Cover image
Displaced Rohingya villagers in Coconut Garden, an unregistered camp on the outskirts of Sittwe. © Dougal Thomas/Corbis
Founded in 1969, Hurst is an independently owned non-fiction publisher specialising in books on global affairs, particularly politics, religion, conflict, international relations and area studies in Europe, Africa, the Middle East and Asia. Hurst releases approximately 80 new titles each year and publishes internationally.
Nigeria and Nigerians have acquired an unfortunate reputation for involvement in drug-trafficking, fraud, cyber-crime and other types of criminal activity. Successful Nigerian criminal networks have a global reach, interacting with their Italian, Latin American and Russian counterparts. Yet in 1944, a British colonial official wrote that ‘the number of persistent and professional criminals is not great’ in Nigeria and that ‘crime as a career has so far made little appeal to the young Nigerian.’

This last book by a celebrated Africanist traces the origins of Nigerian organised crime to the last years of colonial rule, when nationalist politicians acquired power at regional level. In need of funds for campaigning, they offered government contracts to foreign businesses in return for kickbacks, in a pattern that recurs to this day. Political corruption encouraged a wider disrespect for the law that spread throughout Nigerian society. When the country’s oil boom came to an end in the early 1980s, young Nigerian college graduates headed abroad, eager to make money by any means. Nigerian crime went global at the very moment new criminal markets were emerging all over the world.

‘This is quite simply a dynamite book, striking first of all for the sheer depth of research that has gone into it. It is remarkable, too, in the way that it is able to fit this material into a bigger picture, created not only by a thorough familiarity with Nigerian history and politics, but also by an awareness especially of the spiritual dimensions of Nigerian life, and the ways in which these feed through into crime as well as virtually every other aspect of Nigerian affairs.’ — Christopher Clapham, University of Cambridge
God is No Thing

Coherent Christianity

Rupert Shortt

This coolly written tract offers an erudite and eloquent argument for the importance of Christian values in modern life.

April 2016 £9.99

‘God is no thing, but not nothing’. These words from the renowned thinker Herbert McCabe point to a fallacy at the heart of New Atheist polemics against religion: the deity rejected by Richard Dawkins, Christopher Hitchens, Sam Harris and their followers is not God as taught in classical tradition, but merely a blown-up thing. From this basic error flow many more misunderstandings about Christianity and other creeds. As a result, debate on life’s biggest questions has grown vitriolic as well as confused.

The problem is all the more acute because religion refuses to fade away. Even though parts of the Western world now appear almost totally secularised, Christianity remains the most potent worldview on earth alongside Islam. Globalisation and democratisation have only strengthened the two faiths still further. In this hard-hitting but constructive book, Rupert Shortt argues that Christianity is a much more coherent, progressive body of belief — philosophically, scientifically and culturally — than often supposed by its critics. Alert to the menace posed by religious fundamentalism, as well as to secularist blind spots, he shows how a self-critical faith is of huge consequence to wider human flourishing.

‘This is a case for Faith which will trouble the doubting with reason’s light’
— A. N. Wilson

Rupert Shortt is religion editor of the Times Literary Supplement and a former Visiting Fellow at Oxford University. His books include Benedict XVI (2005), Christianophobia: A Faith under Attack (2012) and Rowan’s Rule: The Biography of the Archbishop (2014).

April 2016 • 96pp

Religion
Faithonomics uses economic theory to provide a new and unorthodox view of religion in today’s world. Drawing on state-of-the-art research and on case studies from around the globe, this book shows that religion should be analysed as a market similar to markets for other goods and services, like bottled water or haircuts.

Faithonomics is about today’s religious markets, but in sweeping detours through the histories of Christianity, Islam, Buddhism and Hinduism, Brekke shows us the religious markets of the past, although these were sometimes heavily regulated by states. He argues that government ‘control’ over religious markets is often the cause of unforeseen and negative consequences. Many of today’s problems related to religion, like religious terrorism or rent-seeking by religious political parties, are easier to understand if we think like economists. Religious markets work best when they are relatively free. Religious organisations should be free to sell their products without unnecessary restrictions, but we have no good reason to grant them privileges in the form of subsidies or tax-breaks.

Torkel Brekke

Faithonomics

Religion and the Free Market

Torkel Brekke

Deregulation of the religious marketplace will foster more harmonious societies, Brekke argues, with religions being treated exactly like any other commodity that can be bought and sold.

Torkel Brekke is Professor in the History of Religions at the University of Oslo. He has written and edited twelve books and numerous articles, mostly about religion and politics, including Fundamentalism: Prophecy and Protest in an Age of Globalisation (2012).

July 2016 • 256pp
Hardback • 9781849046367 • £25.00
Religion / Economics
Hidden Power

The Strategic Logic of Organised Crime

James Cockayne

Forcing us to rethink our distinctions between politics, conflict and crime, Cockayne uncovers a world in which states and mafias compete in a ‘market for government’, and not only states, but also some criminal groups, make war.

July 2016 • £25.00

James Cockayne is an Australian strategist, writer and international lawyer who works at the UN. His research and practice focus on armed groups, organised crime, counter-terrorism and the protection of human rights.

July 2016 • 256pp

Hardback • 9781849046350 • £25.00

History / Crime
The global icon is an omnipresent but poorly understood element of mass culture. This book asks why audiences around the world have embraced a small number of iconic figures and what this tells us about cross-border, trans-cultural interrelations since the Cold War. Prestholdt addresses these questions by examining one type of iconic figure: the ‘anti-system’ hero. These hero icons are symbols of alienation and aspiration that can be integrated into diverse political and consumer cultures.

To illustrate these points the book examines four of the most evocative global popular heroes of the past fifty years: Ernesto ‘Che’ Guevara, Bob Marley, Tupac Shakur and Osama bin Laden. Each has embodied a convergence of emancipatory politics, dissent and consumerism, and the popularity of each reveals the dissonance between shared, global references and locally contingent traditions. By examining four diverse popular heroes, Icons of Dissent offers new insights into transnational symbolic idioms, the mutability of common references and the commodification of political sentiment in the contemporary world.

Jeremy Prestholdt is Associate Professor of History at the University of California, San Diego and author of Domesticating the World: African Consumerism and the Genealogies of Globalization.

June 2016 • 244pp
Hardback • 9781849046657 • £17.99
Popular Culture / Sociology
Six Authors in Search of Justice

Engaging With Political Transitions

Michael Newman

Newman offers the reader a nuanced understanding of the complex relationships between injustice, justice and political transition through the prism of six writers of the Left.


March 2016 • 288pp
Hardback • 9781849046329 • £20.00

This book makes an original and readable contribution to defining the nature of justice in the aftermath of a repressive regime. While considering transitional justice as conventionally defined, this work explores broader conceptions of justice and is distinct in approaching the subject through a discussion of the lives and works of six writers: Victor Serge in Stalinist Russia, Albert Camus in Vichy France, Jorge Semprun in Spain under Franco, Ngugi wa Thiong’o in colonial and post-colonial Kenya, Ariel Dorfman in Chile under Pinochet, and Nadine Gordimer in apartheid South Africa. Each lived under a brutal regime, was prepared to take substantial risks in order to contribute to its overthrow, and survived a transition to a new regime. Each thought deeply about the evolving situation with viewpoints derived from a combination of lived experience and intellectual and artistic creation. Each illuminated key questions with reference to a particular country, while developing wider insights.

Newman demonstrates that their writings provide a valuable addition to academic analysis and external policy advice that too often fails to take sufficient account of reflective understanding, social and cultural context and the specificity of each situation. He also highlights the evolving and multi-dimensional nature of justice and injustice in political transitions.
Spies in the Congo

America’s Atomic Mission in World War II

Susan Williams

This book is the true story of American spies in Africa in the Second World War, which until now has never been researched or told. It is set against the background of one of the most tightly-guarded secrets of the war — America’s struggle to secure enough high quality uranium to build atomic bombs. These efforts were focused on the Shinkolobwe Mine in the Belgian Congo, which was described within the Manhattan Project as the ‘most important deposit of uranium yet discovered in the world’. Uranium from this mine was used to build the bombs dropped on Japan in 1945.

Given the very real possibility that Germany was also working on an atomic bomb, it was an urgent priority for the US to prevent uranium from the Congo being diverted to the enemy. This task was given to the newly-created Office of Strategic Services in Washington, which sent some of their best Secret Intelligence agents under cover to the Belgian Congo to track the ore and to hunt for Nazi collaborators. Their assignment was made even tougher by the complex colonial reality and by tensions with British officials. Spies in the Congo tells the story of the men — and one woman — who were sent on this dangerous wartime mission.

Susan Williams is Senior Fellow at the Institute of Commonwealth Studies, School of Advanced Study, University of London. Her books on Africa include Who Killed Hammarskjöld? (2011) and Colour Bar. The Triumph of Seretse Khama and His Nation (2006).

June 2016 • 320pp
Hardback • 9781849046381 • £25.00

History / Africa
The Rohingyas

Inside Myanmar’s Hidden Genocide

Azeem Ibrahim

Ibrahim’s searing book documents the slow-motion genocide of the Muslim Rohingyas and exposes the culpability of the Buddhist clergy in fomenting the religious cleansing of Myanmar.

March 2016 • £12.99

The Rohingyas are a Muslim group who live in Rakhine state (formerly Arakan state) in western Myanmar (Burma), a majority Buddhist country. According to the United Nations, they are one of the most persecuted minorities in the world. They suffer routine discrimination at the hands of neighbouring Buddhist Rakhine groups, but international human rights groups such as Human Rights Watch have also accused Myanmar’s authorities of being complicit in a campaign of ethnic cleansing against the Rohingya Muslims. The Rohingyas face regular violence, arbitrary arrest and detention, extortion, and other abuses, a situation that has been particularly acute since 2012 in the wake of a serious wave of sectarian violence. Islam is practised by around 4 per cent of the population of Myanmar, and most Muslims also identify as Rohingya. Yet the authorities refuse to recognise them as one of the 135 ethnic groups or ‘national races’ making up Myanmar’s population. On this basis, Rohingya individuals are denied citizenship rights in the country of their birth, and face severe limitations on many aspects of an ordinary life, such as marriage or movement around the country.

This exposé of the plight of the Rohingyas is sure to gain widespread attention.

Azeem Ibrahim has a PhD from the University of Cambridge. He has been a Research Fellow with the International Security Program at the Kennedy School of Government at Harvard, a World Fellow at Yale, Fellow and member of the board of directors at the Institute for Social Policy Understanding, and an Adjunct Research Professor at the Strategic Studies Institute, US Army War College. He founded and chairs a private grant-giving foundation (www.ibrahimfoundation.com) focusing on innovative community projects, and served as a reservist in the UK’s 4th Battalion Parachute Regiment.

March 2016 • 160pp
Paperback • 9781849046237 • £12.99
Politics / East Asia
The conflicts and crises of today’s Middle East are rooted in the colonial era. To understand them, we need to grasp how Western imperialism shaped the region and its destiny in the half-century between 1917 and 1967. That is the challenging argument of this book, which provides a vivid account of the struggle against European colonial rule in ten states stretching from north Africa to south Arabia. Drawing on a rich cast of eye-witnesses — ranging from nationalists and colonial administrators to soldiers, spies, and courtesans — the book brings to life the story of the making of the Middle East, highlighting the great dramas of decolonisation such as the end of the Palestine mandate, the Suez crisis, the Algerian war of independence, and the retreat from Aden. It argues that imperialism sowed the seeds of future conflict — and poisoned relations between the Middle East and the West.

Roger Hardy worked for more than twenty years as a Middle East analyst with the BBC World Service. He is the author of The Muslim Revolt: A Journey through Political Islam (2010) and is a Research Associate at the Centre for International Studies in Oxford.

March 2016 • 240pp
Hardback • 9781849046398 • £20.00

History / Middle East
A Long Watch

War, Captivity and Return in Sri Lanka

Commodore Ajith Boyagoda as told to Sunila Galappatti


April 2016 £20.00

'A deeply nuanced, non-sensational book: it is bold, yet tender. An invaluable, close-up account of the ways in which those who fight in these wars survive, and those who don’t.' — Sonali Deraniyagala, author of Wave: A Memoir of Life after the Tsunami

Ajith Boyagoda is a former Sri Lankan Navy Commodore who is now pursuing various business interests.

Sunila Galappatti has worked with other people to tell their stories, as a dramaturg, theatre director and editor. She started her working life at the Royal Shakespeare Company and Live Theatre, Newcastle and is a former Director of the Galle Literary Festival. She has recently been a Fulbright Visiting Fellow at Brown University; reflecting on processes carried out in different parts of the world to curate public histories. She lives in Sri Lanka.

April 2016 • 240pp

Hardback • 9781849046404 • £20.00

South Asia / Memoir

A Long Watch is the story of the highest-ranking prisoner detained by the Tamil Tigers during Sri Lanka’s civil war, a naval officer pulled from a dark ocean after a battle at sea. For eight years Commodore Boyagoda lived at close quarters with his declared enemy, his imprisonment punctuated by high-level talks about his fate, but also by extended conversations with his jailers and scratch games of cricket played in jungle clearings. Throughout, he observed his captors and fellow prisoners acutely, and with discreet empathy for the lives of others undone by war.

A memoir retold in Ajith Boyagoda’s temperate voice, his is an unblinking relation of experiences difficult, moving and ironic. From going to sea, to war, imprisonment and eventual homecoming, he accepted successive realities as ordinary, in order to survive them.

His book is a rare first-hand account of a close encounter between the protagonists of Sri Lanka’s civil war. Refusing sensationalism, A Long Watch offers a statement of human complexity amid the polarised narratives of a brutal conflict.
When India and Pakistan held nuclear tests in 1998, they restarted the clock on a competition that had begun half a century earlier. Nuclear weapons restored strategic parity, erasing the advantage of India’s much larger size and conventional military superiority. Yet in the years that followed Pakistan went on to lose decisively to India. It lost any ability to stake a serious claim to Kashmir, a region it called its jugular vein. Its ability to influence events in Afghanistan diminished. While India’s growing economy won it recognition as a rising world power, Pakistan became known as a failing state. Pakistan had lost to India before but the setbacks since 1998 made this defeat irreversible.

Defeat is an Orphan follows the rollercoaster ride through post-nuclear India–Pakistan, from bitter conflict in the mountains to military confrontation in the plains, from the hijacking of an Indian plane to the assault on Mumbai. Nuclear weapons proved to be Pakistan’s undoing. They encouraged a reckless reliance on militant proxies even as the jihadists spun out of control outside and inside Pakistan. By shielding it from retaliation, the nuclear weapons also sealed it into its own dysfunction — so much so that the Great South Asian War, fought on-and-off since 1947, was not so much won by India as lost by Pakistan.

Myra MacDonald is a journalist and author specialising in South Asian politics and security. She was a correspondent for Reuters for nearly thirty years, and also published a book on the Siachen war. She lives in Scotland.

July 2016 • 320pp
Hardback • 9781849046411 • £25.00
South Asia / Politics
Year of the Sword: The Assyrian Christian Genocide
A History

Joseph Yacoub
Translated by James Ferguson

The first general history published in English of the mass killings of 1915 in which the Ottomans sought to extirpate the Aramaic-speaking Assyrian, Syriac and Chaldean Christians of the Middle East.

July 2016 £25.00

‘Yacoub’s work is essential reading and sheds light on a dark chapter of twentieth century Middle Eastern history that has been deliberately silenced.’ — Vicken Cheterian, Webster University, Geneva, author of Open Wounds: Armenians, Turks and a Century of Genocide (2015)

Joseph Yacoub is Emeritus Professor at the Catholic University of Lyon and the author of several books on minorities and Christians in the Middle East.

July 2016 • 240pp
Hardback • 9781849046428 • £25.00
History / Middle East

The Armenian genocide of 1915 has been well documented. Much less known is the Turkish genocide of the Assyrian, Chaldean and Syriac peoples, which occurred simultaneously in their ancient homelands in and around ancient Mesopotamia — now Turkey, Iran and Iraq. The advent of the First World War gave the Young Turks and the Ottoman government the opportunity to exterminate the Assyrians in a series of massacres and atrocities inflicted on a people whose culture dates back millennia and whose language, Aramaic, was spoken by Jesus. Systematic killings, looting, rape, kidnapping and deportations destroyed countless communities and created a vast refugee diaspora. As many as 300,000 Assyro-Chaldean-Syriac people were murdered and a larger number forced into exile.

The ‘Year of the Sword’ (Seyfo) in 1915 was preceded over millennia by other attacks on the Assyrians and has been mirrored by recent events, not least the abuses committed by Islamic State.

Joseph Yacoub, whose family was murdered and dispersed, has gathered together a compelling range of eye-witness accounts and reports which cast light on this ‘hidden genocide.’ Passionate and yet authoritative in its research, his book reveals a little-known human and cultural tragedy. A century after the Assyrian genocide, the fate of this Christian minority hangs in the balance.
Innovation is key to military success, as Ahmed Hashim explains in his study of how Islamic State functions as a fighting, social media and administrative entity.

May 2016  £25.00

The military victories of ISIS have overturned the geopolitical map of the Middle East. Media attention has focused on ISIS’ savage treatment of its enemies and its ability to attract foreign fighters. However, in order to explain its success, a dispassionate account of its innovations in insurgency, ideology and governance is needed.

The first effort to build an ‘Islamic state’ in Iraq was defeated by US and Iraqi forces in 2011. That the second attempt, dating from 2014, has been more successful calls for explanation. Hashim argues that by focusing their ideology first and foremost on extreme anti-Shia sectarianism — rather than on Western ‘infidels’ — ISIS’ founders were able to present themselves as the saviours of what they saw as the embattled Sunni ‘nation’ in Iraq. This enabled them to win the support of Sunni communities.

Moreover, ISIS’ stunning ability to take major cities is a result of its innovative tactics. It sows terror in advance of its attacks by using targeted assassinations to kill key city leaders, and its decentralised regional command structure facilitates an unusual degree of coordination between small assault units. Meanwhile, it is making a serious effort to engage in state-building and population control.

Ahmed Hashim is Associate Professor of Strategic Studies at RSIS at Nanyang Technological University in Singapore. He has published extensively on insurgency and counterinsurgency, his most recent book being When Counterinsurgency Wins: Sri Lanka’s Defeat of the Tamil Tigers (2013).

May 2016  288pp
Hardback  9781849046435  £25.00
Politics / Middle East
Enemies Known and Unknown
Targeted Killings in America’s Transnational War
Jack McDonald

McDonald’s book lays bare the legal and political consequences of Washington’s pursuit of militarised counterterrorism in the post-9/11 era.

President Obama was elected on an anti-war platform, yet targeted killings have increased under his command of the ‘War on Terror’. The US thinks of itself as upholding the rule of international law and spreading democracy, yet such targeted killings have been widely decried as extra-judicial violations of human rights. This book examines these paradoxes, arguing that they are partially explained by the application of existing legal standards to transnational wars.

Critics argue that the kind of war the US claims to be waging — transnational armed conflict — doesn’t actually exist. McDonald analyses the concept of transnational war and the legal interpretations that underpin it, and argues that the Obama administration’s adherence to the rule of law produces a status quo of violence that is in some ways more disturbing than the excesses of the Bush administration.

America’s interpretations of sovereignty and international law shape and constitute war itself, with lethal consequences for the named and anonymous persons that it unilaterally defines as participants. McDonald’s analysis helps us understand the social and legal construction of legitimate violence in warfare, and the relationship between legal opinions formed in US government departments and acts of violence half a world away.

Jack McDonald is a research associate and teaching fellow at the Centre for Science and Security Studies, in the Department of War Studies, King’s College London.

June 2016 • 256pp
Paperback • 9781849046442 • £17.99
Conflict / Law
When the Berlin Wall crumbled in 1989, a euphoric continent hailed the advent of a new ‘borderless’ Europe in which such barriers would become obsolete. More than twenty-five years later, in the midst of the continent’s worst refugee crisis since the Second World War, European governments have enacted the most sustained and far-reaching border enforcement programme in history. Detention and deportation, physical and bureaucratic barriers, naval patrols and satellite technologies: all these have been part of Europe’s undeclared ‘war’ against undocumented immigration. These efforts have generated a tragic confrontation between some of the richest countries in the world and a stateless population from the poorest. The human consequences of that confrontation have become impossible to ignore, as migrants drown in unprecedented numbers in the Mediterranean or find themselves trapped in chokepoints like Calais, Hungary and Greece. As Europe’s leaders argue among themselves, the continent’s ‘hard borders’ are breaking down and it is increasingly unclear what will replace them.

Fortress Europe is an urgent investigation into Europe’s militarised borders. Carr speaks to border officers and police, officials, migrants, asylum-seekers and activists from across the continent in a unique and ground-breaking critique of an epic political, institutional and humanitarian failure that now threatens the future of the European Union itself.

‘Fortress Europe shines a light on Europe’s hidden war against immigration, whose devastating human cost is often ignored. Through powerful first-hand reporting from the front lines, Matthew Carr reminds us that migrants are not barbarians at the gates but human beings who, like us, aspire to a better life.’ — Philippe Legrain, author of Immigrants: Your Country Needs Them

‘This disturbing but hopeful book humanises the face of twenty-first-century immigration.’ — Publishers Weekly


November 2015 • 320pp
Paperback • 9781849046275 • £9.99
Reportage / Europe
Critical Muslim
Edited by Ziauddin Sardar

Critical Muslim is a quarterly magazine of ideas and issues, presenting Muslim perspectives on the great debates of our times. We aim to emphasise the plurality and diversity of Islam and Muslims and to promote dialogue, cooperation and collaboration between ‘Islam’ and other cultures, including ‘the West’.

We look at everything critically, challenging traditionalist, modernist, fundamentalist and apologetic versions of Islam as well as the established conventions and orthodoxies of dominant cultures. We seek new readings of religion, culture and politics with the potential to transform the Muslim world and beyond.

More info and subscriptions: criticalmuslim.hurstpublishers.com

17 | Extreme

Samia Rahman argues there is more to the Muslim world than extremism; Anne Alexander wonders at the rise and rise of ISIS; John Sweeney suggests we are living in an age of extremes; Raza Ali struggles with reactionary love for the Prophet; Andrew Brown takes a sledgehammer to the New Atheists; Elma Bahira learns to talk to idolatrous statues; Deena Dajani examines the ironies of a rational defence of satire; Sunny Hundal exposes the fanatics hijacking Sikhism; Benedikt Koehler thinks early Islam gave birth to capitalism that spawned wealth inequality; Farouk Peru asks Muslims to confront the enemy within; Samir Younes is appalled at the ubiquity of mean thought in the arts; Rahul Jayaram relates the story of the man who hid in an aeroplane bathroom; and Naufal Mukumi recounts his journey from unaccompanied refugee to renowned pianist.
Hassan Mahamdallie walks the streets of Detroit — the city America allowed to die; Ziauddin Sardar visits the ‘first city’ at the crossroads of Asia; Boyd Tonkin is shocked at the new gleaming cultural capitals of Dubai and Abu Dhabi; Robert Irwin unearths Basra during the Abbasid period; Kevin Ovenden looks at modern-day Athens in turmoil; Judy Cox sees London through the visions of William Blake; and Nazry Bahrawi takes in the nostalgia and popular culture of Singapore.

Also in this issue: past and present explorations of Lahore, Melbourne and Istanbul; a photo essay on the dreams of the migrant workers of the Gulf; and the last word column by Myriam Francois-Cerrah.
Jihadism Transformed

Al-Qaeda and Islamic State’s Global Battle of Ideas

Edited by Simon Staffell and Akil Awan

The contributors examine whether the challenge presented to al-Qaeda by Islamic State heralds a tectonic shift in international jihadism and how the former may respond to the threat of being usurped.

April 2016 £30.00

Jihadist narratives have evolved dramatically over the past five years, driven by momentous events in the Middle East and beyond; the death of bin Laden; the rise and ultimate failure of the Arab Spring; and most notably, the rise of the so-called Islamic State.

For many years, al-Qaeda pointed to an aspirational future Caliphate as their utopian end goal – one which allowed them to justify their violent excesses in the here and now. Islamic State turned that aspiration into a dystopic reality, and in the process hijacked the jihadist narrative, breathing new life into the global Salafi-Jihadi movement. Despite air-strikes from above, and local disillusionment from below, the new caliphate has stubbornly persisted and has been at the heart of ISIS’s growing global appeal.

This timely collection of essays examines how jihadist narratives have changed globally, adapting to these turbulent circumstances. Area and thematic specialists consider transitions inside the Middle East and North Africa as well as in South Asia, sub-Saharan Africa and Europe. As these analyses demonstrate, the success of the ISIS narrative has been as much about resonance with local contexts, as it has been about the appeal of the global idea of a tangible and realised caliphate.

Simon Staffell is a UK government expert on extremist ideologies, counter terrorism and the Middle East. He has a PhD in Political Science and Government from the University of Sheffield and has lived and worked across the Arab World, having recently returned from a diplomatic posting in Cairo.

Akil Awan is Associate Professor in Modern History, Political Violence and Terrorism at Royal Holloway, University of London.

April 2016 • 256pp
Hardback • 9781849046473 • £30.00

Islam / Terrorism
Salafi–Jihadism

The History of an Idea

Shiraz Maher

This primer offers a short history of arguably the most potent religious–political ideology of recent decades and how it has affected Islamist politics worldwide.

April 2016 £25.00

No topic has captured the public imagination of late quite so dramatically as the spectre of global jihadism. While much has been said about the way jihadists behave, their ideology remains poorly understood. As the Levant has imploded and millenarian radicals claim to have revived a caliphate based on the teachings of the Prophet Mohammed, the need for a nuanced and accurate understanding of jihadist beliefs has never been greater.

Shiraz Maher charts the intellectual underpinnings of Salafi-Jihadism from its origins in the mountains of the Hindu Kush to the jihadist insurgencies of the 1990s and the 9/11 wars. What emerges is the story of a pragmatic but resilient warrior doctrine that often struggles — as so many utopian ideologies do — to consolidate the idealism of theory with the reality of practice. His ground-breaking introduction to Salafi-Jihadism recalibrates our understanding of the ideas underpinning one of the most destructive political philosophies of our time by assessing classical works from Islamic antiquity alongside those of contemporary ideologues. Packed with refreshing and provocative insights, Maher’s book explains how war and insecurity engendered one of the most significant socio-religious movements of the modern era.

Shiraz Maher (PhD) is a Senior Research Fellow at the International Centre for the Study of Radicalization (ICSR) at King’s College London, and teaches at Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore.

April 2016 • 224pp
Hardback • 9781849046299 • £25.00
Islam / Terrorism
Gaza as Metaphor

Edited by Helga Tawil-Souri and Dina Matar

A unique multi-perspective take on the real and symbolic significance of this war-torn exclave—cultural and emotional as well as political.

February 2016 £16.99

Open-air Prison, Terror, Resistance, Occupation, Siege, Trauma: irrespective of when, where, and to whom the word is uttered, ‘Gaza’ immediately evokes an abundance of metaphors. Similarly, a host of metaphors also recall Gaza: Crisis, Exception, Refugees, Destitution, Tunnels, Persistence. This book brings together journalists, writers, doctors, academics and others, who use metaphor to record and historicise Gaza, to contextualise its everyday realities, interrogate its representations and provide an understanding of its real and symbolic significance. Offering perspectives from residents and observers, these essays touch on life and survival, the making of the Gaza Strip and its increasing isolation, the discursive and visual tools that have often obscured the real Gaza, and explore what Gaza contributes to our understanding of exception, inequality, dispossession, bio-politics, necro-power and other terms which we rely on to make sense of our world. The contributors reveal the manner of Gaza’s historical and spatial creation, to show that Gaza is more than simply a metaphor for far-away humanitarian disaster, or a location of incomprehensible violence — it is above all an inseparable part of Palestine’s past, present, and future, and of the condition of dispossession.

Helga Tawil-Souri is Associate Professor of Media, Culture, and Communication and Director of the Hagop Kevorkian Center for Near Eastern Studies at New York University. Her work focuses on issues of spatiality, technology, and politics in the Middle East, and especially Israel/Palestine.

Dina Matar is Associate Head, Centre for Media Studies at SOAS, University of London. She is the author of What it Means to be Palestinian and co-author of The Hizbullah Phenomenon: Politics and Communication.

February 2016 • 256pp
Paperback • 9781849046244 • £16.99
Politics / Middle East
Almost thirty years after its foundation, Hezbollah remains an enigma. Is it an Islamist terrorist group dedicated to destroying Israel or the first Arab national resistance to have ever defeated Tel Aviv’s troops? Should we look at it as a patriotic and respectable party or a fascist network at the centre of Lebanese political life? Hezbollah intrigues all the more for the difficulty involved in studying it. Its weakening, if not demise, has been announced many times since its inception in the early 1980s. But the fact is that Hezbollah has never stopped growing in power, on the national stage as well as in a regional context.

This book has three purposes. It first gives a clear definition of Hezbollah, presenting a thorough history of the party, describing its established internal structure, and the scope of its social and political action. It then explains the evolution of the party’s mobilisation. Finally, it illustrates another path, political but mainly identity-related — that of the Shiite community, today the main constituent of Lebanese society.

This rigorous and richly documented study, drawing on primary sources and hundreds of interviews with members, executives and officials of the party, unveils new aspects of this organisation, of the ‘Hezbollah phenomenon’ and of Lebanese politics of the last two decades.

‘Daher dispels a number of myths: that Hezbollah would be a state within a Lebanese state or that its principal goal is Islamic rule. Daher redefines the roles we traditionally attribute to Hezbollah, mouthpiece for the Shiite community, and dwells on its partners’ or adversaries’ perceptions of its activities. Offers a very complete picture.’ — Le Monde Diplomatique

Aurélie Daher received a PhD in political science from Sciences Po, Paris. She was a postdoctoral fellow at the University of Oxford in 2010-2011 and a postdoctoral research associate at Princeton University in 2012-2013. Her work focuses on Hezbollah, the Shiites, and politics in the Levant.
This groundbreaking volume explores how post-Arab Spring societies have experienced transitional justice — or not, as the case may be.  

May 2016 • £25.00

Following the ‘Arab Spring’ uprisings in the Middle East and North Africa, many had high hopes not only for democratisation but also for transitional justice to address the myriad abuses that had taken place in the region, both during the uprisings and for decades prior to them. Protesters had called not only for removal of corrupt and abusive leaders, but also for the protection of human rights more generally, including socio-economic rights as well as civil and political rights. Despite these hopes, most of the transitions in the region have stalled, along with the possibility of transitional justice.  

This volume is the first to look at this process and brings together leading experts in the fields of human rights and transitional justice, and in the history, politics and justice systems of countries such as Egypt, Tunisia, Libya, Algeria, Bahrain and Morocco. While these countries have diverse histories, political institutions, and experiences with accountability, most have experienced non-transition, stalled transition, or political manipulation of transitional justice measures, highlighting the limits of such mechanisms. These studies should inform reflection not only on the role of transitional justice in the region, but also on challenges to its operation more generally.

Chandra Lekha Sriram is Professor of International Law and International Relations, at the University of East London, where she is founder and Director of the Centre on Human Rights in Conflict. She is currently the chair of the International Studies Association Human Rights Section, and the co-chair of the London Transitional Justice Network.
This trenchant history of praetorianism in the Arab world recounts the baleful influence of the armed forces in shaping the region’s political landscape over the last three decades.

Guardians of the Arab State explains clearly and concisely how and why military organisations become involved in politics across the Middle East and North Africa, identifying four key factors: a high degree of organisational capacity, clear institutional interest, a forgiving population and weak civilian control.

Looking at numerous case studies ranging from Mauritania to Iraq, the book finds that these factors are common to all Arab countries to have experienced coups in the last century. It also finds that the opposite is true in cases like Jordan, where strong civilian control and the absence of capacity, interest, or a positive public image made coup attempts futile. Gaub also convincingly argues that the reasons are structural rather than cultural, thereby proving a counter-narrative to conventional explanations which look at Arab coups along religious or historical lines. In essence, the questions addressed herein lead back to issues of weak statehood, legitimacy, and resource constraints — all problems the Arab world has struggled with since independence. Guardians of the Arab State picks up where previous literature on Middle Eastern military forces dropped the debate, and provides an updated and insightful analysis into the soul of Arab armies.

Florence Gaub is a senior analyst at the European Union Institute for Security Studies, where she heads the Middle East programme. Her research focuses on conflict, war and armed forces in the Arab world.
Europe’s Balkan Muslims

A New History

Nathalie Clayer and Xavier Bougarel
Translated by Andrew Kirby

Clayer and Bougarel’s prodigiously researched book is a political and institutional history of the Muslims of south-east Europe since the fourteenth century, focusing on empires, states, political parties, and religious institutions.

There are roughly eight million Muslims in south-east Europe, among them Albanians, Bosniaks, Turks and Roma — descendants of converts or settlers in the Ottoman period. This new history of the social, political and religious transformations that this population experienced in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries — a period marked by the collapse of the Ottoman, Austro-Hungarian and Russian Empires and by the creation of the modern Balkan states — will shed new light on the European Muslim experience.

South-east Europe’s Muslims have experienced a slow and complex crystallisation of their respective national identities, which accelerated after 1945 as a result of the authoritarian modernisation of communist regimes and, in the late twentieth century, ended in nationalist mobilisations that precipitated the independence of Bosnia-Herzegovina and Kosovo during the break-up of Milosevic’s Yugoslavia.

At a religious level, these populations have remained connected to the institutions established by the Ottoman Empire, as well as to various educational, intellectual and Sufi (mystic) networks. With the fall of communism, new transnational networks appeared, especially neo-Salafist and neo-Sufi ones, although Europe’s Balkan Muslims have not escaped the wider processes of secularisation.

Nathalie Clayer and Xavier Bougarel are researchers at the Centre for Turkish, Ottoman, Balkan and Central Asian Studies (CETOBAC), EHESS, University of Paris. Nathalie Clayer is a historian of religion and nationalism in the Ottoman and post-Ottoman eras and Xavier Bougarel specialises in Islam in south-east Europe after the wars in the former Yugoslavia.

July 2016 • 288pp

Hardback • 9781849046596 • £45.00

History / Europe
Tribes and Politics in Yemen

A History of the Houthi Conflict

Marieke Brandt

This is the first rigorous history of the long-running Houthi rebellion and its impact on Yemen, now the victim of multi-national interventions as outside powers seek to determine the course of its ongoing civil war.

June 2016 £30.00

Tribes and Politics in Yemen tells the story of the Houthi conflict in Sa’dah Province, Yemen, as seen through the eyes of the local tribes. In the West the Houthi conflict, which erupted in 2004, is often defined through the lenses of either the Iranian-Saudi proxy war or the Sunni-Shia divide. Yet, as experienced by locals, the Houthi conflict is much more deeply rooted in the recent history of Sa’dah Province. Its origins must be sought in the political, economic, social and sectarian transformations since the 1960s civil war and their repercussions on the local society, which is dominated by tribal norms. From the civil war to the Houthi conflict these transformations involve the same individuals, families and groups, and are driven by the same struggles over resources, prerogatives, and power.

This book is based on years of anthropological fieldwork expertise both on the ground and through digital anthropological approaches. It offers a detailed account of the local complexities of the Houthi conflict and its historical background and underscores the absolute imperative of understanding the highly local, personal, and non-ideological nature of internal conflict in Yemen.

Marieke Brandt is a researcher at the Institute for Social Anthropology (ISA) of the Austrian Academy of Sciences in Vienna. Her research focuses on tribalism, tribal genealogy and history, and tribe–state relations in Southwest Arabia.

June 2016 • 256pp

Hardback • 9781849046466 • £30.00

Anthropology / Politics
A Great Perhaps?

Colombia: Conflict and Convergence

Dickie Davis, David Kilcullen, Greg Mills and David Spencer

‘A handbook for those countries intent on dealing with problems of insecurity and violence.’ — General Richard Myers (rtd), former chairman of the US Joint Chiefs of Staff

February 2016 • £30.00

Dickie Davis is an Associate of the Johannesburg-based Brenthurst Foundation and a retired Major General in the British Army. He served three tours in the Balkans and three in Afghanistan.

David Kilcullen is a Senior Fellow at the New America Foundation, studying insurgency and unconventional warfare. He has served in Colombia, Iraq, Afghanistan and Somalia and is the author of, amongst other books, The Accidental Guerrilla.

Greg Mills directs the Brenthurst Foundation. An adviser to several African presidents and to COMISAF in Afghanistan, he is the author of the best-selling Why Africa is Poor.

David Spencer is Professor of Counterterrorism/Counterinsurgency at the William J. Perry Center for Hemispheric Defense Studies. He has worked in various positions in support of Plan Colombia.

Columbia’s turnaround in governance and security conditions this century is unequalled. In 1999, FARC and ELN rebels were at the gates of Bogotá, and the country was synonymous with Pablo Escobar and known for rapacious corruption, weak government, drug smuggling and criminality. Fifteen years later the guerrillas, seriously weakened, have been persuaded to attend peace talks in Havana, and the Colombian economy has been a top performer in Latin America.

This book is the first comprehensive examination of the Columbian state’s efforts to combat the guerrillas and to win political and military support, extending its authority to rural areas where it was seldom felt, and to turn the Colombian economy around. Four international specialists with unrivalled policy and practical expertise in counterinsurgency campaigns bring a unique comparative perspective.

Based on comprehensive fieldwork, this study provides a history of the conflict, examines the war from the perspectives of the government and the guerrillas, delves into the development of special military capabilities, explains the economic dimension, and compares Columbia’s achievements to those of other nations. It concludes with an assessment of the country’s prospects: can improved security, a flourishing economy and a peace process turn Colombia’s fortunes from, in Gabriel Garcia Marquez’s words, ‘a great perhaps’ into something more permanent?
The choice of weapons used by armies has often been determined as much by politics, the machinations of the arms industry and a race to innovate, as it has by military expediency. This book examines Western military technological innovation through the lens of developments in small arms during the twentieth century. These weapons have existed for centuries, appear to have matured only incrementally and might seem unlikely technologies for investigating the trajectory of military–technical change. Their relative simplicity, however, makes it easy to use them to map patterns of innovation within the military–industrial complex. Advanced technologies may have captured the military imagination, offering the possibility of clean and decisive outcomes, but it is the low technologies of the infantryman that can help us develop an appreciation for the dynamics of military–technical change.

Tracing the path of innovation from battlefield to back office, and from industry to alliance partner, Ford develops insights into the way that small arms are socially constructed. He thereby exposes the mechanics of power across the military–industrial complex. This in turn reveals that shifting power relations between soldiers and scientists, bureaucrats and engineers, have allowed the private sector to exploit infantry status anxiety and shape soldier weapon preferences. Ford’s analysis allows us to draw wider conclusions about how military innovation works and what social factors frame Western military purchasing policy, from small arms to more sophisticated and expensive weapons.

Matthew Ford is a lecturer in International Relations at the University of Sussex. He has a PhD in War Studies from King’s College London and is an Honorary Historical Consultant to the Royal Armouries, a former West Point fellow and a founding editor of the British Journal for Military History.
Why Comrades Go to War
Liberation Politics and the Outbreak of Africa’s Deadliest Conflict
Philip Roessler and Harry Verhoeven

A critical examination of liberation/pan-Africanist ideologies and the ambitions of many of the key players in Zaire/DRC’s long-running civil war that helps explain why neighbouring countries intervened in the conflict.

May 2016 • £35.00

In October 1996, a motley crew of ageing Marxists and unemployed youth coalesced to revolt against Mobutu Sese Seko, president of Zaire/Congo since 1965. The rebels of the AFDL marched over 1500km in seven months to crush the dictatorship, heralding liberation as a second independence for Central Africa as a whole. US President Bill Clinton toasted AFDL leader Laurent-Désiré Kabila and his regional allies — having developed a unique camaraderie and personal trust on the region’s battlefronts — as a ‘new generation of African leaders’ ushering in an ‘African Renaissance.’

Within months, however, the Pan-Africanist alliance fell apart. The AFDL’s collapse triggered a cataclysmic fratricide between the heroes of liberation that became the deadliest conflict since the Second World War, drawing in eight African countries. This book draws on hundreds of interviews with protagonists from Africa and the international community to offer a novel theoretical and empirical account of Africa’s Great War. Bridging the gap between comparative politics and international relations, it argues that the renewed outbreak of calamitous violence in August 1998 was a function of the kind of regime the AFDL was and how its leaders saw Congo, the region and themselves. As a Pan-Africanist liberation movement, the collapse of the AFDL government internally and the unravelling of regional order externally were inextricably linked.

‘One of the most intelligent books on conflict in Africa that I have read in a long time. Based on an astoundingly comprehensive array of interviews with the key actors in this war.’ — Professor William Reno, Northwestern University

Philip Roessler is an assistant professor in the Department of Government at the College of William and Mary, where he is also Director of the Center for African Development. He is the author of Ethnic Politics and State Power in Africa: The Logic of the Coup-Civil War Trap (2016).

Harry Verhoeven is an assistant professor at the School of Foreign Service of Georgetown University in Qatar. He is the Convenor of the Oxford University China–Africa Network and author of Water, Civilisation and Power in Sudan: The Political Economy of Military-Islamist State Building (2015).
Saving Lives and Staying Alive

Humanitarian Security in the Age of Risk Management

Edited by Michaël Neuman and Fabrice Weissman

In recent years what was once unthinkable — the capture, imprisonment and murder of aid workers in conflict and disaster relief zones — has become distressingly commonplace. MSF’s reflections on the phenomenon will be required reading.

Most humanitarian aid organisations now have departments specifically dedicated to protecting the security of their personnel and assets. The management of humanitarian security has gradually become the business of professionals who develop data collection systems, standardised procedures, norms, and training meant to prevent and manage risks.

A large majority of aid agencies and security experts see these developments as inevitable — all the more so because of quantitative studies and media reports concluding that the dangers to which aid workers are today exposed are completely unprecedented. Yet, this trend towards professionalisation is also raising questions within aid organisations, MSF included. Can insecurity be measured by scientific means and managed through norms and protocols? How does the professionalisation of security affect the balance of power between field and headquarters, volunteers and the institution that employs them? What is its impact on the implementation of humanitarian organisations’ social mission? Are there alternatives to the prevailing security model(s) derived from the corporate world?

Building on MSF’s experience and observations of the aid world by academics and practitioners, the authors of this book look at the drivers of the professionalisation of humanitarian security and its impact on humanitarian practices, with a specific focus on Syria, CAR and kidnapping in the Caucasus.

Michaël Neuman is director of studies at MSF–Crash. He joined MSF in 1999, alternating between missions in the field and positions at MSF headquarters. From 2008-2010, Neuman served on the board of directors of the French and US sections of MSF. He is co-editor of Humanitarian Negotiations Revealed: The MSF Experience (2012).

Fabrice Weissman is Coordinator and a Director of Studies at MSF–Crash. A specialist in Sub-saharan Africa, he has been working with MSF since 1995, and spent many years in the field. He is the editor of In the Shadow of ‘Just Wars’: Violence, Politics and Humanitarian Action (2004), and co-editor of Humanitarian negotiations Revealed: The MSF Experience (2012).

February 2016 • 256pp

Paperback • 9781849046510 • £16.99

Humanitarianism / Security Studies
The city of Herat in western Afghanistan long sat at the edge of empires and served as a hub for trade and a conduit for armies. Yet it has been much more than simply a staging post or playing field of political ambition. It has been an imperial capital, a city of extraordinary wealth, and has played host to a cultural renaissance to rival that of Florence. The Pearl of Khorasan tells the history of this storied oasis city, from the invasions of Chingiz Khan in 1221 to the present day. An epilogue assesses the challenges Herat faces in the wake of Afghanistan’s recent turmoil.

Throughout Herat’s cycles of conquest and habitation, several patterns emerge: the primacy of geography; the city’s strong identification with the fertility of the banks of the Hari River; and its reputation as a place of theological excellence, tolerance and cultural refinement. From the luminescent genius of the Timurid century to the destruction and cultural vandalism associated with the Taliban’s rule of Afghanistan and the post-9/11 conflict, Herat has hosted empires and experienced the cupidity and lust for power of foreign agents. Using Persian, Pashto and British sources, the author paints a vivid picture of a city in which he has lived, presenting a personal vision of its tumultuous history.

C. P. W. Gammell is an historian of Afghanistan and Iran who has written widely on Herat’s history and its place in Afghanistan. Educated at Oxford and Cambridge, he has worked in Afghanistan and Iran since 2009, interpreting Farsi and Pashto for the ICRC, advising UNESCO on cultural and historical projects, and researching the history of Herat.

June 2016 • 256pp
Hardback • 9781849046541 • £30.00
South Asia / History
Colonial Lahore
A History of the City and Beyond
Ian Talbot and Tahir Kamran

A first general history of one of the greatest cities of South Asia, examining the impact of colonialism: socially, architecturally and politically.

May 2016 £25.00

A number of studies of colonial Lahore in recent years have explored such themes as the city’s modernity, its cosmopolitanism and the rise of communalism which culminated in the bloodletting of 1947. This first synoptic history moves away from the prism of the Great Divide of 1947 to examine the cultural and social connections which linked colonial Lahore with North India and beyond. In contrast to portrayals of Lahore as inward looking and a world unto itself, the authors argue that imperial globalisation intensified long established exchanges of goods, people and ideas.

Ian Talbot and Tahir Kamran’s book is reflective of concerns arising from the global history of Empire and the new urban history of South Asia. These are addressed thematically rather than through a conventional chronological narrative, as the book uncovers previously neglected areas of Lahore’s history, including the links between Lahore’s and Bombay’s early film industries and the impact on the ‘tourist gaze’ of the consumption of both text and visual representation of India in newsreels and photographs.

Ian Talbot is Professor of modern British history and formerly head of history at the University of Southampton. He has written numerous books on the Partition of India, and the modern history of Pakistan.

Tahir Kamran teaches history at G. C. University, Lahore and was until recently Allama Iqbal Fellow at the University of Cambridge and Fellow of Wolfson College. He has published widely on sectarian militancy and the politics of religious exclusion in Pakistan and is an editor of the Pakistan Journal of Historical Studies.

May 2016 • 256pp
Hardback • 9781849046534 • £25.00
South Asia / History
An Encyclopaedia of Contemporary Nordic Culture

Edited by Helena Forsås-Scott, Mary Hilson and Titus Hjelm

This reference work brings together in one volume the multi-faceted culture of Sweden, Norway, Denmark, and Finland, from Borgen to Lordi.

July 2016 £65.00

Helena Forsås-Scott (1945-2015) was professor of Swedish and Gender Studies at the UCL Department of Scandinavian Studies. She retired in 2010.

Mary Hilson is professor of history at Aarhus University, Denmark. From 2000-2015 she worked at the UCL Department of Scandinavian Studies.

Titus Hjelm is reader in sociology at UCL School of Slavonic and East European Studies. He specialises in Finnish society and culture.

What is ‘Nordic noir’ and why is it so popular? What are the Nordic societies really like? What do Nordic countries have in common and how are they different? This Encyclopaedia is a ground-breaking reference work containing over 800 entries on contemporary life and culture in the Nordic region, ranging from crime to crime fiction; Ingmar Bergman to IKEA; winter sports to the welfare state. Written by experts from within the Nordic region and beyond it, the entries discuss both country-specific issues and pan-Nordic perspectives. Longer essays offer broad historical surveys, though the emphasis throughout is on the most recent developments. Extensive cross-referencing adds to the usefulness of the work and entries also provide suggestions for further reading.

An Encyclopaedia of Contemporary Nordic Culture will be an invaluable tool for students, teachers and anyone seeking to get to grips with a part of the world whose soft power and cultural impact vastly outstrip its size.

Helena Forsås-Scott (1945-2015) was professor of Swedish and Gender Studies at the UCL Department of Scandinavian Studies. She retired in 2010.

Mary Hilson is professor of history at Aarhus University, Denmark. From 2000-2015 she worked at the UCL Department of Scandinavian Studies.

Titus Hjelm is reader in sociology at UCL School of Slavonic and East European Studies. He specialises in Finnish society and culture.

July 2016 • 500pp
Hardback • 9781849046558 • £65.00
Europe / History
After West Indian slavery was abolished in 1833, the anti-slavery campaign turned to the wider world and the goal of Universal Emancipation. Veteran agitators Joseph Sturge, Lord Brougham and John Scoble launched the British and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society at a world convention in 1840.

Throughout its long history the British and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society was instrumental in framing Britain’s diplomatic policy of promoting anti-slavery — a policy that projected moral authority over allies and rivals, through naval power and international tribunals.

The BFASS pushed for and prepared the 1890 Brussels conference that divided Africa between the European powers, on the grounds of fighting Arab slavers. The Society was torn between its belief in the civilising mission of Europeans, and its brief to protect Africans. Rubber slavery in the Belgian Congo, indentured ‘coolies’ in the Empire, and forced labour in British Africa tested the Society’s goals of civilising the world.

This first comprehensive history of the Society draws on 120 years of anti-slavery publications, like the Anti-Slavery Reporter, to explain its unique status as the first international human rights organisation; and explains the Society’s surprising attitudes to the Confederate secession, the ‘Coolies’, and the colonisation of Africa.

James Heartfield is the author of The Aborigines’ Protection Society (2011). He has been teaching, writing and campaigning around questions of international justice for thirty years.
Nationalism and the
Multination State

Alain Dieckhoff

‘This book explains why nationalism has been so successful at taking root in liberal democratic contexts. It is one of the best books in the field of political science in the last decade.’ — Alain G. Gagnon, Canada Research Chair, University of Québec at Montréal.

Published in English for the first time, this book defends the idea that nationhood remains a central aspect of modernity. After the breakup of the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia in the 1990s, the following decade confirmed this hypothesis with the rise of independence movements in Europe (in Scotland and Flanders) and the persistence of claims to nationhood the world over (for example, in Kurdistan and Tibet).

A dual perspective informs Dieckhoff’s analysis: to understand the hidden social and cultural underpinnings of post-Cold War identity dynamics, from Kosovo to Catalonia and from Flanders to Corsica, and to examine how societies can meet the challenge of national pluralism. Finding liberalism, republicanism and multiculturalism unequal to this task, he argues that only by building ‘multi-nation’ democratic states can the issues be properly addressed and secessions prevented.

Contemporary liberal discourse often treats nationalism as an archaic aberration — as a primitive form of tribalism astray in the modern world. Dieckhoff’s sensitive and clear-headed analysis shows why nationalism is in fact a fundamental facet of modernity, which must be dealt with as such by states vulnerable to breakup.

Alain Dieckhoff is senior research fellow at CNRS and director of CERI Sciences Po. His research focuses on politics, contemporary society and transformation of the state in Israel, as well as contemporary nationalism. He is a member of the advisory council of the Princeton Institute for International and Regional Studies and author of, amongst others, the Routledge Handbook of Modern Israel (2013).

July 2016 • 224pp

Paperback • 9781849046572 • £25.00

Politics
How South Africa Works
And Must Do Better

Jeffrey Herbst and Greg Mills

Is South Africa heading for the rocks? No, argue Mills and Herbst. Their book explains how great strides are being made, especially economically, counter to the rhetoric of disappointment which dominates public debate in the ‘Rainbow Nation’.

The overwhelming challenge that South Africa faces, and has to date failed to address, is unemployment, which falls especially on African youths who were promised a better future after 1994. If the current unemployment challenge is not addressed, it will be impossible to sustainably lift many millions of people out of poverty.

How South Africa Works reviews the country’s major economic achievements over the past two decades. Through numerous interviews with politicians, business leaders and analysts, it examines the challenges and opportunities across key productive sectors — including agriculture, manufacturing, services, and mining — illustrative of the policy challenges that leaders face. It scrutinises the social grant and education systems to understand if South Africa has established mechanisms for people not only to escape destitution but also to prepare for employment, and identifies steps that some of South Africa’s most notable entrepreneurs have taken to build world-class enterprises. Recognising the essential challenge to cultivate more employers to employ people, How South Africa Works concludes by offering an agenda and active steps for greater competitiveness for government, business and labour.


Jeffrey Herbst is the 16th President of Colgate University, a leading liberal arts college in the United States, and has written extensively on political and international affairs. His primary research interests are in the politics of sub-Saharan Africa, the politics of political and economic reform and the politics of boundaries.

February 2016 • 176pp
Paperback • 9781849046565 • £25.00
Africa / Politics
While Myanmar under Aung San Suu Kyi may seem destined for a smooth transition towards an enduring democracy, behind the scenes the military remains very much in control. Egreteau’s shrewd analysis is a stark reminder of where the balance of power resides.

This book examines the political landscape that took shape in Myanmar after the 2010 elections and the subsequent transition from direct military rule to a quasi-civilian ‘hybrid’ regime. Striking political, social, and economic transformations have indeed taken place in the long-isolated country since the military junta was disbanded in March 2011. To better construe — and question — what has routinely been labelled a ‘Burmese Spring’, Egreteau examines the reasons behind the ongoing political transition, as well as the role of the Burmese armed forces in that process, drawing on in-depth interviews with Burmese political actors, party leaders, parliamentarians and retired army officers. The study also takes its cue from comparative scholarship on civil-military relations and post-authoritarian politics, to look at the ‘praetorian’ logic explaining the transitional moment. Myanmar’s road to democratic change is, however, still paved with daunting obstacles. As the book suggests, the continuing military intervention in domestic politics, the resilience of bureaucratic, economic and political clientelism at all levels of society, the iconification of Aung San Suu Kyi, the shadowy influence of regional and global powers, as well as enduring concerns about interethnic and interreligious relations, all are strong reminders of the series of elemental conundrums with which Myanmar will have to deal in order to achieve democratisation, sustainable development and peace.

Renaud Egreteau is a 2015-2016 Fellow at the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars (Asia Program) in Washington DC. He holds a PhD in political science from Sciences Po, Paris.
Coolie Woman

The Odyssey of Indenture

Gaiutra Bahadur

SHORTLISTED FOR THE ORWELL PRIZE

A personal journey that seeks to reclaim the history of generations of indentured Indian women who spent their lives on the sugar plantations of British Guyana.

February 2016 • £12.99

In 1903 a Brahmin woman sailed from India to Guyana as a ‘coolie’, the name the British gave to the million indentured labourers they recruited for sugar plantations worldwide after slavery ended. The woman, who claimed no husband, was pregnant and travelling alone. A century later, her great-granddaughter embarks on a journey into the past, hoping to solve a mystery: what made her leave her country? And had she also left behind a man?

Gaiutra Bahadur, an American journalist, pursues traces of her great-grandmother over three continents. She also excavates the repressed history of some quarter of a million female coolies. Disparaged as fallen, many were runaways, widows or outcasts, and many migrated alone. Coolie Woman chronicles their epic passage from Calcutta to the Caribbean, from departures akin either to kidnap or escape, through sea voyages rife with exploitation, to new worlds where women were in short supply. When they exercised the power this gave them, some fell victim to the machete in brutal attacks, often fatal, by men whom they spurned. Sex with overseers both empowered and imperiled other women, in equal measure. It also precipitated uprisings, as a struggle between Indian men and their women intersected with one between coolies and their overlords.

‘A genealogical page-turner interwoven with a compelling, radical history of empire told from the perspective of indentured women. The collective voice of the “jehaji behen” (ship sisters) has been barely audible across the centuries, until now ... Bahadur grants us rare imaginative access to the odyssey through the experience of women’s stories she finds in the archives.’ – The Guardian

Gaiutra Bahadur is an award-winning reporter and book critic. Her work has appeared in The New York Times Book Review, The Washington Post, The Observer and The Nation, among other publications. She studied literature at Yale and journalism at Columbia, and was a Nieman Fellow at Harvard. She was born in Guyana and emigrated to the United States as a child.

February 2016 • 288pp

Paperback • 9781849046602 • £12.99

Politics / South Asia
Northern and central Nigeria have been engulfed in a violent insurgency campaign waged by Jama’atu Ahlis Sunnah Lidda’awati w’al Jihad, a.k.a. ‘Boko Haram’, and, for a time, its splinter group ‘Ansaru’. From its inception an inward-looking, almost parochial, movement, Boko Haram, and even more so Ansaru, have now shown clear signs of regionalisation, expanding their operations across West Africa and forging links with al-Qaeda-affiliated groups. Boko Haram’s stated aim is to Islamise Africa’s most populous country. Like earlier Nigerian Islamist groups, of which there is a long tradition in the Sahel, the discontent prompting young Nigerians and other young West African Muslims to join the insurgency is rooted in more than just religious orthodoxy and cannot be disentangled from their economic, social and and political marginalisation.

The federal government’s response has been a militarised one. But what is the real magnitude of the threat? What can foreign partners do to support Abuja? How effective is the current government’s strategy in tackling the insurgency? And, more importantly, are the root causes of the insurgency being addressed and the foundations for a durable peace being established?
In the wars in Libya, Iraq, Afghanistan and in recent conflicts more generally, liberal powers have blurred the line between military and political activity. Operationally, such blurring is highly effective: it works on the ground. Conversely, in strategic terms, it erases the distinction between war and peace. This, Simpson contends, is undesirable: how can policy control armed force, if armed force is a direct extension of policy?

As the information revolution reinforces the politicisation of combat, this is likely to be an irreversible trend. The question this book seeks to answer is not whether the West should engage in such practices, but how to manage, gain advantage from, and mitigate the associated risks. Liberal powers need to win conflicts on the ground, and yet preserve a healthy distinction between war and peace. Failure to preserve that distinction will result in those powers being caught in endless conflicts for which they are operationally ill-equipped.

War From The Ground Up offers a distinctive perspective in its consideration of the concept of contemporary warfare. While most accounts of conflict survey the battlefield from an academic perspective, or across it as a personal combat narrative, Simpson looks up from the front line to consider the concepts that put him there, and how they played out.
Reading the Quran

Ziauddin Sardar

‘Few books are more deserving of study [than the Qur’an]. Sardar’s book — an extended meditation built around the Qur’an’s first two chapters — is a good place to start. ... Divine revelation demands that “we constantly think outside the box of our earthly concerns by keeping in mind the intersection of time and timelessness”. Writing with a deep love of a text he learned at his mother’s knee, Sardar rises to this challenge, wrestling with problematic passages that would seem to run counter to his generally progressive and enlightened outlook.’ — Malise Ruthven, The Guardian

‘This lucid, scholarly and exciting book could not be more timely; it takes the reader on a spiritual and intellectual journey that is essential for Muslim and non-Muslim alike and addresses some of the most pressing needs of our time.’ — Karen Armstrong, author of A History of God and Muhammad: A Biography of the Prophet

Holy Ignorance

When Religion and Culture Part Ways

Olivier Roy

‘Olivier Roy, the outstanding scholar of contemporary religions, has written a book of startling clarity and wisdom. Illuminating trends, issues and movements that had before appeared bizarre or simply antipathetic, he provides us with tools for the comprehension of matters as diverse as coverage of the war on terror to the common individual confusion over one’s own beliefs and scepticisms’.

— Financial Times

‘An erudite account of intricate relationships between religion and other markers of identity, including nationality, socially defined race, language, class, political ideology, generation, gender and sexual orientation.’

— Times Literary Supplement
Emirati Women

Generations of Change

Jane Bristol-Rhys

‘This book should be read by everyone interested in Arab women.’ — Middle East Journal

‘Jane Bristol-Rhys’s volume is less a historical account of gender struggle and more a collection of conversations with successive generations of Emirati women. In preparing this work, the author has used both her decades of regional experience and her eight-and-a-half-year stint as a lecturer at Abu Dhabi’s Zayed University to admirable effect.’ — The National

‘The oral narratives and interviews presented in this book illustrate tellingly the lives of those who are otherwise marginalised and ignored.’ — Wanda Krause, School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London

A Dictionary of Cantonese Slang

The Language of Hong Kong Movies, Street Gangs and City Life

Christopher Hutton and Kingsley Bolton (eds)

‘Cantonese popular literature, comic books and movies — in fact, everyday life — is incomprehensible without some understanding of slang. A Dictionary of Cantonese Slang is the one and only, covering everything from common colloquialisms to triad trash-talking.’ — Professor Frank Dikötter, author of Mao’s Great Famine

‘A very significant contribution to the field of Chinese lexicography. Will shed much light on the kind of Cantonese speech that many people know about, talk about, and use in their daily conversations yet have not considered worthy of serious scholarship.’ — Robert S. Bauer, Hong Kong Polytechnic University
The Audacious Ascetic

What the Bin Laden Tapes Reveal About Al-Qa’ida

Flagg Miller

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