Recent Books


The title is somewhat misleading, given that this book deals primarily with the United States, with only passing references to Germany, Iraq, and the Soviet Union. Still, the material is chilling enough, recounting the use of human subjects for ghastly experiments during the Cold War. Even making allowance for the acute sense of threat felt in the 1950s, Moreno makes clear that American civilians and military personnel were sometimes exposed to unacceptable risks in various experiments, including those involving LSD injections and plutonium. The author, a professor of biomedical ethics with government experience, writes well. What he does not do, unfortunately, is look much beyond the United States, where the abuses of the past are unlikely to be repeated. To be sure, other countries have not exposed so much of their history. But when they do, the results will probably be even scarier.


Edited works on arms-export controls are usually not compelling reading for anyone other than experts. The result of an international collaborative effort, this work also has some long arid patches, including descriptions of bureaucratic procedures that may operate better in theory than in practice. But one comes away from this work with a renewed sense of just how porous those regulations are. The consequences of the leakage of Soviet military technology—material and know-how for conventional and unconventional weapons alike—are only now being felt. This book acknowledges the truly grim possibilities and informs the reader about the obstacles to effective control over this kind of proliferation. Worse yet, it may be too late to remedy much of the problem.


A skillfully drawn investigation of three countries—South Africa, Singapore, and Israel—that have attempted to forge different (and often antagonistic) ethnic groups into effective military organizations. The central problem for these states was what the author terms “Trojan horse fears”—namely, concerns that a subordinate ethnic group might use its military expertise and status to turn against a state in which their clan, tribe, or group is disadvantaged. In his view, success arises from austere military professionalism, which proves surprisingly effective in dealing with underlying conflict as long as an army does not have at its core a nation-building mission. This thesis may seem paradoxical, but the evidence adduced is convincing. A neat, crisp study, of interest to scholar and practitioner alike.

Western Europe

Stanley Hoffmann


The second volume of Klemperer’s diary