

"Joachim Radkau's *Nature and Power* offers the best overview of world environmental history available in the English language. Radkau has an independent cast of mind and an uncanny ability to focus on the 'hot' topics in the global environmental field. His perspective is always fresh and insightful, even when he is taking the reader down well-trodden paths."

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"Americans may have invented the field of environmental history, but today some of the most ambitious work is coming from outside the country, offering provocative new approaches and perspectives. Joachim Radkau joins that international band of innovative historians with this extraordinary work of global synthesis. It is bold, opinionated, and important."

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THIS BOOK AIMS TO DEMONSTRATE that the changing relationship between humanity and nature is a key to understanding world history. Humans have been grappling with environmental problems since prehistoric times, and the environmental unsustainability of human practices has often been a decisive, if not immediately evident, shaping factor in history. Ironically, the measures that societies and states have adopted to stabilize the relationship between humans and the natural world have repeatedly contributed to environmental crises over the course of history. *Nature and Power* traces the expanding scope of environmental action over the course of history: from initiatives undertaken by individual villages and cities, environmental policy has become a global concern. Efforts to steer human use of nature and natural resources have become complicated, as *Nature and Power* shows, by particularities of culture and by the vagaries of human nature itself. Environmental history, the author argues, is ultimately the history of human hopes and fears.

JOACHIM RADKAU is Professor of History at the University of Bielefeld in Germany. His books include *Die deutsche Emigration in den USA, 1933–1945* (1971), *Deutsche Industrie und Politik von Bismarck bis zur Gegenwart* (in collaboration with George W. F. Hallgarten, 1974), *Aufstieg und Krise der deutschen Atomwirtschaft* (1983), *Holz: Ein Naturstoff in der Technikgeschichte* (in collaboration with Ingrid Schäfer, 1987), *Das Zeitalter der Nervosität: Deutschland zwischen Bismarck und Hitler* (1998), and the biography, *Max Weber* (2005).

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