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978-0-521-46692-9 - The German Idea of Militarism: Radical and Socialist Critics, 1866-1914

Nicholas Stargardt

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Imperial Germany bears a double legacy of militarism. It was, in the eyes of many, the archetypal militarist state. It was also the setting in which the modern idea of militarism developed. Drawing on material from the highly-charged intellectual and political debates of the time, Nicholas Stargardt traces this development from its inception in the 1860s until the outbreak of the first world war. In the process the very terms of discussion changed. 'Militarism' originally expressed an older enlightenment critique of the absolutist state, but by the 1900s wars had come to occupy centre-stage. Issues like the arms race and the military-industrial complex displaced more traditional concerns about authoritarian rule, and militarism gradually acquired its modern meaning. This book is part of a wider discovery by historians of the way political identities and ideas intermeshed, contributing to the rise of civil society and new types of politics in modern Europe. The political history of the main protagonist of anti-militarism, German Social Democracy, is cast in a new light, as Stargardt reveals the lasting influence of older radical traditions and reappraises the role played by its espousal of Marxism.

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*Royal Holloway and Bedford New College,
University of London*



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To my parents

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Acknowledgements

When Heinrich Heine was stopped at the Prussian border in November 1843, he scoffed at the customs officers who searched his bags for contraband lace and banned books. ‘My head’, he rejoiced, ‘is a twittering nest of books good enough to be confiscated.’ In this book I have attempted to recapture part of the subversive tradition to which Heine so eagerly subscribed and bring it into the mainstream of writing about German history and the history of political thought. I have been helped by more people than I can possibly thank personally here.

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Abbreviations

AdSD	Archiv der sozialen Demokratie, Bonn-Bad Godesberg
IISH	International Institute of Social History, Amsterdam
ILP	Independent Labour Party
NZ	<i>Die neue Zeit, Berlin</i>
PRO	Public Records Office, Kew
SFIO	Section Française de l'Internationale Ouvrier
SPD	Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands
<i>Sten. Ber. RT</i>	<i>Stenographische Berichte des deutschen Reichtags</i>
ZPA	Zentral Parteiarchiv, Institut für die Geschichte der Arbeiterbewegung, Berlin