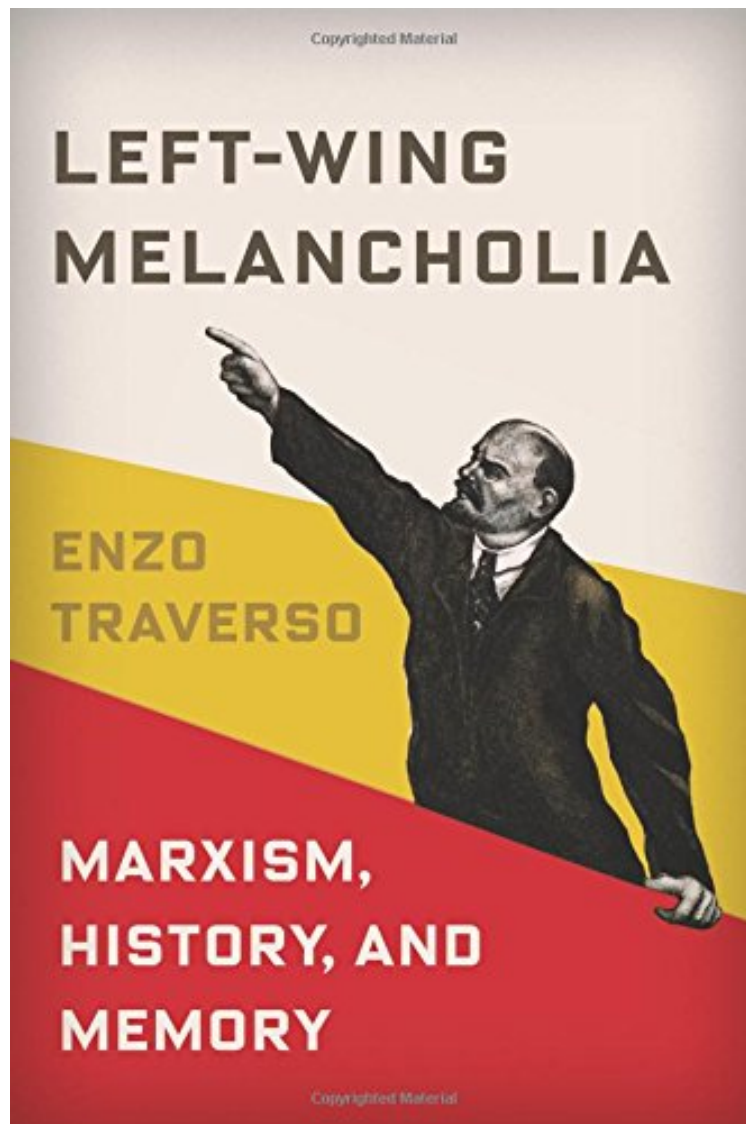


[Library ebook] Left-Wing Melancholia: Marxism, History, and Memory (New Directions in Critical Theory)

Left-Wing Melancholia: Marxism, History, and Memory (New Directions in Critical Theory)

Enzo Traverso

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Enzo Traverso : Left-Wing Melancholia: Marxism, History, and Memory (New Directions in Critical Theory) before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Left-Wing Melancholia: Marxism, History, and Memory (New Directions in Critical Theory):

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Five StarsBy Leon1234Excellent0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Five StarsBy Jeff HalperExtremely insightful.

The fall of the Berlin Wall marked the end of the Cold War but also the rise of a melancholic vision of history as a series of losses. For the political left, the cause lost was communism, and this trauma determined how leftists wrote the next chapter in their political struggle and how they have thought about their past since. Throughout the twentieth century, argues *Left-Wing Melancholia*, from classical Marxism to psychoanalysis to the advent of critical theory, a culture of defeat and its emotional overlay of melancholy have characterized the leftist understanding of the political in history and in theoretical critique. Drawing on a vast and diverse archive in theory, testimony, and image and on such thinkers as Karl Marx, Walter Benjamin, Theodor W. Adorno, and others, the intellectual historian Enzo Traverso explores the varying nature of left melancholy as it has manifested in a feeling of guilt for not sufficiently challenging authority, in a fear of surrendering in disarray and resignation, in mourning the human costs of the past, and in a sense of failure for not realizing utopian aspirations. Yet hidden within this melancholic tradition are the resources for a renewed challenge to prevailing regimes of historicity, a passion that has the power to reignite the dialectic of revolutionary thought.

Left-Wing Melancholia is well-written, timely and original. (Eli Zaretsky, The New School for Social Research) *Left-Wing Melancholia* is a path breaking work that combines history and political theory with a concise, richly analytical, exciting narrative. Enzo Traverso redefines our understanding of the current regimes of temporality a sorrowful transition from the twentieth to the twenty-first century and challenges historians and critical theorists alike to think beyond the standard binaries between history and memory, revolution and defeat, and melancholy and politics. In other words, this book is a gem. (Federico Finchelstein, The New School for Social Research) Marvelously learned and gorgeously poetic, *Left-Wing Melancholia* is a transcendent masterpiece of the Marxist imagination. Each engrossing chapter provides a tour-de-force of trenchant observations and lucid argumentation about the melancholic landscape of socialist memory. Intricately constructed with acrobatic prose, electric compressions, and magisterial assuredness, Traverso's scholarly milestone synthesizes an ambitious spectrum of interventions into the revolutionary aspirations and defeats of the twentieth century that is historically engaging, eminently readable, and pressingly pertinent. (Alan Wald, H. Chandler Davis Collegiate Professor of English Literature and American Culture, University of Michigan) According to Freud, mourning is differentiated from melancholia in its working through grief by acknowledging the irreparable loss of a love object. If so, should the contemporary Left finally concede the failure of its dreams of revolutionary redemption? Or, and this is the gamble of Enzo Traverso's provocative new book, is it better to remain defiantly melancholic in the hope that those dreams may still be realized? Drawing on a lifetime of immersion in the history of modern European culture and politics, he provides future progressive movements a glimmer of hope that the dialectic of defeat may not yet be history's final word. (Martin Jay, University of California, Berkeley) With *Left-Wing Melancholia*, Enzo Traverso provides us with a timely and learned meditation on the politics of grief, mourning, and historical loss. Yet, in the tradition of Walter Benjamin and Ernst Bloch, Traverso also instructs us on how the experience of loss can simultaneously generate heretofore untapped repositories of social hope. *Left-Wing Melancholia* is both an exhilarating work of intellectual synthesis as well as a pathbreaking study in cultural history. (Richard Wolin, author of *Walter Benjamin: An Aesthetic of Redemption*) In this wide-ranging, conceptually rich, nuanced and thoughtful meditation, Enzo Traverso takes stock of the current historical moment as marking a fundamental historical and cultural crisis for the Left. The overarching trajectory of struggles oriented toward an emancipatory future that characterized and motivated movements in the past two centuries has been fundamentally broken, resulting in a profound melancholia. Taking inspiration from heterodox critical responses to the darkness enveloping Europe in 1940, Traverso seeks to uncover trace elements of a new utopian imaginary, as a leap without guarantees, a melancholy wager. (Moishe Postone, University of Chicago) About the Author Enzo Traverso is Susan and Barton Winokur Professor of the Humanities at Cornell University. His books include *The End of Jewish Modernity* (2016); *Fire and Blood: The European Civil War, 1914-1945* (2015); *The Origins of Nazi Violence* (2003); and *Understanding the Nazi Genocide: Marxism After Auschwitz* (1999).