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Book Reviews -- Monographic Musings

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From the Reference Desk from page 60

liographies. Obviously not intended for the home gardener, this set has a far more specialized audience in mind. Practicing scientists, both in industry and government agencies, as well as advanced undergraduates and graduates students, along with their professors, are the main targets for this reference.

Libraries should also keep in mind that the *Encyclopedia of Agrochemicals*, as well as a number of other Wiley titles, are available in online versions. Pricing depends on a number of factors as the following notice from their Website indicates. "Institutional customers may license the online version of this reference work for access on an annual basis. Pricing options for online access depend on the type of institution, the user population, and the collection of Wiley InterScience products the customer licenses." For more information, point your browser to <http://www.mrw.interscience.wiley.com/eoa/>.

The second edition of Greenwood Press' *Banned in the USA* (2002, 0313311668, \$54.95) has recently been published. Subtitled *A Reference Guide to Book Censorship in Schools and Public Libraries*, this is a book that librarians may want on their personal, as well as library shelves. Author Herbert N. Foerstel revises and expands his 1994 edition to report recent evidence of book banning and censorship in America's libraries. He updates his survey of individual book banning incidences in the first chapter and devotes his second chapter to trends in the law on book banning and its expansion into the world of the Internet and publishing in general. The third chapter updates the interview with banned authors contained in the first edition and adds discussion with David Guterson and Jan Slepian. But still, the most fascinating chapter is the one that provides a new list of the "most frequently banned and challenged books, 1996-2000." Topping this list is a new collective entry. Self-appointed book censors have targeted J.K. Rowling's *Harry Potter* series most often in recent years. Second on the list is the American classic by Mark Twain, the *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*. In addition, works by authors as diverse as Maya Angelou, Harper Lee, Aldous Huxley and the young adult writer, Robert Cormier have raised the ire of censors. However, Foerstel provides far more than a rank order list of books in this section. He tells the stories behind the banning of each book, as well as listing selected challenges to them from 1996 through 2000.

Banned in the USA offers a cautionary tale. The individuals and groups that challenge these books are not to be laughed at. They are earnest and committed, and are often adept at proceeding "under formal, bureaucratic cover." Make no mistake the people who challenge books have an impact.

Reading through Foerstel's book makes this obvious. Whether in reference or circulation, *Banned in the USA* is a book that most libraries should own.

With *The Louisiana Purchase: A Historical and Geographical Encyclopedia* (2002, 157607188X, \$99.) historian Junius P. Rodriguez adds to the other solid works he has edited for ABC-CLIO. Rodriguez is also responsible for the *Historical Encyclopedia of World Slavery*, (1997, 0874368855, Out of stock, but available used from Amazon) and its later companion volume, the *Chronology of World Slavery* (2001, 1576074714, \$110).

This new volume may sound narrow in focus but titles can be deceiving. This encyclopedia includes information about more than the Louisiana Purchase. By discussing later events and historical figures affected by Jefferson's deal with Napoleon, it literally covers the opening of the West. As one looks through the entries in this book, it is obvious

that the history of the early 1800s was in a large part prompted by the Louisiana Purchase. The Lewis and Clark Expedition would have been unnecessary, the opening of the Santa Fe and Oregon trails unlikely, and the settlement of 15 Western states far different without the Louisiana Purchase. It was also the first step in the destruction of Native American cultures, the depletion of countless natural resources and animal species and the pollution of wild and pristine rivers. Rodriguez argues in his introduction that the Louisiana Purchase enabled many of the transformations that created our modern world. In short, a reference work on such a seminal event in our history is hardly narrow in focus.

Depending on individual needs and available funds, *The Louisiana Purchase: A Historical and Geographical Encyclopedia* could find a home in either reference or circulating collections. It is worthy of consideration by high school, public and undergraduate libraries.

Book Reviews — Monographic Musings

by Debbie Vaughn (Reference Librarian, College of Charleston) <vaughnd@cofc.edu>

Column Editor's Note:

In the wake of global unrest, it is of utmost importance for people to have at least a modicum of knowledge—however brief—regarding the world's diverse cultures, their

backgrounds, and their often-disparate ways of life. How can we form an all-encompassing opinion about the surmounting tension between Arab populations and Western tradition without understanding the history that lies beneath? And when we consider that history, must not we also explore the backgrounds and customs of the multitude of Middle Eastern minorities? Similarly, when we consider al Qaeda and Af-

ghanistan, is it not consequential also to consider the relationship among Afghanistan, Pakistan, and India?

Of course, it is impossible to read up on all global cultures; simply, there are not enough hours in the days to become as worldly as we would all like to turn out to be. Scanning even a few of the titles examined in this month's column will indeed make us a smidgen more educated, though. Anything done to better understand a different point of view or way of life is a step on the path of enlightenment.

A special thanks is extended to Michael Litchfield and Jared Seay, reviewers for this month's column. Happy reading everyone! —DV

Cohen, Jere. *Protestantism and Capitalism: The Mechanics of Influence*. New York: Aldine de Gruyter, 2002. 0202306720. 296 pages. \$26.95.

Reviewed by Michael Litchfield
(Charleston Conference Coordinator) <libconf@cofc.edu>

Protestantism and Capitalism: The Mechanics of Influence is a volume in Aldine de Gruyter's *Sociology and Economics: Controversy and Integration* series. The book is not really about Protestantism; passing mention is made of Lutheranism and Methodism, but the book is more concerned specifically with the Puritan mores that evolved into mod-

ern-day capitalism. Jere Cohen examines Max Weber's argument that English Puritan heritage evolved into modern capitalism in a methodical and unbiased manner, relying heavily on primary texts, including the writings and sermons of Puritan ministers and the diaries of two very different Puritan merchants.

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Cohen's writing is clear and evenhanded. Indeed, I occasionally found myself wishing he would take a position either in support of **Weber** or against him. **Cohen** avoids drawing any conclusions until every shred of evidence is laid out. He introduces the book with a chapter outlining **Weber's** thesis. A knowledge of **Weber** isn't necessary; I know little of **Weber's** work, but **Cohen** gives a thorough explanation both in the introductory chapter and in the summary chapter. The second chapter examines Puritan views toward work and employment, and the third examines **Weber's** theory of the spirit of capitalism and whether or not this spirit was present among the Puritans. Next **Cohen** details Puritan views toward wealth and its acquisition. He then questions whether Puritans lived in fear of a vengeful God and the influence of Calvin's teachings on Puritans. He also examines Puritan ethics. Finally, **Cohen** revisits the outline of key points in **Weber's** thesis he established in the first chapter, and answers each point with the evidence he has gathered.

Protestantism and Capitalism is a very wide-ranging book—it is not bound by the series guidelines of sociology and economics. Certainly, **Cohen's** writing could be useful in history and religious studies courses as well, thanks to its heavy use of first-hand material. **Cohen** compiles a wide-ranging view of Protestantism through the sermons and writings he references. There is a list of 77 Puritan divines in the appendices, and **Cohen** quotes every name on the list at least once in the course of the book. **Cohen** also uses recently-discovered diaries of two merchants: one born a Puritan and not terribly interested in business, the other a Puritan convert who curbed his capitalistic tendencies in order to be a better Puritan. **Cohen's** stated goal of examining **Weber's** thesis seems less the point of the book than examining how the Puritans viewed themselves. It is this focus that makes the book useful beyond the bounds of sociology; had **Cohen** spent more time examining **Weber** directly and less letting Puritans speak for themselves, it would have been a much less effective book. Indeed, **Cohen's** strongest criticism of **Weber** is that **Weber** did too much purely theoretical work without finding support in the historical record to justify his theories.

I am not interested in sociology or economics, but I still found the book highly engaging because of its reliance on primary texts from a very turbulent time in English history. **Cohen's** sources extend from **Elizabeth I's** reign through the English Civil War and the Commonwealth, the Restoration, and the co-regency of **William III** and **Mary II**. Another selling point for the book is **Cohen's** dedication to breaking down stereotypes regarding Puritans and presenting them in a more honest and complicated way. *Protestantism and Capitalism* manages to encapsulate many different subjects without becoming too general to be of use. In the end, it is an excellent book, far beyond the bounds of its series.

Henderson, Carol E. *Culture and Customs of India*.

Culture and Customs of Asia. Westport, CT:
Greenwood, 2002. 0313305137. 240 pages. \$44.95.
and

Mukenge, Tshilemalema. *Culture and Customs of the
Congo*. Culture and Customs of Africa.

Reviewed by **Debbie Vaughn** (Reference Librarian,
College of Charleston) <vaughnd@cofc.edu>

In the tradition of its exceedingly informative **Daily Life Through History** series, **Greenwood Press** has introduced its **Culture and Customs** series, featuring the continents of Asia and Africa. **Carol E. Henderson's** *Culture and Customs of India* and **Tshilemalema Mukenge's** *Culture and Customs of the Congo* illustrate the strengths of the volumes that are must-haves for school, public, and even undergraduate academic library shelves.

Each volume follows essentially the same format. An in-depth chronology is followed by chapters examining history and people; religion and world view; literature; art, architecture, and landscape; food and dress; relationships, family, and gender roles; festivals and customs; and music and dance. Explicit notes and suggested readings sit at the end of each chapter. Illustrations, photographs, and tables are found throughout. A glossary and index conclude each book.

Henderson, a lecturer at **Rutgers University**, has an easy-to-read manner that engages readers. *Culture and Customs of India* packs buckets of information into a scant 240 pages. **Henderson** begins with a pronunciation chart, taking into consideration differences in dialect and pronunciation. The seven-page historical chronology begins in 7000 BCE and flows to 2001. When writing about India's land, people, and history, **Henderson** briefly discusses the roles of both Afghanistan and Pakistan. Hinduism, Islam, Christianity, Sikhism, Buddhism, Jainism, and other religions are summarized and reviewed in respect to Indian culture. Food cosmology is related to vegetarianism. In the realm of clothing, India's prominent pink is related to the rest of the world's navy blue. Overall, **Henderson** does an exceptional job of describing Indian customs and culture and, through subtle comparing and contrasting, making it relative to the Western way of life.

Mukenge follows suit in *Culture and Customs of the Congo*. A professor at **Morris Brown College** and a Congo scholar, he offers a wealth of information about Congolese social practices, routines, and comforts. From sorcery to Kimbanguists; from counting rhymes to animal stories and legends; and from long pants to short pants, **Mukenge's** knowledge of the Congolese way of life is astonishing.

I truly enjoyed reading these volumes, in part because of the straight-forward nature of **Henderson's** and **Mukenge's** narratives. Mainly, though, I enjoyed these *Culture and Customs* titles because I learned a great deal about different ways of life.

New, David S. *Holy War: The Rise of Militant Christian,
Jewish and Islamic Fundamentalism*. Jefferson, NC:
McFarland, 2002. 0786413360. 244 pages. \$35.00.

Reviewed by **Jared Seay** (Reference Librarian,
College of Charleston) <seayj@cofc.edu>

David New, a "full-time writer" who earned a Ph.D. in religious studies from **McMaster University**, has written a relatively good book on the rise and influence of Christian fundamentalism, the history and proliferation of nuclear weapons, and the various terrorist groups that have attempted to gain access to them. Unfortunately, that—and only that—is what *Holy War: The Rise of Militant Christian, Jewish and Islamic Fundamentalism* is really about. Despite the subtitle, **New** writes very little regarding militant Jewish fundamentalism and even less concerning Islamic fundamentalism. The book would have been more aptly titled *Christian Fundamentalism and Armageddon*.

New spends the first 16 of his 23 chapters detailing how the dispensational premillennial mindset of modern fundamentalist Christians shapes their apocalyptic visions and fuels the more militant among them to attempt violent means to hasten the apocalypse and the return of **Christ** to the earth. "Dispensational premillennialism" is a theology that was developed in the mid-19th century that uses certain passages from the *Bible* to support the idea that the world will end with a nuclear Armageddon in the Middle East just prior to the return of **Christ** to earth. Though **New** begins his story with a few particularly strange Christian apocalyptic-types (that were arrested by Israeli security for plotting to blow up the Dome of the Rock), his main point is that such apocalyptic thinking has entered the mainstream with the likes of fundamentalist figures **Pat Robertson** and **Jerry Falwell**. He uses some severely disturbing

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doomed statements of former president **Ronald Reagan** (who clearly harbored dispensational premillennial beliefs himself) to illustrate the political influence of such ideas.

New also gives a brief history of nuclear weapons, current nuclear politics (especially those of Israel), and the attempts by militants and terrorists to attain nuclear weaponry to further their apocalyptic designs. **New** paints a grim picture of a militant-driven End of Days in a world awash with atomic arms (mostly from the crumbling, lightly-guarded labs of the former Soviet states) and the readily available knowledge to construct them.

Although **New's** style is easily readable, and while his work on Christian fundamentalist apocalyptic beliefs appears well-researched and convincing, his use of **Ronald Reagan**, **Jerry Falwell**, and **Pat Robertson** for examples makes his work seem out-of-date. As I read through his early chapters, I kept looking back at the publication date to make sure of the time period to which he was referring. **New** states that "**Robertson** is a political" and that "he [**Robertson**] is on the verge of seizing the Republican party." Such statements gave me flashbacks to the 1980s when the Moral Majority was on the rise and good old **Pat** was running for President.

To be sure, **New** later considers the political power that **Robertson** has wielded silently since his failed presidential bid in 1988. It does indeed sound impressive and scary. Yet, **Ronald Reagan**, though exemplifying the influence of such dispensational premillennial beliefs in high political office, has not been a personal force in politics in over a decade. Furthermore, **Jerry Falwell**, notably incarcerated for soliciting a prostitute, also has only a shell of his former obvious political influence.

New is subject to a bit of hyperbole and gullibility when he notes in the preface that "Russian intelligence has confirmed that **Osama bin Laden** has nuclear weapons" obtained through a heroin deal with the **Chechnyan Mafia**. Later, in a small paragraph near the end of the book, we get the details. It seems that a former head of Russian Intelligence claims that 84 nuclear "suitcase bombs" have gone missing. The head of a United States House of Representatives task force on terrorism is "virtually certain" that he "knows" that **Bin Laden** has possession of said bombs. Although we should be concerned about 84 missing nuclear weapons, **New** offers no evidence other than a bureaucrat's opinion that they have fallen into terrorist hands. Such confusion of spurious, uncorroborated allegations for well-researched fact undermines **New's** "suitcase bomb" scenario.

Overall I liked *Holy War* for what it did contain. This book clearly lays out the apocalyptic beliefs of Christian fundamentalists (the fastest growing Christian sect) and how these beliefs have become mainstream ideas within the last three decades. It also does a pretty good job of showing how these beliefs tend to enflame the more aggressive brands of Christian fundamentalism, which in turn enflames both Jewish and Islamic revolutionaries. Indeed, to enflame everyone in a holy war is the aim of all of these militant groups.

But don't be fooled by the title. *Holy War*, in fact, is only about the rise of menacing, ill-fated beliefs of Christian fundamentalism

and the violent fanaticism that results. Jewish and Islamic militant fundamentalism get practically no space here.

Nisan, Mordechai. *Minorities in the Middle East: A History of Struggle and Self-Expression*.

2nd ed. Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 2002. 0786413751. 338 pages. \$45.00.

Reviewed by **Debbie Vaughn** (Reference Librarian,
College of Charleston) <vaughnd@cofc.edu>

In the follow-up edition to his 1991 *Minorities in the Middle East: A History of Struggle and Self-Expression*, **Mordechai Nisan** "carries the minority narrative into the new century, with new information and analysis." When **Nisan's** monograph debuted, only a handful of titles—six, to be exact (only three of which were written in English)—explored the history of minority groups in the Middle East. Since its publication, another handful of titles have been added to the list; yet *Minorities in the Middle East* remains one of the only volumes to consider a variety of groups, their relationships with each other, and their collective role in the region and beyond.

Nisan, a professor of Middle East Studies at **Hebrew University** of Jerusalem, has written almost two-dozen books on Arab-Israeli relations and political and social issues. Since the late-1970s, hundreds of libraries have added **Nisan's** works to their collections. His writings offer a pro-Zionist sentiment, while also offering a quest for balance and understanding in the wake of ongoing conflict. Throughout his body of work, **Nisan** makes no apologies for his Jewish background; likewise, it seems genuinely important to him to fairly study and communicate information regarding varying Middle Eastern cultures, peoples, and issues.

Divided into four parts, **Nisan** categorizes minorities according to their major religion—Muslim, Heterodox Muslim, Christian, and Jew. **Nisan** then examines the minority groups within each religious category. For instance, **Nisan** looks at the long-standing struggle of the Kurdish population under Muslim rule, their quest for sovereignty (Kurds are the world's largest ethnic group without a country to call their own), and sundry social, religious, and economic issues facing them in the 21st century. Other minorities—Berbers, Baluch, Druzes, 'Alawites, Armenians, Sudanese Christians, and secular Zionists, to name a few—receive similar attention. The pages are dotted with first-hand oral histories documenting the real-life experiences of minorities in often-hostile regimes and social orders.

Of particular interest is the second edition's consideration of the impact of 9/11 on these minority groups. As **Nisan** states in the preface, the post-9/11 political and social watershed has affected more than just the Taliban regime in Afghanistan. Changes in American foreign policy have trickled down from Kabul and Baghdad to the myriad minority cultures dwelling in these societies.

If your library's collection does not include the first edition—or even if it does—**Nisan's** second edition will prove an invaluable and timely resource for both public and academic institutions. 🐼

Rumors
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I hear (courtesy of **Dennis Brunning** <brunning@asu.edu> that **Johnny Mustang**, lead guitar, **MEGADEATH**, uses **XREFER** to answer questions as a participant on **MTV's Rock Jeopardy**. He communicates with **XREFER** via email. **Dennis** promises to get more "details." Hold your breath!

Got a really wonderful Christmas note

(complete with illustrations) from long-time librarian friend, **Clara-Mae Chittum**, her husband **Ruud**, and pet parrot, **Paco**. You'll remember that way back when **Clara-Mae** was at **MIT** in acquisitions. Well, **Clara-Mae** is now working part-time at the **Supply Chain Knowledge Center** at **Cranfield School of Management**, United Kingdom, living in Bedfordshire. **Ruud** continues to work for Ice Cream and Frozen Foods at **Unilever** (there could be lots worse jobs, I say!). She has sold her house in Malden, Mass. Mean-

while, **Paco** is starting to talk a lot in three different languages, mind you! Here are her snail mail and email addresses — 20 Great Portway, Biddenham, Bedfordshire, MK40 4GB, United Kingdom. Phone: +44 1234 211430. <ruudandcm@hotmail.com>.

And, okay, **Sandy Paul** and **John Money** have not quite yet gotten married. But give them time ...

Gotta go. The printer tells me that I'm out of room. See you in April! **Yr. Ed.** 🐼