearly brought about this collapse.[24]

It is the SPD's decision to vote for war credits in particular, and the transformations it catalysed within the party over the next two years, that were perhaps the most obvious and immediate impetus for Bernstein to write, or compile, the works presented in this collection. Bernstein himself fairly explicitly identifies the question of war credits as a shibboleth for the wider stance of Social Democracy in Germany and further abroad on questions of

[22] See Fischer 1967; Wayne C. Thompson, 'The September Program: Reflections on the Evidence', *Central European History* 11(4) (1978), pp.348-54.

[23] Wolfgang Kruse, *Krieg und nationale Integration: Eine Neuinterpretation des sozialdemokratischen Burgfriedensschlusses 1914/15* (Essen: Verlag Klartext, 1993); Miller 1974.

[24] [Present volume, pp.TBC (*SDIP*)]

militarism versus pacifism, and (chauvinist) nationalism versus (at least potentially internationalist) patriotism—a clear case where he took a practical instance of policy as a 'case-study' for deeper theoretical divisions in socialist theory.[25] Bernstein made great personal efforts to maintain the international socialist ties that had been severed by the start of World War 1 through active and public engagement with the various rival attempts to convene the socialist parties of Europe, especially the explicitly anti-war conference held at Zimmerwald on 5-8 September 1915, and its successor conferences at Kienthal on 24-30 April 1916 and Stockholm on 5-12 September 1917.[26] However, he soon became disillusioned with these last attempts, partly because the International Socialist Bureau refused to endorse their wholly anti-war position, which limited participation in them to delegates only from the anti-war minority factions in the respective national parties, and because the conferences became entirely dominated by revolutionary radicals (the 'Zimmerwald Left', a precursor of what eventually became the Comintern). As a result, for all his efforts, he could only watch, comparatively helplessly, as the Second International fragmented into chauvinist denunciations and infighting between rival constituent factions, and as the wider international socialist movement was rent apart by the institutionalisation of nationalist and anti-bourgeois dogmas at either extreme.[27]

The ongoing failure of these attempts to reconstruct socialist internationalism were mirrored in the near-total lack of international diplomatic efforts to put an end to the unprecedentedly destructive bloodshed the war unleashed—a situation that Bernstein found a source of intolerable anger and frustration. Together, these failures provided the immediate impetus for the vast volume of work Bernstein produced to address the question of how to restore healthy international relations after the war, especially among socialists of previously-warring countries, and what institutional reforms social democrats should commit to in their party programmes to at least try to ensure that the same degree of international rupture would not happen again. In this respect, the context for the three works in this collection was partly a continuation of the same theoretical and practical moment that originally prompted Bernstein to address questions of theoretical revision, societal reform, and parliamentary strategy in the 1890s, but also partly represented a new development—specifically, one that added expressly *political* concerns around nationalism, militarism, and imperialism to the *economic* dividing lines that already existed within Social Democracy.

2. *Theorising the 'republic of peoples': the socialist case for international law and international institutions*

In the works presented here, Bernstein responds to these new political concerns by addressing from various angles the matter of formulating a new social-democratic approach to international relations, in anticipation of the probable contours of the post-war peace settlement. He begins this process in *Sozialdemokratische Völkerpolitik: Die Sozialdemokratie und die Frage Europa*, here translated as *Social Democracy and International Politics: Social Democracy and the European Question*, in which he gathers together fourteen essays, all but one of which originally

[25] [Ibid., pp.TBC (*SDIP*)]
[26] [Ibid., pp.TBC (*ILIP*)]
[27] [Ibid., pp.TBC (*ILIP*)]

appeared as articles in German and Swiss social-democratic periodicals—*Vorwärts*, *Die Neue Zeit*, *Internationale Rundschau*, *Dokumente des Fortschritts*, and *Leipziger Volkszeitung*—in 1915 and 1916.[28] The unifying theme of *Social Democracy and International Politics* is Bernstein's deep concern at the damage the outbreak of war across Europe wreaked on social-democratic ideas and ideals, the cause of proletarian solidarity, and the credibility of socialist internationalism. This is where he expressly makes the acquiescence of the right wing of the SPD to the interests and rhetoric of the militarist factions in the Reichstag—their approval of further war credits, and their almost unquestioning support for the war's conduct and continuation—the target of his criticism, arguing that the SPD's stance is not just a serious mistake, but also the main obstacle to restoring trust and cooperation between European social democrats after the war. At the same time, he is convinced that the conditions the war has brought upon Europe make the need for international cooperation more pressing than ever—specifically, the need for a (social-democratic) 'politics of peoples' to replace the (capitalist-imperialist) 'politics of states'. Consequently, he outlines a framework for future economic and social relations in Europe that aspires to a political-legal order of equal and democratic national self-determination, deliberately rooted in a more pessimistic diagnosis than that offered by many of his contemporaries of the starting conditions from which such an order would have to be created. In the course of doing so, he examines a variety of related conceptual and practical issues of international politics from a specifically social-democratic perspective, including the selection and training of diplomats, the reconcilability of patriotism and class struggle, the differences between the concepts of the 'state' (*Staat*), 'nation' (*Nation*), and 'people' (*Volk*), and the role of free trade in underpinning trust and social engagement.

Having dealt with the starting conditions of the post-war peace settlement, and the particular problems it would need to address, Bernstein turns to examine more closely what the political-legal order designed to preserve this peace might look like in *Völkerbund oder Staatenbund: Eine Untersuchung*, translated as *League of Peoples or League of States?: An Investigation*, a short monograph published in 1918 based on one of the many speeches and public lectures he gave in defence of socialist reformism against the backdrop of the radical and reactionary tumult unleashed by the German Revolution.[29] In *League of Peoples or League of States?*, Bernstein addresses the proposals circulating in (especially liberal) legal and political circles for the creation of a supra-state union dedicated to preserving peace. He is sceptical about the possibility of realising a 'League of Nations' of the sort defined most prominently by Woodrow Wilson in a way that conforms to the spirit of its long intellectual heritage within an international system characterised by inviolable state sovereignty and imperialist capitalism. Playing on themes that he repeatedly revisits in other works, Bernstein challenges the dominance of US and British proposals among internationalist contemporaries, arguing that they disempower peoples as active democratic subjects by continuing to treat state institutions as 'bearers' of national identities and interests.[30] He urges social democrats to reconsider their contingent support for the state as a means of reform and workers' emancipation, and direct their efforts towards the goal of a 'republic of peoples' that unites the institutions of a 'league of peoples' with the regulative

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[28] Eduard Bernstein, *Sozialdemokratische Völkerpolitik: Die Sozialdemokratie und die Frage Europa* (Leipzig: Verlag "Naturwissenschaften", 1917; republished Paderborn: Salzwasser Verlag, 2012). [29] Eduard Bernstein, *Völkerbund oder Staatenbund: Eine Untersuchung* (Berlin: Paul-Cassirer-Verlag, 1918). [30] See, for example, Eduard Bernstein, *Der Völkerbund* (Basel: Verlag der National-Zeitung, 1919).

force of a 'law of peoples'. Bernstein sees Social Democracy as the movement best placed to achieve this aim by being prepared to take the steps needed to bring the expansionist tendencies of capitalism under control, and ends with a hopeful diagnosis of the role a newly democratised Germany could play in making this aim a reality.

Bernstein continues and greatly expands his analysis of international law and international institutions in the final work in this collection, *Völkerrecht und Völkerpolitik: Wesen, Fragen und Zukunft des Völkerrechts*, translated as *International Law and International Politics: The Nature, Questions, and Future of International Law*, which he published in 1919 during the most intense period of his later literary activity, and which brings together a series of eleven lectures which he delivered in late 1917 and early 1918 at the *Arbeiterbildungsschule* (School for Workers' Education) in Berlin.[31] In *International Law and International Politics*, Bernstein is concerned with elucidating the origins and past effectiveness (or rather lack thereof) of international law, which he frames in terms of the 'law of peoples'. Bernstein sees the logic underlying international law as being a fundamentally humane attempt to limit the excesses of modern warfare, but is concerned that past international focus on regulating the laws of war have merely distracted from the ultimate goal of putting an end to war entirely. He argues for an ethical, democratic approach to international relations, and criticises German political leaders for undermining attempts to develop strong international legal institutions at the Hague Conferences of 1899 and 1907. Bernstein also castigates German legal theorists (liberal, conservative, and socialist) for their obsequious duplicity in providing the German government's pursuit of power politics with an intellectual basis, and thereby hollowing out the meaning of the 'law of peoples' in the German tradition. He expresses his support for the creation of a corpus of international jurisprudence to govern relations between peoples, hoping that this will free them from the self-serving interests of ruling classes disguised as matters of national 'honour'. Finally, Bernstein assesses the proposals for international institutions and legal frameworks put forward in the resolutions of various social-democratic factions, parties, and European congresses, and outlines his own alternative that aims to overcome the limitations of the international bodies created by the final peace settlement after WW1.

Bernstein addresses several related theoretical and practical priorities in these three works, and it is possible to trace a fairly smooth chronological shift in these priorities over the years in which he wrote the original essays and lectures—in part because of changing political and economic conditions brought on by the protracted war, both within the international socialist movement itself and across the wider German and European landscape. In developing his responses to these conditions and their concomitant priorities, Bernstein pursues three discrete strands of social theorising. First, he is urgently concerned to diagnose the social, political, and economic problems within Germany, across Europe, and beyond, concentrating especially on the role social democrats might have played (deliberately or through omission) to allow them to come about. Second, Bernstein gradually moves onto considering critically the existing non-socialist and non-social-democratic proposals for addressing some of these problems as these are beginning to take on more concrete, developed shape in parallel to his own work, focusing especially on the dangers of conservative proposals—which he rejects outright—and the limitations of liberal proposals—to which he is broadly sympathetic but which he thinks do not go far enough. Finally, he formulates

[31] Eduard Bernstein, *Völkerrecht und Völkerpolitik: Wesen, Fragen, und Zukunft des Völkerrechts* (Berlin: Paul-Cassirer-Verlag, 1919).

new alternative theoretical and practical proposals from his particular socialist or social-democratic perspective, oriented towards expanding and institutionalising the guiding principles and structures of international law and international politics.

But these three strands to Bernstein's thought—which could be called 'diagnostic', 'critical', and 'positive'—do not always carry equal weight throughout the three works, and Bernstein himself explicitly demarcates a shift between them in his analysis only rarely. Certainly, one of Bernstein's major strengths as a theorist is his diagnostic 'edge'. Throughout all of his works, Bernstein specialises in fielding substantial amounts of empirical data and vast swathes of contemporary philosophical, historical, and sociological literature, and leveraging it all to inform the assumptions that underpin his arguments. It is the same tendency that emerges, for example, in his use of data about the numbers and distribution of shares and shareholders, changes in income and property distribution, numbers of employees in small-, medium-, and large-scale enterprises, and the sizes of agricultural holdings in *Preconditions* to support his argument about capitalism's greater-than-anticipated adaptability, which originally attracted the ire of Luxemburg and his other detractors.[32] At the same time, like all good Marxists—and, for all the accusations of revisionism and "selective" reading of Engels, Bernstein still saw himself to some degree as trying to advance and improve the theory of scientific socialism beyond the personal beliefs and writings of its founders—he also revels in critique.[33] He vehemently opposes all hints of reactionary oppressive or exploitative tendencies, not just among conservative and liberal chauvinists, but especially within Social Democracy (and above all the German SPD), and he has a penchant for choosing individual standard-bearers of opposing positions—from legal theorists (Paul Eltzbacher, Franz von Liszt) to politicians (Bethmann-Hollweg, David, Heine, Scheidemann)—as his *bêtes noires*, although he never quite strays into the realm of pure *ad hominem* polemic.

However, it is in his work as a positive theorist that Bernstein is at his most elusive, and where, at times, it can be difficult to establish what his own position is. Bernstein often 'speaks through' other people who have (he thinks) expressed a particular point he wishes to make or who represent a perspective he also shares especially trenchantly or eloquently—here, the list includes Nelson and Vandervelde, as well as George Bernard Shaw and Jean Jaurès—and he prefers to implicitly endorse their views rather than explicitly assert his own arguments.[34] Bernstein also has the habit of going into frankly pedantic amounts of unnecessary detail—such as questioning a typographical error in Alladar von Navay's trade statistics or pondering the implications for national sea borders being determined by the range of coastal gun batteries—which means his argument often seesaws from the heady heights of grand philosophical reasoning and ideological conceptualisation to genuinely petty concerns.[35] Moreover, in places, his writing can leave one a little frustrated, as he often comes close to offering something akin to a profound new insight or theoretical innovation, only to sidestep into a historical anecdote, exemplifying case-study, or lengthy (and usually approving) quotation from an apposite source. Whether this is a savvy technical move on Bernstein's part to dodge the repression of the German censors, a didactic strategy to ~~inform his readers~~

[32] Bernstein 1993, pp.58-61, 66-77.

[33] [Present volume, pp.TBC (*ILIP* on USPD manifesto, *SDIP* on free trade)] See also Bernstein 1993, pp.28, 35. [34] [Ibid., pp.TBC.]

[35] [Ibid., pp.TBC (*ILIP* on coastal batteries, *SDIP* on Navay)]

of important events and familiarise them with other sources of socialist thought (rather than hectoring them with sloganeering or boring them with theoretical nitpicking), or merely evidence that his own position was still in a state of evolution, is not always clear. But regardless of the reason, the result of Bernstein's approach—exacerbated by his customary use of essays as a favoured medium of delivery—is that many of his thematic interests, principled positions, deeper commitments, or reasoned inferences emerge as much obliquely—even impressionistically—from the totality of these works as they do from the actual texts themselves. The overall effect is thus one of many crystalline pieces of a mosaic coming together incrementally to build a partly notional, but clearly entirely complex, ideological whole.

Nevertheless, some common themes emerge clearly from all three works. In many ways, Bernstein's central concern in these works is restoring 'the people' (*Volk*) as the proper unit of analysis in international politics, as opposed to 'the nation' (*Nation*) or 'the state' (*Staat*). Fundamentally, echoing Johann Gottlieb Fichte, he argues that "the people" comprises all the classes of a population demarcated by a shared use of language—except for "mere drones and their retinue", which could equally refer to the (from a Marxian perspective) unproductive rentier class, or the *lumpen* underclass.[36] Bernstein contrasts this with 'the nation', which he sees as the political unity of members of a country, constituted by a people that has become politically self-conscious, and makes the case for social democrats to better recognise the social importance of national self-consciousness—similar to the arguments of contemporary and later authors (some among them Marxists) on nationhood and nationalism, including Max Weber, Joseph Stalin, Walker Connor, and Benedict Anderson.[37] For Bernstein, the distinction between 'people' and 'nation' is essentially political, and he characterises 'the people' as a profoundly democratic construction, while stressing that the concept of a 'nation' is compatible with rule by the members of a population's privileged classes. At the same time, he argues that the "solidaristic consciousness" of a people is not irretrievably wedded to the existence of a state in any form, whereas the concept of nationhood has become especially closely dependent on the statist bias of contemporary political theorising.[38] The state, for Bernstein, is only a particular "bearer and expression" of certain power relations within a population, while it is the people that constitutes this population and gives the state its so-called national character.[39] In other words, in line with many traditions within nationalist thought, he sees peoples and their politically self-conscious forms, nations, as the precursors and prerequisites of state institutions, not *vice versa*. But whereas nationalists see the state as the highest pinnacle of institutionalisation that a people and its national consciousness can attain, Bernstein argues that such institutionalisation is far better achieved through peoples' equal membership of a global community.[40] He is sceptical of the extent to which the

[36] [Ibid., pp.TBC (*SDIP*)]

[37] [Ibid., pp.TBC (*SDIP*)] See also Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities* (London: Verso, 1983); Walker Connor, *The National Question in Marxist-Leninist Theory and Strategy* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1984); Max Weber, 'The Nation', in H.H. Gerth and C. Wright Mills (ed.), *From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1948), pp.171-9; Joseph Stalin, 'The Nation', in *Marxism and the National Question*, from Bruce Franklin (ed.), *The Essential Stalin: Major Theoretical Writings 1905-1952* (London: Croom Helm, 1973), pp.57-61. [38] [Present volume, pp.TBC (*LPLS*, *SDIP*)]

[39] [Ibid., pp.TBC (*SDIP*)]

[40] [Ibid., pp.TBC (*LPLS*)]

divide between state and people can be bridged via a mere extension of the democratic franchise and other political rights, as the state is still dominated by bourgeois capitalists rather than by the social classes that comprise the people—especially if the propertyless popular mass is not suffused with the idea that it has vital political agency in crafting and transforming the state edifice, but instead languishes in "social and cultural immaturity".[41] Instead, Bernstein argues that the only way for peoples to "develop their own life" is as a "member of the international union of peoples", and that their manifestation in territorially-bounded state institutions, while instrumentally useful to this self-development, must be overcome when it has exhausted its usefulness to the people—i.e., when a better alternative emerges, such as the construction of a network of international legal institutions.[42]

From this starting position that the political interests of a people can be met in better ways than through their current existence as national self-consciousness and state institutions flows Bernstein's attempt to resolve the impasse between nationalist and internationalist tendencies in Social Democracy by articulating a unique socialist perspective on the issue of *patriotism*. Bernstein espouses a sympathetic view of patriotism that is mostly lacking in orthodox Marxian thought—except for later accounts of 'national communism' or 'Socialism in one Country'—and for Germany in particular consciously seeks to reclaim a moderate conception of patriotism from its (to him appalling) monopolisation by assertive Prussian nationalism.[43] He observes that there are many different possible patriotisms, contrasting Chesterton's 'nationalist patriotism' with the 'imperialist patriotism' of Rudyard Kipling, and argues for a greater appreciation among socialists of the revolutionary (Jacobin) origins of patriotism as a mark of commitment to democracy and republicanism, against aristocracy, oppression, and other forms of reaction—what Hans Kohn would later call a 'civic' approach to nationhood and citizenship.[44] In particular, Bernstein sees no necessary opposition between patriotism and class struggle—for him, it is "not a matter of whether someone loves his country and his people, but *how* he loves it, and how he conceives of its position in the family of peoples"—but suggests that a 'socialist conception of patriotism' characterised by loose ethical precepts such as 'honour', 'sportsmanship', and 'chivalry' must be underscored by a clear political worldview which only the "education" of the class struggle can provide.[45] Further, Bernstein seeks to free the wider economic characteristics of patriotism from a narrow, myopic protectionism—which, whether in the form of customs unions or attempted autarky within countries or among allies, he decries as little more than a means of trapping peoples in subjection to prevailing state structures—and offers a radical interpretation of the German nationalists' hero Fichte *en route* to expounding a vision of patriotism that embraces cosmopolitanism and free trade.[46] This, in turn, leads him to argue that the socialist movement must consciously pursue not just a (democratic) patriotic domestic policy but also an independent, internationalist foreign policy in order to motivate, mobilise, and satisfy social-democratic party members. Above all, *contra* Heine, it must not allow itself to become distracted by the purported "realities" associated with the contingent conditions of a people's realisation in national or state institutions—such as their

[41] [Ibid., pp.TBC (*SDIP*)]
[42] [Ibid., pp.TBC (*LPLS*, *SDIP*)]
[43] [Ibid., pp.TBC (*ILIP*, *LPLS*)]
[44] [Ibid., pp.TBC (*SDIP*)]
[45] [Ibid., pp.TBC (*SDIP*)]
[46] [Ibid., pp.TBC (*LPLS*, *SDIP*)]

country's relative strength, or its inclination towards territorial expansion—as this will lead it to sacrifice the crucial internationality of its socialist identity.[47] Overall, Bernstein introduces to social-democratic theory a sensitivity to differences in geography, culture, and historical experience that sits at odds with the somewhat homogenising, "abstract", broad-brush approach of late-19th-century socialist internationalism. However, unlike the nationalists of his day, he rejects out of hand appeals to "historical right", not just (explicitly) as the basis for irredentist claims to foreign territory, but also (implicitly) as grounds for discrimination among the members of a given population—i.e., against contemporary attempts to make a person's claimed right to membership of a people dependent on the need for ethnic homogeneity within it.[48]

Bernstein's attempt to inaugurate a new socialist conception of patriotism is inspired by two of his central principles in the domain of foreign policy: *anti-imperialism* and *anti-militarism*. For the former, he is extremely critical of the hypocrisy of the SPD *Praktiker* in supporting key socialist and democratic principles of independence and non-interference only to the extent that they did not inhibit the interests and integrity of Germany and its allies, rather than cleaving to the venerable socialist tradition of fighting to end the imperial bondage of minority peoples.[49] In contrast to them, Bernstein himself unequivocally condemns imperialism as an intolerable burden, both for peoples who are engaged in it, and those who are its victims. Imperialism, in his view, is favourable only to certain economic interests, whereas the costs of imperial escapades are typically borne by the whole nation, and he questions the historical capacity of imperial states to adequately allow for the development of their constituent nations, arguing that the apparent peace and stability they provide can never be truly lasting as long as they are built on oppressive political structures.[50] As a policy, Bernstein suggests that imperialism is a result of the fact that a state's foreign policy always lags behind the political developments spearheaded by its domestic policy, arguing that foreign policy is 'kept backward' by the strategic corruption of leading politicians by the prevailing economic interests—in the case of modernity, the growing power of finance capital, as also argued separately by liberals such as John Hobson.[51] However, unlike many contemporary socialist critics of imperialism, such as Luxemburg and Lenin, Bernstein does not quite share the fairly sweeping characterisation of all capitalist economic practices as inherently tied to imperialism. Instead, he insists that a qualitative difference must be made when analysing the protectionist versus free trade policies of economically developed states, with the former far more conducive to imperialist policies than the latter.[52] Bernstein's views on colonialism are similarly nuanced, although still generally consistent with the anti-imperialist and emancipatory tendencies of socialists and left-leaning liberals with otherwise very different ideological commitments.[53] He baldly outlines both the pragmatic and ideological (specifically, racist) origins of systems of semi-sovereignty and colonial legal administration, noting that they were

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[47] [Ibid., pp.TBC (*SDIP*)]

[48] [Ibid., pp.TBC (*ILIP*, *SDIP*)]

[49] [Ibid., pp.TBC (*LPLS*)]

[50] [Ibid., pp.TBC (*LPLS*)]

[51] [Present volume, pp.TBC (*SDIP*)] See also John A. Hobson, *Imperialism* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1902). [52] [Present volume, pp.TBC (*SDIP*)]

[53] [Ibid., pp.TBC (*ILIP*)]

extensively fuelled by capitalist exploitative interests.[54] Further, he is convinced that many of the pre-WW1 proposals for greater international cooperation were effectively rendered toothless in the face of capitalist colonial aggression, and argues that ultimately only the transition to socialism coupled with serious efforts at building international institutions will bring an end to expansionist war.[55] Yet at the same time, Bernstein wants to rescue the ideals of the Enlightenment, and especially European political and legal frameworks for international application, irrespective of their racist baggage, and he questions whether any peoples in the world could truly have a vital interest or right of autonomy that went against the grain of the "general development of civilisation".[56] As a result, unlike many of his contemporaries' contributions to debates about socialism's anti-imperial tradition, Bernstein does not straightforwardly decry—in fact, partly endorses—the self-declared 'civilising mission' of European colonialism, leaving him vulnerable to what contemporary critics of Eurocentrism would immediately recognise and condemn as crude epistemic and ethical imperialism.[57]

For the latter principle, Bernstein's hostility to militarism is intimately connected to his strong support for a very particular conception of pacifism. Fundamentally, Bernstein sees the "cultural history" of mankind as being fundamentally pacifistic in nature, geared towards finding ever new ways of "overcoming" war, and he vociferously challenges what he perceives as wholly unjustified arguments that war is a 'natural' state for humanity, personified by Erich Kaufmann and his empty legalistic wordplay.[58] He is scathing of the wilful militarism of much German jurisprudence, in particular bemoaning the close connection of "justice" in international law with the comparatively unambitious goal of the preservation of a balance of power between states, and offers one of the earliest instances of criticism for what would now be seen as the academic wing of the military-industrial complex.[59] It is easy to see Bernstein's focus on peaceful cooperation between peoples as a rejoinder to conservative and other nationalist militarists, chauvinists, and imperialists. While this was surely partly his intention, his arguments are also an intervention in socialist theory, specifically to counter the arguments of nationalists such as Cunow, Paul Lensch, and Konrad Haenisch, who sought to legitimate the SPD's support for the German government's war conduct by replacing the rhetoric of class struggle with that of the struggle between peoples, inspired by the nationalist Hegelian-Marxist sociologist Johann Plenge.[60] On the question of the SPD's stance, Bernstein argues in an originally censored passage that socialists in other countries made a careful distinction between supporting a bourgeois government in the case where one's country was attacked, and participating in the formulation of militarist policy, with only the latter being subject to any sort of reproach. In Bernstein's view, it was the SPD's real or apparent leaning towards the latter decision that incurred the outrage of socialists outside Germany. This, in turn, directly informs Bernstein's view on pacifism. He sees the obligation to national defence as so self-evident that it should be beyond party-political stipulations. As a result, his pacifism is a pragmatic one that makes a clear

[54] [Ibid., pp.TBC (*ILIP*)]
[55] [Ibid., pp.TBC (*LPLS*)]
[56] [Ibid., pp.TBC (*ILIP*, *SDIP*)]
[57] [Ibid., pp.TBC (*LPLS*, *SDIP*)]
[58] [Ibid., pp.TBC (*ILIP*)]
[59] [Ibid., pp.TBC (*ILIP*)]
[60] [Ibid., pp.TBC (*SDIP*)]

exception for defensive war, and thus mostly constitutes an objection to rampant militarism, ideas of 'armed peace', armaments races, and imperialist expansionism.[61] Ultimately, Bernstein's aim is to introduce a pacifist strand into "Marxist Social Democracy", manifested in policies including the "radical suppression" of the armaments industry, and a socialist-pacifist case for free trade against the warlike tendencies of protectionism, which he sees as having gradually started to pervade the SPD's thinking.[62] But he is also mindful that Social Democracy needs meaningful party unity in order for such a pacifist programme to stand a chance of being implemented, arguing that minorities within the movement cannot act on their own except as pioneers, and must attempt to persuade the opposed majority factions—a clear last-ditch *cri-de-cœur* against the imminent fragmentation of the SPD.[63]

Bernstein takes the view that imperialist and militarist tendencies in foreign policy are best kept in check by a full-throated commitment to *parliamentarism* and *parliamentary oversight*. With the war credits vote weighing heavily on him, Bernstein argues that the courtly-aristocratic secretive traditions and the opaque and oligarchic processes of diplomacy, which were explicitly designed to remove the *arcana* of foreign policy from the prying eyes of the public, contributed to war being declared against the demonstrable interests of the majority of each of the participating countries' populations.[64] He echoes Shaw in demanding much increased democratic accountability of foreign ministers to parliamentary representatives, and suggests that all future wars must be made subject to a popular democratic decision, in order to impose a constitutional check on the executive's scope of action in foreign policy, especially its ability to authorise military actions and sign treaties—echoing arguments around the need for increased public insight into all matters that counted as "public affairs" current among contemporary socialists (Ferdinand Tönnies), liberals (John Dewey), and even conservatives (Carl Schmitt).[65] But Bernstein goes beyond merely demanding the democratisation of foreign policy, and proposes the publicisation, socialisation, and even internationalisation of the full legal processes around warfare, casting this as a way of undoing the 'privatisation' of war, of ending it "as a kind of private affair of individual states".[66] Bernstein picks apart the question of whether parliamentary democracy or absolutism is better at giving governments a constant, reliable position in their foreign policy, arguing that "*more parliamentarism*" is needed to counteract the pernicious effect of the excessive personal influence of absolutist monarchs over foreign policy, on the basis that a monarch's personal sovereignty is an extremely risky check to the reflection of ebbs and flows in public opinion among elected representatives and political parties.[67] All in all, Bernstein makes a spirited defence of the legitimacy and usefulness of parliamentarism and socialist participation in electoral democracy, in line with his first theoretical endorsements of the activities of the SPD parliamentarians in the late 1890s. But this time, he urges greater social-democratic support for parliamentarism on the basis that a socialist understanding of parliamentary democracy is the only governmental form that is internally consistent with a peaceful foreign policy—because imperialism flouts the core democratic

[61] [Ibid., pp.TBC (*SDIP*)]
[62] [Ibid., pp.TBC (*ILIP*, *SDIP*)]
[63] [Ibid., pp.TBC (*SDIP*)]
[64] [Ibid., pp.TBC (*SDIP*)]
[65] [Ibid., pp.TBC (*ILIP*, *SDIP*)]
[66] [Ibid., pp.TBC (*ILIP*, *SDIP*)]
[67] [Ibid., pp.TBC (*SDIP*)]

principle of equal rights and absence of privileges—and in order to avert the dangers of vagueness and contradiction in Germany's constitutional arrangements, arguing that "[t]wilight has always been the best opportunity of all deceivers".[68] At the same time, Bernstein is also implicitly advocating the germs of a complex theory of entryism, whereby in order to effect a full socialist transformation of society, socialists and social democrats have to win positions in all branches of government, including the differentiated and hence specialised occupations of legislators and administrators—i.e., not just winning election to parliament, but also effecting a takeover of the bureaucratic organisations (civil service, agencies, etc.) responsible for implementing government policy, here specifically foreign policy.[69]

Bernstein's staunch commitment to pacifism and parliamentary democracy is also closely intertwined with his understanding of the role and importance of *international law*. He insists that the only possible democratic form of foreign policy is a "politics of peoples", driven by peoples and their "necessities of life", that operates within the framework of an international legal system incorporating the right to democratic national self-determination for all peoples.[70] In the first instance, Bernstein criticises contemporary understandings of international law for being insufficiently radical and pacifist, as by defining international law as *prima facie* a "limitation of war", they implicitly legitimated war as a social activity.[71] He observes that the constant progress of technology (especially military technology) will always create material circumstances that expose oversights and flaws of logic in the law of war, jeopardising the effectiveness of even those principles on which international agreement has been secured, with the strong implication that the efforts of jurisprudence would be better directed at trying to end war entirely rather than merely seeking to regulate it via half-measures.[72] In particular, the abject horrors of total war clearly demonstrated the need for international efforts to secure peace, regardless of the theoretical considerations that might still need to be ironed out, and Bernstein details how international cooperation, often led by philanthropists or unofficial international organisations, had begun to impose some limits on war conduct before WW1—albeit limited by the national, class, and racial prejudices standing in the way of freedom of movement between member-states within the international community.[73] For Bernstein, one of the key flaws of contemporary international jurisprudence lay in its insistence on the sanctity of existing states, their structures, and their borders, conceived in highly Eurocentric terms. He approvingly cites Nelson's critique of the false democracy of equality between states of vastly different sizes and differently large populations posited by conservative (German) constitutional and international jurisprudence, on the basis that the size and spatial extent of states can often disguise their level or capacity for economic and social development.[74] Instead, Bernstein insists that a social-democratic conception of international law must include the right for all subject peoples to attain, or be granted, autonomous statehood—albeit on a contingent, even instrumental basis, given his expectation that state formations would ultimately be

[68] [Ibid., pp.TBC (*SDIP*, *ILIP*)]
[69] [Ibid., pp.TBC (*SDIP*)]
[70] [Ibid., pp.TBC (*SDIP*)]
[71] [Ibid., pp.TBC (*ILIP*)]
[72] [Ibid., pp.TBC (*ILIP*)]
[73] [Ibid., pp.TBC (*LPLS*, *ILIP*)]
[74] [Ibid., pp.TBC (*ILIP*, *SDIP*)]

superseded—in line with the long-standing support of many socialists for emancipation struggles. He also strongly endorses, *contra* Liszt, the idea of state-forming and state-preserving plebiscitary resolutions to questions of territorial acquisition and cession over mere reliance on conquest or congress decisions.[75] Almost in the same breath, he lays extensive blame at the door of the SPD majority faction for refusing to countenance the SFIO's demand for a plebiscite to determine the future of Alsace-Lorraine, and thereby preventing the development of a European socialist case for democratic self-determination, rather than its imposition by Anglo-American liberals.[76] An international legal framework that has peoples' right to self-determination at its core is, for Bernstein, essential for any attempt at a lasting peace settlement after the war, and is the only one truly worthy of being called a "law of peoples". However, he also notes that such a law of peoples understood as a series of these rights also necessarily entails the creation of a series of obligations that require individual peoples to make sacrifices for the common interest of the peoples of the world. By this, Bernstein means above all curtailing the privileged global status of imperial state-formations, and he suggests that the twin tendencies towards weakening imperial states by the secession of their provinces and by the emergence of international law could help bring about the "withering-away" of these formations—albeit in the more concessive sense of the break-up of state institutions into autonomous but interrelated self-governing national units, rather than the complete disappearance of political authority anticipated by orthodox Marxism.[77]

This conception of international law also influences Bernstein's view of the purpose and character of (past and future) *international institutions*. Fundamentally, he views such institutions as being primarily concerned with the theoretical and practical problems of developing and enforcing a pacifistic international law, or rather a law of peoples.[78] Bernstein notes that the need to deal with certain practical problems of international politics has led to the emergence of congresses and standing commissions vested with the sort of legal supremacy ordinarily jealously preserved for state sovereignty, and he argues that institutions such as an international court of experts to settle legal disputes over interpretation or scope—such as were proposed before the war—are essential for securing peace in future.[79] But, in his view, these institutions cannot alone provide the amount of cooperation and harmonisation needed to address the political and economic problems that Europe and the wider world would have to confront after the war. Rejecting out of hand both the continuation of the prior policy of the balance of powers and the idea of placing Europe under the leadership of a single hegemon, as both liable to foster an endless successions of further conflicts in future, Bernstein sees the only democratic solution, and the only one that Social Democracy should countenance, being the formation of a "European union of states". Although in the first instance, such a union would be used to oppose both Junker militarism and Russian tsarism, Bernstein also regards it as a stepping-stone towards the establishment of such a union at the global level.[80] But he warns that such a global pacifist union, founded upon democratic or republican principles, will be impossible as long as theorists of international

[75] [Ibid., pp.TBC (*ILIP*, *SDIP*)]
[76] [Ibid., pp.TBC (*LPLS*)]
[77] [Ibid., pp.TBC (*ILIP*)]
[78] [Ibid., pp.TBC (*ILIP*, *LPLS*)]
[79] [Ibid., pp.TBC (*ILIP*)]
[80] [Ibid., pp.TBC (*SDIP*)]

politics (socialists included) hesitate to part company with their outmoded and highly conservative belief in the state.[81] A truly democratic "politics of peoples", for Bernstein, must realise the solidarity of all peoples through the establishment of a "league of peoples" founded on the principle of absolute equality between them—including, for instance, a world parliament directly elected by voters around the world, despite the obvious difficulties entailed in realising this.[82] True to his reformist inclination, Bernstein sees both the Allied and German *liberal* proposals for a 'League of Nations'—for which he reserves the phrase *Bund* ('League') or *Verein der Nationen* ('Society of Nations')—as considerable advances on what has gone before (i.e., interstate anarchy), but argues that the League of Nations as actually instated, which received the misleading German title *Völkerbund*, falls drastically short of a genuine 'league of peoples' in practice.[83] Ultimately, Bernstein believes that the gradual emergence of international institutions has already placed humanity on an inexorable trajectory towards a socialist republican world state—a higher authority which he characterises as a "republic of peoples"—and he predicts that, insofar as such a European or global union came to fruition with the expansion of international law, the "external intercourse" of states would lose its familiar characteristics, including the complete abolition of state diplomacy as we know it.[84]

Lastly, Bernstein summarises his comments about political principles and institutions with an overarching defence of the *quasi-autonomy of 'the political'* (and, insofar as this constitutes a separate domain, 'the legal') from 'the economic', thereby deprioritising economics as the sole driving force of the form and constitution of society. Although he fundamentally still sees "the economy" as "the fundamental material condition of cultural progress", he agrees with Julius Motteler that 'there is more to the social than the economic', observing that 'the social' also encompasses political and cultural aspects (and perhaps others) that are part-independent of the economistic focus on production, and cannot be reduced to pure determination by economic interest.[85] Bernstein argues that there is no immediate, direct relationship between the level of development and distribution of economic functions and the level and distribution of social power within a population, though he acknowledges that there is a "tendency" to bring the two into a "balanced relationship", but insists that this relationship is strongly bidirectional, with the political and cultural domains able to have clear material effects on economic conditions.[86] His case study for this is the relative significance of small and large states, and he rejects contemporary comparisons with the survival or disappearance of small and large business enterprises on the basis that the tasks of states and businesses are entirely different.[87] Instead, Bernstein offers some rough-and-ready proxy statistics for the geographic size, economic strength, density of social intercourse/traffic (both covered by the German word *Verkehr*), and level of cultural

[81] [Ibid., pp.TBC (*LPLS*, *ILIP*)]

[82] [Ibid., pp.TBC (*SDIP*, *ILIP*)]

[83] [Present volume, pp.TBC (*LPLS*, *ILIP*)] On liberal proposals see, for example, John A. Hobson, *Towards International Government* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1915); F.S. Northedge, *The League of Nations: Its life and times, 1920–1946* (London: Holmes & Meier, 1986); Leonard Woolf, *International Government* (London: Fabian Society, 1915); Alfred Eckhard Zimmern, *The League of Nations and the Rule of Law, 1918-1935* (London: Russell & Russell, 1969) [84] [Present volume, pp.TBC (*ILIP*, *LPLS*, *SDIP*)]

[85] [Ibid., pp.TBC (*SDIP*)]

[86] [Ibid., pp.TBC (*SDIP*)]

[87] [Ibid., pp.TBC (*SDIP*)]

development of various nation-states to show the indirectness of the connection between these criteria, using them to argue for the equal position of all states—or rather, of all peoples—because they each have different strengths in their different social domains.[88] In line with his rejection of 'vulgar' Marxian economic determinism, Bernstein recapitulates his by now familiar theme of criticising orthodox Marxists for failing to adequately take political and legal institutions into account, suggesting that social-democrats' approach to politics, law, and culture needs to undergo similar revisions to their economic perspective.[89] He attaches to this a paean in support of party politics and parliamentary strategy as intrinsically important areas of social activity, and issues a "rallying-cry" against the tendency within *Praktiker* circles of appeasing, accommodating, or even aligning with anti-democratic political tendencies.[90] Bernstein lambasts the lamentable appeasement by German liberals—and the SPD right-wingers—of the most reactionary tendencies of militaristic German conservatives, and observes that, for all kinds of political issues (such as the use of plebiscites to resolve secessionist statehood claims), even the notionally ultraconservative governments of Germany and the other Central Powers had been better allies to socialists and democrats than the liberals.[91] If there is to be a 'liberal-socialist' *rapprochement* then, for Bernstein, this cannot entail Social Democracy succumbing to "the influences of imperialism and militarism", but must rather involve seeking areas of ideological overlap and collaboration between those on both the proletarian and bourgeois side who still retained their radical inclinations from the time before the mood of assertive nationalism set at the end of the 19th century.[92]

3. *Bernstein's legacy: Social Democracy between peoples and the world*

Altogether, these themes frame Bernstein's hope, expressed in a patriotic-republican tenor, for a freer, more social, peaceful, internationalist, and democratic world. There are clearly some extremely radical ideas that emerge from Bernstein's works: internationalisation of international rail and sea routes, mandatory amendments to state constitutions, popular representatives (i.e., parliaments) having the final say over declarations of war, and (via his inclusion of the USPD's Stockholm manifesto) a spirited defence of free trade and freedom of movement, as well as significantly more drastic proposals for democratising foreign policy than are in place even a century later.[93] Here, one must make a perhaps inevitable parenthetic observation about these works, namely that they cannot but be read now, at least partly, in the knowledge that barely fifteen years after Bernstein published them—and mere weeks after his death—Germany and later Europe would fall prey to the most egregious apotheosis of exactly the militarist, imperialist, and national-chauvinist tendencies he so bitterly abhorred, and which he sought to fight in his party as well as his country throughout the last thirty years of his life. Yet it is hard to argue that Bernstein—hopeful as he was about the prospects for international peace and cooperation—would have been entirely shocked by the descent of German society into vicious, sectarian totalitarianism. He would have been especially unsurprised

[88] [Ibid., pp.TBC (*SDIP*)]
[89] [Ibid., pp.TBC (*ILIP*)]
[90] [Ibid., pp.TBC (*SDIP*)]
[91] [Ibid., pp.TBC (*ILIP*)]
[92] [Ibid., pp.TBC (*ILIP*)]
[93] [Ibid., pp.TBC (*ILIP*)]

at the rapid co-option of a whole raft of German intellectuals, hitherto held in the highest international regard, into at best tacit appeasement and at worst explicit abetment of the Nazis' racial policies and eugenics programmes, and their destruction of Weimar Germany's nascent democratic institutions—one thinks of Schmitt and Martin Heidegger as the most prominent examples. After all, Bernstein lays the blame for the 'mainstreaming' of jingoistic militarism and imperialism in the lead-up to WW1 at the feet not just of the German government and its propagandists, but of German academia as a whole, and German jurisprudence in particular, whose "intellectual epidemics" of chauvinism produced justifications for any manner of atrocities against civilian populations.[94] From a late-modern perspective, then, it becomes impossible not to see parallels between Bernstein's often-polemical assault on the intellectual legitimation German scholars provided for the most extreme annexationist aspirations of the Wilhelmine régime and the similarly anguished *j'accuse* launched by Jürgen Habermas after WW2—as part of the wider *Historikerstreit*—at the obeisance of German academia to the crimes of the Nazi régime.[95]

This raises a question about the expectations Bernstein might have had for the realisation of his proposals: did his optimism stretch to assuming that Social Democracy (in Germany and further abroad) would be up to the task he had set for it? Certainly, Bernstein's addendums to both *League of Peoples or League of States?* and *International Law and International Politics* reveal a fierce but wary hopefulness about the prospects for the expansion and democratisation of international institutions, and in *Social Democracy and International Politics*, he argues that, of all parties and ideologies, only Social Democracy was capable of healing the material and spiritual wounds the war had inflicted on peoples and societies. But the reason he gives for social democrats to assume a special role in the reconstruction of Europe is rather curt and sobering:

> Social Democracy did not prevent the war that has torn Europe apart, and has also done nothing to cut it short up to now. All the more does it have an obligation to commit all its strength to reconstructing the Europe that is to come.[96]

In the same vein, Bernstein castigates the SPD majority faction's 'peace' manifesto for being a "proclamation" of the "lack of influence", "lack of will", "self-emasculation", "impotence", and "lack of goodwill" of German Social Democracy to be a meaningful contributor to the post-war reconstruction of Europe.[97] If Social Democracy was to become a dominant force in international politics again, then clearly—in Bernstein's eyes—it had a lot to learn. In particular, it had much to learn from the "Anglo-Saxon" approach to international relations, which Bernstein credits with having introduced the first meaningful democratically-inspired pacifist and internationalist measures within the pre-WW1 international system, in contrast to the long-standing intransigence of the Central Powers (especially Germany) that prevented these measures from being fully realised. Bernstein throws back the familiar barb aimed by critics at his well-known Anglophilia—namely, that he saw the world through English spectacles—by accusing those in the SPD with militarist and nationalist leanings of seeing the world through "black-white-

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[94] [Ibid., pp.TBC (*ILIP*)]

[95] See, for instance, Jürgen Habermas, 'Eine Art Schadenabwicklung: Die apologetischen Tendenzen in der deutschen Zeitgeschichtsschreibung', *Die Zeit*, 18 July 1986.

[96] [Present volume, pp.TBC (*SDIP*)]

[97] [Ibid., pp.TBC (*SDIP*)]

red or black-and-yellow spectacles" (the colours of imperial Germany and Austria).[98] In place of its acquiescence to the militarism of the Prussian Junkers, Bernstein exhorts the SPD to become more English in its philosophical outlook, or at least become better-acquainted with the wealth of English progressive (let alone socialist) political thought—a view he had held consistently since his years of exile.[99] At several points in these works, Bernstein is palpably anxious to communicate the salient details of the (in his view) superior 'English view' on the war to his readers, relying heavily on his long experiences of being steeped in English progressive thought in exile in England, perhaps most visibly in the passage on 'fair play' in war.[100] Though he never says so explicitly, Bernstein is acting as an intellectual bridge between at least certain strands of English socialist thought—Shaw, the Fabians, Ramsay Macdonald, and Keir Hardie all make appearances—and the intellectual currents coursing through German Social Democracy. Whether or not he himself was intellectually anglicised by his experiences, he could clearly be viewed, at least partly, as seeking to slightly anglicise the outlook of the wider German left.

This, in turn, prompts a further question that goes beyond the specific influences on Bernstein's thought: how successful was he in effecting the transformation he hoped for within Social Democracy, both in general and on international questions in particular? Or, from another angle: how far has Social Democracy in fact followed the kind of intellectual and strategic trajectory Bernstein envisioned in the century since he wrote these works? Bernstein's views on how a social-democratic party should confront the problems and priorities of international politics are neatly encapsulated by the end of his *coda* to the final essay in *Social Democracy and International Politics*:

> A Germany whose Social Democracy proves itself a strong and resolute opponent of imperialist tendencies will be seen very differently by peoples than a Germany whose Social Democracy lays down arms before them as soon as the occasion arises. Anyone who does not wish to risk the war continuing until both sides have bled dry will understand the view that a German social democrat renders his people the greatest service if he places value on offering—and determines his policy so as to offer—the world the certainty that Germany's Social Democracy is, just as before, the unrelenting opponent of all imperialist *Machtpolitik*, and that it cleaves unshaken to the idea of regulating the relations between peoples in accordance with peoples' democratic right to self-determination and the international solidarity of the proletariat.[101]

If the core lesson that Bernstein wished Social Democracy to learn from the SPD's mistakes before and during WW1 was the need to oppose imperialism in all its forms, then its subsequent record suggests that it has done so only to a rather mixed degree. Centre-left parties across Europe and beyond which carry the social-democratic label have generally adhered to the anti-imperialist line when in opposition, but when in government, the same parties have far too often at best turned a blind eye to, and at worst supported or even instigated, what Bernstein would consider militaristic imperialism in various guises—ranging from the First Indochina War waged by France under Vincent Auriol and the SFIO to Britain's involvement in the Afghanistan and Iraq Wars under Tony Blair and the Labour Party. This is especially visible with formerly proletarian parties that are co-opted into *liberal* (i.e., bourgeois) projects of 'humanitarian interventionism', such as Germany's contribution to the NATO intervention

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[98] [Ibid., pp.TBC (*SDIP*)]

[99] Letter to Kautsky, 22 March 1894, in Till Schelz-Brandenburg (ed.), *Eduard Bernsteins Briefwechsel mit Karl Kautsky (1891-1895)* (Frankfurt: Campus, 2011), p.345.

[100] [Present volume, pp.TBC in this volume (*SDIP*)]

[101] [Ibid., pp.TBC (*SDIP*).]

in the Kosovo War under Gerhard Schröder and the SPD, or France's formation of a military coalition against the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria under François Hollande and the PS—which, in another grim historical echo, are all too frequently given theoretical window-dressing by left-leaning academics, most recently in the form of the 'intellectual epidemic' of political theories of 'just war'.[102]

In other words, it seems that the record of social-democratic parties over the last century appears to offer at best only partial validation for Bernstein's decision to rest his hopes for the future peace and progress of the world on Social Democracy as a movement. In this light, it becomes tempting for thinkers and activists on the left and centre-left to simply turn away from social-democratic ideology entirely, and reject Bernstein's efforts to articulate an independent position that bridged the contrary pulls of socialist theory and social-democratic practice as an impossible ideal. Either, like the Spartacists, and their modern successors from traditions as rich and diverse as autonomism, participism, and various overlapping combinations of communism, anarchism, and syndicalism, they downplay reformist strategies oriented towards capturing power in national parliaments in favour of protests, strikes, occupations, and other forms of direct and revolutionary action, increasingly coordinated across borders and via international networks. Or, like the *Praktiker*, and the current inheritors of their mantle from advocates of the Third Way tendency, market socialism, and welfare capitalism, they acquiesce to operating within the rules of national and international institutions shaped and dominated by liberal-capitalist ideas and practices, and limit themselves to managerialism, technocratic policymaking, and battling for incremental improvements within their parochial domestic contexts. Arguably, however, both of these turns are something of a mistake. Their effect is merely that of hollowing out the intellectual foundations of Social Democracy while leaving unchanged the fact that social-democratic parties still represent the dominant institutional force for progressive politics within parliamentary democracies the world over—i.e., they exacerbate the 'Crisis of Social Democracy' without offering any alternative to take its place.[103] Given these institutional conditions, a rejuvenation of social-democratic theory is more necessary than ever before, and returning to its origins in the thought of Bernstein and others becomes a vital part of the process of uncovering ideas and revealing trajectories that might shed new light on the pressing issues of contemporary society—patriotism and internationalism, war and peace, and the capacity of politics and law to achieve meaningful progressive transformations.

4. *Notes on the translation*

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[102] See, for example, Michael W. Brough, John W. Lango, and Harry van der Linden (eds.), *Rethinking the Just War Tradition* (Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 2007); Mark Evans (ed.), *Just War Theory: A Reappraisal* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2005); Nicholas Fotion, *War and Ethics* (London: Continuum, 2007); Jeff McMahan, *Killing in War* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009); Uwe Steinhoff, *On the Ethics of War and Terrorism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007). [103] See, for example, John Callaghan and Nina Fishman, *In search of social democracy: responses to crisis and modernisation* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2010); Michael Keating and David McCrone (eds.), *The Crisis of Social Democracy in Europe* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2013); Henning Meyer and Jonathan Rutherford, *The Future of European Social Democracy: Building the Good Society* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012); Fritz W. Scharpf, *Crisis and Choice in European Social Democracy* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1991).

With the exception of 3 articles from *Social Democracy and International Politics*—which I have translated here as 'The socialist concept of democracy', 'The value of the Workers' International', and 'A manifesto of the majority fraction in German Social Democracy'—that were included in the comparatively recent (1996) collection *Selected Writings, 1900–21* (edited by Manfred Steger), the works presented in this collection are translated in full here for the first time.[104] As such, they contribute a large portion of new material to the comparatively sparsely populated and fragmented set of Bernstein's works that are currently available in English translation, and round out the available sources with which social theorists and historians can characterise and understand Bernstein's development as a foundational social-democratic thinker.

Bernstein's style of writing fluctuates noticeably across the essays and lectures that form the basis for these three works, depending on the audience he had in mind for each one. I have tried, as far as possible, to reflect his engaging, part-analytical, part-narrative, at times even conversational style in the English translation, especially the intensity of sentiment that marks some of the more polemical passages. Although I have been careful to bear in mind the linguistic usages and conventions of Bernstein's time, I have also adjusted the language and style in places to conform more closely to the expectations of a modern Anglophone audience. In particular, one stylistic implication of the major disparity in size between the vocabularies of German and English is that repetitiveness is both proportionately less desirable and more avoidable in English than it is in German. This is evident in several passages in these works, and I have tried to balance the need for consistency in translating Bernstein's choice of rhetoric or conceptual vocabulary with the need to reflect the eloquence of his original texts. In addition, I have used Bernstein's original emphasis throughout the works, replacing the increased letter-spacing (*Sperrschrift*) in the German text with the more customary italicisation in the English, and retained the (to modern eyes) glaring gender bias in the original to reflect both Bernstein's own mode of expression and the historical norms of his era.

By nature of the themes Bernstein addresses, especially his critical stance towards many of the unthinking errors and internal contradictions that have crept into the use of certain major theoretical concepts of international relations and international jurisprudence, some of his vocabulary is highly specific and idiosyncratic, to the point of being unfamiliar to modern German and English readers. *Völkerbund*, *Völkerrecht*, and *Völkerpolitik* are three prominent examples: since Bernstein lays so much weight on the distinction between 'peoples' and 'nations', I have chosen to translate these in most cases as 'league of peoples', 'law of peoples', and 'politics of peoples', rather than the more normal 'League of Nations', 'international law', and 'international politics'. The same, given the distinction Bernstein wishes to make between 'peoples' and 'states', is true of *Staatenbund*, *Staatenrecht*, and similar constructions, for which I have typically used an apposite term such as 'confederation', and 'inter-state law' or 'law of states'—with the term *Staatsvolk* ('constitutive people [of a state]') posing a particularly thorny challenge. The word *Bund* carries a particularly diverse set of meanings and connotations, including 'league', 'union', 'alliance', 'association', 'confederacy', or 'federation', although I have tended to use 'league' in most cases, except where the context obviously requires another meaning. The same also applies to *Herrschaft*, which—thanks to Weber—now

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[104] See 'The Socialist Conception of Democracy', 'The Value of the International Workmen's Association', and 'Critique of the German Social Democrats' "Peace Manifesto"', in Eduard Bernstein, *Selected Writings, 1900–21*, Manfred B. Steger (ed.) (Amherst, NY: Prometheus Books, 1996).

commands a wide range of possible meanings, such as 'rule', 'dominion', 'dominance', and 'authority' depending on context. Bernstein uses the word *Sozialdemokratie* in the conventional German fashion to refer not just to social-democratic ideology, but also to the whole social-democratic movement, including the members of social-democratic parties. I have chosen to follow the convention of other translators of Bernstein by rendering this as 'Social Democracy' (deliberately capitalised)—with the same for related concepts such as *bürgerliche Demokratie* ('Bourgeois Democracy') and *proletarische Demokratie* ('Proletarian Democracy'). Apart from these, I have also occasionally retained Bernstein's original German terms in square parentheses in-text in order to clarify any ambiguities or obscurities in the translation I have chosen.

Lastly, Bernstein draws on a vast array of sources throughout his works, ranging from magazine articles and parliamentary records to legal scholarship and Biblical and literary quotations. However, he only rarely provides his own references for the relevant sources, so I have completed these citations (with a few exceptions), making particular effort to locate original texts where Bernstein uses translated quotations from other languages (most commonly French or English). Where Bernstein provides his own footnotes, these are indicated with the use of square parentheses, and the addition of "Ed. B. —" at the start. I have taken the liberty of adding an extensive apparatus of further notes for the benefit of readers who do not share the familiarity Bernstein simply assumes with the major figures and intellectual debates of his time.