

the authors' attention. But many of the topics Schmidt and Cohen treat in passing are so complicated (and so important) that the book sometimes seems superficial and glib. They grasp the accelerating velocity of change in the digital age but do not always communicate its meaning effectively to readers who still atavistically seek knowledge from books. The book lacks an organizing grand narrative that would tie together its blizzard of frequently startling insights into just how much change the future will bring.

This Town: Two Parties and a Funeral—Plus Plenty of Valet Parking!—in America's Gilded Capital

BY MARK LEIBOVICH. Blue Rider Press, 2013, 400 pp. \$27.95.

Ce pays-ci ("this country here") is what the denizens of Versailles called their gilded cage in the reign of Louis XIV. "This town" is the name that members of what was once called the American Establishment have given their special place on the Potomac. In the most entertaining and depressing book about the U.S. political system published in many years, Leibovich lets readers peep behind the curtain and see what goes on in the greenrooms and at the parties of the Washington elite. He reveals an ugly spectacle: tribunes of the people transform into corporate shills, money makes the world go round, and insecure arrivistes stroke one another's egos as they bathe in a flowing river of narcissism. It turns out that contrary to the prevalent fears of political polarization, this is a golden age of bipartisanship. Not much happens on the floor of Congress, of course, but when it comes to doing favors for friends, Washington is

enjoying a new Era of Good Feelings, in which politicians help their colleagues score regardless of their party affiliation. The Chinese Communist Party once ordered its cadres to read *The Ancien Régime and the Revolution*, Alexis de Tocqueville's account of how the failings of the old elite paved the way for the French Revolution. But today's Washington elite is probably too busy imitating the benighted creatures of Versailles to learn anything useful from their fate.

Western Europe

Andrew Moravcsik

From Stagnation to Forced Adjustment: Reforms in Greece, 1974–2010

EDITED BY STATHIS KALYVAS, GEORGE PAGOULATOS, AND HARIDIMOS TSOUKAS. Columbia University Press, 2013, 320 pp. \$55.00.

This is the best volume yet on recent economic policy in Greece. It combines analytic rigor with a command of critical economic, legal, and historical details. Eschewing overly technical analysis, this group of authors recognizes that the causes of Greece's dilemmas and the future trajectory of Greek reform rest above all on domestic politics. Greek politicians, they argue, can act more freely and effectively than many observers realize. Yet the country has been bogged down by two decades of poorly designed and badly executed institutional change, based more on special interest job creation and regulation than on fair-minded redistribution. The unsatisfactory results have now been

locked in thanks to political pressure not just from public-sector employees but also from farmers, truckers, electric power producers, medical professionals, and other powerful beneficiaries. This bodes ill for ongoing EU efforts to impose reform from the outside.

The Passage to Europe: How a Continent Became a Union

BY LUUK VAN MIDDELAAR.
TRANSLATED BY LIZ WATERS. Yale University Press, 2013, 392 pp. \$40.00.

Van Middelaar, a smart, young political philosopher who now works as a speechwriter for European Council President Herman Van Rompuy, seems well positioned to cut through the myths and stereotypes that obscure how the EU works and why it is in crisis today. His insightful overview of Europe's historical evolution is livened by occasionally revealing anecdotes of behind-the-scenes political intrigue. Yet in the end, he finds it difficult to transcend the same technocratic prescriptions for an "ever-closer union" that have led Europe into its current impasse. He suggests that diplomats, lawyers, bureaucrats, and politicians deepen their cooperation across borders and impose centralized democratic practices on Europe from the top down. But he does not closely analyze the economic incentives, financial pressures, monetary reforms, public support, or partisan coalitions that would be required to make those solutions work, and he fails to adequately answer the critical question facing the continent today: How much integration do Europeans really want?

Angela Merkel: A Chancellorship Forged in Crisis

BY ALAN CRAWFORD AND TONY CZUCZKA. Wiley, 2013, 214 pp. \$29.95.

German Europe

BY ULRICH BECK. TRANSLATED BY RODNEY LIVINGSTONE. Polity, 2013, 120 pp. \$19.95.

German Chancellor Angela Merkel might well be the most powerful woman in the world. She is now headed for a rare third term as the leader of a global economic powerhouse. More than anyone else, she holds the future of the eurozone in her hands. Yet she remains a divisive and enigmatic figure. Crawford and Czuczka's book, the best biography of Merkel in English, gives readers the facts yet fails to penetrate far into the personality of an intensely private politician whose leadership style is blandly methodical. Despite the book's thin sourcing and repetitive style, the reader does get a strong sense of Merkel's slow but steady approach to governing and her intense commitment to European integration as a means to tame financial markets—elements often overlooked in analyses of the euro crisis. To judge from Crawford and Czuczka's book, Merkel just might triumph in the end.

Beck, a renowned left-leaning sociologist based in London and Munich, takes the opposite view. He thinks Merkel, whom he refers to as "Merkiavelli," is the problem. In his view, economic reforms carried out by Brussels are the only solution to the crisis, and Merkel's myopic electoral opportunism remains the sole obstacle blocking progress. This idealistic view is widely held within Germany's opposition Social Democratic Party, which is perhaps why Beck doesn't

bother to address any of the technical issues surrounding it.

By personalizing European politics, both of these books obscure the real policy tradeoffs that Germany and the other EU countries face today. The polarization the two books illustrate is itself one of the main challenges Merkel faces in realizing any vision for Europe's future.

German Jihad: On the Internationalization of Islamist Terrorism

BY GUIDO W. STEINBERG. Columbia University Press, 2013, 320 pp. \$37.50.

This is an important analysis of the sources of the terrorist threat to the West. Steinberg, a German analyst, presents a perspective very different from that held by most Americans. His basic argument is that the recent focus of Islamist terrorists on U.S. and European targets—rather than, say, Saudi Arabian and Egyptian ones—is a response to Western overreaction to 9/11. The idea of a global struggle waged against the “far enemy” was a minority view within jihadist movements until the United States launched its invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq. One piece of evidence Steinberg points to is that in Europe, most jihadist attacks have targeted countries that participated in those U.S.-led wars, such as Germany, Spain, and the United Kingdom. This well-documented alternative view is widely held in Europe and deserves serious attention in the United States, as well.

The Oxford Handbook of the Italian Economy Since Unification

EDITED BY GIANNI TONIOLO. Oxford University Press, 2013, 816 pp. \$150.00.

In this volume, experts grapple with

one of the great mysteries of modern economic history: Italy's erratic growth. During the Renaissance, parts of the Italian peninsula were among Europe's richest regions, yet the country stagnated from then until well after unification was completed, in 1870. In the early twentieth century, growth picked up, only to be dampened by war, global depression, and fascist mismanagement. After World War II, Italy unexpectedly became western Europe's fastest-growing economy and second-largest exporter. Yet over the past decade, it has again suffered a severe setback, which these authors attribute to large budget deficits, poor adjustment to globalization by big firms, low investment in education and research, perverse wage demands, and the crushing effect of the euro on competitiveness. As one might expect from research sponsored by Italy's central bank, the book downplays that final factor perhaps more than the detailed evidence warrants.

Western Hemisphere

Richard Feinberg

Sustaining Human Rights in the Twenty-first Century: Strategies From Latin America

EDITED BY KATHERINE HITE AND MARK UNGAR. Woodrow Wilson Center Press, 2013, 424 pp. \$60.00.

The veteran human rights advocates whose writings are collected here celebrate the forward march of Latin Americans in securing political freedoms, even as the book calls