This is a worthy aim, but, unfortunately, Kahn's prose is cloudy and opaque and on occasion pretentious, so that it is difficult for the sympathetic reader to grasp his argument, even after repeated readings. Kahn's exposition of the theories of American constitutionalists tends, on occasion, to highlight marginal areas of their thought, while ignoring what is central. There may be insights in this book for those prepared to struggle with Kahn's prose; but the reviewer must honestly declare that he did not find any.

VERNON BOGDANOR
Braemar College, Oxford


Carl Schmitt's 'decisionism' denies that reason and liberty are imminent in history, diverges fundamentally from Hegelian dialectics and proffers a twentieth-century 'total state' that had overcome Hegel's outmoded distinction between state and civil society. Yet Hegelian echo resounds throughout Schmitt's pre-1933 writings. Meinonke arrayed Hegel and Schmitt in the same, 'realist' ranks as critics of 'normativism', abstract rationalism and Enlightenment optimism; Schmitt contra Kelsen seems to reprise Hegel contra Kant; and Schmitt's insistence that jus铃iss is the major attribute of state power easily recalls Hegel's argument—which also appears to sanction violence—about the 'ethical value' of war.

That such recall would be too easy (Schmitt, not Hegel, thought war and enmity the essence of politics) leads us into Kervégan's thesis that Schmitt's Habitus 'decisionism' is not an extension but a 'distorting mirror' of Hegel's thought. Kervégan's book deserves its place in PUF's Léviathan series, which is designed to familiarize interested francophone readers—there are many of these at present—with key texts in Anglo-American as well as German political philosophy. Kervégan's scholarship is impeccable. What is arguably the best book in French on Hegel since Eric Weil's Hegel et L'Etat also convincingly lays to rest the notion of Schmitt's supposed Hegelianism. It deserves translation.

D. PAUL THOMAS
University of California, Berkeley


George Klosko has performed an invaluable service by, for the first time, setting out the fairness theory of political obligation with thoroughness and in some detail. Roughly, the book defends three claims. First, it is argued that principle of fairness generates strong obligations to contribute to non-excludable co-operative schemes if three principal conditions are met: the goods resulting must be (i) worth the recipients' effort in providing them; (ii) "presumptively beneficial"; and (iii) have benefits and burdens that are fairly distributed. Secondly, it is contended that political obligation is best understood as an instance of such obligations. Finally, it is claimed that most existing liberal democracies sufficiently meet these conditions for widespread political obligation to be justified.

The arguments are lucidly presented and Klosko considers the important objections to his theory. He is most successful in establishing the first of his claims but, while he makes some headway against many of the criticisms, serious difficulties persist. One problem is that the fairness requirement is difficult to operationalize in the absence of a compelling or widely accepted account of what a fair distribution consists in: the attempt to defuse this issue by shifting the focus to procedural fairness is not very convincing.

However, Klosko has ensured that hereafter the fairness theory will need to be subjected to proper critical discussion in any serious treatment of political obligation and its statement of the theory is by some way the best available.

JOHN HORTON
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The Journal of the Political Studies Association of the UK

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Political Studies is published four times a year in March, June, September and December by Blackwell Publishers, 108 Cowley Road, Oxford OX4 1JF, UK or 238 Main Street, Cambridge, MA. 02142, USA.

Information for Subscribers: New orders and sample copy requests should be addressed to the Journals Marketing Manager at the publisher's address. Renewals, claims and all other correspondence relating to subscriptions should be addressed to the Journals Subscriptions Department, Marston Book Services, PO Box 87, Oxford OX2 0DT.

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Microform: The journal is available on microfilm (16mm or 35mm) or 105mm microfiche from the Serials Acquisition Department, University Microfilms Inc; 300 North Zeeb Road, Ann Arbor, MI 48106, USA.

US Mailing: Second class postage paid at Rahway, New Jersey. Postmaster: send address corrections to Political Studies, c/o Mercury Airfreight International Ltd Inc, 2123 E-F Randolph Avenue, Avenel, NJ 07001, USA (US mailing agent).

Advertising: For details contact Pamela Courtenay, Albert House, Monnington-on-Wye, Hereford HR4 7NL (Tel: 09817-344) or write to the Publisher.

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This journal is printed on acid-free paper
Printed and bound by Page Brothers, Norwich
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Political Studies
Volume XLI Number 4 December 1993

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