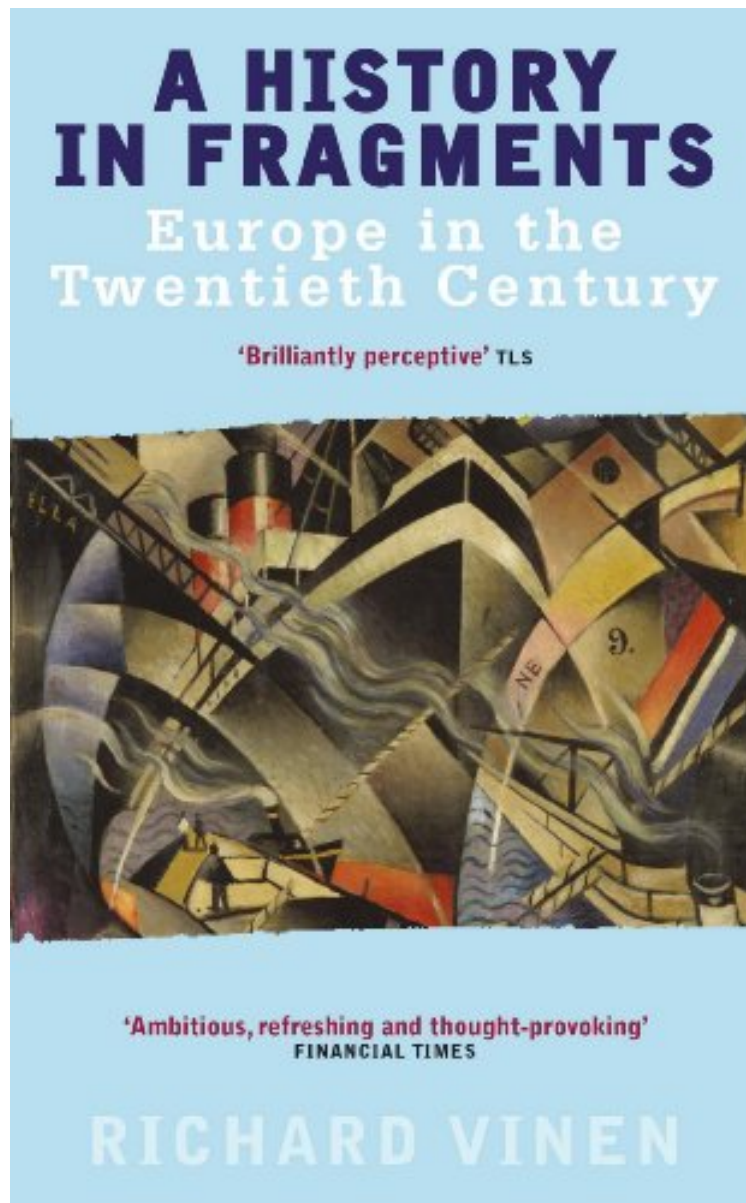


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## A History In Fragments: Europe in the Twentieth Century (English Edition)

Von Richard Vinen

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Von Richard Vinen : A History In Fragments: Europe in the Twentieth Century (English Edition) before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised A History In Fragments: Europe in the Twentieth Century (English Edition):

KundenrezensionenHilfreichste Kundenrezensionen1 von 1 Kunden fanden die folgende Rezension hilfreich. Do Europeans have anything is common ?Von Andrew SmithRichard Vinen would say no. Rejecting grand narrative, and giving no overarching explanations, he uses this opportunity rather to highlight divisions: between generations, economies, towns and rural areas; and all between as well as within nations. Indeed, the predominant flavour of this book is a doubt that there is in fact little, if anything, to unite Europe - it is in effect, a continent of contrasts. Despite this conclusion, this is an optimistic and engaging tour through the events (and a few normally unconsidered details) of what others have called the "Dark Continent" or the "Age of Extremes." Coming full circle, the author identifies parallels between the exuberant optimism of the early "Belle Epoque" of the twentieth century, and its post-Communist afterword. More importantly however, the book's optimism does not come at the price of ignoring contemporary suffering, but a recognition that there is still a lot to be thankful for, and that potential for progress remains. Finally, after highlighting so many divisions, he goes on to recognise some belated international congruence. Indeed, are the nations of Europe so different after all ?

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KurzbeschreibungThe problem with the history of twentieth-century Europe is that everyone thinks they know it. The great stories of the century - the two world wars, the rise and fall of Nazism and communism, female emancipation - seem self-evidently important. But behind the grand narratives, the politics and the ideologies, lies another history: the history of forces that shaped the lives of individual Europeans. That is the thrust of Richard Vinen's magisterial survey of this uniquely destructive and creative century. It argues that there is no single history that encompasses the experience of all Europeans, but rather a multiplicity of different, partially interlocking, histories. Some of these histories are told here in a book which seeks to root the generalisations of large-scale analysis in the concrete - and sometimes incongruous - details of individual lives. Challenging, informing and revealing, this is history writing at its finest.

A History in Fragments captures the sweep of an extraordinary century. Richard Vinen, a popular young London lecturer, traces Europe's tumultuous evolution from imperialism to democracy and cyberspace, "the new frontier." Rather than taking a political, cultural, or economic approach, Vinen combines all in a highly intelligent tour de force. He argues that the key to understanding 20th-century Europe is in its diversity, hence the book's title. Yet this does not do justice to the seamless way he ties together such overarching themes as the rise and fall of communism, the crumbling of social traditions, and total war. His command of vast quantities of material is awe-inspiring; his well-chosen anecdotes lively and right on the mark; his analyses pithy and easy to understand. For example, a simple comparison of the words "internationalism" as used by the communist camp and "globalization" as used by capitalists speaks volumes about the world view of the two ideologies. One of the book's many virtues is a refreshing objectivity. Conscious of his own prejudices as a middle-class British historian born in the 1960s, Vinen takes pains to see events from the viewpoints of those involved. A rather awkward section tucked before a chapter on post-war Europe presents striking photos and a short essay on the use and manipulation of images in the 20th century. Instead of a list of histories and biographies, the bibliography includes useful short critiques of reference material. A History in Fragments inspires both optimism and cynicism in the reader but never boredom. This is drama on the grandest scale and history-telling at its best. --John Stevenson

PressestimmenFascinating and immensely readable...often sums up key moments in soundbite phrases that imprint themselves beautifully on the memory. GLASGOW SUNDAY HERALD Beautifully written, and can be confidently recommended to anyone seeking to make sense of our recent history. DAILY TELEGRAPH A master of telling fact and illuminating insight, Vinen somehow manages to be both opinionated and objective. Andrew Roberts I admired [A HISTORY IN FRAGMENTS] very much indeed. It struck me as a tour de force, as impressive in its collation of little-known facts as in its presentation of fresh and always intelligent interpretation. Anthony Howard