

textbook. It is thought provoking and avoids potential Whiggish traps. It raises a number of interesting questions, most pressing of which is whether the inhabitants of Europe want it to be a place or a project: a geographical area or an integrated sociopolitical entity.

The idea of Europe has been claimed by many political ideologues. Nazis, fascists, liberals, socialists and – to a lesser extent – communists have all raised the banner of Europe above themselves. A brief overview of the history of Europe gives us a starting illustration of how vicious and conflictual were the relationships on this crowded continent. Both of these books provide a valuable service to students of European politics and history. It is a mark of how well written they are that they contain much that would support the arguments of Europhile and Eurosceptic alike – or perhaps that is more a reflection of how confused, turbulent and bloody-minded the history and society of Europe has been.

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Larry Siedentop, *Democracy in Europe*. Harmondsworth: Allen Lane The Penguin Press, 2000. ISBN 0-713-99402-9 Hardback \$27.50, xi + 254pp.

The author of this book is a great Alexis de Tocqueville admirer and he has utilized the opportunity – just like de Tocqueville with his two volumes *De la démocratie en Amérique*, 1835 and 1840 – to compare the USA, a federalist state, with the European adventure. Siedentop is an American, but he has lived in Oxford for many years. His conclusion is without reverse: Europe is not yet ready for federalism (p. 231). He reaches this conclusion by an account that is characterized by a wide knowledge of the political history of different European states, of the process that since 1951 (the Schuman Plan) would lead to the European Union, and of the American constitution. Siedentop often refers to classics in political philosophy and theory like Hobbes, Locke, Montesquieu or Joseph Schumpeter. He shows the relevance and topicality of their writings. On the other hand, Siedentop demonstrates that he is a connoisseur of topical controversies and debates like communitarianism or multiculturalism.

The book contains eleven chapters: Democratic liberty on a continental scale? Where are our Madisons?, The dilemma of modern democracy, How Britain has lost its voice, Why constitutions are important, Three forms of the state, Creating an open political class, Europe and the global market, Europe and the United States, Europe, Christianity and Islam, and Political modernization and social diversity in Europe: the future. The book ends with a short but useful bibliography.

Democratic legitimacy in Europe is at risk, is the author's radical statement in the first chapter. He explains this by mentioning etatist political cultures, shaped by a bureaucratic form of the state. They foster a view of law and public policy as the domain of experts, 'as strangers' who, almost by definition, have an advantage over locals. In 1831–32 Tocqueville journeyed through the United States, during which he noticed that federalism represented a new form of government in comparison with the French situation, but the English newcomers wanted to look after their own interests. Local freedom was, you might say, their heritage (p. 11). Moreover, they had the English language in common and they also had communal moral convictions. It is far from clear how the current Europe can have this moral consensus of which Tocqueville confirmed that it supported American federalism. This finding leads to the comparison with the informative history of the United States, for it is difficult to establish a federal state on a continental scale. Relocation of power to the centre of Europe is very difficult. Moreover, the losers will seek their refuge in atavistic national or regional pride.

The second chapter raises the necessity of a European constituency by treating the rise of the American constitution in 1787, based on the brilliant work of James Madison. The main points which refer to the future of representative democracy in Europe are, in Siedentop's opinion, the dispersal of authority, checks and balances and significant local autonomy. The debate should be on this point; in recent decades politicians have become almost 'cavalier' about this constitutional dimension. Economism monopolized the debate. Constitutional concerns and attention to political culture are secondary (p. 33). Where are our Madisons? yells Siedentop in despair, while contemporary political sciences by and large have ceased to operate with any conception of human well-being or success. In this respect Siedentop mentions the call of communitarianism. A liberal doctrine of citizenship is, in his opinion, a far better way to combat individualism than the appeal to 'community' (p. 42).

Nevertheless we are prisoners of a modern democracy's dilemma. The pursuit of one kind of equality – civil equality or equality before the law – has generated, as an intended consequence, a scale of social organization which apparently rules out action, citizenship or political participation. Are these incompatible issues? General De Gaulle once said that the only acceptable Europe is a Europe of nation-states – a *Europe des nations* or *Europe des patries* and not a federal Europe (p. 65). Siedentop demonstrates that the very idea of the state involves equal subjection to a supreme law-making authority or power – the sovereign. This is the reason that a state is not possible in combination with just any social structure. Rather, state sovereignty introduces an egalitarian or individualist model of society (p. 88). In combination with federalism this gives provinces or states their

own portion of sovereignty, a sphere of authority which cannot be abrogated or altered unilaterally by central government.

In his argument the author contrasts three models. The French model is in essence a bureaucracy; the German model is the opposite pole from the French and is partly inspired by American federalism. It places strict constraints on the growth of central power and adheres to the goal of a 'Rechtsstaat'. Finally, the British model, the hallmark of which is its informality, its reliance on precedent and custom. In effect the British model relies upon the existence of a distinct political class. It is a model of government which is essentially consensual. This 'consent' in that traditional British form cannot now provide any adequate guidance for the construction of the European Union, since it requires more than mere economic association, but less so than federalism. The French have an enormous advantage: they know what they want. After all, the European Union is a French creation. The major initiatives – from Schuman's plan for a coal and steel community, through the Common Agricultural Policy, to the single currency – have been French and have served French interests. Increasingly the idiom of the economist has replaced the idiom of the statesman. The object of concern is no longer the citizen, but the consumer.

Siedentop is of the opinion that the making of an open political class or elite at the European level is advisable. At the same time, religions, the great diversity of languages and the lack of a cosmopolitan attitude constitute an obstacle. What is missing is a shared conviction or commitment to 'democracy'. Moreover, new nation-states and national political traditions create a barrier to a European vision. Ironically the media and tourism support the cosmopolitan mind (p. 132). 'Open' has been underlined, for there is a danger that Europe will be associated with the arrogance of unaccountable elites. In that case the prospects for Europe are bleaker than they have been since 1945. The example of American federalism provides an important practical lesson for European democracy: a proper civic education for lawyers is a necessary condition for the making of an open political class, just like the creation of a powerful European Senate, an Upper House which can begin the difficult task of fusing existing national political classes together (p. 150).

Following Isaiah Berlin, Siedentop sharply rejects the idea of multiculturalism. It disguises the retreat from moral universalism. This large chapter contains lucid remarks on the relation between Christianity and liberalism, and the future of Islamic societies. In the latter it proved to be very difficult to establish really free institutions. 'Only when the connection between moral equality and the claim of equal liberty is understood is there a secure basis for self-government in any society' (p. 214).

What can be said about the future? The political danger is the reduction

to a competition between elites which manipulate consumer preferences in the fashion of companies. In comparison with the advantages of economic integration there is the loss of national identities and civic traditions. Social diversity is of great importance. The danger of premature federalism – of the rush to political integration which turns federalism into little more than a mask for a unitary super state – is that it could put at risk the complex textures of European societies (p. 230). In fact these are matters for future decades, probably for generations. Federalism is the right goal for Europe, for which Europe is not yet ready, however.

Amidst this ongoing debate on European government, Siedentop has written an elegant and well-informed book. The way he used his source of inspiration, de Tocqueville's *Democracy in America* (published last year in a new translation by University of Chicago Press), created a study worth reading by every political sociologist.

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M. Kautto, J. Fritzell, B. Hvinden, J. Kvist and H. Uusitalo (eds), *Nordic Welfare States in the European Context*. London: Routledge, 2001. ISBN 0-415-24161-8 Paperback; 0-415-24160-X Hardback, £16.99, xiv + 309pp.

This book is the sequel to *Nordic Social Policy* (Routledge, 1999), which described recent developments in Nordic welfare states. Both books derive from a major project sponsored by the Nordic Research Council as part of the *Norden och Europa* programme. The current volume sets recent developments and current trends in a broader comparative and theoretical context and is thus likely to attract more attention from scholars outside the region.

Nordic welfare states are widely seen as a distinctive group, identified as a separate regime type in the seminal work of Gøsta Esping-Andersen and typified by commitment to universal, citizenship-based services, in contrast to occupationally oriented corporatist countries and market-leaning liberal systems. They embody the closest approximation to the pure form of the modern welfare state, and their response to the pressures of economic globalization (reinforced, apart from Norway, by the European Common Market), population ageing, technological unemployment and changes in family structure is thus a test case of the viability of the postwar welfare systems in a changing world.

The conclusion of the study is that the Nordic countries retain their distinctive character in most areas. Fritzell demonstrates that income inequality and poverty are less marked than elsewhere, Kjeldstad and