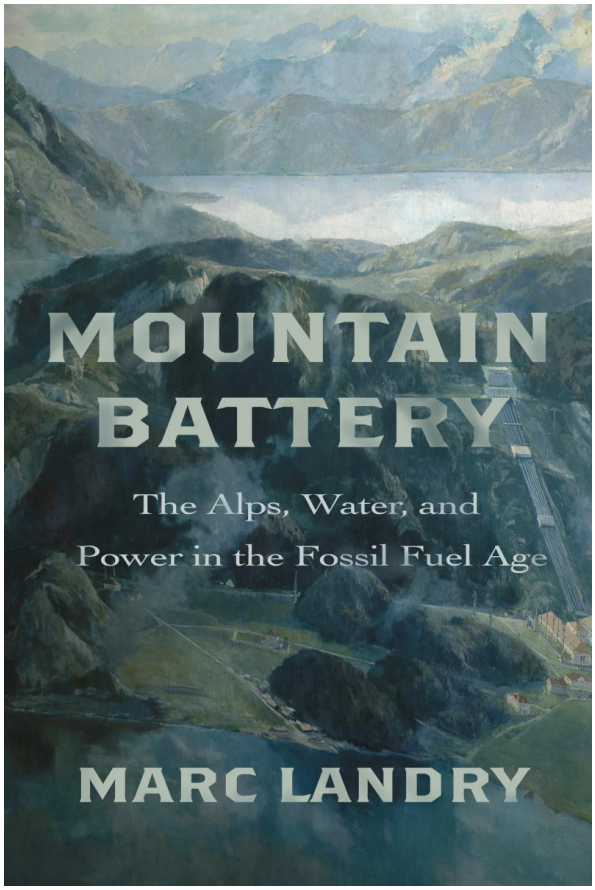
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Mountain Battery: The Alps, Water, and Power in the Fossil Age

Landry, Marc

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Mountain Batter: The Alps, Water, and Power in the Fossil Age. Cover.

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By the end of the nineteenth century, Europeans had come to see the Alps as the ideal place to fashion an alternative to the era's dominant energy source: coal. After 1850, Alpine water increasingly became "white coal": a power source with the revolutionary economic potential of

fossil fuel. In this book, Marc Landry shows how dam-building in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries transformed the Alps into Europe's "battery"—an energy landscape designed to store and produce electricity for use throughout the continent. These stores of energy played an important role in supplying the war economies of west-central Europe in both world wars as demand for munitions and other factory production necessitated access to electrical energy and the conservation of coal.

Through historical research conducted in archives across Europe—especially in Germany, Austria, France, Switzerland, and Italy—Landry shows how and why Europeans thoroughly transformed the Alps in order to generate hydroelectricity, and explores the effects of its attendant economic and military advantages across the turbulent twentieth century. Landry surveys the environmental and energy changes wrought by dam-building, demonstrating that with global warming, melting glaciers, and calls for a green energy transition, the future of white coal is once again in question in twenty-first-century Europe.

(Source: Stanford University Press)

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