



## Contesting Democracy: Political Ideas in Twentieth-Century Europe

*By Jan-Werner Muller*

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This book is the first major account of political thought in twentieth-century Europe, both West and East, to appear since the end of the Cold War. Skillfully blending intellectual, political, and cultural history, Jan-Werner Müller elucidates the ideas that shaped the period of ideological extremes before 1945 and the liberalization of West European politics after the Second World War. He also offers vivid portraits of famous as well as unjustly forgotten political thinkers and the movements and institutions they inspired.

Müller pays particular attention to ideas advanced to justify fascism and how they relate to the special kind of liberal democracy that was created in postwar Western Europe. He also explains the impact of the 1960s and neoliberalism, ending with a critical assessment of today's self-consciously post-ideological age.

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#### Review

" [An] impressive survey of 20th-century European political thought."—Tony Barber, *Financial Times*  
(Tony Barber *Financial Times* 2011-08-20)

'This is a pathbreaking study in the intellectual history of Europe in our time. Analysing ideas that had political impact, Jan-Werner Müller illuminates a never-ending debate about true and false democracy.' - Timothy Garton Ash  
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'The most innovative parts of this admirably thorough and comprehensive book deal with the not so liberal roots of the liberal political institutions and practices that came to fruition in post-war Europe. What strikes me is the balanced treatment of developments in Western *and* Eastern Europe.' - Jürgen Habermas  
(Jürgen Habermas)

'Ideology is the place where theory and practice, philosophy and history, meet. Understand this "in-between" and you are well on your way to understanding the deepest dynamics that shape modern political existence. In this illuminating study Jan-Werner Müller helps us see the experience of twentieth-century Europe, East and West, in a fresh light by showing how its characteristic ideologies developed, functioned, and adapted to the world they created. By focusing on "political thought that matters politically" Müller takes us beyond the simple stories we have inherited about revolution and reaction, post-war reconstruction, the Cold War, the Sixties, and much else. By the end he puts us in a much better position to understand the forces at work in contemporary European politics and the strange attraction of the "anti-political" ideology that governs our time.' - Mark Lilla, author of *The Reckless Mind: Intellectuals in Politics*  
(Mark Lilla)

'The great achievement of Jan Werner Müller's *Contesting Democracy* is to guide us safely across the vast unruly manifestos of European political ideas, from the appalling doctrines that helped generate the totalitarian regimes and world wars to the uneasy decency of our own era, without sacrificing the reader's sense of urgency and signifiante.' - Charles S. Maier  
(Charles Maier)

'Jan-Werner Müller's *Contesting Democracy* is the most philosophically sophisticated and topically comprehensive study of political ideas in twentieth-century Europe yet available. It exhibits a masterful command of primary texts, archival sources, and myriad secondary literatures. Müller assembles for political theorists, intellectual historians and social scientists previously disparate pieces of intellectual-political life from the last, most incomprehensible century on that eternally perplexed and infinitely perplexing continent. By so expertly conveying the full significance of communism, fascism, liberalism, social democracy and Christian democracy, Müller makes the European twentieth century much more fathomable from a historical, moral and political standpoint than any previous work, in any language.' - John P. McCormick, author of *Machiavellian Democracy*  
(John P. McCormick)

"..... [A] fine study of the impact of mass democracy on European political cultures."—David Marquand,

*The New Statesman*

(David Marquand *The New Statesman* 2011-08-22)

".....[An] excellent book.....Müller provides an insightful and comprehensive overview of the development of political ideas in 20th-century Europe that takes in Fascism, Communism, social democracy, liberalism, and much else.—Jeremy Jennings, *Standpoint Magazine*

(Jeremy Jennings *Standpoint Magazine* 2011-09-13)

"Muller's profound and stimulating book has much to offer, both to specialists and for others."—Roger Morgan, *Times Higher Education*

(Roger Morgan *Times Higher Education* 2011-10-06)

"There is no chapter of the twentieth century's European political thought that is not luminously analysed in this superbly written, lucidly argued and immensely engaging book."—Vladimir Tismaneanu, *International Affairs*

(Vladimir Tismaneanu *International Affairs* 2012-01-01)

"Jan-Werner Muller has written a fine book which for the first time gives us a reliable synthesis of twentieth-century European political thought." *European Review of History*

(*European Review of History* 2012-08-27)

"The originality of Contesting Democracy stems in good part from the diversity of its subject, its well thought-out structure, and, last but not least, its lively anecdotes and memorable quotes. Müller writes elegantly and has a good eye for important ideas and neglected authors." A. Craiutu, *Springer*.

(A. Craiutu *Springer* 2012-07-31)

#### About the Author

Jan-Werner Muller teaches politics at Princeton University. His previous books include "A Dangerous Mind: Carl Schmitt in Post-War European Thought" and "Another Country: German Intellectuals, Unification, and National Identity," both published by Yale University Press.

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