

Politics at the University of Hull. The editors have managed to combine some excellent original articles, most notably from Noël O'Sullivan and Bhikhu Parekh on the philosophical rationale of the welfare state, with some novel and interesting perspectives that widen the discursive context of welfare. But the quality of papers is uneven to say the least.

The main problem revolves around the central thesis that most contributors uncritically accept: that the welfare state is withering. Although there is clearly a crisis of the welfare state because of a mismatch between available funding and the extension of entitlements, Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) figures clearly show that welfare expenditure in most developed societies remains static at around 25 per cent (with the notable exception of Sweden where welfare expenditure has been falling for the last decade from a high of around 35 per cent in the mid-1990s). So crisis of welfare state yes, but withering?

The parameters of the crisis are well sketched in O'Sullivan's and Matt Beech's contributions, while Edward Page adds a useful perspective by focusing on the role of the bureaucracy, and Parekh considers the tensions between multiculturalism and solidarity. Simon Lee and Richard Woodward provide insights into the shift from mutualisation of risk to privatisation of individual gains, a key concern for long-term welfare funding. Justin Morris and Nicholas Wheeler focus on the conditions of international solidarity and welfare regimes and usefully broaden the context of discussion to geopolitical issues, while Mahrukh Doctor provides an instructive view of the Brazilian welfare regime.

There are, however, some contributions that can hardly disguise their ideological slant. Jack Hayward starts with a polemic against 'reactionaries' who want to roll back the welfare state. As mentioned above, there is in fact little evidence that welfare expenditure is falling, and the only evidence Hayward brings to the table is a citation of Wilkinson and Pickett's book *The Spirit Level*, which notably does not make the point of decreasing welfare expenditure but of the effects of different welfare regimes in different states.

Other contributions may be of more interest to students of defence or the environment, and in fact might have been better placed elsewhere. Overall, this collection of papers offers some well-argued

contributions but also some weaker, mainly polemical papers.

Axel Kaehne
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Explaining Terrorism: Causes, Processes and Consequences by Martha Crenshaw. Oxford: Routledge, 2011. 268pp., £24.99, ISBN 9780415780513

A compelling account explaining terrorism requires two things: rigorous multi-level analysis with an interdisciplinary approach and in-depth exploration into terrorism past, present and future. *Explaining Terrorism*, a collection of carefully selected essays by Martha Crenshaw, fulfils these requirements. Guiding the reader through her journey on the study of terrorism, Crenshaw demonstrates how her take on the causes, processes and consequences of terrorism have changed since her first publication in 1972.

The book is organised into four sections, with an introductory chapter that sets out a framework to integrate the rest of the essays. The first set of essays offers insightful analyses of concepts and causes of terrorism as well as a convincing argument on the irrelevancy of the 'old' vs. 'new' terrorism dichotomy, since what is said to be new and what is said to be old reveal many similarities rather than firm differences (p. 66). Moving to the analysis of different approaches explaining terrorist behaviour, the second set of essays identifies which approach has more explanatory power: organisational, strategic or psychological. Crenshaw argues that the organisational approach with its focus on group dynamics is more relevant than the psychological approach, and a terrorist act is more instrumental at the collective level. The remaining two sets of essays consider government policies towards terrorism, and the organisational and psychological conditions that may lead to a decline of terrorist tactics. With regard to the former issue, a careful policy-making process is assumed to have a better chance of producing substantive policy even though Crenshaw admits that such an assumption would be difficult to measure.

Covering more than 30 years of research, this impressive collection of essays is well organised and full of arguments that push the reader to reconsider recent literature on terrorism. Nevertheless, Crenshaw sells herself short by choosing not to include more in-depth analyses of empirical cases. Therefore, readers unfamiliar with her 2010 research project *Mapping Terrorist*

Organizations on developing models to produce a comprehensive comparative framework to study the evolution of terrorist organisations and trace their interaction over time, which will be applied to the case of al-Qa'eda and its affiliates, may think that terrorism, a highly visible and empirical subject, is studied in an overly abstract way. However, this should not hold them back from reading this accessible and innovative approach to the study of terrorism, which will surely be a great asset to those studying terrorist violence.

Ahmet Tolga Turker
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Rethinking Contemporary Feminist Politics by **Jonathan Dean**. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010. 226pp., £57.50, ISBN 978 0 230 23892 3

Rethinking Contemporary Feminist Politics is a comprehensive account of the practices of three prominent UK feminist groups: the Fawcett Society, Women's Aid and the website The F-Word. The 'rethinking' of the title refers to Dean's reformulated understanding of radical politics, which takes cues from the radical democratic politics of Ernesto Laclau and seeks to move away from an understanding of the 1970s feminist ideals of autonomy and purity as fundamental to feminist radicalism. The book argues that, while some aspects of contemporary feminist activity may be interpreted as affirming a 'deradicalisation' thesis, it also consists of practices with a radical potential.

The book can roughly be divided into a theoretical section, consisting of a critique of narratives of feminist decline and an account of radicalism which draws on Laclau, Hannah Arendt and Linda Zerilli, and an empirical section consisting of detailed analysis of the three feminist groups. Both are interesting and valuable. Dean's reworked account of radical politics is particularly important, providing a means of critiquing feminist practices without recourse to a narrow and prescriptive understanding of what feminism 'ought' to be. Meanwhile, his balanced discussion of contemporary feminist politics resists, as Dean puts it, an 'overly celebratory' account while also refusing totalising narratives of decline.

Nonetheless, while Dean constructs a convincing challenge to such narratives, he tends to be overly dismissive of the concerns of the authors discussed. The book contains little sustained consideration of why autonomy might be valuable to feminists and why its

(perceived) loss might be mourned. This dismissive attitude persists into the empirical chapters. While Dean aims to challenge accounts of institutionalisation and de-radicalisation, for the most part the feminist groups discussed are not analysed in their interactions with the state. That they engage with state institutions is acknowledged, but the effect this might have had on their discourse is not examined: when Women's Aid gives evidence to parliamentary committees, for example, does it alter its language to suit the changed discursive terrain? This is an unfortunate omission, as these instances have the potential to provide compelling evidence for or against the de-radicalisation thesis.

Dean's optimism concerning feminist resurgence will as such be unlikely to convince those feminists who do value the ideals of autonomy and purity. However, the above criticisms do not detract from his rethinking of radicalism, which provides an extremely useful framework for the analysis of counter-hegemonic practices.

Fran Amery
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Reimagining Child Soldiers by **Mark Drumbl**. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012. 239pp., £17.99, ISBN 978 0 19 959266 1

Mark Drumbl's newest book is an excellent contribution to the topical study of child soldiers, a field caught up in debate regarding the responsibility or lack of responsibility that child soldiers may bear for the acts of atrocity of which they are causal agents. In this book, Drumbl points to the unique position that child soldiers occupy on the continuum between responsible perpetrator of atrocity and blameless victim. He writes that 'although scattered and incomplete, accounts of the conduct of child soldiers during atrocity-producing conflicts offer corrective counterweights to the dominant assumption of faultless passive victimhood' (p. 81).

Drumbl acknowledges that despite the efforts of international law and policy to eradicate child soldiering, the practice persists globally and he turns, therefore, to issues of post-conflict reintegration and asks, among other questions, whether child soldiers are necessarily well served by formulaic stereotypes that no child can ever volunteer to participate in armed groups or commit human rights abuses without being forced. His reasoning for shedding light on the inaccuracy of the non-responsible agent lens through which child soldiers are generally viewed, he