

**Book Review/ Kitap Tanıtımı**

**Bill Emmott, *The Fate of the West: The Battle to Save the World's Most Successful Political Idea*, London: The Economist Books, 2018.**

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Some political books become out of date quickly in a climate of ever-changing world events and technological and scientific transformations. The impact of Covid-19 across the globe and Russia's invasion of Ukraine fills our television screens, collective consciousness, and lives. So, the former editor-in-chief of *The Economist* (between 1993 and 2006), Bill Emmott's *The Fate of the West: The Battle to Save the World's Most Successful Political Idea*, written in 2018, will inevitably have limitations in terms of its content and up-to-dateness. Nevertheless, the author's core argument about the urgent need to rejuvenate neoliberal democracies is topical and important. Though the examples and

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evidence presented in the study are known by many, the book's unique selling point is Emmott's recommendations to revitalise the Western neoliberal democratic societies and to make them the beacons of hope for people living under authoritarian regimes.

The author argues that Western neoliberal democracies face economic, political and social risks and external threats from Russia, China, and religious and nationalist extremists. *'The argument of this book is that the West has, through a mixture of mistakes, misadventures and deliberate manipulation by powerful interest groups of its democratic and policy-making processes, placed itself in jeopardy. It is at a potential turning-point'* (p. 4). Emmott reports that specific decisions are necessary to correct the inequalities and divisions in Western societies; otherwise, these societies might stagnate and even decline. However, all is not lost; according to the book's author, the Western political paradigm remains humanity's only acceptable and viable form of social organisation (p. 5). Indeed, the international popularity and respect for the West's image of modernity and progress (in particular, human rights, welfare rights, and social mobility opportunities) show that it is worth rejuvenating for the benefit of all (p. 6).

So, how will this be achieved? Emmott says the Western societies need to balance the key *'principles of openness and equality'*; the Western neoliberal democracies have been 'enormously successful' in doing this during the post-Second World War era. About Western countries, the author reports: *'The thesis of Fate of the West is that we are in our current trouble because too many of us have lost that balance. So "the right decisions" means measures to restore that balance, to move back towards that central, phenomenally successful idea'* (p. 7). It is worth mentioning that the author is not advocating for socialism or any socio-cultural revolution.

The book contains eleven thematic chapters: Chapter 1, 'Let battle commence', outlines the shared characteristics and values of the pluralistic liberal societies. Each characteristic highlights the strengths and weaknesses of the neoliberal society; and introduces ideas about what themes need addressing to correct the malaise of the neoliberal democracies. The eight characteristics discussed are success, failure,

the rule of law and constitutional legalism, social trust, rising inequality, immigration, rising expectations, and international collaboration. Emmott writes that problems with these characteristics have led to a loss in social trust, *'thanks to inequality in political voice and rights, and to the fraying of welfare states. International collaboration has come to be seen as onerous'* (p. 26). The other chapter titles are Chapter 2 'Inequality and fairness', Chapter 3 'Democracy and the art of self-entrapment', Chapter 4 'Setting America straight again', Chapter 5 'Britain, their Britain', Chapter 6 'European paralysis', Chapter 7 'The Japanese puzzle', Chapter 8 'Swedish and Swiss Houdinis', Chapter 9 'Silver hair and smart drones', and Chapter 10 'Barbarians at the gate'.

The final chapter considers an approach to correcting the weaknesses and failings of the Western political model. Chapter 11, 'The fate of the West', begins with Emmott expressing, *'For the idea of the West, the world's most successful political formula ever, remains powerful, valuable and eminently revivable'* (p. 207). Acknowledging that each Western democracy has unique characteristics, nevertheless, from the 'loadstars' of openness and equality *'can be derived eight principles'* to counteract the West's malaise: openness, equality, education, equality between the young and the old, the rule of law, freedom of speech, the economy, and the international rule of law and collaboration. Each principle is discussed, and its significance in helping to rebuild the Western model outlined.

The book's strength is the structured and contemplative response to the socio-economic problems of neoliberal democracies. Emmott's argument is comprehensive and one possible guide to the correction of loss in social trust in the neoliberal governments among their citizens and perhaps an antidote to the rise of illiberal regimes, ethnic nationalism and populism. On the other hand, while the analysis is deep and broad, it might have been preferable to produce a shorter book that would have communicated the author's core message and views succinctly. The global impact of Covid-19 has shown us that biological hazards and threats need monitoring and given resources provided by governments to prevent future outbreaks. This point is missing in the text. Lastly, the issue of 'surveillance capitalism' is topical and contains many points to ponder. We understand this issue in Communist Party-

run China, but how do we feel about digital surveillance in the liberal United Kingdom? This point and its effect on neoliberal ethics and morality are not explored fully in the book except briefly on page 218.

*The Fate of the West* is a thorough review of the challenges and risks facing Western democracies and a possible road map for recovery and regrowth. Emmott is an experienced and knowledgeable researcher and writer. The book is recommended for journalists, the general public, students and scholars of politics, and those readers interested in contemporary Western societies and futurology.