Modern American Extremism and Domestic Terrorism: An Encyclopedia of Extremists and Extremist Groups

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Balleck (political science & international studies, Georgia Southern Univ.) argues that extremism has flourished over the last 75 years in the United States and will continue to do so. The author argues that first, extremism has been a hallmark of the American social, economic, and political experience as far back as the country’s founding, and second, both the right and left exhibit radical behavior. Finally, groups and individuals labeled as extremists or terrorists reject those categories and perceive themselves as being misunderstood, mischaracterized, and informed by religious or personal convictions. Using designations provided by the Southern Poverty Law Center, the Anti-Defamation League, and the FBI to classify radical behavior. Finally, groups and individuals labeled as extremists or terrorists reject those categories and perceive themselves as being misunderstood, mischaracterized, and informed by religious or personal convictions. Using designations provided by the Southern Poverty Law Center, the Anti-Defamation League, and the FBI to classify such figures, the author examines individuals and groups in the post–World War II era. His enlightening, readable exploration of both well-known and obscure events, movements, organizations, and writings includes contemporary topics such as the Pulse Nightclub shooting and Dylann Roof’s massacre in Charleston. This balanced work includes a full profile earlier (Alvin Ailey, Misty Copeland, Twyla Tharp), although the Aliley piece Revelations and Tharp’s Push Comes To Shove are examined. Contemporary choreographers such as Christopher Wheeldon and Jiri Kylian are detailed, too. VERDICT A visual treat for ballet lovers. Circulate this engaging read rather than keep it in reference; it will spark interest among teens as well.—Barbara Kundanis, Longmont P.L., CO


Lampport (editor, Encyclopedia of Martin Luther and the Reformation), a graduate professor in multiple theological schools, overseeing more than 200 academic contributors, produces a deeply scholarly but accessible overview of Christianity in the “Global South,” which refers to Africa, Latin America, the Middle East, Oceania, and parts of Asia. Front matter, including separate essays on the five regions covered, and a perceptive introduction by historian Philip Jenkins, reveals a big picture. Six afterwords offer important projections, while 16 essays trace the historical and then contemporary experience of Christianity in eight areas (the Caribbean, Latin America, Oceania, East Asia, South Asia, Southeast Asia, the Middle East, and Africa). Entries on 150-plus nations tackle ethnici ties, languages, government, religions, Christian denominations, major historical leaders, church-state relations, and more. Others examine disparate topics, such as music and asceticism. A general time line, extensive bibliography, thematic listing, and two indexes add to the work’s utility. There are minor errors, but overall this massive undertaking, with its varied Christian perspectives, is extremely impressive in scope. VERDICT Readers with any interest in the areas covered, or in religion past and present, will want to explore these hefty volumes.—Patricia D. Lothrop, formerly of St. George’s Sch., Newport, RI


Moore (biology, Univ. of Minnesota; Dinosaurs by the Decade) and psychologist and researcher Witt present a well-organized, creative work that vividly describes the Grand Canyon and details the people, places, and events that have made it famous. Appended with additional resources, 11 thematic essays cover everything from the canyon’s ancient beginnings to intrepid explorer John Wesley Powell to the more controversial “Grand Canyon and Modern Christian Fundamentalism.” More than 160 entries include “see-also” references and further reading. The book also contains a “chronology of human history,” an appendix on geologic time scale, a useful glossary, and an excellent bibliography and index. VERDICT Written for junior high students through college