

severe struggles with his own times: the necessity for Wilhelmine Germany to share its largess and grandeur with the common man if it was to expand into a world power; and the necessity for Weimar Germany to come to terms with the plurality of human interests in order to share in the world's bounty and the world's tasks. The author is rigorously fair; Meinecke's *German Catastrophe* is justly criticized for its unsubstantial analysis, and we are never permitted to confuse sympathy and admiration for the man Meinecke with the temporal limitations of the man's mind. Pistone is less original, though highly successful, in placing Meinecke in the historiographical and philosophical context of Kant, Hegel, and Ranke. These great universalists had to be "transcended" in Bismarckian Germany, but the Prussian school in which Meinecke learned history was far too parochial to serve as more than antithesis for the brilliant young theorist. Seizing upon the "objective idealism" of Hegel and incorporating it into a Rankean historicism, Meinecke was able to place German statism into an evolutionary framework far more sophisticated than the Darwinian Treitschke's. Naumann's social imperialism was similarly the raw material out of which Meinecke's subtle mind wove a rationalization for *Weltmacht*, only to discover in the Ludendorff dictatorship and the Revolution the shortcomings of all purely state-centered power calculuses. Meinecke, like most historians, found himself rationalizing the status quo, but in the great pietist-North German tradition he would not remain content with the contradictions. Although not so much a Protestant as an ecumenical, Meinecke lived up to the finest traditions of scholarly responsibility.

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GEORGE SCHWAB. *The Challenge of the Exception: An Introduction to the Political Ideas of Carl Schmitt between 1921 and 1936*. Berlin: Duncker & Humblot. 1970. Pp. 174.

This study presents the political ideas of Carl Schmitt and shows how he applied these ideas to the analysis of the Weimar Constitution, to the crisis of the last years of the republic, and to the Nazi regime.

Schmitt, who was hostile to the divisive, mul-

tiparty aspect of the Weimar system, attached importance to the powers of the president, particularly the emergency powers provided in Article 48. In "a state of exception," Schmitt held, the president legally becomes a "commissarial dictator," that is, he holds a commission to deal with crisis and to restore order. He even acquires a kind of sovereignty under these conditions in that he is not bound by norms deriving from legal bodies but decides what is to be done on the basis of the concrete situation ("decisionism").

When the parliamentary and economic crisis deepened after 1929 and the "state of exception" became almost the rule, Schmitt espoused a presidential system. He now argued that emergency measures had the force of laws and that the president might bypass the *pouvoir constitué* (the ineffective Reichstag) and rest his authority on the *pouvoir constituant* (the mass of the people who had elected him). He interpreted the Enabling Act and popular support as proper sanction for Hitler to assume dictatorial powers and became a member of the party and its self-appointed "crown-jurist."

Professor Schwab declares that his study is neither "a demonological inquisition nor an ideological snooping." I concur in this judgment and applaud the author for adding to the small but growing collection of books on recent Germany that are written with some objectivity. Overall the book gives the impression of being a mild apologia for Schmitt, who is seen as centrally concerned with finding protection for the nation in a time of turmoil. Schwab regards Schmitt's doctrine of "decisionism" as motivated by the desire to sustain rather than to subvert the Weimar Constitution and his call for a stronger presidential system "a sound alternative for a conservative thinker." While he does not gloss over Schmitt's conversion to National Socialism, Schwab asserts that Schmitt never conceded total power to the Führer.

The reader who does wish to indulge in ideological snooping should turn to Fijalkowski's *Die Wendung zum Führerstaat* (1958). Those who seek a clear and concise exposition of Schmitt's ideas will be well rewarded by turning to Schwab's study.

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