
Western Europe

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The Brussels Effect: How the European Union Rules the World

BY ANU BRADFORD. Oxford University Press, 2020, 424 pp.

This may well be the single most important book on Europe's global influence to appear in a decade. Many believe that Europe's international standing is declining in a world dominated by China and the United States and in which the forces of globalization are creating a race to the bottom that undermines the European model of high regulation and social protection. Bradford demolishes these myths by showing how the European Union's stringent regulations raise the standards of producers in China, the United States, and other countries across the globe. The EU manages to wield this influence by conditioning access to its market, the world's second largest, on compliance with its standards. Bradford illustrates this "Brussels effect"—modeled on a similar "California effect," which intensifies regulations within the United States—with detailed case studies of EU policies in a range of areas, including food safety, data privacy, and environmental protection. Farmers in Nebraska, for instance, grow pesticide-free products so that they meet EU standards. Globally integrated producers of goods as various as chemicals, automobiles, and banking services find that it often makes more business

sense to produce just one product line to the highest standard in the world, which is, almost inevitably, that of Europe. Even big technology firms, such as Google and Microsoft, must toe the line of EU antitrust and cartel policy.

For the Record

BY DAVID CAMERON. Harper, 2019, 752 pp.

Politics is an ugly game, and few who play it are self-reflective. So memoirs by leading politicians almost always disappoint. Even when they avoid outright lies, most mislead by omission, revealing little backroom maneuvering and evading personal responsibility for errors. This book is no exception: the former British prime minister, aware that history will remember him primarily for his disastrous choice to hold the ill-fated Brexit referendum, offers a retrospective self-justification. Throughout, he claims, unconvincingly, that his hands were tied. The referendum was inescapable because the EU had mistreated the United Kingdom and because sincerely Euroskeptical British citizens deserved to have their voices heard. Cameron denies that he was ever pressured by parliamentary backbenchers to hold the Brexit vote. The victory of the Leave campaign, he claims, was at once impossible to predict and inevitable, due to the lack of the EU's willingness to reform; the perfidy of the then recently departed mayor of London, Boris Johnson; and the dynamics of modern media campaigns. Cameron comes across as a sincere and decent fellow severely lacking in the Machiavelian foresight, ruthlessness, and savvy required for political success.

Learning From the Germans: Race and the Memory of Evil

BY SUSAN NEIMAN. Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2019, 432 pp.

Firmly convinced of the exceptional nature of their country, many Americans resist opportunities to learn from the history of others. They interrogate the history and legacy of American slavery, imperialism, genocide, and other mass evils without considering how other countries have dealt with similar misdeeds. Neiman, a Jewish American philosopher who grew up in the American South and now lives in Berlin, has written a corrective. She compares the German response to the Holocaust since World War II to the southern response to slavery and segregation in that same period. Both societies went through decades of denial: for 25 years after World War II, the Germans argued that everyday citizens neither knew about nor supported the Holocaust; American southerners during that same time maintained myths that slavery and segregation were beneficial and that the Civil War was really about states' rights. Starting in the 1960s, however, Germany officially apologized, paid reparations, banned the glorification of the perpetrators of the Holocaust, and memorialized the victims. By contrast, Neiman argues, many southerners and their conservative defenders elsewhere in the United States continue to suppress the record of the past. They defend monuments and symbols celebrating those who took up arms to defend slavery, label official apologies as treasonous, resist reparations, and applaud politicians who employ coded racist language.

After the Berlin Wall: Memory and the Making of the New Germany, 1989 to the Present

BY HOPE M. HARRISON. Cambridge University Press, 2019, 478 pp.

How should Germans feel about the Berlin Wall? During the Cold War, East German leaders insisted that it was a defensive and stabilizing barrier, whereas their counterparts in West Germany denounced it as a humanitarian outrage that revealed the bankruptcy of communist ideology. This carefully researched and superbly readable book explores the wall's place in Germany's collective memory. After 30 years, the events of 1989, seemingly so clear at the time, have become the subject of heated debate. Who in the East was responsible for the wall's fall: Protesters on the streets of East Germany? Tens of thousands of their fellow citizens who snuck through the Hungarian border? The guards who opened the gates on their own? The top Communist politicians who refused to order a violent clampdown? Or the Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev, who declined to back the government in Berlin? Today, the wall has become a contested political symbol. Critics of continuing economic disparities between eastern and western Germany see commemorations of the fall of the wall as opportunities to criticize the current order. Some in the former East Germany view Berlin's current policy of blocking Mediterranean migrants, instituted after the Syrian refugee crisis of 2015, as evidence that stern international barriers are normal and legitimate.

European Disintegration? The Politics of Crisis in the European Union

BY DOUGLAS WEBBER. Red Globe Press, 2018, 278 pp.

Over the past decade, many observers have written about the four large crises facing the European Union: the economic instability of countries in the eurozone, Russian aggression toward Ukraine, mass migration, and Brexit. Of course, the EU has surmounted crises in the past, but Webber suggests that the breadth, depth, and length of these recent ones render them more threatening. This approachable textbook-style treatment of the topic summarizes existing research and compares EU responses in each area. It rejects the conventional view that EU policy grows out of managing the tension between the interdependence of member states and the domestic calculus of nationalist politicians. Instead, Webber argues, EU policies today mostly reflect the power of Germany and, in particular, the idiosyncratic beliefs and motivations of German Chancellor Angela Merkel. Although it is hard to deny that the leader of Europe's most powerful country plays a critical role, one wonders if her actions are as separate from the broader forces shaping the EU as Webber seems to believe.

Braver, Greener, Fairer: Memos to the EU Leadership, 2019–2024

EDITED BY MARIA DEMERTZIS AND GUNTRAM B. WOLFF. Bruegel, 2019, 269 pp.

Every five years, the European Union elects a new parliament, appoints a new commission, and replaces the president of the council and its high representa-

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tive for foreign policy. Traditionally, this turnover is also a moment for EU officials to establish new priorities and a budgetary framework to pay for them. Just such a transition is occurring now. In this collection, analysts from Bruegel, one of Brussels's most respected think tanks, review 11 issues and offer concrete policy recommendations for EU leaders. Each chapter constitutes a concise memo to the relevant officials. There are limitations: the chapters focus almost exclusively on industrial regulation, financial and digital services, competition policy, and other economic matters, areas in which Bruegel specializes; foreign policy, migration, Russian subversion, homeland security, and other important issues go neglected. The market-oriented recommendations are too numerous and idealistic, focusing on what would increase aggregate welfare rather than what is politically viable. The writing is jargon laden. Nonetheless, those who seek a succinct overview of the EU's potential course of action over the next five years are unlikely to find a better starting point.