



# Family Politics: Domestic Life, Devastation and Survival, 1900-1950

By Paul Ginsborg

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**An exploration of the convulsive history of the 20th century's first five decades, seen through the lens of families and family life**

In this masterly twentieth-century history, Paul Ginsborg places the family at center stage, a novel perspective from which to examine key moments of revolution and dictatorship. His groundbreaking book spans 1900 to 1950 and encompasses five nation states in the throes of dramatic transition: Russia in revolutionary passage from Empire to Soviet Union; Turkey in transition from Ottoman Empire to modern Republic; Italy, from liberalism to fascism; Spain during the Second Republic and Civil War; and Germany from the failure of the Weimar Republic to the National Socialist state.

Ginsborg explores the effects of political upheaval and radical social policies on family life and, in turn, the impact of families on revolutionary change itself. Families, he shows, do not simply experience the effects of political power, but are themselves actors in the historical process. The author brings human and personal elements to the fore with biographical details and individual family histories, along with a fascinating selection of family photographs and portraits.

From WWI—an indelible backdrop and imprinting force on the first half of the twentieth century—to post-war dictatorial power and family engineering initiatives, to the conclusion of WWII, this book shines new light on the profound relations among revolution, dictatorship, and family.

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### **Review**

“A haunting, vivid, and thought-provoking new work of social history.”—*The Economist*  
(*The Economist* 2015-01-24)

“A most remarkable book, full of feeling and historical insight, very impressive in the range of knowledge on which it draws, and continuously enjoyable to read and stimulating to think about.”—John Dunn, author of *Setting the People Free: The Story of Democracy*  
(John Dunn)

‘Families are off-stage in history, a footnote in the lives of the great, if that, so it is refreshing that Paul Ginsborg looks at the upheavals of the first half of the twentieth century through the prism of family life. . . . Full of anecdote, brief biography and observation, *Family Politics* is readable and informative . . .’—Jad Adams, *The Independent*  
(Jad Adams *The Independent* 2014-11-11)

‘In the vast literature on the Soviet Union, Weimar and Nazi Germany, Fascist Italy and the Spanish and Turkish Republics, most scholars all but ignore the crucial role of the family. In *Family Politics* Paul Ginsborg explains this anomaly, and his innovative approach provides a wealth of other surprises.’—Robert Gellately, *THES*  
(Robert Gellately *THES* 2014-12-18)

‘Examining that smaller world, Ginsborg paradoxically enlarges our understanding of the greater one, looking beyond the contingencies of massacre and oppression to the fundamental experiences of human life.’—Lucy Hughes-Hallett, *Guardian*.  
(Lucy Hughes-Hallett *The Guardian* 2014-12-27)

### **About the Author**

**Paul Ginsborg** is professor of contemporary European history, University of Florence. The author of numerous books on European history, he lives in Florence, Italy.

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