
Tony Judt. *Postwar: A History of Europe Since 1945*. NY: The Penguin Press, 2005. 878p.

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Tony Judt, the Erich Maria Remarque Professor of European Studies at NYU and Director of its Institute for the Study of Europe, presents here a compelling narrative of unfolding political, military, and economic events in Europe since the mid-20th century. He eagerly takes up the challenge to identify a framework with which seemingly disparate developments on both sides of the Iron Curtain can usefully be analyzed. At nearly 900 pages in hardback, and slightly more in the newly-released paperback edition, *Postwar* does not lend itself to skimming. It is, rather, a work one can refer to repeatedly during one's graduate study and professional career as a useful reference for interdisciplinary inquiry into many aspects of 20th-century Europe. The book's title alludes both to the situation on the European continent after 1945 and post-Cold War, a time no less disorienting and culturally ambiguous than earlier geopolitical upheavals.

While Judt takes pains to make clear that his book "has no over-arching theme to expound," various themes can most certainly be gleaned which are of use. *Postwar* begins with a brief chronicle of Europe in 1945 united by—and under—Allied occupation. Often other works' narratives typically diverge soon after 1946: while x was happening in the West, y was occurring in the East. Judt, however, deftly blends a linear timeline with an interdisciplinary look at events in common in European nations. This is, as he readily acknowledges, made possible especially due to the post-1989 opening of archives. It could be added that a breaking down of traditional national and scholarly boundaries also plays a role. Giving equal space to events in Eastern as in Western Europe, he is able to identify complementary trends on both sides of the Iron Curtain. These lead the reader to reconsider how different each side's micro-societal developments actually were. Consider his treatment of the internecine warfare between personal factions of national Communist parties vis-à-vis the Soviet Union and each other, for example. One cannot completely transport the analysis parameters of Western democracy to the Socialist-Communist system, yet Judt describes the dynamics between various Communist factions in convincingly comparative fashion. Here and elsewhere, ideological camps are described whose answers to Modernism and the horrors of war were different, but whose goal of a Europe unmenaced by a powerful, independent Germany was uncannily similar.

Another area of similarity between the two camps which Judt outlines is the unfortunate aspect of delayed acknowledgment of responsibility for continent-wide

anti-Semitism, not only as regards the Holocaust but continuing down through the present day. While Germany, and to a greater degree Austria and Switzerland, are justly criticized for various degrees of missed responsibility in the postwar years, the Allies' own failure to insist on de-Nazification in the interests of building up power blocs is not ignored. He demonstrates how official Soviet ideology located blame for anti-Semitism solely in the Fascism of a decadent West, and traces a Western de-Nazification strategy that concentrated only on German-speaking Europe and even then was stunted in its effectiveness. Judt's Epilogue reminds readers that while history may not repeat itself directly, European nations must develop common memory-preserving strategies in order to ensure that this history does not poison future generations.

Considerable space is given to chronicling cultural expression in post-1945 Europe, and this is an additional useful characteristic of *Postwar* for a wider group of scholars. Western European cultural markers such as French existentialism, New German Cinema, the Eurovision song contest, Fascist aesthetics in Portugal and Spain through the early '70s, and more, contribute to a richer understanding of "European" culture. These cultural markers are always contextualized within the framework of political, social, and economic developments so that both those with significant knowledge of European cultural history and those more versed in traditional "Great Powers" narratives will find the information presented equally illuminating.

Comparatively little space, however, is given to the influence of Euro-skeptical voices, movements, and parties that have accompanied Europe's "ever-closer union" from the beginning and which have gained renewed support and relevance since 1989. Certainly, Judt does not hide his view that Europe as a unified political, economic, and social actor is a positive development and must inexorably be completed, despite horrific World Wars, artificial political divisions, and recent roadblocks to deeper integration. Yet this sometimes leads to a discounting of the intellectual-political influence of increasing xenophobia across the European continent since the end of the Cold War. Euroskepticism, whether expressed as anti-immigrant or anti-Turkish sentiment, a reluctance to accept the Euro or Central and Eastern European countries as full members, deserves fuller analysis. He combines an excellent and detailed analysis of European xenophobic movements with narratives of anti-EU movements generally, which is indeed admirable. Yet Euroskeptic thought, again demonstrated in 2005 in rejected constitutional referenda in the Netherlands and France, needs its influence and intellectual antecedents treated with the same critical detail as other movements.

Finally, specialists in a particular European nation's history or literature, the French Resistance or New German Cinema for example, may find Judt's treatment of cultural topics somewhat brief or even find trivial errata. For example, Germanists might note the misspellings of the names of Günt[h]er Grass and Egon Krenz[e] and the English mistranslation of Grass' recent novel as *Crabwise* rather than the official *Crabwalk*. Yet these are hardly distracting concerns. Ultimately, few academics are able to collect micro-national historical developments and considerable cultural artifacts about many European nations at once and tie them together in as deep and compelling a Cold War narrative as Judt has. Indeed, though *Postwar* is in no way simply a collection of thesis statements, many paragraphs could nonetheless be taken as starting points for research of one's own, owing to Judt's prodigious skill at narrative-weaving.

A detailed index referencing persons and topics compliments the work. Footnotes in the text are, however, not as comprehensive, and at first one does wish there were more. Yet the imperative to appeal to the educated layperson as well as to the academic necessitates such sacrifice lest the text, already impressively long, become distracted by minutiae. Ultimately, *Postwar* deserves to find a place on the bookshelf of any academic in the humanities whose discipline and research relate to 20th-century Europe. It is at once a summing up of several decades of excellent research on Judt's part as well as a model for further research into an intellectually and politically still-contested time period and continent. Moreover, both the layperson and specialist will find its breadth exceptional and its contextualization of events on both sides of the Iron Curtain from a 21st-century perspective illuminating. ✱