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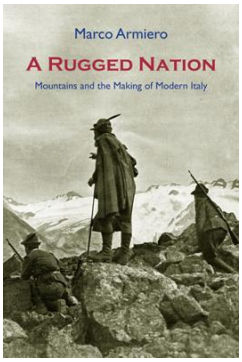
A Rugged Nation: Mountains and the Making of Modern Italy

Armiero, Marco



A Rugged Nation. Cover.

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A Rugged Nation uncovers how Italian identity and mountains have constituted one another. State regimes, since unification in 1861, have made mountains into national symbols and resources. The nationalization of Italian mountains has been a story of military conquest and resistance, ecological and social transformation, and expropriating resources and imposing meanings.

World War I permanently transformed mountain landscapes and people, nationalizing both. When the Fascists came to power, the process of politicization of mountains reached its acme; the regime constructed and exploited mountains both rhetorically and materially, on one hand celebrating ruralism and rural people and, on the other, giving mountain natural resources to large hydro-electric corporations. The book ends with two exemplary tales about mountains and their place in recent Italian history: the Resistance against the Nazi-Fascists, which found its sanctuary up in the mountains, and the 1963 Vajont disaster, which, with the killing of two thousand, represents the tragic epilogue of the hydroelectric modernization of the Alps.

Marco Armiero (PhD in economic history) is an environmental historian, currently working as a senior researcher at the National Research Council, Italy. He was among the founders of the environmental history field in Italy, co-authoring with Stefania Barca the first Italian textbook on the subject, *Storia dell'Ambiente: Una Introduzione* [Environmental History: An Introduction] (2004). His main topics of study have been the history of environmental conflicts over property rights and access to common resources (forests and sea), the politics of nature and landscape in Italian nation building, and the environmental history of mass migrations. He co-edited with Marcus Hall the book *Nature and History in Modern Italy* (2010) and edited *Views from the South: Environmental Stories from the Mediterranean World (19th–20th Centuries.)* (2006). He has worked for the Program in Agrarian Studies, Yale University; for the Environmental Science, Policy, and Management Department, UC Berkeley; and at The Bill Lane Center for the Study of the American West, Stanford University.

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