

dealt a blow to the missionaries' fusion of Enlightenment optimism and Protestant Christianity.) Unfortunately, Kieser does not have the same familiarity with Arab sources that he does with Ottoman ones; his nearest East really includes only Asia Minor. And like many writers with strong theological and moral commitments, he sometimes piles a very high mountain of moral judgment on very shaky foundations of political analysis. Nevertheless, at its best, *Nearest East* casts fresh light on an episode that left lasting marks on the United States' culture and its relations with a vital part of the world.

Western Europe

ANDREW MORAVCSIK

Bust: Greece, the Euro, and the Sovereign Debt Crisis. BY MATTHEW LYNN.

Bloomberg Press, 2010, 288 pp. \$27.95. Uncertainty about the future and myopic thinking drive boom-and-bust cycles in financial markets. The same factors drive cycles in financial journalism. Immediately after the European Union and the International Monetary Fund bailed out troubled European governments in May 2010, when the reporting for this book ends, many were still predicting disaster for the eurozone. Lynn, a journalist, captures the conventional wisdom behind that pessimism. The euro, he says, was always motivated primarily by politics, not economics; the Germans accepted it only as a quid pro quo for reunification, even though it does not really benefit them. He believes that the debt contagion is likely to spread to Italy, Spain, and Portugal; that eventually the euro must collapse; and

that Europe's and the United States' power have irrevocably shifted to Asia. But observers have grown more optimistic since Lynn wrote his book. The Europeans have redoubled their efforts to stabilize the system, because it is in their economic interest to do so. The French and the Germans are bailing out their banks, and the Greeks are working toward a restructuring or a partial default. *Bust* gives a sensible midterm report on the euro crisis, but the final chapter has yet to be written.

The Spanish Republic and Civil War. BY JULIÁN CASANOVA. Cambridge University Press, 2010, 370 pp. \$99.00 (paper, \$31.99).

More than 25,000 books and essays have appeared on the Spanish Civil War, and almost 75 years later, still no consensus has emerged about its causes, course, and consequences. In part, this is because historians still cannot resist taking sides in what was the quintessential battle among twentieth-century political ideas. Nearly every important organized ideology of that century was represented. Fascists, monarchists, Catholics, nationalists, liberals, anti-clericalists, Socialists, Communists, and anarchists all took part. After the assassinations, terrorism, and mass killing spread, the Nazis, the Italian Fascists, and the Soviets intervened, while the British and the French appeased. The war ended with the Republicans' unconditional surrender to General Francisco Franco and led to a half century of repression. Few have contributed more to understanding these events than Casanova, an eminent professor at the University of Zaragoza. Here, he synthesizes new research, much of it by a generation of young historians, into a lively, engaging account—the best available in English.

Recent Books

Genocide and the Europeans. BY KAREN E. SMITH. Cambridge University Press, 2010, 288 pp. \$90.00 (paper, \$31.99).

In world politics, idealistic schemes often begin with high hopes and end with disappointment. Such has been the case with Europe's response to recent genocides. So, also, is the experience of this book's author in applying trendy social science to this issue. Smith sets out to vindicate so-called constructivist theories of international relations, in the form of the proposition that international law alters the ideals, identities, and norms to which states adhere. The Genocide Convention, she conjectures, may encourage states to combat massive violations of human rights, and if any government in the world takes human rights seriously, surely it must be those in Europe. But after examining the official responses of France, Germany, and the United Kingdom to crises in Bosnia, Kosovo, Rwanda, and Darfur—or, more often, their nonresponses—Smith becomes more skeptical. Governments do tailor their actions to their public rhetoric. Yet Paris, Berlin, and London, just like Washington, also respond by recalibrating their rhetoric to duck responsibility, choosing whether to define events as “genocide” depending on their interests. The German government has been the most likely to use the term, in large part because it knows its smaller military is unlikely to be called on to intervene. France and the United Kingdom have been less likely to do so, because they might be obliged to deploy their more robust military forces. The result is perverse: Europe remains divided, self-interested, and cautious, even in the face of the worst atrocities. As François de La Rochefoucauld wrote, “Hypocrisy is the homage that vice pays to virtue.”

The Empire Project: The Rise and Fall of the British World System, 1830–1970. BY JOHN DARWIN. Cambridge University Press, 2009, 814 pp. \$39.00 (paper, \$28.99).

The nineteenth-century historian Sir John Seeley famously remarked that the British “conquered and peopled half the world in a fit of absence of mind.” Seeley was right that the United Kingdom's empire was neither planned nor coherent. Yet nonetheless it was, as the title of this book suggests, a “project,” resulting from the deliberate, largely self-interested choices of British decision-makers. It also required, to a surprising extent, the cooperation of elites and masses in the territories that composed it—without which, British power and wealth alone would surely have been insufficient. Oxford University's Darwin offers a brilliant modern synthesis of the project's history. The guiding theme is the rise and fall of the United Kingdom's power and wealth—resulting from geopolitical forces over which the British had little control. He is particularly good on the empire's ineluctable but slow decline, arguing that only in the midst of World War II did it become clear that the nineteenth-century conception of empire was finished. Yet in telling the story of a great power's inevitable trajectory, Darwin does not neglect history's humanistic, less predictable side: the United Kingdom's clever diplomacy, the remarkable ethnic solidarity felt by the descendants of settlers, the role of imperial romanticism among both the conquerors and the conquered, and the extraordinary individual personalities behind the scenes. This long yet readable book is now the best general history of the British Empire.

Recent Books

From Fatwa to Jihad: The Rushdie Affair and Its Aftermath. BY KENAN MALIK.

Melville House, 2010, 272 pp. \$25.00.

Most books about Islam and Europe tend to be predictable, empirically thin polemics written by outsiders. This book is different. It is not just a sociocultural critique but also a personal memoir by an Indian-born, British-raised research psychologist and journalist who has toiled in the trenches of the culture wars. Although Malik is a socialist and has no time for anti-immigrant polemics, he criticizes the British government's policy of fostering independent multicultural communities. This policy has empowered fundamentalist clerics by naming them official spokespeople for Muslim communities that are, in fact, divided and moderate. He presents an intriguing explanation of how radical Islam has taken hold in the United Kingdom, based on the saga of how Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini's 1989 fatwa against Salman Rushdie for his book *The Satanic Verses*—originally just an opportunistic effort for Khomeini to gain a political advantage in Iran—managed to spark fundamentalist religious confrontation and, ultimately, jihadist terrorism. Malik believes the causes of extremism do not lie in religious tradition: most radicals are neither religious nor traditional. Nor do they lie in hostility toward Western foreign policy, about which most British Muslim radicals care relatively little. He views the sort of jihadism that led to the July 7, 2005, bombings in London as a form of youthful rebellion, akin to membership in street gangs or middle-class slumming. It is motivated by young men's antipathy toward their parents and their desire for street credibility—forces stronger among the better educated. The tragic result has

been an increasingly illiberal and divided society, with little cultural space for second-generation British Muslims.

Western Hemisphere

RICHARD FEINBERG

The New Nicaragua: Lessons in Development, Democracy, and Nation-Building for the United States. BY

STEVEN E. HENDRIX. Praeger, 2009, 286 pp. \$59.95.

In this impassioned political memoir, the man who led the U.S. Agency for International Development's democracy-promotion programs during the 2006 presidential campaign in Nicaragua details just what political nation building means at the grass-roots level. With purposeful transparency, Hendrix reveals the trail of money and technical assistance that flowed from U.S.-based nongovernmental organizations to Nicaraguans fighting for fair elections, integrity in government, a more effective judiciary, and a vibrant civil society. In his energetic efforts, Hendrix mobilized the impressive network of democracy-promotion specialists that USAID has nurtured around the Western Hemisphere. Hendrix adamantly rejects charges of interventionism and insists that his motives were not "right versus left" but rather "right versus wrong." On election day, Nicaraguan voters preferred one of the "wrong" candidates, awarding the United States' nemesis Daniel Ortega a slim plurality. Yet Nicaragua remains a vigorous, if imperfect, democracy, a work in progress that should give Hendrix some comfort.