

YUKIHIRO IKEDA, ANNALISA ROSSELLI (EDS.),
WAR IN THE HISTORY OF ECONOMIC THOUGHT.
ECONOMISTS AND THE QUESTION OF WAR,
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This book, edited by Ikeda and Rosselli, makes a major contribution to an area of studies – the relationship between economic theory and war – which, I believe, offers great scope for research. The perspective adopted by the book is made eminently clear in the introduction: «It is this reflection on the opportunities for peace that growing integration of markets and nations could generate which represents, in our view, the most interesting aspect of the relationship between economics and war» (2). This clearly echoes the expectations cherished by figures like Jan Bloch and Norman Angell between the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th centuries, only to be swept away in August 1914.

The book divides into three sections. The first is devoted to the period from mercantilism to the mid-19th century. The essay by Alain Clément and Riccardo Soliani compares the positions taken by Malthus and Ricardo to analyse the fundamental contrast in war policies between autarky and foreign trade. The contributions by Daniel Diatkine and Shinji Nohara address the thought of Hume and Smith from various points of view. According to Diatkine, Hume attributes responsibility for the outbreak of conflict above all to the tensions created by the mercantile system, while according to Smith the cause is to be sought in “national passion”. These two interpretations may well have some significant points in common. Philippe Steiner offers a detailed reconstruction of the positions taken by Say, Comte and Constant: “According to the theoreticians of the industrial social order, peace is the natural outcome of the new economic life, provided that the political constitution of the nation gives to an en-

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lightened public the possibility of regulating the activity of government through voting on taxes and the management of public credit” (74). Deniz T. Kılınçoğlu illustrates the relationship between economics and war in the first treatise on economics published in the Ottoman Empire in the mid-1830s. Philippe Gillig closes the first section with an essay where he puts his finger on the contradictions in the thought of John Stuart Mill concerning the possibilities of what would be defined today as “humanitarian intervention”. Mill justifies intervention against “threatening barbarous neighbours” but, as Gillig writes, “when Mill comes to illustrate the barbarians on whom a civilized nation could legitimately intervene, he gives the example of Indian ‘neighbours’ who threaten the Crown’s security. Now, Mill remains silent on the question as to how these barbarians have become British ‘neighbours’” (111).

The second section of the book focuses on Japanese experience of the Second World War. In the first essay, Shimpei Yamamoto highlights the lack of a solid liberal school as a major element in the rise of Japanese military expansionism. Tadashi Ohtsuki, on the other hand, brings the focus to bear on the influence exerted by the economic research carried out in Japanese universities during the war on the orientations of post-war research. Tsutomu Hashimoto furnishes a particularly interesting analysis – above all to Western eyes – of the theoretical support provided to Japanese Pan-Asianism by focusing on the intellectual evolution of Takata Yasuma, a leading sociologist and economist. Starting from analysis of the motives for collective action, Yasuma ended up by supporting the Sino-Japanese War and projects for Japanese hegemony in Asia (“According to Takata, the organization of East Asian Racialism had to be stratified among peoples in order to construct a unified East Asia. It would be natural to assume that Japanese people take responsibility to lead other peoples”: 168).

The third and last section deals with the proposals advanced and positions taken by Western economists to guarantee lasting peace. Thus Atsushi Komine reconstructs the story of an “odd couple”, Lionel Robbins and William Beveridge, brought together by the common aim of reducing nationalist tensions, seen as the main cause of wars. The essay by Paolo Paesani and Annalisa Rosselli eloquently illustrates how the experience of the Second World War, with recourse to various methods to regulate demand and production, led to a drastic break with the “‘myth’ of free market” (197). Raphaël Fèvre conducts a detailed examination of the fierce criticism with which the ordoliberal economists greeted the economic policies applied by the Allies in West Germany after 1945: “Although Germany’s productive capacity remained considerable, the population were facing utter indigence. In their diagnosis the ordoliber-

als took this paradox as a key to analyse a condition they judged 'highly pathological': the Allies were perpetuating a planning system much like that of Third Reich" (281). This section and the book close with an essay by Nao Saito on the evolution of Kenneth Arrow's thought on the effects of conflict expenditure.