

BOOK REVIEWS

Cristian-Ion Popa, Gabriela Tănăsescu (coordinators)

The Encyclopedia of Fundamental Writings of Political Philosophy. Contemporary Works 1989-2000, The Publishing House of the Institute of Political Sciences and International Relations “Ion I. C. Brătianu”, Bucharest, 2016, 694 p.

The process of reading and reviewing the 5th volume of a series with a long tradition (having as scientific consultants the Academicians Alexandru Boboc, Gheorghe Vlăduțescu, Alexandru Surdu and as authors: Alexandru Boboc, Lucian Dumitrescu, Ion Goian, Ana-Maria Iancu, Viorella Manolache, Florin Muller, Cristi Pantelimon, Nicolae Perpelea, Cristian-Ion Popa, Bogdan-Mihai Popescu, Lorena Valeria Stuparu, Henrieta Anișoara Șerban, Gabriela Tănăsescu, Cecilia Tohăneanu, † **Mihai D. Vasile**) implies a dedicated and sustained labor of appreciation for the culturally constitutive encyclopedic endeavor to investigate the relevant works of political philosophy. The formulae implies a specific challenge and an effort given not only to the ideational density, the number of pages, the necessary instruments applied, but also due to the impossibility of condensing the entirety of the politics and philosophy specialized writings in the space of the present *Book Reviews*’ chapter, contrived by the requirements pertaining *mostly* to open and signal the general framework of the volume. This is the reason why we shall apply the student’s perspective which dares to take part in the acknowledgement of the truths of political philosophy and the associated realities, as the coordinators invite the readers. We will use the method of reading with precise markings (starting points and progress trackers) leaving an opened space to be filled up by the researchers’ perspectives and particular remarks.

The 5th volume – *Contemporary Works: 1989-2000*, a part continuing the already elaborated ones, addresses political philosophy following the tradition of presenting the fundamental, critical and detailed works that are crucial for the ideas that have marked the last decade of the 20th century.

The *Encyclopedia* opens with a delineation of the main arguments and interpretations and recovers the fundamental sense of the general philosophical arguments; also, it provides their meanings, reviewing the specificity of language and discourse, analyzing their grammar and emphasizing their positions and the founder role in what can be accepted as strengthening the terms and the stakes of political debate (Cristian-Ion Popa, pp. I-II)

We are acknowledging (here) the explicit and the implicit meaning of this work emphasizing that the *Encyclopedia* follows its purpose as “a substitute for the lack of vast endeavors based on scientific criteria, in order to serve as reference work in specialty literature” (Gabriela Tănăsescu, p. 691). The work concludes with a post scriptum characterized by a precise orientation, a dense conceptual framework completed by an *evocation* of an emotional narrative that recognizes and is grateful to the one who was in philosophical-political department of the Institute, Carmen Diaconescu (the evocations is much stronger here, as I recall her last reflections on the dynamic and cultural progress of time, indications given from her University lectures).

If “political philosophy is meant to examine, in a systematic way, the legitimate discourses of politics, to emphasize the presuppositions on which it bases itself on” (C. Popa, p. 2), as Philip Pettit would say, *political philosophers already exist, they don’t need to be invented*.

The 1989 and 2000 *temporal landmarks* are relevant, as both intermediate the understanding of the development of the entire politico-philosophical *corpus*, but also outline the fundamental concepts of *grand theories*. 1989 can be accepted as the year of *The end of history* (Francis Fukuyama), that moves the all pre-configurations (as Academician Alexandru Boboc notices), following the steps of the European philosophy (anticipated by Hans-Georg Gadamer), marking the important events of the 20th century, the “difficulties that the European community went through”, anticipating the future, “looking forward and backward in the same time on the heritage

of Europe” (p. 9). Considering the entire complex registry constituted of the 1989 transformations, Slavoj Žižek announces the trouble with identifying a location of post ideological world, in our world burdened by fantasies, with a restored ideological sublime situated in the object it exposes (*Sublime Object of Ideology*, H. A. Șerban, pp. 15-35). Gabriela Tănăsescu harnesses and substantiates the investigations of the *sources of the self*, discussing the establishment of modern identity, emphasizing the status of Charles Taylor as important contributor in moral philosophy and the valences of his most relevant works published in last decades on the subject, without denying Charles Taylor’s hybrid approach and ideational fecundity, or the difficulty to inscribe his original investigation in predetermined patterns.

Examining our spiritual nature to define and exemplify moral intuitions, which could clarify, for example, why the 18th century thinkers, with particular reference to J. J. Rousseau, could believe in a predisposition to feel sympathy for others (G. Tănăsescu, p. 42), Taylor is among those who had investigated the topic deeper, in a critical perspective, constituting his work as “an analysis of immense wisdom”, with engaging subtleties of the argument (*Ibidem*, p. 51), “an ambitious achievement, broad and original” (*Ibidem*, p. 55). If the selected works converge to indicate the turns of the history of political philosophy occasioned by the intriguing 1989, Nicolae Perpelea employs the theory of pertinence in communication elaborated by Dan Sperber and Deidre Wilson providing an *ostensibly inferential model* (p. 57) for the observation of the plural perspectives of the social disciplines, from the strong epistemological position characteristic for cognitive science (p. 58).

As for the second nodal year taken as a benchmark, namely 2000, the first works of interest are analyzed by the coordinator of the Department of Political Science, Ion Goian: the works of Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri are capitalized as a theorization of the entire range of transformations from the “imperialism specific for the historical era of nation-states to a new modality of manifestation for imperialism”, representing the first part of a fundamental trilogy for mapping social and political phenomena, which are reformed by globalization and anchored to the political-history context (p. 612). The next investigation is dedicated to the democratic paradox explained by Chantal Mouffe as a difficult and fertile tension “between the democratic social significance as sovereignty of the people and its liberal meaning, placing from the same post Marxist perspective the accent on the free market concepts and on the human rights (H. Șerban, p. 631). Lucian Dumitrescu brings to attention another contemporary author, Bhikhu Parekh, by circumscribing political thought, especially modern and ancient Indian thought, around the promotion of a whole spectrum of ideas, focused on diversity and multiculturalism. According to Parekh, the process of citizenship is not intended to adapt to immigrants’ culture, but to form these citizens in relation to the major benchmarks of public culture (p. 654). Culture is the source of legitimacy and power, which is why economic and political struggles are simultaneously cultural battles (p. 657).

All these structural concepts, ideas, arguments and interpretations, along with a host of several other interesting ones included in the volume, converge to prove the representative character of *Encyclopedia of Fundamental Writings of Political Philosophy*, an achievement individualized among the entirety of contemporary political and philosophical works. Moreover, this work is relevant for Romanian researchers of various specializations within political sciences as an essential guide to the complexities of contemporary political philosophy, while completing more accurately the image of Romanian scientific research.

Mădălina Ignat

Dan Dungaciu, Ruxandra Iordache (coord.)

Furtună perfectă în Europa, The Publishing House of the Institute of Political Sciences and International Relations “Ion I. C. Brătianu”, Bucharest, 2016, 385 p.

Published under the auspices of the Institute of Political Sciences and International Relations “Ion I. C. Brătianu” (ISPRI), the volume *Furtună perfectă în Europa* represents the outcome of an impressive effort made by a team of no less than 20 authors, most of them researchers at the ISPRI.

The important contributions that make up this book tackle systematically – from various perspectives, specific to international relations, to political science, to sociology, to security studies, to political philosophy, to history – the multiple crises that threaten, more than ever, the European construction: the economic crisis, the migrant and refugee crisis, terrorism, the Turkish problem, Brexit, the Greek problem, Russia's pressures, the rise of populist parties, etc. These crises apparently seem to converge toward a "perfect storm", a phrase borrowed from nautical language, which designates "the worst 'storm' ever" (p. 11). The authors of the volume also put under scrutiny Europe's short and medium range perspectives, the way these particular problems are reflected by Western mass-media, as well as their relative irrelevance to the Romanian public opinion. From this perspective, the unique nature of this book is to be lauded, because it is the very first scientific Romanian volume which aspires to present to the Romanian audience the sensitive and complex phenomenon of the current European crisis, even harder to describe as it is still underway.

The first part of the book, *The European Crisis: Dilemmas, Texts and Pretexts*, opens with a chapter written by professor Dan Dungaciu, the ISPRI manager and one of the volume's coordinators, entitled "*Perfect Storm*" in Europe. Toward a New Model of Understanding the European Crisis. The author highlights the obsolescence of the old explanatory models, which can offer only a too simplistic view of reality, and presents to the readers a new model for the understanding of the European crisis, built on multiple layers, by stressing the fact that a more profound crisis than the economic one is to be found at the basis of the general European crisis. It is an identity crisis, a trust crisis of the Europeans in the European project, which is deepened by the immigration and terrorism threats and by the development of the economic crisis. At the end of the chapter the author reviews the different scenarios that could result from this crisis, by taking into account a vast range of possibilities, from moderately pessimistic (such as the attenuation of the European integration phenomenon), to mere catastrophic (the outbreak of a new war).

Lucian-Ștefan Dumitrescu, the author of the next chapter, *The Strategic Culture of the European Union. The Security Dilemmas of an anti-geopolitical Project*, emphasizes the danger of a too strong Germany, which is no longer counterbalanced by the USA, and arguments that it is very plausible that the "perfect storm" should come, for the fourth time (after those of 1871, 1914 and 1939), from the German area. He also raises the question whether the European Union will still remain a Kantian political project, an anti-geopolitical organization, if "the metamorphosis of the European Germany into a German European Union occurs" (p. 59-60).

In her contribution, "*The perfect storm*" and the Transforming of the European Strategic Culture. Some Considerations, Gabriela Tănăsescu analyses the main factors that undermine the EU's integrated strategic culture: the existence of diverging strategic cultures, the European security policy deployment in several directions and the American influence. She argues that this context, dominated by the American factor, could offer the EU the chance to return to a strategic vision adapted to the challenges of the XXIst century.

Darie Cristea and Diana Didă, the authors of the chapter *Trust Crisis or Institutional Crisis? The Decline of Confidence in Institutions as Symptom of the Institutional Crisis in the EU Space*, argue that the decline of confidence in the EU member states institutions represents "a barometer of public support of the way the current multiple crises in Europe are dealt with" (p. 93), and it is a consequence of the fact that the EU doesn't have a backup plan for the current situation, in which it can no longer supply at full capacity essential values, such as prosperity and freedom.

Lorena-Valeria Stuparu, the author of the study entitled *The Globalization and the Meaning of Populism in Europe*, offers the readers a conceptual analysis of populism, taking into account the historical context of its emergence and development, as well as its manifestations in the EU member states, and highlighting the danger that it represents for the European project.

In the chapter *Perspectives on Europe's future*, Cristina Arvatu Vohn reviews the most relevant public (Western and Central/Eastern European) scenarios concerning the future of the European Union, from the most optimistic, according to which the problems can be solved by "more Europe", to those according to which Europe is returning to the dark Middle Ages.

The second part of the book, entitled *Multiple Challenges: Aspects of the European Crisis*, opens with a study signed by Cristian-Ion Popa, *Ordnungspolitik – the German Solution*, which analyses the traditional German concept of "order politics" and highlights the policies concerning investment, work and migration that correspond to this concept in nowadays Germany. According to this concept, the current European crises are not the equivalent of natural disasters, but represent "the cumulative result of extended rules' violations" (p. 137).

Viorella Manolache, the author of the chapter “*Europastorm*”. *Brexit – the Crisis of a Europe in Crisis*, interprets the current configuration of Europe in the metaphorical terms of the Dorothy Syndrome, the Old Continent being, at its turn, as the famous character from *The Wizard of Oz*, swept away in a tornado, this time with the epicenter in London.

In the study entitled *Europe, Between the Legitimacy Crisis and Brexit*, Bogdan M. Popescu addresses the topic of the legitimacy crisis at the level of the European institutions, but also at the EU member states level, and comes forward, as a general solution in order to give a new meaning to the idea of political legitimacy, with “the rethinking of the concepts of participatory democracy and representativeness, by increasing civic engagement, as an engine of European integration and development” (p. 179).

Cristi Pantelimon, in the chapter *TTIP – a Controversial Treaty*, provides the readers a critical view on the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership, which is very little-known/debated by the Romanian public opinion, and emphasizes the fact that the TTIP represents also a geopolitical tool, as well as an economic one.

Răzvan Munteanu and Nicolae Țibrigan, in their contribution, *Europe under the hybrid threats’ pression*, depict the development of the security paradigm, induced by the emergence of new types of conflict, specific to the hybrid war, which is characterized by “the use of proxy army forces, but also of politic, economic, social, humanitarian, diplomatic and informational measures, in conjunction with the involvement of local population” (p. 198).

The third part of the book – *The Perfect Storm’s Peak: Migration and Terrorism*, opens with a study signed by Ruxandra Iordache, one of the book’s coordinators, entitled *The European Union and Turkey’s Candidacy: The Chronic of an Accession in Crisis*, which analyses, from a dual perspective, both Turkish and European, Turkey’s candidature file for full EU membership. This file, opened in 1959 and not yet completed, creates multiple pressions on the EU, especially in the context of the refugees crisis.

Lucian Jora’s study, *Functionality Aspects of the EU – Turkey Statement with regard to Migration Management*, also deals with Turkey – EU relations, but in this case the author focuses on the effective implementation of the Statement concerning the legal migration management, from the 29 of November 2015, and emphasizes the EU’s inability to defend its external borders.

The chapter written by Oana Simion, *The Western Balkans Migration Route and the Challenges Facing the European Union*, highlights the immense pressure exerted on the EU by the record number of refugees in 2015/2016, which demonstrates the need for a common European policy on migration.

Sanda Cincă, in her study, *Current trends of terrorism in the European Union*, depicts the phenomenon of new terrorism – whose followers are not coming from outside, but are radicalized European citizens – which draws attention to the vulnerability of European countries against an enemy that is hard to find and annihilate.

The fourth part of the book, *Perceptions and Assessments in the European Press*, opens with a chapter signed by Henrieta Anișoara Șerban, “*The Titanic Europe*”: *European Union among red flags*, which analyses the way that potential warning signs for the EU’s future are reflected in the European media. These signs, generated especially by Brexit, terrorism and migration, have the potential to transform Europe into a “new Titanic” (p. 321).

Carmen Burcea investigates in her contribution, *Waves of Migrants in the Mediterranean Sea or the EU Wreck. Mass Media Perceptions*, the way the migrant waves are presented by the European press, and tries to identify some potential solutions to this issue that has transformed Europe into “a besieged fortress” and has brought to attention the dangerous lack of solidarity between EU member states.

In the last chapter of this book, *The Refugees Crisis – the Dreyfus Affair of the French Far-right?* Cristina-Georgiana Ivan draws a parallel between the Dreyfus Affair and the refugees crisis, taking into account the rise of the far-right parties, based on the fears of the European population, and dwells on the danger to the European construction of parties such as the National Front, that feed off crisis.

The *Perfect Storm in Europe* which addresses original themes and contains interesting assessments and targets both the academic community and all those interested in a better knowledge of the world they live in and of the various developments that have a more or less direct impact on their everyday life – is a serious invitation to reading about a very complex phenomenon whose horizon is not, unfortunately, easily to be outlined in a near future.

Ana-Maria Iancu

Viorella Manolache

Ecce Philosophia Politica. "Diferența" lui Roberto Esposito, The Publishing House of the Institute of Political Sciences and International Relations "Ion I. C. Brătianu", Bucharest, 2016, 253 p.

The book aims to revisit and to re-describe political philosophy starting from the specific lexicon proposed by the contemporary Italian philosopher Roberto Esposito and the language game associated to these keywords concentrating the current political attention.

This incursion into political philosophy offers a portrait of Roberto Esposito and his philosophical perspectives on the tradition of political philosophy. The author, a left-wing thinker who was never a Marxist, is appreciated as "one of the most prolific and important exponents of the Italian political theory", as "first rank Italian political philosopher", as "the successor of Michel Foucault" and as "postmodern Italian philosopher". Roberto Esposito is worldwide recognized for his contributions to the biopolitics theory, geophilosophy, genealogy and political philosophy in general, under the influence of Heidegger, Nietzsche and Arendt. This portrait is relevant as well for an orientation of the reader concerning Roberto Esposito's philosophy.

Heidegger's deconstructivism, via Derrida, governed a period dedicated to specific categories of concepts titled by the author the category of "impolitical" and the category of "community". Foucault, Nietzsche and Deleuze opened the route to geophilosophy, to discussions around the "Italian thought", which bears first the mark of territorialisation declined into new realms of deterritorialization opened to different, wider and "geoemancipated" concerns. Hannah Arendt's philosophy informs a more profound relation between philosophy and politics, not a conjectural and opportunistic one, which would lead the thinkers to similar kind of "impolitical" concepts: superficial and opportunistic with dare consequences for the current lives of hundreds of thousands and millions of people. The concepts gain for Roberto Esposito, besides the significance of *paradigm* and *dispositive*, the meanings of *word*, *reference* and *border*, since each concept sets a kind of *terminus point* of some sort.

The work is structured in five parts situated between a note on the edition, by Sabin Drăgulin (*The reinterpretation of the traditional political vocabulary at Roberto Esposito*), commenting on the accent placed by the interpreter, Viorella Manolache, on the topicality of the political philosophy issues and the vision of Esposito how conceive the actualization of the past into present concerns and a foreword by Giordano Altarozzi situating the author in the postmodern Italian thought aside Giorgio Agamben, Toni Negri, Massimo Cacciari, Gianni Vattimo and within the Italian thought next to Dante Alighieri, Leonardo da Vinci, Niccolò Machiavelli, Giordano Bruno, Giambattista Vico, Giacomo Leopardi, Nicola De Santis, Benedetto Croce, Giovanni Gentile, Antonio Gramsci, Pierpaolo Pasolini, who attempted each to answer the grand questions of their times within a historical perspective and, toward the end of the volume, a couple of interviews conducted by the author with Roberto Esposito and with Ian Browne, deepening the interpretation of the ideas of political philosophy in the book and further clarifying the main directions for the reading of this author.

We cannot stop in this review to discuss more than several "terms", invested with the full symbolical capacity of milestones. The first term, "community", represents for Esposito the forum of predilection and the foundation for the affirmation of sovereignty, forged by people sharing a similar expropriation of being and sharing a mutual *munus* (duty and debt), too. Politics itself springs from the community of life, which inspires unfolding and relevant missions all called to infuse power with responsibility and consciousness. Returning to *munus*, we find this term to be an articulation between the concepts of community and immunity. The guarantor of the existence of community, as well as the core of its definition is represented by these specific social *munera* (duties) if and only if they continue to be meaningful, accepted and shared. When this guarantor disappears, when the feeling of shared missions vanishes then the crisis triggers another situation, when community itself wears thin, voided of mutual missions and deprived of meaning. Then, the very glue of the social community dissolves, along with the feeling of shared mutual duties. This feeling is the sign of community's health and its challenge or disappearance triggers an immunity response. When this happens, we are in the situation of *immunitas*: "community" gives way to "immunity". Paradoxically though, immunity is the symptom of the vanishing community and the foundation of community. As answer to threat immunity expresses the force of community to

renew itself answering the crisis of community with the will to produce new shared meaning, a new social acceptance, a new feeling of belonging, new social duties, and new missions.

Political philosophy is for Esposito an extremely specialized enterprise which follows and emphasizes the “difference” and the particular elements. Particularities and differences are at play in emphasizing the relations between origins and current states of affairs, between non-normative and normative situations within a multi-disciplinary approach (social, political, literary, artistic and filmic) that cannot be left to laymen. Difference infuses meaning and order, mapping the problems analyzed and portraying a geography of philosophy, structuring conceptual universes. Difference is the rotating gate orienting the analyses toward the reality.

”Biopolitics” next to nihilism represents an important principle distilling *l’attuale* the topical themes and aspects characteristic for reality. The correlation between *communitas* and *immunitas* emphasizes the “bios” of political reality. In a certain sense, we can see with Esposito that *immunitas* is the principal biopolitical manifestation, the *biopolitics* itself. As a modern negative understanding of political reality, we find *immunitas* as constitutive part of any social configuration and of individual projects, too, as an engine of *development* and transformation. Life implies the movement, the change and the becoming, rejecting stagnation. This way *biopolitics* depends on *immunitas* for its energy and for all functioning and rejuvenating processes. Ian Browne¹ discussed the phrase “natural life” in connection with the interpretation of the state power, providing a vision for the inclusion of the idea of “natural” within the neo-liberal register, which accepts a particular type of “ideal nature of humanity”.

Other interesting themes should be left for another occasion. Among these, we find the Nietzschean resource in the political philosophy of Roberto Esposito and the more detailed interpretation of concepts such as ownership, freedom and sovereignty.

Also, Esposito establishes an ethical core of political life and political action and interprets the confluence of ideas Blanchot – Levinas (*il y a* or *there is* present at Lévinas is evaluated as an equivalent of the neutral thing at Blanchot, who place in the neutral area the locus of existence, and *outside* the particular matters of personal presence) to interpret alterity, neutrality, anonymity, impersonality and negativity in relation to the problem of subjectivity. This interpretation occasions a discussion of the third space and third person (or dimension of being) in relation to a philosophy of the triple dimensions and triple implications of things developed by Viorella Manolache in her book titled *Philosophical, Political Hecate-isms. The Rule of Three*, Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2016.

Mapping political philosophy through terms as milestones, and through differences, Roberto Esposito weakens the limits always opening the core of the concepts to transformation and becoming to affirmation and reaffirmation. As Roberto Esposito stated, the concept does not fade along with the establishment of order, but as it remains *alive*, hence, it remains somehow undefined, or unfinished, or unended and provides this way an energy (recalling us the concept of *energetism* proposed by Constantin Rădulescu-Motru), a potential for transformation, which becomes resource for new beginnings and new evolutions.

Henrieta Anișoara Șerban

Narciz Balașoiu, *Returning to the Power Agenda. The Dark Realities Developed within the Arms Race*, The Publishing House of the Institute of Political Sciences and International Relations “Ion I. C. Brătianu”, Bucharest, 2017, 289 p.

The Publishing House of the Institute of Political Sciences and International Relations of the Romanian Academy published, at the beginning of 2017, in the context of the Security Studies Collection, a very interesting book dedicated to a sensitive and recurrent issue: the security in the international environment, such as it is reflected/translated in the concrete manifestations of the arms race process. Narciz Balașoiu, the author of the volume, found a very expressive title for his

¹ See Ian Browne, *Repere teoretice în biopolitică*, presentation at *Bookfest*, 2014.

intent to regroup the elements constituting the substance/the dynamic/the ramifications of such a complex process/phenomenon: *Returning to the Power Agenda. The dark realities developed within the arms race.*

The complexity of the studied subject is treated by the author from the both perspectives of the theoretical and concrete approaches, but with the permanent concern and preoccupation to emphasize the different discourse levels enveloping the security theme in many folds hiding and obscuring the truth about the security climax of the world: the very first lines on the book are revealing the gap between “the public discourse of idealist extraction and the arming efforts made by several actors with regional-global detente” (*Preface*, p. 9). In resonance with this ambition to reveal at least some features of the complex face of the truth regarding the arms race in the present context of the post-Cold War international system, the author offers a critical interpretation of norms, behaviors, concrete accomplishments or evident errors made by the main actors of the international system – the states, principally the great powers, but also the emerging ones – in this sometime equivocal and contradictory process of searching security and equilibrium using the ambivalent tool of the arms race.

But, in order to achieve such an audacious critique, the author reframes the main theoretical landmarks explaining the key-concepts which are necessary and useful in the understanding of the international security item: power/distribution of power, state, international system, non-state actors, balance of powers, domination, hegemony, geopolitics, security (military and non-military aspects), collective security, war and peace, international law, international organizations, democracy, human rights, development inequality etc. – all of these explained in the light of distinct paradigms of the international relations as an academic field: from the dominant realist paradigm to the liberal-idealist paradigm, with all their specific ramifications, divergences and connections, with their concrete chronology and mutual influence, and their progresses or limits in approaching the reality and the truth. The author anchors his research in a very consistent academic literature, in order to capture the complexity of the subject, but also to draw the complete picture from which he can extract and assume the theoretical approach he considers to be the most appropriate and useful for the understanding of the arms race phenomenon: “...realism with all its denominations offers the most adequate tools for dissecting and placing the different trends in a coherent frame...We have enough theoretical elements for starting this expedition which seeks nothing else but to regenerate the objective truth, even if occulting it has become a real norm” (p. 74).

From this point, the author makes the transition to the international scene populated by concrete state-actors, to the events, facts, concrete evolutions, statistics, etc. which provide his analysis with the necessary material for interpretation. Several key-questions are answered in the light of the data interpretation from the perspective of the realist paradigm: the reconfiguration of the international system after the Cold War – with the (hegemonic) power of the United States, the European Union as an international actor, but in which someone can hear the separate voices of the member states, the imperialist ambitions of Russia, the emergent powers such as China, or India, with the perpetual conflict region of the Middle East and the international threat of the (religious/Islamic) terrorism, with the tensions in Asia and the recalibration of the American or Russian interests for this area. The international landscape seems to be more complicated than it was during the Cold War époque, with a distribution of conflicts at the global scale respecting the principle of the variable geometry, the asymmetry of threats, the new forms of war, or the configuration of new spaces such as the cyberspace. Behind the formal discourse claiming the descendent trend of the arms race, “a synoptic view on the global security environment reveals an increasing concern of the states and non-states actors in the field of the necessity of military reinforcement” (p. 85). And behind the allegations underlining the end of the two superpowers era ruling the Cold War system, the author seems to distinguish “the return to the Cold War logic, emerging as a strident reality” (p. 138); the book itself is an invitation to reflection, which provides the readers with the necessary tools and data for a better perspective on the fragile relation between security and arms race.

Ruxandra Iordache

Artemis Cooper

Cairo in the War 1939 – 1945, John Murray, Great Britain, 2013, 384 p.

This fascinating and dense book provides the reader with a comprehensive account of wartime Egypt and a brief description of major events preceding and following the period. The book provides a view of both international relations and of domestic Egyptian politics. Artemis Cooper focuses on Egypt's role in the allied victory and the lives of multiple characters residing in Cairo at the time. The reader will be able to see things from various perspectives, including that of the British soldiers that had come from far away to fight in the desert, that of the British citizens residing in Cairo and other Egyptian cities during the war, and how the conflict affected everyday Egyptians. The most famous military campaigns in the desert, those of Rommel and of Montgomery, take center stage in the account however, the author recounts all major battles in North-East Africa, from the front in Libya to the one in Ethiopia. In addition, he provides an understanding of what these events meant for the greater picture, for the war in Europe between the Allies and the Axis powers. It reminds the reader of how close the Nazi's came to conquering all of Egypt and how they almost completely defeated the British in North Africa in the first stages of the war. Lastly, the book does not cover only the military aspects of the war, but also social life in the cities of Egypt, especially in Cairo and Alexandria.

Politics plays a very important part in Egypt's diplomatic stance on the war, as the ruler King Farouk officially aids the Allies and keeps his country neutral, while at same time secretly hoping that the Allies loose so that Egypt can relinquish British sovereignty completely and become a free nation. The tensions between King Farouk and the British make for a lot of drama in the book. After the attempted coup staged by Sir Miles Lampson, the British Ambassador in Cairo, against King Farouk "Anglo-Egyptian relations were never the same". From then on, Egyptian independence became only a matter of time, as too many Egyptians from all echelons of society became irritated with the British occupation of their country.

The attitude of the author towards the British occupation is one of neutrality. He shows the negative aspects of the occupation from the Egyptian perspective, while at the same time pointing out the cynicism of the Egyptian politicians. Far from being innocent natives struggling to lead their country through turbulent and harsh times, the Egyptian leaders are presented as cunning and smart, able to play their hand of cards as well as possible. The conflict of interests and the tensions that existed in Egyptian society during the period are presented with impressive skill. King Farouk's dilemma is most obvious. He is, on the one hand, unable to achieve the independence for his country from the British just yet, while at the same time he tries to give to his subject the impression that he is already taking steps for Egyptian independence, since not doing so would undermine the support amongst his people. Thus, he wants to get rid of the British, but does not want to lose his own power in the process as well. The duality of the politics that he engages in is very eye opening and he demands respect for his management of the whole situation. At the same time, the British have a similar dilemma. They need to squeeze as much as they can from Egypt, in terms of resources and manpower, because they need to win the war against Nazi Germany, but at the same time they realize that unless action is taken this will almost certainly lead to Egyptian independence, for the people of Egypt had suffered too much during the British occupation. The British civilians that live in wartime Egypt, both those who are temporary refugees from Europe and those who had lived there for quite a while, are well aware of the increasing tension in Egyptian society and the resentment that ordinary Egyptians had been accumulating against the occupying Europeans. While in their native land, most of the British citizens now residing in Egypt had been ordinary citizens, in Egypt they enjoyed great privileges, not only financial, but also social. On the inside, they were trapped in a dilemma of their own as they empathized with the aspirations for independence that the Egyptians had, but at the same time did not want to lose their privileges and return to the British Isles as commoners. Despite their high social and financial status, some British citizens residing in Cairo are also negatively affected by the war. A famous image drawn by Artemis Cooper is that of a British boy who goes out to play in the desert and walks onto a landmine. Half his face is blown off, leading to horrific disfigurement. His parents

take him inside the house and, being in extreme shock, pretend that he is going to be fine. They feed him through a hole in his face in front of a crowd of European friends that were visiting at the time.

The British soldiers fighting in North Africa during the Second World War have an experience of their own. Some are eager to fight the Nazis wherever their country needs them to, while others do not seem to understand the importance of the battles in the desert and see them as completely remote from the war in Europe where their homeland is severely threatened. Many feel disgust at the idea of dying in the desert in a faraway place and having their bodies buried under the sand, in an unknown place that none of their loved ones could ever visit or find.

Another perspective offered in the book is that of the British diplomats working in Egypt during the war. For most of them, the war is a distant reality, despite being so close to the battle field. They know that their diplomatic immunity will most likely protect them from any harm that the British soldiers, Egyptian people and even the British civilians could suffer. In a well-drawn image, Cooper describes how the British diplomats burned the diplomatic papers of the British Embassy and laughed and giggled at the same time as the Nazi Army was marching towards Cairo in what seemed to be the imminent fall of the city.

All in all, *Cairo in the War 1939-1945* makes a great read and provides important academic contributions. Among its strongest points, we can note the perfect balance between details of the war in Egypt and the greater picture of the Allied-Axis war, the clear and smooth writing style, and the images it manages to create in the reader's mind. The everyday life of British and Egyptian citizens in partially occupied Egypt is well documented and provides a good understanding for future generations of historians and experts in the international relations field.

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