Reappraisals Reflections On The Forgotten Twentieth Century Tony Judt

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Evaluates the differences between twentieth- and twenty-first-century culture as a result of globalization, citing compromises that have rendered the modern world more vulnerable to recurrences of past tragedies.

The accelerating changes of the past generation have been accompanied by a comparably accelerated amnesia. The twentieth century has become "history" at an unprecedented rate. The world of 2007 is so utterly unlike that of even 1987, much less any earlier

Featuring a new preface by bestselling author of Between the World and Me and The Water Dancer, Ta-Nehisi Coates. “We are in for a fight . . . and in that fight Tony's work will be needed. This volume, in particular, will be needed.” —Ta-Nehisi Coates, from the preface Tony Judt called America "an eviscerated society," a nation tethered to its government more by tradition and law than collective benefit and unity. Written in the wake of the 2008 financial crisis, Ill Fares the Land takes on the nihilistic individualism of conservatives and the failures of liberals to defend effective government. It reintroduces forgotten alternatives to address our common needs, and asks the central question facing us today: How can we make a good society now?

Finalist for the Pulitzer Prize • Winner of the Council on Foreign Relations Arthur Ross Book Award • One of the New York Times' Ten Best Books of the Year “Impressive . . . Mr. Judt writes with enormous authority.” —The Wall Street Journal “Magisterial . . . It is, without a doubt, the most comprehensive, authoritative, and yes, readable postwar history.” —The Boston Globe Almost a decade in the making, this much-anticipated grand history of postwar Europe from one of the world's most esteemed historians and intellectuals is a singular achievement. Postwar is the first modern history that covers all of Europe, both east and west, drawing on research in six languages to sweep readers through thirty-four nations and sixty years of political and cultural change-all in one integrated, enthralling narrative. Both intellectually ambitious and compelling to read, thrilling in its scope and delightful in its small details, Postwar is a rare joy. Judt's book, Ill Fares the Land, republished in 2021 featuring a new preface by bestselling author of Between the World and Me and The Water Dancer, Ta-Nehisi Coates.

"Ideas crackle" in this triumphant final book of Tony Judt, taking readers on "a wild ride through the ideological currents and shoals of 20th century thought.” (Los Angeles Times) One of our most brilliant historians, Tony Judt brings the past century vividly to life in this unprecedented and original history. Structured as a series of intimate conversations between Judt and his friend and fellow historian Timothy Snyder, Thinking the Twentieth Century presents the triumphs and the failures of the twentieth century's most prominent intellectuals and their ideas, guiding readers through the debates that defined our world. Spanning an era with unprecedented clarity and insight, Thinking the Twentieth Century is a tour de force: a masterful analysis of the life of the mind and an unforgettable guide to leading the mindful life.

A New York Times Book Review Notable Book of the Year “[A] tremendously moving memorial to a first-class historian and essayist . . . humane, fearless, unsparingly honest.” —The Financial Times “[A] memorable collection from a memorable man.” —BookPage "It might be thought the height of poor taste to ascribe good fortune to a healthy man with a young family struck down at the age of sixty by an incurable degenerative disorder from which he must shortly die. But there is more than one sort of luck. To fall prey to a motor neuron disease is surely to have offended the Gods at some point, and there is nothing more to be said. But if you must suffer thus, better to have a well-stocked head." —Tony Judt The Memory Chalet is a memoir unlike any you have ever read before. Each essay charts some experience or remembrance of the past through the sieve of Tony Judt's prodigious mind. His youthful love of a particular London bus route evolves into a reflection on public civility and interwar urban planning. Memories of the 1968 student riots of Paris meander through the divergent sex politics of Europe, before concluding that his generation "was a revolutionary generation, but missed the revolution." A series of road trips across America lead not just to an appreciation of American history, but to an eventual acquisition of citizenship. Foods and trains and long-lost smells all compete for Judt's attention; but for us, he has forged his reflections into an elegant arc of analysis. All as simply and beautifully arranged as a Swiss chalet-a reassuring refuge deep in the mountains of memory.

Swept up in the vortex of communism, French postwar intellectuals developed a blind spot to Stalinist tyranny. Albert Camus, who had been an authentic moral voice of the Resistance, pretended not to know about the crimes and terrors of the Soviet Union. Jean-Paul Sartre perverted logic to make an apologia for the Soviet invasion of Hungary. Simone de Beauvoir called for social change to be brought about in a single convulsion, or else not at all. Foolish French thinkers, suffering self-imposed moral anesthesia, defended the credibility of the show trials in Stalinized Eastern Europe. In a devastating study, Judt, a professor of European studies at New York University, argues that the belief system of postwar intellectuals, propped up by faith in communism, reflected fatal weaknesses in French culture such as the fragility of the liberal tradition and the penchant for grand theory. He also strips away the postwar myth that the small, fighting French Resistance was assisted by the mass of the nation.

Originally published: New York: Hill and Wang, 1996.

Using the lives of the three outstanding French intellectuals of the twentieth century, renowned historian Tony Judt offers a unique look at how intellectuals can ignore political pressures and demonstrate a heroic commitment to personal integrity and moral responsibility unfettered by the difficult political exigencies of their time. Through the prism of the lives of Leon Blum, Albert Camus, and Raymond Aron, Judt examines pivotal issues in the history of contemporary French society—antisemitism and the dilemma of Jewish identity, political and moral idealism in public life, the Marxist moment in French thought, the traumas of decolonization, the disaffection of the intelligentsia, and the insidious quarrels rending Right and Left. Judt focuses particularly on Blum's leadership of the Popular Front and his stern defiance of the Vichy governments, on Camus's part in the Resistance and Algerian War, and on Aron's cultural commentary and opposition to the facile acceptance by many French intellectuals of communism's utopian promise. Severely maligned by powerful critics and rivals, each of these exemplary figures stood fast in their principles and eventually won some measure of personal and public redemption. Judt constructs a compelling portrait of modern French intellectual life and politics. He challenges the conventional account of the role of intellectuals precisely because they mattered in France, because they could shape public opinion and influence policy. In Blum, Camus, and Aron, Judt finds three very different men who did not simply play the role, but evinced a courage and a responsibility in public life that far outshone their contemporaries. "An eloquent and instructive study of intellectual courage in the face of what the author persuasively describes as intellectual irresponsibility."—Richard Bernstein, New York Times

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