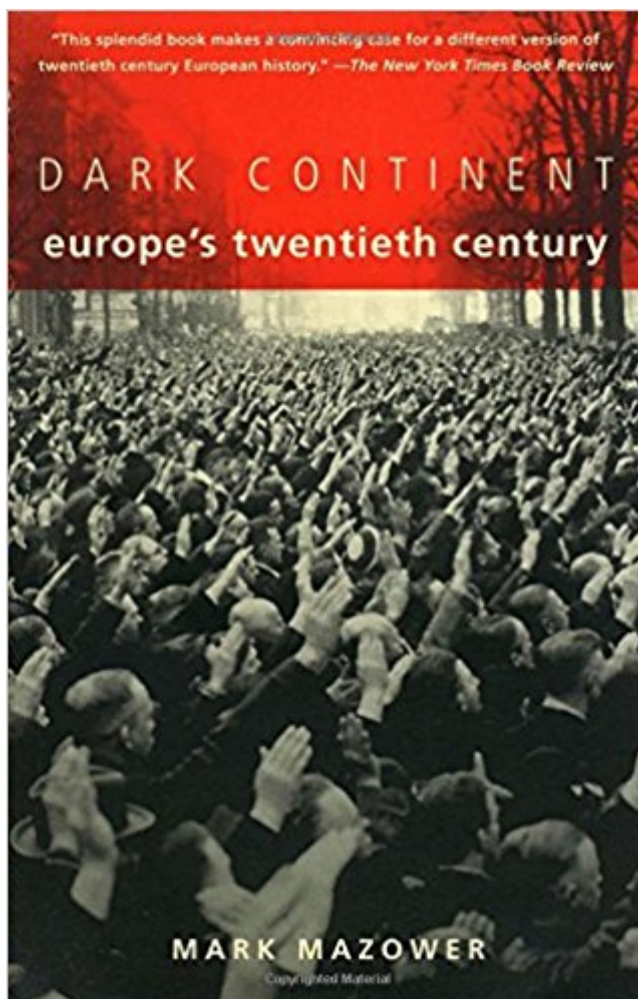


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Dark Continent: Europe's Twentieth Century



Synopsis

"A useful, important book that reminds us, at the right time, how hard [European unity] has been, and how much care must be taken to avoid the terrible old temptations." --Los Angeles Times

Dark Continent provides an alternative history of the twentieth century, one in which the triumph of democracy was anything but a forgone conclusion and fascism and communism provided rival political solutions that battled and sometimes triumphed in an effort to determine the course the continent would take. Mark Mazower strips away myths that have comforted us since World War II, revealing Europe as an entity constantly engaged in a bloody project of self-invention. Here is a history not of inevitable victories and forward marches, but of narrow squeaks and unexpected twists, where townships boast a bronze of Mussolini on horseback one moment, only to melt it down and recast it as a pair of noble partisans the next. Unflinching, intelligent, Dark Continent provides a provocative vision of Europe's past, present, and future-and confirms Mark Mazower as a historian of valuable gifts.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

As the European Union introduces a common currency to world financial markets, Mark Mazower's Dark Continent critically examines the notion of "Europe." The Euro notwithstanding, Mazower argues that the "'Europe' of the European Union may be a promise or a delusion, but it is not a reality." Renouncing the notion of an essential "Europe," Mazower instead explores the conflicts which dominated the continent in the 20th century and the social value systems which informed

them. Mazower orders his examination chronologically, commencing with the collapse of Europe's continental empires following World War I and the initial European experiments in democracy and national self-determination which followed. He continues with analyses of state interventions in family health and the importance of healthy progeny, the financial crisis of the 1920s, the Hitler regime, the transformed democracy that emerged following World War II, the gradual erosion of the social state in the 1980s, and, finally, the collapse of communism. He consistently displays a firm grip of European history, directing his argument to readers with a foundational knowledge of the events that shaped 20th century Europe rather than historical novices unfamiliar with the period. Provocatively insightful, *Dark Continent* makes a convincing argument for a European 21st century characterized by continuity and harmony through divergence. "If Europeans can give up their desperate desire to find a single, workable definition of themselves," Mazower concludes, "they may come to terms more easily with the diversity and dissension which will be as much their future as their past." --Bertina Loeffler --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Mazower (*Inside Hitler's Greece*) shapes his well-written history of Europe's 20th century as a struggle among liberal democracy, communism and fascism. Avoiding the pitfalls of Marxist interpretation on the one hand and capitalist triumphalism on the other, he shows how the failure of liberal democracy after WWI led to the experiment with fascism, which was defeated (principally by the Communists) at an enormous cost. In the first half of this century, he writes, between 60 million and 70 million Europeans died violently in wars or civil unrest, but the figure for the period after the defeat of fascism is under one million. Mazower takes this as evidence that the Cold War was a social and economic, rather than a military, conflict. While this may be true of the Cold War in Europe, the assertion fails to take into account the proxy wars fought by the superpowers in Asia, Africa and Latin America. But this omission doesn't detract from the overall excellence of Mazower's work. The defeat of fascism and the fall of communism have left the field to liberal democracy, which is now faced with the problem it failed to solve in the beginning of the century: how to create a workable relationship between capitalism and representative government. Mazower argues that Europeans can best work this out if they realize that their national differences are greater than any common culture and that Europe has enjoyed its greatest period of peace and prosperity precisely during the period in which it has lost its primacy in world affairs. Maps. Tables not seen by PW. Copyright 1998 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

At the beginning of the Twenty-First Century, when there is so much happening and questioning our ability to think with confidence, it is only quite natural that one should look for events past in search of History's perspective. The author has done a superb job analysing events of a dark era in a dark continent. It is a must read.

Comprehensive but nuanced work that lets one know that the current state of Europe was likely if not inevitable. The idea of Europe is still developing out of its historic darkness. BTW I highly recommend A Short History of the Balkans by this author, as well as his Governing the World.

The best work covering Europe in the Twentieth Century.

Good information well researched but a little "wordy".

Excellent and detailed history of Europe from WW1 through to the end of WW2. My only reservation is the style. This might be a revised academic work but is well worth reading

Very nice, as described fast delivery.

Great book! A must read!

Don't care for the author's worldview. I expected better. I'd rather read books of Europe's wars and peace interludes from an author that doesn't propagate what we've been force-fed for decades - even if he did branch out somewhat with the kind of information we expected from the title of the book. There are numerous other authors that have re-aligned their worldview - to bother with this guy.

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