

"Dutch Deep-Thinker" (Pace The Irish Times) Geert Mak, On The "Racism" Of Geert Wilders

[Here](#).

How "deep" a "deep-thinker" is Geert Mak? He's a journalist, a popular writer of popular travelogues whose work has been taken apart by historians (you can imagine what Geyl and Huizinga would have thought of this phenomenon, and of all the other geert-maks of this Internet-addled world). He's a great defender of Muslims; he gives no sign of having become such a defender because of his deep understanding of Islam, or of the minds of those on Islam, whether to the manner born or, as is now so worrisomely common, Western victims of adult-onset Islam.

You can find at Wikipedia a little more about Geert Mak. For example, his reaction to the murder of Theo van Gogh was to describe the movie he and Ayaan Hirsi Ali had made about the mistreatment of women in Islam as worthy of Goebbels:

"In 2005 he wrote a controversial pamphlet in response to the assassination of the filmmaker [Theo van Gogh](#), *Gedoemd tot kwetsbaarheid* (*Doomed to vulnerability*) and the [culture of fear](#) that he believed had taken root in the Netherlands. The essay caused considerable consternation, partly because Mak compared the propaganda technique of the film [Submission](#) – linking the excesses committed by a few ["a few"!] to the religion of an entire minority – to the imagery of [Der Ewige Jude](#) by Joseph Goebbels."

Then there is *In Europe*.

This – now let Wikipedia speak – “was the best-selling book by a Dutch author in the Netherlands in 2004, selling over 400,000 copies. The British reviews were generally enthusiastic, although for the professional historian or political scientist the book has little to offer: “*In Europe* hardly breaks new ground historically” writes Martin Woollacott in an otherwise positive review in [The Guardian](#) (14 July 2007). On the other hand, the [Sunday Times](#) wrote that *In Europe* was ‘undoubtedly a spectacular and beautifully crafted piece of writing’, and the [Financial Times](#) praised Mak’s instinct for human stories: ‘Mak is the history teacher everyone should have had’. [John Lukacs](#) saw in him ‘Europe’s portrait-painter, its impressionist, its poet-musician, the reader of its peoples’ minds.’ The work should be taken for what it is: something between journalism and travel literature. *Publisher’s Weekly* asks: “is it a history book, a travelogue, a memoir?”

Mak himself sees his work as journalism. In an interview with a Dutch journalism trade-journal he says: “my approach is journalistic. My books are filled with newspaper tricks”. Historians are generally cautious [no, they are severely critical, but express this in the understated Dutch way]when it comes to judging Mak’s work. Hermann von der Dunk, emeritus professor of history at Utrecht University says about Mak: “it is well written, and historically correct, but it is not what I would call academic history. There is no analysis of historical development” (*Academische Boekengids*, March 2005).

A 35-part VPRO television series based on [In Europe](#) prompted some historians to point to errors and comment that the makers were ill-informed about current debates in the field of history (*Historisch Nieuwsblad*, December 2007), criticism that was in turn rebutted by Mak and other historians.