

An examination of the role of history and memory is vital in order to better understand why the grand design of a United Europe – with a common foreign policy and market yet enough diversity to allow for cultural and social differences – was overwhelmingly turned down by its citizens. The book argues that this rejection of the European constitution was to a certain extent a challenge to the current historical grounding used for further integration and further demonstrates the lack of understanding by European bureaucrats of the historical complexity and divisiveness of Europe's past. A critical European history is therefore urgently needed to confront and re-imagine Europe, not as a harmonious continent but as the outcome of violent and bloody conflicts, both within Europe as well as with its Others. As the authors show, these dark shadows of Europe's past must be integrated, and the fact that memories of Europe are contested must be accepted if any new attempts at a United Europe are to be successful.