

transformed into the volatile and often ruthless economic system of today. There is no single culprit in Brill's account. He shows how a series of apparently unrelated developments in law, finance, corporate management, and campaign funding combined to cause a dramatic decline in the fairness, decency, and prosperity of the United States. Perhaps the most interesting theme is how often liberal reforms led to massive, unforeseen problems later on. Brill blames the catastrophic fall in U.S. social mobility, for example, on the shift to meritocratic college admissions policies in the 1960s. The Supreme Court's *Citizens United* decision, which opened the floodgates to corporate money in politics, began with a lawsuit filed by the Green Party presidential candidate Ralph Nader. Brill offers a rare thing: an intelligible summary of the political and policy changes that transformed American life in the last 50 years. But one is left wondering why, as Brill describes the havoc wreaked by the unforeseen consequences of one liberal reform after another, he is so confident that one more round of liberal reforms will set the country right.

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## Western Europe

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*Andrew Moravcsik*

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*Journey Into Europe: Islam, Immigration, and Identity*

BY AKBAR AHMED. Brookings Institution Press, 2018, 592 pp.

**T**his sprawling book by a Pakistani diplomat and anthropologist examines why relations between

Muslims and non-Muslims in Europe are so contentious—and what might be done about it. The author and his research team spent four years interviewing Muslims in Europe, including many religious and community leaders. Their troubling, if unsurprising, finding: Muslims feel disadvantaged, stereotyped, and marginalized. Sadly, the book has little to say about the roots of these perceptions. Ahmed seems more interested in his policy prescription: to override Muslim extremists and white nationalists alike in favor of a more tolerant and pluralistic European culture. That is a laudable goal, but Ahmed's vague proposal—to reform modern Europe along the lines of medieval Muslim Spain—seems far-fetched and inappropriate, not least because medieval tolerance was a strategy designed to accommodate a popular majority. Even if Ahmed's project were feasible and desirable, the rest of his vision is too hazy to resolve the everyday disputes that would still arise over how people dress, whom they marry, and what political ideals they favor.

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*Rescue Board: The Untold Story of America's Efforts to Save the Jews of Europe*

BY REBECCA ERBELDING.

Doubleday, 2018, 384 pp.

Conventional wisdom holds that the United States did too little, too late, to stop the Holocaust. It did not bomb Auschwitz or the railroads leading to it, for example. Fearing public opposition, the Roosevelt administration admitted few Jewish refugees. And the State Department deliberately suppressed information about the murder of Jews. This sober, well-documented book by an archivist at the U.S. Holocaust

Memorial Museum acknowledges these basic facts but advances a more nuanced view. It describes how in early 1944, American Jewish leaders finally managed to convince President Franklin Roosevelt to create the War Refugee Board, which was tasked with coordinating U.S. efforts to rescue Jews and other persecuted minorities. In its 19-month existence, the board engaged in ransom negotiations, organized the rescue of the Swedish businessman Raoul Wallenberg and others in Budapest, evacuated Jews to peaceful parts of Europe and to Palestine, established a refugee camp in upstate New York, and helped deliver 300,000 food parcels to prisoners in Europe. Almost all writing on the Holocaust triggers controversy, as this book already has. Yet Erbelding's book shows that governments do sometimes act for humanitarian purposes, even in the midst of war.

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*Complexity's Embrace: The International Law Implications of Brexit*

EDITED BY OONAGH E. FITZGERALD AND EVA LEIN. CIGI Press, 2018, 352 pp.

To understand what Brexit really means, throw away your newspapers and podcasts and read this book instead. Pro-Brexit pundits and populist politicians proclaim that the situation is simple. Two years ago, they told British referendum voters that Brexit was about reclaiming democracy, sovereignty, and identity. Yet the British government's effort to implement the voters' will has revealed the opposite: Brexit has created an almost unfathomable amount of complexity. Millions of EU rules and regulations govern industrial trade, farming, banking, intellectual

property, consumer safety, the environment, human rights, energy, and much else. Brexit means the United Kingdom must first rewrite all these rules and then realign them with those of the EU and 180 countries across the globe in order to maintain economic relations with them. In this book, a group of European legal specialists examine the practical issues the British are up against, covering topics as varied as what regional electrical grids are permissible under EU law, how to manage bankruptcies of multinational companies, and which types of parody the EU's intellectual property rules allow.

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*Scots and Catalans: Union and Disunion*  
BY J. H. ELLIOTT. Yale University Press, 2018, 360 pp.

In this erudite and engaging book, Elliott, one of the most distinguished historians of early modern Spain, explores the similarities and differences between Scottish and Catalan nationalism. The two movements' histories run in striking parallel, starting with the construction of their founding myths five centuries ago and moving through common stages of rebellion, dynastic union, nation-statehood, home rule, and, finally, the clamor for independence. Despite the book's magisterial scope and subtle detail, however, a lack of method hampers the analysis. Elliott is an old-school historian; for him, great men, wars, and national interests drive policy. He is less interested in analyzing the masses, something that requires a firm grasp of popular psychology, social change, and ground-level politics. Ignoring these factors leaves him perplexed about why separatism is rising in both places. "There seems no good reason," he says. Nor can he sort

out why Catalan nationalists appear more fervent than their Scottish counterparts. Is it their distinct language, the potential economic gains of independence, their sometimes more repressive central government, failures of imagination by Scottish leaders, indoctrination by pro-independence Catalan governments, or some combination of these factors? Or is it just chance? Elliott cannot say.

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*The Grand Strategy of the Habsburg Empire*  
BY A. WESS MITCHELL. Princeton University Press, 2018, 416 pp.

In 1914, the Habsburg empire's fatal combination of belligerence and weakness triggered World War I and, four years later, the empire's own dissolution. This graceful account of Habsburg diplomacy from 1700 to that fateful moment explains how the empire survived so long: its diplomats dampened threats through minor acts of appeasement, always playing for time. The most celebrated case of this strategy came after the Napoleonic Wars, when Prince Metternich, the empire's chancellor, constructed the Concert of Europe, a system for preserving the balance of power and deflecting the hostility of the Habsburgs' stronger neighbors: the Russian, German, and Ottoman empires. Mitchell synthesizes rather than challenges existing interpretations, and his portrait of unitary states managing the military balance is a bit archaic. But the book deserves attention for other reasons. Mitchell currently serves as U.S. assistant secretary of state for European and Eurasian affairs and seeks to identify lessons for today's U.S. policymakers from the Habsburgs' experience. He

convincingly criticizes the Habsburg empire for rampant "anti-intellectualism" in its foreign policy; for provoking and ultimately empowering, rather than subtly deflecting, its enemies; for overspending on its military; and, most important, for alienating its allies through "self-isolation." The Trump administration ought to keep these lessons in mind.

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*Fryderyk Chopin: A Life and Times*  
BY ALAN WALKER. Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2018, 768 pp.

Fryderyk Chopin's music is one of Europe's great cultural legacies. Many of his compositions were based on Polish folk tunes and reflected Chopin's nostalgia for a homeland that he left early and to which he never returned. Chopin did not live long: he was born in 1810 and died in 1849. Yet those 39 years were extraordinary, and not one paragraph of this meticulously researched and often poignant account is wasted. Chopin began composing memorable works at the age of seven; a few years later, he dismissed his only piano teacher. Despite his virtuoso talent, he hated playing in public so much that he did so less than two dozen times as an adult, in part because his uniquely delicate tone could not fill large spaces. Chopin's music often seems improvised, yet he was a dogged perfectionist, drafting and redrafting even his shortest pieces. He was a fastidiously polite, almost aristocratic figure. Yet for a decade, he scandalized society by living with the cross-dressing author George Sand. Chopin suffered from tuberculosis for nearly 20 years, sometimes coughing up bowls full of blood, until it finally killed him. Yet throughout, he found ways to