



Europe on Trial: The Story of Collaboration, Resistance, and Retribution during World War II

By Istvan Deak

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Foreword by Norman M. Naimark

In *Europe on Trial*, acclaimed historian István Deák presents the comparative history of collaboration, retribution, and resistance during World War II. Deák explores these three themes through the Western and Eastern European countries that suffered at the hands of German military occupation. The occupied countries had to face the question of whether to cooperate with their German occupiers, try to survive the war without any political involvement, or risk their lives by opposing the Nazis. Deák delves deep into the decisions that various countries and individuals made during this critical time. Following the brutal war, Deák discusses the purging of the ancient régime through lynching, acts of private vengeance, denunciation, firings, forced retirements, deprivation of citizens' rights, expulsions, mass deportations, arbitrary internment, and judicial proceedings including the Nuremberg International Military Tribunal from 1945-1946, which judged the principal German war criminals. *Europe on Trial* helps us to understand the many moral consequences both during and immediately following World War II.

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Editorial Review

Review

"A rich and complex analysis of the most controversial and neglected aspects of the war. Unbiased, it destroys various national myths and presents a sad story about political and human weaknesses. . . . The greatest strength of *Europe on Trial* is its virtuoso elaboration of the striking paradoxes of the behavior of nation-states' governments and populations." —*Holocaust and Genocide Studies*

"This particular study is concise and does not shun unambiguous opinions. It does not avoid daring comparisons, either, talking to the reader outright, using an uncomplicated and clear language . . . *Europe on Trial* . . . offers a fresh look on the topics it deals with, and a broad perspective in which they are set, enabling to grasp (cor)relations and associations between phenomena that usually tend to be perceived as separate." —*Acta Poloniae Historica*

"István Deák takes the reader on a sweeping survey of some of the bleakest aspects of a bleak period in European history. He dispenses with comforting national myths and unexamined assumptions of national virtue. World War II was, as he writes, 'one of the greatest tragedies that humans ever brought upon themselves' . . . a verdict that is amply illustrated by the many evocative, insightful, and distressing examples of human behavior that fill his book."

—*The New York Review of Books*

"Deak's latest book is the product of a long and distinguished career that has produced some of the English-speaking world's most important scholarship concerning the history of eastern and central Europe during the 20th century." —*CHOICE*

"In *Europe on Trial*, István Deák offers a penetrating and often distressing analysis of the complex moral and ethical dilemmas facing Europeans during World War II. In the process, he writes a much needed counter narrative to the better known, uplifting stories of courage and honorable behavior. His far more multifaceted tale exposes the indifference and overall inhumanity of Europeans during the war." —*Michigan War Studies Review*

"This book should attract huge interest, not only among those of us who teach upper-level modern European history courses, but from the greater public as well."

—**Nancy Wingfield, Northern Illinois University**

"Traditionally, historians have made a sharp break in 1945, either covering the war or postwar but not both. Recently, more and more scholars are realizing that the 1939-1949 decade hangs together in many ways. It is a real strength of this book that it embraces the whole decade."

—**James Felak, University of Washington**

"István Deák's essays on Europe's crisis decades have long been indispensable reading for historians of modern Europe. His new book crowns a distinguished career, and offers a truly fresh perspective on one of the most fascinating and fateful periods in twentieth-century European history."

—**Bruce Thompson, University of California, Santa Cruz**

"This is an excellent contribution on an important subject by an experienced scholar. The truly European range of the exposition is impressive. The interpretations are interesting and the attempt at evaluative balance exemplary."

—**Konrad H. Jarausch, University of North Carolina**

"No historian is better suited than István Deák to survey collaboration, resistance, and retribution in relation to the Second World War. *Europe on Trial* excavates the complexities, ambiguities, and ironies of these occupation experiences. Deák's insightful analysis and vibrant storytelling also follows an unerring moral compass. Here is a master scholar's eloquent meditation on Hitler's Europe."

—**James Mace Ward, University of Rhode Island**

"Professor Deák has provided an essential service to the historical profession by writing a book which provides a synthetic overview of collaboration and resistance in Nazi-Dominated Europe. His book fills an enormous gap in the textbook literature on the Third Reich by viewing the period through the lens of the various national histories of occupation and domination. He also illuminates the extent to which the Holocaust could not have been accomplished without the willing collaboration of many Europeans."

—**Benjamin Lapp, Montclair State University**

"A good deal of the literature, especially on collaboration and retribution, is focused on western Europe. Deak, an accomplished scholar of modern central and east European history, brings much-needed balance to this discussion."

—**Robert Blobaum, West Virginia University**

"The eminent Hungarian-American historian István Deák has delivered one of his finest works with this book that problematizes what once seemed a deceptively simple history of the Second World War. In a lucid manner and an admirably brief fashion, Deák's work offers a comprehensive account of the 'collaboration, accommodation, resistance, and retribution' of all European countries . . . Altogether, this book may very well become a classic as the standard textbook regarding issues of resistance versus collaboration in Europe of the Nazi-era. . . . It is to be hoped, however, that this book reaches a far broader audience than that of college or university researchers and students, as it is a magnificent treatment of 'civilian life' in the Second World War." —*Hungarian Cultural Studies Journal*

"Deák . . . has his readers ponder all the right questions. With no easy answers, this survey is rich with the moral conundrums that are the stuff of great classroom teaching. Indeed, the author's probing questions put our own moral certitudes on trial." —*Slavic Review*

"Deák [is] one of great pioneers of the study of Eastern and Central Europe . . . In this book, published in Deák's 89th year, he brings together a persuasive account of all of the dilemmas of occupation, as experienced by exceptional people such as Stollár and by the less courageous majority. It unites experiences that are usually separated, between east and west, between the occupied states and the actively collaborating ones, between left and right. His major case is all too relevant today: Europeans were too willing to make an accommodation with Nazi power when Western democracy seemed weak. The governing myth of Europeans is that they have learned something from the Second World War; this book indicates how much remains to be learned, on that side of the Atlantic and on this one." —**Timothy Snyder, author of *Black Earth***

"Sparing few words, István Deák brilliantly captures the complex and contradictory world that confronted

Europeans under Nazi rule. From Belgium to Bulgaria, from the first German conquests to postwar trials, the book presents a refreshingly original and deeply insightful narrative that upends traditional stories of heroism, perseverance, or betrayal. In riveting and accessible prose, Deák gives us a story that will become the standard in university courses on the war and modern European history."

—**Benjamin Frommer, Northwestern University**

From the Back Cover

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This is an excellent contribution on an important subject by an experienced scholar. The truly European range of the exposition is impressive; the attempt at evaluative balance is exemplary. Konrad H. Jarausch, University of North Carolina

In *Europe on Trial*, acclaimed historian Istvan Deak explores the history of collaboration, retribution, and resistance during World War II. These three themes are examined through the experiences of people and countries under German occupation, as well as Soviet, Italian, and other military rule. Those under foreign rule faced innumerable moral and ethical dilemmas, including the question of whether to cooperate with their occupiers, try to survive the war without any political involvement, or risk their lives by becoming resisters. Many chose all three, depending on wartime conditions. Following the brutal war, the author discusses the purges of real or alleged war criminals and collaborators, through various acts of violence, deportations, and judicial proceedings at the Nuremberg International Military Tribunal as well as in thousands of local courts. *Europe on Trial* helps us to understand the many moral consequences both during and immediately following World War II.

Foreword by Norman M. Naimark

Istvan Deak, a professor emeritus of history at Columbia University, is an authority on modern Central European and general World War II history. Writing often for the *New York Review of Books* and the *New Republic*, Deak has crafted review essays that cover the breadth and depth of the history of Hitler's Europe.

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Norman M. Naimark is the Robert and Florence McDonnell Professor of East European Studies at Stanford University and Sakurako and William Fisher Director of the Stanford Global Studies Division. He is also Senior Fellow at the Hoover Institution and the Freeman-Spogli Institute of International Studies.

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