Political Groups, Parties, and Organizations That Shaped America: An Encyclopedia and Document Collection

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HISTORY


Through more than 100 maps, this resource chronicles World War II, beginning with the rise of nationalism, communism, fascism, and militarism (1918–39) and continuing through early German military successes, the war’s expansion into Russia and Asia, the tipping point (1943–44), and the conflict’s close and consequences. Maps are enlivened by abundant, informatively captioned archival photos (many in color), brief articles, time lines, quotations, propaganda posters, and graphs. Generous dimensions stress the volume’s spine but permit cartography with legible detail; numbered text boxes superimposed on the maps elucidate complex developments, such as Operation Cartwheel and Stalingrad. Concise overviews cover topics such as the League of Nations or the Sino-Japanese War, though with such a broad topic not everything can be foregrounded. For instance, the Katyn Massacre appears only as a time line entry, as does the Burma Railway. The military rationale for the bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki is made clear; only a passing reference questions the morality of Allied incendiary carpet-bombing (Dresden, Tokyo). Two final pages, “The Price of War” and “Remembrance,” make a fitting close. VERDICT Casual and serious readers alike will find the engaging cartography of this superb, data-rich volume conveys the exceptional range, duration, costs, and intensity of a war that dramatically altered history.—Patricia D. Lotrop, formerly of St. George’s Sch., Newport, RI

LITERATURE


Informed by the work of Yi-Fu Tuan (known as the originator of humanistic geography), Houston (Sacred Heart Univ., CT; Reading Joan Didion) and 17 colleagues explore the role of place in more than 100 literary works, chosen because of their frequency on high school and college syllabi and English literature advanced placement exams over the past ten years. Essays on novels, from Gulliver’s Travels and Crime and Punishment to the Harry Potter books and The Kite Runner; plays, from Antigone to Medea to The Glass Menagerie; a few nonfiction titles, such as Michael Herr’s Dispatches and Tim O’Brien’s The Things They Carried, are interspersed with essays on more than two dozen poets (e.g., William Wordsworth, Emily Dickinson, William Carlos Williams). Each essay includes a brief synopsis of the work (or a poet’s collective output), an analysis of its geographical dimensions (for instance, in Charles Dickens’s Great Expectations the British countryside vs. London), and a substantial bibliography. VERDICT High school and college students will find excellent examples of how to study the geographical components of literature, while book clubs will discover fresh approaches to old and new classics.—Marcia G. Welsh, Dartmouth Coll. Lib., Hanover, NH

PERFORMING ARTS


Bauer (coeditor, All Things Dickinson: An Encyclopedia of Emily Dickinson’s World) fills a gap in the history of women in film by embracing their contributions as costume designers, animators, makeup and hair stylists, production designers, stuntwomen, and more. In the introduction, Bauer acknowledges that “not all women have the same life experiences” and notes that though the focus here is on women, gender identity isn’t binary. Aware that the phrase most influential is subjective, the editor chose award-winning, talented, persistent women, taking into account their impact on future generations as well as their historical significance. Given that gender inequality is an issue with which the entertainment industry is grappling, this timely book intends to enhance the visibility of women, with each section beginning with an introduction to a professional role (actress, casting director, etc.), followed by alphabetically arranged entries that end with recommended further reading. Many sections also include an interview with an individual working in her field. An appendix offers additional names of interest. VERDICT For general readers as well as scholars in film and/or gender studies looking for biographical information about women in film history.—Elizabeth Berndt-Morris, Loeb Music Lib., Harvard Univ., Cambridge, MA
POLITICAL SCIENCE


Ainsworth (political science, Univ. of Georgia) and Harward (political science, Allegheny Coll., PA) highlight the origins, development, and interests of groups, parties, and organizations that have shaped and been shaped by American political history, from the nation’s founding to the present. The editors focus more on systems and behaviors than on events and individuals, with the bulk of the text comprised of 250 alphabetically arranged, signed topical entries with “see also” references and further readings resources. The essays take on everything from important founding groups and parties to contemporary political action committees and policy advocacy groups. Fifty primary source documents, including letters, manifestos, platforms, and court decisions are expertly interwoven with the articles. Features include a guide to related topics, a chronology from 1765 to 2018, and chronological list of entries divided into three periods: the Colonial Era to the Civil War, the Civil War to World War II, and World War II to today. Though the approach is broad, the set’s craftsmanship, organization, and scholarly content leave little doubt about the impact these groups continue to have on the U.S. political process. VERDICT General readers, high school students, and undergraduates will find this outstanding resource well illustrates the divergent genesis and nature of our political culture and landscape.—Rob Tench, Old Dominion Univ. Libs., Norfolk, VA

SOCIAL SCIENCES


Schneider (Sch. of Medicine, Emory Univ., Atlanta), Vincent M. Silenzio (family medicine, psychiatry, and community and preventative medicine, Univ. of Rochester), and psychiatrist Laura Erickson-Schroth, along with more than 40 contributors—all members of the health care and/or LGBT community—focus on the psychosocial aspects of LGBT identity. The first volume covers social issues and health promotion, such as the politics of LGBT health and public health, while the second concentrates on health issues and global challenges. The most useful chapters for health care professionals concern LGBT elders, parenting/family life, and preventive health. Chapters include tables, sidebars, endnotes, bibliography, and occasional footnotes. Unfortunately, uneven writing will discourage general nonmedical readers, as some chapters filled with technical jargon sound dense and academic while others flow easily and smoothly. Some chapters contain introductory information appropriate for general readers but will be of limited interest to health care professionals, as diagnosis, management, and assessment are not addressed. Each stand-alone volume contains its own detailed index complete with see-also references. VERDICT Despite some flaws, this volume is a nice supplement to Abbie E. Goldberg’s The SAGE Encyclopedia of LGBTQ Studies and expands on Kevin L. Nadal’s The Sage Encyclopedia of Psychology and Gender. It will be useful for think tanks, policymakers, and professionals interested in establishing a LGBT-friendly practice.—Laurie Selwyn, formerly with Grayson Cty, Law Lib., Sherman, TX

“A book for our current times and beyond.”

—IAN BREMMER, Eurasia Group and GZERO Media

As a candidate, Donald Trump declared U.S. foreign policy “a complete and total disaster.” He vowed his administration would put American interests above all other considerations.

But the Trump administration has doubled down on the misguided, overly militarized policies of the last three decades.

Fuel to the Fire explores the key elements of Trump’s approach to the world, and explains why they have failed. The authors call for a new approach to advance American security and prosperity without embarking upon costly and counterproductive wars abroad.