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# In Pursuit of Peace

*Kent J. Kille*

***Peace in International Relations***, Oliver P. Richmond (New York: Routledge, 2008), 218 pp., $170 cloth, $43 paper.

***What Is a Just Peace?***, Pierre Allan and Alexis Keller, eds. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), 232 pp., $99 cloth, $30 paper.

***Peace: A History of Movements and Ideas***, David Cortright (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 376 pp., $90 cloth, $30 paper.

Traditional international relations scholarship has stressed the place of war and conflict in the world, but it has not provided deep theoretical consideration of the concept of peace. While the focus of each of the three books discussed here differs, they share a common goal: to better place "peace" into the study of international affairs. Editors Pierre Allan and Alexis Keller ask succinctly *What Is a Just Peace?*, stressing how the limited conceptual consideration of just peace in comparison to discussions of just war demonstrates the pressing need to address this question. David Cortright, meanwhile, through a detailed examination of both the history of peace movements and core themes connected to the study of peace, aims to provide a defense of the place of peace and the role of pacifism in global affairs. For his part, Oliver Richmond takes international relations theory to task for not providing much-needed critical evaluation and conceptual development of peace.

Richmond addresses the failure of international relations theory to fully and properly address peace, arguing that instead "concepts of peace should be a cornerstone of IR interdisciplinary investigation of international politics and everyday life" (p. 7). The first part of his book reviews and critiques the main theoretical approaches in international relations and their versions of peace, with the first three chapters devoted to liberalism, realism, and structuralism. Richmond argues that the current mainstream approach, the liberal peace, represents a "hybridisation" (p. 13) of liberal-realist thinking based on a more pragmatic pacifist idealism. As he explains: "Drawing on both idealism and realism to support the delivery of a universal norm of peace to willing and

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unwilling participants, liberal universalism has become a foundational orthodoxy for the contemporary dominant conceptualisation of the liberal peace'' (p. 73). The critique of this liberal-realist hybrid, and the search for theoretical alternatives, drives the remainder of the book.

Structural theoretical approaches (such as Marxism's perspective on class and international economic relations) focus on issues of agency and structure, and thus provide an ''antonym'' (p. 65) to liberal notions of peace that do not acknowledge existing hierarchical relationships. In a chapter titled ''Beyond an Idealist, Realist, or Marxist Version of Peace,'' Richmond examines how the liberal peace orthodoxy may be challenged by alternative approaches, including the English School, normative theory, institutionalism, constructivism, and environmental discourse. Recent efforts to better address dimensions of structural violence (problems that are ignored by the liberal peace model) are presented in the fifth chapter, on peace and conflict studies scholarship. Peace and conflict studies, Richmond argues, has provided a widely accepted conceptualization of peace because it rests within a liberal approach while still ''providing an impetus for an ambitious version of peace'' (p. 97). Peace and conflict studies has gradually evolved across four ''generations'' (focusing, respectively, on negative peace and conflict management; structural violence and conflict resolution; peacebuilding; and critical reflection and emancipation), and in the fourth generation it has succeeded in transcending the liberal peace by challenging its claims to universal values and its acceptance of the sovereign state as a given. In this manner, peace and conflict studies has become better positioned to addresses emancipatory dimensions of peace that take into account differences and accommodate local actors and their views.

The second part of the book shows how the alternative challenge to the liberal peace is built further through critical and post-structuralist approaches. Richmond argues that ''critical contributions to international relations theory offer a more sophisticated conceptualisation of peace as well as a powerful critique of the liberal orthodoxy'' (p. 121). Some vital elements of the critical contributions are an emphasis on an ''emancipatory'' peace—which is sensitive to local contexts and emphasizes people's agency and representation in peace processes, in contrast to the imposition of peace. It also offers a more complex capability to consider multiple approaches and discourses in the conceptualization of peace than previous theoretical efforts that are bound by an emphasis on parsimonious explanations. However, Richmond is concerned that even critical notions of peace contain a



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flawed underlying claim of achievable universality of understanding, which raises the "notion that a Leviathan looms even in critical theory, in a benevolent form" (p. 132).

Post-structuralism is able to move "beyond" emancipation in a manner that resists such difficulties, through a "genealogical, deconstructive approach" that firmly grasps the discursive knowledge dimensions of considering peace, and provides the space for "multiple ontologies of peace as discourse . . . allowing for a broad ranging empathy and a purer form of self-emancipation" (p. 146). While Richmond acknowledges that post-structuralism does not provide a particular theory or conceptualization of peace, he is endeavoring to derive the implicit notions and approaches to building an understanding of peace. All told, Richmond provides a clarion call to international relations theorists for taking peace seriously as an avenue of intellectual inquiry, which is reinforced in his concluding analysis and supported by summary tables and a set of points for the future agenda of peace in international relations. Whether or not one agrees with his theoretical emphasis on post-structuralism, it is hard to disagree with his conclusion that peace must and—as he has demonstrated in his work—can be a more central part of international relations theorizing.

The edited volume by Allan and Keller has a narrower scope than Richmond's book, focusing on just peace. The volume is derived from a two-session public roundtable held at the University of Geneva in October 2001. It includes chapters by Yossi Beilin, David Little, Sir Adam Roberts, and the late Edward Said, and is bolstered with a prologue by Stanley Hoffmann and separate chapters, as well as a joint concluding chapter, by the editors. In the first chapter drawn from the roundtable, Roberts argues that peace should be linked with justice and surveys positive moves in this direction, particularly in the post-1945 United Nations era, such as concrete achievements in the areas of decolonization, economic justice, human rights, and the laws of war. Yet he also warns against a range of hazards in pursuit of just peace, such as viewing just peace mainly in prescriptive terms, seeking an "ideal type" (p. 57) of just peace, and masking interests in the language of justice.

While Roberts presents just peace as "a cause worth fighting for," Beilin cautions that just peace can actually be a "dangerous objective" (pp. 52, 130) and that use of the term should be avoided. Backing his argument with details from European history as well as examples of the failures to reach agreement



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between the Palestinians and Israelis, Beilin argues that justice and peace are always inherently linked concepts, so just peace is a "redundant" term (p. 130). By drawing out and considering "just" as a descriptive addition to peace, chances to end conflict are missed due to claims that a proposed settlement would provide an "unjust peace." Little's chapter is framed as an exploration of peace, justice, and religion, but the bulk of the chapter is spent reviewing four distinct activities related to the pursuit of peace—peace enforcing, peacekeeping, peacemaking, and peace building—leaving the chapter to only "hint at the pertinence as well as the diversity of religious reflection on the question of Just Peace" (p. 175). The final roundtable participant, Said, provides a "series of reflections" for considering just peace, as he believes there is no one universal way to express the term.

Core conceptual arguments on just peace come from the chapters by the editors. A professor of history of legal and political thought, Keller looks at the underlying intellectual context in which international law related to notions of just peace was established. He begins by examining the (denial of) rights of non-European indigenous peoples in seventeenth- and eighteenth-century European thought, and traces forward through the American and French revolutions and "dissenting" views on the principle of recognition—an examination that informs his conclusion on the importance of such a principle of recognition for the future of just peace. Allan's chapter proposes an "international ethical scale," designed to identify the conceptual boundaries related to just peace, with the endpoints labeled "disappearance of humankind" and "agape-paradise," and the intervening points represented by genocide, war, non-war, just war, stable peace, just peace, positive peace, and global care (p. 104).

In conclusion, the two editors combine the insights of their respective chapters to present their conceptualization of a just peace based on recognition (both thin and thick), renouncement, and rule. Basically, thin recognition is acceptance of the other as a moral agent; thick recognition is mutual empathy; renouncement is concessions, compromises, sacrifices; and rule is making it official. The authors show (summarized in table format) how these four just peace dimensions can be combined with the eight-point international ethical scale (leaving off the two endpoints) set out by Allan, and conclude that just peace "describes a process whereby peace and justice are reached together by two or more parties recognizing each others' identities, each renouncing some central demands, and each accepting to abide by common rules jointly developed" (p. 195).



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Cortright, in his *Peace: A History of Movements and Ideas*, seeks to provide a detailed presentation of the possibilities of pacifism and related movements, explaining that the cause of pacifism and peace activism needs defending because throughout history it "has been on trial, standing like a forlorn defendant before the court of established opinion, misunderstood and maligned on all sides" (p. 1). The book's first section on peace-related movements is largely a historical account across seven chapters, starting at their relatively late origins in the early nineteenth century and leading to the antiwar movements of Vietnam and Iraq, covering along the way the movements' efforts to build an internationalist approach, the impact of fascism, developments in disarmament movements, and engagement during the cold war period.

Overall, the story that emerges is one of fluctuation, as the level of the movement's prestige rises and falls over two centuries. Cortright details the early, heady days of the late 1800s that led into the "golden age of peace" and an era of "genuine hope" (p. 43) in the early twentieth century—a time of many respected and well-supported movements. This is contrasted with the struggles of pacifism and related movements in the face of fascism and World War II, when "the term pacifism increasingly acquired a pejorative, even treasonous, connotation. . . . This was the end of pacifism as it had been previously understood" (p. 91). The alleged connection between pacifism and communism further undermined the efforts of such movements, although "even in these dark years the voice of peace called forth with alternatives to the problems of war and militarization" (p. 110), before rebounding with the Vietnam and Iraq antiwar movements and the antinuclear movements of the 1980s.

In terms of impact, although early peace movements carried a certain level of prestige, they did not yet have the means to bring about political change, and their continuing rise in stature clearly was not enough to counter the momentum toward World War I. Peace advocates were then blamed as appeasers who encouraged fascism, but Cortright claims that this overestimates the level of pacifist influence at the time. Nonetheless, Cortright emphasizes the impact of public pressure on such important developments as the founding of the United Nations, arms control, and placing policy constraints on the conduct of war in Vietnam and Iraq. In addition, taken individually the chapters often provide more than just a factual account, each framing its analysis around a particular theme. For example, Cortright seeks to counter "conventional wisdom" that "the policies of peace-through-strength brought about the collapse of the Soviet Union" (p. 149), which,



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he argues, ignores the contributions made by Western antinuclear disarmament movements at that time.

In the second part of his volume Cortright provides a succinct yet detailed examination of a range of themes related to peace in separate chapters devoted to religion, nonviolence, democracy, social justice, responsibility to protect, nationalism and a patriotic pacifist alternative, and nuclear disarmament. For example, in the chapter on religion Cortright looks at the concept of peace in a range of religions, and extends his analysis to the work of Reinhold Niebuhr and John Howard Yoder as representatives of the realist and pacifist thought in Christian writings. The title of his conclusion, "Realistic Pacifism," captures the idea that in many areas pacifism has developed into a "conditional and pragmatic" approach. The overall argument of the book is that "pacifism is not a term of opprobrium, after all. It is a word to describe movements, ideas, and practices for preventing war and building peace, just as intended by those who originally coined the term" (p. 334).

Cortright's conclusion is organized into three sections—theory, action, and practice—and these distinctions provide a good starting point for reflecting across all three books. He observes that what "we know" theoretically (p. 335) meshes well with evidence from empirical research, and claims: "It is not too bold to suggest that there is an emerging science of peace-building . . . [which] draws heavily from realist and liberal political theory, but it is intellectually rigorous and distinct in its own right" (p. 337). Such conclusions are what Richmond is seeking to curtail. Richmond's focus on the importance of discourse and the need to avoid universal empirical principles within theorizing about peace is in keeping with Allan and Keller's emphasis on the "concept of a Just Peace as a language-oriented process. . . . Thus the book ends up challenging a liberal view of peace founded on norms claiming universal scope" (p. 1). At the same time, it is clear that both Richmond and the contributors to the volume on just peace would concur with Cortright that theory and practice should not be held as distinct.

However, how can the more abstract theorizing inform practical policy-making? Richmond anticipates this concern, arguing that "the discursive is also the pragmatic," which can lead to practical reforms (p. 148). Writes Richmond: "Critics may warn that this is too complicated an approach to have any policy relevance . . . yet re-applying the same solutions in the hope that they may finally work runs the risk of unanticipated consequences for the lives of really existing individuals that international relations orthodoxy appears to prefer to



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hide'' (p. 151). Cortright is more optimistic, concluding that there are now sound, proven techniques and actions that have been developed to promote peace, and Roberts echoes that ''the idea of Just Peace is not an intellectual pipe dream'' in light of the practice that has been developed (p. 89). Still, Richmond's theoretical analysis raises the possibility that the basis for action and peace policy needs to be more radically rethought.

The authors of all three books are careful to reference historical perspectives and implications in their analyses. Aiming to provide ''an outline of peace history'' (p. 16), Cortright tracks developments in pacifism movements and ideas beyond utopian ideals to a realistic pacifism that shows great relevance for the future of peace. The authors discussing just peace often seek to draw historical connections and implications for future policy. At the same time, the post-structural genealogical approach advocated by Richmond ''questions representations of history as a linear and selective story'' (p. 135) and urges that attention be paid to how different discourses are influenced and shaped.

All three books also delve into issues related to the colonial and imperial past. Cortright's history is careful to note how the early movements were Eurocentric and elitist, and generally excluded women. He also attempts to explore movements and ideas beyond those with U.S. and Western European roots, in particular those in Japan, but the analysis still remains largely Western focused. Keller in particular stresses the effects of colonial history, noting how legal and political arguments of the time were designed to support colonialism and limit the recognition of diverse cultural ideas. He argues that the American and French revolutions did not significantly change the imperialistic view since the focus was still on promoting unity, not accepting diversity. Thus, it remains an imperative to move beyond justifications of territorial or cultural control to promote true recognition of the legitimacy of diverse cultures in a manner that provides the building blocks for a consensual just peace. Richmond echoes this argument, stressing that implicit postcolonial subjugation continues in the world via the ideas and approaches contained in much theoretical thinking, such that traditional international relations operates as ''mainly a distant, elitist discipline which ignores the experience and lives of people, and any sense of everyday life for most of the world's inhabitants'' (p. 141), and even critical theory ''smacks of subtle colonialism'' (p. 133).



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While the discussion of just war and just peace is the core of Allan and Keller's volume, issues of justice and peace naturally appear in all three works. Richmond's look at the extension of postcolonial structural control indicates the need to consider more carefully what is "just" from the perspective of the oppressed. Cortright emphasizes the perceived connection of peace and justice, concluding that most of those engaged in peace movements view peace and justice as closely linked. This link is evident in such areas as the development of peace movements and their concern for justice, the debate over whether the call for disarmament should apply in "just struggles," and the motivations of antiwar movements to address "unjust" wars in Vietnam and Iraq versus a "justified" struggle in Korea. In particular, he stresses the similarities and differences of pacifists and socialists as they debated over peace and economic justice, and how the responsibility to protect "represent[s] a major advance in bridging the gap between pacifism and the principle of just war" (p. 298).

Finally, the United Nations (the institution, its Charter, and other related documents) is referenced across all three books. Roberts in particular offers an account of the ideas connected to just peace under the United Nations, while Cortright examines the United Nations historically in light of the internationalization of peace movements, as well as its role in such areas as human rights, peacekeeping, and nuclear proliferation. However, Richmond reminds us that the United Nations is inherently connected to the liberal view of peace, noting at one point that the "projection and consolidation of liberal values is exactly what the UN system was intended to do" (p. 35), so his critique of the liberal peace naturally extends to the United Nations as the institutional manifestation of these ideas.

As Richmond notes, "What is peace? This would seem to be an obvious question deserving an obvious answer" (p. 7). Yet, while all three volumes share a common vision of better examining peace in international affairs, it is clear that there is no one answer to the question of precisely *what* peace should be studied or encouraged in practice. Cortright demonstrates that the understanding of peace has been ever-evolving, and that the lack of coherence has been reflected in divergent peace movement bases and approaches. There is no consensus within the volume on just peace regarding what this concept means or how it should be employed, and contributors, such as Said, challenge whether "we can or should even try to produce a formula for Just Peace," since the term is "nearly impossible to use with any kind of universal consistency" (pp. 176–77). Richmond's work



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presents a challenge to the dominant liberal peace approach, and raises the very question of whether there ever can, or should, be a universal notion of peace. While the combined work of these authors does not bring us closer to a universally acceptable understanding of peace (if such a pursuit should even be welcomed), it does strongly reinforce the point that peace has been a neglected area of careful study in international affairs.



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