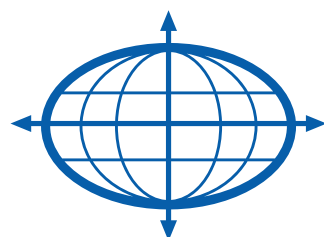


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Passport Editorial Office:

Andrew Johns
Department of History
Brigham Young University
2161 JFSB, Provo, UT 84602
passport@shafr.org
801-422-8942 (phone)
801-422-0275 (fax)

SHAFR Business Office:

Amy Sayward, Executive Director
Department of History
Middle Tennessee State University
1301 East Main Street, Box 23
Murfreesboro, TN 37132
Amy.Sayward@shafr.org
615-898-2569

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Contributors
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Daniel Bessner is Joff Hanauer Honors Associate Professor in Western Civilization in the Henry M. Jackson School of International Studies at the University of Washington, where he was formerly the Anne H.H. and Kenneth B. Pyle Associate Professor in American Foreign Policy. He is the author of *Democracy in Exile: Hans Speier and the Rise of the Defense Intellectual* (2018) and the co-editor of *The Decisionist Imagination: Sovereignty, Social Science, and Democracy in the Twentieth Century* (2019).

Michael Brenes is Associate Director of the Brady-Johnson Program in Grand Strategy and Lecturer in History at Yale University. He is the author of *For Might and Right: Cold War Defense Spending and the Remaking of American Democracy* (2020). In addition to his academic articles and book chapters, his work has been published in *The New York Times*, *The New Republic*, *The Nation*, *Dissent*, *Boston Review*, *Foreign Policy*, and *The Chronicle of Higher Education*.

Susan Colbourn is a historian of international relations, working on the Cold War, transatlantic relations, and the role of nuclear weapons in international politics and society. For the 2020-21 academic year, she is a DAAD postdoctoral fellow at the Foreign Policy Institute at Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies.

Christopher Dietrich is Assistant Professor of History at Fordham University. He is the author of *Oil Revolution: Anti-Colonial Elites, Sovereign Rights, and the Economic Culture of Decolonization* (2017), and the editor of *A Companion to U.S. Foreign Relations* (2019).

Henry D. Fetter holds degrees in History from Harvard College and the University of California, Berkeley. He is a graduate of Harvard Law School and has practiced business and entertainment litigation in Los Angeles. He is the author of *Taking on the Yankees: Winning and Losing in the Business of Baseball* (2003) and has contributed to scholarly journals including the *Journal of Cold War Studies*, *Israel Affairs*, *American Communist History* and *New York History* as well as to the *Wall Street Journal*, the *Times Literary Supplement*, *New York Times*, *History News Network* and *The Atlantic*.

Chris Foss is an adjunct in the history department at Washington State University Vancouver. His book, *Facing the World: Defense Spending and International Trade in the Pacific Northwest Since World War II*, was published in 2020 by Oregon State University Press. Foss has written articles for *Passport*, *Oregon Historical Quarterly*, *Oregon Encyclopedia*, and *Pacific Northwest Quarterly*.

Michael Franczak is a Postdoctoral Fellow in Global Order at the University of Pennsylvania's Perry World House. His first book, *The North-South Dialogue: Global Inequality and American Foreign Policy in the 1970s* is forthcoming (2022) from Cornell University Press.

James Goode is Professor Emeritus of History at Grand Valley State University. He lives in San Luis Obispo, California.

Kurt Güner helps stopped out students return to school as the Adult Learner Program Coordinator at the University of Utah, where he recently graduated with his Ph.D. His dissertation is titled, "The Marshall Plan in Turkish Politics and Turkish-American Relations in the Early Cold War, 1946-1953."

Julia F. Irwin is Associate Professor of History at the University of South Florida. She received her Ph.D. from Yale University in 2009. Her research focuses on the place of humanitarian assistance in 20th century U.S. foreign relations and international history. Her first book, *Making the World Safe: The American Red Cross and a Nation's Humanitarian Awakening* (2013) is a history of U.S. international relief efforts during the First World War era. She is now completing a second book, tentatively titled *Catastrophic Diplomacy*, a history of U.S. foreign disaster assistance in the 20th century world.

Ryan Irwin is Associate Professor of History at the University at Albany, SUNY, and the author of *Gordian Knot: Apartheid and the Unmaking of the Liberal World Order* (2012).

Michael Kimmage is Professor of History and Department Chair at Catholic University of America. He is the author of *The Abandonment of the West: The History of an Idea in American Foreign Policy* (2020); *In History's Grip: Philip Roth's Newark Trilogy* (2012); and *The Conservative Turn: Lionel Trilling, Whittaker Chambers, and the Lessons of Anti-Communism* (2009).

Michael Koncewicz is a Research Scholar at the Tamiment Library and Robert F. Wagner Labor Archives at New York University. He is the author of *They Said No to Nixon: Republicans Who Stood Up to the President's Abuse of Power* (2018).

Zeb Larson is a software engineer, writer, and historian in Columbus, Ohio. He lives with his wife Rose and their three cats. Zeb's dissertation, "The Transnational Dimensions of the U.S. Anti-Apartheid Movement," is currently being adapted into a monograph. His most recent article, "The Sullivan Principles: South Africa, Apartheid, and Globalization" was published in *Diplomatic History* in March 2020.

Grant Madsen is Associate Professor of History at Brigham Young University. He is the author of *Sovereign Soldiers: How the U.S. Military Transformed the Global Economy after World War II* (2018).

Christopher McKnight Nichols is Associate Professor of History at Oregon State University and the Director of the OSU Center for the Humanities. He is the author of *Promise and Peril: America at the Dawn of a Global Age* (2011), and the editor of four other volumes.

Michelle Paranzino is Assistant Professor of Strategy & Policy at the U.S. Naval War College. She is the author of *The Cuban Missile Crisis and the Cold War: A Short History with Documents* (2018) and is currently working on a book about the war on drugs and the Reagan administration.

Andrew Preston is a Fellow of Clare College and the President of the Cambridge Institute on Religion & International Studies at Cambridge University. His publications include *Sword of the Spirit, Shield of Faith: Religion in American War and Diplomacy* (2012), which won the Charles Taylor Prize in 2013; and *The War Council: McGeorge Bundy, the NSC, and Vietnam* (2006). He is president of SHAFR in 2021.

Marc Reyes is an editor for *Contingent* and the organization's treasurer. He is also a History Ph.D. candidate at the University of Connecticut, where he studies 20th-century foreign relations, with a focus on the United States and India, development, and technology. In 2019, he was a Fulbright-Nehru Fellow in India, conducting research for his dissertation, a political and cultural study of India's atomic energy and nuclear weapons programs.

Andrew J. Rotter is Charles Dana Professor of History at Colgate University, where he has taught since 1988. He is the author, most recently, of *Empires of the Senses: Bodily Encounters in Imperial India and the Philippines* (2019).

Stuart Schrader is Associate Director of the Program in Racism, Immigration, and Citizenship and a Lecturer at Johns Hopkins University. He is the author of *Badges Without Borders: How Global Counterinsurgency Transformed American Policing* (2019).

Brad Simpson is Associate Professor of History at the University of Connecticut. He is the author of *Economists with Guns: Authoritarian Development and U.S. Indonesian Relations, 1960-1968* (2008).

Heather Marie Stur is Professor of History at the University of Southern Mississippi and a Fellow in the Dale Center for the Study of War & Society. She is the author or editor of four books, including, most recently, *Saigon at War: South Vietnam and the Global Sixties* (2020). In 2013-2014, Stur was a Fulbright Scholar in Vietnam, where she was a Visiting Professor in the Faculty of International Relations at the University of Social Sciences and Humanities in Ho Chi Minh City.

Lauren F. Turek is Assistant Professor of History, the Director of Museum Studies, and Director of the Mellon Initiative for Undergraduate Research in the Arts and Humanities at Trinity University in San Antonio, Texas. She is the author of *To Bring the Good News to All Nations: Evangelical Influence on Human Rights and U.S. Foreign Relations* (2020), and her articles on religion in American politics and foreign policy have appeared in *Diplomatic History*, *Journal of American Studies*, and *Religions*.

Carl P. Watts is an Honorary Fellow in the Center for Imperial and Post-Colonial Studies at the University of Southampton and a Fellow of the Royal Historical Society. He is a member of the SHAFR Jobs Crisis Task Force and has previously served on the SHAFR Teaching Committee.

Emily Whalen is a postdoctoral fellow at the University of Texas at Austin's Clements Center for National Security. Before earning her Ph.D. in international history in 2020 from University of Texas, Austin, she was an Ernest May Predoctoral Fellow at Harvard Kennedy School's Belfer Center and a Smith Richardson Predoctoral Fellow at Yale University's International Security Studies. Her work examines the history of U.S. foreign policy in the Middle East from an international perspective.

Judy Tzu-Chun Wu is Professor of Asian American Studies at the University of California, Irvine and the director of the Humanities Center. She received her Ph.D. in U.S. History from Stanford University and previously taught at The Ohio State University. She is the author of *Dr. Mom Chung of the Fair-Haired Bastards: the Life of a Wartime Celebrity* (2005) and *Radicals on the Road: Internationalism, Orientalism, and Feminism during the Vietnam Era* (2013). Her current book project, a collaboration with political scientist Gwendolyn Mink, explores the political career of Patsy Takemoto Mink, the first woman of color U.S. congressional representative and the namesake for Title IX. Wu also is working on a book that focuses on Asian American and Pacific Islander Women who attended the 1977 National Women's Conference. She co-edited *Women's America: Refocusing the Past*, 8th Edition (2015), *Gendering the Trans-Pacific World* (2017), and *Frontiers: A Journal of Women's Studies* (2012-2017). Currently, she is a co-editor of *Women and Social Movements in the United States, 1600-2000* (Alexander Street Press) and editor for *Amerasia Journal*.

Thomas W. Zeiler is Professor of History and Director of the Program in International Affairs at the University of Colorado, Boulder. He is past president of SHAFR.

Presidential Message

Andrew Preston

The COVID-19 pandemic continues to upend virtually every aspect of our lives. For too many people, that has a terribly literal meaning, and my heartfelt condolences go out to all those reading this who have suffered through a COVID infection or lost someone to the disease. The virus has upended our lives in countless other ways too, and although those ways are not as serious as a debilitating illness or loss of life, they are disruptive and upsetting nonetheless.

This is why, at its annual January meeting, Council decided to move the 2021 annual conference entirely online. With the crisis reaching new heights in the United States, with new variants of the virus spreading quickly from Britain, South Africa, and Brazil, with new outbreaks affecting countries that had previously had the virus under control (such as Japan), and with vaccine rollouts in many countries proceeding fitfully (or, in the case of much of Europe, hardly at all), meeting in person just seemed too great a risk to the health and well-being of SHAFR members.

Passport readers will recall that last June Council opted for a hybrid conference, one that would be partly in-person at the familiar Renaissance hotel in Arlington, Virginia, and partly online. That decision was based on known unknowns: we knew the situation would probably still be in turmoil a year later, but we couldn't know the extent or circumstances. Hybrid seemed to hedge against those risks, while also securing the best of both worlds. It promised to be, as I wrote with misguided hyperbole in my previous *Passport* column, "the new frontier of conferencing." It's clear in hindsight that such expectations were mistaken. We couldn't safely hold a hybrid conference anyway, but even if we could it's now apparent that hybrid is too difficult and expensive for an organization of SHAFR's size to pull off, at least on relatively short notice. Most importantly, when given the choice of presenting online or in-person, the vast majority of those who submitted a proposal by the December 1 deadline opted for the virtual realm. And so that's where we're headed.

The program co-chairs, Megan Black and Ryan Irwin, and the Program Committee have been hard at work putting together a dynamic and exciting conference. Each day of the four-day conference will kick off with simultaneous roundtables on a major theme (empire, race, gender, religion, development, and so forth) before segueing into networking break-out rooms for informal conversations. The online conference will also feature Julia Irwin's Bernath Lecture, which was postponed with the cancellation of the AHA's annual meeting in January, as a keynote session. Then each afternoon will consist of more traditional panels with a chair, presenters, and a discussant.

If this sounds like a lot is happening at the same time, it is! That always happens, whether we meet in-person or online, but one of the benefits of meeting online is that everything can be recorded, uploaded to the cloud, and watched later. SHAFR has hired a company, Pheedloop, that specializes in providing software for online conferencing (if anyone attended the Western History Association's successful annual conference

last October, they'll have seen the Pheedloop platform in action). This way we can have a smoothly functioning virtual conference that can be watched in real time and/or later on, in any time zone. And if this sounds like there are a lot of moving parts going on behind the scenes, there are! It's a massive effort, and I'm grateful to Megan, Ryan, the Program Committee, as well as SHAFR's administrative staff—Amy Sayward, George Fujii, Amanda Bundy, and our new virtual virtuoso, Paige Mitchell—for all their extremely hard work in making it happen.

I'm wondering how many presenters will talk about COVID this year. On one hand, it's probably the last thing anyone wants to think about right now. But on the other, it's clear that this pandemic has become not just a once-in-a-generation event, like 9/11, but a once-in-a-century threshold with enduring world-historical consequences. It's especially sobering to consider the pandemic as a diplomatic or military historian. It's now widely known that more Americans have died from COVID than in World War II. But other figures are even more startling. As I write this, in early February, four times as many Americans have died from COVID as in World War I. More Americans died of COVID in January 2021 alone (95,369, according to Johns Hopkins) than in the Korean and Vietnam wars combined (94,794, according to the Congressional Research Service), meaning that COVID killed as many Americans in a single month as two of the twentieth century's most brutal wars did over approximately 150 months. The worst year of the Vietnam War for U.S. personnel was 1968, with 16,899 deaths (according to the National Archives); COVID accounted for 16,918 deaths over a particularly bad five-day period in January 2021 (January 24-29, according to The Atlantic Monthly's website covidtracking.com). The figures are just as shocking for some other countries. For example, in Britain, where I live, more people had died of COVID by the end of 2020 (76,207, according to the UK government's official covid-19 website; the total is now well over 100,000) than British civilians died during all of World War II ("nearly 70,000," according to the UK National Archives).

This is not necessarily to equate a pandemic with warfare, and there are good reasons to avoid militaristic language when talking about COVID. But these sobering figures do put our current crisis into sharp relief. And, like war, it's clear that the spread of COVID is fundamentally not just a natural phenomenon but primarily the result of human decisions. With its scant 35 coronavirus deaths (according to Johns Hopkins), Vietnam is in this regard an instructive contrast.

As historians who focus disproportionately on moments of crisis, conflict, power, and mortality, SHAFR members are well-suited to putting COVID into historical perspective. So while the pandemic has been maddeningly turbulent and the short-term future difficult to predict, I am certain that SHAFR historians will be at the forefront in exploring its implications for our world and explaining its historical context. And I'm also pretty confident they'll be doing that, in-person, at future annual meetings every June.

A Roundtable on Christopher Dietrich, *A Companion to U.S. Foreign Relations*

Thomas W. Zeiler, Grant Madsen, Lauren Turek, and Christopher Dietrich

Introduction to Roundtable on Christopher Dietrich, *Companion to U.S. Foreign Relations*

Thomas W. Zeiler

When David Anderson, acting as a conduit for editors at the *Journal of American History*, approached me at a SHAFR meeting in 2007 to write a state-of-the-field essay, I accepted, in part because we were sitting in a bar where I was happily consuming. The offer came with a responsibility to the field. I was serving as an editor of our journal, *Diplomatic History*, as well as the editor of the digitized version of our bibliography, *American Foreign Relations Since 1600: A Guide to the Literature*. Because these positions allowed me to survey our vibrant field, accepting the offer seemed natural. And I was honored to be asked to represent us. Did I mention we were drinking?

I'm sure that Chris Dietrich accepted the invitation to oversee this next-gen pioneering *Companion* volume from Peter Coveney, a long-time editorial guru and booster of our field at Wiley-Blackwell, for similar reasons. This, even though there were times when, surrounded by books and articles and reviews that piled up to my shoulders in my office (yes, I read in paper, mostly), I whined, cursed, and, on occasion, wept about the amount of sources. What kept me going was not only how much I learned about the field, including an appreciation for great scholarship written through traditional and new approaches, but both the constancy and transformations over the years, much of it due to pressure from beyond SHAFR that prompted internal reflections. Vigorous debate, searing critiques, sensitive adaptation, and bold adoption of theory and methods had wrought a revolution in the field of U.S. diplomatic history, a moniker itself deemed outmoded.

To say we were self-reflective is an understatement. At my first SHAFR presentation, in the 1990s, I vividly recall one of the panelists under attack from an audience member, and responding, "I should have worn my crotch protector." Meanwhile, those inclined to more timeworn topics and categories stuck to their guns and continued to write superb history. We were also wringing our hands over the supposed demise of the field, then wringing them some more because we repeatedly discussed why we talked so much about our demise. Such doom and gloom in itself got tiring, and we sniped, self-flagellated, and drank some more.

All the while, as the job market dried up, SHAFR experienced a boom over the next two decades. We became a big tent for the study of American foreign relations. Nomads from a myriad of other fields and disciplines, from around the world to boot, attended the conference in greater numbers than ever before. We got a ton to come to the Rocky Mountains in the mid-1990s, and later to

other places across the country, and in Canada, in droves. The Organization of American Historians that sponsors the *JAH* looked to us for financial support; other groups sought our members' participation in their conferences. It helped that wise investment guidance from wise leaders in SHAFR made us flush with cash, money we used to expand programs and launch new initiatives as well.

But it was history, and history-in-the-making, that also fueled our success. The terrorist attacks of 9/11 and subsequent wars, the impact of globalization and a worldwide economic downturn, the rise of China, humanitarian tragedies like refugees, and the dark rise of populism in many countries only made us more important. Looking at America from the perspectives of society, foreigners, and movements connected us to other fields. Sure, elders from other fields still quip that we are outmoded, a worn-out path among the new turns. But they came to academia in an earlier era dominated by social, then cultural, history, and they never kept up with the trends. American foreign relations became trendy!

So, while I periodically swore to seek revenge on David Anderson, I also silently thanked him and the *JAH* for providing me the opportunity to lay bare our field to outsiders, as well as SHAFRites. I actually bought him a beer—in yet another bar. But toasts go to Chris Dietrich's *Companion to U.S. Foreign Relations*, which exhibits our field for what is always was: vital to the study of history and international relations.

Grant Madsen and Lauren Turek have ably captured the essence of this wonderful compendium that so brilliantly represents the pathbreaking scholarship that has internationalized our field, across all time periods and a diversity of themes. Cultural historians can rejoice, as the "turn" is clear, but the interests of political and security scholars appear as well. It is also time to cease the drumbeat of criticism that the field is obsessed with the Cold War. It was and is, but as these two volumes display, we've also moved on to embrace the pre-World War II era (though more modern history still attracts us). The United States is both dominant but also another player. We are a mess, writes Madsen, but it is like the recently deceased congressman and civil rights leader John Lewis' "good trouble"—it is a good messiness! Turek zeroes in on this chaos on display in several chapters. For his part, in the tradition of our mature field, Madsen takes issues with some of the conceptualization of the collection and wishes a few topics were more singularly addressed.

Dietrich need not don a crotch protector; the reviewers vigorously applaud his massive undertaking. His is an impressive sweeping look by young scholars. I raise a glass to Chris Dietrich's collection that demonstrates for a new generation—by a young generation—that our field's bandwagon is rolling along.

Review of *A Companion to U.S. Foreign Relations: Colonial Era to the Present*, ed. Christopher R. W. Dietrich

Grant Madsen

A little more than a decade ago, when I was working to finish my dissertation, nearly all my fellow grad students agreed that the best way to get a job was to internationalize our topics. We had read *Rethinking American History in a Global Age*, had followed the *American Historical Review's* "conversation" on "Transnational History," and had consumed the *Journal of American History's* "Diplomatic History Today: A Roundtable."¹ Whether we researched race or religion, colonial or contemporary eras, we tried to "globalize" our topics. We jumped on the "diplomatic history bandwagon" (to borrow Thomas Zeiler's well-known phrase). In my case, that meant finding the overlap between policy history and diplomatic history (as Robert McMahon recommended in an important article from 2005).²

Wiley-Blackwell's updated *Companion to U.S. Foreign Relations* represents the downstream consequences of that prior decade's flood of interest in internationalizing the field of American history. In the preface to this two-volume set, Christopher Dietrich writes that "the essays here represent the work of a new generation of scholars" (xi), fifty-two of whom contributed a chapter to these volumes. Most of these authors came of age at roughly the moment I describe above, and their diverse approaches to U.S. Foreign Relations reflect the frenetic energy I felt in graduate school to cross disciplinary boundaries and embrace a more global perspective.

Dietrich appears to concede that this effort has gone in all directions at once. The scholars in these volumes have "unearthed . . . economic, racial, and patriarchal structures" through investigations of "popular culture and politics," along with "social movements, media, and nongovernmental organizations," by using "a wide variety of methodologies" drawn from "U.S. political, diplomatic, legal, and military history" as well as "the study of American culture, ideology, race, gender, and religion" (xi-xii). He calls the result "wonderfully messy" (xii).

I agree. There is something wonderful and something messy about the collection of essays, although it struck me that not many users of this anthology will come away with that impression, because few readers will approach *Companion* as I did, starting on the first page and soldiering on to Robert Singh's final line on the last page of text: "All that can be said with confidence now is that Obama departed office, and Trump entered, with the struggle for the soul of U.S. statecraft joined anew once again" (1,118). Writing now, in January 2021, I find it hard to imagine a pithier way to understate the wrenching experience of the subsequent four years.

Most readers will likely take up *Companion* piecemeal, looking for a broad overview of this topic or that, mining the long list of references at the end of each chapter to flesh out a comprehensive exam list or fill a gap in a syllabus. These readers will find what they need. The many contributors have provided thoughtful summaries of their topics. As in most anthologies, the majority of the chapters give a historical summary of the topic, a review of the historiography, and suggestions for future research, although not always with the same emphasis. In general, essays that deal with older, familiar topics (such as Ross Kennedy's chapter on Woodrow Wilson) emphasize historiography, whereas chapters that engage a less developed subfield (such as

David Narrett's lead-off essay on colonial and early republic foreign relations) often provide more historical narrative. While the historiographic reviews are helpful, they can be repetitious for people reading from beginning to end. For most readers that will not be a problem.

Many of the chapters reperiodize their subject matter, usually by demonstrating a longer historiographic arc than is usually associated with their topic. For example, Elisabeth Leake alerts us to the fact that the United States has had a "century-long relationship . . . with the Afghan state," not the "20-40 years" that has "been the predominant focus of scholars" (1005). Other chapters make reperiodizing the focus of their argument.

Dietrich explains that "research in the last decade has drawn our attention to . . . trends in the history of U.S. foreign relations" (xiii), and when taken as a whole, *Companion* demonstrates those trends in terms of the topics engaged (or not engaged), the approaches taken (or not taken), and the issues that appear (or remain hidden). For example, *Companion* signals that the Cold War continues to lose its centrality in answering the "moral question of how to judge U.S. behavior" (631). While several chapters work within a Cold War framework,³ only two take up the Cold War as such. Both provide very nice overviews of the massive historiography on the topic, and both carry a hint of a postmortem in their tone.

Historians no longer ask the question "Who began it?" Masuda Hajimu writes in his chapter, "but more 'How did it work?' and then 'What was it?'" (634). In her chapter, Sarah B. Snyder distills current scholarship into four core questions: "periodization," "how effective U.S. policy was in ending the Cold War," who made which "contributions" to ending it, and finally what "legacies" will follow it (1083). Both historians, in other words, describe a research agenda that takes the Cold War more as an event within U.S. foreign relations rather than the central paradigm for understanding U.S. foreign relations.

Several authors express the hope that their fields can finally break free from the weakened Cold War framework. For example, Andrew Johnstone voices his relief that the focus of recent work on World War II is not "simply the origin of the Cold War" (418). Similarly, David S. Foglesong hopes to free the history of Russian-American relations from its Cold War narrative: "As historians utilize [new archival] materials in new studies, they should guard against a tendency to view the 1917-1945 period in hindsight simply as the era of the origins of the Cold War" (447). In short, the Cold War as an organizing paradigm continues to fade even as scholars continue and try to make sense of what it all meant.

Speaking to a more recent controversy, we might read *Companion* as confirming Daniel Bessner and Fredrik Logevall's fear that "the turn to international and transnational history has led historians, at least implicitly, to deemphasize unduly subjects that traditionally stood at the center of the historiography."⁴ Or not, depending on how we read the word "unduly." By my count, roughly ten of the fifty-two chapters would fit comfortably within Bessner and Logevall's framework of "elections, institutions, coalition-building, business interests, ideologies, individual pride, and careerist ambition" as the primary drivers of foreign relations.⁵ This includes five chapters devoted to presidents: Charles Laderman on Theodore Roosevelt, Kennedy on Woodrow Wilson, Kiran Klaus Patel on Franklin Roosevelt, James Graham Wilson on Ronald Reagan, and Robert Singh on Barack Obama. Whether this represents an over- or under-emphasis depends, I suppose, on what one considers the "right" balance within the field.⁶

With the decline of the Cold War as the primary focus

Wiley-Blackwell's updated *Companion to U.S. Foreign Relations* represents the downstream consequences of that prior decade's flood of interest in internationalizing the field of American history.

for historians of foreign relations, regional interests have shifted as well. If *Companion* is any guide, in the coming years we should see a great deal of scholarship on Asia and Latin America, followed by the Middle East, with Africa and American Indian nations the regions where scholarship has the most ground to make up. Europe still garners interest, but perhaps the least as a region.⁷

With the decline of the Cold War as the central focus for foreign relations, the new paradigm taking its place is “empire.” If my search engine can be trusted, the term appears 1,051 times in *Companion*, with another 876 appearances of the word “imperial,” for a grand total of 1,927 mentions of the concept. By contrast, my engine noted 1,092 uses of the words “culture/cultural,” 805 instances of “race/racial/racist/racialized,” 704 instances of the word “president,” and 215 uses of the word “gender”—the terms we typically associate with investigative frameworks. Some terms that might have gotten a lot of play in the past have faded almost into obscurity: for example, “corporatist/corporatism” saw only 16 mentions (indeed, only Brandon Wolfe-Hunnicut’s chapter on U.S.-Iraq relations engages in depth with the corporatist historiography). What surprised me is that variations on the term “diplomatic” (including variants such as “diplomat,” “diplomats,” and “diplomacy,”) appeared 1,607 times, more than many other search terms but still second to “empire/imperial.”

Of course, word counts do not tell us everything. My search engine did not differentiate between titles, citations, and meaningful utterances. Still, the rough story these wordcounts tell fits my experience reading through *Companion*. Nearly all the chapters either situated themselves within the framework of American empire or felt a need to respond to it (such as when Charles Laderman discusses Theodore Roosevelt’s “anti-imperial imperialism” [299]).

On the one hand, this emphasis provides a certain amount of order to the entire work. It turns out that, at least thematically, the essays are not as “messy” as the preface leads us to believe, and I can imagine that in assigning and compiling the chapters Dietrich may have intended something like this outcome. Whether we read Megan Black’s chapter on mineral extraction or April Merleaux’s article on U.S. drug policy, most (although not all) the chapters connect to each other like so many angles delimiting American empire.

With that in mind, certain claims make a lot more sense, such as Marc-William Palen’s assertion that “by the 1970s, the Open Door imperial thesis . . . would become the dominant historical framework for understanding U.S. imperial economic expansion from the country’s founding to the Vietnam War, a position of prominence that it still maintains today” (271). Indeed, most of the scholars in *Companion* take empire as a given and seek to move to the next set of questions the framework implies. “[I]f we can readily acknowledge that the United States is and has been an empire,” writes Andrew Friedman, “then perhaps it is time to study more directly the lived shape of that empire, and the diverse material and spatial practices that have constituted it over time” (652).

Many of the chapters provide helpful historiographic overviews of empire on their way to their specific topic. In this regard, Sarah Steinbock-Pratt’s chapter is particularly useful. Ostensibly focused on the turn of the twentieth century, the chapter mostly provides a useful and succinct walk through the “historiography of U.S. foreign relations,” beginning with Samuel Flagg Bemis, continuing through its cultural turn, and ultimately triumphing as the dominant analytic for scholars today (233). Starting in the 1980s, scholars had modified William Appleman Williams’ “Open Door” thesis because “cultural categories of analysis have provided ways to appreciate both the unities and the disjunctions of American imperialism”; moreover, cultural analysis could better “link domestic and foreign

historiographies” (233). Indeed, by the “early twenty-first century,” culture had become the “primary lens for the history of foreign relations” (241). This is all familiar to historians of foreign relations, but it is nicely stated and has a celebratory historiographic plot.

Companion also demonstrates what cultural historians have argued for decades: that the chief advantage to the cultural turn lies in its ability to bring to historical consciousness the lives and experiences of non-American, non-state actors. As Colleen Woods summarizes in her chapter on the U.S. foreign policy and the Philippines, the cultural approach has “widened the lens of historical inquiry to provide rich accounts of people, places, and belief systems previously overlooked” by the earlier, more traditional versions of diplomatic history (510).

While many chapters depend on “empire” for their investigatory framework, they do not agree on exactly when it began. Emily Conroy-Krutz sees the early republic as the moment that started the imperial ball rolling; Phil Magness sees the late antebellum period as perhaps more decisive. While making an argument for the “fallow years” (1865–86) as particularly important in the evolution of American empire (217), Daniel Margolies nevertheless acknowledges a continuity in “beliefs, institutions, policies, and practices in the American experience as part of the country’s evolving grand strategy” throughout the nineteenth century—and into the twentieth (219).

Scholars have debated the usefulness of the imperial framework almost to death (in the pages of *Passport*, among other place), and I have no intention of relitigating it here. As an alternative, perhaps I can add something in the spirit of the many chapters that offer suggestions for future research—or, put another way, let me suggest some concerns about a few themes that seem surprisingly underdeveloped in *Companion*. First, when the next *Companion* comes into being, I hope scholars of foreign relations have circled back to economics with a bit more nuance. To be sure, the term “economics” comes up often in the current *Companion* (1,020 times, according to my search engine), but usually to describe American interests. Those interests themselves remain only partially analyzed, and never in *economic* terms. To pick one example, consider Christy Thornton’s discussion of the historiography on Mexican-American relations: “Historians of U.S.–Mexican relations have long been necessarily concerned with economic considerations, attempting to ascertain to what extent economic interests ‘determined’ U.S. or Mexican action” during the course of the Mexican Revolution (333).

Certainly, policymakers—not to mention international corporations—have pursued economic interests, and those interests have often motivated empire. But you could finish *Companion* without much sense of the *economic* consequences of those interests, including one that seems quite important in our time: global inequality. We know that inequality has grown in some parts of the world but shrunk in others. Why? How has U.S. foreign policy played a part in these disparate outcomes? In this regard my search engine produced its most surprising result: the term “inequality” appears only nine times, and only three of those refer to economic inequality.

Again, I do not want to draw too many conclusions from a simple word search. Still, given the tremendous amount of scholarly work produced on globalization and global political economy, I would have appreciated more engagement with the topic. Stephen Macekura’s chapter on development is a case in point. He very nicely outlines the historiography on development, along with the changing motivations American policymakers had while pursuing development after World War II. This is all very useful, to be sure. But in his otherwise excellent review, we do not learn a great deal about what all these efforts accomplished, specifically in terms of development.

In fairness, Macekura just remained close to the historiography he describes, and so my concern lies less with his chapter than the historical work he nicely reviews. In any event, I would have appreciated a bit more analysis based on economic outcomes in *Companion*, because outcomes also explain adaptations to foreign policymaking and vice versa, especially across policy domains. A good example of this can be seen in a question Simon Toner raises at the end of his review of the massive historiography on Vietnam: "What was the impact of the war on the gold crisis, the stagflation of the 1970s, and the decline of the Keynesian consensus?" (878).⁸

In addition, as much as the imperial-cum-cultural framework has decentered diplomatic history's "traditional interest in state actors and high politics" (227), the United States appears safely ensconced at the center of the foreign relations universe. To borrow a metaphor used by Bessner and Logevall: "the United States is the sun that delimits the entire system's structure."⁹ On the surface, *Companion* appears to reject this metaphor (John A. Gronbeck-Tedesco's chapter on U.S. culture and the Cuban Revolution is one of my favorite chapters in this regard). Yet for all the "decentering" that happens within individual chapters, the collective impression tends to confirm the "heliocentric" universe posited by Bessner and Logevall. That is, at times it seems that *Companion* decenters the United States in the same way the egotist stops talking about himself: "But enough about me; now tell me, what do you think of me?"

Undoubtedly, the way the anthology was conceived helps shape this impression; it is, after all, a companion to U.S. foreign policy. The United States could be expected to play a central role in the chapters, for thematic unity if nothing else. My point, though, is that the framework of empire can reduce itself to a debate over how to measure which solar body has how much gravitational pull and in which direction. For Bessner and Logevall the sun always wins and therefore deserves the most analysis. For *Companion*, the planets tell the more interesting story. To give one example, Christy Thornton writes that "it is only relatively recently that [historians] have begun to take seriously the other side of the coin, and to ask how the [Mexican] revolution influenced the world beyond Mexico's borders" (326). From my perspective, both sides fit within the heliocentric metaphor despite the animosity each has for its opponent.

All of which leads to my last two concerns. I blame the dominance of the heliocentric metaphor for leaving out freestanding chapters addressing environmentalism and human rights.

To be clear, many chapters mention both topics, but usually just in passing or as recommendations for future research. For example, in his chapter on oil and foreign policy, Victor McFarland argues that future research should "be particularly interested in climate change and efforts to stop it" (956). Similarly, both Benjamin Coates's chapter on the United States and international law and Andrew Johnstone's chapter on U.S. foreign relations during World War II mention a growing interest in human rights within the historiography. Yet each has a distinct focus. Of course, both environmentalism and human rights both have important historical connections to empire. Still, consider, for example, two important books not mentioned in *Companion*: Richard Grove's *Green Imperialism* or Peder Anker's *Imperial Ecology*.¹⁰ While both books argue that a concern for conservation and the environment emerged within subjugated parts of the British empire, neither fits the "heliocentric" model. As Thomas Robertson writes in an essay from 2008, "[Grove's and Anker's] point is not that environmental awareness came from colonial peoples, but

that the desire to rule colonial peoples led some colonial administrators to new forms of environmental awareness." Environmental awareness, in other words, emerged in part through the interplay of colonizer and colony. "Concern for nature could and often did provide a counter-vision to the imperial enterprise," Robertson concludes, "but it sometimes served as a handmaiden to empire, providing imperial officials with another way to regulate and control far-off lands and peoples."¹¹

Robertson's insights (along with Grove's and Anker's) might fit uncomfortably within a *Companion* that more often follows, for example, Megan Black's chapter on "extractive capitalism." Black writes that the American corporate empire created "calamities" in places "targeted for their minerals . . . a painful process by which national economies and local landscapes become reoriented to the mercurial north star of extraction" (934).

Handbook's chapters often tell similar stories of American global interests encountering local resistance. In other words, a powerful sun affecting resistant planets, where the story follows the vantage of one or another celestial body.

If we hope to understand something like global environmentalism, we probably need a different metaphor. What if we thought of empire as a discourse of knowledge/power expanding outward from a metropole (as Michel Foucault might see it)? As it encounters (and attempts to dominate) pre-existing indigenous discourses on the "periphery," we should not be surprised to find pidgin discourses emerging at interstices of the converging discourses. Environmentalism might be one such pidgin discourse, an example of what happens when power and resistance combine to create something unforeseen by either. Eventually, it became its own discourse of power/knowledge, a discourse with a history that ought to have its own chapter in *Companion*.¹²

Finally, *Companion* does not include, surprisingly, a freestanding chapter on human rights. Mark Bradley gave voice to the thoughts of many scholars when he observed in 2014 that "once at the margins, human rights and its historiography are at the intellectual vanguard of international and diplomatic history."¹³ Here again, an omission may be simply that. But again, it feels that perhaps human rights ended up on the chopping block because thematically it also employs the kind of "pidgin discourse" that fits uncomfortably within the "heliocentric" metaphor more common to *Companion*. To return to Mark Bradley, the embrace of a human rights framework "also involves a willingness to look beyond still prevailing notions of American exceptionalism to recognize the ways in which the lexicon of human rights was constituted in transnational space."¹⁴ To my mind, his "transnational space" and my "interstices with overlapping discourses" amount to roughly the same thing (although, in fairness, his is the less jargonistic term).

Having said all that, let me conclude with a huge caveat: please take all of the above with a grain of salt. I have tried to bring thematic order to a massive anthology against the advice of the anthology's own editor. There are plenty of exceptions to the general claims I have made, and since I do not know how the anthology came to be, I am only speculating on why some parts were included or left out. Indeed, despite the fact that I tried to mention as many different chapters as possible, only a fraction of the fifty-two entries appear in this review. More to the point, for nearly every question put to it, the newest Wiley-Blackwell *Companion to U.S. Foreign Policy* will provide a good answer. On the whole it is a massive undertaking that I enjoyed reading and learning from.

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Notes:

1. Thomas Bender, ed., *Rethinking American History in a Global Age* (Berkeley, 2002); C. A. Bayly, Sven Beckert, Matthew Connelly, Isabel Hofmeyr, Wendy Kozol, and Patricia Seed, "AHR Conversation: On Transnational History," *American Historical Review* 111, no. 5 (Dec. 2006), 1441–64; Thomas W. Zeiler, Frederik Logevall, Mario Del Pero, Jessica C. E. Gienow-Hecht, and Kristin Hoganson, "Diplomatic History Today: A Roundtable," *Journal of American History* 95, no. 4 (Mar. 2009).
2. Thomas Zeiler, "The Diplomatic History Bandwagon: A State of the Field" *Journal of American History* 95, no. 4 (Mar. 2009), 1053–1073; Robert J. McMahon, "Diplomatic History and Policy History: Finding Common Ground," *Journal of Policy History* 17, 1 (2005).
3. See, for example, Lori Clune's chapter on propaganda during the Cold War, Andrew c. McKeivitt's chapter on U.S.—Japan Relations since the occupation, Jonathan Hunt's chapter on the way nuclear weapons shaped policy during the Cold War, and Philip E. Muehlenbeck's chapter on U.S.—Sub-Saharan policy during the Cold War. In these chapters the Cold War serves largely as a given that helps periodize and frame the topic.
4. Daniel Bessner and Fredrik Logevall, "Recentering the United States in the Historiography of American Foreign Relations," *Texas National Security Review* 3, no. 2 (Spring 2020), 40.
5. This is admittedly a rough fit, because the chapters tend to be historiographic and comprehensive, so (again) my categorization is a bit fuzzy. For the quote see Bessner and Logevall, 41.
6. For a larger discussion of what the right balance should be, see H-Diplo Roundtable XXI-42 on Bessner and Logevall, "Recentering the United States in the Historiography of American Foreign Relations." May 25, 2020, <https://networks.h-net.org/node/28443/discussions/6165504/h-diplo-roundtable-xxi-42-bessner-and-logevall-%E2%80%99Ccentering>.
7. By my count (and with the acknowledgment that my criteria are a bit fuzzy), six chapters focus almost entirely on U.S. relations with Asia or an Asian country; six on Latin America; four on the Middle East. Several chapters take up topics related to Africa, although only one focuses exclusively on U.S.-African relationships. As for American Indians, in her chapter "Toward a 'New Indian History' of Foreign Relations," Elspeth Martini notes that "nineteenth-century U.S.—American Indian diplomacy is not in itself a recognizable field of historical study" (114), and she calls for the situation to change.
8. For my own answer to the question of how foreign policy affected the end of the gold standard and contributed to stagflation, see *Sovereign Soldiers: How the U.S. Military Transformed the Global Economy After World War II* (Philadelphia, PA, 2018).
9. Bessner and Logevall, 40.
10. Richard H. Grove, *Green Imperialism: Colonial Expansion, Tropical Islands, Edens, and the Origins of Environmentalism* (Cambridge, UK, 2003); Peder Anker, *Imperial Ecology: Environmental Order in the British Empire, 1895–1945* (Cambridge, MA, 2001).
11. Thomas Robertson, "'This is the American Earth': American Empire, the Cold War, and American Environmentalism," *Diplomatic History* 32, no. 4 (Sept. 2008), 563.
12. In fairness, several chapters move in the direction of this metaphor, although none as fully as I would have recommended for a chapter on environmentalism. Brandon Byrd's chapter on black internationalism and Paul Rubinson's chapter on nuclear disarmament, along with Theresa Keeley's chapter on transnational activism between the United States and Central America in the 1980s, serve as examples.
13. Mark Bradley, "American Vernaculars: The United States and the Global Human Rights Imagination," *Diplomatic History* 38, no.1 (2014), 3.
14. Bradley, 5.

Review of Christopher R. W. Dietrich, ed., *A Companion to U.S. Foreign Relations: Colonial Era to the Present*

Lauren F. Turek

Our field has been fortunate when it comes to its historiographical and methodological surveys. Whether in the form of Alexander DeConde's 1976 "American Diplomatic History in Transformation" pamphlet or the stalwart (and regularly updated) volumes that Michael Hogan, Thomas Paterson, and Frank

Costigliola have edited at various points since the early 1990s, these essential essays and essay collections have not simply provided a snapshot of our field at a moment in time, they have also asked probing questions about the field's future, inspired exciting new generations of foreign relations scholarship, and trained countless graduate students in the varied methodological approaches to U.S. foreign relations history.¹

The two-volume set that Christopher Dietrich has edited, *A Companion to U.S. Foreign Relations: Colonial Era to the Present*, is a valuable contribution to this body of literature. Dietrich notes that he has brought together "a new generation of scholars" to reflect on a range of significant questions that foreign relations scholars have pursued in their efforts to understand the evolving role of the United States in the world since the eighteenth century (xi).

Each essayist sets about to accomplish this task by weaving the most recent scholarship into a concise historical overview of their area of focus that takes account of exciting new methods, diverse voices, and important contributions from other subfields. According to Dietrich, by taking this approach, he and the contributors hope to "remind us how the nation's interactions at home and abroad have shaped not just the practice of American power but the ways it has been understood over time: how people work out what values and interests drive U.S. foreign relations, what consequences derive from the practice of American power, what it means to be American" (xiii). Thanks to the thematic diversity and scope of the volumes, they are by and large successful in achieving this lofty objective.

Reviewing any edited volume presents challenges. Although *A Companion to U.S. Foreign Relations* avoids many of the potential pitfalls of edited volumes in that it is cohesive, focused, and well-balanced in terms of content and quality of contributions, it still comprises fifty-two chapters and spans 1175 pages. Rather than attempting to provide a summative evaluation of so many essays, I have instead opted to highlight a few entries from each volume that speak to the stated goals of the collection and epitomize the breadth, depth, and style of the essays as a whole. I will then reflect on the overall value that the volume provides to scholars as well as to students.

On a general note, the essays in the first volume cover a range of topics (including empire, law, industrialization, policing, war, and diplomacy with indigenous groups) that span the period from 1763 through 1965, with most focusing on the late eighteenth through the nineteenth century. The second volume attends to the twentieth century, and the topics reflect the increasingly active role the United States played in the world during that time, with chapters on nuclear policy, U.S. relations with countries in the Middle East, Latin America, Africa, and Asia, drug policy, and the like.

A number of these essays throughout both volumes prove very effective in teasing out how U.S. core values and interests emerged, evolved, and influenced U.S. interactions abroad. For example, Emily Conroy-Krutz's "The Early Republic in a World of Empire, 1787–1848" challenges readers to think seriously about these dynamics when considering the U.S. relationship with imperialism and colonialism in the years after the Revolution. Drawing on scholarship from Peter Onuf, Bethel Saler, and Julian Go, among others, she notes that "America emerged from its war against empire as a postcolonial nation with imperial ambitions of its own" (26).

Conroy-Krutz also offers a lucid explanation of how "imperial concepts" provided early U.S. citizens with a framework for understanding the nascent nation's role in the world and envisioning how that role might grow in the future (27). In addition, she sheds light on the contested and varied definitions of empire in circulation in the years surrounding the Revolution and makes it clear that even

as many Americans sought to differentiate their aims and inclinations from those of the British empire, concepts like Jefferson's "Empire of Liberty," to say nothing of expansionism and Manifest Destiny, still reflected "an imperial vision of republicanism, reminding people that nation and empire were not incompatible, binary terms, but rather deeply linked concepts" (30). Her discussions of settler colonialism and Indian removal within the American continent, the American Colonization Society and Liberia, and U.S. Christian missionaries as part of a larger imperial project all reinforce her contention that during the period from the Revolution through the Mexican-American War, "Americans from a wide range of backgrounds had thought about empire in new ways, rejecting the oppressive form that they felt the British Empire had come to take in the 1760s and 1770s, but imagining possibilities for new forms of imperialism" (41).

Similarly illuminating and thoughtfully conceived chapters from Anelise Hanson ShROUT (on philanthropy in the Early Republic), Sarah Steinbock-Pratt (on the culture of U.S. empire in the late nineteenth century), Andre Fleche (on ideology and conceptions of the national interest during the Civil War, as well as the links between the war and the development of U.S. imperialism, nationalism, and capitalism), Brandon Byrd (on how Black internationalists confronted racism, imperialism, and racial capitalism), and Theresa Keeley (on the response of religious and human rights activists to the Reagan administration's interventions in Central America) draw readers' attention to the significance of contests over U.S. values and interests in U.S. foreign relations, as well as to the extensive scholarship on these topics.

Reflections on the consequences of American power over time also abound throughout the collection. Indeed, this dynamic is certainly at the center of Elspeth Martini's chapter, "Toward a 'New Indian History' of Foreign Relations: U.S.-American Indian Diplomacy from Greenville to Wounded Knee, 1795–1890." Martini emphasizes the power imbalance inherent in U.S. negotiations with indigenous groups, noting that although "treaties involved at least the nominal recognition on the part of U.S. officials and Indian leaders of the other's status as representatives of sovereign polities," the U.S. commitment to expansionist imperialism and settler colonialism meant that most U.S.-American Indian diplomacy "took place in the shadow of violence and coercion" (114).

Asserting that it is still somewhat rare for diplomatic and political historians to write on U.S.-American Indian relations, and rare for borderlands or Native American scholars to frame their work in terms of U.S. foreign relations, Martini makes the case that it is worth bringing these disparate fields together. She has helpfully divided her chapter into three sections that demonstrate the points of connection between these areas of scholarly focus. Her first section explores how U.S.-Indian diplomacy fits into a larger history of U.S. imperialism. She follows this with a section on how the methodological innovations in Native American and borderlands history "orient us to the actual, on-the-ground realities of politics and diplomacy in particular territories and regions," and she ends with a final section on how legal scholarship, histories of settler colonialism, and work from indigenous scholars can help us appreciate the indigenous experiences, the "interplay of law and power," and the role of imperial processes in treaty negotiations (121, 131).

Taken as a whole, Martini's historiographical overview reveals that, despite our assumptions that the story of nineteenth-century U.S.-American Indian diplomacy is

one of "declining Indian power, in which U.S. officials . . . end up having the power simply to dictate their demands to Indian polities," by blending old and new scholarship we can better grasp "what sovereign Indian polities signed away" in treaty negotiations with the United States, as well as "what they did not" (135).

Much like Martini, who urges us to consider indigenous agency while exploring the consequences of U.S. power in U.S.-indigenous relations, Christy Thornton pushes us to think beyond traditional histories of the Mexican Revolution that put "a powerful United States" and Europe at the center of an effort to influence "a weak, poor, and unstable Mexico" (326). Indeed, she reminds us of key literature that reflects on how cultural influence and intellectual currents emanating from the Revolution ran northward as well. Her chapter, "Responding to a Revolution: The 'Mexican Question' in the United States," like J.C. McKercher's "Chrysalis of Power: U.S. Foreign Policy and the Retreat from Isolationism, 1919–1941," Stephen Macekura's "Remaking the World: The United States and International Development, 1898–2015," Andrew Friedman's "U.S. Power in a Material World," and Lori Clune's "Waging War with Words, 1945–1963," provides a nuanced exploration of U.S. power in the world, including its limits, reception, and unintended outcomes.

As might be expected, many of the chapters that address historical questions about how the United States has projected its power, values, and interests also reflect in some way on how U.S. foreign relations have shaped and changed American identity. Sarah Ellen Graham's chapter, "Propaganda in the Best Sense of the Word? Public Diplomacy and U.S. Diplomatic History Since World War I," opens with a brief history of foreign efforts to manipulate the U.S. public (and the public's conflicted reactions to U.S. efforts to influence foreign audiences) as a means to evaluate the relationship between democracy, propaganda, and American identity. She considers post-World War I public debate about foreign and domestic propaganda, exploring the concerns that many progressive and liberal Americans evinced about the potential that agencies such as the Committee on Public Information had "to aggregate power to government" at the expense of cherished civil liberties (683).

Turning to the Cold War, Graham notes that the threat of communism changed the calculus somewhat, though it did not completely erase this sense that government propaganda ran contrary to democratic principles. Yet even if these concerns about propaganda reflected certain ideas about what it meant to be an American or to live in a democratic polity, the propaganda that the United States produced also conveyed and encapsulated policymakers' perceptions of American identity and the American way of life. Graham references works from Robert Ivie, David Campbell, and Roxanne Doty that reveal that "Cold War American public diplomacy had an obvious dependence on the discursive construction of a shared conception of 'America' as an exceptional superpower in contrast to less worthy or hostile 'Other/s'. . . . Public diplomacy is therefore a fruitful area in which to uncover how American self-representations and 'interpretive dispositions . . . create[d] certain possibilities' for policy choice while 'precluding others'" (683).

Further, public diplomacy and propaganda changed aspects of U.S. politics and culture. Graham cites the expansions of executive authority under Truman and Eisenhower as examples. Her survey of the literature on Cold War public diplomacy points to a range of studies that have explored how "official self-representations" of

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the United States and its values contributed to “the making of U.S. foreign policy” (685). This chapter thus provides a rich overview of the literature on propaganda and public diplomacy in the early twentieth century, while neatly linking identity, values, and power. Like other chapters in the volume, it also concludes with suggestions for future research.

I should note that there are a number of chapters in the volumes that address other aspects of identity and U.S. foreign relations. Among them are Sarah Steinbock-Pratt’s “New Frontiers beyond the Seas: The Culture of American Empire and Expansion at the Turn of the Twentieth Century” and Meredith Oyen’s “Migrants and Transnational Networks in Sino-American Relations in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries.”

As should be evident from this brief sampling, *A Companion to U.S. Foreign Relations: Colonial Era to the Present* is exceptionally broad in its coverage. This is not to say that it covers everything; no collection reasonably could, and this one does emphasize certain countries, themes, and concepts more than others. Still, it does achieve its stated objectives of appraising the history and historiography of U.S. power, values, and identity as they relate to the U.S. role in the world.

Although some chapters provide mostly straightforward historiographies, the most effective and engaging contributions offer interpretive overviews of their topics as well. While chapters from these volumes will likely be most beneficial to scholars and graduate students, particularly those just starting out on a topic and in need of a cogent “state of the field” to get their bearings, the chapters that move beyond basic historiographical survey may also have utility in the (advanced) undergraduate classroom. I assigned Philip Muehlenbeck’s chapter, “The Cold War in Sub-Saharan Africa,” to my U.S. Foreign Relations class during the Fall 2020 semester in large part because it was a detailed yet accessible and concise survey of the topic, perfect for undergraduates with little exposure to the history of modern U.S. relations with the continent. Not all chapters will work for this purpose, of course, but the accessible style of most of the chapters does allow for this possibility. On the whole, then, this is a welcome and versatile collection.

Note:

1. To cite just a few of the most recent editions of these key volumes, I am referencing here Michael J. Hogan, ed., *Paths to Power: The Historiography of American Foreign Relations to 1941* (Cambridge, UK, 2000); Frank Costigliola and Michael J. Hogan, eds., *America in the World: The Historiography of American Foreign Relations since 1941*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge, UK, 2013); Frank Costigliola and Michael J. Hogan, eds., *Explaining the History of American Foreign Relations*, 3rd ed. (Cambridge, UK, 2016) (with Thomas G. Paterson as co-editor in earlier editions); Alexander DeConde, *American Diplomatic History in Transformation* (Washington, DC, American Historical Association, 1976). Others of note (and this is certainly not an exhaustive list) include Walter LaFeber, *Liberty and Power: U.S. Diplomatic History, 1750–1945*, rev. ed. (Washington, DC, American Historical Association, 1997); Marc Trachtenberg, *The Craft of International History: A Guide to Method* (Princeton, NJ, 2006); and James G. Morgan, *Into New Territory: American Historians and the Concept of U.S. Imperialism* (Madison, WI, 2014).

The Benefits of Pluralism in the History of U.S. Foreign Relations

Christopher Dietrich

In his field-capturing article in the *Journal of American History* a decade ago, Tom Zeiler declared that “an era of innovation among historians of American foreign relations is upon us.”¹ In the same special issue, Kristin

Hoganson noted that while changes in the discipline often originated from outside it, “the field is welcoming new approaches, topics, and archival bases, and the transnational turn is making U.S. foreign relations scholarship ever more relevant to the discipline as a whole.” Since then, historians of U.S. foreign relations have largely celebrated the expansion of depth and breadth in the field, which Hoganson described as “the fact that power has operated in different registers.”²

This establishment of a more plural field in the 1990s and after, now a consensus, has sparked new debates. Most recently, Fred Logevall and Daniel Bessner have decried the international and transnational turns in *The Texas National Security Review*, for potentially leading historians down an anti-statist path that tends to “deemphasize unduly subjects that traditionally stood at the center of the historiography of U.S. foreign relations: policymaking and its relationship to the projection of power.” They eloquently recount an important story of institutional growth in the 1990s and after. They point out excellent work in international and transnational history, and note the appeals of each. In their case study of the historiography of the Vietnam War, they agree that new studies of North and South Vietnam paint a more well-rounded picture of the conflict. “Something important, though, was lost” in the international and the transnational turns, they lament. Finally, Bessner and Logevall make a compelling argument for future directions for the field: the rise of U.S. “hyperpower,” bipartisan consensus, the evolution of the national security state, the impact of domestic politics, and elite-centered military history. They fear that the international and transnational consensus marginalizes these lines of inquiry. This is too bad, they say, because historians have just begun to understand the political, cultural, economic, and ideological factors that led the United States to wage constant war since World War II. To do so requires an “America-centric” approach.³

I agree with the benefits of such studies and my current work looks in part at the place of oil in national security and military strategy. As I understand the article, though, its deepest concern is about the diffusion of agency in the field. I am less concerned. To edit the Wiley-Blackwell *Companion to U.S. Foreign Relations* was to understand the benefits of a big-tent understanding of the history of U.S. foreign relations. The editing process also made it clear that so-called “new approaches,” which have really been a part of the history of U.S. foreign relations for decades, don’t take away from the traditional state-based emphasis on questions of power. Rather, they add to it, whether through the often-domestic questions posed by critical race and gender theory, through the new perspectives offered by multi-archival transnational or international history, or through other emphases. Such distinct approaches need not be at odds with each other. In fact, if the essays in this volume are any indication, cross-pollination further invigorates all of our work.

It really is a tough job to review a volume meant to be read in parts, so I deeply appreciate the time and thought that Lauren Turek and Grant Madsen have put into their reviews. Their discussions of the Cold War, empire and decolonization, democracy, cultural influence and propaganda, economics, the environment, human rights, intellectual and ideological currents, national identity, and other topics are shrewd. So are their analyses about the core values and interests of U.S. foreign relations and the consequences of American power.

Following the lead of specific chapters, Turek and Madsen skillfully address how different sub-literatures point towards deeper changes in the field and in U.S. history more broadly, including its growing diversity and the emergence of new subfields and lines of inquiry. They ask what is lost and what is gained in the emphasis

on new approaches. They capture the intent and limits of the project better than I can. Therefore, in lieu of a direct response, I will briefly discuss the history of the volume before returning to the crucial argument for pluralism.

When Peter Coveney approached me about editing a Wiley-Blackwell *Companion* on U.S. secretaries of state in February 2015, I asked if I could put together a more thorough update to Robert Schulzinger's now-classic volume in the same series.⁴ That volume was published almost twenty years ago, which is eons in historiographical terms. The proposal I sent in soon afterward envisioned a sixty-seven-chapter division of the history of U.S. foreign relations into three volumes: the colonial era to 1877, 1877 to 1945, and 1945 to the present. It closely followed Coveney's original intent, with a laser-like focus on chronology and the major issues faced by policymakers and other elites. Stand-in titles included "The Foreign Policy of the Federalists," "The End of the Frontier," "NSC-68 and the Korean War," "Human Rights and the Carter Administration," and my personal favorite, "Warren Christopher, Madeleine Albright, and the Limits of Globalization."

Enter peer review, which was immensely helpful. The reviewers pressed me to move away from an authoritative guide to the foreign policies of specific presidential administrations toward a more ambitious and representative project that would capture the essential trends that shaped and continue to shape the history of U.S. foreign relations. The study of diplomats and other actors in foreign relations should be mutually reinforcing anyway, each said in their own way.

Equally important, the reviewers implicitly suggested that such a large project is inherently anti-territorial. Large projects like this one, more than anything, are about creating living space for respected scholars to explain their own understanding of major themes and topics, as they relate to newer questions and the traditional ones about the causes, motives, and consequences of major foreign relations decisions. The reviewers thus reaffirmed the general practice—the productive tension—in our field: to include the international, transnational, and cultural turns without losing focus on the state.

As I considered the peer reviews, I also reached out to historians who had edited other volumes in the series. They were supportive but warned me of the endurance such an immense project would require. "It's good that you're starting this while you're still young," one said. To ward off premature aging, perhaps the only inevitability historians will admit, I landed on the basic strategy of trusting my peers' expertise and goodwill. I wrote to scholars, many of whom I knew and many of whom I didn't, explaining the project and asking if they would be interested in writing an essay. Most said yes, and those who didn't enthusiastically recommended colleagues. As expected, things changed quite a bit once specific conversations with authors commenced. We ended up with a two-volume history with fifty-two chapters. Blessedly, none of the original chapter titles made the cut.

As Turek and Madsen note, each author provides an introduction into the major narratives, themes, and problems they see in their particular slice of history. Most discuss interdisciplinary connections that are important to their subfield. Each also concludes with suggestions for further research and fruitful lines of future inquiry. (In many chapters, both before the twentieth century and after, the suggestions complement those of Logevall and Bessner.) Apart from having to meet these requirements, the authors enjoyed great leeway.

The intended audience for the *Companion* is clear. At any number of institutions of higher learning across the United States, there are professors who have to teach topics that lie well outside of their expertise. There are graduate and advanced undergraduate students who need to create

bibliographies and comprehensive exam lists or who are simply looking for a topic. There are high school teachers with precocious students who express interest in a subject that gets a line, if that, in the Advanced Placement curricula for U.S. or World History. There are bibliophiles and history lovers who peruse library reference sections and would like to know what to read next. For these audiences, the *Companion to U.S. Foreign Relations* will, I hope, serve as a useful reference and complement the important work of the *SHAFR Guide* and other reference works on the history of U.S. foreign relations.

I want to emphasize that the purpose of the volume is not to throw down a generational gauntlet, as I unwittingly did in the preface to the *Companion*. It is rather to argue for the benefits of a constantly expanding conception of the field (as the title of the preface, "Many Histories," was meant to indicate). That conception doesn't only have to move forward. In fact, it is encouraging to see how far back most of the authors reach in the historiography. I am pleased with the generally shared belief that historical scholarship is a collective project built over generations. To return to historiography the way the authors of this volume do is also a reminder that the field has been pluralist for a long time.

It is true that there are certain drawbacks to an approach that celebrates, or critics might say fetishizes, pluralism. When we cut through the verbiage and get at the root of things, the questions are simple: Are power and diplomacy not at the core of the field? How can one marshal evidence in support of an argument about causality and change if all evidence is treated as equally important? Is it not irresponsible to say, "Oh, all history is interpretation"? Don't we have the duty as historians to present the interpretation that most closely approximates what we think is the truth about the past?

Of course we do. And we do it better because the field is a rich one, replete with talented historians who dig into complexity and multicausality and thus prevent themselves from sliding down an imagined slippery slope of relativity. We explain context. We measure change and continuity. We take contingency into account. We embrace complexity. In doing so, we collectively reveal that there are indeed many useful frameworks for understanding the history of the foreign relations of the United States.⁵

Reasonable people can and should disagree about emphasis and interpretation in their field of expertise and in the field at large. All of this is to say that mastery over our chosen topics isn't what is at stake here. The most basic question in our field is whether or not the history of U.S. foreign relations is spacious enough to continue to welcome methodologies or foci that present different ways of understanding important events and stories. I believe it is, and I have great enthusiasm about the future of the field.

Notes:

1. Thomas W. Zeiler, "The Diplomatic History Bandwagon: A State of the Field," *Journal of American History* 95, no. 4 (March 2009): 1053.
2. Kristin Hoganson, "Hop off the Bandwagon! It's a Mass Movement, Not a Parade," *Journal of American History* 95, no. 4 (March 2009): 1087, 1090.
3. Daniel Bessner and Fredrik Logevall, "Recentring the United States in the Historiography of American Foreign Relations," *Texas National Security Review* 3, no. 2 (Spring 2020): 40, 43, 47, 53, 54.
4. Robert D. Schulzinger, ed., *A Companion to American Foreign Relations* (Hoboken, NJ, 2003).
5. Indeed, an examination of series dedicated to the field at major academic presses reveal the dynamism of a concatenation of state-centric and other approaches.

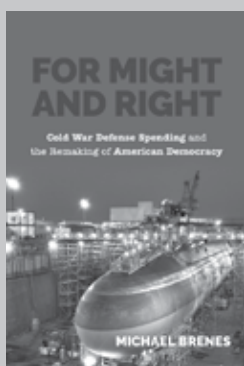
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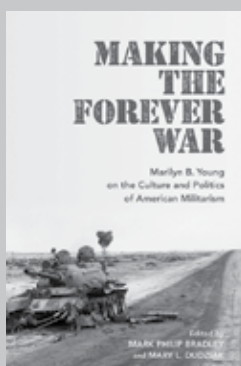
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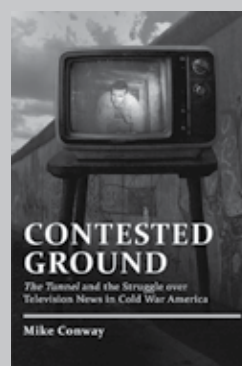
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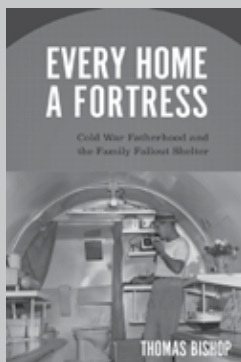
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A Roundtable on Michael Kimmage, *The Abandonment of the West*

Christopher McKnight Nichols, Heather Marie Stur, Brad Simpson, Andy Rotter, and
Michael Kimmage

Whither the West? From Columbian Triumphalism to the first Non-Western Presidency: A Review of Michael Kimmage, *The Abandonment of the West*

Christopher McKnight Nichols

The title of this book evokes numerous Donald Trump tweets, statements, and threats over the past five years. It also raises questions: was Trump pro-West or not, and how does his administration and its policies compare to those of his predecessors?

Trumpism and the related, inchoate policies of “America First” were firmly positioned against the organizational structures and assumptions of the so-called liberal international order, or rules-based order. Trump’s targets ranged from NATO to the World Health Organization (WHO). From his speech at Trump Tower announcing his run for office to statements we heard during his efforts to contest the results of the 2020 election, Trump promulgated racist, particularist claims about which peoples and groups counted (white ones), which immigrants should be allowed in (northern European) and which should be banned (Muslims, those from “shithole” countries), and what wider heritages they fit into or “good genes” they were blessed with.

While Trump applauded certain ideals and figures in Western history, he eschewed alliances with Western and other nations and rejected universalisms of all kinds. In recent years, Huntingtonian perspectives on the “clash of civilizations” have intersected in haunting ways with renewed calls for championing Western civilization, particularly on the far right in the United States and in nations across Europe. Those intersecting ideas were seared into my consciousness when they were made concrete by the white supremacists who marched in Charlottesville, Virginia, in 2017 chanting anti-Semitic, racist tropes such as “you will not replace us.”

These are precisely the contemporary and near-past referents that a skilled intellectual historian like Michael Kimmage, who also has experience in diplomacy and policymaking, likely wanted to understand in tackling their roots through a conceptual history of “the West” in U.S. foreign policy. In his deeply researched and erudite *Abandonment of the West*, Kimmage historicizes these elements of our contemporary moment. In doing so, like any good historian, he focuses on origins, proposing and exploring pivotal moments and conceptual turns in the march toward the present. The book takes us back to the late nineteenth century to understand the rise of the “West” as an animating factor in U.S. foreign relations and then

traces the rise, decline, and fall of many intertwined and often competing notions and reorientations of the “West” in foreign policy thought, debate, and practice.

At heart, this book is about how perhaps the most vaunted of Enlightenment ideals—a “Western”-centered set of concepts related to liberty and the definition, extension, and practice thereof—have and have not been embodied in the rhetoric and the practice of U.S. foreign relations. This is an intellectual genealogy. As such, it seeks to reveal the sinuous path by which we arrived at contemporary notions of the West and to point out which notions were rejected, adapted, and transformed along the way.

The book asks, in other words, how the United States got from the era of the Turnerian “closure of frontiers” and the 1893 World’s Columbian Exposition, which were characterized by encomiums to Anglo-Saxon civilizational hierarchy, conquest, and annexation, to the aspirational world-shaping “crusades of Wilson, Truman and Eisenhower,” to the “anti-crusade or the un-crusade of George W. Bush” (Bush used the term and then rejected it as defining the U.S.’s post-9/11 mission), and, finally, to Donald Trump as the first “non-Western” U.S. president (12–13). But whither the West now? What explains the seeming abandonment of the West as a causal or justifying notion in U.S. foreign relations thought?

There are no simple answers to these questions. And, to its credit, this book does not attempt any such simplification project. While readers may disagree with Kimmage’s interpretations and overall chronology, they will appreciate his discriminating eye for sources and texts, fascinating and figures and groups, theories and critiques, along with his attention to subtle changes over time and mapping of them across eras.

This book is palpably a product of the U.S. foreign relations intellectual milieu that arose after 9/11 and persisted through the Trump presidency. Indeed, the opening sections seem remote, as they address George W. Bush’s gaffe in calling the war on terror a “crusade.” This “now generation” long moment can be aptly characterized as a decentering of the West—in foreign policy and geopolitics as well as in scholarship and universities, as Kimmage shows effectively.

Yet *The Abandonment of the West* also tracks something much less bound to the twenty-first century: the West as a “place, an idea, a value—or places, ideas and values,” including “a range of cultural and philosophical constellations” (13). Kimmage rightly argues that the West as concept has long had an appeal for American policymakers and thinkers, stretching back to the Revolution but really generating momentum from the late nineteenth century through World War I. This book’s nuanced approach to these ideas and their often “mutually contradictory”

dimensions is part of what makes this analysis compelling. This is no triumphalist account of the West in U.S. foreign relations thought, but it is also not entirely a critique and is far from a complete rejection.

There are a number of definitions in the book and a recognition that, obviously, definition matters greatly for such a slippery topic, as does precision. The core of the West for Kimmage is defined as the “transatlantic idea of liberty” (16). What the book does so innovatively is to construct the first broad-based intellectual history of that idea. It tracks the West as “embedded in a Euro-American narrative of self-government and liberty, a history of liberty, a project of building liberty, a future-oriented heritage of liberty,” all of which also include the many undersides of such a project—settler colonialism, slavery and racism, inequality, and hierarchy (14–16). For Kimmage, the West serves as a category of analysis to travel a fresh path through the thought, the thinkers, and some of the major events of the last one hundred and thirty years in depth, although the book covers several hundred years overall.

The concept of “the West” can be best understood as arising in U.S. foreign policy thought and American public life in the late nineteenth century. This was a time of precipitous change, as I have noted in my own work. For Kimmage, the U.S. as “Columbian nation” was born again, in a way; by the fin de siècle it became a world commercial and military power and acquired the ability to take global actions that had consequences beyond the nation’s borders.

This crucial period of rethinking core assumptions about the nation and its foreign policy built on longer patterns of framing the United States as an extension of a Western set of ideals and practices; these were moored, of course, in antiquity, in city-state democracies and political theories of Greece and Rome and in the iconography and mythology of citizen-generals and philosopher-statesmen. It is no coincidence that American leaders were surrounded by neo-classical architecture, equipped with the trappings of classical learning, and visually represented in togas. It was not until the United States struck out on its own as a colonial power, extending and enforcing ideals abroad and accessing markets more directly and self-consciously, that the “West” was born as an ideological construct in U.S. foreign relations.

This book fits with new directions in the intellectual history of the United States’s role in the world, though it is unlike transmission and reception histories on a single author or theory, and more akin to global intellectual histories that track a concept (neoliberalism, the global) or even goods (salt, for example) over time. The source base is broad and deep. I particularly appreciated the eclectic nature of the many areas Kimmage draws upon for insight, from architecture and art to philosophy and political science. A real strength here is the engagement with Black American critiques of U.S. foreign relations throughout the study. We find the full panoply of foreign and domestic policy analysis and evolution in the lives of W.E.B. Du Bois, Malcom X, James Baldwin, and Alain Locke, among others. Readers encounter references to virtually every major thinker and work one might imagine relevant, yet Kimmage is never tedious, and often mentions details with a deft touch to distill just the most important claims or insights to propel the book.

One area of limitation, though I hasten to add that this book has a little of everything, concerns women. I would like to have seen more regarding the role of women in U.S. engagement with the West as a concept. There is virtually nothing, for example, on women’s activism in transnational peace and humanitarian movements. More on Jane Addams and Emily Balch, two figures I have studied extensively

and who were deeply significant as the first two American women to win the Nobel Peace Prize and pioneered international women’s peace activism, would be welcome; so, too, I longed to see attention to Eleanor Roosevelt and Mary McLeod Bethune, for example, to round out this otherwise very full account. Though, to be fair, Jeane Kirkpatrick, Madeleine Albright, Condoleeza Rice, and Samantha Power factor into the more recent analysis in the book. Those concerns aside, the book is perhaps best at combining and analyzing major books, arguments, theories, and thinkers and at blending domestic policy concerns with foreign ones.

The book has scores of superb insights, ranging from the nexus of domestic and foreign policy, to close readings of key texts, to new interpretations of events and sequences made possible through the eclectic source base and the lens of analysis on the West. The apotheosis of the West in U.S. foreign policy was, of course, during and immediately following World War II. I appreciated Kimmage’s even-handed approach to the many Wests in play in that era, from America Firsters seeing the United States as a paragon of virtue; to preserving FDR’s Four Freedoms in a universal Western world; to the critiques of Du Bois and others, especially in the wake of the war, when the fate of the non-

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West was determined by the parochial, racist, hegemonic civilizational logics still at play in the postwar organizations designed to reorient international relations. In turn, Kimmage insightfully shows how, within a half century, these organizations and the notions that shaped them supplanted the West itself, making the “liberal international order” the new West, with a comparable but more malleable set of commitments and ideals. It also had less long-term baggage, yet it remained a shibboleth for similar practices that propped up the central components and tenets of a U.S.-West-led world.

Universities, intellectuals, and policymaker-scholar-thinkers are crucial to this account, beginning with Thomas Jefferson and the University of Virginia. “In this linkage between learning and liberty and between politics and ideas,” writes Kimmage, “Jefferson was prescient. His contributions would prove crucial . . . and universities (of many kinds) would never cease to have a decisive impact on American foreign policy” (16). Universities, thinkers, disciplines, and theories have been the shaping force behind what David Milne has depicted as the crucial worldviews of American strategic thinkers, and Kimmage amply demonstrates their influence at the level of ideas.

The book hinges persuasively on four key moments, or “acts,” as Kimmage calls them, playing upon the stagecraft imagery that Bishop Berkeley used in his poem about the westward course of empire, “Verses on the Prospect of Planting Arts and Learning in America.” These acts extend from “the connections Jefferson established between . . . idea and foreign policy, foreign policy and idea” (19), to revolutionary notions of liberty (which excluded non-white peoples and slaves), and an ideological foreign policy project framed at first implicitly and later explicitly on notions of the West. From the late nineteenth century through 1963, according to Kimmage, the West was an ascendant cause in American society, politics, and foreign relations, often frequently invoked, and always under stress and critique.

The book generally moves chronologically, with some overlapping that is due to the flow of ideas, figures, and events. It opens with the United States as “Columbian Republic” in 1893 and shifts from largely continental westward expansion to a cultivated world-shaping based on both European connections and common Greco-Roman inheritance. Next, the book tracks the rise of the modern idea of the West from act one in the Wilson era through

act two in the 1920s and 1930s and through act three, at the zenith of the Cold War, in the 1950s to early 1960s. In the 1960s a critique of the West began to emerge, with 1963 as the pivot point. The transformation thereafter came in a period of questioning leading toward an end, or even a “suicide” of the West, that Kimmage details as spanning the period from 1863 through 1979 (157-201).

Act four was “an exercise in irony” (22), as the West “exits stage right.” That was the end of the Cold War moment, a time that might well have been the apotheosis of the West and yet, as Kimmage explains, everything coalesced, from the right and the left, to “move away from invocations of the West”: nationalism, internationalism, transnationalism, along with increasing polarization and the lack of a unifying existential enemy and a cause (23). Yes, there was a New World Order, a global order, and there were agreed-upon values related to freedom and liberty to pursue, but those values were no longer under the aegis of the West, and they were far from clear in application (NATO, Kosovo, Iraq War, Libya, Syria, climate change, nonproliferation, etc.).

It is a bit reductive to say it in this way, as this book draws on a vast array of sources, but looming over this book are a number of major works. W.E.B. Du Bois’s *Souls of Black Folk* (1903) is crucial in setting up the problem that the color line presented for Western goals and in showing the fundamentally self-destructive hypocrisy of a Western foreign policy based on freedom. Oswald Spengler’s *The Decline of the West* (1918–23, trans. 1926), which epitomizes post-World War I disillusion, is also crucial, as is Mortimer Adler’s *The Great Ideas: A Syntopicon of Great Books of the Western World* (1952), which juxtaposes the aftermath of World War II with the optimism and set of values Adler heralds in the “Western Civ moment” of the 1940s and 1950s. But it is William McNeill’s *The Rise of the West: A History of the Human Community* (1963), which plays off Spengler’s title and the World War I generation’s “credible pessimism” (113) and defines both a culmination and a conclusion, that looms over the era and marks a clear watershed.

In the 1990s, McNeill himself lamented his book’s naïveté. As Kimmage explains, by that time McNeill recognized that his book “retained more than a whiff of Eurocentrism” (133). But of course, this “lament predated the 1990s. It was the substance of Du Bois’s unheeded 1947 appeal” and of much earlier criticism of the American-and-Euro-centric hegemonic practices of American empire, from the Columbian Exposition and annexations of the 1890s, through the resolutions and the mandate system baked into the Treaty of Versailles and the League of Nations, to the international structures of world order that came in the aftermath of a second devastating global war in the 1940s. The aftermath of that war overlapped with Du Bois’s appeal to the United Nations on the “denial of human rights to minorities in the case of citizens of negro descent in the United States of America” (131–33).

The Rise of the West, however, came at the end of an era in American politics and foreign policy, according to Kimmage. The real intellectual marker of the era can be seen in the rise of Black American diplomats such as Ralph Bunche, who eventually received the Nobel Peace Prize, and the wide range of works critiquing the sources of U.S. foreign policy, including William Appleman Williams’s *Tragedy of American Diplomacy* (1959), Gabriel Kolko’s *The Politics of War* (1968), Noam Chomsky’s *American Power and the New Mandarins* (1969), and David Halberstam’s *The Best and the Brightest* (1972). Taken together, these works offered a searing indictment of the war in Vietnam in particular,

but also of broader Cold War rhetorics on a U.S.-led West, illuminating motivations, influences, peoples, and groups that combined to exert immense causal forces in American foreign policy.

In contrast, by identifying liberals as the source of decline and central antagonists in the drama of Western expansion, James Burnham’s *Suicide of the West* (1964) excoriated figures like James Baldwin as much as JFK or Walt Rostow for unmoored universalism. Burnham saw “national belonging (his own country) as a bridge to civilizational belonging” (219). The internationalist liberal, in contrast, had developed “a generalized hatred of Western civilization and of his own country as a part of the West” (219). For Burnham, Eisenhower’s use of U.S. diplomatic power to defend Egypt in the Suez Crisis against Britain and France as well as the non-Western Soviet Union—and actions like it—were a clear sign that the United States was deeply implicated in the decline of the West. Though communism and decolonization were enormous problems for the West, according to Burnham, it was variations on liberalism that were leading to suicide and an end state.

Burnham’s prescription, of course, was a renewal of conservative Western values, inherently white and awfully supremacist (exactly the critique of Du Bois, Baldwin, Chomsky, et al.). He proposed to reassert “the pre-liberal conviction that Western civilization, thus Western man, is both different from and superior in quality to other civilizations and non-civilizations” (219). Kimmage believes these old ideas were given new form by people like Burnham and Barry Goldwater, people who had less in common with the optimistic William F. Buckley Jr. and more in common with the pessimistic Pat Buchanan of the 1990s.

The most important critic of the conservative idea of the West, in my view, was Edward Said, in whose book *Orientalism* (1978) the critiques by men like Du Bois, Baldwin, and Chomsky culminated, as Kimmage lays it out. Said responded to the backlash against 1960s critics of the United States—a backlash that was trying to redeem an imagined, glorious West and rally around it. Kimmage does a superb job of centering Said’s work as a crucial pivot away from the intellectual currents about the West in U.S. foreign policy and politics more broadly from the 1960s to the end of the Cold War.

Indeed, Said’s analysis in revised and updated forms continues to frame core animating elements of U.S. global aims and the concomitant reluctance to herald the “West” in abstract terms. His central East-West contrast and his rejection of facile binaries is paramount. The “essence of Orientalism,” according to Said, “is the ineradicable distinction between western superiority and Oriental inferiority” (189). In turn, Western or European identity was a problem because in relation to a real or imagined East or other, its cultural representations and other modes of exchange (commerce, diplomacy) have historically operated as not just a means of control but as a means of domination.

As Kimmage suggests, Said lined the United States up with Britain and France, and his “most devastating indictment was of the American-led West” (191). What stands out to Kimmage, as he deploys Said’s analysis to help frame subsequent critiques, is that it did not operationalize any reductive foreign policy paths forward. What it did do, in order to address why the West fell further from favor in U.S. diplomatic rhetoric after the Cold War, was to make a trenchant case against reductive conflicts that “herd people under falsely unifying rubrics like ‘American,’ ‘the West,’ or ‘Islam’ and invent collective identities for large numbers of individuals who are actually quite diverse” (191–92).

Said’s analysis in revised and updated forms continues to frame core animating elements of U.S. global aims and the concomitant reluctance to herald the “West” in abstract terms. His central East-West contrast and his rejection of facile binaries is paramount. The “essence of Orientalism,” according to Said, “is the ineradicable distinction between western superiority and Oriental inferiority.”

In conflicts from the Gulf War through the wars in Afghanistan, Iraq, and Syria, American leaders have tried to follow this path, albeit imperfectly. Their halting rhetoric and George W. Bush's quick recanting of the language of crusade underscore this point. The United States has abandoned the West. Said's insights built on those of three generations before him, and now there are two that have followed. His efforts were integral to the conceptual tearing down of the "ideological fiction of the West" by the end of 1970s; and certainly, by the early 1990s, the central tenets of *Orientalism* had been so widely accepted that they "permanently undermined the prestige of Western Civilization curricula at American universities," "dethroned books like William McNeill's *The Rise of the West*," and thereby untethered the West from its "self-declared values and ideals."

Where will the United States turn now? While the liberal international order, or rules-based order, has been instrumental in replacing some of what the West stood for and in attempting that conceptual project with less of the imperial, racist, hegemonic baggage, what it is not and was not, according to Kimmage, is something most "Americans were necessarily ready to sacrifice for" (23). I was left to wonder what value the aggregating concept of "the West" has any more. Personally, I have tremendous interest in and even reverence for many of the individual authors, thinkers, and traditions that might be distilled from the West, but I am not interested in any abstract aggregation of the West, which seems problematic to operationalize at best, and offensive as a continuing of racialized-hegemonic practices at worst. As Kimmage rightly and vividly explains, the "West" as an aggregating concept was challenging after 1919; even more so in the 1960s; almost impossible after the Cold War; and certainly toxic in the wake of 9/11. Only in the heyday preceding World War I and especially during World War II and mid-century did it work, even then, only for a relatively small subset of policymakers and nations. If I were advising a president, or policymaker, and even in my own public writing, a return to the "West" is not where I would land.

Thus, I wondered why, in his conclusion, Kimmage advances modest claims about reviving Euro-American, transatlantic, or "Western" alliances to face down challenges from China and Russia. After traveling so far through a book that seems to land on a place where Western solidarity, even if understood primarily in terms of ideals and not geography, is no longer relevant and remains deeply problematic, I would have imagined a turn to the constituent ideas as a place to go. That is, in the wake of America's first "non-western" president, it seems like extracting FDR-esque "Four Freedoms" notions to underpin U.S. re-engagement via the WHO and the UN to fight the global pandemic and climate change, to pursue non-proliferation, and even to re-inscribe visions for collective security in Asia, the Middle East, and Europe, would be more appropriate than any return to the freighted language and concepts of the "West."

Review of Michael Kimmage, *The Abandonment of the West: The History of an Idea in American Foreign Policy*

Heather Marie Stur

In search of a symbol of Western principles in the twenty-first century, Michael Kimmage made his way to the National Museum of African American History and Culture (NMAAHC) in Washington, DC. At first look, this

trip seems odd—an unexpected conclusion to a scholarly journey that began at the 1893 Chicago World's Fair and followed the rise and decline of the idea of the West. African Americans and other people of color had been some of the most articulate and forceful critics of the West, pointing out its relationship to white supremacy and imperialism, both physical and cultural.

But what Kimmage found in the NMAAHC were the Western values of liberty and self-government, the struggle for which shaped the museum's telling of African American history. At the museum's opening in 2016, President Barack Obama called it a shrine to "the deep and abiding love for this country, and the ideals upon which it is founded" (328). For Kimmage, the fact that America's first black president opened the NMAAHC validated his belief that Western values are forces for democracy and freedom despite their misuse by racists and colonialists.

Kimmage defines the concept of the West as "a Euro-American narrative of self-government and liberty, a history of liberty, a project of building liberty, a future-oriented heritage of liberty" (14). It is rooted in the Enlightenment, the European philosophical movement of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries that inspired the U.S. founders to conceive of national independence and provided the language for the Declaration of Independence. The West gained salience as the embodiment of a foreign policy principle in the early twentieth century, particularly during World War I. That conflict brought the idea of "self-determination," at least for the parts of Europe under Austro-Hungarian, German, and Ottoman imperial rule, into the international conversation. In Paris after the war, President Woodrow Wilson argued that a global commitment to national freedom was key to world peace. He believed so deeply in the power of an international collaboration of liberty-loving nations to "end all wars" that he risked his health to try and convince Americans to accept membership in the League of Nations.

The colonized world paid hopeful attention to Wilson's words, but African American intellectuals like W.E.B. DuBois were not surprised to learn that what Wilson meant was a Poland for Poles but not a Kenya for Kenyans. White supremacy already defined the international order, and "Western" Europeans and Americans had devised elaborate racial hierarchies to justify their subjugation of non-Western countries while purporting to uphold liberty and freedom. In the 1930s and 1940s, fascism in Franco's Spain, Mussolini's Italy, and Hitler's Germany threatened the Western order and provided a common enemy to bolster an imagined Western unity.

With the establishment of Western civilization courses in the 1930s, U.S. universities offered the intellectual foundation for the Euro-American alliance that linked America, Britain, and France via their national affinities for classical antiquity and the Enlightenment. Hypocrisy also united the U.S. and Western Europe, as racism and imperialism remained central to their national identities and international behaviors. African American veterans who returned home after fighting against Nazi racism only to be told to sit at the back of the bus called the United States out on its pretense.

Out of the ashes of World War II the United States rose and stood as the leader of the West. American policymakers viewed the ensuing Cold War world as one of stark divides—East versus West, separated by an iron curtain that cut through Europe. Kimmage notes that America's Cold War presidents idealized the West more than their predecessors or their successors. Yet the Cold War world was more complicated than the East-West binary made it

look. Activists and politicians in the decolonizing world resisted the pull to either pole, preferring non-alignment and regional cooperation to entering the U.S. or the Soviet sphere.

Although the West claimed to champion liberty and freedom, America still held on to an undemocratic culture. Its violent racism left leaders in Africa and Asia wondering what kind of friend the United States could possibly be to them. The murder of Emmitt Till, clashes over desegregation, and international media coverage of U.S. race relations motivated President Dwight Eisenhower to launch a series of jazz tours, which were administered by the State Department.

Louis Armstrong, Duke Ellington, Dizzy Gillespie, and other musicians traveled throughout the decolonizing world and the Eastern Bloc and played concerts to showcase African American contributions to U.S. culture. Behind the scenes, the musicians also talked with locals about their shared experiences with racism, defying orders to only speak positively about life in the United States. The State Department caught on, and the CIA began monitoring the musicians while they were on tour.

By the time George W. Bush was president, the concept of an East-West clash of civilizations had fallen out of favor as a policy principle, thanks to critiques of the West launched by both the Left and the Right in the United States. Beginning in the 1960s, the academic Left and people of color denounced the West for its neoimperialist wars in places like Vietnam and for the racism that informed those interventions. Later in the Cold War and after, some on the Right rejected the West's liberal internationalism, warning that Americans should insulate themselves from the "cold winds of globalization" (19).

After the Cold War ended, the concept of a shared global commitment to liberty usurped the idea of the West, with its need for a polar opposite against which to define itself. That shared commitment is why Bush disavowed the word "crusade," which suggests a clash between East and West, to describe the war on terror, Kimmage argues. This is where Kimmage sees U.S. foreign policymakers abandoning the idea of the West. President Donald Trump continued that abandonment when he repudiated America's long relationship with NATO.

Despite recent rejections of the importance of Euro-American kinship, it remains central to Kimmage's definition of the West, and as he traces the idea of the West in U.S. foreign policy, he does not hide his belief in its promise. He writes in his conclusion that the West offers "a shared set of ideals" that could unify a divided U.S. public (320). However, for Americans to buy into the idea of the West again, he asserts that school and university curricula, public history, and the built environment must all emphasize Western values and make the case for why and how those values unite all Americans regardless of race, gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, or religion. Kimmage argues that identity politics have run amok on both the Left and the Right and have made Americans forget that their nation and its rich multicultural identity exist because "self-government is neither a conservative nor a progressive cause" nor "the property of any one ethnic, racial, or religious group" (319). Americans are better, and truer to the principles of their founding, together.

Even Kimmage's discussion of the West's detractors serves to illustrate the West's potential for good—if its tenet of liberty is applied to everyone. Yet liberty and self-government don't necessarily support the common good. In the United States, Americans elected a right-

wing demagogue to the presidency in 2016, and European politics have taken a conservative turn within the past two decades. Politicians from Marine Le Pen in France to Viktor Orban in Hungary have won election to national offices after campaigning on far-right principles. Liberal internationalists tend to romanticize democracy, as though Europe's velvet revolutions of the late 1980s, not the populist discord of the 2010s, are the standard for how democracy plays out. The truth about self-government is that it includes the right to elect a dictator who might eventually strip away civil liberties.

The West's conservative turn might cause a cynic to reject Kimmage's vision of democracy, but to do so, the cynic would have to ignore the mobilization of African American voters in Georgia in the 2020 U.S. presidential election and the 2021 Senate run-off elections, as well as other grassroots movements for more equitable politics and shared citizenship. The cynic would also have to ignore the elections of young and progressive congressional representatives like Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, Rashida Tlaib, Ayanna Pressley, and Ilhan Omar. Although identity politics informed both the support for and the opposition to these politicians, the opportunities they had to run for office and citizens' rights to a choice of candidates from across the political spectrum is political liberty, the most cherished "Western" value.

Average voters and local activists may not know or care about what "the West" means, and they might never read the works of Oswald Spengler, Jacques Barzun, William McNeill, W.E.B. DuBois, James Baldwin, or Edward Said. But they know and care about what the right to vote means for their lives, and it is not connected to America's relationship with Europe. The ideals embedded in the concept of the West may have originated in the European Enlightenment, but the United States was the first nation to build a lasting political system based on those ideals, and for all its many faults, the American experiment with Western democracy has not yet failed. Kimmage's call to ponder the African American struggle for civil liberties within the complicated, shameful, and hopeful history of the United States is a reminder that ideas are as good as the people who put them into practice.

Clinging to the West: Or, What is a Declining Hegemon to do?

Brad Simpson

It is perhaps fitting to review Michael Kimmage's *The Abandonment of the West* in the aftermath of the 2020 election, which many observers considered a referendum on the future of U.S. foreign policy and its relationship to a democratic Europe, and on the survival of a democratic West more generally. Trump's supporters likewise portrayed the elections as a referendum on the future of the West and the president himself as the "bodyguard of Western civilization," as right-wing activist Charlie Kirk inelegantly phrased it at the Republican National Convention in August 2020. Trump himself spent his term as president repeatedly declaring, as he did in Warsaw, Poland, in 2017, that Western civilization was under assault from "radical Islamic terrorism," immigration, globalism, and other ominous threats.

But what is the West that Trump claimed to defend and critics accuse him of seeking to undermine? And what is the West that the new Biden administration is self-consciously pledging to rejoin? Michael Kimmage argues that ideas of an imagined "West," defined as a set of transatlantic

ideals of “liberty and self-government,” guided twentieth-century U.S. diplomacy and foreign policy before coming under assault in the 1960s and that a revived, expansive, inclusive, and multicultural conception of “the West” still has utility as an animating framework.

We should note what Kimmage is not trying to do. He is not attempting to explore the persistence of a concept’s shifting frames of meaning, as Kristin Hoganson does in *The Heartland*; nor is he trying to reframe U.S. history around the violence of our ever-receding frontiers in a way that is constitutive rather than exceptional, as Greg Grandin does in *The End of the Myth*. Rather, Kimmage’s account seems squarely aimed at liberal foreign policy elites and educated readers for whom the “liberal international order” exists as a continuing aspiration rather than as a joke. It is not a historiographical intervention, as it employs a rather scattershot collection of great books and representative texts, and Kimmage visited no archives. It is, instead, an attempted resuscitation of an exhausted liberal internationalism, framed as a defense of a multicultural West rather than the ethno-nationalist West of Steve Bannon’s fevered imagination.

Kimmage frames the United States in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century as a “Columbian Republic” (32) whose intellectual and political elites imagined themselves as culturally linked “to the cosmopolitan West and to a larger Europe,” especially after the United States emerged as an overseas colonial power in the 1890s. The 1893 Chicago World’s Fair makes an expected appearance, but Kimmel focuses his attention on neoclassical architecture, Western Civilization programs at major universities, and great engineering projects such as the Panama Canal as the clearest expression of fidelity to vague ideas of the West, alongside an emergent commitment to empire and worries about civilizational decline. Here W.E.B. Du Bois embodies the immanent critique of the Americans’ imagined West, offering “an inclusivity larger and better than white Americanism and the imperial sway of contemporary international affairs,” a vision Kimmel returns to throughout the book.

Empire, however, got in the way, ushered in by McKinley, Roosevelt, and Wilson with much florid rhetoric about the United States as an “arsenal of civilization and a guarantor of order” and, evidently, almost no violence. Businessmen seeking foreign markets or missionaries seeking souls to convert played no evident role, nor does capitalism more generally, except by vague reference (58). One would hardly know, reading this account, that the United States had already emerged as an industrial behemoth before 1919, pioneering models of mass production and consumption across leading sectors—models that alternately fascinated and terrified Europeans. Kimmage’s lack of engagement with existing historiography is especially acute here. He misses any number of opportunities to grapple with Michael Adas, Kristin Hoganson, Andrew Preston, Paul Kramer, Amy Kaplan and others.

After 1919, Kimmage argues, the United States was dominant but not prepared to lead; its elites were still mostly in thrall to “anti-immigrant sentiment and rampant Anglo-Saxonism.” Universities, architects whose tastes extended beyond the neo-gothic, and “educated Americans,” in contrast, “were solidifying a connection to European culture and history” beyond Northern Europe and Protestantism, while Nazism and Communism waited in the wings (73, 82–84). Great men (Coolidge, Kellogg, Stimson, Roosevelt, and Hull, Lippman, Eisenhower, etc.) drive the geopolitical story in these years. They gradually deepened U.S. involvement in European affairs, though in Hull’s case with no apparent concern for free trade. Elite

universities such as Columbia and Chicago, meanwhile, widened the horizons of a generation of elites with General Honors and Great Books courses that emphasized the contemporary relevance of European classics.

The early Cold War (1945–1963), in Kimmage’s rendering, represents the golden age of the West in the eyes of U.S. foreign policy elites. Again, Kimmage cites the widespread currency of textbooks such as William McNeill’s *The Rise of the West* (1963), which firmly located the United States within “Western civilization” and associated both with democracy and cultural vitality (114–15). Great men again make their appearance (Truman, Kennan, Marshall, Eisenhower, the Dulles brothers, Walt Rostow, JFK), forging transatlantic partnerships with German, British, and French colleagues while occasionally—very occasionally—engaging in covert operations in places like Iran and Guatemala. Great scholars, many of them European refugees (Carl Friedrich, Hannah Arendt, Leo Strauss, Henry Kissinger, Zbigniew Brzezinski) bridged the world between academia and policy in Aspen or Cambridge (142–43). Modern architecture (Dulles Airport, Foggy Bottom, window-filled U.S. embassies in Accra and Baghdad, and even the universally hated Penn Station) broke with the neoclassical past and suggested optimism about the future (146–48).

But there were questions, many revolving around whether the U.S. vision of the West could break with white supremacy and empire while embracing diversity. Malcolm X, James Baldwin, and Martin Luther King posed them from the outside, while diplomats such as Ralph Bunche and Carl Rowan posed them from within, seeking to diversify the national security state and paving the way for Colin Powell and Condoleezza Rice to wage war with multicultural armies. The U.S. wars in Indochina (176–78), myriad covert interventions, and alliances with authoritarian regimes serve as a vague backdrop for deepening pessimism about the moral valence of U.S. leadership of the West, but mostly they are bloodless abstractions, rendered in the passive voice and drained of any sense of the human toll they took. Inside the university, William Appleman Williams, Gabriel Kolko, Noam Chomsky, and especially Edward Said critiqued and demystified U.S. foreign policy, “detaching the West from its self-declared values and ideals” (192). Meanwhile, energy crises, revolutionary upheaval in the Middle East, and a sweater-clad Jimmy Carter “gave the impression of a West unable to control its own destiny” (197).

Many conservatives during this period, rejecting the sunny revivalism of Ronald Reagan, shared a deepening pessimism over the vitality and coherence of a West beset by secularism, social and cultural liberalism, multiculturalism, and university-based ethnic studies programs (233–35). Some veered into neoconservatism (James Burnham, Irving Kristol), others into culture war defenses of an allegedly beleaguered Western canon (Allan Bloom, Dinesh D’Souza, William Bennett), while Francis Fukuyama sought “to refute the theorists of malaise, decline, and suicide” (244). Presidents Clinton, Bush, and Obama, Kimmage argues, rejected such pessimism, embracing instead different strands of post-Cold War universalism that reflected a continuing belief in the epistemological and ideological coherence of a West embracing “liberty and self-government,” if not crusading triumphalism.

But the liberal international order was a chimera, as the backlash against neoliberal globalization, China’s resistance to political (if not economic) liberalization, authoritarian revival in the former Soviet Union, and the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, testified. Samuel Huntington’s *Clash*

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of *Civilizations* serves as Kimmage's ur-text for the era's pessimism (264–270), counterbalanced in the early 2000s by John Ikenberry's and Samantha Powers's emergence as "the conscience of [a] liberal international order" (281) that could "dispense with the racial, ethnic, religious, and cultural baggage of the West" (284).

Obama-era optimism, Kimmage argues, foundered in the face of the collapse of the 2011 Arab Spring, civil war in Syria, and challenges from Russia and China. Advocates of an "illiberal West" took advantage, "a dormant West defined not as liberty but as an ethnonationalist entity, a West defined in opposition to the liberal international order," universalism, immigration, and the like. The "illiberal West" delivered twin shocks to the liberal international order in the form of Brexit and the election of Donald Trump, himself the ideological spawn of Pat Buchanan's racist, xenophobic, authoritarian brand of civilizational malaise.

Four years later, Kimmage laments, the United States "is no longer the swing-dancing Mount Olympus of democracy" (303). Europe and NATO are no longer as central to American security; a commitment to hoary ideas about "the West" no longer dominates the academy or structures U.S. political culture; and nobody reads the classics, if they read at all. Nevertheless, Kimmage insists on the foreign policy urgency of "reviving the West" through a recommitment to ideas of liberty and self-government, a vision of the West more diverse, more multicultural, perhaps a little less militaristic than before, all the better to engage in strategic competition with Russia and China (314, 318). Universities, he helpfully suggests, should continue to teach key Western texts (though evidently not histories of them), make everyone read Toqueville, and "train students in the foreign policy initiatives that have been derived from liberty and self-government," such as Wilson's Fourteen Points and the Atlantic Charter. Museums should look more like the African American history museum and less like the World War II memorial, to inspire visitors to be more confident about the country's democratic possibilities.

The Abandonment of the West is not aimed at historians, as Kimmage makes no historiographical interventions and consulted no archives. It is aimed, rather, at members of the foreign policy blob who are edified by revived ideas of a multicultural West and who need no explanations of the Atlantic Charter and Wilson's Fourteen Points because everyone agrees on their self-evident virtue. It is aimed at readers for whom the claim that "the essence of the West in American foreign policy has never been ethnic or racial" (317) inspires not sputtering gasps but knowing nods. Kimmage's breezy tour of a century and a half of U.S. foreign policy barely gestures at the violence of wars and interventions, U.S. economic interests, or the militarized structure of U.S. hegemony after 1945.

To cite but one of innumerable possible examples, Kimmage's emphasis on civilizational ideals as animating the impulses of U.S. officials at key moments, such as during the Second World War, relegates geopolitics, the world economy, and conceptions of world order to the sidelines (for an exception, see 107–108). "Leadership of the West fell into Truman's lap" (104) in 1945, he passively asserts, and U.S. officials, apparently untroubled by politics or differing conceptions of U.S. national security, simply chose to lead, an argument that Stephen Wertheim has persuasively demolished.

Kimmage's insistence on the urgency and utility of a pluralistic, tolerant, inclusive idea of the West will resonate with those who view the Biden administration's foreign policy as a restorationist project: restoring transatlantic partnership; restoring the credibility of U.S. global leadership; and restoring the putative power of America's example. But "the West" as a value proposition or as a set of ostensible political commitments makes no contribution

to understanding or grappling with the gravest challenges facing the United States, including climate change, galloping global inequality, pandemic disease, authoritarian revival at home and abroad, and the bipartisan commitment of national security elites to global military dominance for decades to come.

Review of Michael Kimmage, *The Abandonment of the West: The History of an Idea in American Foreign Policy*

Andrew J. Rotter

Michael Kimmage's new book is remarkable for its ambition: it offers a sweeping interpretation of how the idea of the West has influenced U.S. foreign policy for the last century and a half. Citing fiction and quoting poetry, sampling from the work of historians and biographers, Kimmage presents a "four-act drama" that begins with the Chicago World's Fair and Columbian Exposition in 1893 (but hearkens back to the early Republic) and ends with the presidency of Donald Trump.

Along the way, Kimmage describes how Americans have imagined the West; how they have fought over its definition, meaning, and importance; how their leaders have deployed it in the service of their policy decisions; and how, starting in 1992 but with breathtaking speed after 2016, they have abandoned it, either because of its increasingly problematic nature or in the name of a parochial nationalism that sees no virtue in respecting either the past or the transatlantic community that was built upon it after 1945. Kimmage regards the abandonment of the West as a tragedy. His concluding chapter combines elegy with exhortation; the West as an idea isn't quite dead but is seriously resting, and its revival is essential for the United States as a cultural, diplomatic, and moral touchstone.

Books that take on big issues deserve admiration and respect, and I offer mine. Yet they risk much too. Tracking a single theme over the full history of the Republic threatens to flatten a complex story, eliding other matters of importance and discarding evidence that gets in the way. When that theme is the West—an idea that is not only big but so vigorously grappled over that the buzzword "contested" hardly begins to describe its course—the complications grow. And when a historian has the temerity to defend the idea of the West, to consider but dismiss the scholarly criticism that it invites, and to end his account with a recommendation that all American university students should be required to read several "key texts" in U.S. history and something of their "foundation," including Locke, Kant, the Old Testament book of Amos, and "a touch of Greco-Roman antiquity" (320), as Kimmage does here, he is all but looking for trouble. He will find some here.

Start with his limited collection of secondary sources. Kimmage chooses wisely but too well, neglecting scholarship that might have enriched his case or made it more subtle. Since, for example, religion is at the core of what most people think the West means, it is surprising that Kimmage's endnotes do not contain references to important works on religion and U.S. foreign relations, including those by William Inboden, Andrew Preston, and Melani McAlister.¹ Similarly, while Kimmage recognizes the significance of race in the formation of the West as an idea, and does cite the work of W. E. B. Du Bois, James Baldwin, and Martin Luther King, he relies almost exclusively for perspective on Thomas Borstelmann's *The Cold War and the Color Line*—an excellent source, but at nearly twenty years old hardly alone any more in its insight on the subject.² Far from fetishizing scholarly bulk or demanding recognition for the work of one's friends, this concern seems to me directly proportional to Kimmage's need to substantiate his admirably bold claims. The higher the wire, the greater the

need of a robust support system for the performer.

Kimmage builds his case through a series of biographies of eminent thinkers and policymakers and the books they wrote and read. He displays range and erudition in these excursions, seemingly comfortable with the poetry of Langston Hughes (and Dr. Seuss); the song lyrics of Bob Dylan; the fiction of Saul Bellow, V. S. Naipaul, and Graham Greene; and, most of all, influential nonfiction that confronts the idea of the West, including books by Du Bois, James Burnham, Hannah Arendt (virtually the only woman included in Kimmage's analysis), Edward Said, Francis Fukuyama, and Samuel Huntington. Impressive though it may be, this approach sacrifices linear narrative and invites digression. More than once, I had the impression of being an undergraduate in a lively but perplexing course in American Studies, taught by a popular professor whose enthusiasm for his vivid and various materials tended to outweigh his commitment to getting through the syllabus.

Kimmage's real love is for the architecture of Washington, DC, or most of it. He is at his best in describing the glories of David Adjaye's National Museum of African American History and Culture, "Washington's most vital and important public space," the embodiment of "a new West" (326, 328). He is at his most digressive when he notes that the capital's airport is named for John Foster Dulles, at the time the most extensively traveled secretary of state in U.S. history (137). A little of this goes a long way. There is more than a little of it here.

The East is a career, as Benjamin Disraeli wrote in his novel, *Tancred*.³ What is the West, according to Kimmage? An idea, yes; he says so in his title. But ideas have variants, subsets, forms they take, particular functions. They change over time. Is the West a logic, a roadmap, a set of rules meant to be followed? Is it an ideology, what Michael Hunt called "an interrelated set of convictions or assumptions that reduces the complexities of a particular slice of reality to easily comprehensible terms and suggests appropriate ways of dealing with that reality"?⁴ Is the West a culture, rich with symbolic meaning, reflecting social significance, indicative not only of thought but feeling? Is it a construction or a discourse, the Occidental counterpart of Said's Orientalism? (If so, what is its relationship to power?) Is it a concept characterized mainly by its usefulness, there to provide a rationale for hubris or dominion, portable and fungible through time and space? George Kennan famously called Marxism a "fig leaf" of the "moral and intellectual respectability" of Soviet leaders.⁵ Has the idea of the West worked the same way for Americans? Frequently used in partnership with the word "civilization," is it for its enthusiasts just a synonym for that word?

One of the confusions created by any invocation of the West in U.S. history stems from its double meaning: it can indicate identification of the United States with the nations of Western Europe through their common origins in the Classical World, or it can mean the apparently yawning space roughly west of the Appalachian Mountains, the American frontier that has in its mythic form served as an inducement to movement, an outlet for class conflict, and a guarantor of democracy.⁶ Kimmage means the first, nodding only briefly to the second (Frederick Jackson Turner is relegated to parentheses, 35).

This is not a small distinction. It points instead to a fundamental tension in American identity and, by extension, U.S. foreign relations. The transatlantic West was an affiliation predicated on a shared civilization that was presumed to have started in Europe. The transcontinental West offered a vision of national identity that renounced

Europe as overcivilized, despotic, corrupt, ossified, and effete. As much as American elites may have wished to follow the intellectual and cultural fashions of their European counterparts, they were hesitant to embrace them too ardently, out of fear that they would lose what was uniquely theirs. Kimmage understands this, of course, noting that the West was still making its "case" to Americans before 1945. Still, the struggle between these two versions of the West has never fully disappeared. Belief in their own exceptionalism made Americans reluctant to join with their Western cohabitants in two world wars, to condone desperate acts of postwar imperialism (Suez, 1956), and to follow European leads on matters of trade and finance, even after Bretton Woods.

Kimmage is hardly unaware of the problems of the Western canon and the reasons why it has endured criticism from the left, even if it is made "new" by the addition of a few writers of color. Some argue that defenders of the West are parochial, asserting or assuming that only its historical luminaries have articulated ideas and values worth

The constructed West has struggled in particular with its history of spawning authoritarianism. Fascism and communism were born in the West. Kimmage seems uncertain as to how to handle this, implying at times that authoritarian systems are something outside the West, alien to it, able to exploit its moral letdowns and its genial defense of free speech in order to hijack its political institutions.

reproducing. They point out that those typically considered outside the West have in fact come by different paths to many of the same ideas and values, or have generated their own versions of these that depart from "Western" ones but are nevertheless worthy of respect. This is emphatically true in an increasingly globalized world. Lacking (say) Confucius and the Buddha, the *Mahābhārata*, the *Qu'rān*, or the *Popol Vuh*, the canon is radically incomplete. Other critics charge defenders of the West with hypocrisy. Ideals of justice, liberty, democracy, peace, and respect for law have been

too often compromised by Western practices of racial slavery, misogyny and discrimination, class exploitation, imperialism, and violence. The idea of the West has been built on oppression and exclusion; its seeming virtues are the result of its deepest vices. And the West is, after all, a constructed thing, its texts chosen by human beings of a certain standing and not by the finger of some deity.

The constructed West has struggled in particular with its history of spawning authoritarianism. Fascism and communism were born in the West. Kimmage seems uncertain as to how to handle this, implying at times that authoritarian systems are something outside the West, alien to it, able to exploit its moral letdowns and its genial defense of free speech in order to hijack its political institutions. Germany, he writes, descended "from civilization to barbarism" during the 1930s (103). The West's powers of resistance are limited; its borders are evidently porous.

Kimmage's spirited defense of the Western alliance is understandable and welcome in the current circumstances. His defense of the values it supposedly represents is murkier, and it isn't clear that the West as an idea was as pervasive and as powerful as he claims after 1945. Imagine a thought experiment: Americans are stricken with a highly selective anomia and forget the words "West," and "Western," as capitalized, altogether. What would be lost as a result? They would still, on the whole, support good things like democracy, decency, freedom, respect for the law, and the rest—they just wouldn't know to aggregate them under the label "Western." They would read, think, and talk about these values regardless of their historical or literary points of origin. They would deem them universal values, not Western ones. No one would celebrate the West over the East; all such comparisons would be invidious and now impossible. People would simply cherish what was good and right.

Kimmage writes with an evocative, aphoristic style that

sometimes soars, sometimes grates. He makes some small mistakes, twice misspelling “linchpin” (125, 281); giving Condoleezza Rice degrees from the University of Colorado (she went to the University of Denver); placing Gabriel Kolko in the “Wisconsin School” of diplomatic history (184); mucking out the “Aegean” rather than the “Augean” stables (210); neglecting to mention that William F. Buckley co-wrote *McCarthy and His Enemies* with McCarthy’s former speechwriter, L. Brent Bozell; and abbreviating Barack Obama’s private school to Puna (from Punahou, 271). He utters occasional banalities—William McNeill’s book *The Rise of the West* would have been different “had the Germans been victorious” in World War II (115)—and peculiarities—“World order was being hashed out not so much on the playing fields of American schools and universities as in their curricula and syllabi” (269).

I also have interpretive disagreements with Kimmage, on matters large and small. I struggle to understand his claim that the two World Wars and the Cold War were “all wars of East against West” (10); wonder whether the “strengths of Western enterprise were obvious” (11) in the 1990s, given the then-recent experience with Japanese and South Korean export successes; doubt that the British Empire emerged from the Great War “unscathed” (33), given the *Thawra* in Egypt and the aftermath of Jallianwala Bagh in India in 1919; and disagree that St. John’s College switched to a Great Books curriculum in 1937 out of a newfound commitment to the West (97) (it was trying desperately to save itself from bankruptcy). “God and Western man were invisible on Ivy League campuses” in 1960 (214)? Buckley complained about that, but it was hardly the case. And Kimmage’s epitaph for the book (308–9) seems to me premature: independent bookstores have shown surprising resilience in the digital age, and many of my students (and both of my daughters) cling determinedly to the printed page.⁷

Kimmage’s book is in the end a jeremiad, as calls to return to an allegedly forsaken West tend to be, though he seems on the whole to be more cheerful than many previous polemicists who have written in this vein. What I miss most in his account is a sense of irony. Reinhold Niebuhr gets just a mention in *The Abandonment of the West*, and there is nothing of Joseph Heller or Norman Mailer in the book. Yet it strikes me that much of what Kimmage is getting at has to do with the distance between intention and consequence—when, as Niebuhr wrote, the “apparently fortuitous incongruities of life . . . are discovered, upon closer examination, to be not merely fortuitous.”⁸ So it has been with the West: meant to summon what is good and right and of benevolent use to everyone, the invocation of the idea of the West has in fact always contained within itself the confounding, and thereby self-defeating, essence of hubris, the belief that what is “ours” is right, incontestably. That is not how Kimmage means it. Along with other well-intentioned scholars and advocates for the West, his intentions are pure. Consequences are, alas, another thing altogether.

Notes:

1. William Inboden, *Religion and American Foreign Policy, 1945–1960: The Soul of Containment* (Cambridge, UK, 2008); Andrew Preston, *Sword of the Spirit, Shield of Faith: Religion in American War and Diplomacy* (New York, 2012); Melani McAlister, *The Kingdom of God Has No Borders: A Global History of American Evangelicals* (New York, 2018).
2. Thomas Borstelmann, *The Cold War and the Color Line: American Race Relations in the Global Era* (Cambridge, MA, 2001).
3. An aphorism made famous as an epigraph in Edward Said, *Orientalism* (New York, 1978), np.
4. Michael H. Hunt, *Ideology and U.S. Foreign Policy* (New Haven, CT, 1987), xi.
5. The Charge in the Soviet Union (Kennan) to the Secretary of State, Feb. 22, 1946, <https://nsarchive2.gwu.edu/coldwar/docu->

ments/episode-1/kennan.htm.

6. See Greg Grandin, *The End of the Myth: From the Frontier to the Border Wall in the Mind of America* (New York, 2019).

7. I would also enjoy arguing with Kimmage about V. S. Naipaul’s novel *A House for Mr. Biswas*. He thinks the book is “a fiction writer’s Bandung” (172). I find it a lot less grand than that. And its protagonist is deeply annoying.

8. Reinhold Niebuhr, *The Irony of American History* (Chicago, 2008 [1952]).

Author’s Response

Michael Kimmage

I was honored to receive and read the essays on my 2020 book, *The Abandonment of the West*, written with verve, care, and erudition by four distinguished scholars. I was especially grateful for the critical judgments they rendered, because many of these judgments strike me as correct and because they are such a good point of departure for a dialogue about what this book is, what it was intended to achieve and what it fails to achieve. I will take up each essay in turn, offering a response to the points raised and to the questions asked, and will conclude with a few thoughts on the genre into which I think *The Abandonment* falls. Mostly, I would like this essay to demonstrate my gratitude for the effort Christopher Nichols, Brad Simpson, Andrew Rotter, and Heather Stur took in their close readings of my book.

Christopher Nichols notes that “this book is palpably the product of the U.S. foreign relations intellectual milieu that arose after 9/11 and persisted through the Trump presidency,” which is exactly right. I began work on this book in 2012. I also spent two years working at the State Department’s Office of Policy Planning (2014–16), not quite writing this book but contemplating it from the seventh floor, as it were. If the Trump presidency came along midstream, it did a lot to shape *The Abandonment*. Nichols adds that the book “is not entirely a critique and is far from a complete rejection,” which is also correct, a framing that I might reword to say that this book is both a history and, with qualifications, a defense of the West in American foreign policy. He goes on to describe the book as “the first broad-based intellectual history” of the West. It is also a “global intellectual history,” which is a lovely label and one I wish this book did more to deserve.

Like several other respondents, Nichols rightly criticizes *The Abandonment* for not doing enough to address “the role of women in U.S. engagement with the West as a concept.” He points to a lack of material on women’s activism in transnational peace and humanitarian movements, for example, and calls for “more on Jane Addams, Emily Baluch, Eleanor Roosevelt, Mary McLeod Bethune, Jeane Kirkpatrick, Madeleine Albright, and Samantha Power.” Jeane Kirkpatrick, Madeleine Albright, and Samantha Power are all cited in *The Abandonment* (Samantha Power at some length), as are Condoleezza Rice and Hillary Clinton, both in their capacities as secretary of state, and Anne-Marie Slaughter, in her capacity as director of policy planning at the State Department. Nevertheless, I agree with Nichols and with other responders in identifying a gender imbalance as one of the book’s debits.

In stimulating fashion, Nichols dissents from the conclusion of *The Abandonment*, outlining what he considers the obsolescence of the West and of any foreign-policy orientation with a pronounced Western component. Here he makes two interrelated points. First, he asks why I “advance[d] modest claims about reviving Euro-American, transatlantic, or ‘Western’ alliances to face down challenges from China and Russia,” given that “Western solidarity,

even in ideals, is no longer relevant and remains deeply problematic." Second, he proposes a post-Western or non-Western perspective for American foreign policy, a perspective that owes something to the policy thinking of the 1940s and 1950s. "In the wake of President Trump's 'America first' onslaught," Nichols writes, "extracting FDR-esque Four Freedoms notions to underpin U.S. reengagement via the UN and the WHO in to fight the global pandemic and climate change, to pursue non-proliferation, and even to reinscribe collective security in Asia, the Middle East, and Europe would be more appropriate than any return to the freighted language and concepts of the 'West.'"

Here I would stick to the (modest) claims I made in *The Abandonment*. China and Russia are a real challenge to the transatlantic alliance, Russia more in the national-security domain and China via its long-term economic statecraft. Alliance structures other than NATO will come into play for the United States *vis-à-vis* China, but challenges stemming from China will matter to the transatlantic alliance as well. Problematic as Western solidarity may be in this and many other regards, I still see it as necessary.

Nor are the Western ideals of consequence to *The Abandonment* (liberty and self-government) irrelevant for transatlantic Russia and China policy. Interestingly, the 2013–14 Maidan revolution in Ukraine was conducted explicitly in the name of Western ideals. A similar evolution is occurring in Belarus and has already occurred in many other post-Soviet states. Why would Washington, Brussels, Paris, Berlin, etc., choose to ignore these ideals where they are present and credible? Why would they not encourage them among the constituencies that are seeking such encouragement? What would one achieve with greater reticence or with a self-effacing silence?

Nichols's second argument conflicts with what was—for me—a key finding from my research: that there is an intimate connection among culture, ideas, and foreign policy; that foreign policy tends to work better when culture, ideas, and foreign policy are aligned; that political leaders, if they want their foreign policy to succeed, must find ways of articulating this alignment to their own and to foreign publics. Hence, the attention paid in this book to John F. Kennedy's 1963 visit to West Berlin and to the speech he gave there, which was the most effective way an American president has ever found to argue for "the idea of the West."

The West is a freighted concept. That is why the historian in me likes to write about it. But any alignment of culture, ideas, and foreign policy will be freighted, and the alternatives are not necessarily preferable. This is why the Obama administration's commitment to the "liberal international order," as I write in *The Abandonment*, never really took off. It was well-suited to handling the problems Nichols identifies, or at least better suited than the "America first" approach that came later. It helped in dealing with the Ebola crisis, negotiating the Paris Climate Accords, and the Iran nuclear deal, and expanding the perimeter of collective security in Asia and Europe – though not, alas, in the Middle East.

Outside of foreign policy circles, however, very few knew what the liberal international order was, and not many cared. It was a technocratic construct with the un-freighted purity of a technocratic concept. FDR himself was able to augment the liberal internationalism he absorbed from Woodrow Wilson (and others) precisely because it was linked to an alignment of culture, ideas, and foreign policy long in the making at universities and elsewhere—

and aligned in the 1940s in the name of the West. I know that we cannot go back to this; I know that the West is much more than a synonym for the achievements of liberal internationalism; that American culture has moved far away from what it was in the 1940s; that the challenges of 2021 hardly resemble those of 1945. But the West, no matter how old-fashioned and in need of modification, still provides the best vehicle I can think of for making this alignment. I know: it is a heavy lift.

Andrew Rotter's essay is a witty and thought-provoking reckoning with *The Abandonment*. I am not sure I regard the abandonment of the West as a "tragedy." Part of me sees it simply as an inevitability, because of the way most American universities have already abandoned it as any kind of organizing pedagogic principle. Part of me sees this abandonment as understandable, and perhaps even desirable, because of the multicultural imperatives of American society and because a great deal of harm can be done by dividing the world up into an East and a West. (The Cold War was a tragedy for this very reason, a tragedy for which the Soviet Union and the United States were both responsible.) I would settle for the abandonment of the West circa 2021 as the wrong choice.

I appreciate Rotter's descriptions of me as as an author with "the temerity to defend the idea of the West, to consider but dismiss the scholarly criticism that it invites." This kind of an author "is all but looking for trouble." I would never want to be a writer without temerity, and I sent my book out into the world looking for trouble rather than for easy agreement, though in my own mind I was not dismissing the scholarly criticism that amounts by now to the conventional wisdom about the West in academic circles. I was, more basically, disagreeing with some of it. The scholarly criticism is far too serious to dismiss. This may or may not have worked on the printed page, but I wanted to engage these critics by, in a sense, criticizing them. Are they not, perhaps, cutting the ground out from beneath our feet? Are they not, perhaps, alienating us not just from the shadows of the West but from the light it has also shed? In theory at least, such criticism can be a kind of homage.

Rotter is not alone in noticing that the author of this book has too thin a base of historical and historiographical knowledge. I can only agree, and I will take up this issue from another angle in my conclusion. As Rotter puts it, "the higher the wire, the greater the need of a robust support system for the performer." By support system he means mastery of the relevant bodies of scholarly literature. I was delighted by the following description, which is another version of the scholar-on-a-wire metaphor: "More than once, I had the impression of being an undergraduate in a lively but perplexing course in American studies, taught by a popular professor whose enthusiasm for his vivid and various material tended to outweigh his commitment to getting through the syllabus."

I would *want* to be this professor, a perplexed guide to the perplexed. So much of the history I tried to confront in *The Abandonment* perplexes me; that being the case, I suppose I could only write in a way that perplexes my readers; and there is a place, I think, for teachers and writers who perplex more than they explain. Rotter astutely intuits that this book—for good or for ill—follows more from my undergraduate teaching than it does from carefully amassed research. And I concede his point: too much of this book proceeds from associative rather than analytical connections (the syllabus, as it were). This is one of the ways in which *The Abandonment* falls short as a work of history.

Rotter also notes that my “real love is for the architecture of Washington, DC, or most of it.” I loved all the material that went into this book, from the policy formulations to the blockbuster books on the West to the poetry and fiction, but architecture did serve a special function. For one, architecture has a prominent place in books about civilization: Oswald Spengler, for one, finds endless historical meaning in buildings and derives real insight from this angle of vision. Buildings also do something that books cannot do. Even major books like William McNeill’s *The Rise of the West* or Edward Said’s *Orientalism* or Frances Fukuyama’s *The End of History* are read by relatively small groups of Americans.

The set-piece architecture of Washington, DC, by contrast, is known to everyone. That most of this architecture is neoclassical and meant to reinforce the bonds between American politics and the West (as I define it in my book) is therefore crucial. The National Mall is the national story in its official dimensions, and it is the National Mall that determined the periodization for *The Abandonment*. Its beginnings in the Chicago World’s Fair of 1893, the Lincoln Memorial (as part of the McMillan Plan) in 1922, the Vietnam War Memorial in 1982 and, finally, the National Museum of African American History and Culture, which President Obama opened in the fall of 2016, shortly before Trump was elected. The book’s main narratives, and its salient contradictions, run most visibly through the representative architecture of the nation’s capital. Historiographical inspiration for this organizational scheme came from Yuri Slezkine’s magisterial study of Moscow, *The House of Government: A Saga of the Russian Revolution* (Princeton University Press, 2017), in which the history of an entire epoch is related through successive residents of a single building.

Rotter traces several useful critiques of *The Abandonment* in his essay. One is that it does not do enough to explicate the two Wests of American history, the West of the NATO alliance and the transatlantic relationship, and the West of the *American West*. This second West is a “transcontinental West [which] offered a vision of national identity that renounced Europe as overcivilized, despotic, corrupt, ossified, and effete.” It fostered an American exceptionalism eager to separate American from European culture. It was the impetus, presumably, for the isolationist tendency in foreign policy debates that is often associated with the Midwest.

In many ways, the transcontinental West is more important to American culture than the Europhile West. It is certainly more important to American popular culture. I left this second West out of my book, though, because it has never gained much traction in American foreign policy proper. Even someone as self-consciously Western (in the transcontinental sense) as Ronald Reagan was an ardent Atlanticist as president; and George W. Bush, the self-styled Texas cowboy, was pushing to expand NATO to Georgia and Ukraine at the end of his second term. Historically speaking, for the makers of American foreign policy, the “European” West has been vastly more significant than the pioneer myth, the rugged individualism, the gunslinger nation, or any other association that could be derived from the America west of the Appalachian Mountains. One place where these two Wests converge, only hinted at in my book, is in the final paragraphs of Fukuyama’s *The End of History*, where he compares the spread of liberal democracy to the movement of pioneers from the East to the West.

Another of Rotter’s critiques concerns fascism and communism. He notes that “fascism and communism were born in the West. Kimmage seems uncertain how to handle this.” This is correct. I am uncertain about how to handle this,

though not, I hope, because I wish to isolate unnaturally a liberal West from the larger tapestry of Western history. It is more that I am not a historian of fascism and communism, not writing about these themes directly in this book, and limited, I would say, by having written a book on American history. The makers of American foreign policy for the most part defined American foreign policy *against* fascism and communism. That definition contributed to (or reflected) a notion of the West that has its roots in the eighteenth-century British colonies and is very different from notions of the West in Germany or Italy or the Soviet Union. To fascism and communism one could also add nationalism as an ideological construct of Western vintage, and a more capacious, more learned book about the West in American foreign policy would also take this into account.

A further critique is that I exaggerate the “idea of the West” and its scope in the 1940s and 1950s. “It isn’t clear that the West as an idea was as pervasive and as powerful as he claims after 1945,” Rotter writes. For national politics and history writ large, this is a good debate to have. Rotter conducts a thought experiment with “the West” taken out of American life, and finds that the story comes out more or less the same. The West is an ingredient, he implies, but not the essential ingredient, not the catalyst of change.

I do not agree. *The Abandonment* is a study of intellectual life and foreign policy, and it works off the assumption that foreign policy emerges not just as a response to international events or a tool for realizing national interests but from ideas, from culture, and from an airy abstraction we could call civilizational imagination. In the 1940s and 1950s, the idea of the West dominated both American intellectual life and American foreign policy. There might have been a NATO alliance without the idea of the West, but it would have been very difficult to explain and to justify; and it would have been impossible to provide the narrative for it that JFK did in his “ich bin ein Berliner” speech. For American policymakers, this West set the parameters of their mental map, provided them with certain insights, gave them their blinders and furnished them and the postwar leaders of Western Europe with a common language. In sum, the West was pervasive and powerful for the subjects of this book, though it was very far from all-pervasive and all-powerful for the nation at large.

I thank Rotter for his gentleness in pointing out that the author of *The Abandonment of the West*, who modestly proposes that twenty-first century American universities teach a handful of Western texts and ideas to their students, going back to Greek and Roman antiquity, wrote about the cleaning of the Aegean stables rather than, as he should have, the Augean stables. Setting the record straight can be a Herculean task, and my punishment for this error should be finding and tidying up some stables near Athens or Izmir. I thank Rotter for not capitalizing on this revealing slip of the pen.

I find myself not fully in agreement with Rotter’s concluding characterizations of *The Abandonment*. “Kimmage’s book is in the end a jeremiad,” he writes, “though he seems on the whole to be more cheerful than many previous polemicists who have written in this vein.” My aspiration was not to write a polemic or a jeremiad. It was to write a hybrid book, a work of history that culminated in some judgments and had a few recommendations for policymakers and universities alike—a definition of the problem followed by an attempt to “solve” the problem. If the book ended up being a jeremiad or a polemic, then it broke away from its author’s goals for it. “What’s most missing for me in his account is a sense of irony,” Rotter continues, mentioning the omission of Reinhold Niebuhr,

In many ways, the transcontinental West is more important to American culture than the Europhile West. It is certainly more important to American popular culture.

Joseph Heller, and Norman Mailer. *The Abandonment* has its ironic touches here and there—not enough, no doubt – and I am an admirer of Niebuhr, Heller, and Mailer. (Mailer’s *Armies of the Night* is truly the perfect ironic foil to books like *The Abandonment of the West*, which belongs to a painfully earnest genre if ever there was one.) But irony is also a luxury. Irony entails the luxury of detachment.

Perhaps I would have availed myself of this writerly luxury had Trump not been elected in 2016. Perhaps I would have felt more comfortable with the luxury of irony had I not myself served in the Obama administration. At any rate, when it came to this book, detachment did not feel like an option to me, and it would have undercut my recommendations. Put differently, it would have been easier to write an ironic book about American foreign policy if it were entirely a work of history, ending, say, in 1980. By bringing my narrative all the way up to Trump, in a book published in the final year of his presidency (not that I could have known this when I was finishing the book) I had the chance to weigh in on questions in real time, to the extent one can in a book. Rotter has rightly assessed the intellectual costs of doing this.

I have one last, respectful disagreement with Rotter. His verdict on the West is different from mine. He believes that “the invocation of the idea of the West has in fact always contained within itself the confounding, and thereby self-defeating, essence of hubris, the belief that what is ‘ours’ is right, incontestably.” American foreign policy has long suffered from hubris. Some of it has followed from the arrogance and chauvinism that the idea of the West can inspire, or from the arrogance and chauvinism that can inspire the idea of the West. Both the Vietnam and the Iraq wars betray of hubris of this kind. Where I differ with Rotter is over two words: *always* and *incontestably*. I think the historical record bears out a more complicated dynamic.

Let me limit myself to the figure of George Kennan, the architect of American foreign policy for the second half of the twentieth century. Certainly he was enamored of the idea of the West. He too was present at the creation of the Marshall Plan and the NATO alliance. He warned frequently against hubris, however; and, from his reading of Gibbon on the decadence and overreach of the Roman Empire, which brought about its decline, he fashioned the containment strategy. It was no accident that he vociferously opposed both the Vietnam and the Iraq wars and never argued that what is “ours” is right incontestably. To the contrary, he was often as critical of American society and of American foreign policy as were Niebuhr, Heller, and Mailer.

Kennan was also a Russophile, contemptuous in many ways of the world outside the West, but capable of being educated by his own cosmopolitan curiosity. His invocation of the West was nuanced, and it was self-critical, showing that a modulated perspective is at the very least possible. Channeling Kennan and others like him in *The Abandonment*, I tried to appeal to the West with qualifications and criticism and thus to forestall its self-defeat.

At the core of Brad Simpson’s essay is a superb paraphrase of *The Abandonment*. It leads him to a series of critical judgments about the book itself and its intended audience as he envisions it. The book is, in his words, an “attempted resuscitation of an exhausted liberal internationalism framed as a defense of the multicultural West.” I am not quite sure of the word “exhausted” here. Liberal internationalism was robust under President

Obama; it is robust once again under President Biden. My impression in the fall of 2019, when I wrote the book’s conclusion, was that liberal internationalism was not so much exhausted as imperiled by the Trump presidency. But *The Abandonment* is surely a defense of the multicultural West. For Simpson, the book betrays scholarly deficiencies, a glibness when it comes to the evils of American foreign policy and a fundamental misunderstanding of what the West really is.

The core problem of *The Abandonment*, for Simpson, begins with the fact that this book is not a monograph. It does not delve into theory or into reflection on the underpinnings of the argument that it tries to make. Its theses were not spun from archival research, and its footnotes are minimal. These deficiencies, along with “Kimmage’s lack of engagement with existing historiography,” persuade Simpson that the book is not “aimed at historians.”

Here I would distinguish between reading and citing the existing historiography. One does not necessarily have to cite historiography to engage with it. In writing *The Abandonment* I stand on the shoulders of many, many historians, though there are sizable gaps in my knowledge. I could have rectified this by honing in on one piece of the puzzle: norms and images of the West, say, in Harry Truman’s State Department. That would be a worthwhile book.

I chose, however foolishly, to take on the whole puzzle, and I doubt there is time in a single lifetime to master the historiography of American foreign policy from 1893 to 2016, the historiography of American politics from 1893 to 2016, and the historiography of American intellectual history from 1893 to 2016. Nor could these subjects be comprehensively addressed in a book of some 100,000 words. Perhaps books like *The Abandonment* should not be written. If they are, though, they will have any number of scholarly inadequacies. (I will pick up on this point in my conclusion.)

More damningly, Simpson sees *The Abandonment* as a specimen of the foreign policy elite’s myopia. It seems “squarely aimed at liberal foreign policy elites and educated readers for whom the ‘liberal international order’ exists as a continuing aspiration rather than a joke.” *The Abandonment* abets the delusions of

such elites, providing fodder for “the foreign policy Blob who are edified by revived ideas of a multicultural West and who need no explanations of references to the Atlantic Charter and Wilson’s fourteen points because everyone agrees on their self-evident virtue.” Furthermore, he writes, “Kimmage’s breezy tour of a century and a half of U.S. foreign policy barely gestures at the violence of wars and interventions, U.S. economic interests, or the militarized structure of U.S. hegemony after 1945.” Almost an entire chapter of *The Abandonment* is devoted to the Vietnam War, and wide-ranging as this book is, it is not an investigation into economic or military history, both of which would be excellent subjects for historians examining the idea of the West.

I find it hard to respond—academically—to the other insinuations here. I would simply say that I find Simpson’s characterization of “the Blob” (a phrase that itself emanates from said Blob) to be a caricature, and whatever the shortcomings of *The Abandonment*, historiographical or political, it does not presume the self-evident virtue of the West. It consistently poses questions about the virtues and the vices of this idea in American foreign policy.

Like Nichols, Simpson disagrees with my concluding recommendations for the creation of a twenty-first-

century West. He has encountered an author “apparently untroubled by politics or differing conceptions of U.S. national security” circa 1945, but also more generally. With this worry in mind, he makes a normative argument for abandoning the West. “‘The West’ as a value proposition or as a set of ostensible commitments,” he writes, “makes no contribution to understanding or grappling with the grave challenges facing the United States, including climate change, galloping global inequality, pandemic disease, authoritarian revival at home and abroad, and the bipartisan commitment of national security elites to global military dominance for decades to come.” The phrase about national security elites committed (to a man and a woman) to global military dominance for decades to come suggests that I may not be the only one untroubled by differing conceptions of U.S. national security; but our key differences here are about the West.

I cannot see how the West as a value proposition or set of ostensible commitments makes *no* contribution to understanding or grappling with the challenges the United States faces. The West defined American foreign policy throughout the twentieth century. It figures in the rhetoric and policy prescriptions of presidents and secretaries of state from the 1930s to the present. As a word and a concept, it sheds considerable light on the presidencies of Obama, Trump, and Biden. One may hate what it stands for. One may see it as a reservoir of chauvinism and hubris, or as the rhetorical fig leaf that the foreign-policy elite uses to obscure its militarism and its lust for economic gain. But ignoring a word and a concept that is ubiquitous in the primary sources of American diplomatic history would limit rather than enhance understanding.

If history is relevant at all to the ways in which the United States grapples with its many grave challenges, then the history of the West is relevant. As for the present, why would one not want to delve into Secretary of State Anthony Blinken’s ideas of the West, which are rich and interesting, and try to assess their shaping force in the work he will be doing on climate change, inequality, pandemics, and authoritarianism while in office? Normatively, one can reject this framing, this lingering attachment to the West, but in American foreign policy it is an unavoidable concept. We should all be trying to understand it.

I am not sure what Simpson means by calling U.S. commitments to the West “ostensible.” Does he mean that the United States is merely pretending to be committed to the transatlantic relationship? To the NATO alliance? Without forgetting Trump’s animosity toward Europe, I would disagree. I would also disagree that the transatlantic relationship (a commitment to the West that is grounded, however problematically, in the West as a value proposition) is categorically incapable of contributing to a decent and successful American foreign policy. Each of the problems Simpson itemizes—climate change, global inequality, pandemic disease and authoritarianism on the advance—will be easier to handle if the transatlantic relationship is up and running, if the West is vibrant and functional. With several of these problems, there is a great deal the United States can learn from Europe and the European Union (not to mention other parts of the world) and could work on collaboratively: a transatlantic collaboration within other multilateral collaborations, precisely the foreign policy for which I argue in the conclusion of *The Abandonment*.

As for Simpson’s point about a national-security elite addicted to global military dominance for decades to come, I think it is both tautological and imprecise. Every country’s national-security elite tries to maximize available leverage, and the past decade or so has witnessed a lively

debate among those looking at national-security questions in the United States. There are the advocates of restraint, of a smaller military footprint for the United States, the inverse of global military dominance, who come from diverse places on the political spectrum: Will Ruger on the Right, for example, and Matt Duss on the Left. There are the liberal internationalists, like Obama, who would prefer to see conflict resolved through multilateral institutions, if possible, rather than with military force. There are the neoconservatives, like Robert Kagan, and the neo-neoconservatives who believe in the advance of liberal democracy through military pressure.

For the past four years, the most often invoked buzzword in Washington, DC, has been “great power competition.” This phrase presumes that the United States does not and will not have global military dominance. It must share the stage with China, Russia, and other powers that view themselves as adversaries or competitors to the United States, which, if true, is yet another way in which the West (the third great power in addition to China and Russia) is salient to today’s world.

Like Simpson, Heather Stur provides a superlative paraphrase of *The Abandonment*. Simpson is right to say that, as I trace “the idea of the West in U.S. foreign policy,” I don’t hide my belief in its promise, and Stur makes a helpful set of distinctions where liberty and self-government are concerned. By themselves they are not enough for a healthy political culture, she notes, as they “don’t necessarily support the common good.” She reminds us that “Americans elected a right-wing demagogue in 2016,” which is proof of a bigger problem. “The truth about self-government,” she adds, “is that it includes the right to elect a dictator who might eventually strip away civil liberties.”

This is all spot on. When the idea of the West was ascendant, in the 1890s, its exponents not only upheld liberty and self-government (blinker as their understanding of those ideals was, and far as the United States was from consistently honoring them in practice), they grounded those ideals in education. They built the Italian Renaissance Library of Congress (1897) next to a neoclassical Capitol building that was still unfinished in the Civil War. Of the urban planning and architectural schemes for the National Mall, which has more museums on it than government buildings, I write that “the lamp of learning, lit in European antiquity, was burning brightly in the modern United States,” meaning that this was the public of message of the National Mall at the turn of the century. For all that Americans of the 1890s got wrong about politics and international affairs, they got one big thing right: liberty must walk hand in hand with learning. The only protection against demagogues and dictators, in political systems lucky enough to enable self-government, is the power of discernment among the citizens charged with governing themselves. Effort must be expended, institutions cultivated, books assimilated, and ideas propagated for the mass of citizens to avoid the temptations of tyranny.

Stur and I concur in our conclusions. She relates events from after the publication of *The Abandonment* to the book’s argument, alluding to the “mobilization of African American voters in the 2020 U.S. presidential election and 2021 Senate run-off elections.” She goes on to write that “the ideals embedded in the concept of the West may have originated in the European Enlightenment, but the United States was the first nation to build a lasting political system based on them. For all its faults, the American Western democracy experiment has not yet failed.”

It has not yet failed. The challenge for American foreign

If history is relevant at all to the ways in which the United States grapples with its many grave challenges, then the history of the West is relevant.

policy, which has often enough been a projection of American faults and failures, is to incorporate that which is best in the American experiment, to push for enfranchisement in the fullest sense of the word and to resist the pull toward disenfranchisement, which has its origins in the founding of the republic and is not less palpable in 2021 than it was in 1921 or 1821. I agree with Simpson that meeting this challenge should not be a military project for American foreign policy and that clear distinctions should be drawn between the imperatives of national security and the problem-solving thrust of American foreign policy, to which the bulk of resources deserve to be devoted. Nichols, Rotter, and Simpson regard the West as an obstacle to a peaceful, internationalist, and enlightened American foreign policy. There is much to recommend their point of view. I remain convinced, however, that the West should remain a part of the ongoing story.

I would like to conclude this essay by reflecting on genre. *The Abandonment of the West* is not a monograph. It was not written with the aid of archival research. It has no scholarly apparatus. It covers 123 years of U.S. history, with excursions into the history of Europe and the Soviet Union. It is diplomatic history, intellectual history and political history. It encompasses a range of figures, from Woodrow Wilson to Henry Kissinger and beyond, about whom there are enormous bodies of scholarly literature in many languages. On one level, this might disqualify *The Abandonment of the West* from being scholarship at all, making it a popular history or a polemic or a pat on the back to the foreign-policy elite or merely something idiosyncratic and half-baked. I will leave that judgment to my readers. I can see why this book is frustrating, especially for readers who are versed in the relevant scholarly literature. Again, as Rotter put it, the higher the wire, the more exposed the performer is.

If *The Abandonment* is not quite scholarship, then what is it? When writing it, I thought of the book as an essay more in the tradition of Montaigne than the *American Historical Review*. Unlike monographs, essays can float ideas. They can ask questions and not answer them. They can make juxtapositions without pretending to work through these juxtapositions comprehensively. They can be playful. They can take liberties. Essays are also personal, quirky at times, subjective in essence, and conducted in the open air, out from behind the veil of omniscience. The word essay comes from the French verb *essayer*, meaning *to try*, and to try is not the same as to succeed. In so many ways, *The Abandonment* does not succeed. Still, I am very glad I tried to write about the West as expansively as I did, and this for three reasons.

The first is scholarly. As Nichols observes, there is no book about American foreign policy and the West per se. When researching this topic, I had the invigorating feeling of walking across open space. I know that my manner of filling this space is provisional, that this is a book with almost no brick or mortar. It is composed entirely of scaffolding, some of it very loosely held together. At best, the book allows the scholarly reader to perceive the outlines of a new subject, to recognize that the story of the West in American foreign policy does not begin in 1945, to accept the complicated interplay between “American” ideas and “global” ideas within this concept and to recognize a cumulative genealogy of ideas and foreign policy precepts, in which there is genuine continuity from the 1890s to the present and no end of discontinuity.

Secondly, I was glad to write for two distinct reading publics outside the academy. For the general public, sweeping narratives are often preferable to narrowly focused studies, and scholarly apparatus is only an impediment. This makes it impossible to write about historiography, but it opens up other possibilities, and I did what I could to exploit those. My other audience, as Simpson emphasizes, consists of policy experts and policymakers, and policy

writing that is purely analytical is beside the point. It has to be prescriptive.

Whether my prescriptions are right or wrong, I found it helpful to arrive at them through historical inquiry. This may skew the history writing in *The Abandonment* or render it suspect. It also tethers the book to a transient topicality, since policy prescriptions are always context-specific, and already *The Abandonment's* conclusion belongs to the long-gone era of the Trump presidency. Nevertheless, it felt right to me, in a book that highlights the productive relationship among ideas, policy, universities, and the institutions of policy formation to try for a book that in style and content bridges the academic world and the world of policy debate and policymaking.

Finally, I am glad to know that graduate students might read this book. They—and not the Blob—were my ideal audience. My hope is that a graduate student would pick up this book and be horrified by it. What an outrageously telegraphic book! What an outrageously foreshortened book! What an outrageously incomplete book! Kimmage never proves his arguments! What masquerades as narrative is really word association and concept juxtaposition pegged to various chronological developments, the march of ideas, and the march of events manipulatively merged into a book that purports to be the history of an idea, even a history of American foreign policy!

I would not want the outrage to end with these exclamations. I would want it to generate the key question for this hypothetical reader: how could I do it better? What would a wiser periodization look like? What about fascism and the West? What about communism? Which archival collections should be consulted to get deeper into this topic? How might one write a dissertation or monograph about the idea or concept of the West in American foreign policy? I do not mean, by picturing this mock horror or by posing these questions, to say that I sought to write a bad book so that others might write good ones. I mean that *The Abandonment of the West* is a first survey of the territory, an opening salvo. It is thus an invitation to younger scholars to add the refinement, the texture, the detail, and the wide learning that this subject so urgently deserves.

In the next issue of *Passport:*

- A roundtable on David Schmitz,
The Sailor
- A Roundtable on Vanessa Walker,
Principles in Power

...and much more.

The Academic Jobs Crisis: A Forum

Guest Editors: Daniel Bessner and Michael Brenes

Susan Colbourn, Emily Whalen, Michael Franczak, Henry D. Fetter, Chris Foss, Zeb Larson, Ryan Irwin, Julia Irwin, Stuart Schrader, Judy Wu, Michelle Paranzino, Marc Reyes, Michael Koncewicz, Kurt Güner, and Carl Watts

Introduction

Daniel Bessner and Michael Brenes

The U.S. academic job market is in total freefall. As the American Historical Association's (AHA) 2020 jobs report bluntly stated, "History Ph.D.s who graduated in the past decade encountered fewer opportunities and more competition on the academic job market than any cohort of Ph.D.s since the 1970s."¹ And this was before the COVID-19 pandemic, which, the 2021 jobs report noted, has resulted in numerous "program closures, enrollment declines, and faculty layoffs."² It's not an exaggeration to say that, even if things improved tomorrow (which they won't), there will be several "lost generations" of historians who will never secure stable academic employment.

The Society for Historians of American Foreign Relations (SHAFR) is well aware of these depressing and disturbing trends. Under the leadership of past-SHAFR presidents Barbara Keys and Kristin Hoganson, the organization recently established a Jobs Crisis Task Force to begin to deal with the new material and structural realities of U.S. higher education.

Most, if not all, members of SHAFR have experienced the effects of the jobs crisis. Even if scholars have not personally been subjected to the capricious cruelty of the tenure-track job market—the dozens of job applications that require voluminous amounts of paperwork and personal time; the relentless rejections; the deafening silence of institutions that don't have the courtesy to reject applicants; the overwhelming stress and anxiety as one contemplates a "Plan B"; the inability to provide for oneself, let alone loved ones—they have probably seen students struggle to land an academic position or heard stories from colleagues about budding scholars with stellar CVs who did not receive tenure-track offers. And if scholars haven't personally encountered the market's indignities, they can simply read publications like the *Chronicle of Higher Education*, *Inside Higher Education*, or *Slate*, which all have published popular articles on the humiliations of the academic job market.³

SHAFR is in a unique position to tackle the jobs crisis. In the last three decades, our subfield has increasingly supported and centered scholarship produced by marginalized groups—women, Black Americans, people of color, LGBTQIA+ scholars, and first-generation students. Unfortunately, the diversification of scholarly production within SHAFR occurred at the very same moment that

tenure-track employment all but disappeared. Put another way, as SHAFR began to overcome the well-founded concern that the field was too demographically homogenous, the historical profession entered a period of long-term decline. As a result, many of the people who comprise SHAFR's new and more diverse constituency won't find stable academic employment, preventing the field, and society more broadly, from learning from and being transformed by their scholarship.

If recent experience teaches us anything, it is that university administrators, already under significant pressure to cut costs, will use the shock of the pandemic to institute austerity measures that starve the humanities and social sciences of funds. And under austerity, most tenure-track history positions are unlikely to return. To add insult to injury, the fields for which historians who can't secure tenure-track employment are most suited—archival work, museum work, journalism—are likewise experiencing their own jobs crises.⁴ There is no escape from the miseries engendered by contemporary austerity and inequality—not within the university, and not outside of it.

We believe that the only effort that might begin to change the present situation is one that begins with us. We should make use of our labor power and collective knowledge to band together with other workers—from adjunct faculty to university staff, from archivists and librarians to high school teachers, from Uber drivers to Amazon employees—to demand that society's resources be redistributed to aid the many and not the few.⁵ Whether SHAFR will contribute to this broader project remains to be seen; personally, we hope that it will.

To try and help build the consciousness required to reverse trends in the job market and the modern university, this forum has collected eleven short articles written mostly by non-tenure track scholars working in or adjacent to the history of U.S. foreign relations. The pieces address a diversity of topics, including gender and racial inequity in the academy; the purpose of a history PhD; the challenges of producing scholarship off the tenure-track; the long history of the jobs crisis; recent activism on behalf of adjuncts and contingent faculty; and the state and fate of tenure. Though the essays don't come together to offer a single solution to the jobs crisis—in our opinion, such a solution does not exist—we believe they will help SHAFR members learn about the degradations of being an early-career scholar in the American academy of 2021 and, hopefully, inspire action to reverse the corporatizing trends that have done so much damage to the university system.

We believe that the only effort that might begin to change the present situation is one that begins with us.

Notes:

1. Dylan Ruediger, "The 2020 AHA Jobs Report: New History PhDs Awarded Continue to Decline as Academic Job Market Remains Flat," *Perspectives on History* (February 12, 2020), <https://www.historians.org/ahajobsreport2020>.
2. Dylan Ruediger, "The 2021 AHA Jobs Report: 2019–2020 Data Show Relative Stability in the Year before COVID," *Perspectives on History* (January 20, 2021), <https://www.historians.org/ahajobsreport2021#:~:text=Job%20ads%20placed%20with%20the,rise%20in%20tenure%2Dtrack%20positions>.
3. Rebecca Schuman, "Thesis Hatment: Getting a Literature Ph.D. Will Turn You into an Emotional Trainwreck, Not a Professor," *Slate* (April 5, 2013), http://www.slate.com/articles/life/culturebox/2013/04/there_are_no_academic_jobs_and_getting_a_ph_d_will_make_you_into_a_horrible.html; Daniel Bessner and Michael Brenes, "A Moral Stain on the Profession: As the Humanities Collapse, It's Time to Name and Shame the Culprits," *The Chronicle of Higher Education* (April 26, 2019), <https://www.chronicle.com/article/A-Moral-Stain-on-the-/246197>; Zeb Larson, "You Can't Kill It with Kindness," *Inside Higher Education* (June 23, 2020), <https://www.insidehighered.com/advice/2020/06/23/kindness-wont-resolve-core-issues-what-makes-job-hunting-phds-so-demoralizing-and>.
4. Matthew Francis, "2013 Archival Program Graduates and the Entry-Level Job Market," *American Archivist* 78, no. 2 (2015): 514–47.
5. Bessner and Brenes, "A Moral Stain on the Profession."

What Can SHAFR Do?

Susan Colbourn

Last winter, in January 2020, as the work of SHAFR's Jobs Crisis Task Force was getting off the ground, the committee's plans happened to come up in conversation as Mike Brenes and I chatted over a coffee. (That sentence was a real flashback—having coffee with friends and colleagues!) Mike asked me if I could think of any concrete things that professional societies like SHAFR might be able to do for early-career scholars facing an increasingly precarious professional future.

I couldn't.

All I could think about were the large, daunting structural problems—the various trends we all know are eroding the chances at stable employment for up-and-coming scholars who would like to find careers researching, writing, and teaching history. You know, the kind of things that come up all too often in conversation when your office is full of predoctoral and postdoctoral fellows.

After that coffee, it frustrated me that I couldn't come up with any concrete ways to improve the lot of young scholars.

It also, if I'm being honest, left me even more depressed about the grim state of affairs facing the discipline and profession as a whole, and the countless talented people who hope to make a living in the academy but likely won't. Certainly, the sweeping hiring freezes and university budget cuts of recent months have done little to make me more optimistic about our present situation.

But I still believe there is a place for professional societies like SHAFR to make a difference in the careers of junior scholars. In that spirit, I want to offer SHAFR a modest proposal: Why not create a new small grant that would help authors not on the tenure-track defray the costs of publishing a book?

Other comparable professional associations already offer programs explicitly designed to help authors and presses with the publication of first books. The Association for Slavic, East European, and Eurasian Studies (ASEEES), for instance, runs a program that offers subventions for

first books. In the case of ASEEES, applications are made by publishers "for manuscripts that have already been contracted and peer reviewed in full, and are at or nearing the production stage."¹

What I envision is a bit different, geared toward authors themselves. Perhaps SHAFR could establish a grant that would make it possible for authors to hire an indexer, secure image permissions, or even commission a map. With academic publishing timelines far outstripping short-term contracts and one- or two-year fellowships, it's very difficult for scholars in precarious positions to find the resources to support such necessary but often overlooked aspects of book publishing. A grant like this could—not unlike the Michael Hunt Fund—be established through voluntary contributions and gifts to SHAFR.

Even a small amount of money could go a long way toward making a huge difference for an individual scholar.

Note:

1. "ASEEES First Book Subvention Program," Association for Slavic, East European, and Eurasian Studies, <https://www.aseees.org/programs/firstbook-subvention>.

Unfenced

Emily Whalen

In the baldest, least compassionate language I can muster, the thrust of my essay is this: the point of getting a PhD is not to get a job. What a tenured job symbolizes for most scholars—economic security, the ability to live in a stable community, and the freedom to speak your mind—is something that ought to be guaranteed from birth, by virtue of one's humanity. While it's important to lament that struggling through graduate school is no longer a viable path toward this birthright, we cannot, in our lamentation, lose sight of the bigger picture.

As an institution in human society, academia is a means to an end. The end is not economic security; the end is deepening and broadening the realm of human knowledge. As a means to achieving this end, academia has always been imperfect. The historical moment we are living through, this series of cascading economic, social, and political disasters, is perhaps the best possible time to look critically at academia, and question if it is still a useful means to the end of wisdom. Pursuing a PhD, ironically, is an excellent way to begin this shift in focus, from explaining how the proverbial game is rigged against us to building an entirely new game.

Put another way, my argument is that there are good reasons to get a PhD even though you and I and the vast majority of our talented, brilliant peers will likely never land a tenure-track academic job. There is something in the pursuit of getting your PhD that is *better* than membership in academia or economic security in the private sector. Something in the process cuts to the heart of what it means to be alive in the world, and that might, just possibly, be excellent preparation for the upheavals to come—in academia, in the university system, in the world.

Security and stability, even outside the academy, are scarce these days. Erratic political leaders and their unhinged acolytes, deficient governments, climate change, and profound social fragmentation have all made planning for any kind of a future difficult. Realistically, these factors were destabilizing our futures even before the coronavirus pandemic. In academia, the mirage has been shimmering for some time; the job market has been bleak for more than

ten years. Much of the academic discourse around the so-called “jobs crisis” reflects the fractured reality of many scholars’ experience: even in fitful moments of general economic recovery, academia has not recovered. Scarcity has been our reality for decades.

Most “quit lit” and writing about the “jobs crisis” is still trying to convince the broader public that there’s a problem, usually to no avail. Reflecting the deeper disconnection between academia and the general public, “quit lit” hasn’t really moved past the Cassandra phase, prophesying doom and gloom to deaf ears. Certainly, on an individual level, reckoning with the “jobs crisis” requires reckoning with our own feelings about living through this ill-starred moment in time. Usually, essays on our dismal prospects for meaningful and economically viable employment evolve into expressions of grief, rage, frustration, or despair—often beautiful, often searing, always important. Yet in these expressions, we lose sight of the crux of the problem: a system of producing knowledge that relies on exploitation.

The current “jobs crisis” is in fact a slow-burning social crisis. This period of acute pain is not an aberration, it is the culmination of a process with short roots in the erosion of middle-class stability in the United States during the 1980s and 1990s, longer roots in the development of the Cold War university, and thin, hairline root tendrils that curl back into the development of the university system in eighteenth-century North America. In the shorter term, as higher education in the United States became a commodity, social and communal ties became less important than economic ties. As the walls between academia and the general public became higher than ever, curiosity and imagination lost ground to efficiency and productivity as important social values. In the very long term, the guild of academia, no less than the university system that supports it, arose from notions of social order based on classist, racist, and sexist assumptions. Its proponents made virtues of self-abnegation, exclusivity, and ideological homogeneity.¹

These historical antecedents are reflected in how we talk about the “jobs crisis.” The remedies that the historical discipline offers to graduate students collapse the entire process of obtaining a PhD into its outcome: a doctoral degree. Pushes for “career diversity” (or its more patronizing cousin, “alt-ac careers”) and suspending—or seriously curtailing—graduate admissions exist on the same spectrum of half-measures, reinforcing the elitism of an earlier era while pretending to alleviate the problem. We remain stuck in the privatized mindset that led us to this crisis, one in which scholarship is an elite, marketable commodity, rather than a universal resource.

The structure of academia reveals how completely we accept the premise that the pursuit of truth is a luxury, reserved for the select few, or only justifiable in its perceived utility to some indefinite, amorphous “broader good” (but not for the broader public). Academic writing devolves into insider baseball, both financially and stylistically walled off from non-academics. Recent efforts to bolster public history programs, filtered through this system, still suggest that public-facing historical work is an “extra” skill that graduate students must acquire, rather than the very soul of our work. We forget that one of our most solemn duties as knowledge-seekers is sharing that knowledge with the rest of humanity as much as with our peers.

Evidence abounds that academia’s institutional culture, insular in the extreme, in fact retrenches regressive norms instead of overturning them. Despite popular anxieties about liberal campus culture and many academics’

self-images as radical progressive voices, the scholarly community remains resistant to change. The scholarly life is notoriously inaccessible to promising students from the middle and working classes and is becoming ever more so as it offers fewer paths to basic financial solvency. Less than 10 percent of academics are Black; Black and brown scholars are often the only people of color in professional spaces and face not only the daily degradations of systemic racism, but outright resistance from their white colleagues in having even basic conversations about race and racism.² Sexism is so prevalent in the academy that it merits its own article. In a revealing snapshot, Princeton’s leadership agreed in October 2020 to a \$1.2 million dollar settlement after a federal investigation revealed the university was still consistently underpaying female professors.³

In April 2019, two of my colleagues made perhaps the best argument for rescuing academia.⁴ They looked specifically at the discipline of history, but their conclusions would carry weight in any discipline currently in extremis. The jobs crisis, they argue, is more than a jobs crisis. It foreshadows a *knowledge* crisis. Without tenured scholars producing historical knowledge, history as we have come to understand it will erode, thinning with the passage of time into something insubstantial, something far less than

wisdom. They point accurately to what we often forget: the reason academia exists is not to provide jobs for eccentric intellectuals, but rather to enrich and grow the store of human wisdom.

Academia has always been an imperfect path to wisdom, one that ignores and silences many voices and many would-be seekers. A raft

of new tenure lines will not solve that problem. The scarcity mentality the academy cultivates is inescapable, always waiting around the corner. Individual scholars may shift out of the feral mistrust the system breeds in us, but without establishing a different paradigm—moving away from the old, broken process of academic apprenticeship and the tenure track—real change will remain elusive. Perhaps it is time to start imagining other routes to wisdom, other ways to cultivate and to spread knowledge—paths that do not exclude and exploit, but rather embrace and amplify. A system that chews people up and either spits them out, broken and disillusioned, or swallows them whole, leaving them broken in quieter, more insidious ways, is not a system worth saving wholesale.

Why, then, pursue a doctoral degree? The PhD process asks you to embark on an indefinite period of uncertainty, all while doing the hardest thinking you’ve done to that point in your life. It subjects you to the agony of continual scrutiny and frequent critique, not only of your intellectual output but of your personal choices, set against a background of existential and economic anxiety. It is like learning acrobatics without a safety net. It is humiliating. It is infuriating. It is unfair.

Yet it is also an opportunity to build invaluable capacities—not in the sense of “marketable skills,” but rather in the realm of “basic human decency.” The endless, agonizing documents you read in freezing archives can teach you the ability to absorb and process an enormous amount of information. Your towering list of reading for your comprehensive exams can hone your sense of the truth and your instincts for critical thinking. Learning to write clearly can force you to think clearly, and if you write very clearly, you may discover how to bring others along with you on your journey. The process can instill humility and a sense of solidarity with those who went before and those who will come after; it can engender empathy and altruism, since an understanding of what it is to be lonely, strapped for cash, and uncertain of the future can make

The structure of academia reveals how completely we accept the premise that the pursuit of truth is a luxury, reserved for the select few, or only justifiable in its perceived utility to some indefinite, amorphous “broader good” (but not for the broader public).

you a kinder, more giving person in the years to come.

Individual grit is not the answer to systemic failure. Presently, obtaining a PhD means incurring deep costs, material and otherwise. In the days after I defended my dissertation, I tried to tabulate these costs, spending some indolent mornings indexing debt, lost opportunities, failed connections. All of my savings from before graduate school were gone. I'd lost weeks of my life to packing and unpacking, coordinating moves, searching for apartments. The innumerable daily compromises between budget and need had certainly shaved months off my life. Abandoned relationships, both romantic and platonic, lay strewn across my six years of graduate school. Yet it was worth it. I don't have a job, I've got no idea what comes next for me, and I still think it was worth it.

Sometime in the mid-2000s, I read a magazine article about the only place on earth that produced ethical foie gras.⁵ Producing traditional foie gras requires brutally force-feeding geese, usually through a tube, until their fattened livers are a rich paste. The process is revoltingly cruel. Yet in southwest Spain, a man named Eduardo de Sousa took a different approach. Geese, de Sousa explained to the skeptical author of the article, would gorge themselves, given sufficient opportunity and freedom, without human coercion. The key to making exquisite foie gras without cruelty was to give the goose complete and utter freedom. De Sousa's farm resembled a sort of goosy paradise: luxurious beds of hay and grass, wide ranges and crystal ponds for waddling, a never-ending buffet of delicious and varied goose foods.

There were no fences on De Sousa's farm. The geese were blazingly free. The costs were steep. Some never returned after their winter migration, some fell victim to foxes and other predators. One winter, de Sousa lost nearly a quarter of his flock. Yet the birds who survived returned again and again, to their gluttonous, anserine heaven, where de Sousa greeted them as friends. De Sousa was sparing in his selection of geese whose livers would become that year's product. He was careful not to exploit the geese. The foie gras, the author reported, was transcendent.

The author returned to the United States, determined to replicate de Sousa's methods. Unable to find investors willing to sign onto a goose farm without fences, the author compromised. He built the fence as far from the geese as possible, on a farm much larger than was normal for the size of his flock. Hiding the fence did not work; his geese ate normally, and lived placidly, securely. Their livers were lean. De Sousa, over the phone, insisted that they could sense the presence of a fence. Freedom could not be faked. Excellence and security were antithetical.

Something of the means always seeps into the ends. If the end is knowledge and the pursuit of truth, academia has always been flawed means, a hidden fence. The part that we tend to rush over, the part of greatest insecurity, the process of getting one's PhD, happens to be a far more consistent means. The PhD process offers the necessary skills to exploit our unprecedented insecurity, which is also an unprecedented freedom: a sense of the truth, a deep humility, and an abiding empathy. These are critical capacities for building what comes next—in one's individual life, in academia, and in the world around us. If we hope to combat the cynicism that pervades our age, if we hope to right the wrongs that have produced this historical moment, we will need many people with these skills, working on many fronts.

Here, then, we are, a flock of geese without a fence. The dangers are real, we are not safe. But we do have freedom, a freedom that permits us to strive for more. To build something better. To forge new paths and to bring others along with us. To follow the wild, winding pull of our own hungry hearts.

Notes:

1. Robert Novick, *That Noble Dream: The "Objectivity Question" and the American Historical Profession* (Cambridge, UK, 1988), 21–86.
2. Nidhi Subbaraman, "How #BlackInTheIvory put a spotlight on racism in academia," *Nature*, 11 Jun 2020, <https://www.nature.com/articles/d41586-020-01741-7>; Tsedale M. Melaku and Angie Beeman, "Academia Isn't a Safe Haven for Conversations About Race and Racism," *Harvard Business Review*, 25 Jun 2020, <https://hbr.org/2020/06/academia-isnt-a-safe-haven-for-conversations-about-race-and-racism>.
3. Concepción de León, "Princeton to Pay Nearly \$1.2 Million to Female Professors to Address Inequity," *The New York Times*, 13 Oct 2020, <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/10/13/us/princeton-female-professors-backpay-discrimination-lawsuit.html>.
4. Daniel Bessner and Michael Brenes, "A Moral Stain on the Profession," *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, 26 Apr 2019, <https://www.chronicle.com/article/a-moral-stain-on-the-profession/>.
5. When I read the article prior to graduate school, I didn't note down any of the bibliographic information, callowness I've regretted many times over.

Career Diversity in the 1970s: Ernest May's "Careers in Business"

Michael Franczak

The lede in the Harvard *Crimson* article was grim. "The educational analysts agree: the academic job market looks bleak now, and during the coming decade it will worsen considerably." Those in the "humanities disciplines" were particularly at risk. Aware of the awful employment conditions facing them, already anxious humanities PhDs-to-be were exploring "a wide variety of solutions to the academic job crunch, ranging from driving cabs to belatedly enrolling in law school."¹

Whatever their path, the article made clear, no doctoral students could deny a simple fact: there were too few jobs for too many PhDs. As one Harvard faculty member put it, predicting the job crisis' impact on this generation of PhDs would be "like predicting the numbers of traffic fatalities on Labor Day weekend." You don't know what the numbers are going to be, but you know they're going to be high.² That article was published in 1977. Thirty years earlier, millions of American World War II veterans had returned home. Generous federal programs like the 1944 G.I. Bill subsidized (mostly white) Americans' capital accumulation in the form of low-interest loans, cheap housing, health care, and tuition and living expenses for higher education. (Because of racist state and local governments—by no means limited to the Jim Crow South—black veterans were largely unable to access these extraordinary, unprecedented benefits.)

From the perspective of U.S. universities, the only "jobs crisis" in the late 1940s and the 1950s was a shortage of qualified instructors. To fill the gap, graduate programs expanded across private and public universities, producing teacher-scholars (and sometimes just teachers) to meet the surge in demand for experts in everything from algebra to Aeschylus. But in the 1970s, the humanities PhD market crashed all of a sudden—or so it seemed—and possibly for good. "During the coming decade," the *Crimson* article lamented, "it is estimated that 2,500 new recipients of humanities doctorates will have to scramble for 900 academic posts each year."³

My point in highlighting this article is not to contextualize our own generation's misery. After all, our odds for the tenure track today are far *worse* than they were for the beleaguered class of '77. And I'd bet money that our CVs are much longer and more impressive.⁴ Instead, I bring in the article to highlight its title: "Program to Ready PhDs for Careers in Business."

Careers in Business, or CIB, was a short-lived but

VARIATIONS ON A THEME

SHAFR ANNUAL CONFERENCE

June 17-20, 2021

VIRTUAL

Due to the global pandemic, the conference will be entirely online this year. SHAFR is excited to partner with Pheedloop, an online conference platform that has successfully transitioned programming for organizations such as the Western History Association. We hope that the online platform will allow more scholars to engage with the conference.



THEMES

The program committee will organize the conference around themed sessions including borders, capitalism, decolonization, development, domestic politics, empire, environment, gender and sexuality, ideas, immigration, law, race, religion, rights, science and technology, security, strategy, and war and the military.

EXHIBITS

SHAFR will continue to partner with university presses to host book exhibits. The virtual exhibit hall will offer chat and podcast features, plus new book promotion opportunities for members and participants. Contact conference@shafr.org for more information.



REGISTRATION

SHAFR will offer reduced registration rates for this year's conference. Registration information and the program will be available in April. <https://www.shafr.org/events/shafr-2021-annual-meeting>.

ambitious program that, as the *Crimson* put it, “attempt[ed] to teach graduate students basic entrepreneurial skills, such as business language and corporate strategy.” The program was conceived and led by the esteemed Harvard diplomatic historian Ernest May (then History Department chair) and Dorothy G. Harrison, a New York State Education Department official. Its funds came in the form of a \$205,000 grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities, with additional gifts from Prudential, Pfizer, Exxon, and General Motors (the Rockefeller Foundation matched all corporate gifts). As part of the program, blue chip behemoths like Time, AT&T, IBM, and CBS provided humanities PhDs with direct access to company interviewers, who would teach them corporate lingo and potentially hire them after the program.

In its first year, CIB staff sent out some 2,500 applications for the seven-week orientation program, mostly to department leaders and “people who read ads in *The Chronicle of Higher Education*.” Interest was high, and CIB received five hundred complete applications from humanities PhD students.⁵ Program officials then interviewed 116 distinguished candidates from 44 universities, representing 31 fields of study. In the end, forty-five to fifty were selected for admission. During the process, May and Harrison also completed a monograph titled *You Don’t Have to Teach!* which was based on their popular *Chronicle* article, “The Academic Job Crisis: The Problem and the Opportunity.”⁶

CIB’s full story has not been told, though perhaps it should be, especially given our own woeful jobs crisis. On the surface, the program was a success. As stated in the “Careers in Business Progress Report, May 1977–May 1978,” “the primary objective of the project was to demonstrate that the pool of Ph.D.’s and near Ph.D.’s in the Humanities and related social sciences contains a significant number of men and women with high aptitude for and interest in business careers. . . . [The] response to the project over the past 12 months has shown that there are a significant number of people in corporations and on campuses across the country who believe that the two sectors have much to gain by working together.”⁷

The majority of CIB attendees did in fact leave academia to give “business” a shot, both at and beyond the participating corporations. That is not all there is to learn from CIB, however. The extensive and remarkably candid follow-up interviews, conducted in 1979, suggest a darker conclusion.

Many students were never able or willing to complete the turn away from academia. An interviewee named Robert, to cite one example, committed the sin of having “purposely pursued academics when his dissertation was complete,” and “should not have been admitted to the program.” Reviewers were also harsh on Dean, who “received his Ph.D. at a time when the sky was the limit. There were plenty of jobs for everyone and Dean had every right to expect a grand future.” Now, “Dean’s pursuit of [an academic] career [rather than one in business] has brought great hardship on him and his family. . . . His attendance at CIB was a waste of money and a waste of space.”⁸

Even those who landed “careers in business” found those positions unglamorous, unfulfilling, or both. “It is not hard to see Sibyl’s dissatisfaction with her job,” began one review, which the author blamed on her “unrealistic expectations” and “age (over 35).” Rick was another “confusing case.” Despite his “continued success in the insurance industry,” Rick “has, by his own admission, a value conflict with business” and “would return to academia if given the opportunity.” The report concluded

with familiar circular logic: “It would have behooved Rick to have made more effort to find a job that coincided not only with his abilities, but also with his values.”⁹ What did they suppose the purpose of his PhD was?

These are selections from the first half-dozen interviews in the collection. Reading on, one encounters even more depressing tales of professional regret, loss of identity, depression, alcoholism, despair, even paranoia and madness. Worse, the only thing on which interviewer and interviewee generally agree is that the latter’s predicament is no fault but his/her own. Again, CIB on poor Dean: “Maybe his [planned] return to academia can be interpreted as the one thing that employers fear about Ph.D.’s, that their true love is the university. When and if the job market is favorable, Dean is apt to leave business and return to teaching.”¹⁰

What does the CIB effort mean for our current jobs crisis? To begin with, the scale of CIB was multiples greater than the recent revitalization of alternative academic (“alt-ac”) programs. CIB’s largest benefactor was the U.S. government, which contributed nearly a quarter-million dollars for the seven-week effort. There is no such federal effort today. Instead, the “job” of helping PhDs find jobs is left either to well-meaning but misguided efforts by department leaders, who in most cases have zero experience in the private sector, or to the private sector itself, in the form of PhD “consultants” whose hourly rates rival those of a decent tax attorney.

A second point of contrast between CIB and today’s alt-ac is that CIB had demonstrable buy-in (figurative and literal) from American corporations. Again, this is not the case today. If you want real industry connections—that is, the people who hire or suggest hires—you will not find them in your department. There is another bit of irony in CIB’s tragic conclusion: today’s humanities PhDs cannot even get jobs they hate—or at least jobs that pay well and offer a future (i.e., a career). Whether for structural economic reasons or the bottom line, American corporations are not clamoring to employ more humanities PhDs. From Wall Street to Silicon Valley, America’s premier corporations and firms are far more likely to hire an undergrad history major from an elite school rather than one of that school’s history PhDs for the same entry-level job.

The biggest lesson we can take from CIB is also the most obvious. PhDs, especially in the humanities, want to be academics. The deep reservoir of adjunct or contingent faculty that elite and non-elite universities alike depend on for their courses is testament to this fact—as is the excellent scholarship so many adjuncts produce without department support. To pretend otherwise is disingenuous, and, as CIB shows, possibly dangerous, too.

Notes:

1. Jonathan D. Rattner, “Program to Ready Ph.D.s For Careers in Business,” *Harvard Crimson*, November 4, 1977, <https://www.thecrimson.com/article/1977/11/4/program-to-ready-phds-for-careers/>.
2. Rattner, “Program to Ready Ph.D.s.”
3. Rattner, “Program to Ready Ph.D.s.”
4. The productivity generational gap is not unique to academia. Since 1980, average productivity per worker in the United States has risen steadily. Average compensation (for the vast non-executive set) is another story.
5. “There were roughly an equal number of incomplete, late, or ineligible applications. The latter group contained a significant number of masters-only candidates and people with Ed.D.’s.” From “Careers in Business Progress Report, May 1977–May 1978,” HUG 4564.9 (Correspondence and Other Papers), Box 10, Folder: Careers in Planning—Reports (1 and 2), Ernest May

Papers, Harvard University.

6. "Careers in Business Progress Report, May 1977–May 1978," HUG 4564.9 (Correspondence and Other Papers), Box 10, Folder: Careers in Planning—Reports (1 and 2), Ernest May Papers, Harvard University.

7. "Careers in Business Progress Report."

8. Careers in Business Program, HUG 4564.10 (Correspondence and other papers), Box 3, Interview Reports and Analyses, 1979 (1 of 4).

9. Ibid.

10. Ibid.

"Crisis? What Crisis?" A Personal View from Outside the Academy

Henry D. Fetter

"Crisis? What crisis?" was the headline emblazoned across the *Sun* when suntanned UK Prime Minister James Callaghan returned from the Caribbean to a strike-bound Britain during the Winter of Discontent of 1978–79. From my vantage point, that pretty much characterizes the reaction of the historical profession to a decades-long jobs crisis that suddenly struck half a century ago and is the subject of this special issue of *Passport*. What follows is a personal, unsystematic and anecdotal view of that crisis and my perception of the historical profession's response to it.

The January 2014 issue of *Perspectives on History*, the newsletter of the American Historical Association, includes a graph that depicts the precipitous collapse of the history job market in the early 1970s and its failure to recover to any significant extent thereafter.¹

I was not surprised by what the graph showed. I entered the UC Berkeley doctoral program in history (Late Modern Europe) in the fall of 1972. At our orientation, the chairman of the department said that he knew many of us were "worried about the jobs crisis," but he tended to be an optimist, adding, "I also tend to have a job." He was right about the crisis. He was wrong about the optimism.

As it happened, I completed my MA and then left the department to enroll in law school. I was not alone among my graduate school cohort in leaving academia, both before and after receiving a doctorate. Law school was a popular escape route. One day I even encountered one of my undergraduate teachers in a law school corridor. The untenured assistant professor was changing careers.

Unlike most of my friends who left the profession, I retained the interests that led me to grad school in the first place, and to this day, I continue to scrutinize with care the footnotes of books I read and, as a Europeanist manqué, I even continue to cross my 7s. I have contributed to peer-reviewed journals and maintained memberships in the AHA and SHAFR, and I follow developments in academia.

What has surprised me is the very belated, and still grudgingly inadequate, recognition by the historical profession of a crisis that is now fifty years old. Why is this? Most likely because academic associations and organizations are almost entirely comprised of academics who do have jobs (like the UC Berkeley history department chairman I quoted earlier) and are not on the sharp end of the crisis. It may also be true that in the afterglow of the great expansion of academic employment opportunities in the 1960s, it took a while to face up to the new reality that the jobs crisis marked a secular decline and

not a temporary blip.

Then too, for a while at least there was an expectation that job opportunities would open up when the hires of the 1950s and 1960s retired—a promised land lying just over the hill. But then mandatory retirement was abolished. And as it happened, the crisis was not an equal opportunity destroyer. While the overall hiring market might have crashed, expanded employment opportunities opened up to scholars from previously underrepresented constituencies. Perhaps that overdue development alleviated concern about the more general and ongoing crisis.

As for the field in which members of SHAFR are engaged, there may be an additional reason for a delayed recognition of the "job market failure." As the jobs crisis hit, the entire field found itself being written off as an academic backwater that was merely "marking time," to quote Charles S. Maier's much-cited critique of the state of the field, circa 1980. By way of at least an implicit response,

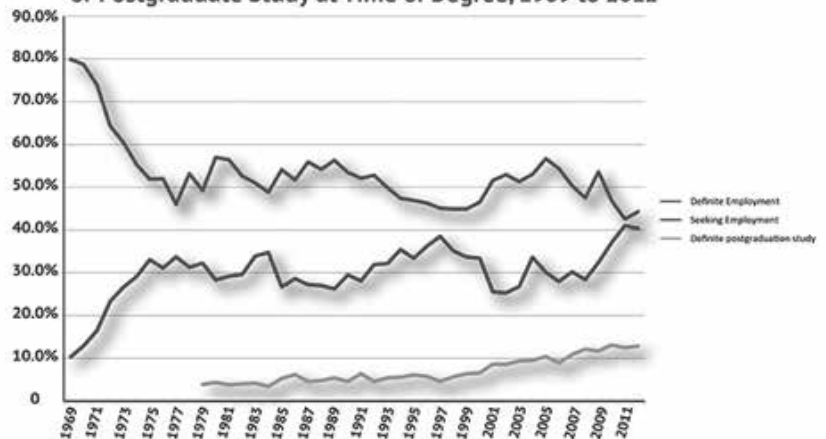
much time and energy were consumed thereafter in jettisoning traditional diplomatic history and fashioning a "new international history" that confronted subject matters and posed questions extending far beyond what one damn clerk wrote to another. A preoccupation with "rebooting" the field and assuring its continued relevance and scholarly bona fides, while necessary and justified in many ways, may also have shunted concern with anything else, including the jobs crisis, aside.

Not that the profession's myopia improved much once the crisis was finally acknowledged. Flawed vision was especially manifest in the apparent determination to keep the doors of graduate education in history open, despite the shortage of employment opportunities in academia, and to tout the value of a history PhD for non-academic pursuits. A 2013 AHA publication ("The Many Careers of History PhDs") optimistically contended that "students interested in careers beyond the professoriate should recognize the versatility of a history education and know that they, too, can leverage their PhD into a meaningful career outside the academy."²

But can anyone really believe that the holder of a doctorate in history will be as well positioned in the non-academic job market as their peers who have studied law or business—or library science, for that matter? Talk about opportunity cost—one can obtain both a JD and an MBA in less time than a PhD.

Nor should any PhD holders who are employed

Figure 3. New History PhDs Reporting Employment or Postgraduate Study at Time of Degree, 1969 to 2012



Source: Survey of Earned Doctorates, 2013. Previous years taken from tables created and updated by Robert Townsend. Percentages are of total number of graduates who answered the question on the survey, not total number of graduates.

outside academia be under the illusion that they can easily pursue the research and writing interests that drew them to the field in the first place. A PhD holder outside the academy will be out of the feedback loop of grants, lecture invitations, fellowships, offers to contribute to symposia or essay collections, opportunities to appear on panels at professional conferences, and other elements of academic life that fuel the careers of those who have landed academic jobs. Moreover, as their time away from the university increases, they will likely find it increasingly difficult to round up the letters of recommendation upon which all such opportunities depend.

In any event, it seems somewhat beside the point to worry—at long last—about the jobs crisis when the entire discipline is under siege. The jobs crisis is now only a subset of a crisis facing the entire discipline, and by no means the most acute. Enrollments in history courses have been falling at institutions both high and low, as is the number of students majoring in the subject. Writing a senior thesis was once a matter of course for students majoring in history (including those not intending to pursue graduate study) at “elite” colleges. That’s no longer the case. As movie mogul Sam Goldwyn did (or did not) say, if people don’t want to come, you can’t stop them. Perhaps it’s easier to worry about the jobs crisis and moot solutions (whether effective or not) than to face up to the challenges to the continued existence of the field itself. It’s more than about time that the jobs crisis was acknowledged. Ironically, now that it has been, it seems so last century.

Notes:

1. Allen Mikaelian, “The 2013 Jobs Report: Number of AHA Ads Dip, New Experiment Offers Expanded View,” *Perspectives on History*, January 2014, <https://www.historians.org/publications-and-directories/perspectives-on-history/january-2014/the-2013-jobs-report-number-of-aha-ads-dip-new-experiment-offers-expanded-view>.
2. L. Maren Wood and Robert B. Townsend, “The Many Careers of History PhDs: A Study of Job Outcomes, Spring 2013,” <https://www.historians.org/jobs-and-professional-development/career-resources/the-many-careers-of-history-phds>.

I’m Still Standing. Better Than I Ever Did?

Chris Foss

Over the course of my career in academia, I haven’t faced the personal and professional challenges that Bernie Taupin and Elton John must have been reflecting upon when they made “I’m Still Standing” the title of John’s 1983 hit song. Nearly fifteen years after deciding to go to graduate school and pursue an advanced degree in history, I’m also still standing, but I’m wondering if I’m better off now than I would be if I had made a different career choice.

On the one hand, I made great friends and worked with cherished colleagues at the University of Colorado. I almost surely met my wife because I made the decision to move to Colorado. I wrote a book, and I got to teach some amazing classes (and continue to do so!). On the other hand, I still live with my parents at the age of thirty-five, and, thanks to the CARES Act, I made more money from a spring and summer of unemployment than I would have if I had worked during the same period of time as an adjunct faculty member. As the dust (hopefully) settles from a year of living with COVID-19, how do I come off the high of successes I *have* had in academia, and find new opportunities to help not only myself but others facing the academic jobs crisis? I hope that a review of my story encourages readers to offer some answers to these questions that will start to give our discipline a way forward.

When I decided as a college senior at Willamette

University to try to make academia a career, I was warned away. Jobs were scarce. Competition was fierce. The politics would make me crazy. And this was before the Great Recession of 2007–2009! Yet I was encouraged by all of my closest advisers in and out of the History Department, who told me that graduate school was something worth doing.

In my senior year I was editor-in-chief of the campus newspaper, so I was also thinking about pursuing a career in journalism. But that seemed like a dying field. Plus, I already knew what it was like to fight with the major power players on campus whenever a big and controversial news story broke, and, having come of age at about the time 9/11 struck, I was wary of having to cover wars and terrorism. I therefore bid adieu to the paper, wrote my senior thesis on the Argentine “dirty war” of the late 1970s and early 1980s, and spent the next couple of years working in my hometown of Portland, Oregon, saving money and applying to grad schools. Diplomatic history seemed like a natural fit for me because it would marry my interests in U.S. history and foreign affairs. I remain grateful to this day to Bob Schulzinger and Tom Zeiler for taking a chance on me and bringing me to CU in the fall of 2009.

My early years of graduate school were a struggle. Early on, I was diagnosed with a rare (but treatable) brain condition, and had trouble figuring out how to deal with it emotionally. I was also unused to the loneliness that accompanied the new workload of reading and paper-writing. Furthermore, in those early years I experienced anxiety around the professional aspects of graduate school—going to conferences, networking, giving papers, and (perhaps most of all) picking a cutting-edge dissertation topic. Yes, I went to SHAFR annually. Yes, SHAFRites are an extremely friendly bunch, and I met a number of interesting people. But my anxiety and occasional health issues kept me, for the most part, from “jumping in” and networking until I got a bit more seasoned. I didn’t give a paper at a major conference of any kind until my fifth SHAFR, in 2014.

That leads me to what I think may have been my biggest problem—choosing a dissertation topic. This is where the apparatus of graduate school may have failed me the most. Could advisers or fellow grad students have gotten me more on track? Perhaps, but I ultimately blame no one but myself. If I could travel back in time, I would tell my Younger Self to settle on a reasonable topic and work on it whenever I had the chance. Instead, I probably focused too much on my coursework, on trying to fit in better socially, and on figuring out how to better manage my health condition. It wasn’t until the fall of 2011—over two years into grad school—that I realized that my idea to study in Argentina wasn’t financially feasible or personally rewarding enough and that I needed to change course.

During the spring of 2012, I wrote a research paper on the rise of bookselling culture, but struggled to figure out how to make that work as a U.S. foreign relations topic. It wasn’t until the summer of 2012—three years into graduate school—that I finally determined that I would write about the intersection of U.S. foreign policy and the Pacific Northwest. Even with this late start, it seemed like things fell into place, at least for a few years. Setting my dissertation topic in Washington and Oregon allowed me to complete my journey through grad school affordably.

Modest award winnings, stays with friends and family, and an adjunct position back at Willamette during my final year of school helped push me across the finish line. During this time, I was incredibly happy. I met my wife and got married. I was an assistant editor of *Diplomatic History*. I attended the SHAFR Summer Institute in Columbus, Ohio, in 2015. I got the opportunity to travel more than I ever had before, and it seemed like my research and writing flowed at a remarkably easy pace.

Things slowed down for me, however, once I graduated

from CU in August 2016 and settled into year after year of adjunct gigs. One problem I quickly discovered was that there were not very many tenure-track jobs that fit my research interests. Again, if Older Self could go back in time and meet with Younger Self, the former would have encouraged the latter to be more serious about taking the market into consideration. At the same time, I also knew that I did not want to move to a job in an undesirable place, uprooting my family for my needs alone.

But it looked like I was going to do just that until, a few months into my job search, my wife was offered her dream job as a full-time pediatric physical therapist, a rare opportunity for someone who was herself a few months out of grad school. Her job doesn't pay well enough to enable us both to live the so-called American dream, but it has unbeatable benefits, she loves the work, and we stay close to Portland so I can help my aging parents. How could I pull her, and us, away from that? As it became clear how good this job was, it seemed unlikely that we would want to leave the Portland area.

Even with my lack of luck on the job market, my work has carried on. I enjoyed my time as an adjunct at the University of Portland, and I especially enjoyed teaching at Willamette's Tokyo International University of America branch before it was forced to close when the pandemic hit. Within those varied institutional settings, I built a corpus of classes in a wide variety of U.S. history subfields. I used the extra time I would have lost as a full-time assistant professor to finish my book. I published a number of journal and encyclopedia articles, as well as book reviews. Though I haven't been able to attend SHAFR since 2016 because of a lack of funds and institutional support, I have taken advantage of conferences put on by regional groups like the Pacific Coast Branch of the American Historical Association and Oregon's and Washington State's historical societies. And, while I haven't felt like a true member of the faculty at any of my stops along the way, I have made good contacts, and people have been exceedingly friendly and willing to help me in every way they can. Doing all of this has helped me stay reasonably active in the historical profession.

I have no doubt that it's been worth it. I have a young family, a Rolodex full of friends and colleagues down for conversation and commiseration at the drop of a hat, and fond memories to look back on. I grew up, and, even though I eventually returned home, my years in Colorado and around the United States taught me how to be self-reliant, self-disciplined, and happy—in short, a well-rounded adult. I always knew that the odds of receiving a tenure-track job at the end of the rainbow were somewhat remote, but I made peace with that long ago, and I've mainly been able to enjoy the ride.

If I had chosen a more conventional career like many of my old college buddies did, I'm not sure I would have been able to have done the things I wanted to do, like get away from home for a time, visit most of the presidential libraries, travel to most of the states in the country, meet my favorite authors, and impress upon thousands of students the importance of history. If I hadn't moved to Colorado, I wouldn't have met my roommate of six years, David Varel, who became one of my best friends and has gone on to become a highly-accomplished historian of African American intellectuals. Most important, I wouldn't have met my remarkable wife and been able to share the best little boy ever with her.

With all that in mind, I am still left to wonder how I and those like me are going to carry ourselves forward for the

next half of our lives before (God willing) retirement. Even before the pandemic struck with full force, the news was getting worse for contingent scholars: diminishing tenure-track *and* adjunct opportunities and few public history or historical consulting jobs. I've weighed whether to go back to school and spend more money to get a teaching degree so I can teach high school or middle school social studies. Every time I think seriously about that path, an adjunct carrot seems to dangle itself to keep me going. So, what to do? I'd love to hear suggestions from you, fellow readers.

Beyond that, I'm back to time travel as the best option. But I wouldn't go back and tell Younger Self not to take the path I ended up following; rather, I'd have him come up with a serious Plan B, and maybe even a Plan C. I've devoted the last fifteen years of my life almost wholly to making myself marketable for a tenure-track job as a history professor. I can't reset for a completely different career.

Archives want trained archivists; museums want Museum Studies grads; architectural firms want trained architects or archaeologists. The career diversity program at the American Historical Association thus has its work cut out for it. In recent years, even as the "alt-ac" track has become trendy, I've found that, like Lyndon B. Johnson and Vietnam or Michael Corleone and the mob, I may have gotten myself too far in to get back out.

Getting Out and Fighting On: How to Confront the Jobs Crisis

Zeb Larson

It's strange to be writing about the academic jobs' crisis from the outside; stranger still to be doing it in *Passport*, where I was an assistant editor for a few years. In December of 2019, I decided that after several years of applying to academic and "alt-ac" positions with nothing to show for it, I was done. So I enrolled in a coding boot camp. I'm a software developer now, writing for fun and working on my book, but firmly "out" and glad to be. I pat myself on the back regularly for this decision, though I don't deserve much credit for it: I couldn't have guessed that COVID was going to come along and wreck what little was unbroken in the humanities and higher education.

The American Historical Association likely won't have its 2020–21 jobs report out until early 2022, though given how little there is to study, maybe they'll just knock it out over a weekend. Based on the number of job postings historically seen on H-Net and elsewhere, it's going to have people pining for how "good" things were back in 2016. If you're rolling your eyes, you should be: things were terrible in 2016, 2017, 2018, and 2019. Cutting a piddling number in half leaves you with a smaller piddling number, but that's where we are. The damage being inflicted by COVID isn't an anomaly or a "bad year"—it's creating a new reality, and we can probably look forward to more of nothing in 2022.

The pandemic is accelerating forces that were in play long before 2020–21, and these forces will continue to wreak havoc on academe even after vaccines are in wide distribution. State higher-ed budgets are going to be cut, undoing any of the gains made since 2008 for public universities. There were fewer young people applying to college even before COVID: in 2019, there were two million fewer postsecondary enrollments than there were in 2011.¹ University endowments will shrink for both public and private schools. Barring a miracle of support from gridlocked Washington, DC, federal fiscal relief will be

insufficient to offset this crisis.

As we've seen through most of 2020, administrators will use this current crisis to eliminate faculty. In fact, the cuts that occurred at the University of Akron, or more recently at the University of Vermont, were already in the works for budgetary reasons.² Cuts are being supported at a political level as well. As an example, Kansas has announced that layoffs due to financial exigency will proceed at state universities through December 2022: this means that the tenured professoriate is at risk.³

Talking about "recovery" or "going back to normal" is a special kind of nonsense—one that's even worse than the fallacious comparisons to how bad the job market was in the 1970s and 1980s. One has to ask, recovery to what? To 2017, when the decline bottomed out somewhat? Even a return to this pathetic "normal" isn't going to happen, and for that matter, it shouldn't. The old status quo worked for only a few people and did little but mask a deeply unstable and exploitative system.

I offer four suggestions to SHAFR and to other historical societies on what they ought to do going forward if they want to support historians and ensure that history is still written. Truth be told, this is what they should have been doing well before the arrival of COVID, and having waited so long will likely make the transformation that much more painful. Nothing can be done about that now, and the shocks caused by COVID might finally give people a reason to fight for this profession.

1. Academia needs to fight for its survival. The tenured professoriate has been long on thoughts and prayers and short on action when it comes to the plight of contingent faculty. Up until now, many tenured faculty have benefited from the job crisis. They haven't had to teach classes they dislike: they pass them over to adjuncts, knowing full well they can take them back if they need to. Hiring and grant committees always get their pick of overqualified candidates. The lucky tenured few still receive a fair amount of respect and prestige.

No tenured faculty are safe from financial retrenchment, on the other hand. *Force majeure* clauses can remove just about anybody from their job, tenured or no, and that's led to a lot of sudden concern about the state of the field. But just sounding the alarm isn't going to do the trick: academics need to internalize and promote genuine solidarity with contingent faculty. Unionization can no longer be an abstract goal. But effective unionization also means leveling the status between faculty members somewhat: it's hard to engender solidarity between heavily exploited adjuncts and professors with incredible job security.

Academics also need to become more aware of the political dimensions of this problem. It's easy (and fair) to complain about university administrators, but funding decisions are ultimately made at the state level. Conservative groups like the National Association of Scholars (NAS) are already making a clear case for what they want. In a report from April of 2020, for example, the NAS offered several proposals to guide a bailout of higher education, including "intellectual freedom charters" to prohibit safe spaces; the restriction of hiring practices aimed at fostering social diversity; and a declaration that prohibits comments on "issues such as climate change, electoral politics, foreign policy, federal or state diversity programs, immigration policy, or marriage policy." COVID and the economic fallout that's coming will make bargains like this increasingly attractive. Protecting academia means fighting for budget appropriations and participating in lobbying efforts, which we have mostly left to university presidents and administrators.

2. Start looking beyond the academy to preserve scholarship. Something I always liked about SHAFR is that

it seemed like a big-tent professional society, welcoming people from think-tanks and government in addition to universities. SHAFR must lean even more heavily into that identity. Furthermore, adjuncts must become part of society governance. It is problematic that contingent faculty are so poorly represented in SHAFR and other professional organizations, especially when they make up the majority of faculty.

SHAFR must also orient itself to dealing with the concerns of people like myself, who gave up on tenure-track jobs but would like to remain members of the historians' guild. I have a dissertation I'm working to publish, I have article ideas and drafts, and I stay in regular contact with scholars in the field. It might be difficult for me to keep up that output as time goes on—which would also have been true if I'd remained an adjunct—but it will be much easier and more rewarding if I still feel like I belong at SHAFR. Moreover, the field itself will benefit from the scholarship of people like me.

Scholarly societies need to strengthen and create new links with scholars working outside of academia. The stigma needs to be taken off part-time historians, who will no doubt form an increasingly large subset of the field. Even if we could somehow restore funding to higher ed, it's unlikely we'll be able to give every history PhD a tenure-track job. At least two generations of historians have been lost to the job market; the question is whether we can find a way for those who left the university to stay involved in the discipline.

3. Rethink how we amplify and develop scholarship. It's absurd that it took the pandemic to force conferences online. People who couldn't travel, people who didn't have money or institutional support, people with chronic illnesses, and people who just had a conflict were told time and again that they couldn't present their work remotely. But suddenly, we can present online. And despite the hypocrisy, I don't think we should reverse this decision. Yes, it's fun to see friends and colleagues in person, and the social bonds formed in real-life discussions are stronger than those formed online. Nevertheless, forcing everyone to gather in one place at one specific time benefits the resourced at the expense of the poor. Ensuring that people have the opportunity to present online is a meaningful step that SHAFR can take to support contingent and other scholars.

There's been another silver lining to the pandemic: people sharing research materials online. Archives will be closed for a while longer, but even when they reopen, there will be a lot of people who simply won't be able to travel to them. Research is expensive, resources are scarce, and a lot of people's scholarship will grind to a halt if they can't look at primary sources. The kinds of sharing networks that emerged during COVID could help the situation and should not be abandoned once we "return to normal." If anything, such efforts should be expanded.

We also need to be more intentional about the kinds of research we amplify and support. A lot of people's scholarship is going to end with a dissertation. Why not, therefore, review dissertations in forums like *Diplomatic History*, *Passport*, or *H-Diplo*? Collaborative work on multinational research projects should also be encouraged, as it's not practical or ethical to expect that single-author projects remain the standard when so few authors have the resources to pursue multi-archival scholarship. The standard going forward should be that SHAFR, and academia more broadly, functions less like a club and more like a community.

4. Decide what we want the changes in graduate education to look like. I've been afraid for a while about what the inevitable "reforms" to graduate education might look like—in particular, cuts that will leave a handful of Ivy League

schools and a couple of state and private institutions with grad programs. Such a system will overwhelmingly favor white, upper-middle-class men. Scholarship will border on the inbred if it just comes out of a few institutions.

So, what should the future of graduate education look like? There's an argument to be made that departments that don't successfully place large numbers of graduate students in tenure-track jobs should no longer have PhD programs. Nonetheless, eliminating programs or dramatically slashing admissions is an ugly solution in a world where many history courses are still being taught. In some ways, it confirms a conservative critique of this profession, that the study of history is not worthwhile except as a hobby for the well-off. With institutions like the NAS pushing for schools to focus on vocational training, the humanities will increasingly be pushed aside. History will become a pastime of the leisured class.

This leads us to the subject of "alt-ac" careers. While I dislike this term—it's nonspecific and implicitly demeans non-academic careers—it's the one we're stuck with. Alt-ac has garnered a lot of attention, though in terms of practical support, not much has actually been done to encourage it. Instead, we've been handed tokens: committees have been formed, workshops have been attended, and practice interviews have been given. But beyond that, there have been few genuine links established between graduate programs in history and extra-university institutions. This is problematic, because a PhD by itself is not a strong qualification for non-academic jobs. Furthermore, new skills cannot be meaningfully learned or taught in the course of a weekend or day-long workshop. If I started a month-long class that claimed to teach students how to become history professors, #academictwitter would put a bounty on my head. But that's how many schools and professional societies have approached alt-ac.

If we're going to take alt-ac seriously—and there are reasons we should, given the long-term problems we're facing—we need to embrace curricular changes. The best and most productive thing to do is to teach hard skills that can be used by both scholars and those forced into different careers. If we want to talk about sending people into instructional design, that means an actual understanding of design pedagogies and theories of learning. If you want to talk about writing or editing, that means actually offering coursework on developmental editing. A PhD by itself is not a qualification for editing.

Offering that kind of coursework means encouraging PhD candidates to write for non-academic venues. Journal articles and dissertation chapters are painfully irrelevant to hiring entities when you leave academia. There's no reason, either, that courses on programming and coding can't be wedded to scholarship. An SQL database properly managed is useful for academic research, and programming languages like Python open up new paths of data analytics. (I spent much of graduate school grumbling that I needed to learn how to build a scraper, and I'm currently using what I know to build a digital archive for oral histories).

Adding new courses also means fostering honest conversations about finding work outside graduate school. Difficult though it may be to accept, most employers don't regard graduate school as a useful work history, and work history counts for a great deal in publishing, in education, in journalism, and in general throughout the private sector.

The other choice is to do what the professoriate has been doing for a long time now, which is basically nothing. Offering faint sympathy or banal platitudes like "good work gets a job" could be interpreted as advancing what some professors might feel is an agreeable vision of what the profession could look like: a shrinking, gated community where the residents pat themselves on the back for being where they are but occasionally miss having somebody to talk to. Perhaps now that universities themselves are in

genuine peril and the polite fiction that tenure is ironclad is dying, people will make a different choice.

Notes:

1. Michael Nietzel, "College Enrollment Declines Again. It's Down More Than Two Million Students in this Decade," *Forbes*, December 16, 2019, <https://www.forbes.com/sites/michaelnietzel/2019/12/16/college-enrollment-declines-again-its-down-more-than-two-million-students-in-this-decade/?sh=30f99d03d959>.
2. The University of Akron president referred to the need for cuts as a \$50 million problem the administration had to solve suddenly instead of slowly. Reporting from *Inside Higher Ed* agrees that the Vermont cuts were planned previously. Lilah Burke, "Arbitrator Sides with U. of Akron on Faculty Layoffs," *Inside Higher Ed*, September 21, 2020, <https://www.insidehighered.com/quick-takes/2020/09/21/arbitrator-sides-u-akron-faculty-layoffs>; Colleen Flaherty, "Not-So Fait Accompli," *Inside Higher Ed*, December 7, 2020, <https://www.insidehighered.com/news/2020/12/07/u-vermont-faculty-members-pledge-fight-planned-cuts-liberal-arts>.
3. Colleen Flaherty, "Suspending the Rules for Faculty Layoffs," *Inside Higher Ed*, January 22, 2021, <https://www.insidehighered.com/news/2021/01/22/firing-professors-kansas-just-got-lot-easier>.

A Conversation about the Jobs Crisis

In autumn 2020, a small group of SHAFRites chatted remotely about the jobs crisis. The four participants work at different kinds of institutions and have had different experiences in higher education, but they share common concerns about the future of the profession.

Ryan Irwin: Shall we start with introductions?

Stuart Schrader: Sure. I received my PhD in American Studies from New York University in 2015, and I'm currently at Johns Hopkins University on a contingent contract. Technically, I'm in the sociology department, but I teach interdisciplinary courses listed in Africana Studies and International Studies. And then also sociology and political science. My students always read historical analyses and wrestle with primary sources.

Judy Tzu-Chun Wu: I am a professor of Asian American studies at the University of California, Irvine. I also direct the UCI Humanities Center, which is a really wonderful opportunity to foster collective intellectual engagement. I received my PhD way, way back in the last century, in 1998, and I taught for a long period of time at Ohio State. I've been at UCI for just over five years.

Julia Irwin: I'm an associate professor of history at the University of South Florida. I got my PhD from Yale in 2009 and then came here to USF in 2010 after a yearlong stint as a visiting assistant professor. I teach classes on the U.S. in the world, and my research focuses on U.S. foreign aid and international humanitarianism in the twentieth century.

Ryan Irwin: I'm an associate professor at the University at Albany, SUNY. I got my PhD at Ohio State and took a fellowship at Yale that turned into my first academic job as the Associate Director of International Security Studies. That position got me through the post-2008 downturn and taught me how to use my dissertation to do weird things like raise money. I came to Albany in 2013, and I've been teaching here since then.

So, how do you all define the jobs crisis? We work at different kinds of institutions and we've had different experiences in our careers so far. Do you think the jobs crisis is baked into our profession—something we all experience when we're on the market—or is it something that has

changed over time and gotten worse in recent years?

Stuart Schrader: Being on the job market is a burden that is at times overwhelming and all-consuming. I joke that I wouldn't wish it on my worst enemy. It's not a market, right? I think a market would imply that there's some kind of choice, but there is very little choice; we're just kind of stuck going where it leads us. Honestly, it feels sometimes more like a lottery, although even that metaphor doesn't exactly work because the job market is not totally random. There are certain types of hidden criteria that help people succeed.

It's very demoralizing. At the same time, when you do it for a while, you get used to it in a weird way. It's just, "Okay, fall is coming. It's time to apply for jobs." Then around Christmas or New Year's, you know you'll be in a state of deep depression. Or maybe you'll get your hopes up a little bit and then they'll be crushed.

For me, there's a before-and-after in my sense of self. I feel like I meet grad students now who are so happy-go-lucky, or maybe even a little cocky, before they apply for jobs. Then they go on the market and come out the other side, and their demeanor has totally changed. It's quite sad and kind of tragic.

Ryan Irwin: Judy, do you think the situation has gotten worse since the 1990s? Is Stuart describing something that's been "normal" for a long time, or have things genuinely gotten harder in the period you've been in the profession?

Judy Wu: I think it's become more difficult to land a tenure-track academic position. I was just looking at some statistics from the *Chronicle of Higher Education*, and they're estimating that 337,000 people have lost their jobs in higher education since March 2020. That's not history-specific, but that's a really steep decline. The academic market has changed dramatically since I began looking for my first job. I noticed, when I was at Ohio State, people were coming into the department with CVs that made them appear as if they were tenured faculty already. They had a book out, they had taught in multiple places, they were already thinking about a second book. By the time they got a job—if they got a job—they were incredibly accomplished. In fact, I've noticed that the expectations for graduate students and postdocs escalate every year. Also, the people who tend to be contingent faculty tend to be marginalized in many ways. They might be women or people of color. Their economic marginalization is compounded by other forms of exclusion.¹

I will say, as the director UCI's Humanities Center, that we try to support the research initiatives of our faculty and students, and we're also trying to think about how to professionalize people in multiple ways. For those who are thinking about pursuing a career as a tenure-track faculty member, we're trying to figure out ways to support their writing and publishing and get them prepared for the job market. But we're also trying to cultivate different skills that come out of their love for the subject they study. One example of this is that we're sponsoring summer internships with different local and national cultural and educational institutions. Participants might work with the *Los Angeles Review of Books* over the summer or they might work for a museum. We are now trying to make connections with the Smithsonian. These kinds of positions help students use their intellectual skills in diverse settings, develop professional contacts, and think about the various ways in which they might share the passion of their intellectual love.

Julia Irwin: Yes, the situation has gotten exponentially worse. I was on the market for two years, and I applied to somewhere between fifty and seventy-five jobs and

fellowships in each of those years. In my second year applying, I got two offers for tenure-track jobs. At the time, that seemed pretty difficult. Now, I recognize that it's nothing by comparison. These days, I know people who have been on the market for five years, who have applied to over five hundred jobs. And it's not just anecdotal—one only needs to study the statistics in the AHA job market reports to appreciate the dire state of the market.

Regrettably, I think it could—and likely will—get even worse. Just look at the cuts, the hiring freezes, and the declining university budgets right now. At my university, there is talk of closing programs and shutting down entire units. This is also happening in a lot of other places, and I fear it is likely to accelerate, especially if the pandemic continues well into 2021. It's all pretty dismal.

Ryan Irwin: Yeah, I share your fears. My university is also struggling with a hiring freeze and an apocalyptic budget. In the past decade, my department has tried to collaborate with other units on campus to hire people who can teach across disciplines, and we've adjusted our hiring priorities every time the president's office announces a new initiative. We've managed to hire about ten people, which is great, but I don't think any of those lines have been straightforward replacements for retiring faculty.

At SUNY, undergraduate enrollment often feels entwined with hiring. The reason we've had to fight so hard for the opportunity to hire is because our majors declined dramatically after the 2008 recession. Although our classes still fill, fewer students want to major in history, so the department is constantly being told, "If you want lines, get majors." We've made adjustments—rebranding classes, assigning new kinds of projects, clarifying career pathways—but the result has been minors, double majors, and skeptical administrators. We're pushing against a powerful headwind.

If we all agree that the jobs crisis is getting worse, do you think there's a straightforward explanation?

Julia Irwin: Our majors have declined too. I think we've probably lost half our majors since the 2008 recession. However, the numbers stabilized a few years ago. And in fact, I think they've actually gone up a little bit, in part because of changes we've made to our curriculum. So, I don't see a straightforward connection at my institution. Our hiring situation definitely hasn't been as good as yours, Ryan. We've hired four tenure-track people in the time I've been at USF, two of whom are no longer here. But we've lost far more than that—roughly ten tenure-track people in ten years, most of whom haven't been replaced. Our classes fill well, yet we still can't hire. So, there doesn't seem to be a clear relationship between hiring and enrollment.

Judy Wu: At least three things are happening, though I'm sure there are more. One explanation for why things are getting worse is the systematic defunding of higher education. Three of the four of us work in public institutions, and the percentage of funding that our state governments provide has gone down, which has led to a greater reliance on grants as well as tuition from out of state, particularly from international students. The humanities do not bring big grants like the STEM fields. Similarly, there's been a push for new economic partnerships outside the academy in fields like engineering. Again, the humanities is not in a position to take advantage of these types of partnerships.

Another thing that's happening is that the value the humanities bring to college education has become less obvious, especially for students who are the first members of their families to get a college degree. Even students whose parents went to college have new anxieties about their increasingly precarious middle-class status. So, I think it makes sense that our classes are full, because

we teach subjects that interest a lot of people. However, the perceived cash value of some majors is more obvious than that of others, and that cash value has grown more important in the past decade.

There is also a third thing, which is the denigration of higher education in the United States. This has happened in a broad sense, but the Trump administration has been extremely hostile toward experts or so-called “liberals” working in the academy. I think all three things have changed how people approach university education, which has affected how education is funded and how faculty are hired.

These things are not easy to address. But the humanities play such an incredibly important role in our society. It is our job to help people make sense of our world. For example, why has COVID-19 affected some communities so disproportionately? How do we make sense of the racial violence that’s happening? We need the humanities for intellectual guidance, and universities must begin to see beyond cold fiscal logic when they set priorities. That’s what leadership is supposed to be about.

Ryan Irwin: When you walk into the Albany airport, there’s an enormous banner announcing that our university has created more new programs than any university in the United States. Maybe that’s true; I have no idea. But every time I look at that banner I start gritting my teeth and muttering about the vagaries of neoliberalism. One group of administrators is telling us we need more majors to get more tenure-track faculty lines, while another group is creating, and celebrating, new programs as proof that the university is racing into the future.

You can’t really “win” in that environment; there are a finite number of students on campus. The tragedy is that many of these new programs recycle existing faculty and resources, so the arrangement feels very market-driven, and if you complain too loudly, you invite uncomfortable questions about your personal version of that banner: How many Twitter followers do you have? How many people have downloaded your work? Who are you influencing? Sometimes, it feels like we’re caught in a system and pushing its excesses onto job candidates.

Is there a solution? Do you think things would get better if schools produced fewer PhDs?

Stuart Schrader: That’s a hard question. On the one hand, “yes” might seem like the rational answer. The market is saturated. Therefore, producing fewer PhDs makes sense. But on the other hand, I feel like that mindset submits to this unnecessary austerity, because if state budgets were putting more money into universities—or even just returning to the levels of twenty years ago—the landscape around hiring might look completely different.

I think the fundamental question is whether we design our programs to accommodate the crisis in order to muddle through in this environment, or do we rather think about more collective solutions to refuse the crisis? Obviously, that’s a really hard thing to do, but this jobs crisis is so big, I don’t see any alternative to thinking and acting collectively.

From the perspective of declining majors, sure, it may seem there are no fulfilling and high-paying employment opportunities for undergraduates who study history, and it might feel smarter to major in something that appears to lead to guaranteed employment, like computer programming. I get that, though I believe it is a mistake. But we also have to be mindful of the gap that would emerge if the students who studied history did so only because they have the financial ability not to worry about whether they’re going to get a great job after graduation. That would be a huge tragedy, and I don’t think we should resign ourselves to a looming bifurcation in which the humanities or social sciences become luxury goods available only to students

who can afford to be “impractical” in their choice of major. I’m not convinced that majoring in history is less practical than computer programming over the long term.

Julia Irwin: I think Stuart makes really important points. I agree that accepting the logic of scarcity and austerity will have unintended side effects. However, this isn’t to say that we should ignore the realities. At USF, we try to be very upfront with anyone applying to doctoral programs and to talk with PhD students about the market’s realities. That’s the only ethical and responsible thing to do. We need to be very blunt about the job situation nationally and students’ competitiveness for tenure-track faculty positions.

That being said, we have a lot of students who, for various reasons, want to study and learn history. Some of them are retired. Some of them are working parttime as they earn their PhDs. They *want* to study history. I don’t think they should be refused simply because they didn’t go to an elite undergraduate school.

When we talk about the PhD, we need to recognize that there are different ways to be successful. A number of our graduates have gotten really good non-tenure-track jobs. For example, one of the students I advised is now teaching AP and dual-enrollment history courses in a local high school, which is exactly the position he wanted. Another of my students got a job as a curator at a local museum. In addition to these, several recent graduates from our program have gotten full-time jobs in regional community colleges and universities.

The problem with shutting down regional graduate programs like the one at USF is that it would lead to a situation where only a very small and select group of students get to study the past at the graduate level. That seems very damaging to our profession. Going back to what Stuart said, what is the point of a public university and a public education if not to educate students and serve students in the region? I think giving up on that right now would be problematic in many ways.

Judy Wu: I guess I would share three things. One, I think we should be open to redefining the purpose of the PhD. Because there are various paths that a person might pursue that are fulfilling intellectually yet may not necessarily correlate with a tenure-track position. I agree with Julia about this.

Two, I think we should recognize the way history and humanities intersect with other forms of inquiry. For example, we have a medical humanities program at UCI that asks, “How do you train doctors and nurses to be ethical if you don’t talk about the human experience of healthcare?” To take another example, this year I’m trying to promote the exploration of oceans. I’ve been in conversation with people in various fields about the environment, including scientists studying microorganisms and ocean pollution.

Three, we all need to learn how to explain the real-life impact of our work. It’s not enough to train students to be better critical thinkers; we need to show them how to make an impact in our society. During my time at Ohio State, I was engaged in a community research project that recorded the life experiences of Japanese Americans who had been incarcerated during World War II and relocated to Ohio. Ryan, you engaged in this project as a student. I’m now located in Orange County, which has the third largest population of Asian American and Pacific Islanders in the country. I’m using this methodology called PhotoVoice, which is a community participatory action research methodology. We’re utilizing photography to capture worldviews, and we’re pairing those images with oral histories and storytelling. The objective is to create something artistic and well researched, but also something that will help advocate for social change and that might change minds, behaviors, and policies.

Those are the things I'm really invested in, and I know I'm in a very privileged position as a professor and as the director of this center, but I think that these types of projects resonate with students who are experiencing a lot of anxiety and stress about the job market. We all crave a sense of agency, something that we can do with our intellectual labor that is meaningful.

Ryan Irwin: For most PhD programs, the "outcome" is the dissertation, which is a splendid exercise in so far as it teaches people how to squeeze complexity from apparently straightforward things and turn that complexity into something stylish, accessible, and, hopefully, important. As an intellectual act, nothing else compares. But dissertations can also be lonely, expensive, and time-consuming—the opposite of Judy's collaborative community project—and it's occasionally hard to explain what they prepare you for. Is this a problem?

Judy Wu: Stuart, you just published your first book with University of California Press. I'm on the editorial board for that press and one of its acquisition editors came to UCI recently to talk about how to translate the dissertation into a first book. In addition to talking about the importance of considering the audience, the speaker also mentioned that many editors are now looking for authors with platforms. Editors want authors who have a social media presence through Twitter, Instagram, etc. That really enhances the author's ability to create a reading public. Even "traditional" markers of academic success are changing. We have to have the ability to communicate across multiple mediums.

Stuart Schrader: Yeah, I think one of the things that's vertiginous about all of this is that history is so present in our contemporary political and social discourse. President Trump, for instance, issued an executive order against a project of historical scholarship, the *New York Times'* "1619 Project."

Some of the contemporary visibility of historical scholarship is actually a function of the job market. So many people with PhDs are incredibly smart and talented and well equipped to do really interesting work. And they are doing that work in the public sphere with or without secure tenure-track employment. There's so much amazing scholarship happening. Some of it is online in new kinds of startup venues, but a lot of it is being featured in the old guard media that has not previously published historical pieces by people with PhDs. So, in a weird way, I feel like the argument about the importance of history isn't as hard to make as it used to be.

But at the same time, it's also true that the visibility of history and historical analysis is a function of the crisis that is facing many PhDs. A feeling of urgency is driving public scholarship. Further, historians and social scientists are becoming more present in intellectual debates outside our fields. At Johns Hopkins, where the campus is plagued with lots of divisions, interdisciplinary exchanges are growing a little bit. First, COVID's disparate impact has forced people to talk about racial inequality, which has crucial historical dimensions. Then the protests about policing exploded, and suddenly many public health, medical, and nursing students and faculty wanted to learn about history, or at least acknowledged its relevance. This work was already happening a bit, but there's been an uptick facilitated by the general turn to Zoom experienced across professions.

As Judy said, there needs to be an effort to meet the appetite for what we do, and we need to make sure we are well equipped to speak to our colleagues—whether they are in oceanography or the medical school—because that relationship might be a stopgap measure to prove our importance and relevance in a way that sustains the work we do. This is especially true for critical work.

I don't think we have a full understanding of the ways the jobs crisis is affecting the field and shaping scholarship. In some ways, it may be perversely positive, encouraging creativity within institutions and among individuals. But it also may be stunting intellectual production. Intellectual daredevilry and risk aversion are probably happening simultaneously.

In fact, we shouldn't so easily separate the jobs crisis from our scholarship. I think any historiographic essay—or argument about the direction a field is or is not taking—needs to acknowledge the unstable employment options facing so many junior scholars.

Ryan Irwin: Is there something you know now that you didn't know when you started graduate school? I'm thinking back to Stuart's comment about that happy-go-lucky person who hasn't yet experienced the soul-crushing vicissitudes of the market.

Julia Irwin: It's a really good question. I'm wary about giving advice, because I feel like any advice I give risks sounding paternalistic. I am not in school or on the market right now myself, so I don't know what students on the market are going through. At least, not on a personal, visceral level.

But with that caveat in mind, my advice would be to make sure you have your eyes wide open. Make sure you understand the situation and how the market has changed over the last decade or so. Read the reports about the job market before you apply for graduate school, and make sure that it is still something you want to do, knowing full well that there may not be—there likely won't be—a job at the other end of it, or at least the sort of tenure track job that many envision. Hope and optimism without clarity are bad things, though I certainly hoped I would be an exception when I was on the market. But it was easier to be an exception a decade ago, and easier to be lucky, which I definitely was.

I'm hesitant to say, "Don't try." We need good people in the academy, and I think simply saying "don't bother" does a disservice to many students who *do* have their eyes open and would be amazing professors. But you need to have your eyes open. Learn about the state of the profession before committing to it, and recognize that it is challenging to be an exception in a world where everything has gotten exponentially harder.

Judy Wu: When I graduated from college, I felt like I had no job skills. I couldn't even figure out how to present myself in a way that might make people want to employ me. In general, I think grad schools don't do a great job teaching people how to talk about their skills. Two books that have been recommended to me are Katina Rogers's *Putting the Humanities PhD to Work* and Bill Burnett and Dave Evans's *Designing Your Life*. The skills a PhD candidate develops by writing a dissertation can be translated in lots of unexpected work environments. For example, if you've written a dissertation, you already know how to manage a large project. There are things you take for granted that you've internalized through osmosis and hard work, but these skills are translatable to non-academic work environments.

Another thing I didn't appreciate until later is how much each field or department in graduate school can be siloed from others. As a graduate student, you become an expert in a particular topic or a set of fields that is often organized around methodology. But if you're able to secure a tenure-track position, you'll probably be the only person on your campus with that particular specialization. You'll find yourself talking to sociologists and political scientists. The other side of knowing what you're good at is knowing how to talk about your skills and research in relation to other areas of expertise.

Lastly, your audience is constantly changing, which I think is particularly important to recall if you're on the market. Developing the ability to see your work in a broader context and to talk with different constituencies and groups is something that is really valuable. That's what I'm trying to emphasize with my students.

Ryan Irwin: Ultimately, I'm like you, Julia. I often tell undergraduates to go for an MA before committing to the PhD. Somebody's got to do this job, so why not you? Just make sure you keep your eyes open. There are so many interesting exit ramps on the road between year one of graduate school and year one of a tenure-track job—or, more likely, year one of an adjunct professorship. It's condescending for someone in a tenured position to talk about those exit ramps, but I think it's courageous to take them when they make sense. There are lots of different ways to love history and be successful.

Stuart Schrader: You know, there's been such a profusion of professionalization advice about how to succeed on the job market that I think now there's a little bit of a backlash. What's the point of giving this knowing advice that pretends the key to succeeding is the perfect cover letter or CV? I feel reluctant to give people advice that promises to unlock the secret to their ultimate success on the academic job market, and I definitely agree about advising graduate students to think differently about what success looks like. But I also believe that we need to recognize how graduate programs socialize us into a certain model of success. You attend SHAFR meetings, you publish your journal articles, you write your dissertation, but all of these things just encourage a narrower and narrower definition of success.

We also need to reckon with the fact that it's not enough just to say, "Okay, we're going to hold some workshops where you think about other types of careers." Even as I'm organizing one of these workshops as part of my current position, I'm on the market myself, trying to tell grad students that they could do something else that might be more fulfilling and lead to greater employment security.

The one piece of advice I'd actually offer is for hiring committees, not job candidates. They must make their applications less onerous.

Julia Irwin: I agree, byzantine applications create such a burden for job candidates! I think hiring committees should only ask for a letter and a CV during the first round. That's it.

Ryan Irwin: Agreed.

Let's wrap up. First, thank you. I learned so much from this conversation. And thanks too to Daniel Bessner, Mike Brenes, and Andy Johns for putting together a special forum on this topic. Second, it's mid-October. A presidential election is looming here in the United States and COVID-19 is out of control. None of us know what the spring will bring, but the problems we've discussed today aren't going anywhere, obviously.

We've sidestepped grand solutions, so I won't offer a grand conclusion. My only hope is that we continue this conversation. Seeing this crisis—recognizing its existence and its effects on the profession—is so important, especially because solutions are elusive. Maybe one good thing to come from this bad year is that we have an opportunity to

revisit old assumptions and find new ways to collaborate on shared problems. Let's keep this discussion going.

Note:

1. Colleen Flaherty, "More Faculty Diversity, Not on Tenure Track," *Inside Higher Education*, August 22, 2016, <https://www.insidehighered.com/news/2016/08/22/study-finds-gains-faculty-diversity-not-tenure-track>. See also the statistics compiled by the American Association of University Professors (AAUP), <https://www.aaup.org/issues/contingent-faculty-positions/resources-contingent-positions>.

"Rethinking Tenure: Serve the Public, not the Profession"

Michelle Paranzino

The COVID-19 pandemic has upended higher education, wreaking havoc on the budgets of colleges and universities nationwide and exacerbating inequality by disproportionately affecting those who are least privileged. Though enrollments at most public and private four-year universities have remained relatively stable, enrollments at community colleges, which tend to serve lower-income and first-generation students, have been decimated.

More than half a million people who work in higher education have lost their jobs, with the layoffs overwhelmingly coming from staff and contingent faculty. In contrast, those at the top of the academic hierarchy—tenured professors and high-ranking administrators—have been comparatively safe from redundancy.¹ The present situation is grim, and yet the long-term consequences of the crisis have not even begun to be felt. Whether higher education as we know it will survive the pandemic is not yet clear, but one thing is certain: the roots of the jobs crisis in academia stretch much deeper than the devastation wrought by COVID-19.

Much of the criticism surrounding higher education correctly focuses on administrative bloat and the "business model" of universities, both of which have contributed to skyrocketing tuition rates and widened the gap between the "haves" and the "have-nots." However, not much direct criticism has been levied at the institution of tenure and the ways it has created a two-tier labor force, with profound effects on the state of the humanities in higher education and especially academic history. Perhaps this is because most academics believe they have a vested interest in the maintenance of tenure as an institution.² Those who enjoy tenure wish to continue benefiting from it, while contingent and non-tenure-track faculty scramble to research and publish in order to climb their way up the ladder to a tenure-track position.

And who can blame them? Adjunct faculty are crushed under the weight of burdensome teaching loads, sometimes without the benefit of teaching assistants even for very large survey courses. They do not enjoy job security, they do not receive benefits like paid vacation and health and dental insurance, and they frequently struggle to survive on salaries that amount to less than minimum wage. Non-tenure-track faculty now comprise over seventy percent of all instructional staff positions in U.S. higher ed.³ And the state of contingent faculty at universities across the country is an absolute disgrace.

What distinguishes adjunct faculty members from their

tenured counterparts? Are they less educated, or otherwise less qualified to teach college courses? Not usually. Most non-tenure-track appointments are held by full-fledged PhDs, some of whom have already published articles in top-ranked peer-reviewed journals or even have monographs with university presses. Contingent faculty are among the most highly educated people in the country, and the fundamentally different treatment they are accorded by their institutions is unjustifiable and immoral. Yet this situation persists in part because of the glut of humanities and history PhDs on the academic job market, itself a result of the conflicting interests of graduate programs and graduate students.

Graduate programs at public research universities, like the one I attended at the University of Texas at Austin, tend to use graduate students as cheap labor to teach or assist with large undergraduate history survey courses. The “adjunctification” of higher ed means that the majority of such survey courses are now taught by contingent faculty, with a corresponding decline in student outcomes, not to mention the negative consequences for knowledge production and community engagement.⁴ In theory, teaching assistantships help graduate students fund their education, while providing valuable experience that can boost their prospects on the academic job market. In reality, however, hundreds of applicants vie for a minuscule number of tenure-track job openings, which means that the vast majority of history PhDs will not ultimately secure such employment. And yet many graduate programs in history continue to operate on the basis of a false premise: that they are training graduate students to be professors.

The administrators of graduate degree programs in history have traditionally been reluctant to compile, crunch, and disseminate data about attrition rates in the program and job placement rates afterward. This information is thus typically not readily available to prospective graduate students who must make profoundly consequential life decisions while lacking knowledge of the potential opportunity costs involved. The sources of incomplete knowledge are many and varied—epistemic, institutional, historical, social, cultural—but in this case must be seen as the result of conscious decisions that the administrators of graduate degree programs make to preserve the priorities and prerogatives of the profession’s most elite members at the expense of its most vulnerable. In this sense, it is not merely a disservice to bright young people who could be making their mark on the world in any number of different and creative ways, but a moral lapse that undermines consent by intentionally withholding the information needed to make an informed decision about graduate school.

The elitist culture of history PhD programs, meanwhile, tends to encourage the production of scholarship that follows academic trends and fashions and to disincentivize policy-relevant research and public engagement. I will never forget my first graduate seminar at the University of Texas. It was not my first graduate seminar, as I had earned a terminal MA at the California State University at Northridge before moving to Texas. Having come from a working-class family, I was largely ignorant of the elitist culture of academia and had erroneously assumed that decisions about recruitment and funding were based on merit. I was quickly disabused of this notion. At an orientation for new graduate students in the history department, I discovered that many people in my cohort already knew each other, as they had attended a recruitment orientation on campus during the summer.

This was how I realized that the department hadn’t

considered me worthy of recruitment (or funding), despite the fact that I held a BA and an MA in history, had conducted archival research, had presented my research at several conferences, and even had an article in the pipeline for publication in a peer-reviewed journal. Meanwhile, some of my peers, who didn’t even have undergraduate degrees in history, had been extended full-funding packages. I could only assume it was because they had attended Ivy League schools and I had not.

The professor opened the graduate seminar by asking why we study history. I pounced on the question, offering a utilitarian answer that I considered uncontroversial. We study the past, I contended, because we need to do so in order to make sense of the present. To my surprise, I was greeted by blank stares. Another student raised a hand and said, meaningfully, “We study history because we love to study history.” The other students around the table nodded vigorously and chimed in with agreement. Thus, my first and most powerful impressions of the PhD program were that elitism trumps merit and that there was a general disdain for the idea that our study of history should serve a useful public function.

This disconnect between the priorities of academic historians and the interests of the general public has contributed to steadily declining history enrollments, while the negative student outcomes correlated with the rise of contingent faculty have resulted in an appalling lack of historical consciousness among the American public. The skills that an education in history imparts are among those most sorely needed in the general populace today. The ability to identify authorial intentions and biases and to triangulate multiple and varying accounts and narratives is crucial to determining the accuracy and authenticity of information. Yet the rise of social media and the concurrent public discourse surrounding “fake news” (not a novel concept, as anyone familiar with the term “yellow journalism” is aware) suggest that too many Americans are fundamentally incapable of distinguishing between fact and interpretation, and even more alarmingly, are unable or unwilling to even agree upon what constitutes a “fact.”

This poverty of historical knowledge and deficit of critical thinking skills is currently on full display as politicians, pundits, and protestors across the ideological spectrum distort and manipulate history to legitimize their political agendas. Calling themselves “Western chauvinists,” the Proud Boys purport to be protecting Western civilization from what they perceive as the encroaching political and cultural power of women, immigrants, and people of color.⁵ Their rhetoric rests on a fallacious interpretation of history in which white Europeans are responsible for all of the positive achievements of modernity.

Other nationalist groups and pro-Second Amendment organizations seek to borrow legitimacy from the Founding Fathers by proffering dubious interpretations of the American Revolution. The 1776 Report, commissioned by the Trump administration, is only the most recent example of the blatant politicization of history to serve a political agenda.⁶ The incoming Biden administration has already vowed to rescind the commission via executive order, and while the move is certain to please historians, it is unlikely to quash the culture wars over the meaning and history of the United States.

Academic historians, meanwhile, seem unable to agree upon what constitutes “mainstream” history, as a recent debate within the scholarly community of historians of U.S. foreign relations demonstrates.⁷ This debate risks eliding the crucial distinction between elite history and mainstream

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history. Elite history appears in the pages of top-ranked academic journals and university presses and, because it is locked behind expensive pay walls, is typically out of the reach of the American lay public. Mainstream history, in contrast, is written precisely for that public and is made accessible for low list prices at commercial outlets.

Historians themselves make the critical choices about which audience to write for. The overwhelming majority of them choose to write for the scholars in their field and look snobbishly down their noses at those who decide to write for the public. (Those who make the latter choice are sometimes denigrated as “airport historians” because their books are sold at airport bookstores.) This is to a significant degree the product of the elitist culture surrounding tenure; typically, the only scholarship that “counts” is peer-reviewed and based substantially on archival research. The general public does not particularly care for abstract theoretical debate, post-modernist jargon, historiographical “interventions,” or esoteric archival findings. Yet this is exactly the type of scholarship that the priorities of tenure incentivize.

Most academic historians (myself included) have not been trained in how to write history as a compelling narrative story. We have been trained to find gaps in the existing literature, which tends to narrow the focus—and thus the appeal—of our work. Yet given that higher education is taxpayer-funded, academic historians have an obligation to serve the public.⁸ This is why, at a minimum, the requirements for tenure should be refocused on public engagement rather than peer review. Public policy research and advocacy, community outreach, and teaching and writing for underserved audiences should be valued just as much if not more than peer-reviewed publications.

Tenure has contributed to an unjust and exploitative two-tier system of academic labor and has disincentivized academic historians from engaging with the American public, with damaging consequences for our nation’s collective understanding of and interest in history. Whether tenure even protects academic freedom—often seen as its *raison d’être*—is also up for debate. Recent examples like the firing of Garrett Felber from the history department at the University of Mississippi raise questions about the degree to which academic freedom protects professors from retaliation for unpopular or subversive political views, regardless of their position on or off the tenure track.⁹ Indeed, in an age of social media “scandals” manufactured and exploited by rightwing conservatives, it seems that in at least a few cases tenure has lost its ability to protect scholars from being dismissed for controversial opinions.¹⁰

Academic freedom must be disconnected from tenure, and all faculty members, regardless of status, should feel safe raising contentious subjects in their classrooms or in the public sphere. History is nothing if not controversial, and academic historians should not feel pressured by university administration to whitewash it. Meanwhile, tenure has too often served to protect those whose jobs should be stripped from them because of misconduct.¹¹ Abolishing tenure, or at least reforming it to center public engagement rather than service to the academic elite, could mitigate the injustices of the current system while bringing the incentives of the profession into line with the interests of the general public. It may sound paradoxical to some, but doing away with tenure could contribute to a brighter future for all historians.

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History for Everyone: On *Contingent Magazine*

Marc Reyes

A long-form article about hunting dinosaurs in Central Africa. A short piece about the evolution of women’s wrestling gear. A field trip to a museum dedicated to sanitation and toilets. At first glance, these topics don’t sound like the obvious subjects for a history publication. But as one of the editors involved in selecting these articles for publication, I can assure you, we don’t do the obvious.

These three articles were published by *Contingent Magazine*, a history-focused publication geared towards everyone interested in history. Co-founders Erin Bartram, Bill Black and I, along with website developer Emily Esten, launched *Contingent* in 2019. From the start, the magazine operated on three principles: (1) history is for everyone; (2) every way of doing history is worthwhile; (3) historians should be paid for their work.

Whether your employment is directly tied to interpreting the past or you are merely interested in history, *Contingent* is for you. Our writers include graduate students, museum workers, adjunct instructors, and independent scholars. All are working off the tenure track and have published many forms of historical scholarship. Many are based in countries other than the United States.

This special issue of *Passport* is a great idea and provides a forum for a much-needed discussion about what SHAFR

can do to address the increasingly worsening academic jobs crisis. Pre-pandemic, the academic job market was already abysmal, with not enough positions available for qualified candidates. A lack of federal support and further state cutbacks will continue to degrade the employment opportunities of the next generation of historians. The historical profession never recovered from the 2007–2009 recession, and most scholars completing their degree programs and heading onto the job market will never find steady, secure, and satisfying employment as historians.

For my contribution to *Passport*, I'd like to tell you about *Contingent Magazine*, its ethos, and its success in publishing contingent scholars. My colleagues and I founded *Contingent* because we believed another model for publishing accessible historical scholarship, one based on payment in money, not exposure, was necessary. We don't believe that *Contingent* alone is the remedy for the jobs crisis, though it is playing a role in modeling what a better historical profession—one that values and financially compensates the scholarship of some of the most underappreciated scholars working today—might look like.

When we think of the academic contributions of contingent scholars, we tend to think mostly of the classes they teach (often for little pay and few if any benefits). But contingent scholars are also publishing articles, writing manuscripts, and collaborating on all types of analog and digital projects.¹ *Contingent* exists to showcase the hard work and impressive scholarship they do. Oftentimes, their work is stuck behind journal paywalls. Even worse, when scholars leave the academic job market for good, their scholarship ceases and the discipline loses their work forever. There had to be a place to preserve that work, a place that would compensate that scholar for turning that germ of an idea into a piece of historical analysis. That place is *Contingent Magazine*.

When I first got involved with what would become *Contingent Magazine*, it existed only as a Google Doc called "Untitled Project Brainstorm." As the project began to take shape, one of our earliest ideas was to offer something more than "hot takes" or writing primarily focused on political history and present-day issues.

While this work is important, we sensed that mainstream publications were placing too much of a premium on political history. As historians know, there are countless fields of historical study. It's one thing for us to say that history is for everyone, but it's another to show it and show it consistently. When *Contingent* reviews pitches, we look for clear and concise submissions, around one to two paragraphs long, that establish a clear topic, your enthusiasm for it, what format (short, field trip, review, feature) it will be in, the significance of the topic, and what you will argue. We're the first readers and we want to be hooked.

Telling possible contributors that we have greenlit their pieces and we will be working together is such a wonderful part of my job. When Erin, Bill, and I prepare to edit pieces, sometimes we are familiar with the topic, but other times we are engaging with historical writing far removed from the fields we have studied. If we find ourselves hooked and interested in different historical fields and topics, then we know our readers will be too.

Contingent exists to tell different histories as well as challenge readers' notions about what constitutes history. When scrolling through *Contingent's* archives, you'll find articles about the U.S. Civil War or American presidents, but we try to have pieces that offer arguments and perspectives different from those readers might have seen in previous historical writing. For instance, in our debut article, historian Keri Leigh Merritt produced a photo essay about the Civil War, but it was not about famous battles or

generals. It was about the thick woods and swamps that Confederate deserters hid out in. Merritt's haunting photos combined with her gripping text to motivate readers to rethink their ideas of battlefields and consider the ways environments influence the waging of war.

Besides publishing articles that highlight the diversity of historical topics, *Contingent's* founders also aimed to broaden the public's understanding of *who* is a historian and *what* historical work entails. Do a Google image search for historians and see who pops up. What you'll find are a lot of beards or white hair, blazers of all fabrics (not just tweed or corduroy), and men—still, mostly men—staring intently into old books. The image search reinforces the idea that historian equals old white male professor.

Before I started working with *Contingent*, when I thought of contingent scholars, I mostly associated the term with adjunct instructors. But in time, I have come to see how diverse contingent historians are. Some are postdocs on yearly appointments (some with the option of renewal) focused entirely on research or teaching or both. Some are visiting assistant professors (VAPs) who teach a number of courses, including large introductory survey courses.

Others are archivists and librarians working on projects for a year or two, depending on grant funding. And there are independent researchers writing and lecturing for a variety of history audiences. I have learned that if there is a way to interpret the past and reach people interested in history, there is a historian already doing that work.

While many historians labor as professors, we do the historical profession a great disservice by not thinking more broadly

about who does historical work. *Contingent* publishes archivists, librarians, and independent scholars without a university affiliation who write about history. Indeed, since *Contingent* started, we've worked with researchers and scholars who do not have a background in history but do the work of interpreting the past for think tanks, nonprofit organizations, and classrooms all over the United States. They are historians too, and I'm proud that *Contingent* showcases their contributions to historical knowledge.

One thing that separates *Contingent* from many other history publications is that we pay scholars for their work. As every historian well knows, writing is a job. *Contingent* believes that work should be compensated. We are, happily, just one of the sites that has started or moved to a payment-based model. Besides *Contingent*, *Lady Science* and *Insurrect!* pay their writers. In 2020, *Nursing Clio* and *Hazine* announced that going forward they too would start paying their contributors and staff.

Thanks to one-time and recurring donors, *Contingent* pays everyone involved, from our writers and editors to our marketing and web staff. We are not funded by a university or a foundation. As of January 1, 2021, we receive a little over two thousand dollars a month from two hundred and fifty donors. The majority of those donations are less than twenty dollars, with many folks contributing three, five, and ten dollars at a time. Many of our donors are contingent historians who affirm that they would donate more money if they could.

Contingent concluded its second year in operation in 2020. In the past year, we published plenty of shorts, reviews, and features, as well as a series about how the COVID-19 pandemic affected a number of different historians. These essays examined how the pandemic upended travel plans, immigration status, and childcare arrangements and further eroded an already weak job market. When autumn classes started, *Contingent* devoted a roundtable to historian Kevin Gannon's new pedagogical treatise, *Radical Hope: A Teaching Manifesto*. We debuted the first guest mailbags on how to use Zoom to conduct oral histories and how to write

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a biography.

We further expanded our series titled “How I Do History,” in which we profile different types of historians and the work that they do. We also took pains to make it clear that historians come in many diverse forms, and in 2020 we published profiles of nine historians, including two postdocs, two museum directors, an independent researcher, a librarian, a public historian involved in historic preservation, an adjunct professor, and a documentary editor, to explain what their jobs were, how they came to study history, and how their historical training prepared them for the work they now do.

With continued support, *Contingent* would love to do more multimedia projects such as producing movies in which we pair a historian and young filmmaker to collaborate on a live-action documentary short. We also hope to do more with illustration by hiring artists to create original artwork to run with pieces. We have ideas for digital projects that can assist text-based articles or stand alone as wholly digital scholarship.

But as ambitious as our goals may be, *Contingent* will never lose sight of its mission: to promote the work of contingent scholars. Whenever one of our pieces goes viral, we see that hundreds, even thousands of people are visiting our site. We know that *Contingent* is read in different countries and that our articles are cited in dissertations and assigned on syllabi. I love seeing what we have built and knowing the potential *Contingent* possesses to bring historical writing to broader audiences. But as one of the lucky editors who has the pleasure of mailing checks to our contributors, what matters most is putting a little more money in the bank accounts of historians who are some of the hardest working, most dedicated, but least compensated people in the profession. We have their backs because they have ours.

If you already are a *Contingent* donor, I can’t thank you enough for your support. But if you are not familiar with us, please give us a read. I’m sure that out of our many articles, there is bound to be something that will grab your attention. We would also love to receive more pitches from SHAFR members for shorts, reviews, and features. As someone who daily checks the *Contingent* inbox, I can assure you that we will see your pitches.

If you like what you read and want to see what *Contingent* has in store for years four, five, and beyond, then please become a donor. As little as \$3 a month unlocks all the bonus content we produce but, more importantly, keeps *Contingent* going and puts much needed money into the hands of hardworking historians.

As someone who watched *Contingent* grow from concept to reality, it is an honor to write about it for *Passport* and to encourage my SHAFR colleagues to become regular readers and contributors. We believe *Contingent* can play a role in creating a better future for history and historians, a future shaped by three principles:

History is for everyone.
Every way of doing history is worthwhile.
Historians should be paid for their work.

Note:

1. For the past two years, *Contingent* has published lists of books as well as articles and book chapters published by non-tenured historians. These are great works by talented scholars, and we don’t want to miss an opportunity to showcase their incredible scholarship to our readers. The lists often receive suggestions from other disciplines, and while we are open to including these

works, we are also open to helping other scholars start “*Contingent* for English” or “*Contingent* for Musicology.” We have seen firsthand that many disciplines and their early-career scholars are in similarly difficult employment circumstances.

Do Jobs Outside the Academy Support Scholarship?

Michael Koncewicz

A stable, full-time career in archives, government, museums, publishing, or secondary education can lead to intellectually stimulating work. But what these careers rarely offer is support for producing independent scholarship. As someone who has worked in archives and at a museum, I have dealt with the substantive impediments that many others in my position face when pursuing their own work. Many non-academic employers who hire historians have little incentive to encourage outside work, and in some cases, might even be actively hostile toward scholarship that does not align with the political views of an office or their donors.

A lack of support for independent scholarship is an especially pertinent fact of life at museums, memorials, and other public history sites. Public historians frequently work with private donors or community organizations that prioritize an individual’s or a community’s legacy over its history. These groups often pressure workers to avoid producing scholarship that could upset community members who might also be financial contributors.

Relevant examples can be found across the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA), which censored anti-Trump images of the 2017 Women’s March in Washington, DC, in order to make it appear less “political.”¹ NARA’s leadership also did very little to counter the pressure from the John F. Kennedy Foundation that was directed towards NARA staff at the JFK Library, leading to the resignation of its director, Tom Putnam, and many other staff members.² High-profile cases involving federal museums might be seen as exceptional, but they set a tone for other historians who work outside the academy.

While tenure is meant to provide a certain level of security when it comes to academic freedom, jobs outside the academy rarely have those same protections.

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Public history sites often place serious limitations on what a scholar can accomplish outside the academy. When it’s a controversial museum, scholars are often forced to bend to pressure from those who aren’t interested in accurate representations of history. I worked for NARA at the Richard Nixon Presidential Library and Museum for nearly four years (2010–2014) as an assistant to the director while completing my PhD in history at the University of California, Irvine.³ The library was originally a private facility, though it was incorporated into the federal presidential library system in 2010.⁴ At the library, I was responsible for daily administrative tasks and more public-facing scholarship. I worked on museum exhibits, led school tours, and helped organize nonpartisan events.

Through my interactions with elementary school students, high school teachers, and senior citizen groups, I became a better teacher, more attuned to making history accessible to a wide range of communities.

The full-time job also fed my research, as my dissertation focused on Republicans inside the Nixon administration who refused to carry out the president's illegal orders. The topic was born out of my work on the library's revamped Watergate exhibit, which was curated by my supervisors, including the library's first federal director, Timothy Naftali. The job eventually made me even more aware of the constraints placed on scholars who work at federal institutions that rely on public-private partnerships. Scholarship is supported only if there is sufficient external pressure from leading scholars and the broader public.

After Naftali's departure in late 2011, our office shifted away from nonpartisan exhibits and programs as the privately operated Nixon Foundation regained control over much of the library's public-facing projects. As we were being encouraged to work with Nixon loyalists who sought to rehabilitate the thirty-seventh president's legacy, it became clear that my research would eventually become an issue. Indeed, my supervisors received complaints from the Nixon Foundation about my views on the president and my connections to "anti-Nixon historians." Few scholars paid attention to the library's drift back towards being a shrine to a former president.

While our office received national coverage during the opening of the library's Watergate Gallery in 2011, we were largely ignored when it came time to appoint Naftali's successor.⁵ NARA's leading candidate for the position, historian Mark Atwood Lawrence, withdrew his name after more than a year of waiting for the Nixon Foundation to approve NARA's decision. The *Orange County Register* reported that Lawrence's scholarship—specifically, his critiques of Nixon's handling of the Vietnam War—was a factor in the delay. Although foundation consent was never of a formal requirement, Archivist of the United States David Ferriero refused to appoint Lawrence without it.⁶ After more than three years, NARA selected Michael Elzey, a former director of Golden Gate Park and Orange County's Great Park, as the library's new director in 2015. Since then, the Nixon Foundation has regained control over the museum's exhibits, programs, and other public-facing activities.

Although my goal had been to carve out a permanent position within NARA's system, I chose to leave for a grant-funded job at the Tamiment Library & Robert F. Wagner Labor Archives at New York University, which is a renowned archive on the history of labor and the Left. This move was, of course, made easier by Naftali's acceptance of a position as head of these archives. But I was also convinced that, if I stayed at the Nixon Library, I would be forbidden to publish anything related to my research on the Nixon presidency once I completed my PhD. Shifts in our office's culture made it clear to me that it would be impossible to advance my career with NARA if I wrote about the thirty-seventh president in a critical manner.

For the last six years, I have worked a forty-hour-a-week job, have taught as an adjunct at New York University and other institutions, and have been able to publish and conduct some research. I have supervisors that approve research trips and I have funding available to me for development activities. While this is not an ideal situation for my scholarship, the job has a much more structured schedule than most full-time teaching positions. I don't have to worry about politics getting in the way of my outside work. None of this would have been possible without luck and the connections that I made as a graduate student.

While presidential libraries have an exceptionally troubling past, the issues I experienced within NARA's system are common to plenty of public history job sites.⁷

Indeed, academic historians must become more aware of the problems faced by their colleagues who work as public historians. In particular, they must appreciate that historians who work at archives, libraries, or museums usually struggle with the need to make sure their public-facing scholarship does not clash with the interests and ideologies of donors. This is especially true now that an increasing number of archives rely on private donations and external grants for their survival.

The political and logistical pressures that public historians face are significant and will inevitably lead many outside the academy to either change their scholarship or give up on it entirely. This is even truer for project-based workers at archives and museums, as public history sites are not exempt from the "gigification" of the U.S. economy.⁸ Without the time and support that is necessary to produce good scholarship, it is safe to assume that many will choose some semblance of job security over scholarship.

Historian and former archivist Michael Brenes wrote in 2018 that the line between those who work in archives and academic historians in recent years has become noticeably blurrier. As he wrote, "many archivists are also public historians, teachers, and scholars, and collaborate with historians in teaching students how history is made, preserved, and perpetuated."⁹ This is a positive development that scholars should support. Still, all historians must acknowledge that there will only be more alt-ac success stories if we push to protect and strengthen the institutions that employ us. We should not just tell young scholars to take nonacademic jobs and hope that their bosses or donors respect their training. We should not settle for a nights-and-weekends plan for writing and research. If we do, then it is inevitable that many will stop producing historical scholarship altogether.

As Erin Bartram, a historian who is currently school programs coordinator at the Mark Twain House & Museum, remarked in 2018, we historians have not yet "grapp[le]d with what it means for dozens, hundreds, thousands of our colleagues to leave the field."¹⁰ If we want people who are not academics to remain part of our discipline, we must take the conditions of their intellectual labor seriously and do what we can to aid and promote them.

While many tenure-track professors face logistical and political challenges, their jobs provide a certain level of academic freedom, time, and funding to advance their scholarship. Any discussion that encourages a career beyond the professoriate must not ignore the fact that the overwhelming majority of workers do not enjoy these perks. As this suggests, "alt-ac" is not a solution to the academic jobs crisis; our current circumstances require much more drastic action. Still, honestly assessing the limitations that historians face when they have a nonacademic job is the first step in mapping out the future of the historical profession that actually exists. We must discover ways to protect the independent scholarship produced by those who work outside the academy. Otherwise, this scholarship, and the people who make it, will suffer.

Notes:

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The Research Downward Spiral

Kurt Güner

The adjunctification of higher education and the resulting jobs crisis (exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic) has made it increasingly difficult, if not impossible, for new PhDs to research and write, work that is critical both for their job prospects and for the health of the field. While the randomness and cruelty of the job market has been discussed at length, it is worth asking what the loss of *scholarship* has done (and is doing) to the field of history.¹ This essay will detail the dilemmas confronted by new PhDs as they try to land a job—one either on or off the tenure track—while trying to build their scholarly profiles. If unaddressed, the restrictions on new PhDs posed by shortages of time and money, combined with the competitiveness of the job market and the demands of career diversity work, will prohibit new scholarship.

The jobs crisis in history can be traced to several overlapping issues, but a growing reliance on adjuncts (part-time instructors paid by the course and rarely given health insurance) at colleges and universities is most salient. Many historians have already written about the repercussions that stem from their precarious circumstances, especially the crippling personal and professional anxiety.² The history of the profession's failure to protect its laborers³ and its moral bankruptcy have also been subject to scrutiny.⁴ The open discussion of these subjects has led to *some* reaction from the American Historical Association,⁵ but most of the listed suggestions fall far short of the transformative change necessary for course correction. As it stands now, adjuncts and new PhDs face dire odds; their goals for research and writing will be nearly impossible to achieve.

It is difficult to say definitively how much "research" is necessary to land a professorship, though anecdotal evidence from advisors seems to suggest that informal requirements have gotten more extensive in the past twenty years. There is certainly a perception among every graduate student I've encountered that *several* publications are the bare minimum required for entry into the academy, and that perception drives young academics down an anxious and untenable path. There is evidence that the number of scholarly books has grown consistently since the 1970s (though the number of printed books and the

influx of digital publishing confounds an easy takeaway from those numbers).⁶ Many of my colleagues—some with award-winning dissertations and several published articles—struck out on the job market, stymied at the application stage even *before* job postings were pulled due to the pandemic. The abundance of talented graduate students applying for jobs—added to the already tenure-bound academics changing positions—has turned what has always been a challenging career path into a crapshoot. So, what is a newly minted PhD to do?

For now, the answer seems to be a choice (when it can be a choice) between a postdoctoral fellowship, part-time teaching, and/or career diversity work. Postdocs have been a useful steppingstone for many graduate students—although the competitive job market can now make postdoctoral fellowships a long-term stop on the path toward being forced out of academia. Adjuncting can be a nice way for graduate students to earn some money while they develop their teaching skills, but it is not a sustainable source of income. Finally, the career diversity route has led many to try and jump to a neighboring field, hoping that a 9-to-5 job that's vaguely related to their skills as a historian will either help them pay the bills until the next academic job cycle starts or open up a new career path entirely. Some PhDs find full-time work *somewhere* while they adjunct on the side, keeping a toe in the field while they wait for an opportunity.

All the career paths above present challenges to the creation of a stable research agenda. Some of these paths and approaches are also mutually exclusive. If you decide to focus on being a specialist of some kind (teaching, writing, editing, researching, etc.), that time can't be spent on another specialty. In my case, becoming a teaching specialist and administrator has led me to gainful employment, but it has stalled my research. Such professional uncertainty is destabilizing and demoralizing; new PhDs might spend a good amount of time worrying that they made the wrong decision. So, in the end, any scholarship produced by precarious scholars is a pale shadow of what their work *could* have been—if they had the time to devote their full attention to it.

Historical research is exhausting and time-consuming work that generally requires institutional affiliation to be done properly. Gaining access to digital databases and archives is easy enough as a graduate student, but for a contingent faculty member, the lack of institutional support can close previously open doors. Many archives simply don't allow access to individuals, instead granting it to universities and organizations that then distribute it to students and faculty.⁷ Beyond that, archival work requires travel and months (years, decades) of careful effort, with follow-up trips usually a requirement as well. A job in a non-academic field is simply not going to allow employees the time necessary to complete such work, limiting many new PhDs to the research they did for their dissertation or graduate study as the primary source to draw on for their new work.

Dissertation research generally produces enough material to spin off a couple of articles and potentially even a separate book, giving scholars room to refine rough ideas and follow up on loose ends that were just outside the scope of the dissertation. The dissertation, as we are often reminded, is not supposed to be your crowning achievement as a scholar; it is supposed to be your ticket for entry into the profession, a sign that you are a serious researcher and that you intend to build on this foundation. For other researchers, articles or dissertations on relevant topics are often a sign that a particular scholar is on a similar track, and tracing the development of that scholar's work (and their sources) is a crucial part of the research process. But what happens if there is no development? If scholars simply disappear after a thought-provoking dissertation or

manuscript? How many truly great ideas have hit a dead end before they could be worked into their final form?

The “research downward spiral” is where new PhDs find themselves as they try to navigate a bleak post-graduation landscape. With a full-time alt-ac job, it is impractical to find new sources to broaden dissertation research and difficult to find writing time in general. The further you get from your time in graduate school, the more damning your dearth of scholarship looks on your CV, and that decreases your chances of securing an academic position.

This pattern was referenced directly in the 2021 AHA Jobs Report: “Over the past three academic hiring cycles, 53 percent of the 162 assistant professor hires about which we have data were no more than one year out from finishing their degree. Past this point, job candidates became steadily less likely to be hired as assistant professors.”⁸ The desperation to produce something, *anything*, to make you employable leads to shoddy work, scholarship that would be vastly improved if it was approached from the comfort of an academic position. In my case, there are at least two articles that I have yet to write that address gaps in my dissertation. Both, however, require a bit more research before I can begin writing, and so they sit. I imagine the thousands of new entrants in the job market have a similar story, and the more those numbers grow, the more devastating the loss of scholarship feels. While the downward spiral of research is most obvious in the way it impacts individual scholars, the long-term damage to the field seems unsustainable.

There aren’t easy solutions to this problem either, as the biggest issues are systemic and require coalitions of faculty and grad students mobilizing together, with the support of their institutions and professional organization. But one concept that I think requires challenging is the idea that new PhDs are on their own once the dissertation is submitted. To make a clumsy analogy, history has long treated its new graduates as teens going off to college: they help pack the bags, load up the car, and send them on their way. This generation, however, might need to move back home for a bit before they can get settled, or at least borrow the car and some money.

The relationship between new PhDs and their schools should, I believe, be extended into the first several years of a scholar’s career. Support for these students can be split up into two categories: expensive and free. On the expensive end, departments could potentially redirect funds from new graduate cohorts (which, theoretically, they would reduce to a smaller number to compensate) to recently graduated students, provide research/travel funding, or healthcare. Providing funds and support for those graduates could help vulnerable researchers add to their CV and figure out their next steps. On the free (or at least low-cost) end, departments can help recent graduates maintain library/journal access, explicitly create recent graduate cohorts (or support groups, depending on their mood), offer writing/editing support, provide a stable “.edu” email address, and offer alt-ac job placement assistance and even academic job app support.

These are all half-measures, aimed at addressing the symptoms rather than the causes of the jobs crisis, but they could provide a lifeline to desperate researchers. If history departments are interested in extending a hand to young graduates and preserving the flow of research so necessary to the field of history, these changes are a good place to start. It is the very least academia can do.

Notes:

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Conclusion

Carl Watts

Readers of this *Passport* forum will be under no illusions about the extent and severity of the crisis in academia. Indeed, everyone should be alarmed, as no one is safe. I was a “permanent” member of the faculty at my last (non-tenure-granting) institution. At the end of 2019, after I had served for seven years, my position as department chair was eliminated. I recently discovered that the entire college of education is being wound down. It turns out that insufficient numbers of prospective K-12 teachers can be induced to incur heavy debts for a four-year degree to qualify for a career in schools that are mired in bureaucracy and pay atrociously.

In their pieces, Henry Fetter and Michael Franczak both acknowledge that the origins of the jobs crisis in higher education stretch back many decades. And yet, as Fetter writes, there has been a “very belated, and still grudgingly inadequate, recognition by the historical profession of a crisis that is now fifty years old.” In our own professional corner of diplomatic history, it may be that the attempt to “reboot” the field, coupled with the ongoing defense of its relevance, shunted aside important questions about the state of the job market.

Such questions are now inescapable, thanks in part to the quantification of the problem by the American Historical Association. Unfortunately, as the AHA acknowledges in its most recent jobs report, next year’s market will likely make the past decade look quite rosy by comparison. As several contributors to this forum underlined, the COVID-19 pandemic is accelerating longer-term negative trends in higher education. There can be no doubt that without some far-reaching, even revolutionary, solutions, student enrollment will continue to decline, budgets will continue to shrink, and tenure-track jobs will continue to disappear.

Yet trying to conjure concrete solutions to the jobs crisis is difficult. Susan Colbourn’s point is well taken: historians often, and rightly, feel overwhelmed by the structural problems in academia that seem to present insurmountable obstacles to stable employment. As Franczak makes clear

in his piece, the prescription that those with a PhD should seek either an alternative academic career or a career outside of academia is by no means new. This is a path that many would-be academics have taken and will doubtless continue to take. However, as the "Careers in Business" program demonstrated in the 1970s, the psychological impact of abandoning an academic career will forever impart a sense of professional loss in many people.

Frustratingly, the decisions made by SHAFR, or any other organization, cannot address all elements of what is at base a structural crisis. As Emily Whalen makes clear in her piece, for decades the United States has witnessed a "commodification of higher education" that has transformed how Americans think about college. This is a cultural problem that no disciplinary organization has the resources or ability to confront. Nevertheless, we scholars are not powerless, even if we sometimes act as if we were. As Larson argues, professional associations must begin to apply political pressure at the state and federal levels to reverse the trend of ever-decreasing university budgets.

Meanwhile, on the supply side, we will likely have to scale back graduate education, though this is admittedly an "ugly solution." Graduate programs will also need to focus on teaching students skills that will enable them to make a convincing case to non-academic employers. Certain revolutionary transformations might have to be promoted, including, as Michelle Paranzino argues in her piece, the abolition of tenure. While that may seem a step too far for some, doubtless many members of SHAFR would agree with Paranzino's broader point that we have a duty to push back against the misuse and abuse of history that recently has characterized U.S. political discourse.

So, what should SHAFR do? Freshly minted PhDs obviously have an imperative to publish if they are to have any hope on an increasingly hopeless job market. Colbourn therefore suggests that SHAFR implement a subvention

program to help authors defray book publishing costs, which would mirror what some other professional associations already do. Larson, for his part, contends that SHAFR should do more to make the organization more welcoming to scholars not on the tenure track by inviting adjuncts into society governance. Finally, Michael Koncewicz encourages SHAFR to take active steps to support the work of those employed in non- or para-academic settings like archives, libraries, and museums.

For my part, I suspect that many universities cater rather too easily to graduate students seduced by the prospect of an academic career. Institutions could therefore do more to educate prospective students about the jobs crisis in higher education. If students want to proceed with their eyes fully open, then they should be equipped with the skills required to succeed in alternative academic careers, or outside academia altogether. Senior SHAFR members are in a position to make this case within their own institutions. As an organization, however, SHAFR should craft opportunities for early-career academics and those who are not in traditional academic employment.

It is clear that the problem of academic jobs is of enormous magnitude and that there are no easy solutions. It is easy to feel a sense of paralysis, especially as members of a relatively small academic organization. Nevertheless, SHAFR should do *something*, because if it does not, it contributes to the normalization of a situation that is unacceptable. There is an analogy here to the use of sanctions: they are widely perceived as useless because they generally do not produce an observable change of behavior in the target state. However, this instrumental perspective fails to acknowledge the expressive purpose of sanctions, which is to signal when norms have been breached. SHAFR must send a signal that the current state of affairs is not acceptable.

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Your donations will help SHAFR continue its mission for future generations. Thank you!!!

Research Note: Hoping for the Best, Preparing for the Worst

James Goode

We have recently marked the fortieth anniversary of the release of the American hostages in Tehran on January 20, 1981. We know how diplomats eventually resolved the 444-day crisis. What we tend to overlook are the imponderables facing U.S. officials at the outset of such events. Diplomats often work under the stress of limited time, unpredictability of adversaries, or fear of what might come next. On rare occasions these elements combine. Consider, for example, Berlin in 1948 or the Cuban Missile Crisis in 1962.

The Iranian Hostage Crisis belongs on this short list. As radical students forced their way into the American embassy on November 4, 1979, seizing sixty-six U.S. citizens, they shocked the American public. The captors had violated international law respecting the rights of diplomats, and they soon gained the support of Ayatollah Khomeini himself. No one in the Carter administration knew what might happen next or when. Officials needed to prepare immediately for every contingency.

During the first days of the crisis, members of the State Department's Policy Planning Staff set to work drawing up a number of outline statements, each appropriate to a particular outcome. Designed as presidential communications to the American people, one draft announced the freeing of all the hostages; another, a partial release, with other hostages being put on trial. Finally came this grim message:

Contingency E: All the Hostages are Killed

- We mourn. For brave Americans who were senselessly and brutally murdered. For their loved ones. For a crime, not only against our nation, but against mankind.
- The price of freedom is high. But inhumanity also has a price.
- I have today ordered that the following actions be taken against Iran:
- These actions are taken in accordance with international law.
- Time and again, our nation has stood in defense of the principles we cherish:
 - the sanctity of life
 - the preservation of freedom; and
 - the rule of law
- It is in defense of those fundamental principles that I have acted tonight.
- Let us demonstrate, as a nation united, our firm resolve that the enemies of those sacred values must be defeated. But let us not, in our anger and outrage, break faith with those very principles. We will not take innocent lives. We will not assault freedom. We will not tear down the rule of law.
- We will honor our colleagues who have fallen, by defending—and upholding—the fundamental principles for which they gave their lives.

Thankfully, President Carter had no need to console the nation, and since his time in office, this document has lain unused and forgotten in the archives. Yet it remains a powerful expression of a terrible possibility, a reminder of the grave threat confronting American officials during those first unpredictable days.

SHAFR SPOTLIGHTS

Jeremi Suri

Jeremi holds the Mack Brown Distinguished Chair for Leadership in Global Affairs at the University of Texas at Austin. He is a professor in the University's Department of History and the Lyndon B. Johnson School of Public Affairs. He is the author and editor of ten books on contemporary politics and foreign policy. His most recent book is *The Impossible Presidency: The Rise and Fall of America's Highest Office*. Jeremi is especially proud of his teaching awards, most recently: the President's Associates Teaching Excellence Award from the University of Texas. He enjoys writing for diverse media — from the *New York Times* and the *Washington Post* to *Wired* and *Psychology Today*. Jeremi's most fun project is his weekly podcast, co-hosted with his poetry-writing son, Zachary: "This is Democracy," <https://podcasts.la.utexas.edu/this-is-democracy/> episodes. Many SHAFR scholars have appeared as guests on the podcast. Please contact Jeremi if you have a topic related to the history of democracy that you wish to discuss.



Jeremi Suri

1. What are your favorite movies/TV shows of all time?

I am a sucker for James Bond films. I am fascinated with the evolution of Spectre and how it tracks our contemporary security fears. We argue about the best Bond in our house all the time. I am still partial to Sean Connery.

2. What was your most embarrassing/nerve-wracking/anxiety-producing professional moment?

I once, long ago, passed out in the middle of a lecture. (I think I was dehydrated.) Apparently I stood up, tried to continue, and fell over again. I do not remember it. That was the most embarrassing part — seeing people who watched the incident, and not knowing exactly what they witnessed.

3. If you could have dinner with any three historical figures, who would they be and why?

This is a frequent dream: a fine dinner (with nice wine) seated around a table with Abraham Lincoln, Jane Addams, and Nelson Mandela — just imagine the stories.

4. What would you do if you won the \$500 million Powerball?

With \$500 million I would buy even more books...

5. You have been given an unlimited budget and a time machine to organize a music festival. What bands or solo acts do you invite?

I would love to organize a concert of Woody Guthrie, John Lennon, and Paul Simon

6. What are five things on your bucket list?

My bucket list: Watch the Packers in person win the Super Bowl; Watch the Palio di Siena in person; Attend my kids' future weddings; Babysit their kids (our future grandkids); Visit my grandparents' family homes in Kashmir and Lahore.

7. What would you be doing if you were not an academic?

If not a historian, I would play basketball in the NBA, or (more realistically) regret not being good enough to play basketball in the NBA.

Simon Miles

I grew up in Saint Catharines, Ontario, just on the Canadian side of the border but close enough that I grew up watching Sesame Street on PBS over bunny-ears — until, in the third grade, my parents decided we should not have television. That made me love reading, in part because I didn't have much choice in the matter if I wanted to be entertained; the way the story is told, I announced "That stinks!" and then trudged up to my bedroom and picked up a book. I may have traded the Hardy Boys for Warsaw Pact nuclear-war plans, but I more or less haven't stopped since.

Now, I am an assistant professor in the Sanford School of Public Policy at Duke University, with courtesy appointments in the departments of History and Slavic and Eurasian Studies. My first book, *Engaging the Evil Empire: Washington, Moscow, and the Beginning of the End of the Cold War* came out in October 2020 from Cornell University Press. I am beginning work on a new project, *On Guard for Peace and Socialism: The Warsaw Pact, 1955–1991*, and I'm looking forward to being able to get back into the archives in Eastern Europe, which are uniquely rich, hopefully sooner rather than later. At Duke, I primarily teach courses on strategy, grand and otherwise. I live in an old house in Durham, N.C., with my wife Susie and an unruly quantity of our books. When I'm not at my desk or in the classroom, I can usually be found waist-deep in a river trying to trick fish into thinking my flies are food with varying degrees of success.

1. What are your favorite movies/TV shows of all time)?

For television, if I want to get into a real plot, it's *The Americans*, *Fauda*, the original *House of Cards*, *Killing Eve*, or *Sherlock*. For something lighter, *Archer* or *Letterkenny*. I maintain that the *Poirot* series with David Suchet is some of the best television ever made; and I'll never say no to watching *Jeopardy*.

2. What was your most embarrassing/nerve-wracking/anxiety-producing professional moment?

Odds are the real answer is something to which I was and remain oblivious. There is something special about the first meeting of a class, but I think that sense is more of potential than peril.

3. If you could have dinner with any three historical figures, who would they be and why?

I think a table with Edmund Burke, Václav Havel, and Golda Meir would break up very late, probably a sign of a good time.

4. What would you do if you won the \$500 million Powerball?

With that kind of money, I would bring back the Quebec Nordiques of the National Hockey League and name the barn after the Šťastný family.

5. You have been given an unlimited budget and a time machine to organize a music festival. What bands or solo acts do you invite?

This festival would certainly reflect my eclectic tastes: Bob Dylan, Burna Boy, Johnny Cash, Kacey Musgraves, Lauryn Hill, Margo Price, Old Crow Medicine Show, Popcaan, Pusha T, Skepta, Stefflon Don, Stormzy, and Willie Nelson. Then, because reality is being suspended, Biggie and Tupac would co-headline. The Tragically Hip would play the afterparty.

6. What are five things on your bucket list?

I'm lucky that this isn't something I've thought about; I spend a lot more time grateful for what I have, a loving partner and a rewarding career, than dreaming of what I don't. Some that come to mind are personal, like riding the Trans-Siberian Railroad, chasing taimen on the fly in Mongolia, and mastering pâté en croûte. Some are professional. As an undergraduate, I was fortunate to take several classes which had been running so long and were so popular and well subscribed that they were basically institutions; I would love to create a course like that. And finally, I think all of us in this business want to write a book that outlives us.

7. What would you be doing if you were not an academic?

I would like to think something in the civil service, maybe in the diplomatic corps or another national-security role; but to be honest, Big Law can't be ruled out.



Simon Miles

Katrina Ponti

I am a Ph.D. Candidate in early American History at the University of Rochester. My dissertation "Agents of Exchange: American Public Diplomats in U.S. Foreign Affairs, 1773-1818" explores how American public diplomats created strategies to help shape a global environment favorable to U.S. interests and how they created a previously unseen type of democratic diplomacy.

I have always been fascinated by how Americans interact with their worlds. I grew up in Central Pennsylvania where history was always part of my life. Visiting places like the State Museum, Gettysburg, or Independence Hall filled my weekends and summers. There was never a time that history wasn't part of our lives. As a result, both of my siblings also have history degrees and work in various aspects of heritage and cultural preservation. As the nuttiest of the brood, I am the only one pursuing a PhD, but the experience, in addition to shaping me into a thinker and historian, has offered me many opportunities to check-off a few items on my bucket list. These include becoming a Fulbright scholar and participating in archaeological field schools in exotic locales like Bermuda.



Katrina Ponti

1. What are your favorite movies/TV shows of all time?

TV: *M*A*S*H*, *Star Trek: The Next Generation*, *Antiques Roadshow*, *Masterpiece Theater*, *Golden Girls*
Movies: *The Great Escape*, *To Catch A Thief*, *History of the World Part 1*

2. What was your most embarrassing/nerve-wracking/anxiety-producing professional moment?

The whole process of comprehensive/ qualifying exams was particularly nerve-wracking. I had to do them twice: once for my MA program and then again for my Ph.D. program.

3. If you could have dinner with any three historical figures, who would they be and why?

Groucho Marx- just an all-around good time.

Lady Mary Wortley Montagu- she was the original ambassadress, political writer and poet of her age.

My great-great grandmother Helen Mehler - her wedding picture (taken when she was 17!) is a fixture in the family dining room. Her husband, my great-great grandfather, had been her 8th grade teacher and a Catholic monk. He went from New York to Rome to be released from his religious vows to marry her. I have many questions about her life and faith. She is also the originator of my family's Christmas sugar cookie recipe. I would ask her for a few more recipes to hand down to my children.

4. What would you do if you won the \$500 million Powerball?

At first, I would do practical things like pay off loans and establish long-term financial security. But then I would probably become an eccentric and start a commune for displaced humanities PhDs in a castle.

5. You have been given an unlimited budget and a time machine to organize a music festival. What bands or solo acts do you invite?

BardCore Festival: Bards from across time- Sappho, Robert Burns, the Beatles c. 1967.

6. What are five things on your bucket list?

Play the Matchmaker in a community production of *Fiddler on the Roof*

Write a novel that gets adapted into a BBC costume drama

Sail the Mediterranean

Have my portrait painted

Compete on *Jeopardy*

7. What would you be doing if you were not an academic?

I would own a local coffee shop. I've spent my fair share of time in cafes and consistently appreciate their historical and modern roles as community spaces for art, culture, and conversation.

Kelly McFarland

I was born and raised outside of Akron, Ohio, and remain a diehard Cleveland sports fan. I never really had a strong grasp of what I wanted to do for a living until after undergrad, but I vividly remember always loving history. This included a fifth-grade version of myself reading thick Civil War history books for fun after a visit to Gettysburg. I moved to DC to work in the State Department's Office of the Historian, where I stayed for two years before becoming an intelligence analyst. I met my wife in our nation's capitol and we now have a five-year old son (Graham) and a two-year old daughter (Zoe). We recently sold our house in Virginia and are squatting in Rehoboth Beach, DE while we look for a new house in the northern Virginia area. It's been really great to have the beach so close during the pandemic. I have been at Georgetown University since early 2016 as the Director of Programs and Research at the Institute for the Study of Diplomacy. I teach courses on history's influence on foreign affairs, the U.S. and alliances, diplomatic history, and how to write for a more public audience. I am currently working on a few different writing projects.

1. What are your favorite movies/TV shows of all time?

Movies: *It's a Wonderful Life*, *The Great Escape*, *Bullitt*, *Where Eagles Dare*, *The Shawshank Redemption*, *The Big Lebowski*, *Love Actually*. TV: *The West Wing*, *The Wire*, *The Americans*.

2. What was your most embarrassing/nerve-wracking/anxiety-producing professional moment?

My first paper presentation as an ABD grad student back in 2009 at SHAFR's annual meeting was pretty anxiety-producing, especially because one of the authors I quoted in my paper was sitting in the audience. (Thankfully it went well and she didn't disagree with my characterization of her work)! In 2014/2015, I did a one-year joint duty assignment to work in the Office of the Director of National Intelligence as Secretary of State Kerry's Presidential Daily Briefing Book briefer. Needless to say, my first time sitting in his private office to brief him on the state of the world that particular morning elevated my heart rate quite a bit! As did remembering upon leaving his office that I had to do it again six-days-a-week for the next year.

3. If you could have dinner with any three historical figures, who would they be and why?

John Quincy Adams so we could chat about the founding fathers, U.S. diplomacy, the presidency, and becoming a congressman and abolitionist afterward. Frederick Douglas because of the unbelievable struggles and successes in his life. Steve McQueen (see favorite movies section and what would you be doing if you weren't an academic section).

4. What would you do if you won the \$500 million Powerball?

I'd donate a bunch of money to education and food security initiatives, and make sure close family members were taken care of. Then...it's lots of travel, homes in Tuscany, Maine, and a beautiful beach somewhere. I'd also own multiple sports cars and old hot rods. Other than that, I'd probably keep doing a lot of the same things I do now, but just in a much more stress-free manor!

5. You have been given an unlimited budget and a time machine to organize a music festival. What bands or solo acts do you invite?

This is tough. I think I'd pick bands by looking at their overall musical greatness, their capabilities as a live performer, guilty pleasures, and current bands I've always wanted to see live. So, in no particular order, my festival would include: The Beatles, Stones, Led Zeppelin, the Allman Brothers, Springsteen, U2, Hall and Oates, Otis Redding, Sam Cooke, Third Eye Blind, Pearl Jam, Foo Fighters, Dave Matthews Band, The Black Keys, Shakey Graves, Ghost of Paul Revere, and the Lumineers. This would obviously be a multi-day event.

6. What are five things on your bucket list?

1. Run a marathon; 2. Become a half-way decent guitar player (I started learning last summer but am in no way close to being "half-way decent"); 3. Live abroad with my wife and kids for a year or so; 4. Publish multiple books; 5. Attend a Cleveland Browns Super Bowl game (they don't need to win, just making it for the first time will suffice).

7. What would you be doing if you were not an academic?

I would most likely own a hot rod shop. My family has always built hot rods and muscle cars. My grandfather and dad had a hot rod Model A pickup truck in the mid-1960s when hot rods were still mostly a Beach Boys/southern California thing. I did this with my dad and brother until I moved to the DC area, and they still build cars for people on the side. I played football in college, so I'd probably also coach high school football in some fashion.



Kelly McFarland

Emily Whalen

I'm a recent graduate of the history program at UT Austin, where I studied the history of U.S. foreign policy in the Middle East. Currently, I'm revising my dissertation manuscript, an international history of the Lebanese Civil War, based on work in Arabic and English sources. My interest in history sprang from my undergrad years at UVa, when I realized I looked forward to my history classes far more than any other courses. When not writing or researching, I pursue several hobbies, ranging from the athletic-outdoorsy to the artistic-worldly.



Emily Whalen

1. What are your favorite movies/TV shows of all time?

8 ½
Mamma Mia 1 & 2
Rashomon
Fleabag

2. What was your most embarrassing/nerve-wracking/anxiety-producing professional moment?

Trying to figure out how to pay my rent, medical expenses, and eat in Austin on a TA salary of \$12,000.

3. If you could have dinner with any three historical figures, who would they be and why?

Aeschylus, to discuss writing and the nature of tragedy; Hannah Arendt, to discuss writing and the nature of freedom; Shirley Chisholm, to bask in the light of her splendor.

4. What would you do if you won the \$500 million Powerball?

I'd donate \$100 million to affordable housing causes. Of the rest, I'd set up half in trust for my family members and close friends, use the other half to purchase an estate somewhere on the Mediterranean and run a modern-day Lycaenum-cum-writing retreat.

5. You have been given an unlimited budget and a time machine to organize a music festival. What bands or solo acts do you invite?

Not a fan of music festivals, frankly. I'd probably just get a slew of Baroque composers (Corelli, Scarlatti, Bach, etc) together for a very relaxing concert.

6. What are five things on your bucket list?

Purchase an estate on the Mediterranean and run a modern-day Lycaenum-cum-writing retreat; write a book that I'm happy with; cause an international scandal (the fun kind); hug a baby sloth; plant and cultivate a lemon grove.

7. What would you be doing if you were not an academic?

Portrait painter.

SHA FR Council Minutes
Friday, January 8, 2021
10:00 a.m. - 2:35 p.m. EDT
Via Zoom

Present: Andrew Preston (presiding), Shaun Armstead, Laura Belmonte, Vivien Chang, Emily Conroy-Krutz, Peter Hahn, Kristin Hoganson, Daniel Immerwahr, Andrew Johns, Barbara Keys, Kyle Longley, Kelly Shannon, Lauren Turek, Karine Walther, and Amy Sayward (ex officio)

Also Attending: Faith Bagley, Ryan Irwin, Paige Mitchell, Patricia Thomas, Lucy Oates, Petra Geode, and Anne Foster

Introductory Business:

Andrew Preston offered welcoming remarks, and everyone introduced themselves. He then requested a resolution of thanks to retiring Council members (Adriane Lentz-Smith, Lien-Hang Nguyen, Brian McNamara, and Mary Dudziak) and immediate past president Kristin Hoganson. The motion was made by Daniel Immerwahr, seconded by Kelly Shannon, and all voted in favor.

Amy Sayward recapped the Council votes taken by correspondence since the June meeting--approval of the minutes of the June 2020 Council meeting, agreement on joining the new CREW lawsuit, and endorsement of the proposed Chris Murphy legislation. There was no further discussion of these votes. Sayward also offered an oral report that there had been no reports of breaches of the code of conduct in the past calendar year.

Conference Issues:

Preston gave background for the proposal to shift to an entirely online format for the 2021 conference. At the June 2020 Council meeting, Council had decided on a hybrid conference and reduced its room liability due to the uncertainties of conditions a year ahead of time and in hopes of offering the best possible conference experience to all SHA FR members. However, as subsequent events unfolded and as the Program Committee worked with the President to think through a hybrid conference, it became clear that the hybrid format was incredibly complex as well as expensive, as witnessed by the hotel bid for audiovisual needs for the hybrid format. Although they located a vendor—Pheedloop—that could be used for both a hybrid and an entirely virtual format, the rather low response rate to the call for papers and the very low number of these applicants who planned to attend in person have called into question the financial viability of any in-person element for the 2021 conference. Therefore, the SHA FR President and Executive Director sought advice from SHA FR counsel and have already opened discussions with the hotel through SHA FR's hotel broker to understand our options moving forward.

Ryan Irwin, co-chair of the Program Committee, joined the meeting. Hoganson offered the Ways and Means Committee's unanimous recommendation to shift to all-remote conference given the financial implications. Irwin summarized the Program Committee's written report about the thematic design of the upcoming conference and thanked co-chair Megan Black, Preston, and Sayward for their work on the conference. He then offered to answer any questions as well as welcoming suggestions on how to optimize the conference and attendance.

Irwin agreed that moving to an all-digital conference seemed the best option at this point, and he mentioned that the Program Committee had already planned to extend the conference to four days (Thursday through Sunday) under the hybrid model. There was discussion about how to manage the timing and asynchronous content of the conference to maximize international participation across global time zones. There was also a suggestion to perhaps include sessions on late-breaking issues, similar to what the American Historical Association has done in the past. Finally, there was some discussion of how SHA FR might utilize some of the rooms and food if it had to pay for them even without hosting a conference on-site, including that some might want to attend the virtual conference from the conference hotel and/or connecting with local charities. Preston thanked the two Program Committee co-chairs for their tireless and invaluable work, and Irwin left the meeting. Peter Hahn moved that SHA FR should shift to an all-virtual meeting, Kyle Longley seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously, 14-0-0.

Discussion then shifted to a strategy for implementing this decision. After some discussion, Hahn moved to authorize the president in consultation with the executive director to renegotiate the hotel contract through the hotel broker and legal counsel on the best possible terms. The motion was seconded by Hoganson and was approved unanimously, 14-0-0.

There was discussion about how to set the registration fees for a virtual conference, building on the written report and modeling by the Ways and Means Committee as well as data from the Conference Committee's written report. There was discussion of creating an additional registration category between regular registration and the reduced registration rate traditionally charged to students, K-12 educators, and the precariously employed. Such a pandemic-related rate would recognize that many colleges and universities have cut conference funds entirely. There was also a desire to have rates low enough to encourage broad participation balanced with the recognition of the conference costs and on-going financial commitments of the society. Another suggestion was offered that the keynote speakers (which would be luncheon speakers at an in-person conference) might have an additional charge for those paying regular registration rates. Some Council members expressed concerns that such fees might deter attendance at these events and urged SHA FR to advance maximum access.

Hahn moved to vest authority in the president to develop an appropriate fee structure and circulate it to Council. This motion was seconded by Lauren Turek and passed unanimously, 14-0-0. Following the vote, Paige Mitchell, SHA FR's new conference coordinator in charge of the Pheedloop (on-line) elements of the conference, joined the meeting and shared her screen to allow SHA FR Council members to see what the Western Historical Association's Pheedloop platform looked like and what the elements of the conference site were. After answering several questions, Mitchell left the meeting.

Sayward then presented the proposal for a 2022 conference based at the Tulane University campus, offering both inexpensive dorm

housing (\$40/person/night) as well as a room block and shuttle service to the Westin hotel with which SHAFR had had a contract for the 2020 conference. The Tulane campus also has public transportation access to the French Quarter, sufficient spaces for the conference that will be less expensive than a hotel conference, and additional opportunities for sponsorships of the conference. Hoganson reported that the Ways & Means Committee endorsed this shift. The motion to shift the 2022 conference to the Tulane campus was moved by Immerwahr, seconded by Turek, and passed unanimously, 14-0-0.

Shannon then highlighted the action items from the extensive report by the Conference Code of Conduct Task Force. One set of proposals were implementation procedures flowing from the current code of conduct, and the other set aimed at expanding of the existing code of conduct. Council opted to tackle the implementation issues first. The task force recommended keeping Sherry Marts as SHAFR's ombudsperson and to have her investigate all complaints received by the task force, which serves as the intake team and whose members rotate. Although there was general agreement during the Council meeting, Council discussions immediately following have identified the need for Council to further consider the implications at its next meeting.

The next implementation issues were creating a sanctions procedure and team (who would determine what sanctions should be imposed on someone found to have violated SHAFR's code of conduct) and an appeals team (who would determine an appeals process and rule on any appeals). Shannon pointed out that these two teams should be preconstituted, could contain the same people, and should have senior members of leadership. Hoganson proposed that the members of this/these team(s) could be determined by position, such as past presidents and/or senior members of Council. This would ensure that it was a rotating group. Council charged the president with convening the team(s) to draft specific language on the sanctions and appeals for Council approval. The final implementation issue was the question of the security of the email system for receiving reports. The president committed to following up on this issue and developing some concrete options.

Council then considered the question of expanding the current code of conduct, which only covers SHAFR events and only covers misconduct of a sexual nature. The task force report strongly suggested the need for a broader code of conduct for the conference to cover other protected categories and for a separate code of ethics that would cover behavior outside of the conference. The task force envisioned that this code of ethics could deal with egregious behavior and could cover academic misconduct. It was suggested that the President should work with the task force to develop a draft that would then be brought to Council. Karine Walther then moved that Council pass the broader code of conduct drafted by the task force and attached to its report as appendix D. Keys seconded the motion. In the discussion that followed it was suggested that Council should have SHAFR counsel review the proposed code before it is implemented, that SHAFR should determine how such a policy might interface with its insurance policy, and that SHAFR might include academic status as a protected category in its policy. The original motion was then withdrawn by Walther and replaced by a motion to approve the draft policy pending consultation with counsel. The motion was made by Walther, seconded by Keys, and approved by a vote of 12-2-0, with those opposed being of the opinion that the policy should not be even provisionally approved before legal review.

Council also considered a proposal that was part of the petition from SHAFR members seeking greater internationalization of the society but that had been tabled at the June Council meeting--the proposal that the by-laws should be amended to require one in every ten conferences to be held outside of North America. Keys, who had originally brought the petition to Council, explained the petitioners' desire to broaden SHAFR's geographic range beyond North America. In the discussion, some of the concerns raised about the proposal were that a by-laws amendment would create a mandate that would potentially handcuff future Councils, that such a conference might be significantly more expensive for the organization and some members, and that the unknowns of the post-pandemic conference scene make it difficult to make such a commitment at this time. Positive aspects of the proposal that were discussed included that it could expand participation in SHAFR by overseas members and especially by international graduate students and that it would not necessarily be more expensive to host an international conference. There was also discussion about whether Mexico should be considered part of North America in terms of the resolution or whether the geographic language should be replaced with language about a country where SHAFR has not previously hosted a conference (currently only the United States and Canada). Council also discussed ways in which other, non-conference events can further internationalize SHAFR as well as the possibility that virtual content can make the conference more accessible--both for U.S. members if the conference is abroad and for non-U.S. members if the conference is in the United States.

Keys then moved that Council adopt the original language in the petition, that the SHAFR by-laws be amended to state "As long as SHAFR holds face-to-face conferences, at least one in ten should be outside the United States." The motion was seconded by Walther but was defeated by a vote of 5-6-3 (5 in favor, 6 opposed, and 3 abstaining). Hoganson then proposed a strong commitment--rather than a by-laws amendment--and moved that Council commit to hosting a conference outside of the United States and Canada within the next six to eight years. The motion was seconded by Immerwahr and passed unanimously, 14-0-0.

Financial Issues:

Sayward briefly reviewed the financial reports that she had shared with Council. They demonstrated that SHAFR was in sound fiscal shape, despite the issues posed by the pandemic; she also pointed out some upcoming financial commitments, including the update to the shafr.org website and the summer institute in 2022.

Hoganson then reviewed additional recommendations from the Ways and Means Committee, including support for a 5% raise for SHAFR IT Director and reduction of the prize money connected to the Ferrell Book Prize (which goes to a senior scholar who is not necessarily a SHAFR member) from \$2,500 to \$1,000, which would not impact the prestige connected to the prize. The committee did not make a recommendation about the proposal for hosting conferences outside of North America given the great difficulties in modeling hypothetical future situations. The committee's recommendation for the raise for the IT Director and the reduction of the Ferrell Prize money was approved unanimously, 14-0-0.

Hoganson also raised the Ways and Means committee's recommendation that SHAFR's administrative staffing budget could be increased in line with Council's decision(s) about how to handle the recommendations of the Task Force on the Executive Director position. Although the task force's larger recommendations had to be tabled to the June meeting due to a lack of time, at the end of

the meeting, Hoganson specifically raised the issue of creating an administrative fellowship specifically to help with developing a plan of action for advancing the website ahead of the June meeting (a need identified in the Executive Director's written report). Hoganson therefore moved that Council approve up to \$4,000 to hire an administrative fellow to begin coordination of website revamp. Turek seconded the motion, and Council approved it unanimously, 14-0-0.

Publication Issues:

Patricia Thomas and Lucy Oates from Oxford University Press (OUP) and Petra Goedde and Anne Foster, co-editors of *Diplomatic History*, joined the meeting. Thomas covered some of the key points of the written report, highlighting the additional traffic on JSTOR, the good impact factor (for the humanities) of the journal, and the timeliness of content delivery from the editors. Oates, who specializes in open access issues for OUP, presented some of the key issues within this continually changing landscape.

Goedde and Foster highlighted parts of their report for Council, including that submissions continue to be robust, that they expect to see a dip as the pandemic closure of archives impacts new scholarship, that they are preparing forums for future issues, and that they are encountering some difficulties in recruiting sufficient reviewers for the books that they have committed to review. They also pointed out that to date, OUP has handled the open access issue well for individual authors and that it has not significantly affected editorial operations. However, the concern over the long term is that since *Diplomatic History* is not an open access publication, there might be declines in submissions from the U.K. and Europe over time.

Longley (chair of SHAFR's Open Access Task Force) thanked Thomas for the report that was included in the Council packet and stated the task force's commitment to continuing to monitor the issue. He stated that the key work of the present is to educate SHAFR members, and Thomas indicated that it might be possible to organize some type of programming for the upcoming SHAFR conference if there is sufficient interest. At this point, Thomas, Oates, Goedde, and Foster left the meeting.

Final Issues:

Given that the meeting was running long, Sayward recommended that several items on the agenda could be treated as informational items, that several could be tabled until the June meeting, and that some committee issues could be resolved by the president. At this point, Preston asked Sayward to recuse herself and raised the question with Council of the procedure for evaluating the Executive Director ahead of the June decision regarding reappointment. It was decided that the group of former presidents would carry out the evaluation and make a recommendation to the Council in June. Sayward then rejoined the meeting.

Council then considered the report and requests of the Task Force on Advocacy. Although there was general agreement that the task force should be empowered to advocate on behalf of SHAFR's core mission (e.g., preservation of diplomatic historical records and adequate funding for the governmental archives that preserve those records), discussion following the meeting about how these proposals interface with the existing by-laws governing SHAFR's advocacy led to a proposal to more fully examine this proposal and its implications at the next Council meeting. The request that SHAFR join the National Humanities Alliance at the minimum rate of \$1,000 per year can be accommodated within the existing Outreach budget ("Other" category), as reported by the Ways & Means Committee. The motion to do this was made by Hoganson, seconded by Turek, and passed unanimously, 14-0-0. Council believed that the task force's communications with the membership may be more frequent but should be channeled through the Executive Director after consultation with the President. The motion to authorize this was moved by Keys, seconded by Shannon, and passed unanimously, 14-0-0.

Council also approved a proposal to officially connect SHAFR with the workshop developed by Elisabeth Leake for SHAFR members in the United Kingdom and Ireland. Council expressed great interest in the proposal and expressed the hope that the model might be expanded to other regions of the world—perhaps within the existing structure or perhaps by replicating the model elsewhere. Andrew Johns pointed out that Leake would be publishing an article in *Passport* about the workshop, which could be a catalyst for expansion.

Meeting adjourned 2:35 p.m. EDT



Recent Books of Interest

- Abbas, Megan Brankley. *Whose Islam? The Western University and Modern Islamic Thought in Indonesia*. (Stanford, 2021).
- Abbott, Elena K. *Beacons of Liberty: International Free Soil and the Fight for Racial Justice in Antebellum America*. (Cambridge, 2021).
- Abrahamian, Ervand. *Oil Crisis in Iran: From Nationalism to Coup d'Etat*. (Cambridge, 2021).
- Bacevich, Andrew. *After the Apocalypse: America's Role in a World Transformed*. (Metropolitan Books, 2021).
- Bass, Emily. *To End a Plague: America's Fight to Defeat AIDS in Africa*. (PublicAffairs, 2021).
- Baykurt, Burcu and Victoria de Grazia, eds. *Soft-Power Internationalism: Competing for Cultural Influence in the 21st Century Global Order*. (Columbia, 2021).
- Bevins, Vincent. *The Jakarta Method: Washington's Anticommunist Crusade and the Mass Murder Program that Shaped Our World*. (PublicAffairs, 2021).
- Biltoft, Carolyn N. *A Violent Peace: Media, Truth, and Power at the League of Nations*. (Chicago, 2021).
- Blanchfield, Patrick. *Gunpower: The Structure of American Violence*. (Verso, 2021).
- Blyden, Nemata Amelia Ibitayo. *African Americans and Africa: A New History*. (Yale, 2021).
- Brier, Robert. *Poland's Solidarity Movement and the Global Politics of Human Rights*. (Cambridge, 2021).
- Carlson, Kerstin Bree. *The Justice Laboratory: International Criminal Justice in Africa*. (Brookings, 2021).
- Carroll, Francis M. *America and the Making of An Independent Ireland: A History*. (New York University Press, 2021).
- Carter, Ralph G. and James M. Scott, eds. *Congress and U.S. Foreign Policy: Activism, Assertiveness, and Acquiescence in a Polarized Era*. (Rowman & Littlefield, 2021).
- Clarke, Michael. *American Grand Strategy and National Security: The Dilemmas of Primacy and Decline from the Founding to Trump*. (Palgrave Macmillan, 2021).
- Cockburn, Andrew. *The Spoils of War: Power, Profit, and the American War Machine*. (Verso, 2021).
- Demmer, Amanda C. *After Saigon's Fall: Refugees and U.S.-Vietnamese Relations, 1975-2000*. (Cambridge, 2021).
- Dickson, John. *History Shock: When History Collides with Foreign Relations*. (Kansas, 2021).
- Donaghy, Aaron. *The Second Cold War: Carter, Reagan, and the Politics of Foreign Policy*. (Cambridge, 2021).
- Dorais, Geneviève. *Journey to Indo-América: APRA and the Transnational Politics of Exile, Persecution, and Solidarity, 1918-1945*. (Cambridge, 2021).
- Drábik, Jakub, ed. *Operation Danube Reconsidered: The International Aspects of the Czechoslovak 1968 Crisis*. (Columbia, 2021).
- Dragostinova, Theodora K. *The Cold War from the Margins: A Small Socialist State on the Global Cultural Scene*. (Cornell, 2021).
- Freedman, Alisa. *Japan on American TV: Screaming Samurai Join Anime Clubs in the Land of the Lost*. (Columbia, 2021).
- Granick, Jaclyn. *International Jewish Humanitarianism in the Age of the Great War*. (Cambridge, 2021).
- Goff, Brendan. *Rotary International and the Selling of American Capitalism*. (Harvard, 2021).
- Hacohen, Dvora. *To Repair a Broken World: The Life of Henrietta Szold, Found of Hadassah*. (Harvard, 2021).
- Hamblin, Jacob Darwin. *The Wretched Atom: America's Global Gamble with Peaceful Nuclear Technology*. (Oxford, 2021).
- Hanhimaki, Jussi M. *Pax Transatlantica: America and Europe in the post-Cold War Era*. (Oxford, 2021).
- Hayashi, Brian Masaru. *Asian American Spies: How Asian Americans Helped Win the Allied Victory*. (Oxford, 2021).
- Ibrahimov, Mahir. *Across Cultures and Empires: An Immigrant's Odyssey from the Soviet Army to the US War in Iraq and American Citizenship*. (Kansas, 2021).
- Indyk, Martin. *Master of the Game: Henry Kissinger and the Art of Middle East Diplomacy*. (Knopf, 2021).
- Jacob, Frank and Mario Keblor, eds. *Transatlantic Radicalism: Socialist and Anarchist Exchanges in the 19th and 20th Centuries*. (Oxford, 2021).
- Johnson, Richard. *US Foreign Policy: Domestic Roots and International Impact*. (Bristol University, 2021).
- Johnson, Ronaldo Angelo. *In Search of Liberty: African American Internationalism in the Nineteenth-Century Atlantic World*. (Georgia, 2021).
- Kaufman, Joyce P. *A Concise History of U.S. Foreign Policy*. (Rowman & Littlefield, 2021).

- Keshavarzian, Arang and Ali Mirsepassi, eds. *Global 1979: Geographies and Histories of the Iranian Revolution*. (Cambridge, 2021).
- Khan, Aisha. *The Deepest Dye: Obeah, Hosay, and Race in the Atlantic World*. (Harvard, 2021).
- Kolb, Anjuli Fatima Raza. *Epidemic Empire: Colonialism, Contagion, and Terror, 1817-2020*. (Chicago, 2021).
- Krebs, Daniel and Lorien Foote. *Useful Captives: The Role of POWs in American Military Conflicts*. (Kansas, 2021).
- Lai, Albert K. *The Cold War, the Space Race, and the Law of Outer Space*. (Routledge, 2021).
- Larsen, Daniel. *Plotting for Peace: American Peacemakers, British Codebreakers, and Britain at War, 1914-1917*. (Cambridge, 2021).
- Lee, David Johnson. *The Ends of Modernization: Nicaragua and the United States in the Cold War Era*. (Cornell, 2021).
- Lepistö, Antti. *The Rise of Common-Sense Conservatism: The American Right and the Reinvention of the Scottish Enlightenment*. (Chicago, 2021).
- Le-Tormala, Hang Thi Thu. *Postwar Journeys: American and Vietnamese Transnational Peace Efforts since 1975*. (Kansas, 2021).
- Lynch, Edward A. *The Arab Spring: The Failure of the Obama Doctrine*. (Praeger, 2021).
- McAllister, James. *Wilsonian Visions: The Williamstown Institute of Politics and American Internationalism after the First World War*. (Cornell, 2021).
- McCauley, Martin. *Origins of the Cold War, 1941-1949*. (Routledge, 2021).
- McHale, Shawn F. *The First Vietnam War: Violence, Sovereignty, and the Fracture of the South, 1945-1956*. (Cambridge, 2021).
- Meyerowitz, Joanne. *A War on Global Poverty: The Lost Promise of Redistribution and the Rise of Microcredit*. (Princeton, 2021).
- Moore, Celeste Day. *Soundscapes of Liberation: African American Music in Postwar France*. (Duke, 2021).
- Nielsen, Kristian H. and Henry Nielsen. *Camp Century: The Untold Story of America's Secret Arctic Military Base Under the Greenland Ice*. (Columbia, 2021).
- Norris, John. *The Enduring Struggle: The History of the U.S. Agency for International Development and America's Uneasy Transformation of the World*. (Rowman & Littlefield, 2021).
- Pouillard, Véronique. *Paris to New York: The Transatlantic Fashion Industry in the Twentieth Century*. (Harvard, 2021).
- Priest, Andrew J. *Designs on Empire: America's Rise to Power in the Age of European Imperialism*. (Columbia, 2021).
- Riedel, Bruce. *America and the Hashemites: The United States and Jordan in War and Peace*. (Brookings, 2021).
- Reglme, Jr., Salvador Santino Fulo. *Aid Imperium: United States Foreign Policy and Human Rights in Post-Cold War Southeast Asia*. (Michigan, 2021).
- Sander, Barrie. *Doing Justice to History: Confronting the Past in International Criminal Courts*. (Oxford, 2021).
- Schrad, Mark Lawrence. *Smashing the Liquor Machine: A Global History of Prohibition*. (Oxford, 2021).
- Sobocinska, Agnieszka. *Saving the World? Western Volunteers and the Rise of the Humanitarian-Development Complex*. (Cambridge, 2021).
- Solovey, Mark and Christian Dayé, eds. *Cold War Social Science: Transnational Entanglements*. (Palgrave, 2021).
- Stockhausen, Ulrike Elisabeth. *The Strangers in Our Midst: American Evangelicals and Immigration from the Cold War to the Twenty-First Century*. (Oxford, 2021).
- Taffet, Jeffrey. *Against Aid: A History of Opposition to U.S. Foreign Aid Spending*. (Routledge, 2021).
- Thurston, Anne. *Engaging China: Fifty Years of Sino-American Relations*. (Columbia, 2021).
- Vieth, Jane Karoline. *Tempting All the Gods: Joseph P. Kennedy, Ambassador to Great Britain, 1938-1940*. (Michigan State, 2021).
- Wake, Naoko. *American Survivors: Trans-Pacific Memories of Hiroshima and Nagasaki*. (Cambridge, 2021).
- Wang, Tao. *Isolating the Enemy: Diplomatic Strategy in China and the United States, 1953-1956*. (Columbia, 2021).
- Western, Jon. *Selling Intervention and War: The Presidency, the Media, and the American Public*. (Johns Hopkins, 2021).
- Wooster, Robert. *The United States Army and the Making of America: From Confederation to Empire, 1775-1903*. (Kansas, 2021).
- Worcester, Leonard. *The Aimless Life: Music, Mines, and Revolution from the Rocky Mountains to Mexico*. (Bison Books, 2021).
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In Memoriam:

Marvin Zahniser (1936-2020)

Marvin R. Zahniser passed away in Columbus, Ohio on the last day of 2020.

I had never heard of Marvin Zahniser when I enrolled in the Ph.D. program at Ohio State University in the Fall of 1966. My intent was to study labor history with David Brody. When I arrived in Columbus, Brody was on research leave, and he never returned. Absorbed as I was in the anti-Vietnam War movement, I thought it would be worthwhile to take some courses in American diplomatic history, as it was then called. In my very first trimester I walked into Zahniser's lecture course, which I recall having about 75-100 students, a mixture of graduate and undergraduate, mostly the latter.

In the front of the class was a young man with short hair, dressed very neatly, often in white shirt and bow tie. His lectures were extremely well organized, filled with narrative detail, very illuminating, yet ignoring the political whirlwind that seemed to be engulfing us. His careful apolitical approach unnerved me, but also intrigued me. His focus on facts, events, and broad context revealed an unease with larger interpretive judgments. Simultaneously, however, he seemed to be inviting his students to think hard about the larger meaning of the narrative, almost daring us to form our own views without losing sight of the complexities that he meticulously outlined in his lectures. The message I absorbed, and so did many others, was think hard, strive to be "objective," be imaginative, yet seek "truth," however elusive it might be.

Over two or three intense years, I got to know him better—not well, but better. I took his seminars. I wrote papers. I absorbed his brief, cryptic comments. I learned that behind his friendly, but cautious smile, he asked tough questions, demanded focus, and reserved judgment. I recall with much embarrassment when I was writing a seminar paper on the Spanish-American War, and he expected a historiographical overview, he asked me to explain Julius Pratt's view to the class. I had not read the book yet, but tried to fake it. Zahniser smiled and nodded—looking somewhat disquieted—as I recited nonsense. He did not reproach. He did not ridicule. He pushed, prodded, and encouraged. In his personal deportment, he embodied integrity, self-discipline, ethical behavior, respect for others. But despite an occasional, lovely invitation to his home with other grad students, he remained a circumspect and enigmatic mentor. Only after I left graduate school did I really get to know the man, and my affection and admiration for him grew year by year, decade by decade.

Marvin Zahniser was the scion of a family of Free Methodist ministers. Born in New Kensington, Pennsylvania in 1936, he grew up in Pittsburgh. He attended a small Free Methodist college, Greenville College, in Illinois. He was expected to follow the family tradition and enter the ministry. But in college he took a number of courses in American and European history that inspired him to defy paternal expectations and trod his own career path. Supported by his wife, Adrienne, whom he had met in college, he went to graduate school at the University of Michigan and studied there with Alexander DeConde, the great diplomatic historian of the early republic. When DeConde moved to the University of California, Santa Barbara, Zahniser moved with him. There, he finished his dissertation on Charles Cotesworth Pinckney, and became one of the first doctoral

students to complete a history degree at that institution.

Zahniser then spent a year teaching at the University of Washington and another at the University of Iowa before taking a tenure-track assistant professorial job at Ohio State in 1965. He remained in Columbus for the next twenty-seven years, teaching thousands of undergraduates, rising through the professorial ranks, serving twice as chair of the Department of History, and holding various administrative positions, including a brief stint as Associate Vice Provost for the College of Arts & Sciences (from 1971-1973) and a four-year term as Associate Dean of the College of Humanities (1985-1989). Throughout this career trajectory, he remained true to the values taught him at home—deep moral convictions, strong ethical principles, abiding faith, and a sense of duty to serve others.

Zahniser spent most of his academic career writing about French-American relations. This was not his original intention when he began his work on C. C. Pinckney, the South Carolinian Founding Father, signer of the Constitution, patrician, slaveholder, and emissary to France in the late 1790s. Yet Zahniser's account of Pinckney's unsuccessful mission to heal Franco-American relations after the signing of the Jay Treaty with England, a defining moment in Pinckney's own career, was such a distinctive contribution to the literature that it became the fulcrum for Zahniser's subsequent intellectual journey. In his book, *C. C. Pinckney, Founding Father* (University of North Carolina Press, 1967), Zahniser detailed Pinckney's relations with the other two emissaries that President John Adams had sent to Paris—Elbridge Gerry and John Marshall—and illuminated Talleyrand's efforts to divide them, intimidate them, and seduce them (through the enchantments of Madame de Vilette). Zahniser illustrated how Pinckney—a man of honor and mediocre talent—resisted French threats and overtures and refused to offer a loan or a bribe in order to lubricate the peace negotiations and avert war. When news of the secret negotiations was leaked to the American press and when the American public learned that Pinckney had rebuffed the efforts of French agents X, Y, and Z to secure a bribe, he was heralded as a great patriot. Returning to the United States amidst huge popularity, Pinckney cemented his stature among Federalists when he agreed to take a subordinate command in the newly enlarged army, right below Alexander Hamilton. Zahniser dexterously explained the complicated negotiations with France and illuminated the even more delicate maneuverings among Federalists that led to Pinckney's presidential candidacy in 1800, 1804, and 1808.

As a result of his work on Pinckney, Zahniser defined two big future projects. He contemplated writing a book on the role of diplomatic missions in American foreign relations history and another on the troubled trajectory of Franco-American relations. The first project never came to full fruition, but its promise was apparent in an article that Zahniser wrote with W. Michael Weis, one of his talented graduate students, on Nixon's mission to South America in 1958. Usually viewed as a dramatic failure because of the outpouring of anger, indeed visceral hatred, that the trip engendered, Zahniser and Weis showed how the mission helped to catalyze some important positive changes in U.S. foreign policy.

More substantial, Zahniser used his vast knowledge of

early American diplomacy to write an overall history of Franco-American relations. Entitled *Uncertain Friendship: American-French Relations Through the Cold War* (Wiley, 1975), Zahniser portrayed the tortuous course of the bilateral relationship. France, of course, was America's first ally, but Americans mixed their gratitude for French help during the revolution with duplicity during the negotiations that ended the war and cemented American independence. Rather than honoring the alliance that had been forged in 1778 and offering France help during its subsequent revolutionary upheaval and international wars, the young American republic declared ideological sympathy yet conducted a diplomacy of *realpolitik*—seeking neutrality, wanting to protect its trade, and hoping to consolidate its frontiers. Interest, not ideology, inspired the foreign policies of the two governments, often leading to contentious interactions. In Zahniser's view, President Charles de Gaulle's apparent distrust and contempt for America in the 1950s and 1960s was a natural continuation of a long, troubled relationship in which the two countries often defined their transient, mutual, overlapping interests in emotional or ideological rhetoric, and then felt betrayed when common enemies disappeared and the parallel pursuit of ambition, wealth, and glory led to rancor. Zahniser's deft narrative of a contentious relationship reflected a mature grasp of the role of ideas, interests, and power in international relations. Reviewing *Uncertain Friendship* in the *Journal of American History*, Larry Kaplan judged that Zahniser had written "what should become the standard work for this generation on the diplomatic history of Franco-American relations."

By the time Zahniser finished this book, he was envisioning a more detailed analysis of the bilateral relationship between Washington and Paris in the years leading up to France's devastating surrender in 1940. But in the middle 1970s and early 1980s, he increasingly assumed administrative responsibilities. In 1973, he became chairman of the department of history and focused considerable effort on healing a troubled department. An orderly man with a keen sense of fairness and a strong belief that Ohio State could achieve real distinction in historical studies, he devoted himself to systematizing hiring procedures, defining criteria for tenure and promotion, and replacing short-term appointments for instructors with tenure-track line assistant professorships. At the same time, he championed curriculum reform and sought to overcome rifts between Americanists and Europeanists within the department. During his second term as department chair from 1981 to 1985, the Ohio State University president and the Board of Regents of the State of Ohio deemed the history department to be "a university center of excellence," an honor bestowed on departments that had achieved national distinction and, more importantly, a designation that positioned the department for additional strategic investments in faculty appointments. Zahniser coupled this effort with a surprising zest for fundraising, an activity not undertaken by many department chairs. He was particularly proud of his ability to secure funding for the Joe R. Engle Chair in the History of Christianity, a position he thought nicely complemented the department's growing strength in Jewish history.

When he finished a second term as chair, he returned to his work on Franco-American relations in the interwar years, but again was derailed when he was asked to become Associate Dean for faculty affairs in OSU's Humanities College. He did this for four years, garnering much admiration for his personal and administrative integrity, his entrepreneurship, and his selfless commitment to the well-being of the institution. He never allowed his own ego to intercede with his commitment to service, his respect for his colleagues, and his passion for congenial resolution of disputes. When he retired, Dean Michael G. Riley paid tribute to Zahniser extolling those "special characteristics" that made his leadership so noteworthy: "personal and professional integrity . . . an enduring commitment to enterprise, a rightly-placed and exceptionally well-served sense of duty."

Zahniser then chose to take early retirement, and did the unexpected. Few of us who knew him were aware of his deep-seated convictions about the civil rights movement's importance

as well as the principle of educational opportunity. We did not know that he had felt he had missed out on contributing anything substantial to this movement during the late 1950s and 1960s, such as going south to protest discrimination and injustice. In his own mind, he realized he could now do something to compensate for this omission; he could spend the remainder of his teaching career at a historically Black college. He garnered a position at Dillard University in New Orleans, and with his three sons grown and out of the house, he and Adrienne moved south to spend the next four years at Dillard. He often talked about this as a learning experience of his own, as a growth opportunity, as an important lesson for him to learn what it is like to be a minority person of (white) color in a majority black environment.

Zahniser then moved back to Columbus in the late 1990s and finally returned to writing his book, *Then Came Disaster: France and the United States, 1918-1940* (Praeger, 2002). "For both Americans and Frenchmen," Zahniser wrote, "the fall of France brought a new world into existence." He carefully portrayed the failure of officials in Paris, London, and Washington to meet the looming threat posed by Nazi Germany. His characterizations of William Bullitt, the U.S. ambassador to France, and of President Franklin D. Roosevelt were especially insightful and arresting. Bullitt had spectacular access to top French officials and provided FDR, a friend, with vivid accounts of the daily intrigues, fights, and foibles inside French governing circles. But Roosevelt procrastinated and improvised, aware of the growing German threat yet sensitive to public opinion. He hated the Nazi regime but remained deeply wary of embroiling Americans in another European land war. Zahniser nicely captured elements of Roosevelt, the juggler, so ably described by Warren Kimball, and Roosevelt, the manipulator, so adroitly portrayed in Frank Costigliola's subsequently published, *Roosevelt's Lost Alliances*. The president tried to thread a needle: to sell airplanes, offer aid, and (belatedly) rearm while readying public opinion for the inevitable embroilment that few desired. Zahniser depicted all of this with a palpable sense of sadness about the tragedy of France's defeat yet with a historian's grasp of the multiple factors that circumscribed effective action.

Upon completing this book, Zahniser continued to teach as an adjunct professor at the Pontifical College Josephinum in Columbus. He loved the irony that he, a son of a Free Methodist minister, was finishing his career teaching part-time at a Catholic seminary. "If my father knew," he wrote me in January 2004, "I'm sure there would be rumblings in or about his grave." What his father would have appreciated was Zahniser's ongoing commitment to institutions that embodied his convictions and that stirred his intellectual inquiry. He served as Trustee for Spring Arbor University and Northern Baptist Seminary. He also was a founding member of the Conference on Faith in History, a society of evangelical historians. Even as he began to struggle with the onset of Parkinson's disease, Zahniser relished the opportunity that the Pontifical College Josephinum afforded him to teach a wide array of courses that opened new vistas. "For the first time in my life," he wrote me in 2004, "I am presently teaching modern Europe since 1789." It was "mind-expanding," yet "humbling." And two years later, in 2006, he wrote me again: "I will be teaching a historical methods and methodological course," and "will be focusing on how the nature of historical inquiry has changed over the past fifty years by showing how social history has blossomed in what used to be an area dominated by big battles, major diplomacy, and important political personages. There are so many wonderful books on social history topics that I have never read, much less heard about until I decided to go this route. Hope it works out well."

What did work out well and what delighted Zahniser was the success of SHAFR. Along with his mentor, Alex DeConde, Zahniser was deeply involved in the founding of our organization in 1967 and the launching of *Diplomatic History* a few years later. He and his colleague, Al Eckes, hosted the second annual meeting of SHAFR in Columbus in August 1976. Subsequently, he played a critical role in shaping the financial success of the organization, first, as Executive Secretary-Treasurer from 1981

to 1985, and then as a key member of the Finance Committee.

Zahniser was a reserved man who nonetheless greatly appreciated the human interaction afforded by a life of teaching and administration. Although he was often guarded and was rarely emotional, I came to see how much he reveled in the success of his students and friends. I visited him every two or three years in Columbus and he liked to hear about or tell me about his former students. I, myself did not know all of them, but they included James Boggs, John Cooley, Saul Friedman, Morris Frommer, Tom Hartig, Elizabeth Liston, Stephen Millett, and Michael Weis. Of course, there were many others who had been in his classes, some of whom had gone on to distinguished academic careers, like Mark Rose and William Walker, and others, like Charles Robinson, who never completed his dissertation yet enjoyed huge success in financial services. Zahniser loved the humor of Chuck doubling or tripling the income of most academics. Throughout, his wry humor helped define the man. I am told that when he was hired by Ohio State in 1965 he had to swear an oath of loyalty to defend the U.S. constitution “against all enemies, foreign and domestic.” Marvin signed the pledge and wrote: “I hope that doesn’t entail duties that are too onerous.”

Mel Leffler

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Society for Historians of American Foreign
Relations (SHAFR)
Middle Tennessee State University
1301 East Main Street, Box 23
Murfreesboro, TN 37132

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