

Kiran Klaus Patel, Kenneth Weisbrode. *European Integration and the Atlantic Community in the 1980s*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013. 312 S. \$99.00, cloth, ISBN 978-1-107-03156-2.



Reviewed by George Ross

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Commissioned by Seth Offenbach (Bronx Community College, The City University of New York)

The goal of *European Integration and the Atlantic Community in the 1980s* is to persuade contemporary historians to reassess the relationship between European integration and transatlantic politics in the 1980s. Why write this book when there are libraries of existing interpretations? It is now time, new documents in hand, to take scholarly distance from them. What is wrong with what earlier analysts have said? Their work remains useful as documentation. This volume is “revisionist” in the best sense, composed of short, targeted papers by a team of authors. To do it justice I will first summarize and comment on each paper and then conclude by raising some larger issues.

The important themes are announced by Piers Ludlow, who contends that the early years of the 1980s were an “unnoticed apogee of Atlanticism” (p. 17). Ronald Reagan brought an aggressive new anti-Sovietism to transatlantic relations at a moment when Europeans were committed to détente, even if key European governments disagreed. An economically solid West Germany was

deeply worried that new Soviet missiles would upset the balance of nuclear deterrence and allow a U.S. “decoupling.” Margaret Thatcher’s government in the United Kingdom was committed to neoliberal domestic changes, but its “special relationship” with the U.S. remained solid and it enthusiastically welcomed Reaganism. In France, François Mitterrand and the Left, including communists, were elected in 1981 to implement a left radical program that deeply disturbed Washington. American commitments to deep geostrategic changes might succeed because of European divisions or fail because of the European Community (EC) leaders’ investments in détente. Contemporary analysts anticipated clashes and crises. Ludlow concludes that contemporary anxieties were exaggerated because deeper mechanisms of transatlantic cooperation—institutions, the networks within and between them, plus changing agendas as the middle 1980s approached—facilitated compromise and “unnoticed apogee.”

Angela Romano’s chapter on the 1983 Madrid Commission on Security and Cooperation in Eu-

rope (CSCE) follow-up meeting is in a similar vein. Strongly opposing policy options led to momentary clashes, but good diplomacy, particularly American, produced an outcome that restated differences but avoided conflict. The “apogee” was sustainable despite U.S. hawkishness, disagreements on détente, and trade and economic differences, including on the Trans-Siberian Pipeline issue, and on how CSCE ought to push human rights. However, diplomats felt that sustaining existing organizations like the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and the CSCE was more important than confrontation. There is a minor analytical issue that recurs in other chapters. Romano mentions the importance of the European Political Cooperation (EPC), an intergovernmental EC mechanism meant to hammer out common foreign policy positions, as helpful, but neither she nor others discuss it deeply enough for readers to know why this was true.

Ksenia Demidova next reviews transatlantic dealings about the Trans-Siberian gas pipeline. Against a background of American export restrictions, the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, and the crackdown on Solidarity in Poland, there was much saber-rattling by the Reagan administration about Europe’s pipeline plans. The dénouement was similar to those stories just discussed; however, U.S.- imposed sanctions were lifted to avoid collision with allies. Europeans again proved committed to détente, particularly economic openings to Europe’s east. The pipeline was a central pillar of Europe’s post-oil shock energy strategy, and Reagan’s sanctions troubled large American firms with European subsidiaries. Globalization’s liberalizing trajectory was well under way with political ramifications felt on both sides of the Atlantic. A tempest in a teapot, or perhaps in a pipeline?

Robert Brier then analyzes discourses about Polish Solidarity, helping us understand public and elite debate about “second Cold War” issues. The different meanings ascribed to *Solidarność* became part of a larger debate about what the

“West” stood for. The United States attempted to resurrect older Cold War dichotomies spiced with neoliberal anti-statism. But when the debate was over, it was unclear that participants believed that the West was “us” and the East was “them.” Peace movements saw both the official West and East positions as complicit in a dangerous situation. French, Polish, and central European intellectuals, imbued with post-Cold War concerns about human rights, had a different vision, while labor movements had yet another. Outside Washington DC, the meanings ascribed to Western values were transcending Cold War manicheism, and hawks inside the Beltway could do little to change this.

Arthe Van Laer’s paper on the EC and U.S. economic diplomacy looks at transatlantic IT and telecommunications trade issues. There was a long history of contention over trade policy and each side of the Atlantic had different approaches. When threatened, the United States resorted to protectionism and when it had an advantage it pushed for more liberalization through the General Agreement on Trade and Tariffs (GATT). In contrast, the EC customs union included key EC members, particularly France, who traditionally resorted to “industrial policy” through catch-up subsidies to threatened industries and restrictive public procurement policies. Both sides were worried about Japanese export successes in the early 1980s, when the EC developed its ESPRIT program of targeted subsidies in IT and telecoms. In response, as new Cold War tensions about the transfer of high-tech products eastwards rose, Americans tightened their Export Administration Act and tried to divide EC members on trade issues with threats and Cold War bluster, eventually pushing hard to open the GATT Uruguay round. Both sides managed to keep their differences within tolerable limits, however, in keeping with the broader theme of the book.

Duccio Basosi’s “European Community and International Reaganomics, 1981-1985” analyzes

the effects of changing U.S. foreign economic policies on Europe. Basosi's definition of "international Reaganomics" includes deregulation, privatization, financialization, and high U.S. interest rates. Almost all of these items originated under the Jimmy Carter presidency, though they intensified under Reagan. As Basosi also notes, Reagan tax cuts for the wealthy, perhaps the major Reaganomics innovation, provided Keynesian stimuli and large deficits that helped the United States out of recession in the early 1980s, even if Laffer-Stockman economics also saw them as a way of obliging budget cuts to shrink the size of the federal government. America's very high interest rates, a product of the Paul Volcker Federal Reserve's new monetarism in 1979 to break inflation, attracted global funds to the United States and pushed up the value of the dollar, feeding dangerous currency fluctuations within the European Monetary System. Basosi does a good job describing persistent economic policy divisions within the EC. France's leftist flirtations occurred at the same time as Thatcher's neoliberalism in the United Kingdom, while traditional Bundesbank-led ordoliberal anti-inflationary remedies prevailed in the Federal Republic of Germany. Basosi's decision to use *L'Humanité* as his main source for France is puzzling. *L'Humanité* was the very biased daily of French communism and was confused about reality throughout the period, hardly a newspaper of record.

The major transatlantic issue of the early 1980s was Euromissiles, following Soviet decisions to deploy SS-20 missiles changing Europe's deterrence situation and leading to NATO's "dual track" response to deploy new missiles. "Dual Track" was meant to reassure Europeans of solid U.S. support, but many were not convinced. Philipp Gassert's chapter asks whether "transatlantic drift" on Euromissiles helped European integration and answers, perhaps. Germany was heavily invested in détente, and when the peace movement in Germany threatened a neutralist turn for German politics, Chancellor Helmut

Schmidt feared and sought help from NATO and fellow EC members. Gassert does not explore deeply the Franco-German dealings that followed. The key was French president François Mitterrand's support of Schmidt and Helmut Kohl, even to the point of addressing the Bundestag in favor of the NATO decision. Gassert notes that the process did not lead to a revival of European political cooperation advocated by German foreign minister Hans-Dietrich Genscher, but did lead to talk of reactivating the moribund Western European Union. Reagan's subsequent ill-conceived Star Wars proposals were read correctly by most European leaders as unlikely to work and dangerous. Despite all this, Gassert concludes that renewing European integration after 1984-85 followed Europe's need for better economic governance more than transatlantic security politics.

Helger Nehring's chapter comparing the West German and U.S. peace movements complements Gassert's larger portrait by analyzing differences between social movements ostensibly addressing the same issues. The German movement understood the NATO dual track decision as implying that nuclear conflict could be fought in Europe alone, feeding radical protest against new missiles, nuclear weapons, and deterrence plans altogether. A tamer American movement was connected to Washington lobbies promoting a "freeze" on nuclear weapons as a path to multilateral nuclear disarmament. Despite massive transatlantic mobilization, the movements, one regional and neutralist, the other general and multilateral, spoke past one another. They also occupied different places in their respective political systems. In Germany, anti-Euromissile protest sat atop consensus about national social and economic policies. In the United States, the movement disagreed with many national partisan outlooks.

Nine of the book's chapters look at the early 1980s, but the last four chapters go beyond this period. Giles Scott-Smith thus presents an overview of the "successor generation concept in U.S.

foreign affairs” (p. 201). Worries that the successor generation of transatlantic elites might not share Atlantic Community goals had begun in the 1960s but became urgent again in the 1980s after the image of the United States was deeply tarnished by Vietnam, Watergate, and new Republican conservatism. Fostering a “successor generation” provides a different look at American elite consciousness going beyond the *sturm and drang* of larger events. Leading American politicians, think tanks, universities, and foundations sensed that international cooperation depended on transatlantic “socialization,” personal familiarity, shared values across borders and cultures, public diplomacy, and educational and scientific exchange, all needing careful nurturance and financing. Scott-Smith documents the wisdom of some American social scientists and the astute generosity of private foundations, in particular from the list of baby-boomer Europeans tapped as potential future leaders. He might have added that American foundations were also active on the domestic front. The Ford Foundation, in particular, played a huge role promoting European studies in American universities at a critical moment.

The final chapters move from the early 1980s to 1989 as if little happened in between. Antonio Varsori has the daunting task of writing about the relaunch of European integration in twenty-six pages. He leads with a section entitled “The Reasons For Change: Europe in the Second Cold War” that hints that renewing European integration was connected to changing international relations, against strong evidence that re-launching was basically intra-European. In addition, what counted most internationally happened not in the 1980s but in the 1970s, with the collapse of Bretton Woods, currency flotation, oil shocks, inflation, and Europe’s economic crises and policy challenges, all casting a pall over the EC. Varsori allows that “change and stabilization of domestic politics” in the early 1980s EC was also important (p. 230). In fact, the EC was initially stymied by

such changes, in particular by Thatcher’s obdurate pursuit to “get her money back” from the 1973 deal that allowed the United Kingdom to join the EC, and her blocking EC decisions to get her way. Change and stabilization led to EC deadlock that took a reconstructed Franco-German “couple” to break in 1984 at Fontainebleau following Mitterrand and Kohl’s tough joint diplomacy forged earlier by Mitterrand’s positioning on Euromissiles and renewed focus on European integration after his 1983 policy U-turn. Once Kohl and Mitterrand had browbeaten Thatcher into a budgetary deal there followed agreements on EC membership for Spain and Portugal, new regional development policies, and the appointment of Jacques Delors to the presidency of the commission. Varsori, an Italian, understandably underlines the importance the contributions of the European Parliament to rethinking the EC’s impasse (in particular of Altiero Spinelli), and Bettino Craxi’s leadership toward an intergovernmental conference (IGC) at the 1985 Milan summit. There might not have been a relaunch at all, however, without the Delors Commission’s 1985 white paper, “Completing the Single Market,” and this IGC was called specifically to explore treaty changes for implementing the new program. Finally, once the IGC was underway, the Delors Commission played a central role in crafting the Single European Act’s (SEA) expansion of EC prerogatives competences in environmental, social, regional, and monetary policy.

Mark Gilbert’s chapter on 1992 and changing American perceptions of the EC moves the book’s time frame from the late 1980s toward German unification. Mired in “Eurosclerosis” until Fontainebleau in 1984, the EC had little appeal to American leaders. After the single-market white paper, the SEA, and the beginnings of the Mikhail Gorbachev moment, the EC became an important actor and American politicians (James Baker in particular), quickly picked up on this. To Gilbert, the 1988 Hanover summit, where Delors was charged with chairing a committee to outline Eco-

conomic and Monetary Union (EMU), was a turning point. That EMU might be a serious prospect meant that the EC was committed to deeper economic and political integration. It had to be taken more seriously, therefore, by American companies and governmental leaders.

Frédéric Bozo's concluding chapter on France, the United States, and NATO regarding German unification draws on his *Mitterrand, the End of the Cold War, and German Unification* (2009). As the Cold War ended and the EC changed, France was caught between promoting a Gaullist, quasi-independent European defense, which most EC members did not want, and returning to the inner sanctum of a NATO that was bound to change, but probably not in French directions. Uncertainties were compounded by Mitterrand's desires not to endanger Gorbachev's situation and to oblige the German government to make new commitments to European integration in exchange for unification. As Bozo notes, "the truth was one of latent competition between Paris and Washington to shape the post-Cold War West" (p. 282). NATO would then be reformed to American specifications; Germany would unite and regain sovereignty by committing to EMU and the Maastricht Treaty that contained vague phrases about a common European foreign and security policy. Bozo stops at this point, as did the 1980s, but squabbling over new roles for NATO and a Western European Union (WEU) pillar continued until it was crystal clear that France had lost.

Observers of the 1980s have focused on a hegemonic and conservatizing United States trying to discipline disorganized Europe behind a "new Cold War." The book argues that this picture is overdrawn and inaccurate. Even good books have their limitations, however, which, in this case, may be best approached by dissecting the title, *European Integration and the Atlantic Community in the 1980s*, that leads us to anticipate that three themes—developments in European integration, twists and turns of the Atlantic commu-

nity, and whether or not the 1980s constituted an "era"—would be interrelated. Reading chapter titles shows that the authors' greatest interests are in U.S.-European relations about new Cold War issues promoted by the Reagan administration, changing American foreign economic policies, and transatlantic power politics. Potential readers might then be excused from thinking that the causal "drivers" of the book are transatlantic international relations and that EC developments are "dependent variables." Historians do not talk like this, thank goodness, but the weight of causality in the book is indeed on changing transatlantic relations and produces some innovative arguments. Despite Reagan's ideological bluster and muscle flexing, the "Atlantic community" successfully rounded these sharp American edges and moderated potentially serious conflicts. The "new Cold War" of the first half of the 1980s did not turn into the confrontation that some American leaders desired, even though many Europeans did not want to cooperate. The reason is that the institutions and networks of cooperation built over the years softened harshness. Leaders learned that preserving these institutions and networks was more important than risky brinkmanship.

Partly because of this concern with transatlantic relations, reconsideration of "European integration" is relatively neglected. Two papers on the EC provide useful summaries, but more is needed about the EC from 1981-84 for the title to be true to the content. Conventional "EU studies" wisdom holds that developments in European integration were driven primarily by interactions among EC member states and this is undoubtedly accurate. It is also likely that the main causes of such interactions emerged in the 1970s and not in the Reaganite early 1980s. The EC and its members had to respond to vast international economic changes created by the American closing of Bretton Woods' gold window, oil shocks, and inflation. Founding the EMS, limiting the damages from new non-tariff barriers in the Common Market, finding new economic governance tools to

limit unemployment, encourage growth, and fend off new global competitors and inflationary pressures, preventing the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) from discrediting the EC and eating up its EC budget, enlarging to ex-dictatorships in Greece, Spain, and Portugal, and digesting the 1973 enlargement to the United Kingdom were challenges. The traditional story continues to argue that these issues knotted together and EC member states then deadlocked, hence the “Euroclerosis” of the early 1980s. The transatlantic matters in the mix, the United State’s high interest rates and recession and rapid financial globalization, were important mainly because they helped tighten these knots. Threats to détente were serious, but, for the EC, secondary, excepting the Euromissile issue. Surely there is more to say about the EC after 1985, than, as Gilbert asserts, that it was “a Community ... working through the backlog of ... single market legislation and enjoying monetary stability” (p. 263). This vision of a suddenly energized Europe mainly working through an order book of past issues is so far out of line with conventional narratives that making the case, if it can be made, deserves more than an ex cathedra pronouncement.

A final uncertainty concerns the appropriateness of seeing the 1980s as an analytical period. Here the book is puzzling. The bulk of its concerns are about the first half of the 1980s, even if the able introduction by editors Patel and Weisbrode acknowledges some connections between these brief years and the 1970s. More striking, however, is the absence of discussion of what happened after the 1985 EC white paper and SEA until 1989-91. The effects of Gorbachev’s desperate reformism on the transatlantic community, the evolution of Reaganite and George H. W. Bush policies, and EC and European leaders’ responses to these things (which Bozo discusses for the moment after 1989) are missing. The book’s introduction acknowledges that there were “two phases” in the 1980s, dating the first from 1977 to 1986 and the second from 1987 to 1992. It is tempting to suggest that these two phases are so different

as to partake of different “eras” altogether, the first tied to the 1970s international crises and the second to renewed European integration and the disintegration of the world of already existing socialism from 1985 well into the 1990s. One should not judge a book by its title, however. As the editors’ last paragraph notes “the transatlantic history of the 1980s has only just begun to receive serious treatment. May others continue what we have started” (p. 289). Amen!

Editor's Note: The contributor Angela Romano was misnamed and misgendered in a previous version of this review. The errors have been corrected.

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