

## Society's Books of Note

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Priscilla J. McMillan, *The Ruin of J. Robert Oppenheimer and the Birth of the Modern Arms Race*. Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2018. \$29.95. 416 pp.

McMillan, an associate of the Davis Center for Russian and Eurasian Studies at Harvard University draws on newly declassified U.S. government documents and materials from Russia, as well as in-depth interviews, to expose for the first time the conspiracy that destroyed one of America's most illustrious scientists. She argues that the effort to discredit Oppenheimer, occurring at the height of the McCarthy era and sanctioned by a misinformed President Eisenhower, was a watershed in the Cold War, creating dangers that haunt us today.

Fawaz A. Gerges, *Making the Arab World: Nasser, Qutb, and the Clash That Shaped the Middle East*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, \$20.95. 528 pp.

Gerges, professor of International Relations at the London School of Economics and Political Science, recounts the bloody events in Egypt since 2011, and he argues these events echoed an older political rift in Egypt and the Middle East: the splitting of nationalists and Islamists during the rule of Egyptian president and Arab nationalist leader Gamal Abdel Nasser. Gerges tells how the clash between pan-Arab nationalism and pan-Islamism has shaped the history of the region from the 1920s to the present.

Wendy Webster, *Mixing It: Diversity in World War Two Britain*. New York: Oxford University Press. \$34.95. 336 pp.

Webster, professor of modern cultural history at the University of Huddersfield, describes that during the Second World War, people arrived in Britain from all over the world as troops, war-workers, nurses, refugees, exiles, and prisoners-

of-war-chiefly from Europe, America, and the British Empire. Between 1939 and 1945, the population in Britain became more diverse than it had ever been before. *Mixing It* recovers this forgotten history. It illuminates the place of the Second World War in the making of multinational, multi-ethnic Britain and resonates with current debates on immigration.

László Mérő, *The Logic of Miracles Making Sense of Rare, Really Rare, and Impossibly Rare Events*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press. \$27.50. 288 pp.

Mérő, professor at the Institute of Psychology at Eötvös Loránd University, contends that we live in a much more turbulent world than we like to think, but the science we use to analyze economic, financial, and statistical events mostly disregards the world's essentially chaotic nature. He explains how the wild and mild worlds (which he names Wildovia and Mildovia) coexist, and that different laws apply to each. He proposes to extend the reach of science to subjects previously considered outside its grasp: the unpredictable, unrepeatable, highly improbable events we commonly call "miracles."

Alisa Roth, *Insane: America's Criminal Treatment of Mental Illness*. New York: Basic Books, 2018. \$28.00. 320 pp.

Roth, a former reporter at Marketplace, argues that America has made mental illness a crime. Jails in New York, Los Angeles, and Chicago each house more people with mental illnesses than any hospital. As many as half of all people in America's jails and prisons have a psychiatric disorder. One in four fatal police shootings involves a person with such disorders. She reveals the hidden forces behind this crisis and suggests how a fairer and more humane approach might look.