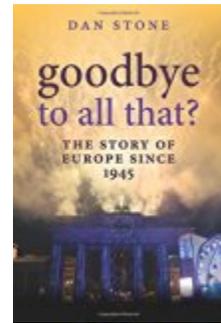


Dan Stone. *Goodbye to all that?: The Story of Europe since 1945*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014. xxvii + 379 pp. \$39.95 (cloth), ISBN 978-0-19-969771-7.

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## The Rise and Fall of the Antifascist Consensus: Stability and Instability in Postwar Europe

In 2014, the year that this book was published, the winter Olympics were held in Sochi, Russia. The opening ceremony included all of the extravagant national celebration, mythmaking, and selective remembering and forgetting that are the hallmarks of such events. What was remarkable about this Russian ceremony was that there was no reference to the Soviet victory over Nazi Germany. Vladimir Putin's propaganda machine had declared 1945 as the Russian people's greatest victory, and had once again draped the USSR in the cloak of "liberator." So why were these important historical legitimizing tropes absent? According to the ceremony's general producer, Russia had proposed the theme of "Soviet Soldier Liberating the World from Fascism," but the International Olympic Committee had categorically rejected a war memorialization. The Russian organizers then planned a moment of silence in the middle of the ceremony during which the audience would have held up 40,000 individual portraits of fallen Soviet soldiers. Although the Russian organizers held out until the last minute, the IOC was adamant that there be no war theme. Such is the importance of the memory of the Second World War in European politics.

It was in this political climate that Dan Stone wrote *Goodbye to All That? : The Story of Europe Since 1945*. Longtime members of H-German are no doubt familiar with Stone's body of work on the Holocaust, memory, and related topics. In addition to his prolific production for specialist audiences, Stone has provided excellent tools for use in the classroom, such as *The Historiogra-*

*phy of the Holocaust* (2004), *The Historiography of Genocide* (2008), and *The Holocaust and Historical Methodology* (2012). Stone is continuing to publish on such topics (e.g., *The Liberation of the Camps: The End of the Holocaust and its Aftermath*, 2015). Perhaps less familiar to the H-German audience are his publications that take a wider view, both in space and in time. Even so, Stone is making a name for himself in this broader field, as well. After editing *The Oxford Handbook of Postwar European History* in 2012, Stone wrote the book under review here.

This book is a history of postwar Europe written by an expert on genocide and memory—and it shows. In *Goodbye to All That?* Stone utilizes, as a heuristic framework, "the rise and fall of the postwar consensus," which "went hand in hand with a particular memory of the Second World War," and should be understood not just economically, but also politically, especially on the level of memory politics (p. ix). For Stone, memory politics and socioeconomic change are inextricably linked, and historians (including Tony Judt, Mark Mazower, and Eric Hobsbawm) have not yet explored this sufficiently. With this book, Stone seeks to rectify this situation, arguing that "memory of the Second World War is the key to understanding European affairs since 1945" (p. xi).

Stone further argues that a particular kind of memory politics—antifascism—"became the basis of stability in postwar Europe," both in the East and in the West (p. 9). On both sides of the Iron Curtain, elites employed forms of "antifascism" to legitimize postwar regimes and pro-

mote stability. Communists enforced a consensus of antifascism in Eastern Europe while liberals built and used a consensus of antifascism in Western Europe. Vastly different in content from East to West, Stone argues that these antifascist narratives nevertheless helped form the foundation of a prosperous postwar Europe that remained at peace (within the continent).

Indeed, Stone argues, the antifascist consensus was so fundamental to the peace and prosperity of postwar Europe that its dismantling since the 1970s and especially since the end of the Cold War—alongside the dismantling of social democracy (the erosion of the welfare state in the West and state control in the East)—has opened space in the arena of memory politics. Into that space, and in response to the loss of economic stability, have crept new arguments, fascist and fascist-like, which further break with the postwar consensus in the sphere of European collective memory.

Regarding the Cold War in Europe, Stone follows Melvyn Leffler's lead (citing Leffler's 1999 review essay in the *American Historical Review*) in stressing how the United States structured the basic parameters, delimiting options available to Europeans. For Stone, then, defensive reactions to Western policies, national imperatives, and vulnerability in the face of American power led to the cold conflict. Stone eschews the concept of "totalitarianism," and does not make comparisons between communism and Nazism. Instead, he highlights the fact that the Soviet victory over Nazism gave communism a kind of popular legitimacy throughout Europe.

The book is organized chronologically into four parts: "The Rise of the Postwar Consensus" (1944/5-53), "Boom to Bust" (1953-75), "Shock Treatment" (1975-89), and "The Fall of the Postwar Consensus" (after 1989)." Each part has two chapters: one for Eastern Europe, one for Western Europe. In the East was "Stalinism as a civilization," followed by reform and "gerontocracy." Stone follows the 1990s interpretation of Stalinism by Stephen Kotkin and revised by Sheila Fitzpatrick and others (but not later revisions), which describes Soviet rule as participatory. As counterweight, Stone also incorporates—citing the work of intellectuals from Eastern Europe—an understanding of the Soviet terror and coercion that shaped the postwar period.

In the West, meanwhile, Christian democracy resurged and then held sway until the dismantling of the welfare state and the breakdown of the antifascist consensus in the 1980s. Stone insists on the relationship between social welfare and antifascism. Thus, as the econ-

omy waned, neoliberal policies grew, and a cacophony of divergent memories took the place of the antifascist consensus.

In both East and West, Stone argues, consumerism and the welfare state played a central role—successfully in the West and partially so in the East. On both sides of the Iron Curtain, the construction of an antifascist consensus required compromise, considerable historical revision, and memory politics based on wartime victimhood and resistance to fascism.

Stone situates himself in good company by utilizing an East-West interpretive framework, but some of the same Eastern European intellectuals whom Stone cites as experts on terror would perhaps see this as an exercise in moral equivalence. Similarly, some scholars may take issue with his claim that the second half of the twentieth century was "as much the 'German Century' as the first half" (p. 55), but many of H-German's members would likely agree.

What Stone has accomplished with this book is the construction of an innovative new transnational framework that raises memory politics to the level of economic politics as an integral and equally important object of historical analysis. This framework allows Stone to deemphasize the particular, to focus on high politics, and to consider both East and West as a whole, albeit a divided one. Overall, the book is a valuable contribution to the historiography of the postwar period.

Some of the choices made by Stone and his publisher will perhaps confuse audiences. For professionals in this field, the constructed heuristic may seem overly rigid, especially since it does not allow for more than peripheral attention to insights from other types of social and cultural history. The realization that the first five pages of the introduction are identical to the opening pages of Stone's introduction to the *Oxford Handbook of Postwar European History* causes more confusion, since in other respects it does not seem that the intended audiences for the two books are the same. Additionally, the index is thin and inconsistent—for example, it lists Judt but not Leffler—making it difficult for a specialist to use *Goodbye to All That?* for reference.

It may also be difficult for a more general audience, including students, to use this book. It does not have a bibliography—which is a limitation for any history monograph, but particularly for one intended for students. It is also unclear if any significant portion of such an audience could understand much of this book beyond

the ten-page introduction and three-page conclusion, as the level of erudition Stone assumes on the part of the reader is considerable. Often, Stone simply names events and people without definition or explanation; even some significant processes are only glancingly explored. Overall, a reader needs multidisciplinary and transnational erudition to be able to appreciate Stone's pithy but sophisticated theses.

His overarching argument, however, is accessible to all. As an outlet for popular anger over economic instability, recent neonationalist and neofascist propaganda lines have broken down the previous antifascist consensus in the sphere of European collective memory. For Stone, this is what explains the rise of right-wing populism in today's Europe, from Front National to Golden Dawn. Stone concludes ominously. If the simultaneous disassembling of social democracy and the antifascist consensus "is not halted, then by the hundredth anniversary of the outbreak of the Second World War, a Europe of protectionist, nationalist micro-states led by populists demanding 'national preference,' but without the means to pay for it and unwilling to admit the foreign labor necessary to maintain it, will once again march the continent into the abyss" (p. 294).

However, the intervening years since the book's publication have shown that the next round of violent state

conflict in Europe was not started in France or Greece; it erupted in Ukraine. Russia's elites seem to be drawing a new line between East and West, seeking to distance Russia from Europe once again by appealing to Russian nationalism. This new propaganda battle over meaning in European history involves more than just the legitimizing memory of victory in what the Russians call the Great Patriotic War. In fact, all of the following are at issue in Russia: the definition and meaning of Stalinism, the categorization of perpetrators and victims of the Holocaust and Soviet atrocities, the foundations of stability in postwar Europe, and the reasons for the Soviet collapse. Dan Stone has laid out a framework for understanding the politics of memory in postwar Europe, and it admirably covers these issues. Besides explaining neofascism, this framework can also help us to comprehend why the cult of the Great Patriotic War has been revived in Russia.

As fascism and Russian nationalist imperialism once again rear their heads in Europe—both shamelessly employing exclusionary memory politics—the information contained in this book will be valuable to those who wish to understand the current troubling situation. Indeed, one of the merits of this book is that, much like Robert Graves in his *Good-bye to All That* (1929), Stone makes us consider the causes of the contemporary climate in Europe—as well as the possible consequences.

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