

needed to create a radically redesigned social media ecosystem that would reinforce, rather than erode, democracy.

The Age of Hiroshima

EDITED BY MICHAEL D. GORDIN
AND G. JOHN IKENBERRY. Princeton
University Press, 2020, 448 pp.

The essays chosen for this rich volume are an attempt by its editors to “unsettle” the legacy and understanding of the bombing of Hiroshima, an act that triggered the nuclear age 75 years ago. This collection explores the age’s unanswered questions from a global perspective, rather than through the prism of the Cold War. It is not only geographically broad; it is also enriched by the diverse perspectives of historians, political scientists, and other theorists of international relations. One set of chapters reveals, for example, that the familiar binary categories of nuclear state and nonnuclear state hide a fluid spectrum of conditions of which these are merely the endpoints. Other chapters explore the ways political and cultural contexts constrain the choices leaders can make about nuclear weapons and programs. And some contributors wrestle with the surprising fact that many pivotal questions about the nuclear age—for instance, does deterrence work?—remain unanswerable.

Western Europe

Andrew Moravcsik

*Stars With Stripes: The Essential
Partnership Between the European Union
and the United States*

BY ANTHONY LUZZATTO
GARDNER. Palgrave Macmillan, 2020,
468 pp.

This memoir relates the impressions of the Obama administration’s final U.S. ambassador to the European Union. Gardner’s term began with the 2014 Ukraine crisis, which ironically helped deflect attention from transatlantic differences over a litany of other issues, including digital surveillance, the euro crisis, and a proposed transatlantic trade agreement. Gardner spent much of his time trying to pry decisions from the bureaucratic and procedure-bound EU system. But he insists nonetheless that the interests of the EU and the United States are more closely aligned than those of any other two parts of the world. They can and should cooperate closely not just on economic issues but also on law enforcement, counterterrorism, sanctions, energy, the environment, foreign aid, and military security. This compelling book also makes a strong case for the EU as a preferred U.S. partner and dismisses Brexit as absurd. Gardner’s term ended in 2017. Just three years later, after his successor admitted pursuing U.S. President Donald Trump’s domestic political objectives in Ukraine, the former ambassador’s cultural sensitivity,

deep experience, and genuine belief in transatlantic cooperation seem like relics of a forgotten era.

The Tipping Point: Britain, Brexit, and Security in the 2020s

BY MICHAEL CLARKE AND HELEN RAMSCAR. I.B. Tauris, 2019, 328 pp.

Two London-based policy analysts study the challenges and opportunities facing British foreign policy. On challenges, they recycle clichés: the world is materially better but people remain dissatisfied, inequality and xenophobia threaten liberal democracy, globalization creates turmoil, and smaller countries such as the United Kingdom are being cut out of the emerging twenty-first-century great-power competition among China, India, Russia, and the United States. Skip to the second half, however, and their analysis of how the United Kingdom, a middle power, should adapt to decline and to the consequences of Brexit proves more engaging and original. They tally national assets and capabilities and conclude that the United Kingdom can and will ally with the Europeans on most military and diplomatic initiatives, but that the British can still play an outsized role by exploiting their robust nonmilitary instruments of power: global networks of foreign aid, strong intelligence capacities, diplomatic expertise, world-class financial and educational sectors—and the soft power created by the British monarchy, the BBC, and soccer’s Premier League. To bolster the country’s status, they recommend a “strategic surge” of spending, focused primarily on these nonmilitary policy instruments.

War for Eternity: Inside Bannon’s Far-Right Circle of Global Power Brokers

BY BENJAMIN R. TEITELBAUM. HarperCollins, 2020, 336 pp.

This book has the makings of a fine Hollywood script. Start with Steve Bannon, the Harvard-educated former U.S. Navy officer, investment banker, and Breitbart News executive who became U.S. President Donald Trump’s alt-right political strategist. Fired within a year of the 2016 election, Bannon now promotes nationalist, far-right populists in Europe. Seeking to understand the roots of Bannon’s eccentric post-fascist beliefs, Teitelbaum (a music professor who also studies radical populists) convinced him to sit for 20 hours of interviews. Teitelbaum sets out to find the leaders of Bannon’s underground “spiritual school” committed to “Traditionalism,” a secretive ideology that rejects modernity, the Enlightenment, materialism, and globalization. They include a bearded supporter of Russian President Vladimir Putin who promotes “Eurasianism” as an alternative to the rotten West, the former leader of a Hungarian nationalist and anti-Roma party, an Iranian American author peddling plans for a eugenic purification of Persians, a Brazilian philosopher active on social media and close to Brazil’s current populist government, and a Briton with obscure corporate and political connections and the code name “Jellyfish.” Fun stuff—but in the end, the Traditionalists seem like cranks with obscure, inconsistent beliefs and only a small following.

Theodor Herzl: The Charismatic Leader
BY DEREK PENSLAR. Yale University
Press, 2020, 256 pp.

This pocket biography demystifies—then re-mystifies—Theodor Herzl, the founder of the Zionist movement. At 35, despite possessing neither deep knowledge of Jewish culture nor any known religious beliefs, he penned a classic pamphlet, *The Jewish State*, asserting a demand on behalf of European Jews for their own nation-state—on the model of the demands of Czechs, Serbs, and other groups within the Austro-Hungarian Empire. For the next nine years, before dying quite young, he organized continent-wide conferences, harangued national leaders, visited Palestine, and churned out speeches and articles. Although historians dismiss Herzl’s intellectual achievements, this book seeks to reinterpret him as a brilliant organizer and activist. Yet it is hard to see why. At the time, most people viewed him as a crackpot. Upper-class Jews (including his wife) disparaged Zionism as an unsavory mass ideology. Orthodox groups criticized it as unholy. Herzl’s own vague and inconsistent plans for governing a Jewish state were fashioned with remarkable ignorance of Palestine—when he wasn’t weighing Argentina or Mozambique as an alternative. This book reminds readers that intellectuals are sometimes remembered simply for stating an ideal goal that, much later and for reasons unforeseeable by them, becomes reality.

The Life and Death of Ancient Cities: A Natural History
BY GREG WOOLF. Oxford University
Press, 2020, 528 pp.

Today, for the first time in human history, more than half of humanity lives in cities. Yet until about 500 years ago, cities were few and fragile. This book focuses on history’s major exception: the Mediterranean in classical antiquity. Overall urbanization rates there reached around 20 percent, higher than Europe would see again until the nineteenth century. The force behind ancient Mediterranean urbanization was economic: control over the surplus from surrounding agricultural land and, for the largest cities, privileged access to long-distance trade. Yet ancient cities were not self-sufficient: the more they grew, the more taxes they had to levy; the more food, water, stone, metals, and luxury goods they had to import; and the more slave labor they needed to offset high urban mortality from famine, disease, fire, and natural disasters. Ancient cities became the hubs of hegemonies and empires—a highly leveraged arrangement that made them vulnerable to sudden shocks and military decline. They collapsed much faster than they had been built: in three centuries, Rome’s population declined from over a million to just about 10,000. Today’s global cities face similar vulnerabilities, and one wonders whether future historians will write about them in the same way.

Soviet Judgment at Nuremberg: A New History of the International Military Tribunal After World War II

BY FRANCINE HIRSCH. Oxford University Press, 2020, 560 pp.

Histories of the Nuremberg trials, held mostly from 1945 to 1946 to punish Nazi leaders for their crimes, have traditionally taken a Western perspective. The Soviet view, examined in this pathbreaking book, rarely receives mention. Yet the Soviets were the first to suggest trials for Nazi leaders, perhaps in order to strengthen reparation claims for the Soviet Union for its unmatched sacrifice during the war. Western countries had initially preferred the summary execution of Nazi officials. Moreover, Soviet lawyers played a key role in developing Nuremberg's legal innovations, such as the notion that those complicit in a conspiracy were guilty for actions committed by any of its members. Yet once the trials started, the roles reversed, with Western lawyers seeking to stage a high-minded fair trial and the Soviets, under tight leadership from Moscow, looking to stage a didactic show trial. Relations between the Western powers and Moscow grew tenuous as Winston Churchill began calling for Western cooperation against the Soviet Union. The propaganda war over the trial offers a glimpse of the beginning of the Cold War.

The Bridge: Natural Gas in a Redivided Europe

BY THANE GUSTAFSON. Harvard University Press, 2020, 520 pp.

Few energy issues provoke as much transatlantic angst as Europe's reliance on Russian natural gas. Critics fret that

trusting Russian President Vladimir Putin to keep the heat on invites blackmail. In a useful exploration of Europe's energy future, Gustafson offers a corrective to this view. Factors beyond geopolitics have shaped and will continue to drive the Russian-European energy relationship. Russia has suddenly stopped exports to Europe on a few occasions, but the business logic of Russian supply and European demand has generally held firm and will likely continue to do so despite U.S. pressure. Gustafson shows how the European Union has used its legal powers—enforcing regulations on competition and requirements to diversify gas transportation links—to limit the ability of the Russian energy giant Gazprom to monopolize supply for the continent. He also outlines how the changing nature of the gas industry itself has shifted the balance of power: Gazprom faces competition from U.S. and Russian liquefied natural gas producers. Indeed, the most ominous development for the natural gas sector may come not from geopolitical tensions with Russia but from growing calls in Europe to keep fossil fuels in the ground.

NEIL BHATIYA