Philipp Ther
Europe After 1989 - A History

Literal translation of German title: The New Order on the Old Continent

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Professor Philipp Ther (born 1967) teaches Modern European and East European History at the University of Vienna. He has already published five books in English, and his publications have been translated into various other languages. He has received several prizes and awards, including the John-F.-Kennedy Fellowship at the Center for European Studies, Harvard University (in 1997/98), the 2012 Translation Award of the German Book Trade Association (Börsenverein des deutschen Buchhandels) for Die dunkle Seite der Nationalstaaten:

Leipzig Book Fair Award 2015

#1 on the Non-Fiction Best Book List (Sachbuch Bestenliste)

»Poor backward Eastern Europe has ceased to exist ... whereas poor but sexy Berlin has become proverbial. ... Welcome to the new Europe.«

About

In 2014, Europe is in the grip of concerns and crises that have caused the optimism of 1989’s new beginnings to fade into distant memory. The New Order on the Old Continent explores correlations between the current situation in Europe and the new dawn arising after the fall of the Iron Curtain by shedding a different light on the end of communism, the revolutions of 1989-91 and the subsequent political and social transformations that gave rise to the «new Europe». Current transformations are analyzed, not within the confines of Eastern Europe, but as a phenomenon affecting all EU Member States.

When the Berlin Wall fell in 1989, it gave rise to an experiment of tremendous proportions that affected all of Europe: the nations that used to form the Eastern Bloc were molded to fit the neoliberal order pervasive in Western Europe and thus subordinated to the regime of privatization and liberalization. The book’s accounts draw not only on a wealth of data, archive research and medial sources but also on the personal experiences of the author. Philipp Ther witnessed the historical transformations firsthand, be it on the streets of Prague, where he observed the “velvet revolution”, or in Poland and Ukraine, where he lived and worked for several years. Additionally, Ther draws conclusions about the current situation of the Southern European states (lived in Italy from 2007 to 2010) and the general condition of Europe. Not only are these experiences interwoven with the narrative, making this one of the most compelling books on contemporary European history, its upswings and crises since the 1980s, but with this book Ther also delivers a historical account

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of *The New Order on the Old Continent* — and for the first time a comprehensive analysis from a pan-European perspective.

*From »Poor Berlin, Boomtown Warsaw: The transformation of Central European cities since the 1980s«, talk held at Harvard University, 18.11.2013, manuscript available upon request)

**Praise**

»*The New Order on the Old Continent* achieves a very distinctive history of the present: a history of our present. One that is more understandable after reading this book.« *from the Jury's Statement at the Leipzig Book Fair Award 2015*

» [...] Philipp Ther's beautiful and smart book about the new order on the old continent« *Welt*

»Ther's book reveals Eastern and Western Europe's grand delusions.« *Der Freitag*

»Ther depicts these complicated events meticulously, precise, and with great style and coherence.« *ZEIT*

»Eye-opening.« *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*

»His central thesis demands serious consideration. He argues that a 'neoliberal train,' put on track in Margaret Thatcher's Britain and Ronald Reagan's United States, began 'to cross Europe in 1989.' He says he uses neoliberalism 'as a neutral, analytical term,' and rightly distinguishes between its intellectual history and the specific social and political circumstances of its implementation.« *Timothy Garton Ash, New York Review of Books*

»Philipp Ther doesn't deliver a rash condemnation of neo-liberalism, but endeavours to create a balanced depiction of the processes set in motion by neo-liberal politics in Eastern Europe. His argument is supported by good empirical evidence, differentiated between the countries and identifies the differences between neo-liberal rhetorics and the actual, relatively pragmatic, course of action taken, for example, by the former Czech president Vaclav Klaus.« *Deutschlandfunk*

»This galvanizing book is not a plea for a shock treatment, but opens up the possibility to learn from the experiences and crises of the period that is coming to an end.« *Süddeutsche Zeitung*

»Ther's book is a work of art in contemporary historical scholarship that manages to exhibit the events of the past in their subjective experience without trivializing their objectivity.« *ParisBerlin | Magazin für Europa*

»Everybody concerned with Central and Eastern Europe should make this book compulsive reading.« *vorwaerts.de*

»This brilliant book is a masterpiece of contemporary history and far and away the best thing that’s been published about the huge historical turn that began in Europe
in 1989. It instantly becomes the go-to book understanding the period, totally supplanting previous accounts. Philipp Ther makes the events of 1989, and what followed, not simply a history of Eastern Europe, but a history of Europe as a whole, with both east and west entranced, and partly blinded, by the neoliberal imperative.«

Larry Wolff, New York University

»This is a great and original book. It offers keen personal observations of a wide range of European countries across several tumultuous decades, and brings forward new facts and perspectives. It will remain the history of the European transition from communism to capitalism for many years to come.« Mitchell A. Orenstein, University of Pennsylvania

»Philipp Ther provides a richly detailed history of postcommunist Europe, employing key comparisons enhanced by wonderful personal knowledge of many locations. At a time when the public seems finally ready to question the neoliberal orthodoxy of the past few decades, Ther’s narrative offers some major evidence.« Charles S. Maier, Harvard University

»This book features a lively and imaginative intellect on every page. But Philipp Ther’s erudition is also extraordinary; he ranges with authority over the entirety of Europe in prose that sparkles and flows effortlessly. Europe since 1989 provokes, informs, and entertains, and there is not a dull moment in the entire book.« John Connelly, University of California, Berkeley

»Bound to become the standard work for Europe’s transformation since 1989.« Frank Bösh, H-Net