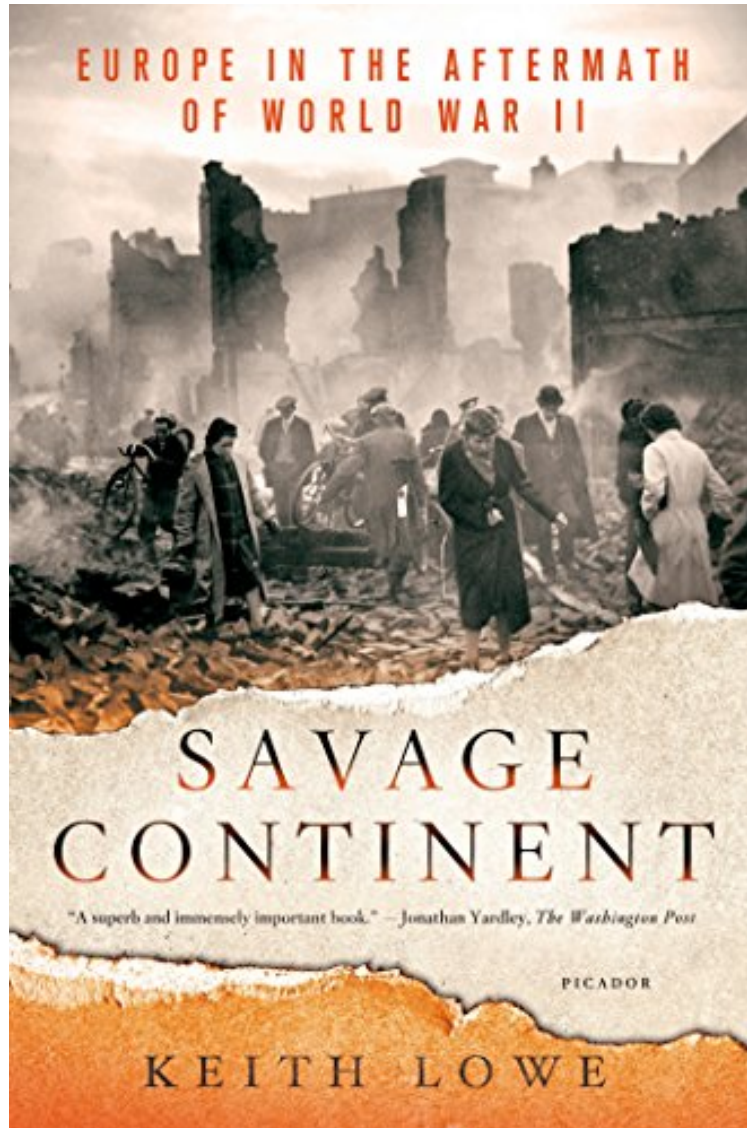


(Read ebook) Savage Continent: Europe in the Aftermath of World War II

Savage Continent: Europe in the Aftermath of World War II

Keith Lowe

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Keith Lowe : Savage Continent: Europe in the Aftermath of World War II before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Savage Continent: Europe in the Aftermath of World War II:

373 of 382 people found the following review helpful. The chaos of postwar Europe By Paul Gelman In the introduction to his book, Keith Lowe writes that the story of Europe in the immediate period following WW2 "is not primarily one of reconstruction and rehabilitation-it is firstly one of descent into anarchy". Such a history has never been written before. This book, which comes to fill in this void, has four main parts and its main theme is that of

vengeance. Its other themes are those of displacement, famines, moral destruction, rape and civil wars. In other words, after WW2 there was an atmosphere of chaos and violence almost everywhere and people decided to take the law into their hands. It was also the time to settle old scores. Yugoslav partisans decided to cut off the noses of their opponents, while Sudeten Germans were butchered in Czechoslovakia. Dutch and Belgian collaborators were summarily executed and their houses were set on fire, while in Italy the bodies of Fascists were displayed in the streets where they could be spat at by passers-by. In Hungary, members of the far-right Arrow Cross were forced to exume mass Jewish graves in very hot weather while local people threw sticks and stones at them. In France, clandestine prisons were set up where suspected collaborators were subjected to multiple forms of sadism including mutilation, rape, enforced prostitution and every type of torture imaginable. This book is also about the history of ethnic cleansing and inter-communal and political violence. Poland harnessed the wartime hatred for Ukrainians to launch a program of expulsion and forced assimilation. Slovaks, Hungarians and Romanians embarked on a series of population exchange. Take, for example, Berlin. It was there where Hannelore Thiele was raped by seven in a row, "like animals". Another woman was raped by Russian soldiers—twenty-three of them, therefore she had to be "stitched up in a hospital. I never want to have anything to do with any man again". Some Lithuanian partisans who fought against the Russians and against Communism were hunted down by the KGB even in the seventies. One of them, Juozas Luksa, was betrayed by someone he thought he was his friend and by 1956, the last of the partisan groups in Lithuania was finally destroyed. For years hundreds of thousands of nationalist partisans "fought a doomed war against the Soviet occupiers in the forlorn hope that the West would eventually come to their aid". Lowe also describes in great detail the civil wars which tore Europe apart from the Baltic to the Mediterranean. He emphasizes that Europe as we know it today emerged out of a complete and total chaos and reminds his readers not to forget this fact. If one can speak of ruthlessness and the pursuit of power while destroying any civil rights, Romania can serve as a very good example, and in one of the best chapters of the book, Lowe shows how the Communists seized absolute power there by suppressing free speech and by a process of collectivization of farms introduced by the Petru Groza government. The Stalinization of the whole country manifested itself in the suppression of churches. The authorities placed bans on baptisms, church weddings and public celebration of Christmas. The mighty shadow of the Soviet Union was everywhere in Eastern Europe. The book is extremely original in its contents and views about the re-emergence of Europe—a continent which knew so many dark days. Lowe has conducted a meticulous and scrupulous research, incorporating primary sources and interviews in eight languages—a tremendous task in itself. This chilling and outstanding book should be read by anyone who is interested in contemporary history and especially in the origins of postwar Europe and the beginnings of the Cold War. Highly recommended!

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. I liked the way Lowe has presented the realities of the ...

By Billy B. Harrell Interesting perspective on a subject that has been well documented and written about by a number of authors in the past. I liked the way Lowe has presented the realities of the devastation better than I've ever seen it laid out. Not just dry statistics but a rather more insightful approach to explaining the horrors behind the numbers. I'm torn in how I feel about the rest of the book. It's not exactly "revisionist" history but I think there is a modern political mindset in the vantage point. Still a good book overall. It came highly recommended by my 25 year old daughter so just to know it was a beginning to her interest in WWII and recent history in general is a good thing.

4 of 4 people found the following review helpful. Outstanding work, highly recommended, many lessons for today.

By Matthew Bracken, author Really first rate scholarship written in an engaging form. The German Nazis may have kicked over the seething cauldron of Europe's national, ethnic, class and religious fault lines, but once that pot ruptured and split over the fire, even the defeat of Germany did not spell peace. Instead, ethnic cleansing and violent repression of class and ethnic enemies continued for several years after "VE Day." And perhaps as Lowe suggests, harsh as it was, this ethnic cleansing might have led to greater stability in most of Europe after WW2. In former Yugoslavia, where this ethnic separation was not conducted, the pressure was only released in the 1990s. A larger point of the book is that while ethnically mixed societies can exist as long as there is a successful integration at the national level (Yugoslavia under Tito, for example) when that top-down pressure lid is removed, watch out! Thus *Savage Continent* can be read as a warning for modern Europeans and Americans. Does anybody truly believe the "multi-kulti-uber-alles" politically-correct claptrap we are forced to pretend to believe? Does anybody not see that allowing the immigration of millions of inassimilable Muslims will not lead to future strife and bloodshed, when Europe's scab is once again ripped open, next time perhaps by an economic depression or other factors? Remember the larger message of *Savage Continent*: The German Nazis merely kicked over the simmering cauldron. Today Europe's cauldron (and America's) are once again bubbling and threatening to boil over. Once the cauldron spills, no matter what tips it over, the social explosions may occur in an unstoppable chain reaction. I've written extensively about this myself. Google my "The CW2 Cube: Mapping the Meta-terrain of Civil War Two" for a primer.

Winner of the PEN Hessell-Tiltman Prize "A superb and immensely important book." —Jonathan Yardley, *The Washington Post*

The Second World War might have officially ended in May 1945, but in reality it rumbled on for another ten years... The end of World War II in Europe is remembered as a time when cheering crowds filled the streets, but the reality was quite different. Across Europe, landscapes had been ravaged, entire cities razed, and more

than thirty million people had been killed in the war. The institutions that we now take for granted—such as police, media, transport, and local and national government—were either entirely absent or compromised. Crime rates soared, economies collapsed, and whole populations hovered on the brink of starvation.. In *Savage Continent*, Keith Lowe describes a continent where individual Germans and collaborators were rounded up and summarily executed, where concentration camps were reopened, and violent anti-Semitism was reborn. In some of the monstrous acts of ethnic cleansing the world has ever seen, tens of millions were expelled from their ancestral homelands. *Savage Continent* is the story of post-war Europe, from the close of the war right to the establishment of an uneasy stability at the end of the 1940s. Based principally on primary sources from a dozen countries, *Savage Continent* is the chronicle of a world gone mad, the standard history of post-World War II Europe for years to come.

“A superb and immensely important book.” —*The Washington Post* “A breathtaking, numbing account of the physical and moral desolation that plagued Europe in the late 1940s. Authoritative but never dry, stripping away soothing myths of national unity and victimhood, this is a painful but necessary historical task superbly done.” —*Kirkus* “Lowe's work, thoroughly researched and written with scrupulous objectivity, promises to be the year's best book on European history.” —*Financial Times (London)* “Deeply harrowing. Moving, measured, and provocative. A compelling picture of a continent physically and morally brutalized by slaughter.” —*The Sunday Times (London)* “A graphic and chilling account of the murderous vengeance, terroristic reprisals, and ferocious ethnic cleansing that gripped Europe following—and often as a direct continuation of—the Second World War. Keith Lowe's excellent book paints a little-known and frightening picture of a continent in the embrace of lawlessness, chaos, and unconstrained violence.” —*Ian Kershaw*, author of *The End: The Defiance and Destruction of Hitler's Germany, 1944–1945* “*Savage Continent* is a powerful and disturbing book, painstakingly researched and written with both authority and an impressive historical sweep.” —*James Holland*, author of *Italy's Sorrow* and *The Battle of Britain* About the Author Keith Lowe is the author of two novels and the critically acclaimed history *Inferno: The Fiery Devastation of Hamburg, 1943*. He is widely recognized as an authority on the Second World War, and has often spoken on TV and radio, both in Britain and the United States. Most recently he was an historical consultant and one of the main speakers in the PBS documentary *The Bombing of Germany* which was also broadcast in Germany. His books have been translated into several languages, and he has also lectured in Britain, Canada and Germany. He lives in North London with his wife and two kids.