

his battles with a variety of rugged foes. They aimed to boost Caesar's reputation as a great general and support his bid for power, but they also serve as useful records of events, if not quite the unvarnished truth. O'Donnell has produced a vigorous, modern, and uncluttered translation, removing sections added to the commentaries by later authors and adding few footnotes. He encourages readers to focus on the candor and cruelty with which Caesar describes his victories and his negotiations with foreign leaders. In a jaunty introduction, O'Donnell demonstrates how to appreciate the book as a major contribution to martial literature while deploring its morals. This is, he declares, "the best bad man's book ever written."

Why America Loses Wars: Limited War and US Strategy From the Korean War to the Present

BY DONALD STOKER. Cambridge University Press, 2019, 336 pp.

Since 1945, the United States' experience of war has been a frustrating one, full of stalemates, setbacks, and only occasional victories. In this lively and opinionated book, Stoker pins a major part of the blame on muddled thinking about "limited war." He is a scholar of Carl von Clausewitz and frequently turns to the Prussian general as his authority. Stoker believes that in wartime, leaders should first and foremost set proper political objectives (and reappraise them when necessary) and not let the means they are prepared to use dictate the ends. Time and again, from Korea to Vietnam to the war against the Islamic State (or ISIS), U.S. leaders have been either too vague about what they are seeking to do

or unwilling to devote the requisite resources to achieve it. Theorists, such as Thomas Schelling, have contributed to the muddle by their readiness to talk about war as a form of bargaining. Stoker's analysis of the United States' failures is convincing, but his argument that better thinking would enable political leaders to set clear objectives and pursue them to victory is less so.

Western Europe

Andrew Moravcsik

How to Democratize Europe

BY STÉPHANIE HENNETTE, THOMAS PIKETTY, GUILLAUME SACRISTE, AND ANTOINE VAUCHEZ. TRANSLATED BY PAUL DERMINE, MARC LEPAIN, AND PATRICK CAMILLER. Harvard University Press, 2019, 224 pp.

This book, which sparked considerable debate when it appeared in French, criticizes Europe's single currency not because it does too much (the usual complaint) but because it does too little. The authors, three legal academics and a celebrated economist, charge that the eurozone's technocratic obscurantism and self-defeating tendency toward austerity exacerbate inequality, right-wing populism, and Euroskepticism. They propose to counteract these forces by greatly increasing fiscal transfers between EU countries. To do so, they recommend that the EU create a powerful new transnational parliament composed of national parlia-

mentarians. This body would, they hope, supplant existing institutions and allow for transfers of wealth from richer EU countries to poorer ones. Yet none of this has the slightest chance of being realized, and even if it were, it would hardly be sufficient to offset the harm done by the euro. Recent experience and social science findings, moreover, belie the idealistic notion that referendums and parliamentary elections automatically legitimate policies. The proposal is important chiefly because it illustrates the utter failure of Europe's center-left social democrats—caught between their pro-federalist beliefs and the realities of international economic cooperation—to craft coherent and viable proposals for renewing the EU.

Alarums and Excursions: Improvising Politics on the European Stage
BY LUK VAN MIDDELAAR.
TRANSLATED BY LIZ WATERS.
Agenda, 2019, 320 pp.

Part insider memoir and part commentary, this is probably the best analysis yet to appear of how the EU managed its recent crises over refugees, Ukraine, and the euro. Van Middelaar, now a political theorist, worked as a speechwriter for Herman Van Rompuy, the president of the European Council, from 2010 to 2014. He repackages the EU establishment consensus in prose largely free of jargon and footnotes. He convincingly shows that the EU has been surprisingly successful at managing crises—although, in keeping with the conventional wisdom in Brussels, he suggests some moderate reforms designed to bolster its power and legitimacy. The book is less persuasive in its overarching explanation for

the EU's success: that, when push comes to shove in Brussels, "politics trumps economics," thereby purportedly overcoming opposition to integration by special interests. This is the story leaders in Brussels tell. Yet what van Middelaar's narrative actually reveals is how European leaders, buffeted by market forces and regulatory failures, craft pragmatic responses to real-world problems in pursuit of their enduring national interests. Although this is not the technocratic world dreamed of by economists, it is also far from one in which politics reigns supreme over economics.

Dreams of Leaving and Remaining
BY JAMES MEEK. Verso, 2019, 272 pp.

This book's title belies its content: it covers dreams only of leaving the EU, not of remaining in it. Indeed, the book belongs to a distinct genre of journalism that has recently emerged, in which a distinguished member of the chattering classes sallies out from London, New York, or a university town to record (for metropolitan consumption) the thoughts and feelings of populist sympathizers in the hinterland. Meek, an editor at the *London Review of Books*, visits a fishing village, a farming town, a former Cadbury chocolate factory, and an urban medical complex. He relates colorful and engaging tales of such places that his readers rarely visit and of the common folk who live there. He concludes that British supporters of leaving the EU view themselves as heirs to the legacy of Saint George: they must slay a foreign dragon, regardless of the practical consequences. It is tempting to think that such stories accurately capture the decisive sources of support for Brexit and other populist

movements, but it is impossible to know for sure. More interesting is Meek's own left-wing analysis of the EU, which ignores local prejudices and instead highlights foreign investment, battles over government subsidies, industrial decline, labor shortages, and other reasons for mass discontent among the older and more rural citizens of the United Kingdom.

1931: Debt, Crisis, and the Rise of Hitler
BY TOBIAS STRAUMANN. Oxford University Press, 2019, 272 pp.

In this engaging book, Straumann, a leading Swiss economic historian, examines a critical factor in Adolf Hitler's rise to power. In the last days of the Weimar Republic, Germany faced a punishing international economic environment: a financial crisis was radiating outward from the United States, and Germany's opponents in World War I continued to demand reparations. Market pressure forced the German government to impose austerity by lowering wages, raising taxes, and slashing government spending. This triggered a wave of dissatisfaction with establishment political parties and made the half-truths in Hitler's radical critique of democratic government and the Treaty of Versailles seem plausible. That, in turn, allowed the Nazi Party, up to that point a fringe group, to win enough votes to enter government. The lesson for today's policymakers is all too clear. When establishing the euro, technocrats and politicians ignored the possible domestic political consequences of supranational economic choices, with disastrous results.

The Alps: An Environmental History
BY JON MATHIEU. TRANSLATED BY ROSE HADSHAR. Polity, 2019, 184 pp.

Among the globe's great mountain ranges, the Alps are exceptional, not least because humans have inhabited them for longer, more densely, and in more economically productive ways than any other. Mathieu obsessively packs this introduction to their history with facts about human interaction with the mountains. He describes how people began visiting them to hunt and gather 50,000 years ago and built the first continuous settlements among them 15,000 years ago—culminating in the surprising range of churches and monasteries that dot the mountain range's peaks and valleys today. Ever since 218 BC, when Hannibal drove his army over the Alps, most Europeans have viewed them as an inert barrier to travel and commerce. A few hundred years ago, elite climbers began tackling the Alpine slopes, joined by tourists and writers in search of the sublime. More recently, governments have cooperated to preserve the distinctive Alpine culture and natural environment, which remains a monument to mutually beneficial interaction between man and mountain.