



The Lost Debate: German Socialist Intellectuals and Totalitarianism

By *William D. Jones*

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"The definition of totalitarianism has long been shaped by the narrow confines of cold war-era ideas. In this important study, William Jones recovers, reinterprets, and revitalizes the fragments of a lost debate on modern dictatorship, revealing a longer and more challenging history of totalitarian theory than most commentators have granted". "Jones traces the historical development of the concept of totalitarianism through the writings of key German leftists from the late 1920s to the cold war era. A record of bitter disagreement about the definition, origins, nature, and means of overcoming totalitarianism, these documents articulate a critical "third path" that challenged the legacy of Nazism, while seeking to avoid both the bipolar power grid and the Stalinist brand of Marxism. In an era that has retooled totalitarianism and rendered cold war politics obsolete, the writings of these neglected intellectuals remain vital implements in the study of history, politics, society, ideology and culture. "

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Review

"To read Jones is to rediscover the vitality and creativity of these German students of totalitarianism. The author may have sought to place these thinkers in the context of recent history, but he has done more - he has invited readers to better understand that history itself." - Choice ADVANCE PRAISE "Debates over totalitarian ideas and regimes haunt the twentieth century at its end, and Jones has opened up new dimensions of their beginnings. He renews our appreciation of thinkers such as Orwell, Arendt, and Adorno, and links their critiques of the modern state to the political nightmares of recent historians and postmodern thinkers." - Harry Liebersohn, author of *Fate and Utopia in German Sociology, 1870-1923* "In this post-communist era, when anything tinged with red seems suspect, William Jones helps rescue the honor of a political tradition. This is intellectual history at its best, and the result is a new understanding of an entire body of neglected-and still relevant-scholarship." - Stephen Bronner, author of *Moments of Decision: Political History and the Crisis of Radicalism* "A first-rate piece of work... Jones provides new perspectives on twentieth-century intellectual history, especially the discourse of the Left, and complexifies our understanding of this period as a whole." - Douglas Kellner, author of *Critical Theory, Marxism, and Modernity*

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