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## In the Shadow of the Gulag: Tony Judt's Europe

IN *POSTWAR*, HIS 800-PAGE HISTORY OF EUROPE since World War II, Tony Judt has brought together so many arresting anecdotes, statistics, quotations, and observations, written it all up in prose that is so consistently graceful and lucid, and organized it so effectively into a seamless and almost consistently engaging narrative, that one cannot help being impressed—even though (despite the book's epic length) there is much that is not here but should be, and even though Judt's obviously strong desire to come off as an objective historian is undermined time and again by his at least equally strong ideological fealty.<sup>1</sup>

Still, as I say, there is much here to be impressed by. A British scholar who, after *résumé* stops at Cambridge, Oxford, Berkeley, and the *École Normale Supérieure* in Paris, has spent most of the last two decades at New York University (where he runs an institute dedicated to the study of Europe), Judt breathes fresh life into such oft-recounted events as the occupation of Germany, the Soviet takeover of Eastern Europe, the formation of NATO, and the genesis of the EU; writes at unexpected length about every European country larger than Luxembourg (as well as major regions such as Wales and Catalonia); and draws cogent connections among political and economic developments, intellectual trends, and shifting styles in art, music, and architecture. (Judt admirably assails "the distinctive ugliness" of such 1960s urban structures as La Défense in Paris, where the "ugliness appeared almost deliberate, the product of careful design.") He also recognizes the importance of language as a factor in social tensions, mapping out the patchwork of languages that is the Balkans, illuminating the deep divisions between Dutch-speaking Flanders and French-speaking Wallonia in Belgium, and chronicling the rise of English as Europe's ubiquitous common language—a development with which, he reminds us, not everyone was pleased. (Judt cites an early-seventies comment by Georges Pompidou: "Should French ever cease to be the primary working language of Europe, then Europe itself would never be fully European.")

Who felt what about whom at the end of World War II? When Frenchmen were asked in early 1945 which country would most aid

<sup>1</sup> *POSTWAR: A History of Europe Since 1945*, by *Tony Judt*. The Penguin Press. \$39.95; \$20.00.

their recovery, “25 percent said the USSR, 24 percent the USA.” Judt quotes an American GI who was far from alone in finding the conquered Germans “a damned sight friendlier” than the liberated French. And he recalls EU godfather Jean Monnet’s observation that what differentiated Britain from the rest of Western Europe after V-E Day was the lack of a “need to exorcise history”: as Judt neatly puts it, “in France the war had revealed everything that was wrong with the nation’s political culture; in Britain, it had seemed to confirm everything that was right and good about national institutions and habits.” The amount of attention Judt gives to Eastern Europe is surprising and welcome. He notes George Kennan’s comment that after the war American leaders “had no idea at all, and would probably have been incapable of imagining, what a Soviet occupation . . . meant for the people who were subjected to it”; yet he denies that seeking to prevent that occupation by non-nuclear means was a realistic option, for the Red Army could have pushed all the way across Western Europe if ordered to. Among the many facts that catch one’s eye here: when the Soviets moved in to create “people’s republics,” there were only four thousand Communists in Hungary and fewer than a thousand in Romania; when Germany divided, Bertolt Brecht chose East Germany over West, but “hedged his bets by retaining an Austrian passport.” NATO? Its formation may now seem inevitable, though “as late as 1947 few would have predicted that the United States would commit itself to a European military alliance.”

Nor was it foreordained that most of the countries of Western Europe would develop a form of government—involving the massive expansion of the public sector and a major systematic redistribution of wealth—known as social democracy. At war’s end, writes Judt, Western European politicians agreed that “if democracy was to work, if it was to recover its appeal, it would have to be *planned*.” Judt doesn’t see any need to explain why, in the wake of the Holocaust and in the shadow of the Gulag—two of the more memorable examples of elaborate government planning in human history—the appeal of “planned” democracy could have been so self-evident to so many supposedly democratic-minded leaders. But if Judt doesn’t consider such explanation necessary, it’s because he is himself an enthusiastic cheerleader for the social-democratic welfare state. His chapter on the topic is essentially a nostalgic recollection of the 1960s, “the apogee of the [Western] European state,” an era when both the political left and right were united by a “faith in the state—as planner, coordinator, facilitator, arbiter, provider, caretaker and guardian.” Judt carefully distinguishes among the forms social democracy took in different countries—even noting the differences among its various Scandinavian incarnations—but hails it in all its varieties as “a virtuous circle of employment and influence that attracted near-universal appreciation.” Well, it certainly was (and is) celebrated by plenty of Western European writers, journalists, and academics—hardly a surprise, given that in many parts of Western Europe it can be difficult to get a book published, or get a good teaching job or an influential position at a major newspaper, if you’re

not a socialist (or can't keep quiet about the fact that you aren't). Judt maintains that in the 1960s "the broad Western consensus of the age held that only the state had the resources to service the cultural needs of its citizens: left to themselves, individuals and communities would lack both means and initiative." It's true that academic, political, and media elites succeeded in convincing many people that this was the case; what Judt fails to acknowledge sufficiently is that this conviction bred a generation of Western Europeans for many of whom an alarmingly childlike reliance on the state is second nature and individual initiative an almost alien concept.

Judt wants us to understand that because he's attached to the notion of a benign, all-powerful state, it doesn't mean he's a Communist. On the contrary, he makes a point of emphasizing the contrasts between his beloved social democracy ("reforms for the common benefit") and Communism ("party dictatorships established in the name of a collectivist myth") rather than their continuities, the idea being to insulate the former from the evils of the latter. (Though he dutifully cites the maxim that "what begins with centralized planning ends with centralized killing," he makes it clear that he's nonetheless a big fan of centralized planning, social-democratic style.) Judt argues that while the founders of European social democracy were indeed anti-capitalist and pro-socialist, they sought "to build not economic utopias but good societies" and thus set out to tame capitalism, not crush it, creating states that were "avowedly social" but "far from socialist." Yet he seems to waver on the question of whether social-democratic welfare states can fairly be labeled as socialist. (Certainly they're widely understood to be so, and the Labor parties in many countries routinely describe themselves, and are described by others, as such.) He celebrates the sharp rise in support for Social Democratic parties in Scandinavian elections between 1945 and 1964; what he omits to point out is that a major reason for it is that the Social Democrats' electoral base consisted largely of public-sector employees who owed their jobs to social-democratic policies. Similarly, Judt praises the Social Democrats' building of constituencies among peasants and farmers who might otherwise have turned to fascists or right-wing "Agrarian populists"—but he doesn't mention that the principal means by which they won these groups' loyalty was by providing them with high levels of tax relief, tariff protection, and direct financial support.

"The legitimacy of the state in post-war Scandinavia, the authority and initiative accorded it by a mostly unquestioning citizenry," Judt acknowledges, "left government free to act in what it took to be the common interest with remarkably little oversight." You can say that again. But Judt plainly doesn't consider this a significant problem. Nor does he focus on the fact that—in Scandinavia, especially—the citizenry was trained to be "unquestioning" by government-owned broadcast monopolies, state-funded "independent" newspapers, and officially approved school and university textbooks that sang the praises of social democracy while systematically misrepresenting its chief rival,

American-style liberal democracy. Even as America, during the postwar era, was taking its predilection for national self-criticism to unprecedented heights in the civil rights, antiwar, women's, and gay-rights movements, young Western Europeans were being brought up to be boosters for social democracy, to defer reflexively on major issues to the views of official policymakers, and to channel their rebelliousness into protests against the U.S. (notably its involvement in Vietnam) rather than into criticism of their own leaders and system of government.

Judt admits readily enough that social democracy's Golden Age is behind it—that, indeed, the whole contraption is in serious trouble, its economic foundations increasingly undermined by low reproductive rates and a growing cohort of pensioners that will eventually compel a drastic scaling back of welfare entitlements—and recognizes the importance of Margaret Thatcher's reforms in making the British economy more efficient and competitive during the 1980s. Yet he savages Thatcherism nonetheless, arguing that the Iron Lady brought on social “meltdown” by “dismantling all collectively-held resources” and “vociferously insisting upon an individualist ethic.” In his words, “citizens were transmuted into shareholders . . . their relationship to one another and to the collectivity measured in assets and claims rather than in services or obligations. . . . The public space became a market place.” Here's a rather different way to put it: the idea of Thatcherism was to treat Britons somewhat less like helpless children in the charge of a wise nanny and somewhat more like free adults able to make decisions for themselves. Judt's language in this passage is that of someone who assumes that you can't have anything worth calling community without a statist “collectivity”; someone for whom the good society is, by definition, one in which the state plays the essential role in mediating individuals' relationships to one another. (This zeal for a state-defined “collectivity,” of course, is a tragic European habit: it was such thinking that made the Third Reich and Soviet Union possible.) True, Judt recognizes Thatcher's “realism”; but he echoes the familiar leftist regret over the damage that that realism did to Marxist “ideals.” Significantly, he reserves the word “radicals” not for power-mongering statists but for the Thatcherites who rejected government authoritarianism in the name of individual self-determination. Reading Judt on these matters, one is forcefully reminded that for all his efforts to downplay the continuities between social democracy and Communism, those continuities are extensive. At times, for example, Vaclav Havel's observation (quoted by Judt) that Communist governments have an “outpost in every citizen” seems equally applicable to social-democratic Scandinavia. Also, Judt writes about how in Communist Eastern Europe “the problem was often one of *self-censorship*” by writers, artists, filmmakers, and others who sought to avoid trouble with the authorities, but fails to note that this is a growing problem in today's Western Europe, where many members of these professions (especially in the wake of Theo van Gogh's murder and the Danish cartoon crisis) have begun to censor

themselves lest they offend Muslim leaders and their supporters in the political and media establishment.<sup>2</sup>

Though Judt concedes the decline of European social democracy, he appears to look forward to yet another Golden Age of successful income redistribution, this time under the aegis of the European Union. Though faithfully cataloguing the EU's many failings—among them its lack of democratic accountability and high levels of corruption, waste, and bureaucratization—he nonetheless dismisses opposition to the EU as “Europhobic prejudice” and describes that “prejudice” as being “fuelled by irresponsible mainstream politicians” and “fanned by nationalist demagogues.” He all but says straight out that European citizens should shut up and let their masters in Brussels go about their business. Like fellow official-expert-on-Europe Timothy Garton Ash in his recent book *Free World*,<sup>3</sup> Judt expresses the hope that the European public will develop a “patriotism for Europe”; but given how the EU works, with key decisions made not by the European Parliament but by unelected technocrats, the “patriotism” he longs for would have to be founded not (like American patriotism) on a devotion to liberty but on a deference not unlike that of a serf toward his feudal lord. Judt even goes so far as to say that the disorganized, unpremeditated way in which the EU took form was a good thing because

very few lawyers or legislators in even the most pro-European states of the European “core” would have been willing to relinquish local legal supremacy had they been asked to do so at the outset. Similarly, if a clearly articulated “European project,” describing the goals and institutions of the Union as they later evolved, had ever been put to the separate voters of the states of western Europe it would surely have been rejected.

In other words, the undemocratic way in which Western Europeans' democratic rights were gradually siphoned away from them is something to celebrate. One of the EU's many virtues, as Judt sees it, is that simply by binding its member states together so intricately it has made armed conflict among them “inconceivable.” But which major events of the last few years (9/11? the murder of Pim Fortuyn? the Paris riots? the Danish cartoon crisis?) can be said to have been “conceivable” before the fact? To many observers, Europe today, with its unhesitating appeasement of Islamofascism and its increasing anti-Semitism, is awfully reminiscent of Europe in the late 1930s. As the Islamization of Europe proceeds apace, with some countries (such as Denmark) addressing the problem and others (such as Sweden) refusing to do so,

<sup>2</sup> One example: Finn Graff, Norway's most famous editorial cartoonist, has drawn cartoons equating Israeli leaders to Nazis, but after the controversy over the Danish Muhammed cartoons announced that, out of sheer self-protection, he would not draw anything that might offend Muslims.

<sup>3</sup> I reviewed *Free World* in *The Hudson Review*, Vol. LVIII, No. 4 (Winter 2006).

both international and intranational frictions seem bound to intensify, leading to conflicts that perhaps no one has yet foreseen.

If Judt isn't exactly staying awake at night worrying about the corrosion of ordinary EU citizens' democratic rights, he frets at length about the status of intellectuals, bemoaning the dramatic deterioration of their position in Eastern Europe after the fall of Communism and the supposed "demise of the continental intellectual" over recent years. Intellectuals, he complains, are now "marginal" in Europe. This claim is (to put it mildly) hard to accept, given the inordinate attention the European media still accord the likes of, say, Noam Chomsky and Gore Vidal. In Norway, where I live, several "intellectuals" based at the University of Oslo are genuine media celebrities; last July the popular national tabloid *Dagbladet* devoted several pages to a splashy feature in which it selected the country's "top ten intellectuals"—not exactly the sort of thing you'd expect to find in the *New York Post* or *Daily News*. To support his argument that intellectuals are underappreciated, Judt carps that in 2003 insufficient coverage was given to an essay that Jürgen Habermas and Jacques Derrida published in a German newspaper and apparently expected to be received as a major anti-American statement. I happen to recall that this banal article (which said nothing Europeans hadn't heard a thousand times) was in fact treated in the European media as a landmark event. Neglect? On the contrary, Western Europe today is a place where intellectuals are routinely treated as prophets and oracles, no matter how rapid their restatements of social-democratic dogma, how misguided their predictions, or how shameless their admiration of the Fidels and Saddams of this world.

What makes Judt's concern about the diminishing role of Western European intellectuals particularly curious is his recognition of the extent to which members of that fraternity betrayed freedom and supported Communist tyranny during the Cold War. "Enthusiasm for Communism in theory," Judt notes with appropriate sarcasm, "was characteristically present in inverse proportion to direct experience of it in practice." He recalls Stalin's coordination of the postwar "peace" movement in Western Europe, a sham which convinced "many West Germans that their country could be both reunified and secure if it declared itself 'neutral.'" He quotes Janet Flanner's observation in 1950 that "Communist propaganda is enjoying the most extraordinary success. . . . that it has ever had in France." (Judt points out that this should hardly surprise us: given that French intellectuals "approved and even worshipped violence as a tool of public policy" and "had long since been familiarized with the idea that historical change and purgative bloodshed go hand in hand," they were "pre-disposed . . . to greet Communist apologetics for Soviet brutality with a distinctly sympathetic ear.") Among the many French intellectuals who famously joined the ranks of Stalin's useful idiots were Jean-Paul Sartre, whose multitudinous fatuities Judt usefully sums up, and Paul Eluard, who in 1948 told

a stunned Romanian audience that “France is in shadow” but “you have discovered the sunshine of Happiness.” As Judt points out,

writers, professors, artists, teachers and journalists frequently admired Stalin not in spite of his faults, but *because* of them. It was when he was murdering people on an industrial scale, when the show trials were displaying Soviet Communism at its most theatrically macabre, that men and women beyond Stalin’s grasp were most seduced by the man and his cult. It was the absurdly large gap separating rhetoric from reality that made it so irresistible to men and women of goodwill in search of a Cause.

In the same way, “the cult of Mao in the West reached its zenith at the height of the Cultural Revolution, just when and *just because* Mao was persecuting writers, artists and teachers.” Judt’s bluntness about all this is admirable; yet he fails to understand that this selfsame *trahison des clercs* persists today, when many of Europe’s most influential “writers, professors, artists, teachers and journalists” close their eyes to the most brutal aspects of European Islam as heartlessly as their predecessors once ignored the Gulag, and decry “Islamophobia” as fiercely as their predecessors denounced anti-Communism.

What of the mid-century “Red Scare”? Today’s popular culture consistently dismisses it as sheer paranoia and/or an attempt by nefarious reactionaries to induce unwarranted fear; Judt reminds us that throughout the Cold War, Communist infiltration in the Western European establishment was a grim reality, noting that around 1980 at least 25 members of the West German Bundestag were “paid agents” of East Germany. Many leaders readily betrayed democracy in the name of peaceful coexistence: the Bonn government, while denying support to anti-Communists in East Germany, propped up that country’s Communist regime with generous subsidies; in 1982, Egon Bahr, a Social Democratic politician in West Germany, called on Poles to renounce hopes of freedom in order to preserve peace. The French did their part: in East Germany’s eleventh hour, François Mitterrand visited it “in a show of support for its sovereignty”; likewise, when Soviet hard-liners overthrew Gorbachev, Mitterrand was “quick to acknowledge the plotters’ success in restoring the *status quo ante*.” Judt underscores the degree to which Eastern Europe’s Communist regimes monitored and controlled their subjects: in its last years, the East German secret police, the Stasi, had “85,000 full-time employees . . . , 60,000 ‘unofficial collaborators,’ 110,000 regular informers and upwards of half a million ‘part-time’ informers. . . . Husbands spied on wives, professors reported on students, priests informed on their parishioners. There were files on 6 million residents of former East Germany, one of three in the population.”

Yet for all his candor about such matters, Judt has, as Norman Davies put it in a review of *Postwar* for *The Guardian*, a “strange reluctance to

give the Stalinist spade its real name.” All too frequently, Judt’s emphasis is on Communism’s “dysfunctional” quality, not its evil. The staggering horrors of the Gulag, many facts about which have been unearthed in Soviet archives since the fall of Communism (and recounted in such books as Anne Applebaum’s *Gulag: A History*), are hardly mentioned here. Writing about French intellectuals who turned away from Marxism, Judt describes their “haste to abjure their own previous engagement” as “sometimes unseemly.” Would he characterize defection from Nazism in this way? He calls the brave anti-Marxism of Bernard-Henri Lévy and André Glucksmann “parricidal.” Talk about unseemly! Tellingly, nowhere in this mammoth volume does Judt find room even to mention Ronald Reagan’s “evil empire” speech at the Brandenburg Gate.

This omission, to be sure, is no surprise, for it fits in not only with Judt’s skirting of Soviet Communism’s darkest aspects (“evil”—such a vulgar word!) but also with his manifest determination to minimize the U.S. role in postwar European history. Granted, he writes at considerable length about America’s cultural impact during the early postwar years—his emphasis being on Western Europeans’ fear that they had been liberated from Nazism only to suffer the indignity of “Coca-Colonisation.” Judt quotes French critics who, while belittling the sacrifices of France’s American liberators (and keeping mum about their own wartime collaboration), ranted hysterically about transatlantic cultural pollution. Though Judt examines the Marshall Plan in some detail—even drawing our attention to the remarkable fact that “in mid-1950 only one French adult in three acknowledged having even heard of the Marshall Plan and of these 64 percent declared it to be ‘bad’ for their country” (most Frenchmen saw it, indeed, as “a serious threat to French independence”)—he seems to diminish its role in the recovery of Western Europe. Similarly, he argues that “the U.S. played a remarkably small part in the dramas of 1989” and denies that it served as a model of freedom or source of inspiration for young, newly liberated Eastern Europeans. For the latter, he insists, “the opposite of Communism was not ‘capitalism’ but ‘Europe.’” Here, as throughout the book, Judt equates America less with life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness than with an almost caricaturish plutocracy, a view that enables him to write that “for most people who had lived under Communism, liberation by no means implied a yearning for untrammelled economic competition” (i.e., the American way of life); rather, they preferred to join Europe, where “you could have your socialist cake and eat it in freedom.” Judt cites with apparent sympathy the fear of Jérôme Clément, head of the TV station *Arte*, that post-Communist Prague would succumb to “a deadly liberal utopia” of American conditions in the form of (as Judt puts it) “deregulated markets and the lure of profit.” In passages like this, Judt seems awfully close in spirit to those Europeans who emphasize the continuities of Communism and Social Democracy, who celebrate both systems for their high level of state control, and who contrast them favorably with the American system, which they portray as a hellhole of worker exploitation. Judt even appears to buy the opposition of “European creativity” to “American



materialism”—this at a time, mind you, when European culture feels weary and uncertain and America is not only materially richer but considerably more artistically vibrant, varied, energetic, self-assured, adventurous. Judt himself quotes a 1996 remark by Alfons Verplaetse, former head of Belgium’s central bank: “Europeans want to be sure that there is no adventure in the future. They have had too much of that.” This is absolutely true—and is one reason why they can be so discomfited by Americans, who are far more likely to view life as an adventure, in the most positive sense of the word, and to welcome rather than fear it.

Judt touches on the recent resurgence of anti-Americanism in Europe but does not point out that if ordinary Europeans are anti-American, it’s because they’re constantly being fed anti-American propaganda by their teachers and professors, writers and journalists, politicians and intellectuals. Judt says that to Europeans “life in the U.S. appear[s] dangerous and anarchic”—but it appears this way only because the European media *make* it “appear” this way. Judt might note (but doesn’t) that for some time now crime rates have been declining in the U.S. and soaring in Western Europe—and that this (along with high unemployment) has driven increasing numbers of Western Europeans to emigrate, more than a few of them to the U.S. Comparing social-democratic Europe with America, Judt slants the facts in familiar ways—arguing, for example, that Western Europeans are better educated “through secondary school” while neglecting to add that twice as many Americans go on to college, and recycling the tired claim that Europe’s health care system beats America’s hands down instead of admitting that both are seriously flawed in different ways. Judt tends to exhibit the casual disdain for America that one finds among European academics (even though, like many other members of the breed, he has long deigned to live and work in the U.S.). To him, the fact that over 75 percent of Americans are “very proud” of their country, as compared with (for example) 17 percent of Germans, can mean only one thing: that that foul beast “nationalism” is still alive in the U.S. but nearly dead on the other side of the pond. He’s wrong: while nationalism of the potentially dangerous European kind is a highly marginal phenomenon in the U.S. (where patriotism is a matter not of exclusionary ethnic pride but of ethnically inclusive love of freedom), there persists in Europe a long-suppressed national feeling that is now reawakening, largely in reaction to Europe’s ongoing Islamization. At present, where this will lead—to an American-style determination to defend liberty or to a self-destructive chauvinism more consistent with modern European history—is anybody’s guess.

Alas, Judt has no light to shed on the matter. His handling of the subject of Europe’s Islamization—or, more precisely, his failure to address this subject satisfactorily—is this book’s major shortcoming. Indeed, he puts the word “Islamization” in scare quotes (in a reference to “the coming ‘Islamisation’ of Europe”), and does the same, disconcertingly, for the words “radical Islam,” “terror,” and “terrorism.” In a book that covers so many topics at such great length, it is bizarre to find

no reference whatsoever to the many Cold War-era agreements between European and Arab governments that helped bring the current European Muslim dilemma into being and that the scholar Gisèle Littman (who writes under the name Bat Ye'or) has outlined exhaustively in her important book *Eurabia*. Nor does Judt acknowledge that Europe's Islamization is a direct consequence of social-democratic engineering—a consequence, namely, of a “multicultural” approach to immigration that rejected America's successful encouragement of integration and self-reliance in favor of a policy that treated newcomers as irrevocably alien welfare clients and empowered despotic Muslim-community patriarchs and imams who shared social democracy's scorn for the individual.

Incredibly, Judt doesn't even begin to delve into European Islam until page 731, nine-tenths of the way through the book. And not only does he fail to note the spiraling incidence of rape, gay-bashing, and other transgressions by Muslim youth in European cities, he actually makes the jaw-dropping claim that in Europe today “racially motivated attacks on Arabs” are “far more numerous than assaults on Jews.” Has he even heard of the official French government report, leaked on the Internet in 2004 and known popularly as the Obin Report (its official name is “Les Signes et manifestations d'appartenance religieuse dans les établissements scolaires”), which concluded that owing to harassment by Muslim classmates Jewish children cannot get an education anywhere in France today? Does he know that European Jews are so scared of being physically attacked that they are increasingly concealing their Jewish identity? On the morning of the day that I am writing this, somebody riddled the façade of Oslo's only synagogue (which is in my neighborhood) with bullet holes; in today's Europe, such acts have become commonplace. Judt points out, correctly, that more and more European Muslim girls are donning hijab, but he maintains that this is only “sometimes” the result of “family pressure” while “often” (i.e., more than “sometimes”) a “rebellion against the compromises of an older generation.” This is breathtaking: nobody who understood the rigidly defined and carefully regulated role of women and girls in the typical European Muslim home, or who was aware of the harsh and systematic oppression of females that is endemic in European Muslim communities—not to mention the severe punishment that awaits any Muslim woman who dares to carry out any kind of “rebellion” against her family's and community's “older generation”—could write such nonsense in good conscience.

But so it goes in this book. Judt doesn't breathe so much as a word about such widespread practices as forced marriage and female genital mutilation, or about the staggeringly high frequency of physical violence and sexual abuse within European Muslim families, or about the equally staggering (and rising) number of “honor killings” committed every year by European passport holders whose wives or sisters or daughters have, in their estimation, besmirched the family honor by befriending boys, rejecting forced marriages, seeking divorces, or simply being “too European” (i.e., independent-minded and well-

integrated). Entirely overlooking the contempt for democracy and for “infidels” that participants in the autumn 2005 Paris riots articulated in one media interview after another, Judt insipidly describes the riots as a “legacy of empire” and attributes them (with breathtaking absurdity) to the rioters’ sympathy for Palestinians. You would never know from Judt’s book that according to a recent *Daily Telegraph* poll, 40 percent of British Muslims want to see Britain under sharia law, which entails (among much else) the execution of homosexuals and adulterous women. You’d never know that in the Netherlands, where Muslims will soon be a majority in the larger cities, Minister of Justice Piet Hein Donner has accepted the idea of introducing sharia law, stating that “It would be a disgrace to say: ‘That is not allowed!’”

Judt knows a great deal about how Europe renewed itself after being devastated by one totalitarian ideology and how it survived the nearly half-century-long domination of its eastern half by another totalitarian ideology. Today Europe confronts a third totalitarian ideology. In two world wars, it committed suicide; now it’s doing so again—and this time it may not rise from the ashes. Yet Judt either can’t accept it or won’t admit it. He’s not alone, of course: most of today’s academic “Europe experts” are utterly useless on this subject. Some don’t even dare mention the elephant in the room. Predictably, Judt concludes that the real problem here is “Islamophobia” (this is one word he *doesn’t* put in scare quotes) and the rise of “far-right,” “anti-immigrant” parties.<sup>4</sup> For all his flagrant denial of reality, however, one is still astonished to see him conclude on a note of sheer fantasy, insisting, in his closing sentences, on Europe’s right “to offer the world some modest advice” on how to live and suggesting that “the twenty-first century might yet belong to Europe.” More likely, Europe will by the end of the century belong, in whole or in part, to the Islamic world, and will be governed, in whole or in part, according to sharia law. Yes, this disaster may yet be averted; but only if people like Judt—that is to say, the teachers, professors, politicians, writers, artists, and journalists who shape government agendas and public attitudes—summon the courage to face difficult challenges and speak uncomfortable truths before it’s too late.

<sup>4</sup> The underlying ideology of *Postwar* is explicitly and illuminatingly articulated in a piece by Judt that appeared in the September 21, 2006 issue of the *London Review of Books*. In the essay, entitled “Bush’s Useful Idiots,” Judt denounces what he describes as the betrayal of the left by liberal intellectuals who have aligned themselves with conservatives in the struggle against Islamic jihad. He not only disagrees with these intellectuals—among them Paul Berman, Christopher Hitchens, Vaclav Havel, and André Glucksmann—but also impugns their motives and competence. His ludicrous argument is that these turncoats, longing for “the comforting verities of a simpler time” when there was “a binary division of the world along ideological lines,” have reduced “exotic complexity” to a crude formula of “Democracy v. Totalitarianism, Freedom v. Fascism, Them v. Us.” The level of denial of reality in this piece is breathtaking: Judt puts the words “global jihad” in scare quotes, as if the atrocities of 9/11, 2/11 (Madrid), 7/7 (London), etc.—and the millions of Muslims who applauded them—were all figments of the collective imagination of Bush, Berman, & co. Note to Judt: there *is* an enemy out there, and for them it *is* “Them v. Us.” It’s anything but “comforting” to stare unblinkingly into the reality of their totalitarian ideology and their hatred for us. The “useful idiots” of our day are not (as Judt would have it) those who are standing up to this enemy, but those who, like Lenin’s “useful idiots,” stubbornly refuse to give evil its name.