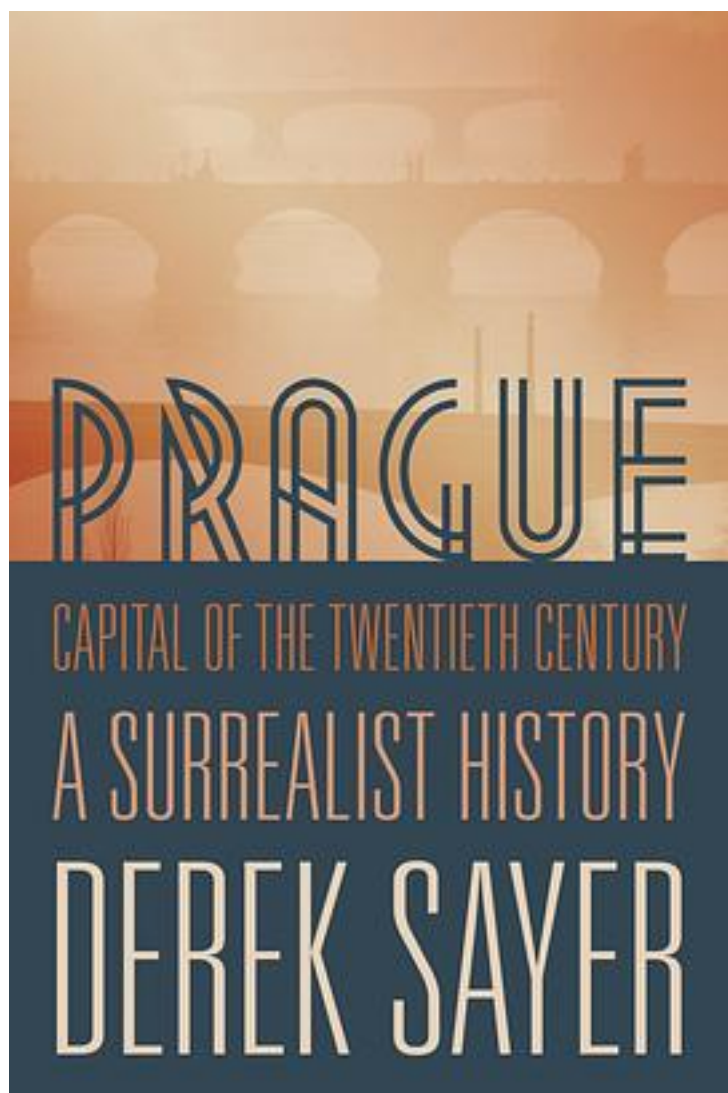


# Prague: Capital of the Twentieth Century



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著者:Derek Sayer

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Setting out to recover the roots of modernity in the boulevards, interiors, and arcades of the "city of light," Walter Benjamin dubbed Paris "the capital of the nineteenth century." In this eagerly anticipated sequel to his acclaimed *Coasts of Bohemia: A Czech History*, Derek Sayer argues that Prague could well be seen as the capital of the much darker twentieth century. Ranging across twentieth-century Prague's astonishingly vibrant and always surprising human landscape, this richly illustrated cultural history describes how the city has experienced (and suffered) more ways of being modern than perhaps any other metropolis.

Located at the crossroads of struggles between democratic, communist, and fascist visions of the modern world, twentieth-century Prague witnessed revolutions and invasions, national liberation and ethnic cleansing, the Holocaust, show trials, and snuffed-out dreams of "socialism with a human face." Yet between the wars, when Prague was the capital of Europe's most easterly parliamentary democracy, it was also a hotbed of artistic and architectural modernism, and a center of surrealism second only to Paris.

Focusing on these years, Sayer explores Prague's spectacular modern buildings, monuments, paintings, books, films, operas, exhibitions, and much more. A place where the utopian fantasies of the century repeatedly unraveled, Prague was tailor-made for surrealist André Breton's "black humor," and Sayer discusses the way the city produced unrivaled connoisseurs of grim comedy, from Franz Kafka and Jaroslav Hasek to Milan Kundera and Václav Havel. A masterful and unforgettable account of a city where an idling flaneur could just as easily be a secret policeman, this book vividly shows why Prague can teach us so much about the twentieth century and what made us who we are.

Paris may have been the capital of the nineteenth century, as Walter Benjamin observed, but for Sayer it is Prague—with its avant-garde impulses, erotic subcurrents, political contradictions, and moments of hideous violence—that best exemplifies the twentieth. Yet Prague "offers slim pickings for grand narratives, least of all for grand narratives of progress," and therefore, suggests Sayer, the best way to reveal the Czech nucleus of culture at the crossroads of Eastern and Western Europe is through the dark mirror of surrealism. And so this selection is both an examination of the Prague experiences of André Breton, Guillaume Apollinaire, Vítězslav Nezval, and other surrealists, and a surrealist document in its own right, revealing its truths in a big, messy knot of jarring juxtapositions, playful obscenities, and found objects of profound beauty. Though some may find themselves frustrated by this fragmentary, nonlinear approach, readers up for the challenge will likely find themselves delighted by Sayer's erudition as he reintroduces dozens of figures, many long forgotten or scarcely known to non-Czechs, into our understanding of twentieth-century cultural history. --Brendan Driscoll

"Winner of the 2014 George L. Mosse Prize, American Historical Association"

"Honorable Mention for the 2014 Wayne S. Vucinich Book Prize, Association for Slavic, East European, and Eurasian Studies"

"Special Mention for the 2014 F. X. alda Prize, Institute for Czech Literature of the Czech Academy of Sciences"

"One of Financial Times (FT.com) Best History Books of 2013"

"[A] pleasure to read, luscious in a sultry kind of way."---Marci Shore, Times Literary

## Supplement

"[A] captivating portrait of 20th-century Prague. . . . The breadth of Sayer's knowledge is encyclopedic, and those willing to stay the course will be rewarded." (Publishers Weekly)

"[T]his is a broad cultural history . . . with Sayer ranging easily across the arts. . . . [C]ontinually illuminating."---Andrew Mead, Architectural Review

"[Readers] will likely find themselves delighted by Sayer's erudition as he reintroduces dozens of figures, many long forgotten or scarcely known to non-Czechs, into our understanding of twentieth-century cultural history."---Brendan Driscoll, Booklist

"A real page-turner that leads the reader through all possible facets of Modernism in Prague, starting with Breton's and Eluard visit to the city in 1935 and ending with the crashing of all modern and Surrealist legacy by the Communist regime in the 1940s and 50s. At the same time, Sayer's book pays also great attention to previous periods while putting also a strong emphasis on the many efforts, from the Prague Spring till today's resistance to Prague's Macdonalization, to recover the revolutionary power and intuitions of the past, in the field of art but as well as in that of daily life. . . . [A] fabulously good read. . . . Derek Sayer stands already out as one of the most convincing representatives of how to rethink our cultural past today."---Jan Baetens, Leonardo

"Prague, Capital of the Twentieth Century is an erudite, comprehensive, well-illustrated and witty account of Czech art, design, architecture, literature and music in an era--stretching roughly from Czechoslovakia's creation in 1918 to the end of the second world war--when few in Paris, Berlin, London or even New York would have thought of the Czechs as not being part of western civilisation. . . . [I]n this book [Sayer] has succeeded in bringing back to life a golden avant-garde era that not long ago was in danger of being written out of history altogether."---Tony Barber, Financial Times

"A triumph! Sayer's indispensable work is at once magisterial and puckish, authoritative and subversive, intellectually dense and brilliantly accessible."--Michael Beckerman, New York University

"This is a fascinating and brilliantly written narrative that combines elements of literary guide, biography, cultural history, and essay. Writing with warm engagement, and drawing on his detailed knowledge of Czech literature, art, architecture, music, and other fields, Derek Sayer provides a rich picture of a dynamic cultural landscape."--Jindrich Toman, University of Michigan

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作者介绍:

Derek Sayer is Professor of Cultural History at Lancaster University and a former Canada Research Chair at the University of Alberta. His previous books include The Coasts of Bohemia: A Czech History (Princeton) and Capitalism and Modernity. He is a fellow of the Royal Society of Canada.

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# 书评

提起布拉格，总给人一种美丽浪漫又神秘的感觉，从中世纪、神圣罗马帝国时期遗留下来的哥特式、巴洛克风格建筑与二十世纪现代主义建筑简约的线条夹杂在一起，市中心的小巷内似乎每处都隐藏着不为人知的历史。对英国历史学家德里克·塞耶(Derek Sayer)来说，布拉格的神秘感， ...

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