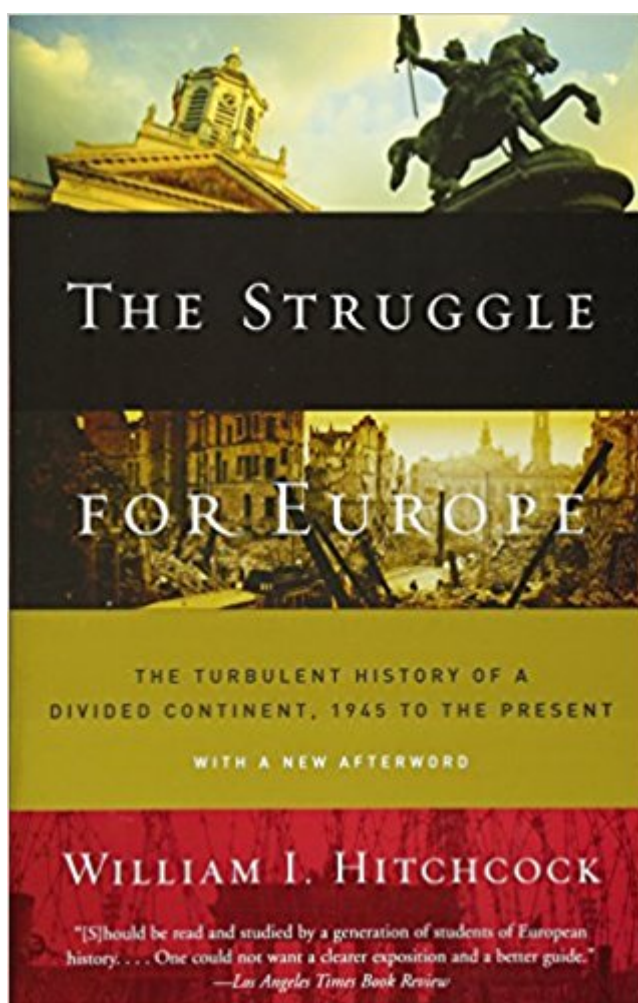


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# The Struggle For Europe: The Turbulent History Of A Divided Continent 1945 To The Present



## Synopsis

From the ashes of World War II to the conflict over Iraq, William Hitchcock examines the miraculous transformation of Europe from a deeply fractured land to a continent striving for stability, tolerance, democracy, and prosperity. Exploring the role of Cold War politics in Europe's peace settlement and the half century that followed, Hitchcock reveals how leaders such as Charles de Gaulle, Willy Brandt, and Margaret Thatcher balanced their nations' interests against the demands of the reigning superpowers, leading to great strides in economic and political unity. He re-creates Europeans' struggles with their troubling legacy of racial, ethnic, and national antagonism, and shows that while divisions persist, Europe stands on the threshold of changes that may profoundly shape the future of world affairs.

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## Customer Reviews

"[S]hould be read and studied by a generation of students of European history. . . . One could not want a clearer exposition and a better guide." **Los Angeles Times Book Review**  
"Lively and insightful. . . . A thoughtful narrative that challenges some previous assumptions about key events that shaped our world." **The Washington Post Book World**  
"Splendid. . . . Hitchcock is a gifted storyteller, with a knack for choosing the right anecdote and quotation to enliven his story." **The Economist**  
"Energetic and fluid. . . . A confident, sharp-minded account." **Financial Times**  
"Every now and then books come along that tell you who the master historians of the next generation are going

to be. I had this sense as I read Will Hitchcock's *The Struggle for Europe*. Shrewd, comprehensive, elegantly written, always convincing in its arguments, it is without question the most successful analytical synthesis of recent European history now available.

• John Lewis Gaddis, Yale University "There is nothing more important at this juncture of our history than a crash course for Americans in modern European history. And there is no better place to start than with William I. Hitchcock's book. . . . It deserves serious attention.

• Daily News Tribune "A clear exposition of postwar developments. . . . Sober and comprehensive.

• Publishers Weekly "Lucid, highly readable. . . . Scholarly without being tedious, a sturdy companion to Richard Vinen's *A History in Fragments*.

• Kirkus Reviews "Two features of this book stand out: its easy, lucid style, which allows deeply thought-out analyses to be slipped into the readable narrative; and the confident way it treats regional complexities, from Ulster to Greece, yet preserves the larger picture of Europe's remarkable transformation. This is a very deft and mature work.

• Paul Kennedy, author of *The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers* "Succinct and handy. . . . Its analysis is adept, well supported with statistics, and quite readable.

• Booklist "Concise . . . A classic account. . . . [The Struggle for Europe] has the priceless merit of clarity, indispensable to those trying to pick their way through the European labyrinth.

• The Daily Telegraph (London) "The nature of the task [Hitchcock] has accomplished here should not be underestimated. In fewer than 500 pages of text he has synthesized a mass of information, intelligently summarizing the latest state of play on a whole range of topics. . . . Always lucid and the geographical range is impressive.

• The Sunday Telegraph (London) "An unassuming tour de force, *The Struggle for Europe* is seamlessly structured, witty and elegant in its narration.

• The Scotsman (UK) "The optimism is refreshing, and this well-informed work is written in robust and readable prose.

• The Independent (London) "Brilliantly concise, pithy, and sometimes acerbic. . . . If it is true that nations that forget their history are doomed to repeat it, then *The Struggle for Europe* ought to be part of a national curriculum.

• The Times (London) "Written with an impressive level of sensitivity and understanding. . . . Hitchcock's lively style and infectious enthusiasm for his subject have resulted in a book which deserves to be widely read.

• Scotland on Sunday "Stimulating and readable. . . . Hitchcock is alive to the dilemmas of European policy makers and statesmen.

• The Evening Standard

From the ashes of World War II to the conflict over Iraq, William Hitchcock examines the miraculous transformation of Europe from a deeply fractured land to a continent striving for stability, tolerance, democracy, and prosperity. Exploring the role of Cold War politics in Europe's peace settlement and the half century that followed, Hitchcock reveals how leaders such as Charles de Gaulle, Willy Brandt, and Margaret Thatcher balanced their nations' interests against the demands of the reigning superpowers, leading to great strides in economic and political unity. He re-creates Europeans' struggles with their troubling legacy of racial, ethnic, and national antagonism, and shows that while divisions persist, Europe stands on the threshold of changes that may profoundly shape the future of world affairs.

How much do you actually know about Europe post-WWII? If you are like the majority of people you'll know they made it through the Cold War and that they are still around and host an Olympic event every now and then. Hitchcock's "The Struggle for Europe" will open your eyes, will expand your knowledge and will elaborate on all of the deep, burning questions you've ever had about Europe. Sitting down and thinking about my knowledge (even as a history major) prior to reading this book, I am truly shocked at how little I knew. There is so much here in this book and so much brought to the foreground that it's amazing it all fits together. That's another point I wanted to emphasize. This doesn't read like a textbook, doesn't read like a lecture, doesn't read like anything I've had the chance of diving into before. You'll absolutely love it, you'll crave the information and you will forever be thankful the veil has been lifted. 5 Informational Stars out of 5!

Good read for understanding European History.

great

College student very happy with this book needed for course on the Cold War. Arrived quickly and well packed.

Very good book. Bought for class but fascinating read in its own right. Great shipping from seller and good condition, as described.

This book provides a very good political overview of post-WWII Europe. If you want a better understanding of the reasons for the cold war, this book is worthwhile.

Hitchcock's *The Struggle for Europe* achieves exactly what it sets out to do: provide a clear and easy-to-read synopsis of the events of the last 60 years of European History. The book opens with a detailed analysis of the postwar period with Britain totally broke, much of Germany destroyed, France & Italy in chaos and Eastern Europe falling into Stalinist control. Hitchcock shows the importance that a few key decisions in the late 1940s had on the development of both Western and Eastern Europe for the rest of the century. The economic boom in the West, continued repression in the E, social change, immigration, the fall of the Berlin Wall, the collapse of Yugoslavia, and the European Union all receive a chapter in this, mostly chronological, narrative. Hitchcock does a very good job weaving these disparate events together and providing the reader with a perspective on the forces behind them. Hitchcock spends most of his time focusing on Germany, Britain, and France. Although Eastern Europe (essentially limited to Poland, Hungary and Czechoslovakia) features in a few chapters and there is a chapter on Spain and Portugal, the book is structured around events in Western Europe. Scandinavia is hardly mentioned and Romania first appears in 1989! If you are looking to learn about the modern history of Austria, Bulgaria, Sweden, Holland, Greece, etc. you will need to look elsewhere! However, if you are looking for a good survey of European history since the Second World War, *The Struggle for Europe* delivers with a clear and concise narrative.

The best thing to be said about Hitchcock's book is probably the worst as well: it is perfectly suited to be an entertaining and accessible textbook for a modern European history class. On the one hand, this means that the book is highly informative and hits on the major issues of high politics in postwar Europe. Hitchcock is very adept at providing enough background to allow readers to fully appreciate the stories he tells, many of which are probably unknown to most. Reading the story of Labor's postwar victory in Britain, or the fairly unheard-of July 1953 uprising in Berlin turns out to be novel and entertaining. Yet, the book also suffers from some classic schoolbook problems. Hitchcock occasionally gets drowned in reciting facts and figures, which greatly slows the book's fast start. And as the previous reviewer said, the scope of the book is not wide, sticking to the obvious countries and people for the most part. The final chapter on the EU is truly textbook-like, bogged down with bolded terms, long definitions, and slightly out of date. For all the momentum the book builds, it ends with a disappointing whimper that sours the whole experience. The bottom line is that the book is good, but skippable. For those with an interest in recent European history, it will serve as an excellent and interesting starting point. For those well-steeped in the story of the

Continent, it is probably of little use, though the occasional story may provide some novelty.

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