

one on European integration and foreign policy, another field to which Hoffman has made seminal contributions. These thirteen essays span the history of the European Community and include classics from the period before its recent *relance*, yet nearly half date from the past five years. Hoffman, more than any other post-war writer on European politics, captures the complex, contingent context in which important political decisions were made. Only now is mainstream international relations theory rediscovering Hoffman's enduring insight, namely that when policy is made under circumstances of uncertainty, as it so often is, historical particularities – culture, ideology, local institutions and distinctive political personalities – can assume considerable, even decisive, importance. Although easily stated, this insight poses a difficult challenge for social science. Lacking the rich contextual understanding and distinctively ironic insight that suffuse this book, more parsimonious explanations often seem thin, unable to capture the ambiguities and compromises inherent in the Sisyphean labours of politics. This is not to imply, however, that Hoffman's essays lack either precision or falsifiability. No reader of a classic like *Obstinate or Obsolete* or *Fragments in the Here and Now* can overlook or mistake its central thrust, while Hoffman's introduction states with uncommon honesty where and why certain of his predictions and explanations were disconfirmed. Hoffman belongs to the youngest of several generations of emigrés who rejuvenated postwar international relations and European studies in the US. Reading these essays as a whole, it becomes clear that Hoffman, for all his mastery of indigenous history and culture, views Europe from a distinctly transatlantic perspective. At the centre of his analysis of European foreign policy lies the subtle, yet sweeping influence of US policies and power, to which European statesmen reacted in varied and distinctive ways. To take only one example: in Hoffman's reading, neither Jean Monnet nor his nemesis, General de Gaulle, would have played the role they did absent the United States, which the former emulated and the latter defied. This personal perspective, at once within and outside Europe, gives Hoffman's essays their unique sensibility. In this, the essays mirror the man.

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Martin Holland (foreword by Sir Leon Brittan), *European Union Common Foreign Policy: from EPC to CFSP Joint Action and South Africa* (Basingstoke, Macmillan, 1995), xxii + 277 pp., £45.00 ISBN 0 333 61768 1.

Martin Holland has contributed much to our understanding of European foreign policy cooperation, particularly as directed toward – or, until recently, against – South Africa. Though a difficult and often technical subject, as the acronym-laden subtitle of this book suggests, the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) has emerged as a decisive point of contention among politicians and publicists debating the future trajectory of European integration. In this useful book, Holland places contemporary debates over CFSP in a twenty-year context of less formal, but substantively similar foreign policy coordination under the European Political Cooperation (EPC) mechanism. Holland's case study of the EC's observation of South African elections, one of the first CFSP actions, offers a timely assessment of the new procedure. His conclusion: *Plus ça change ...* Joint action remains hampered by unanimity voting, the lack of legal commitment, and idiosyncratic national implementation. Most analysts of European foreign policy cooperation, most recently the Commission itself, reach similar conclusions. Having observed that current European foreign policy cooperation remains limited, the analyst is faced with a choice between two, generally (if not inevitably) divergent paths. He or she might proceed as the dispassionate social scientist, seeking to assess alternative explanations for the current unwillingness to act. Alternatively, he or she might proceed as the engaged practitioner, proposing a set of institutions that, if adopted, would impel governments to pursue a more active policy. Holland chooses the latter path, criticizing current institutions and practices as 'insufficient', 'incoherent' and 'disappointing', and portraying the EC as a system in need of further fundamental reform. Proposing improvements in the institutions of European foreign policy cooperation is a laudable task, but one that leads Holland to circumvent the most important analytic issue underlying this policy recommendation. The current public debate over Europe has raised the question whether current levels of foreign policy coordination are actually suboptimal. Is cooperation constrained by

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an inadequate delegation of authority to supranational institutions, or is it constrained by the fundamental absence of convergence interests on the part of the EC's member governments? It remains unclear what, if anything, a strengthened CFSP mechanism could achieve. Moreover, Holland, like most analysts of EPC and CFSP, never demonstrates that national preferences are sufficiently compatible – or perceived as sufficiently compatible – to justify the pooling of sovereignty in this delicate area. However one ultimately answers this question, a thorough analysis of national preferences remains a fundamental prerequisite to a definitive analysis of the prospects for foreign policy coordination. For all its timely insights, Holland's admirable book bequeaths this essential task to future scholars.

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Eldon Kenworthy, *America/Americas: Myth in the Making of US Policy toward Latin America* (Pennsylvania PA, Pennsylvania State University Press, 1995), xvi + 189 pp., £31.50 ISBN 0 271 01414 8, £13.50 pbk ISBN 0 271 01415 6.

US policy towards Latin America is underpinned by a set of mythic propositions which assert the vanguard role of the United States in bringing civilization and progress to the 'new world', while the implied threat to the national sovereignty of other regional states is masked by the strategic ambiguity of the term 'America', meaning either the US alone, the US and Latin America, or the 'Western Hemisphere'. In this context, discourse is structured around the 'sameness' rather than the 'otherness' of Latin America. Kenworthy's account of the way in which the rhetoric employed in the Reagan administration's 1986 campaign to reverse congressional prohibitions on US military aid to the Nicaraguan Contras exploited these mythic resources reveals the persistence of deeply rooted images of, and attitudes towards, Latin America. In addition, it shows how Congressional opposition was reversed through the use of covert disinformation, illegally funded public operations exercises, and the targeting and electoral blackmail of recalcitrant members of Congress. This graphic account of the degradation of the democratic process in the United States under the Reagan presidency has as many implications for the changing role of the presidency and the policy-making process in general as for policy towards Latin America.

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Lawrence J. LeBlanc, *The Convention on the Rights of the Child: United Nations Lawmaking on Human Rights* (Lincoln NE, University of Nebraska Press [distributed in UK by Academic and University Publishers Group, London], 1995), xxiii + 337 pp., £42.75 ISBN 0 8032 2909 7.

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child has, since its adoption in 1989, become a widely accepted, authoritative international instrument of children's rights. This book is an absorbing, carefully researched, and judiciously argued case study of human rights lawmaking, which illuminates both the limits of international conventions, and the ways in which the United Nations goes about its business. The book's three parts address the origins and drafting of the convention, its substantive content, and the manner of its implementation. LeBlanc is able to show how the need to secure a consensus tended to make the resultant document a rather traditional, and not innovative, statement of children's rights. Its articles are biased more towards 'protection' than 'empowerment' rights. At the same time differences in cultural and religious values were accommodated at the expense of vague and general formulations, which avoid some crucial issues (for instance, concerning 'traditional practices' and international adoption). Nevertheless the Convention is, on the whole, a success story, and will, for the foreseeable future, dominate thinking about, and policy toward, children's rights. It is to LeBlanc's considerable credit that his book does justice to this story.

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