

**The European Rescue of the Nation-State.** By *Alan S. Milward* with the assistance of *George Brennan* and *Federico Romero*.

Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1992. Pp. xvi + 477. \$45.00.

For the second time in a decade, Alan Milward has taken aim at contemporary misconceptions about postwar European integration. Although much of this trenchantly written history of the founding of the European Economic Community (EEC) is grounded in an understanding of primary sources from eight countries, thereby distinguishing it from previous chapter-length treatments, Milward eschews the kind of exhaustive diplomatic history found in recent books about this period by Hanns-Jürgen Küsters (*Die Gründung der Europäischen Wirtschaftsgemeinschaft* [Baden-Baden, 1982]) and Gérard Bossuat (*La France, l'aide américaine, et la construction européenne, 1944-1954* [Paris, 1992]). Instead, he marshals an eclectic mix of economic statistics, secondary observations, interviews, and primary sources to solve a political puzzle: how can we explain the surrender of sovereignty to a supranational organization at a moment when the modern European state was establishing and expanding unprecedented levels of control over the domestic economy?

Milward resolves this paradox by linking the two trends. The political consensus in postwar continental Europe, he argues, rested on the emergence of a strong, interventionist welfare state. The assumption of new functions, including agricultural income support, industrial policy, and comprehensive social welfare, averted the "collapse" of the European state by mobilizing the allegiance of new constituencies, most notably farmers, labor, and the lower middle class. By the late 1950s, a carefully controlled measure of economic integration was required to defend this achievement. In successive chapters, he shows how the integration of the coal and steel markets bolstered state efforts to encourage industrial adjustment and development; a customs union facilitated economic modernization while shielding domestic societies against the full force of liberalization; and the integration of agriculture permitted continuing increases in farm incomes. Britain, concerned with finance rather than industry and agriculture, stayed out.

Milward downplays two sources of European integration central to other historical interpretations: geopolitical interests and European idealism. Geopolitics is secondary to European leaders: "Except in Germany, the economic foundation of the treaties was more fundamental, because without it they could not have achieved their . . . political objectives" (p. 208). As for idealism, the heroes of Milward's narrative are not Jean Monnet, Paul-Henri Spaak, or any other supranational "saints" in what he terms the "hagiography of European integration" (p. 318). These men are portrayed as hopelessly out of touch with the "true" justifications for integration, while the real heroes were democratically elected national politicians who understood how to exploit creatively the new constraints and opportunities of the postwar world. Some, like Dutch Foreign Minister Johan Willem Beyen, whom Milward calls "the first architect of the EEC," understood the exigencies of economic modernization; others, like Konrad Adenauer and Robert Schuman, grasped the new economic sources of postwar political legitimacy.

As the first comprehensive interpretation in a burgeoning historical debate over the founding of the EEC, written by a leading European economic historian, this epochal work will henceforth be essential reading for all interested in the issue. Scholars will confront its provocative thesis for years to come. In doing so, however, historians and social scientists will begin from different points of departure.

Historians will most likely focus on the empirical claims. The originality of Milward's research strategy lies in his use of detailed records, statistical and verbal, of national economic policy and performance, rather than traditional diplomatic and political records of interstate intrigue. His analysis of the European Coal and Steel

Community opens with a forty-page excursus on postwar Belgian coal policy, his analysis of trade liberalization with fifty pages on trade patterns in postwar Europe. Political consequences are considered with striking brevity. The chapter on Britain devotes eighty pages to a debate over the sources of its monetary weakness and relative industrial decline vis-à-vis Germany before dispatching British policy toward the Treaty of Rome in only nine.

This oblique research strategy is brilliant but ultimately frustrating. Its virtue lies in the near perfect fit with Milward's underlying interpretive purpose. Detailed evidence of economic performance and policy provides a prior or counterfactual basis for his central claim that European foreign economic policies in this period were the continuation of domestic policy by other, more effective means. In many cases, it is convincing. Yet the virtue is also a vice: economic details come at the expense of more traditional diplomatic history, which is equally crucial to the argument. The domestic economic rationality of European integration does not establish that domestic economic goals actually motivated policy. To forge the intervening causal link, political analysis is required.

Here Milward is less convincing. While he mentions nearly all key diplomatic developments and many domestic political events, his analysis of the political causal links between domestic economic goals and European integration sometimes appears to skate across a thin and uneven layer of evidence. Essential for Milward's broader argument, for example, is the claim that French policy was driven by economic rather than geopolitical motivations. This key conclusion is grounded in little more than a statement by Robert Marjolin, a man brought into the French government solely to manage the Treaty of Rome negotiations, to a British diplomat. (Here, to be sure, Milward is not entirely to blame, since the bulk of French and German documents were not available.) Yet Marjolin, who married an American and spent the 1950s and 1960s as an international technocrat, is described quite correctly in one of Milward's witty and informative footnote vignettes of major political figures as "trusted by both Americans and British, and sometimes by his own side" (p. 207n.). His views were far from representative of his country.

Careful readers will also detect a tendency to overlook evidence relevant to alternative explanations. Pierre Uri, whose documented claim to have initiated the common market proposal is a centerpiece of the argument that federal idealists like Monnet played a vital role, is absent from the index. The French debate over the future of its empire, which figures so centrally in Bossuat's geopolitical analysis of French discussions up to 1955, finds no mention. And, like many British students of the European Community (EC), Milward seems frustrated with his country's current antifederalist opposition and thus seems unwilling to acknowledge that hostility to the EC in 1955 might have been the rational response of a country that sent 52 percent of its exports to the Commonwealth.

Yet it is above all for social scientists, not historians, that Milward appears to be writing. They will find their own reasons to quarrel with this book. Milward frames his history above all as a response to the "thin gruel" of theory offered by American political scientists, notably "neo-functionalists" of the 1950s and early 1960s like Ernst Haas and Leon Lindberg. He is dismissive of their efforts to develop a theory of regional integration. Nor is he above a bit of transatlantic jingoism. Armed with what he terms a new "European" theory of integration, he concludes the book with a quixotic challenge to "American" theorists.

Unfortunately, Milward has only a loose grasp of this—admittedly vulnerable—social scientific literature. Excepting brief mention of a recent edited volume, Milward does not reference and seems utterly unaware of the extensive work political scientists have published on European integration over the past two decades. This is regrettable,

since the essence of his attack on neo-functionalism and other “American” theories as too technocratically determinist is now old hat; it first appeared in 1963 as part of Haas’s and Lindberg’s own self-criticisms. Far from being a revision of current scholarship, Milward’s view of the EC as an institution designed to advance concrete domestic economic interests has been the conventional wisdom, particularly among British scholars, since around 1970. Such “intergovernmentalist” theories of integration, joined with more modern theories of commercial policy and international organizations, are currently being refined and extended by scholars on both sides of the Atlantic—although, it must be conceded, they have yet to be applied to the Treaty of Rome.

For social scientists, the decisive taste today is to develop new theoretical generalizations that parsimoniously subsume various domestic motivations for integration. Milward accepts the challenge, then abandons it. His alternative “theory”—as he comes perilously close to conceding in the conclusion—is no such thing. What precisely does it mean to “rescue the nation-state”? In a democratic society, Milward finds, it can mean many things. In his reading, different countries joined the customs union for different reasons: the Germans to regain geopolitical autonomy; the French to modernize their economy; the Dutch and Belgians to assure access to the markets of larger neighbors. Resolution of the “German problem” is invoked intermittently. At some point in the book, Milward formulates each of these motivations as a broad generalization about the sources of European integration, without stating its restricted scope. Since these diverse motivations are not entirely consistent with one another, the theoretical implications remain ambiguous—an impression strengthened by Milward’s penchant for scattering his conclusions through the book in the form of brief, provocative pronouncements.

The basic problem is well known to political scientists: the claim that democratic governments seek integration to satisfy powerful domestic groups, on which Milward rests his case, is too vague to define a unique theory of integration. All existing integration theories, including those Milward criticizes, argue something similar. Moreover, most political scientists—though perhaps only a minority among historians—share Milward’s view that the basic imperatives have been economic. Indeed, Milward’s position comes perilously close to Haas’s belief that a modern state must integrate to assure economic benefits to political coalitions of its citizens, without Haas’s underlying technocratic presumption about economic development as a backbone. In short, Milward’s provocative claims about the 1950s do not constitute a new theory of integration; they remain a set of observations in search of a theory.

In sum, Milward’s contribution to social science is more empirical than theoretical. In this, however, it must be admitted that he does little worse than contemporary political scientists. Although the latter may rightfully protest that his criticisms are outdated, they would also have to admit that his current trajectory tracks theirs. Both disciplines have arrived at more or less the same place. The real work lies ahead. Milward has documented some sources of European integration, but he has not explained the phenomenon. If political scientists are to add anything to history, they must specify the precise conditions under which a shift in domestic economic or political conditions decisively influences integration. This they have yet to do satisfactorily. Hence this magisterial history, indispensable to all who seek to understand the sources of European integration, marks not the end of a debate among historians and political scientists, but a *relance*.

ANDREW MORAVCSIK

*Harvard University*