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# The Best of Books 2022

This Year's Top Picks From *Foreign Affairs*' Reviewers

December 2, 2022



Patrick Leger



he best books we reviewed this year, selected by *Foreign Affairs* editors and book reviewers.



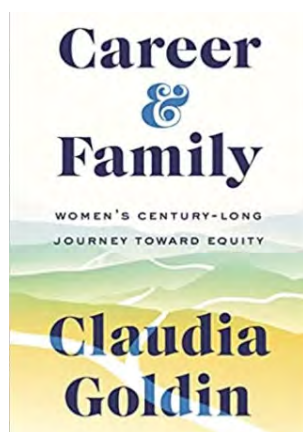
In this fascinating book, Cherniss explores the ideas of liberal thinkers from the World War II and Cold War eras, building portraits of intellectuals preoccupied with how liberalism could survive as a way of life in the face of extremist projects that sought to destroy liberalism and democracy.

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ECONOMIC | SOCIAL | ENVIRONMENTAL

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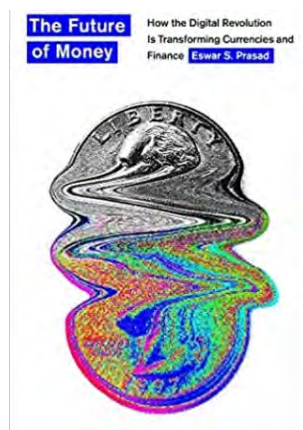


## Career and Family: Women's Century-Long Journey Toward Equity

by *Claudia Goldin*

Goldin summarizes the history and current state of gender disparities in employment and pay, arguing that redressing today's pay gap will require revisiting fundamental social and workplace norms. An erudite, engaging, and surprisingly personal book.

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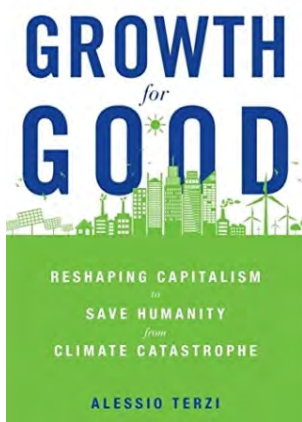


## The Future of Money: How the Digital Revolution Is Transforming Currencies and Finance

by *Eswar S. Prasad*

Prasad demystifies the esoteric world of cryptocurrencies, so-called stablecoins, and central bank digital currencies, drawing out the new currencies' implications for monetary policy, financial regulation, and economic development. He offers the best single point of entry for those interested in the nitty-gritty of digital finance.

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## Growth for Good: Reshaping Capitalism to Save Humanity From Climate Catastrophe

by *Alessio Terzi*

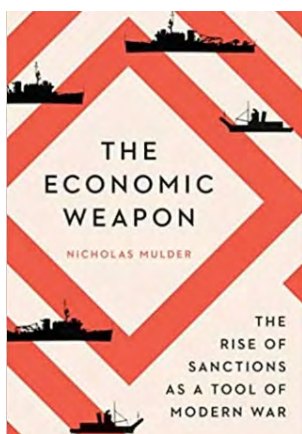
Terzi thoughtfully engages with the argument that societies must transition away from economic growth in order to address climate change and the ills of the market system, notably pervasive inequality. He makes the case that only the resources made available by an expanding economy can solve these problems.

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MILITARY | SCIENTIFIC | TECHNOLOGICAL

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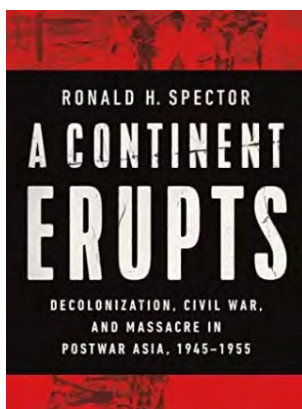


## The Economic Weapon: The Rise of Sanctions as a Tool of Modern War

by *Nicholas Mulder*

In an original and persuasive analysis, Mulder charts how economic sanctions emerged as a potential coercive instrument and alternative to war during the early twentieth century—and argues that rather than keeping the peace, this form of economic warfare aggravated tensions and often backfired.

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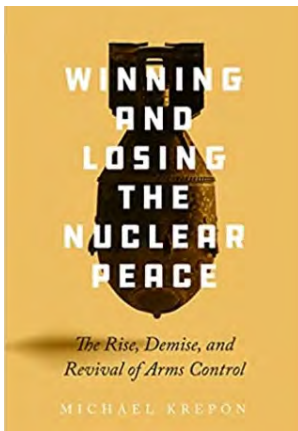
## A Continent Erupts: Decolonization, Civil War, and Massacre in Postwar Asia, 1945-1955

by *Ronald H. Spector*

Spector combines meticulous research with lively writing to describe the bloody conflicts that arose as European powers struggled to hold

on to their colonies in Asia in the wake of World War II.

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## Winning and Losing the Nuclear Peace: The Rise, Demise, and Revival of Arms Control

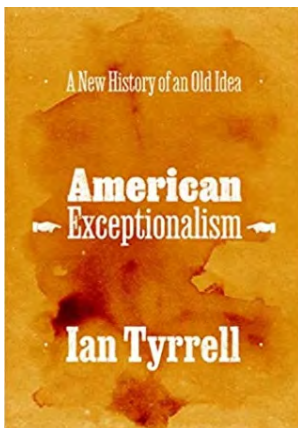
*by Michael Krepon*

Krepon's comprehensive and thoroughly researched history of U.S. nuclear arms control policy advances a refreshingly realist message: the world is stuck in the nuclear age.

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### THE UNITED STATES

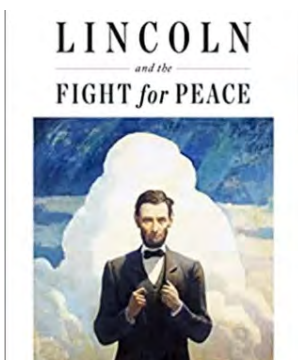


## American Exceptionalism: A New History of an Old Idea

*by Ian Tyrrell*

Tyrrell's rich intellectual history traces the changing significance of the idea of American exceptionalism from its roots in the revolutionary era to the present—illuminating the broad sweep of U.S. history in the process.

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## Lincoln and the Fight for Peace

*by John Avlon*

Avlon's highly readable, original treatment of President Abraham Lincoln's tragically interrupted plans to advance political reconciliation in the wake of the U.S. Civil War is particularly



JOHN AVLON

Author of Washington's Farewell

timely now in a polarized United States and world.

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## There Is Nothing for You Here: Finding Opportunity in the Twenty-first Century

by *Fiona Hill*

Hill, a well-known Russia expert, deftly combines a childhood memoir, political analysis, and an account of her time on U.S. President Donald Trump's National Security Council to offer a compelling examination of the conditions that breed populism.

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### WESTERN EUROPE



## Free: A Child and a Country at the End of History

by *Lea Ypi*

This prize-winning memoir recounts with wit, charm, and wisdom Ypi's life before and after the fall of communism in Albania, charting the path that led her to a personal and intellectual commitment to social democracy.

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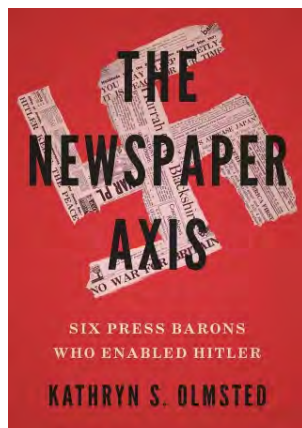
## We Don't Know Ourselves: A Personal History of Modern Ireland

by *Fintan O'Toole*

O'Toole, perhaps Ireland's foremost public intellectual, combines an intimately personal narrative, piquant facts and figures, and sharp commentary to chart the extraordinary economic, social, and

political transformation of Ireland since 1958 in this standout book.

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## The Newspaper Axis: Six Press Barons Who Enabled Hitler

by Kathryn S. Olmsted

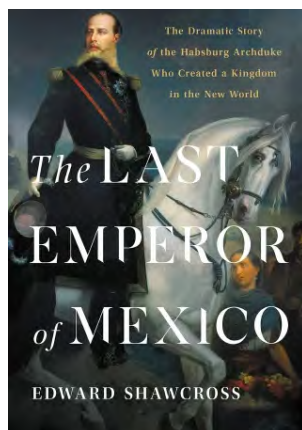
Olmsted examines how the most powerful media moguls in the United Kingdom and the United States whitewashed Adolf Hitler's actions and embraced sensationalism and untruth throughout the 1930s—reminding readers that nationalist press outlets that disseminate fake news, praise foreign autocrats, and practice dog-whistle politics are nothing new.

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### WESTERN HEMISPHERE

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## The Last Emperor of Mexico: The Dramatic Story of the Habsburg Archduke Who Created a Kingdom in the New World

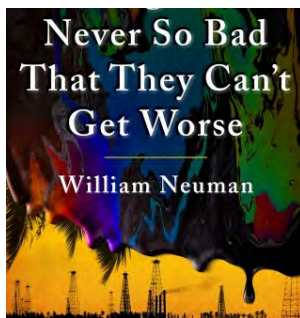
by Edward Shawcross

Shawcross deftly and persuasively reexamines the tragicomic rule of the Austrian archduke Ferdinand Maximilian, the Habsburg prince whom France briefly imposed on Mexico in the 1860s, arguing that Maximilian was a well-intentioned, if flawed, Enlightenment ruler buffeted by the great forces of the age.

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## Things Are Never So Bad That They

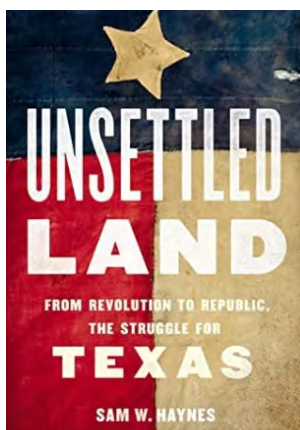


## Can't Get Worse: Inside the Collapse of Venezuela

by *William Neuman*

In an unrelentingly depressing requiem, Neuman examines how Venezuela went from being an oil-rich, functioning democracy with a prosperous middle class to a country trapped by economic ruin, severe shortages, and crippling urban crime—a cautionary tale in which U.S. politicians come off poorly.

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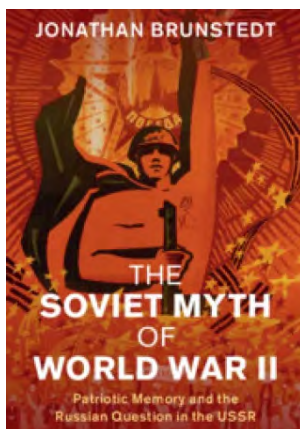
## Unsettled Land: From Revolution to Republic, the Struggle for Texas

by *Sam W. Haynes*

Haynes proposes an alternative to the traditional foundational myth of Texas, in which a heroic American resistance overcame Mexican despotism—instead illuminating a pre-independence history in which English speakers, Hispanics, indigenous tribes, and freed Blacks coexisted in relative harmony under Mexican rule.

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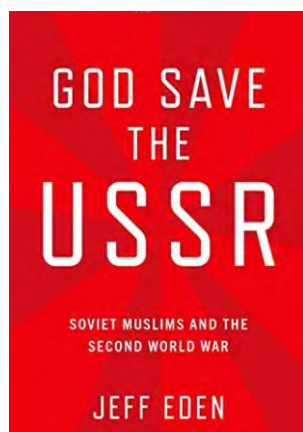
### EASTERN EUROPE AND FORMER SOVIET REPUBLICS



## The Soviet Myth of World War II: Patriotic Memory and the Russian Question in the USSR

by *Jonathan Brunstedt*

In this well-researched book, Brunstedt assesses the competing narratives of the Soviet experience of World War II and the rise of Russian nationalism among Moscow elites.

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## God Save the USSR: Soviet Muslims and the Second World War

*by Jeff Eden*

Eden's innovative study explores the dynamics of Muslim life in the Soviet Union during World War II, examining how Moscow sought to inculcate patriotism among communities whose sense of belonging to Soviet society remained tenuous.

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## Navalny: Putin's Nemesis, Russia's Future?

*by Jan Matti Dollbaum, Morvan Lallouet, and Ben Noble*

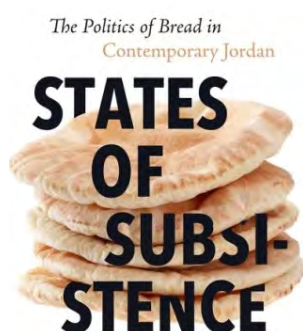
In the first English-language book about Alexei Navalny, the leader of the Russian opposition to President Vladimir Putin, the authors follow Navalny's trajectory to becoming Russia's most prominent political prisoner—and, along the way, explain how corruption secures Putin's rule instead of eroding it, why support for Putin remains broad, and why Navalny's current imprisonment speeds Russia's descent toward full-fledged dictatorship.

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### MIDDLE EAST

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## States of Subsistence: The Politics of Bread in Contemporary Jordan

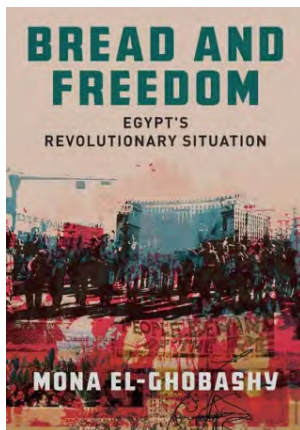
*by José Ciro Martínez*

Martínez shows how public debates about bread in Jordan illustrate both the state's profound role in shaping national identity and its



JOSÉ CIRO MARTÍNEZ

fading influence in popular understandings of political authority—and why decades of economic liberalization have left the country's welfare state in tatters.

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## Bread and Freedom: Egypt's Revolutionary Situation

by *Mona El-Ghobashy*

El-Ghobashy elegantly recounts the years of upheaval in Egypt between the 2011 uprising against President Hosni Mubarak and the 2014 election of President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi, analyzing sources of political contestation and stressing the uncertainty and volatility of those years.

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## Fixing Stories: Local Newsmaking and International Media in Turkey and Syria

by *Noah Amir Arjomand*

In this subtle and reflective book, Arjomand draws on his own experience as a young Iranian American reporter and local fixer in Turkey to examine the murky forces—and figures—that shape how international news is made.

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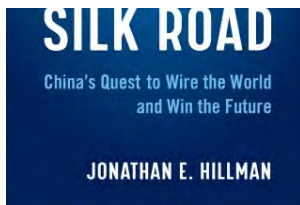
### ASIA AND PACIFIC

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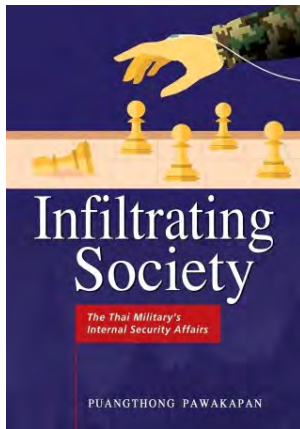
## The Digital Silk Road: China's Quest to Wire the World and Win the Future

by *Jonathan E. Hillman*



Hillman shows how Chinese-manufactured digital technology is taking over the world and argues that although China remains poised to dominate the industry, leading democracies still have a chance to invest in technology that promotes ethical norms and freer societies.

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## Infiltrating Society: The Thai Military's Internal Security Affairs

*by Puangthong Pawakapan*

In a work of skill and courage, Pawakapan explains how Thailand's military has penetrated society in an effort to foster support for its conservative policies—but casts doubt on whether it has succeeded in generating popular support for a corrupt and inequitable system.

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## Line of Advantage: Japan's Grand Strategy in the Era of Abe Shinzo

*by Michael J. Green*

Green argues that former Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe reoriented and strengthened Tokyo's foreign policy in a way that will persist, despite his tragic assassination in July 2022.

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### AFRICA



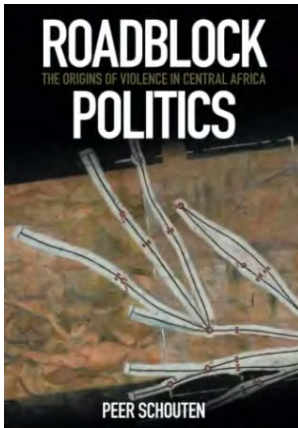
## Salafism and Political Order in Africa

*by Sebastian Elischer*



In this powerful book, Elischer explains how some African states avoided a rise in Salafi political violence by responding to early signs of emerging extremism, while others were complacent and allowed Islamic groups to organize themselves and become a threat.

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## Roadblock Politics: The Origins of Violence in Central Africa

*by Peer Schouten*

In this strikingly original study, Schouten shows how local actors seek to gain power and resources by controlling the road networks in the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo. He demonstrates that these roadblocks profoundly fuel long-standing conflicts and hamper efforts at institution building in central Africa.

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## Holy War: The Untold Story of Catholic Italy's Crusade Against the Ethiopian Orthodox Church

*by Ian Campbell*

In this stunning book, Campbell explores the Catholic Church's support for and encouragement of the Italian dictator Benito Mussolini's campaign against the Ethiopian Orthodox Church during Italy's invasion and occupation of Ethiopia from 1935 to 1943, shedding new light on a key episode in African history.

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