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From the Reference Desk-Europe Since 1945: An Encyclopedia; Encyclopedia of Urban Legends; and Oxford Companion to Politics of the World

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From the Reference Desk

by **Tom Gilson** (Head, Reference Services, College of Charleston)
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An understanding of today's Europe is contingent on an awareness of the political and historical developments since the end of the Second World War. The last half-century has been a time of tremendous change from the start of the Cold War to the dismantling of the communist bloc to the continuing emergence of the European Union. In **Garland's Europe Since 1945: An Encyclopedia** (2001, 0815313365, \$195) readers now have a well rounded set that offers the necessary background to gain a useful grasp of these and other elements of Europe's recent past.

Editor **Bernard A. Cook** and 286 other scholars provide some 1700 articles on specific political figures, countries, international agreements, paramilitary groups and labor unions. Also treated are broad concepts like de-colonization, terrorism, human rights, women's issues, European integration, and regionalism, as well as articles that deal with non-political topics like art and literature, education, philosophy and the theater. However, the main strength is the political coverage, particularly of individual countries and personalities. Articles on the individual countries emphasize elections, parties, movements and other political developments while nearly a third of the articles in the set deal with political figures and their influence.

The arrangement is standard with alphabetical entries linked by "see also" references. Add to this a good general index and a "subject guide" grouping articles in broad themes and you have an encyclopedia that is well organized and easy to use. One caveat, the bibliographies could be stronger. Citations seem limited to books. There are few, if any, references to journal articles.

Although narrower in focus, **Europe Since 1945: An Encyclopedia** is more timely and comprehensive than the *Columbia Dictionary of European Political History Since 1914* (1992, 0231078803, \$92). It offers an up-to-date, thorough treatment of the forces making up recent European politics and history and is a natural companion to another quality **Garland** encyclopedia, *World War II in Europe* (1998, 0824070291, \$195). It should find a welcome place on both public and academic library shelves.

Anglophiles will welcome another recent entry from **Garland**. **Tudor England: An Encyclopedia** (2000, 0815307934, \$135) chronicles one of the most vibrant times in English history in a scholarly but highly readable fashion. There are 700 entries from some 250 scholars in the field. Every facet of Tudor life is captured from medicine and health

to games and sports, trade and craft guilds to interior decoration, sermons to sexual offenses and knighthood to lawyers. In addition, coverage includes institutions like the Chacery, concepts like Puritanism, events like the invasion of the Armada, and of course, the many accomplishments in Tudor drama and music. As you might expect, many of the entries are devoted to the individuals that peopled this fascinating time. Biographies range from those of kings and queens like **Henry and Elizabeth** to lesser nobles like **Thomas Howard** and from the great literary figures like **Shakespeare** and **Marlowe** to the more obscure like the compiler and indexer **Abraham Fleming**. There are also entries for Catholic martyrs like **Thomas More** and **John Fisher**, as well as Protestant reformers like **John Foxe** and **Hugh Latimer**. Tying all this content together is a useful index and numerous "see also" references. Each entry has its own brief bibliography, but, lending additional scholarly weight to this encyclopedia, there are bibliographic essays on primary and secondary sources for various aspects of Tudor life including education and science, literature, the visual arts, music, politics, religion, social history and economics. There are a few illustrations throughout the text but a handsome set of color plates helps brighten the book.

From the mundane to the majestic, **Tudor England: An Encyclopedia** offers the reader a collection of vivid snapshots that taken together provide a full picture of an era. Given the enduring interest in this topic, **Tudor England** is a worthwhile purchase for both academic and public libraries.

There is a never-ending need for quality biographical references and **Routledge** recently published a set that will prove a significant addition to most libraries. **The Biographical Dictionary of Women in Science: Pioneering Lives From Ancient Times to the Mid-20th Century** (2000, 0415920388, \$250) contains sketches of nearly 2500 women scientists worldwide. Thoroughly researched, it offers convincing proof of the neglected scientific contributions of women.

Editors **Marilyn Olgilvie** and **Joy Harvey** interpret scientist broadly and consider "most areas of science," as well as those "science related activities in which women have worked." Pure sciences like physics, biology and mathematics, various health-related fields, as well as the social sciences like sociology and psychology are fair game. While including people like **Clara Maria Pope**, a British flower painter, might raise some eyebrows, an expansive view of what constitutes

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a scientist is appropriate given the historical neglect of women in this area.

Entries are alphabetical and are structured with ease of use in mind. Personal information like dates, family, educational background, etc. are given in a brief introduction followed by a biographical sketch outlining the contribution of each scientist. Each entry has a bibliography with many containing both primary and secondary sources. Access to the set is provided by a subject index, as well as by very helpful lists by occupation, time period, and country. The set is international in scope but "it is skewed toward the United States and Great Britain" because of the better coverage afforded women in the scientific literature of those two countries.

The *Biographical Dictionary of Women in Science* is a scholarly and comprehensive work that its editors have reason to be proud of. It joins *Gale's Women in World History* as a recently published, top-notch biographical reference focusing on the lives and contributions of women. Highly recommended for both academic and public libraries.

(Libraries collecting in this area should also consider **Martha J. Bailey's** *American Women in Science 1950 to the present* (ABC-CLIO 1998, 0874369215, \$75). Although its coverage is limited to American women, it concentrates on women who have made their mark in the second half of the 20th century and in that sense updates the *Biographical Dictionary*.

The *Dictionary of Biological Psychology* (2001, 0415136067, \$165) is another Routledge publication worthy of consideration. Edited by **Philip Winn**, this reference addresses the increasing impact that other sciences like the biological and brain sciences are having on the study of psychology. As Winn notes, this book is not a mere collection of jargon. The terms defined here are "clearly real things – anatomical structures, psychological processes, cell functions and so on." They include descriptions of the main

neurotransmitters and receptors, the physiology of the brain, various classes of drugs, as well as terms related to body chemistry and genetics. In addition there are definitions of the impacted human behaviors, conditions and syndromes. The *Dictionary of Biological Psychology* is intended for undergraduates studying psychology, many of whom have little background in the sciences. Clearly written and easy to use, it is well suited to the task. However, it will also be of use to those more practiced in these areas for thorough definitions and explanations of familiar terms. Entries vary in length from one to two paragraphs up to one to two pages. Naturally the arrangement is alphabetical and there are cross-references linking similar and related terms. American librarians will want to note that the spelling follows English conventions. This handsomely bound volume will find a place in many academic library collections, as well as on the shelves of some individual faculty members.

America is awash in them. Millions of us take them on a daily basis and they can be found almost anywhere from trendy health food stores to your local grocery to Walmart. Nutritional supplements play a major role in our diets and the folks at Physicians Desk Reference have just zeroed in on them in a recent reference work. But, the *PDR for Nutritional Supplements* (2001, 1563633647, \$59.95) published by **Medical Economics** is much more than a guide to vitamins. It offers comprehensive and sound critical evaluation of a variety of supplements from bee pollen to beta-carotene, fish oils to folic acid, green tea to glycerol, and soy protein to spirulina. Each entry has a description for the nutrient including structural formula, as well as a list of trade names, indications and usage, actions and pharmacology, a research summary, precautions and adverse reactions, interactions and dosage. Each also has a bibliography of sources from established medical journals. As with other *PDR* titles, the indexing is a thorough and highly useful feature. In total, there are eight indexes including ones for supplement and brand names, as well as for category, indication, side effects, interactions, companion drug, and manufacturers.

The *PDR for Nutritional Supplements* is intended for use by physicians to advise patients so the terminology can be technical at times. A glossary would have been a valuable addition for the general reader. Nonetheless, they can still learn a great deal about the value of nutritional supplements here. Overall, this work is tough to beat as an authoritative source for this type of information. It is a definite purchase for most public libraries. Academic libraries where there is interest should also consider it.

It is rare to find a reference title that is both informative and fun to read. But ABC-CLIO's recently published *Encyclopedia of Urban Legends* (2001, 157607076X, \$75) fits the bill on both counts. Written by the prolific **Jan Harold Brunvald** this *Encyclopedia* contains entries on the development of urban legends in individual countries, as well as those on major themes like religion, social class, crime and sex. However, the majority of entries are devoted to hundreds of specific urban legends. **Mr. Brunvald**, professor emeritus of English at the **University of Utah**, has been collecting bizarre, but often believed urban legends for over 20 years. These stories range from the issuing of death certificates for Cabbage patch dolls, to the mouse in the coke rumor, to reports of microwaved pets, to the "good times" computer virus scare of the mid-1990's. Most, if not all, of these legends are recounted in **Mr. Brunvald's** earlier book *To Good to be True: The Colossal Book of Urban Legends* published by **Norton** (1999, 0393047342, \$29.95). What **Brunvald** adds in this new book is an encyclopedic arrangement with an index along with supporting articles on themes, trends, etc. (One suggestion for any future edition would be a thematic index grouping entries by major categories.)

Each of the legend entries describes the legend, as well as any variant versions, points to related entries in the *Encyclopedia* and offers a brief bibliography. Another valuable feature is **Mr. Brunvald's** introduction that traces the development of the modern urban legend from the French concept of the contemporary legend developed in the 1880s. But he also points to a problem in the study of urban legends. **Brunvald** argues that with the advent of the Internet, urban legends are already losing their vitality as an oral-narrative genre. They have "migrated from folklore into popular culture where they became stereotyped, standardized, exploited, commodified and repackaged." However, according to **Brunvald**, this is also an opportunity. This change has "opened up another new field of research." He seems to see even this change as developing part of the urban legend tradition. I suspect he is right. Urban legends are here to stay and their study will only grow. The *Encyclopedia of Urban Legends* is a good place to start getting acquainted with them. There is nothing else quite like it.

Encyclopedia of Urban Legends is appropriate for both academic and public libraries and is one of those titles that would be equally useful in circulation.

It may be one of the most important jobs anyone can have but there are no required courses or training. Well, at least now there is a reference book. *Parenthood in America* (2000, 1576072134, \$175) also published by

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ABC-CLIO, is a 2-volume set offering scholarly and concise A-Z coverage of parenting issues and concerns. Drawing on the fields of psychology, health and sociology, editor **Lawrence Balter** has assembled more than 110 contributors who have written over 200 separate articles. Coverage includes issues like spacing of children, dual-career families, parent-teen communication, home schooling, divorce and custody conflicts, sibling relationships, parenting styles and the impacts of video and computer games. There are also entries on theorists and practitioners like **Louise Bates Ames**, **Maria Montessori**, **Arnold Gesell**, **Erik Erikson**, and **Benjamin Spock**.

Geared to the layperson, as well as the professional and student, the articles are written in down-to-earth, understandable language but with scholarly authority. Each entry is signed and has a brief, but helpful bibliography. A general index and "see" references provide access to related articles and there is a cumulative bibliography giving a sense of the depth of scholarship involved.

Parenthood in America should find a home in public, academic and professional libraries. It will prove a highly useful resource for a wide audience. In fact, this set might have even more value in home libraries. It's too bad the price is so steep. **ABC-CLIO** might consider an edited, single volume, paperback version for the home market.

A number of new editions of established works have also been released of late.

One of the more impressive is the second edition of the **Encyclopedia of Musical Theatre** (2001, 0028649702, \$368) published by **Schirmer Books**, a **Gale** imprint. Expanded into three volumes, the **Encyclopedia** contains 500 new articles and updates of 4000 more and is authored by **Kurt Ganzl**, who also wrote the first edition, a 1994 **Dartmouth** honoree. In the new edition **Mr. Ganzl** has also "filled in those annoying gaps in the birth and death information," as well as offering more thorough treatment of provincial theatre (outside of London and New York). Despite the heavy emphasis on American and British theatre these three volumes are international in scope and contain numerous entries for individual performers, composers, lyricists, musical producers, as well as specific shows. The entries are written in a straightforward fashion and are crammed with facts. The entries for composer/playwrights contain chronologies of their plays as an added feature. The set is illustrated with black and white photos. The third volume also has a small section of color plates. But there are some problems. While the alphabetical arrangement tries to be as inclusive

as possible, the lack of an index and cross-references is a surprising flaw, as is the lack of adequate bibliographies. The set could have also benefited from articles on the various national musical theatres, as well as on related topics like vaudeville, tin pan alley, etc. However, even with these lapses, this set will prove a necessary addition for both public and academic libraries where there is interest in musical theatre. In terms of broadness of scope and coverage there is nothing else matching it.

Also in its second edition is the **Oxford Companion to Politics of the World** (2001, 0195117395, \$60). The first edition was released in 1993 and as editor **Joel Krieger** notes "the world of politics seems more unsettled today and the challenges more daunting than ... when we began work more than a decade ago on the first edition." Reflecting this, 87 of the 672 articles are new with many others updated. There are new articles on topics like **NAFTA**, the wars in **Bosnia** and **Kosovo**, the **Rwandan Genocide**, as well as those on more recent players on the world's stage like **Tony Blair** and **Bill Clinton**. There is also a new "critical issues" essay format in this edition. Pairs of articles by different authors with differing perspectives are offered for six issues including sustainable development, the United Nations, the future of entitlements, affirmative action, censorship, and the limits of liberal democracy. In addition, there are interpretive essays on topics like gender, comparative politics, equality and inequality, globalization, media and politics, nationalism and revolution. Thoughtful and well written, the length of the articles varies from brief factual accounts to full-blown essays of 4000 words or more. Each entry has a brief bibliography and "see also" references. A set of selected maps and a general index round out the book.

The **Oxford Companion to Politics of the World** is a scholarly, skillfully edited update of a highly useful reference. The added content is worth the price, especially when you consider that the previous edition will still have shelf life in circulation. **Oxford University Press** has produced another useful reference for academic and large public libraries.

Political junkies have just received another timely fix from **Congressional Quarterly**. Now in its 11th edition, **CQ's Politics in America 2002** (2001, 1568026560, \$69 paperback; 1568026552, \$115, Cloth) provides objective and factual biographies of the men and women who make up the 107th Congress. Arranged in sections by state, each of the 535 representatives and senators is given a concise treatment in well-organized individual entries. Besides the biographical sketch, each entry contains contact information, committee assignments, election results, votes on key issues, selected interest group scores and **CQ** vote studies related to party unity and presidential support. Also included are descriptions of each state with a map of districts, as well as the descriptions of the districts themselves. Other features include a brief essay on the 2000 census and its resulting reapportionment, a section of member-related statistics and campaign financing figures back to 1996. For the first time, buyers of the book receive access to a Website from "which they can print profiles of members of both the 106th and 107th Congresses." Readers can register at <http://library.cqpress.com/pia>.

Politics in America 2002 is a necessary purchase for those public and academic libraries trying to meet the demands of either the politic novice or the serious political observer. And considering the added Web access, **CQ** has come up with a hard to resist package that will have strong appeal. 🐼

Book Reviews — Monographic Musings

Column Editor: **Debbie Vaughn** (Reference Librarian, College of Charleston) <vaughnd@cofc.edu>

Where would we be without **Mike Litchfield**? Over the past two years, our **Charleston Conference Coordinator Extraordinaire** has been a driving force in our

yearly meeting of the minds. He can now add "book reviewer" to his long list of accomplishments. An English major here at the College of Charleston, his favorite pastimes include reading, writing, and perfecting his classical guitar playing. His minor in Latin American Studies and his research interests in Che Guevara and Nicholas Guillen make him the perfect commentator on **Cuba: The Contours of Change**. Welcome, Mike! — **DB**

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