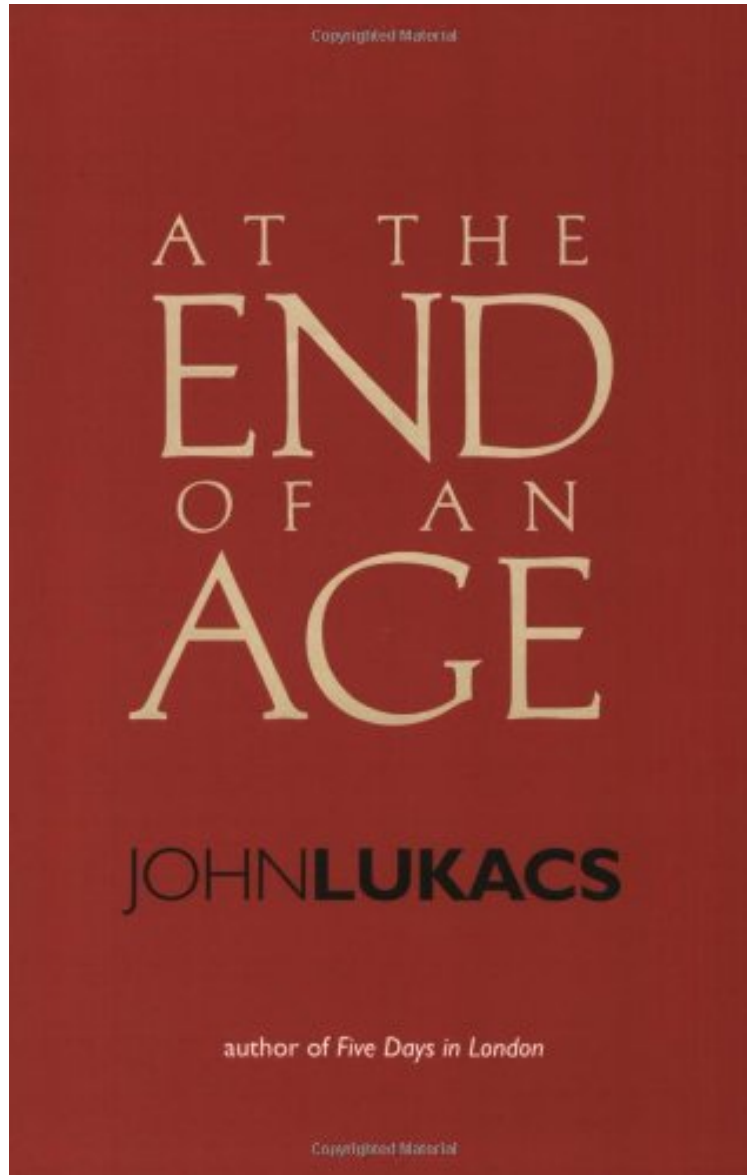


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At the End of an Age

John Lukacs

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John Lukacs : At the End of an Age before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised At the End of an Age:

3 of 3 people found the following review helpful. Exceptional, worthy of reading and re-readingBy J SantiagoThis is to my mind, an exceptional work by a sage historian of many decades, reminiscing on our current state. I have bought it and read and re-read it many times and it just gets better.1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Prolific

author. No wasted time ever when reading Lukacs. By hunter green The observations of an intellectual on the changes noted in the 20th century. A real piece of his mind. 1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Excellent, didactic work By Peter M Solstad Prior to reading this work I recommend reading Dr. Lukacs's, *Remembered Past*. Like all of his previous writing, it is instructively brilliant.

At the End of an Age is a deeply informed and rewarding reflection on the nature of historical and scientific knowledge. Of extraordinary philosophical, religious, and historical scope, it is the product of a great historian's lifetime of thought on the subject of his discipline and the human condition. While running counter to most of the accepted ideas and doctrines of our time, it offers a compelling framework for understanding history, science, and man's capacity for self-knowledge. In this work, John Lukacs describes how we in the Western world have now been living through the ending of an entire historical age that began in Western Europe about five hundred years ago. Unlike people during the ending of the Middle Ages or the Roman empire, we can know where we are. But how and what is it that we know? In John Lukacs's view, there is no science apart from scientists, and all of Science, including our view of the universe, is a human creation, imagined and defined by fallible human beings in a historical continuum. This radical and reactionary assertion in its way a summa of the author's thinking, expressed here and there in many of his previous twenty-odd books leads to his fundamental assertion that, contrary to all existing cosmological doctrines and theories, it is this earth which is the very center of the universe—the only universe we know and can know.

From *Publishers Weekly* "We have arrived at the stage of history when we must begin thinking about thinking itself. This is something as different from philosophy as it is from psycho-analysis," writes celebrated historian John Lukacs (*Five Days in London*, May 1940) in *At the End of an Age*, an extended essay on the problems of history. Continuing the argument he began in earlier books, Lukacs elaborates on his notion that we're at the end of the modern age that began with the Renaissance, and that this period calls for a reconsideration of the idea of objectivity in history and science, two disciplines that create rather than describe the world that they seek to understand. From *Library Journal* The author of over 20 books (*Five Days in London*: May 1940, etc.), Lukacs argues that our entire civilized "Modern Age" of science, reason, democracy, and capitalism is coming to an end. His own thoughts are especially influenced by the ideas of Pierre Duhem, Heisenberg, and Tocqueville. The author stresses the necessity of taking a historical perspective seriously, yet he ignores the obvious ramifications of organic evolution, which places human existence totally within a naturalistic (not idealistic) framework. Moreover, Lukacs is critical of giving priority to scientific knowledge and philosophical materialism. He even maintains that both this planet and our species are unique in the whole universe. Many readers will not accept his position that mind precedes and is the key to understanding matter. Furthermore, they will not readily dismiss the enormous contributions made by Darwin, Marx, Freud, and Einstein to a sound comprehension of and proper appreciation for mental activity, evolved humankind, and dynamic nature. Unfortunately, Lukacs neither speculates on what the emerging next age might be like nor discusses what could replace science and reason in the human quest for truths. Although insightful (particularly in its treatment of Adolf Hitler in terms of historical unpredictability), this esoteric book is suitable for larger academic library collections only. H. James Birx, Canisius Coll., Buffalo, NY Copyright 2002 Cahners Business Information, Inc. From *Booklist* (*Starred *) One of the finest historians of World War II explores his conviction that the present is the end of an age that began 500 years ago. He examines what is meant by the modern age as opposed to others, especially the Middle Ages; the nature of historical thinking and of scientific knowledge; our knowledge of Hitler as an illustration of historical thinking; and the concept of humanity as the center of the universe. The expiring era is, he says, that of determinism, which reached its apogee in the systems of Marx, Darwin, Freud, and Einstein, in which personal effectiveness is constrained by large, inhuman forces. The uncertainty principle of quantum physics—that observation renders what is observed incompletely knowable—and the devastation of twentieth-century political determinisms have dampened the Enlightenment passion for rigid materialist explanation, which motivated the great determinisms. Mind is central to existence, and humanity to the universe, which by the nature of its conception is a human reality, as are science and history. Such centrality should be a humble position, for we know now, better than ever before, that human nature is unpredictable, and that we must act in the expectation of being confounded. Lukacs' little book is slow reading, but it contains more than shelves of other historical works. Ray Olson Copyright American Library Association. All rights reserved