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H-Diplo Review Essay on Giuliano Garavini, trans. Richard R. Nybakken. *After Empires: European Integration, Decolonization, and the Challenge from the Global South, 1957-1986*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012. 304 pages. ISBN: 978-0-19-965919-7 (£65.00, hardback).

and

Aurélié Élis Gfeller. *Building a European Identity: France, the United States, and the Oil Shock, 1973-1974*. New York: Berghahn, 2012. 252 pages. ISBN: 978-0-85745-225-2 (\$75.00, hardback).

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Reviewed for H-Diplo by **Christopher R. W. Dietrich**, Fordham University

Oil, Decolonization and European Integration

The monographs by Giuliano Garavini and Aurélié Élis Gfeller, *After Empires* and *Building a European Identity*, have important similarities. Each book is very good, and covers the same general topic: European integration. Furthermore, for Gfeller and for Garavini, the international crises of the early 1970s—in particular the Yom Kippur War and the 1973-1974 energy crisis—formed a pendular moment in the formation of a common Europe. Momentum swung from one set of beliefs to another as European governments responded to those crises, and a rough consensus formed around the vision of Europe as a unitary international actor.

Here the similarities end. *Building a European Identity* is a tightly-conceived history of French diplomacy towards European integration that covers a narrow time-period, 1973 and 1974. Gfeller has engaged in an ambitious but compact research agenda, pouring over the relevant materials in the French and American national archives, the Jean Monnet Foundation archives in Lausanne, and the European Union archives in Florence. That research agenda reflects her driving question: How did the French political establishment under Georges Pompidou and Valéry Giscard d'Estaing envision and build European identity? Relatedly, are the successive policies of Pompidou and Giscard marked more by change or by continuity, both with each other and with the Gaullist concept of a 'European Europe'?

According to Gfeller, the surface differences between Pompidou and Giscard are actually variations on a theme, one that differentiates the policies of both men from those of Charles de Gaulle. The emphasis of Pompidou on the European Political Cooperation and the movement of Giscard to more institutional matters reflected their shared commitment to a collective European policy (132-133, 183-186). More significantly, both leaders committed themselves to a unique notion of “European identity” (58-59, 72-75, 195-198).

Henry Kissinger’s Year of Europe initiative—which Thomas Schwarz recently described as “clumsy” and prompted the British Ambassador to Washington, Peter Ramsbotham, to call Kissinger “Spenglerian”—sparked the renewal of French emphasis on the mechanisms for European Political Cooperation, an institutional framework founded in 1970 to help the European nations find common ground in the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe.¹ For Gfeller, who underscores the close relationship between Kissinger and Jean Monnet, American pressure to frame European relations as a new “Atlantic Charter” exacerbated the traditional French anxiety about national decline (19, 22-23, 45). The Morocco-born *pied-noir* Foreign Minister, Michel Jobert, thus began a long-term push for the political distinctiveness of a united Europe, especially through the official Declaration on European Identity in 1973 (39-40, 68-72).

A fitful relationship between French identity and European identity drives the narrative forward, and Gfeller uses discourse analysis and identity politics to complement her close archival reading of French diplomacy in Pompidou’s last year in office. In this frame, the discursive push toward a French “European identity” is a “groundbreaking concept,” one that proclaimed “the distinct identity of the nascent European entity” (197, 75). The oppositional stance of the Quai d’Orsay towards American policy regarding the Arab-Israeli conflict, heightened as a result of the growing influence of Kissinger in the Middle East, advanced the integrationist outlook. In that context, the November 1973 Declaration on the Middle East is “a historical novelty” for Gfeller, because the states of the European Community spoke with “a single voice” (97). Likewise, what Kissinger described to Richard Nixon as a “Titanic confrontation” between French and American aims at the February 1974 Washington Energy Conference and the emergent “Euro-Arab dialogue” further substantiated the French emphasis on a singular European political identity (127-130, 143-146). Gfeller argues that the surge of that political “European identity” continued under Giscard, who enhanced “intergovernmentalism” and “supranationalism” with institutional reforms to the European Community that strengthened integration, in particular during the 1974 Paris Summit (179-183).

Garavini draws on the same archives as Gfeller, and adds repositories in Algeria, the United Kingdom, Belgium, Italy, and Venezuela, as well as the archives of oil companies, the Food and Agriculture Organization, the United Nations, and the World Bank. His research and interest in intellectual and cultural history leads to a different story—he examines European integration through a wider lens. At times, although their interpretations are mostly

¹ Thomas A. Schwartz, “Legacies of Détente: A Three-Way Discussion,” *Cold War History* 8: 4 (Nov. 2008): 520, 522.

complementary, Garavini's broader focus finds itself at odds with Gfeller's tight emphasis on French policymaking. One example is the looming presence of de Gaulle. Gfeller draws a fine distinction between the adjectives "Gaullian" and "Gaullist," and takes great pains to emphasize the difference between "Gaullist" political doctrine and the "Gaullian" post-1973 commitment to collective European action and identity. Garavini introduces the General in an earlier moment:

At the end of that year [1962], France thus sought a new grand idea that would bring it a global role equal to de Gaulle's ambitions. In his traditional end-of-year speech, de Gaulle reminded the nation that "aid must be given to peoples in need for their modern development and, above all, for the spirit of cooperation with those nations of Africa, Asia, and Latin America which ask for assistance from France." He considered the European Community, through its ties with the Association of the African States and Madagascar (AASM), formalized in the 1963 Yaoundé Convention imposed by France on its partners, as an instrument for the maintenance of France's privileged role with the Francophone nations at the lowest possible cost. The new association was symbolically signed in Cameroon, thus avoiding the Eurocentrism of Rome in 1957, and included a development fund and common institutions....De Gaulle was convinced at the same time that, with his plans for a *Eurafrique* definitively sunk, France should also play its global role as partner to the non-aligned countries. This policy was based largely on solemn speeches and grandiose gestures, on the rupture with NATO—more symbolic than substantive it succeeded only in forcing the alliance to move its headquarters from Paris to Brussels, while France remained a member of the Atlantic Pact—and on the idea of Europe as a "Third Force." At the same time, France held onto its special economic and cultural relationships with its former colonies (48-49).

In one long breath, Garavini moves de Gaulle from Algerian independence to the European Community to Cameroon to NATO and back to Algeria and the other colonies. The sweeping analysis merits extended citation because it exemplifies the breakneck pace, learned insight, and wide range that will make *After Empires* a touchstone in the histories of decolonization and globalization.

The selection also points to the central theme of the book: the end of European empire and the rise of self-assertion of the Third World. Because *After Empires* is as much about the effect of decolonization on European integration as it is about integration itself, the research agenda and time horizon are significantly more expansive.

Garavini begins in 1957 by analyzing "the revolt against the West" by the Third World, that loose grouping of "millions of peoples with different religions, languages, and traditions" who feared the "very real possibility" of "a new form of imperial tutelage" during the early Cold War (7). In a variety of different settings, the Third World attempted to control its destiny and replace the pillaging of the imperial past, formal or informal, with a more modern and just international system. Garavini emphasizes in particular the emergence of an economic dimension to "Third World internationalism," and the new "recipes for development" that eventually led to the collective attempt of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development to reform the international economy (23-30).

The economics of Third World internationalism—asserted aggressively by Raul Prebisch, Kwame Nkrumah, Frantz Fanon, Leopold Senghor, and other leaders from Latin America, Africa, Asia, and the Middle East—was not lost on the European nations. Indeed, how could it be? In the early 1960s, elites from the Middle East and Latin America joined their counterparts from newly-independent nations in calling for economic reform: the Organization for Petroleum Exporting Nations, the Non-Aligned Movement, and the Altagracia Charter were all important elements of “the Third World’s new activism and the increasingly global reach of some of its ideas” in the early 1960s (34-35). The UN Conference on Trade and Development, described by Garavini as “something akin to a trade union of Third World governments” sought to use that cooperation to reset the profound inequalities of international trade that beset raw material producers (38).

Third World solidarity was often weak and fleeting, especially in the economic field—Garavini notes the difficulties of the UN Conference on Trade and Development to force the European Community to budge on the international prices of sugar or cocoa. But, even at this early stage, “Third Worldism” affected the European integration process by pointing to the need for Western solidarity “to avoid engaging the questions of preferences and prices for raw materials” (89). Forced to move beyond what Garavini calls “the myopia of the European Community,” the European nations agreed on “the need to defend and promote [their] role in the expansion of global commerce” (87).

According to Garavini, the theme of Third-World economic inequality became closely linked in the minds of Europeans to other important questions of that crucial decade, including the issues of working conditions, environmental degradation, and neo-Marxist thought. The “political and cultural trend” of Third Worldism joined the Vietnam War to give socially rebellious youth a particular intensity and influence. The Global South played a key role in the development of what the Italian academic Peppino Ortoleva called “the urgent desire for moral clarity” (101). As a result, even American establishment figures like World Bank President Robert McNamara and Ford Foundation President McGeorge Bundy joined “intellectuals outside the established political or academic orthodoxy” like radical European social theorists Ivan Illich, Barry Commoner, and Ernst Friedrich Schumacher in recognizing that the political climate had changed by the late 1960s and early 1970s (114, 118-121).

The inequality of the Third World moved to the center of socio-political debates, became closely linked to broader issues of inequality in the Western world, and widened the sphere of European political participation. The 1973-1974 energy crisis created an even more urgent sense of anxiety among mainstream European leaders “in the form of an explicit threat” to economic growth and political stability. High oil prices “shattered the illusion that modern industrial development...could constitute an invincible shield to protect the West from outside events” (169). For Garavini, it is impossible to understand the 1973-1974 “oil shock,” or the European response to it, independent of the broader conflict between the developed and the developing countries. When Algerian president Houari Boumedienne and others accused the European nations of accepting the principle of self-determination only after having taken control of the international economy, the European nations complemented their distance from Kissinger’s Year of Europe with a common realignment towards the Third World (176, 183-187). The resultant North-South dialogue—which dealt with the important topics of

currency instability, debt repayment, and commodities prices—was an important precursor to the “cooperative path out of global economic turmoil” that cemented the integration of the European Community (202).

Both books are compelling and well-written, but some questions will pop up for specialists. Some historians of French political culture may disagree with the weight Gfeller gives to Foreign Minister Jean Sauvagnargues and his handwritten notes from a 1974 summer vacation, which she sees as representative of the “changing mindset among French officials” (197). More important, perhaps, are the limits of what is a traditional diplomatic history. That Gfeller did not visit the British archives or discuss in detail the balance-of-payments problem related to high oil prices restricts the range of her analysis. Like the French, the British became frustrated with American policy in 1974, especially as Kissinger and William Simon, the U.S. Secretary of the Treasury, described both European and OPEC activities as “illiberal” and an existential threat to “an open and interdependent world economy.”² The British Chancellor of the Exchequer Denis Healey, for example, consistently railed against American Treasury Secretary William Simon, and even characterized him as “far to the right of Genghis Kahn” in his memoirs.³ Healey circulated proposals for the multilateral management of oil-money deficits in 1974 that criticized American “brinksmanship” as “dangerously imprudent.”⁴ Yet, as Thomas Robb has argued, the British government of Edward Heath joined Kissinger in criticizing French policy in 1974 because of a fear that French nationalism would lead to “beggar thy neighbor” oil and monetary policies.⁵ Gfeller does briefly discuss British diplomacy, but greater understanding of that context would have strengthened her analysis.

One is impressed with the depth of research and the analytical cohesion of *After Empires*, but certain points of interpretation are also debatable. To cite just one example, Garavini holds that the oil price increases of 1979—related to the reduction of Iranian oil production and the interest rate hikes of the U.S. Federal Reserve—“snapped the bonds” of Third World solidarity by saddling those nations with unmanageable levels of debt (246). But, as Garavini notes, the 1973-1974 crisis may already have marked “the passing of the heroic liberation generation” (244). That debt, UN Conference on Trade and Development scion Raul Prebisch

² See, for example: Action Memorandum, Sonnenfeldt and Lord to Kissinger, “Secretary Shultz’ Questions,” January 29, 1974, NARA, RG 59, Lord Files, 346; No. 143, “The Challenge of Interdependence,” April 15, 1974, NARA, RG 59, Lord Files, 345; No. 41, “Remarks of Kissinger before the Harvard/Princeton/Yale Club,” February 6, 1974, NARA, RG 59, Lord Files, 345; Briefing Memorandum, Lord and Enders to Kissinger, “Following Up Your UN and OAS Speeches,” n.d. (May 1974), NARA, RG 59, Lord Files, 345.

³ Healey, *Time of My Life* (New York: Norton, 1989), 419.

⁴ H.M. Treasury, “Brief for Discussions with the Americans: Recycling,” October 9, 1974, UKNA, FCO 96/6.

⁵ Thomas Robb, “The Power of Oil: Edward Heath, the ‘Year of Europe’ and the Anglo-American ‘Special Relationship’.” *Contemporary British History* 26, no. 1 (2012): 73-96.

wrote to Secretary General Kurt Waldheim in January 1975, created “a very difficult situation for the hardest hit developing countries.”⁶

Such finicky points about timing or emphasis aside, both authors have written keen and, at points, inspired histories. Gfeller is at her best when she discusses the relationship between language and political beliefs. The French term for cross-issue bargaining, *globalisation*, is one such linguistic gem (38). And one marvels at the factoids that pepper Garavini’s analysis. Who knew, for instance, that Ernesto Guevara presented Prebisch, the first director of the UN Conference of Trade and Development a copy of his treatise on guerilla warfare with the dedication “a means for economic development” (88)? Or that, German Chancellor Helmut Schmidt charged Fed Chairman Paul Volcker with foisting on the world “the highest [interest] rates since the birth of Jesus Christ” (246)? In sum, both books are highly recommended.

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⁶ UN Interoffice Memorandum, Prebisch to the Secretary General, “Recent Financial Discussions in Washington, D.C.,” January 21, 1975, MS. Eng. c. 5825, Dell Papers, Bodleian Library Special Collection, Oxford University.