

Jarausch, Konrad H. *Embattled Europe: A Progressive Alternative*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2021. 282 pages. Hardcover, \$29.99.

Embattled Europe is the newest book by the renowned German historian, Konrad H. Jarausch. The tale is in the title, and Jarausch examines the battle that the European Union is engaged in for its survival. Fighting against the tide of pessimism derived from the Union's rocky experiences in the last two decades, Jarausch refutes the idea that the EU is a failure, believing that the dream of a united Europe is both plausible and wholly necessary. Jarausch covers a wide time frame, from the end of the Second World War to the Covid-19 pandemic, providing along the way important context for some of the EU's greatest recent battles: the implementation of the Euro, the Brexit negotiations, the migrant crisis, threats to regional security, and the rise of the populist right. With this perspective, he maintains these crises should not overshadow the EU's great successes, and he suggests some paths in which it may yet realize its resilient potential.

While Jarausch discusses a wide range of topics across various years, the primary topics of his argument focus upon defensive doctrine, international trade, and national politics. The Union's toughest critics gesture to the Union's failure to respond to the Russian annexation of Crimea, a crisis in its own backyard. Many critics doubt that the EU is prepared to handle the prospect of Trumpism and subsequent US isolationism, a weakened NATO, and the end of nuclear deals with Iran. Jarausch acknowledges the concern, "In truth, the EU is not a military force and may never become a superpower due to underlying diversity" (p. 270). However, Jarausch is not concerned that the EU is not a military power. The EU has preferred to handle international tensions through peaceful means, such as sanctions. He admits, however, that Crimea proved that Europe needs to find a way to react to violence effectively when peaceful solutions have failed. There are such EU defensive structures in the works, like PESCO

(Permanent Structured Cooperation) that seeks to integrate military policy across member states. Jarausch views this as a currently ineffectual body but is hopeful it may yet bear fruit and prove the EU does not require American military aid to solve its problems.

In the realm of trade, the EU has made some of its best progress, which illustrates the continued value of this European project. Achievements such as liberalization, the borderless Schengenland, the common currency Euro, and many other agreements and organizations prove that the EU is a valuable institution for all its member states. By erasing import/export tariffs within the Schengen realm and removing the hassle of currency conversions, participating nations have seen gains in their economic prosperity. Citizens of these nations also enjoy the freedom of movement, assuredly benefiting inter-European labor resources and tourism revenues.

With national politics, Jarausch looks upon the rise of the right and populism across Europe with great concern, yet he remains convinced that Europe can survive. Brexit, the most notable outcome of this shift in politics, did not immediately shatter the EU as some critics speculated. Jarausch instead sees Brexit as a warning sign more than an omen of death. It has shown Europe what it stands to lose if the EU were to dissolve further. He feels similarly about the influx of Syrian migrants to Europe and the rise of xenophobia. While Brussels itself offered a lackluster solution to the crisis, Jarausch sees the actions of individual member states such as Germany and Sweden as humanitarian victories, even as it prompted extreme right-wing parties in both nations to form. Jarausch shows concern about the rise of these parties but has faith that illiberalism will fade out.

Embattled Europe offers insightful commentary on major recent events. For this reason, it will be of value to historians, but also economists, sociologists, and political scientists. Due to

the scope of the book and the timeliness of its release, Jarausch skims the top of some deeply complex topics, such as Brexit and the damaged US-EU relationship. As these events continue to unfold, future researchers may build off the solid foundation Jarausch has laid. Concerning the issues beyond European borders, some readers may wish that Jarausch could provide more context. For instance, his criticism of Trump's policies on the climate and Iran is important to understanding European views, but they are not always sufficiently explained. However, this is a book about the EU, and Jarausch's suggestion for a more optimistic outlook after a turbulent start to the twenty-first century is heartily convincing.

By viewing the EU as a work in progress, Jarausch defeats the naysayers and argues that the lofty aspirations of the EU remain viable. With renewed commitment, he maintains that EU's visions can be realized with a little help from the progressive alternative solution: which includes abandoning illiberal parties, perusing peaceful, multilateral solutions to world problems, and enhancing the life of European citizens through the welfare system.

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