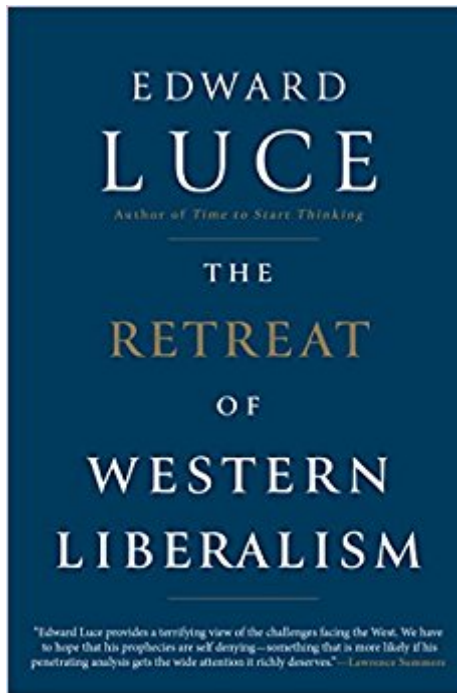


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The Retreat Of Western Liberalism



Synopsis

"Insightful and harrowing . . . lucidly expounds on the erosion of the West's middle classes, the dysfunction among its political and economic elites and the consequences for America and the world." — Michiko Kakutani, New York Times

In his widely acclaimed book *Time to Start Thinking*, Financial Times chief US columnist and commentator Edward Luce charted the course of America's relative decline, proving to be a prescient voice on our current social and political turmoil. In *The Retreat of Western Liberalism*, Luce makes a larger statement about the weakening of western hegemony and the crisis of liberal democracy — of which Donald Trump and his European counterparts are not the cause, but a terrifying symptom. Luce argues that we are on a menacing trajectory brought about by ignorance of what it took to build the West, arrogance towards society's economic losers, and complacency about our system's durability — attitudes that have been emerging since the fall of the Berlin Wall. We cannot move forward without a clear diagnosis of what has gone wrong. Unless the West can rekindle an economy that produces gains for the majority of its people, its political liberties may be doomed. The West's faith in history teaches us to take democracy for granted. Reality tells us something troublingly different. Combining on-the-ground reporting with intelligent synthesis of the literature and economic analysis, Luce offers a detailed projection of the consequences of the Trump administration, the rise of European populism, and a forward-thinking analysis of what those who believe in enlightenment values must do to defend them from the multiple onslaughts they face in the coming years.

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Customer Reviews

An Best Book of June 2017: Why does it feel like things are coming apart in the world? As the U.S. commentator for the Financial Times, Edward Luce is in a good position to observe global trends and answer this question. In *The Retreat of Western Liberalism*, he points to the rise in populism across nations and the relative economic growth of a few developing countries like China and India as key contributing factors. Of course it's much more complicated than that, and Luce's taut and satisfying book goes a long way in helping us to wrap our heads around what's happening. Think of this as a global Hillbilly Elegy. You may not find every answer you're looking for, but you'll make serious, welcome progress in understanding the questions. --Chris Schlupe, The Book Review

One of the Top 10 Best Books of the Month An best history book of the year so far
"Timely and informed, providing an important overview of the dynamics in an increasingly interconnected and fragmented planet . . . In his prescient 2012 book, *Time to Start Thinking: America in the Age of Descent*, Luce uncannily anticipated the politics of resentment and the bitter fights over immigration that would fuel Brexit and last year's American election. And in this new book, he lucidly expounds on the erosion of the West's middle classes, the dysfunction among its political and economic elites and the consequences for America and the world." --Michiko Kakutani, New York Times
"Many around the globe sense a systemic crisis. To understand the nature of this crisis, we could not find a better guide than Edward Luce's *The Retreat of Western Liberalism* . . . Luce writes in fluid prose, moving from a telling statistic to a striking quotation. Throughout, one is struck by his command of the material and the activity of his prose -- he is unsparing in his condemnation of the elites who didn't see this coming." --Fareed Zakaria, New York Times Book Review
"Mr. Luce offers a useful wake-up call to elites, urging them to focus on the very real struggles of America's besieged middle class before we all lose the freedom and democracy we cherish . . . [A] concise, accessible and valuable work." --Lawrence J. Haas, Wall Street Journal
"What the book offers is . . . a panorama of the unravelling world order as riveting as any beach read. Luce's project is to explain what the recent dark turn in Western politics -- the rise of ultranationalism, populist demagoguery, cultural insularity, and social unrest -- has to do with global economics. It's a story of trade balances and technological disruption, but also a withering dismantling of Western liberalism's faith in progress." --Elias Muhanna, New Yorker, "What we're reading this

summer. A brisk, timely survey . . . Mr. Luce is a shrewd observer . . . At rapid pace and with telling statistics, Mr. Luce . . . gives a knowledgeable tour through the unmapped terrain in which Western politicians and governments must now operate. Economist

“Edward Luce provides a terrifying view of the challenges facing the West. We have to hope that his prophecies are self denying something that is more likely if his penetrating analysis gets the wide attention it richly deserves. Lawrence Summers

“Read this book: In the three hours it takes you will get a new, bracing, and brilliant understanding of the dangers we in the democratic West now face. Luce is one of the smartest journalists working today, and his perceptions are priceless. Jane Mayer, Pulitzer Prize-winning author of Dark Money

“The challenges to the West are outlined in detail and they mainly come from within . . . For Luce, the combination of rising income inequality, vanishing economic mobility and distant technocracy has led to our moment, a populist resurgence. Carlos Lozada, Washington Post

“An informative look at the current state of world politics and economics . . . It is also a thought-provoking warning that history is not guaranteed. Chris Schlupe, Omnivoracious

“Important . . . Through his deep reporting and clear-headed analysis, Luce explains popular frustration with liberalism, and the resurgence of nationalism. National Book Review,

“5 hot books

“No one was more prescient about the economic malaise and popular resentment that has hit the United States than Edward Luce in his previous book, Time to Start Thinking. His new book, The Retreat of Western Liberalism, broadens that picture to cover the Western world. It is a must read for anyone trying to make sense of the waves of populism and nationalism we face today. Liaquat Ahamed, Pulitzer Prize-winning author of Lords of Finance

“What is the future of Western liberal democracy? How did it get into its current mess, and how will those origins shape its forthcoming evolution? This volume is the very best guide for starting to grapple with those questions. Tyler Cowen, Founder of Marginal Revolution University

“In just 200 pages, [Luce] surveys economics, history, electoral politics, and international relations to paint a vision of the planet that is as worrying as it is realistic. VICE

“[The Retreat of Western Liberalism] is really, really important . . . We strongly encourage you to buy it. David Rothkopf, Foreign Policy

“The E.R. podcast

“Luce does a masterful job of describing the contours of the rise of illiberal democracy in the west. Benjamin Knoll, New York Journal of Books

“Beautifully written. Times (UK)

“The great merit of Luce is, a brisk, pointed and fascinating book . . . is that it is far more than a disappointed

liberalism's angry tirade. His achievement is to put the rise of antiestablishment populism in a broader global economic context . . . In particular, he is memorably and rightly scathing about the self-regard of the Davos elite. *Literary Review (UK)* "Timely . . . [Luce's] writing has a vigour and sweep all too absent in the deadly prose of social scientists. *Financial Times (UK)* "Incisive . . . Luce combines some hard, and unsettling, facts about the stagnant state of Western economies and societies, with perceptive, even provocative insights into their implications. *Vikas Datta, Business Standard* "Timely and thoughtful . . . A clear-eyed lament of liberalism's decline, and America stepping back and turning inward. *American Conservative* "Fantastic. I recommend that everyone buys it. *James Pethokoukis, American Enterprise Institute*

The Retreat of Western Liberalism is the book I've been waiting for. Its sweep takes in America, the UK and continental Europe and highlights the structural forces that's ailing the middle classes across all those countries. Other books focus only on America, or Brexit Britain, or the French far right. Luce's work stands back from the particularities and brings out what is threatening the west in general. The writing is pacy and engaging. The analysis is acute and the forecast is troubling. As Luce argues, western liberalism is in retreat but that does not mean that it has collapsed. It is up to us - the readers - to do something about it. I couldn't recommend this book more highly. Five stars.

I thought Mr. Luce's previous book, "Time to Start Thinking" was disturbing. Then I began this one and it made the previous volume seem positively Pollyannaish. His dissection of the American and general Western political climate is spot on, and his extrapolation of the possible outcome of Mr. Trump's "leadership" is frighteningly plausible. And then he points out that, "...as Winter follows Autumn...", he fears what and whom follows Trump even more. And I'll be damned if I can come up with any sort of argument to refute his reasoning. It's a good reminder that good people of conscience must remain vigilant and prepared to take peaceful action to both resist the creep of autocracy, but also to rebuild the social compact that binds a nation together. It is our responsibility to be brave, to be strong, and to foster the trust that is the foundation of a free society.

Enjoyed, but very uneven. Enough good writing to make it worthwhile, though.

Excellent mixture of history and economics.

An incredibly important work, which challenges many routine assumptions about what is really the normal state of affairs and therefore what we might expect to return to in the future. Easy to read, not always easy to process. I have recommended this book to over twenty friends and all have found it to be a compelling and instructive read...

Great, although depressing book.

Reality plus! An excellent explanation of what is going on in our country.

Provocative analysis of our current historical moment.

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