

COMMENT

Ursula Gates: insider revelations on the power of lobbies in Brussels

WORLD

17_10_2025



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Frédéric Baldan's book "Ursula Gates, la Von Der Leyen e il potere delle lobby a Bruxelles" (Ursula Gates: Von der Leyen and the Power of Lobbies in Brussels), published by Guerini e Associati, is available in bookshops in Italy today. Written by the man who exposed the Pfizergate scandal — the text messages in which the President of the EU Commission dealt directly with the CEO of Pfizer on the sale of anti-Covid vaccines — it is an exceptional book. Baldan's book provides extraordinary and well-documented insights into the shady mechanisms that govern the main European institution. In Italy, the book is published by Guerini e Associati nella collana Scintille, directed by Marcello Foa. Courtesy of the author and publisher, we present Marcello Foa's preface to readers.

Many people spend most of their lives in what the English call 'the comfort zone'. They study, graduate, start a family, find a job — perhaps a well-paid one — have no problems, and therefore no stimulus. In the end, they have no reason to question the world in which they live, let alone the ethical aspects of their profession. Psychologists and sociologists are well acquainted with these mechanisms: our personal sphere has a decisive influence on our view of the world. When we are comfortable in our own small way, everything appears rosy and we become spontaneously compliant with institutions and common opinion, thus reinforcing the conviction that we live in an authentic democracy. Some people spend their whole lives in this state of happy passivity.

Others, on the other hand, although well integrated in society, shake themselves up at a certain point in their lives, often following an unexpected and shocking event. They step out of their 'comfort zone', begin to question themselves, and scrutinise reality beyond conventions. The most sincere embark on an uncomfortable, challenging, yet enlightening journey in search of truth. The boldest continue to dig deeper and, when they discover the truth in their own spheres of competence, they do not cower in disgust; rather, they denounce publicly and expose themselves with the intention of truly serving society and preserving the authenticity of its values.

One such person is Frédéric Baldan, a Belgian of Italian origin who used to work as a lobbyist — someone who promotes the interests of a company or sector within the legislative, political and institutional spheres. This is a difficult job due to its possible ethical implications, but it is useful and legitimate when carried out openly, since it is better for the defence of certain interests to be overt and regulated in a serious and verifiable manner than to be conducted in secret with all that this entails.

Baldan was a lobbyist for the aviation sector at the European Union and, as a responsible professional, he performed his duties in accordance with the Commission's theoretically strict rules. But then one day, everything changed. He realised that these rules did not apply to everyone. In recent years, the European institutions themselves had increasingly turned into an incoherent, nonchalant caste, smug in their immense power. They demanded that others comply with rules they themselves betrayed with chilling detachment and cynicism, all in the silence of the media and with the widespread acquiescence of the MEPs. Taking this double standard to unprecedented levels is, first and foremost, the person who should embody transparency and fairness: the current President of the European Commission, Ursula von der Leyen. When Baldan, a convinced pro-European, notes this reality in the aftermath of the Covid crisis, the shock is enormous. The transformation is instantaneous.

He investigates, finds evidence and rebels. Thus was born the new Frédéric Baldan, and with him this book. This is not simply another denunciatory essay, but a testimony of extraordinary courage, which is decidedly rare. Inspired by his own awakening, Baldan the lobbyist first denounces the dark side of the world he has lived with for many years: the most powerful lobbies, which operate among national and, above all, international institutions such as the UN, WHO and the EU itself; large multinationals; fake philanthropic activities; think tanks and study centres that appear neutral but are not; intelligence services; and extraordinary-power forums such as the World Economic Forum or the Council on Foreign Relations. He does so with extraordinary precision, documenting all his assertions and deductions.

Baldan's analysis enriches existing essays on world governance and the crisis of representative democracy as it is a first-hand account from within a sector that does not tolerate dissenting voices. In its most extreme forms, this sector enforces a code of silence among its professionals. Moreover, few denounce the dark side of their profession. However, Baldan has broken the taboo by describing the techniques of power management from the inside with extraordinary precision, as only an (awakened) lobbyist can do. He paid a high personal price, as the European Union froze his lobbyist

accreditation, preventing him from continuing his work in Brussels.

Ursula von der Leyen is the book's central figure, and the author reconstructs her life while revealing the ambiguities and black holes of the international elite of which she is an expression. The first part of the essay is dedicated to this world. With a wealth of details and quotations, the author explains how, why and where decisions are really taken, and how countries, the economic world and individual citizens are induced to conform to them, with no possibility of interlocution or participation in the decision-making process. He names names, but importantly, he does not start from a prejudice; he does not seek confirmation of his convictions as other authors do, consciously or unconsciously. Instead, he seeks and finds feedback, truly searching for the truth. What he discovers outrages him to the point of being unable to restrain his irate sarcasm towards the person who becomes the protagonist and emblem of the ethical and value decline of the current European Union: Ursula von der Leyen.

Frédéric Baldan was the first to criminally denounce the President of the European Commission, an action that was later supported by other associations. He documented the violations, both formal and substantial, with extraordinary precision, starting with the incredible affair of the purchase of anti-Covid vaccines agreed via SMS with Pfizer's CEO, Albert Bourla. The fact that his denunciations have not yet led to any real trials only confirms his analysis, demonstrating how Europe's judiciary and various control bodies become deaf, dumb and blind when examining violations involving top European management. This is the logic of a caste that conceals, covers up and distorts the interpretation of the EU's own rules, even defying the much-vaunted separation of powers. Separation indeed! These pages reveal unacceptable ambiguity in the relations between von der Leyen, the European Commission, the judiciary, supervisory bodies, large international economic groups, think tanks, pressure groups, and the media, which is guilty of professional omission. This is a situation of which most European voters are unaware, and it demonstrates the vacuity of continental institutions and the rules that are supposed to protect us.

How can we Europeans claim to be better than the many non-democratic regimes that populate the international community if the facts show that our societies are governed by oligarchies that act above the law and common sense with no respect for the common good or the protection of populations? This book provides evidence that the health of hundreds of millions of people was deliberately endangered in the era of the pandemic, in favour of business interests. You will discover how manipulation of perception and the media is the norm in Brussels' management of public opinion.

You may be surprised to learn that Bill Gates helped the Chinese government create and implement the horrific 'social credit' system several years ago. This system allows for the digital control of all citizens and the exclusion from civil society of those who do not conform to the regime's expectations. This is not just a suspicion: Baldan has tracked down footage of Chinese President Xi Jinping publicly thanking the Microsoft founder. You will also learn a great deal about the man who, despite his philanthropic image, secretly cultivates enormous personal and business interests. The title of the essay is deliberately plural: not 'UrsulaGate', but 'UrsulaGates', because von der Leyen's affairs concern not only scandals such as the purchase of Pfizer and Moderna vaccines, but also Bill Gates' 'sleight of hand'.

You will learn that Ursula von der Leyen had accommodation built for herself at the European Commission's headquarters, the Berlaymont Palace, unlike her predecessors who rented ordinary Brussels residences. This is probably not an entirely innocent eccentricity, as accommodation within a European institution automatically confers diplomatic immunity, inhibiting any search by the investigating authorities. It is also shocking to learn that the European Commission had evidence of simple, inexpensive yet highly effective cures for Covid, but deliberately ignored them in order to present an experimental vaccine as the only viable solution to the crisis.

Unsurprisingly, this book has been ignored by the major media outlets and obstructed by several bookshops in France. It is a truthful book written by an author who has thus compromised his professional career. He was moved to write it by his desire to honour the values of justice, authentic democracy and altruism, in which he believes with all his heart. Values in which we also continue to believe.