

The MIN-Ds

December 10, 2011 Category: The Most Important Books of the Year
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The Most Important Non-fiction of the Decade:

The following are the best of the best: the twenty most important books to read from the first decade of the 21st century—distilled from the 2001-2010 MIBYs. There were many landmark works published during those ten years. Regarding foreign policy, notable books included Chomsky's *Hegemony Or Survival*, Finkelstein's *Beyond Chutzpah*, Phillips' *Wealth & Democracy*, Weiner's *Legacy of Ashes*, and Baceviche's *The Limits of Power*. In 2010, Stiglitz published the best explanation of the 2008 economic catastrophe, *Freefall*. *The Lords of Finance* by Liaquat Ahamed was also a major publication. I limited the MIN-D list to the twenty most important books for everyone to read that concern general knowledge about the world we live in. These are "must reads" for anyone seeking erudition. The mark of a truly great book is: If everyone actually read (and paid heed to) this book, the world would become a better place.

If we lived in a healthy society, these books would have dominated the "New Releases" and "Best-Sellers" shelves at the typical bookstore during the first decade of the 21st century...and beyond. (Conversely, if these had been the books that most people were reading in the last ten years, we would now be living in a healthier society.)

Listed in order of publication...

The Closing of the Western Mind –Charles Freeman

Religion Explained –Pascal Boyer

War Is A Force That Gives Us Meaning –Chris Hedges

Understanding Power –Noam Chomsky

Lost Christianities – Bart Ehrman

Freethinkers –Susan Jacoby

The Sorrows of Empire –Chalmers Johnson

A Brief History of Neoliberalism –David Harvey

Breaking The Spell –Daniel Dennett

House of War –James Carroll

The Israel Lobby —Mearsheimer and Walt

The Shock Doctrine –Naomi Klein

Democracy Incorporated –Sheldon S. Wolin

The Age of Reagan –Sean Wilentz

The Spirit Level –Wilkinson / Pickett

The Invention of the Jewish People –Shlomo Sand

The Greatest Show On Earth –Richard Dawkins

Winner Take All Politics –Pierson / Hacker

Unequal Protection (2nd ed.) –Thom Hartmann

Ill Fares The Land –Tony Judt

To reiterate: these are 20 books that everyone should read at some point in their lives. We can look forward to the next decade, 2011-2020, which will surely offer additional non-fiction crucial to understanding our world.