

# PASSPORT



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In this issue of *Passport*

Welcome from SHAFR President Mary Ann Heiss

Seven Questions on NATO

Slavery and U.S. Foreign Relations

...and more!

# Passport

THE SOCIETY FOR HISTORIANS OF AMERICAN FOREIGN RELATIONS REVIEW



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# Thoughts from the SHAFR President

*Mary Ann Heiss*

It's a singular honor to pen this message as SHAFR's fifty-sixth president. The Society has been my professional home for thirty-five years. I attended my first SHAFR conference in 1987 in Annapolis and gave my first SHAFR paper four years later at American University. Since I first joined and became active in the Society, it has changed in many ways. The program is now much bigger and broader than it was during my first several conferences, when a folded sheet of paper listed the few panels that were on tap, the audiences were much less diverse, and the scope of the field's inquiry was much less expansive. But SHAFR's core importance to me has remained salient. It's brought me lively intellectual partners, kindred spirits, valuable sounding boards, sympathetic shoulders, treasured mentors, and even, on occasion, partners in crime. I am humbled and honored to serve this year as SHAFR president and hope to use that time to give back to an organization that's been integral to my personal and professional life.

It's no secret that the last several years have been difficult, for each of us individually and for the organizations and institutions that we cherish. SHAFR is no exception. Our recent conferences have not been immune to the challenges wrought by the COVID-19 pandemic. We saw our 2020 conference, on which then-president Kristin Hoganson, Program Committee co-chairs Gretchen Heefner and Julia Irwin, and so many others had devoted a great deal of time and energy planning, fall victim to the pandemic's early chaos. The program planned for 2020 was outstanding. It was truly a shame that it was ultimately unable to proceed. We held a fully online conference in 2021, expertly organized by Megan Black and Ryan Irwin, that allowed us to connect intellectually but reminded us that there's just no substitute for face-to-face contact and interaction. And in 2022, Emily Conroy-Krutz and Daniel Immerwahr planned what amounted to two conferences: two days of online events as well as a complete in-person conference in New Orleans, which had been slated to serve as host city in 2020.

Planning for the 2023 conference is well under way. We'll be returning to the Arlington Renaissance Capital View for the fifth time overall and the first time since 2019, when few of us knew much of anything about the coronavirus or had stashes of facemasks and hand sanitizer close at hand. Program Committee co-chairs for 2023 are Jeannette Jones and Jason Parker; together with a stellar committee they're planning a full slate of panels and sessions that will hold broad appeal for SHAFR members. Director of the National Security Archive Thomas Blanton will deliver a keynote address at the Saturday luncheon. And our Conference Coordinator Kaete O'Connell is hard at work planning a social event befitting of our return to the DC area but also one that's affordable. Meeting the latter criteria has been particularly challenging given current inflationary pressures, but we're hoping to bring attendees something special. I hope to see many of you in Arlington.

Unlike last year's conference, the 2023 gathering will not include a virtual component tied explicitly or directly to the in-person event. After considering the results of the member survey conducted after our meeting in New Orleans, Council voted

to discontinue virtual conference events timed to the annual meeting in favor of a variety of such events scattered throughout the year. These events might feature a panel of SHAFR members discussing an important anniversary or event, provide an opportunity for work-in-progress discussions, or constitute other kinds of events of particular interest and assistance to our graduate student members. Watch for information about these online-only events in the new year.

If the recent pandemic forced some changes in the way our past few conferences unfolded, its accompanying economic upheaval exacerbated problems that were already evident across the US higher education system. Although SHAFR's mission does not formally or explicitly extend to issues of employment, our stated interest in "the scholarly study of the history of American foreign relations" certainly puts them on our radar and speaks to the need for our involvement. As a result, we've worked over the past several years to address employment uncertainty for our members and better prepare graduate students in the field for a variety of professional positions. These efforts, of course, are ongoing. Interest in the Job Search Workshop that has been a part of our annual meeting since 2013 has waned over the years, suggesting that that initiative may have run its course. But our initiatives in the area of jobs and employment can and must continue. One way we can accomplish this is through the periodic virtual professionalization sessions I mentioned above. Others might include more generous support to graduate students presenting at our annual meeting. (Watch for more on this coming soon.) I would encourage those of you who, like me, cut their professional teeth in SHAFR to respond positively to fund-raising efforts designed specifically to assist our graduate student members. We've always been a welcoming organization for graduate students, leading the way among professional societies in adding graduate students to our governing Council and creating a dedicated Graduate Student Committee. It's more important than ever that these efforts continue—and even expand.

If addressing the needs of our newer members is vital for SHAFR's well-being, it's also fitting that we recall the long and storied history of the organization. Last year, SHAFR turned fifty-five. In the day-to-day struggle of simply managing operations during the pandemic, we missed marking this important milestone. Watch for ways to mark our past at the summer conference, when we can look back at all that the organization has accomplished. The minutes of the most recent Council meeting posted elsewhere in this issue detail one initiative in this direction. You'll be able to discover others in Arlington.

I'd like to close with a reminder of how vital it is that we staff SHAFR's many committees with willing and able volunteers. The scope of the Society's activities is truly vast, and there is certainly something of interest for each and every member. Please consider this an appeal to indicate your interest in serving on one of our more than two dozen committees by completing the short form available at [shaf.org/volunteer](http://shaf.org/volunteer). Interested volunteers are also invited to contact me directly at [mheiss@kent.edu](mailto:mheiss@kent.edu).

# A Roundtable on Steven Brady, *Chained to History: Slavery and U.S. Foreign Relations to 1865*

*Matthew Mason, Brian Rouleau, Joseph A. Fry, Michael E. Woods, Stacey Smith,  
and Steven Brady*

## Introduction to Brady Roundtable

*Matthew Mason*

At one key moment in my dissertation prospectus defense, my advisor, Ira Berlin, offered a helpful intervention on my behalf. After several of the faculty critics of the prospectus had asked “what about this” or “what about that,” usually trying to push my frame of reference backwards in time, Ira pronounced these questions part of “the Jamestown Phenomenon,” an oddity that all early Americanists are bound to encounter. His response has stuck with me to these many years, not only because he was rescuing little old me, but also because of his insight into the nature of criticism. An author’s job, he said, is to make the parameters of the dissertation (or book or article) clear. A critic’s job is to assess whether those parameters are fair. Critics should not pile up “what abouts” rooted in the manuscript they would like to have seen written.

This experience came to mind when I read the essays in this roundtable on Steven J. Brady’s synthesis of the impact of slavery on U.S. foreign relations from 1776 to 1865. Many of the reviewers express a wish that various themes or groups of people were better represented in the book. As Brady notes in his response to the reviews, such “what abouts” are, at their worst, an exercise in imagining the author had written a different—or at least a much, much longer—book.

As the two most appreciative reviewers note, the book that Brady wrote draws on extensive sources in multiple languages and synthesizes many issues both familiar and novel. Still, if Michael Woods and Brian Rouleau had had their way, the book would have covered a much broader cast of characters (both inside and outside of governments), other forms of servitude (including those inflicted on Native Americans and “coolie” laborers), and new time periods (such as Reconstruction and the Gilded Age). And, picking up on Woods’s excellent point that people rather than “slavery” as a disembodied force drove U.S. foreign relations and that those people were not just in government, I might add antislavery Americans and key nongovernmental foreign actors to the list, were I inclined to pile on.

When “what abouts” proliferate, responding to them all would obscure what the author wishes to highlight. In the case of American foreign policy in this era, for instance, it is hard to escape the impression from Brady’s sources that not all concerns were equal. The transatlantic, and especially matters connected to the British Empire, was first among U.S. policymakers’ and citizens’ concerns far more often than other considerations. To address all the issues at hand in U.S. foreign policy as equally

significant, even if we were to delimit them by their connections to slavery, would be to obscure this ranking in contemporaries’ minds.

No reviewer here raises these questions of significance more pointedly than Joseph Fry, although it must be said that his own criteria for the relative weight we ought to assign issues is somewhat unclear. Given the sheer amounts of ink and energy that American diplomats and politicians lavished on the issue of fugitive slaves taken during wars with Britain and that British diplomats lavished on the issue of cooperation in suppressing the transatlantic slave trade, it seems tendentious to simply dismiss them out of hand. Although these issues may not, as Fry notes, have determined “the international balance of power or involved decisions of war and peace,” they related to questions of sovereignty (especially in the American case with fugitive slaves) and reputation (especially in the British case with slave trade abolition) that obviously weighed heavily on contemporary minds.

However, this roundtable does show that Brady might have done more to establish the exact parameters of this study. In Rouleau’s reading of the book, Brady “purports to tell” the entire “story of ‘slavery and US foreign relations to 1865.’” Woods, on the other hand, finds it refreshing that Brady “eschews any claim to definitiveness.” Whatever may or may not have been going on in the book to lead to such divergent conclusions, Brady’s response in this roundtable is problematic.

First, he argues that his goal in the book was to look at “whatever is necessary, in whatever language, to understand all the factors that had a part in shaping the policies that emerged from complex international interactions.” Yet later he makes this disclaimer: because he had to limit the book’s length if he wanted it to be used in the classroom, “there is much that is not in *Chained to History*.” Additionally, Rouleau’s discussion shows not only how useful a consideration of U.S. foreign policy during Reconstruction and Gilded Age would have been, but also how Brady himself opens the door to an objection about its absence by arguing both that “the issue of slavery had been cleanly resolved” by 1865 and that slavery’s “legacy for American foreign relations did not end with the Thirteenth Amendment.”

“What abouts” can also play constructive roles. Rather than merely dinging the book in question for what it lacks, reviews that ask “what about” can point future scholars to profitable areas of inquiry. Woods’ review is an especially good example of this impulse. Stacey Smith’s review suggests avenues for future research but also provides useful angles of perspective on the book’s significance. She uses the lens of Black agency to draw out some of the importance of what is in Brady’s book.

These at times divergent and certainly diverse reviews of Brady's book are a testament to its power to provoke discussion, as any good monograph—especially one synthetic in nature—should do. They also point up the value of reading and trying to synthesize a range of responses to a book of this nature, rather than just one review.

### Review of Steven J. Brady, *Chained to History: Slavery and US Foreign Relations to 1865*

Brian Rouleau

The conclusion of Steven J. Brady's impressive new book channels the spirit of the *1619 Project*. "To understand America's diplomatic history," he observes, "one must understand the impact and legacy of slavery on America's relations with the world" (184). Such was the fundamental premise of Nikole Hannah-Jones and her fellow contributors' attempt to reorient the master narrative of U.S. history around Black bondage. One could not comprehend the unfolding of past events in this country, they proclaimed, without paying due attention to the shaping influence of unfree labor and its ugly twin, racism. Why should the same supposition not also apply to America's diplomatic history? Hence the insistence of *Chained to History* that from its founding in 1776 until the Civil War, the United States pursued a foreign relations policy unmistakably molded by slaveholding. While not the only factor guiding diplomatic decision-making, it nevertheless helped build the early foreign policy establishment in this country.

As Brady notes in the introduction, examining the knotted histories of slavery and foreign relations can pay rich interpretive dividends. Perhaps the most important of these dividends relates to the question of U.S. unilateralism—or more precisely, to the regularity with which an American desire for disentanglement foundered in the face of slavery's "proclivity . . . to enmesh the nation with the wider world in unwanted ways" (4). Though the nation "would have preferred to keep its relations with the eastern littoral of the Atlantic world largely limited to commerce," slaveholders became "compelled to conduct an active diplomacy with the Old World" (4). Time and time again, a material interest in slavery triggered perceived crises of national security. Those diplomatic predicaments, in turn, required deeper U.S. immersion in the affairs of other countries. Freedom from inter-imperial entanglements, supposedly a bedrock principle of American foreign relations, remained a pipe dream with slaveholders at the policymaking helm.

Subsequent sections explore the slavery issue's impact on early American international affairs in greater detail. The first few chapters in particular are among the book's strongest, because they pinpoint the ways in which U.S. diplomacy was stamped by bondage from the beginning. Indeed, even the 1783 Treaty of Paris, from which American independence derived, featured language meant to protect the property rights of slaveholders. A particularly fascinating discussion covers nearly nonstop Anglo-American wrangling over Article 7 of the Revolutionary War's peace accord. Inserted by South Carolina slaver Henry Laurens, it stipulated that as the British withdrew from the United States, they would not carry away any "Negroes or other Property." Suddenly the status of thousands of slaves who had self-emancipated during the war seemed to hinge on whose interpretation of the evacuation agreement would prevail.

Americans wanted returned to them every slave (or their cash equivalent) lost since the start of hostilities, while Britons insisted that the freedom of Black loyalists was non-negotiable. Brady adroitly tracks the dispute, which festered for years. Demands for compensation on the part of aggrieved slaveholders extended into and beyond the War of 1812, during which, once again, African American slaves flocked to British lines, seeking both freedom and an opportunity to visit vengeance upon their former masters.

The Treaty of Ghent resulted in a similar impasse over

slavery, and the matter eventually went to arbitration. As with any good compromise, both sides were left dissatisfied. Tsar Alexander I's decree ordered a relatively limited compensation of U.S. slaveholders. However, most of them never saw a penny. "Perhaps fittingly for these men, the loss of slaves proved to be the price of their own liberty" (17). In a well-written volume, Brady displays a real knack for the bon mot.

*Chained to History* also excels at demonstrating how slavery shaped antebellum maritime diplomacy. Most scholarly accounts tend to see debate over the acquisition of Florida, Texas, Cuba, and other territory as the clearest manifestation of slaveholder diplomacy. As Brady suggests, that is not so much wrong as incomplete. I appreciated the breadth of his book's vision, which of course covers more "standard" fare like westward and southward expansion but also wades into the lesser-known and more watery corners of the historiographic map.

For example, surveys of U.S. foreign relations tend to drop the issue of nautical searches and seizures after the impressment crisis ended in 1815. Brady's account, however, explores in impressive depth the regularity with which Britain and the United States clashed over the Royal Navy's efforts to suppress the transatlantic slave trade. America had banned slave imports in 1808, but Congress committed few resources to the law's enforcement. Moreover, one presidential administration after another refused to allow British authorities to inspect U.S. vessels for contraband slaves.

The American position was perfectly summarized by John Quincy Adams, then serving as James Monroe's secretary of state. When asked by his English counterpart if he could imagine a worse evil than the slave trade, Adams replied in the affirmative: "Admitting the right of search by foreign officers of our vessels upon the seas in time of peace, for that would be making slaves of ourselves" (78). Of course, as Brady is quick to point out, in objecting to their own figurative enslavement, Americans "assured that many more Africans would be subjected to slavery of a much more literal kind" (78).

A whole host of issues connected to slavery continued to draw the United States into contentious debate over maritime questions with Britain (and other European powers). Brady does particularly superb work in charting the role that the American Colonization Society played in shaping federal foreign policymaking. In seeking to solve the "problem" of the early republic's free Black population, U.S. agents planted the stars and stripes in Liberia and created a new source for one diplomatic misunderstanding after another with neighboring West African polities.

White terror over the prospect of slave rebellion also created havoc with European nations. Officials in several southern states reacted to these fears by trying to restrict the movement of Black sailors in port. The so-called Negro Seamen Acts, meant to curtail a potential flood of abolitionist influence into U.S. ports, ended up angering those countries whose nonwhite mariners were swept up in slaveholder dragnets. Conflict also arose over the status of shipwrecked and self-emancipated American slaves who turned up in British ports declared free soil by Parliament's 1834 Abolition Act. The *Creole* affair was only the highest profile case among many similar episodes involving Black travel along the "saltwater underground railroad." *Chained to History* helps to transform events that usually appear (if they appear at all) within the pages of highly specialized texts into pivotal moments in early America's diplomatic history.

For this reason, the last two chapters of the book, which cover more familiar topics like antebellum territorial expansion and the Civil War, perhaps lack some of the verve and originality of the first few. This is not to suggest they are without merit. But the annexation of Texas, the quest for Cuba, and the question of "Blue and Gray" diplomacy during the slaveholders' rebellion have of late been the focus of much good academic literature. One cannot help but notice that Brady more often cites the interpretations of others here; as well he should. Walter Johnson, Matthew Karp, Howard Jones, Robert May, Don Doyle, and Piero Gleijeses (among others) have all published seminal scholarship on the



foreign policy of slavery in the past decade or so. Therefore, Brady is surely on firm (but less pathbreaking) interpretive footing in drawing our attention to the role of slaveholders in shaping diplomacy during the decades immediately preceding the sectional split.

Less satisfactory is Brady's questionable decision to end the book in 1865 with the ratification of the Thirteenth Amendment. The abolition of chattel slavery in the United States may have shifted the diplomatic conversation about bound labor, but it did not end the debate in quite as definitive a way as the author implies. It is a stretch, in other words, to say that the issue of slavery had been "cleanly resolved" by the end of the Civil War (182). Emancipation was a signal event, but it did not mean that "one of the most important determinants of US foreign relations since the founding of the nation [had] vanished" (182).

We now have a fair number of studies detailing the ways in which Reconstruction-era and Gilded Age debates over foreign policy ended up relitigating the sectional dispute over slavery. Indeed, the last two chapters of Robert Kagan's *Dangerous Nation* (uncited here—an unfortunate oversight, given Kagan's role as one of the first modern scholars to posit the existence of a systematized "foreign policy of slavery") make a pretty persuasive argument about the ways that postbellum diplomatic disputes channeled older conversations about unfree labor.

In fairness, Brady acknowledges as much by the last sentences of the book. "Slavery was, at last, extirpated in 1865," he concedes, but "its legacy for American foreign relations did not end with the Thirteenth Amendment" (184). What had ceased to matter only a few pages before now transforms into something of enduring influence. This all comes across as a little muddled. It might have been worthwhile for the author to explore in slightly greater detail the lingering effects of the slaveholders' multigenerational dominance over the State Department's policymaking establishment.<sup>1</sup>

The largest part of the problem with Brady's swift exit circa 1865 is conceptual. A question that does not get asked here but probably should be is, How do we define slavery? *Chained to History* presumes an almost a priori definition of unfree labor as exclusive to peoples of African descent. At first glance, this makes sense. Chattel slavery, as well as its toxic corollary, anti-Black racism, was indisputably a major force in the history of American foreign relations. But there were varieties and gradations of slavery in North America (and beyond) that go unmentioned here, and they too shaped U.S. diplomacy.

A long-standing Native American trade in captives—what Andrés Reséndez has called "the other slavery"—structured intra-Indian foreign relations and provoked repeated imperial incursions into the West. Southwestern labor schemes like debt peonage likewise helped trigger a flurry of border disputes and armed conflicts in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The scourge of "coolie" labor and efforts to stamp out similarly exploitative systems of indenture also shaped relations between East Asia, South Asia, the Caribbean, and the United States. Some Americans participated in (while others decried) a transpacific man-stealing regime known as the "blackbird trade," which saw untold thousands of Natives plucked from their island homes and condemned to lifetimes of immiseration gathering the guano used as fertilizer by U.S. farmers.<sup>2</sup>

Each of these bound labor systems was written and talked about by Americans as slavery or so close an approximation to slavery that there really was no difference. There were others as well, and good histories have recently been written about all of them. My concern about a survey like Brady's, which purports to tell the story of "slavery and US foreign relations to 1865," is that it may misleadingly narrow our field of vision. Many millions of Black Americans were "chained to history," and their fates surely entwined with the choices made by federal diplomats. But I would also like to see a bigger and bolder imagining of what we mean

when we talk about slavery. Other kinds of people experiencing other varieties of slavery were also chained to the history of the United States in the world. Our task now is to assemble the pieces of a much bigger puzzle. The result will be a more comprehensive picture of the multiple levels at which the "land of the free" alternately safeguarded or smashed unfree labor in pursuit of an evolving conception of what constituted the "national interest."

None of this is meant to detract from Steven J. Brady's signal achievement. In fact, there may be no other person more disarmingly and refreshingly forthright about the limitations of a short survey on this topic. In an admirably honest introduction, the author cheerfully acknowledges that his book "makes no claim to being the proverbial 'last word' on its subject" (7). Instead, his hope is that his inquiry "will arouse interest in further scholarship on a highly significant aspect of America's early international relations. If it serves in some degree to re-center slavery as a key element in American foreign relations up through the Civil War, *Chained to History* will have made a worthwhile contribution" (7). On that front (and many others), Brady has entirely succeeded.

This is a *more* than worthwhile contribution to the field that will continue to invigorate debate and inspire new research for years to come.

Notes:

1. Robert Kagan, *Dangerous Nation: America's Foreign Policy from Its Earliest Days to the Dawn of the Twentieth Century* (New York, 2006).
2. On Indian slavery and U.S. policy, see Andrés Reséndez, *The Other Slavery: The Uncovered Story of Indian Enslavement in America* (Boston, MA, 2016); and Brian DeLay, "Indian Politics, Empire, and the History of American Foreign Relations," *Diplomatic History* 39, no. 5 (November 2015): 927–42. On debt peonage, see Andrés Reséndez, "North American Peonage," *Journal of the Civil War Era* 7, no. 4 (December 2017): 597–619. On coolies and imperial policymaking, see Moon-Ho Jung, *Coolies and Cane: Race, Labor, and Sugar in the Age of Emancipation* (Baltimore, MD, 2006); and Manu Karuka, *The Empire's Tracks: Indigenous Nations, Chinese Workers, and the Transcontinental Railroad* (Oakland, CA, 2019). On blackbirding, see Gerald Horne, *The White Pacific: U.S. Imperialism and Black Slavery in the South Seas after the Civil War* (Honolulu, 2007).

## Review of Stephen J. Brady, *Chained to History: Slavery and US Foreign Relations to 1865*

Joseph A. Fry

Stephen J. Brady asserts that slavery was "one of the major determinants" of pre-1865 U.S. foreign relations. Antebellum American policymakers consistently incorporated the peculiar institution into their assessments of the nation's "security, prosperity, and geographical and political reach" (181). Therefore, he argues, slavery should be accorded a more conspicuous role in recounting and analyzing the history of U.S. foreign relations from the American Revolution through the end of the Civil War. Brady asserts that the absence of a "single, synthetic volume" examining slavery's persistent and influential role in the United States' international involvements constitutes a glaring omission in the "scholarly literature," and he seeks to "fill that lacuna" by re-centering slavery as a but not always the "key element in American foreign relations" (6–7).

While tracing and emphasizing slavery's impact on U.S. foreign relations during the nation's first century, Brady advances several subthemes. Slavery, he contends, repeatedly forced the United States to abandon its preferred policy of unilateralism and its primary focus on the North American continent and to become involved with the broader Atlantic World and European powers such as Great Britain, France, and Spain. An account of slavery's connection to U.S. international relations also demonstrates the "sheer messiness" (4) of foreign policy, replete with countervailing national interests and objectives; frustrations and failures



associated with international involvement and limits on national power; and inconsistencies among different U.S. presidential administrations and policymakers. Finally, and certainly most importantly, slavery was an ever-present consideration as the United States expanded westward across the North American continent and southward in attempts to acquire Cuba.

Brady explicates slavery's centrality to U.S. foreign relations and these collateral themes by examining five principal issues: (1) U.S. demands for compensation for the slaves the British "carried away" or freed during the American Revolution, (2) the American refusal to cooperate with British attempts to suppress the Atlantic slave trade and U.S. efforts to colonize African Americans, (3) the U.S. response to the Black slave revolution in Haiti, (4) U.S. territorial expansion, and (5) competing U.S. and Confederate foreign policies during the American Civil War.

In the 1783 Treaty of Paris, Great Britain acknowledged U.S. independence and sovereignty to the Mississippi River and agreed to withdraw from this territory without "carrying away any Negroes or other Property of the American Inhabitants" (9). There followed more than forty years of Anglo-American wrangling over how this language applied to the approximately 5 percent of slaves in southern colonies who had fled to freedom behind British lines. The United States demanded that these slaves be returned to their owners or that the aggrieved slaveholders be afforded fair monetary compensation. The British countered that they had the right to free any slaves who had come under their control during the war. After an indecisive effort at arbitration by Tsar Alexander of Russia in 1822, the matter was settled in 1826, when Great Britain agreed to pay \$1.2 million in compensation for the 3,061 slaves in question.

As Brady notes, this issue was at most a foreign policy "annoyance" for the British, but the United States considered Great Britain's concession a "significant foreign policy achievement" (29). The dogged U.S. pursuit of compensation under four slaveholding presidents and other policymakers, such as Benjamin Franklin and John Quincy Adams, both of whom were ambivalent about the institution, demonstrated the perceived importance of slavery to early American international interests and to the "messiness" engendered by the pursuit of those slavery-related interests. Despite the contemporary U.S. response, this matter hardly qualified as a critical foreign policy issue that decisively compromised the nation's unilateral preferences in the international realm.

The same could be argued about U.S. responses to the persistent British campaign after 1815 to suppress the Atlantic slave trade. Only by securing a multinational coalition could Britain hope to interdict the slave ships transporting Africans to the Western Hemisphere. Until 1862, the United States refused to grant Britain the right to stop and search ships sailing under the American flag. The United States stymied repeated British efforts to construct a cooperative and comprehensive multinational strategy for ending the inhumane transporting of enslaved people to the new world. By the 1830s, the southern political figures and allied northern Democrats who dominated the U.S. presidency and foreign policy until 1861 had also become concerned that British efforts to terminate the slave trade were part of a more general scheme to abolish slavery in the United States.

Colonization, or the U.S. attempt to settle freed Blacks in West Africa, further illustrates the importance of domestic slavery and the slave trade in the conduct of pre-Civil War U.S. foreign relations. Although important southerners such as Thomas Jefferson and James Madison had raised the possibility of resettling freed slaves outside the United States, the formation of the American Colonization Society (ACS) in 1815 seemed to provide an institutional mechanism for realizing this project. With the crucial assistance of the Monroe administration, the ACS launched the colony of Liberia in 1821 and sustained it over the subsequent decade.

While Liberia struggled as a private colony, the House Commerce Committee suggested in 1843 that the United States should more actively protect both Liberia and a neighboring, state-of-Maryland colonization site from encroachments by European merchants. This protection, the report suggested, might include making these entities an official "American colony" (101). No U.S. president took this step, nor was the United States willing to extend diplomatic recognition to Liberia after it declared its national independence in 1847. Liberia was not of sufficient economic or political importance to be made a colony, and no pre-Civil War, southern-dominated administration was prepared to extend recognition to a country populated by free Blacks.

Brady strongly buttresses the case for slavery as an important, ongoing influence on U.S. foreign relations with his informative treatment of the U.S. campaign to secure compensation for slaves freed by Britain during the American Revolution; the response to British initiatives to end the Atlantic slave trade and associated issues such as the *La Amistad* and *Creole* affairs; state laws in the American South restricting the rights and movement of free Afro-British sailors; and U.S. colonization projects. The U.S. response to these primarily Anglo-American disputes also reflected the nation's desire to conduct an independent foreign policy, even as slavery led to unwelcome international conflicts with European powers and their citizens.

To be sure, these slavery-related issues were sufficiently important to command attention from policymakers and to merit inclusion in a comprehensive history of slavery and U.S. foreign relations, but were they worthy of occupying approximately one-half of Brady's book? While tied to slavery and perceived as important by southern slaveholders and a U.S. government dominated by southerners and their northern allies, none of these matters threatened the actual existence of the institution within the United States. None imperiled the nation's economic prosperity or territorial expansion and integrity. None involved an outcome that would have altered the U.S. place in the international balance of power or involved decisions of war and peace. In short, they all paled in importance when compared to Brady's final three topics: U.S. policy toward Haiti, U.S. territorial expansion, and the American Civil War.

The revolution in Haiti presented the United States with an especially complex foreign policy challenge. It involved key U.S. commercial interests and balance of power relations with France and Great Britain. Since the Haitian uprising against colonial rule was also a slave rebellion, it rendered the U.S. response even more tortuous. This confluence of concerns, as Brady perceptively notes, yielded a "complicated, convoluted, and at times contradictory" set of U.S. policies (34).

The Washington administration sided with France, while seeking to preserve important trade with the island of Saint-Domingue and to forestall any possibility of this slave rebellion spreading to the United States. France failed to suppress the rebellion, however, and matters became even more muddled when Great Britain invaded the island in 1893, raising U.S. fears that the British might seize control of the colony and its valuable commerce. But by 1898, the Black revolutionaries and yellow fever had defeated the British. In the interim, the Adams administration, which had become embroiled in the Quasi-War with France in 1897, negotiated with Toussaint Louverture, the principal leader of the Black rebels, and provided him and his followers essential economic and military assistance in their battle against the French. U.S. strategic and commercial interests had taken precedence over deeply ingrained racial prejudice and the fear that American slaves might follow this violent Caribbean example.

That President Thomas Jefferson, a southern Republican slaveowner, continued his New England Federalist predecessor's functional alliance with the Black ex-slave rebels appeared even more surprising. Once more, U.S. trade with Saint-Domingue

and the desire to counter French power were decisive. But U.S. pursuit of empire and, as Brady's principal argument indicates, Jefferson's solicitude for slavery's wellbeing, were also crucial, collateral considerations.

Although the Caribbean example of a successful Black slave rebellion led by the impressive Louverture caused Jefferson great discomfort, the president was even more fearful of Napoleon Bonaparte's campaign to restore French control over Saint-Domingue and to link the island with Louisiana in a French imperial project. If successful, Napoleon's venture would have devastated the lucrative U.S. trade with the island and left a major European power in control of the Mississippi River and New Orleans. U.S. national security, economic prosperity, and the institution of slavery would have been imperiled.

To forestall these potential outcomes, the Jefferson administration continued U.S. trade with Louverture and his successor, Jean-Jacques Dessalines. This trade served as "the arsenal for the formerly enslaved Blacks" (59) and their successful war with France. National security, U.S. commerce, and imperial aspiration once again trumped race and slavery. Only after Black resistance and yellow fever had prevailed over the French, as they had the British, and Jefferson had successfully purchased Louisiana in 1803 did the United States resume its anti-Black, unambiguously proslavery position by refusing to recognize Haiti after the new nation adopted a new name and declared its status as an independent country in 1804. Although American slavery had influenced U.S. foreign policy responses in diverse ways, the institution had unquestionably been in the forefront of U.S. foreign policy regarding Haiti from 1791 through 1804 and would remain relevant through 1862.

The Louisiana Purchase exemplified Brady's fourth major theme—that the "desire to preserve and expand" (122) slavery was repeatedly tied to antebellum U.S. territorial expansion. After the Louisiana Purchase, the acquisition of Florida eliminated a refuge for runaway U.S. slaves. The annexation of Texas, the foremost achievement of what Matthew Karp has characterized as the "foreign policy of slavery," was partially motivated by apprehensions within the Tyler and Polk administrations that Britain sought to promote an independent, free territory and an alternative source of cotton on the U.S. border. This free-labor, cotton-producing nation would have threatened both the institution of slavery and the U.S. economy.

Brady also appropriately places slavery at the center of U.S.-Cuban policies after 1820. To avoid a British-dominated or independent, non-slave Cuba, U.S. leaders unsuccessfully sought to acquire the island from Spain via purchase or diplomatic pressure and acquiesced in violent, private filibustering expeditions originating in the United States. Slaveholders also coveted Cuba as an additional slave state that would have helped to preserve the South's influence in the Senate, as Florida and Texas had done.

Brady contends that the proslavery goal of expanding U.S. territory south into the Caribbean perished as the North-South battle over the New West intensified in the mid-1850s. "In pursuing expansion of slavery westward," he writes, southerners "thwarted their best chance for American expansion to the South," thereby losing a "golden opportunity" (150). Brady has also missed a golden opportunity by not including U.S.-Native American interactions in his analysis of U.S. foreign relations and by not examining how the imperial seizure of Indian lands was inextricably tied to the expansion of slavery, to the construction of the "Cotton Kingdom" across the Deep South, and to the globalization of the pre-Civil War American economy.

After 1787, white Americans built an empire by expanding westward, and the South was "the most imperialistically minded U.S. region." This imperial process led to foreign policy conflicts with Britain, France, and Spain, but it especially victimized

Mexicans and Native Americans. Brian DeLay has argued persuasively that "U.S. relations with native polities was more than a dark prelude to or a formative context for U.S. empire. This was U.S. empire." Those relations, he added, should certainly be included as a part of U.S. foreign relations. More than twice as many American Indians lived in the South as in the North in 1815, and southern seizure of Indian lands via force and treaties over the ensuing five decades set the tone for U.S.-Indian relations. Indian removal, in which Andrew Jackson, a southerner, played a central role, cleared the way for the construction of the slavery-based Cotton Kingdom in the Deep South and therefore deserves greater attention.

The cotton economy and the region's "sectionally defined economic agenda" were dependent upon continually acquiring additional territory and additional slaves for cotton cultivation. Exporting raw cotton was the engine of the pre-Civil War economy, and the search for markets drove a free-trade agenda, propelled U.S. global commercial involvement, and led slaveholders to demand the resumption of the international slave trade in the 1850s—a demand that Brady fails to address.

Until the 1850s, additions to this burgeoning U.S. empire consistently benefited the South and its slave-based political economy. The northern opposition to this pro-South, pro-slavery imperial dynamic after 1846, the rise of the free-soil, anti-slave Republican Party, Lincoln's election in 1860, and the South's loss of control over U.S. foreign relations and the power to protect slavery led to the Civil War, Brady's final area of emphasis.

Brady skillfully draws on an extensive literature to trace the role of slavery in Civil War foreign relations. He concludes that "slavery . . . was not the primary determinant" (179) of the Union's decisive campaign to forestall European diplomatic or military intervention in the American conflict. Still, fighting a war to defend slavery left the South at a distinct foreign policy disadvantage, one that the Confederacy could never overcome. As Brady demonstrates, President Lincoln and Secretary of State William H. Seward were slow to employ the North's opposition to slavery as a foreign policy asset. For the first year of the war, they emphasized that the North fought to preserve the Union rather than to abolish slavery. This allowed the South to argue that it had seceded in search of liberty and independence instead of battling to preserve an institution that most Europeans deemed inhumane and evil.

Lincoln and Seward realigned this foreign policy stance in 1862 by signing an anti-slave trade treaty with Great Britain, extending diplomatic recognition to Haiti and Liberia, and, most importantly, issuing the Emancipation Proclamation. Although the foreign policy impact of the proclamation did not become fully clear until early 1863, European policymakers could no longer deny that the North sought to end slavery and the South to preserve it. This realization, and the recognition that there was no way to reconcile the North and South on the fate of slavery, were critical considerations when Britain and France declined to intervene in the American conflict in the fall of 1862. Brady has amplified this assessment of slavery's role in Civil War diplomacy with provocative sections examining the opinions of Russian liberal intellectuals regarding slavery and the war and Lincoln's ongoing interest in the colonization of freed Blacks.

I have no quarrel with the contention that Lincoln and Seward were dilatory in moving the abolish of slavery to the forefront of U.S. foreign policy; however, there remain opportunities for greater explanation and clarity. Once more, Union and Confederate diplomatic overtures to Native Americans, especially the South's offer to help Indians reclaim their lands and to retain slavery, warrant at least a brief examination. Similarly, the inclusion of U.S.-Indian relations during the Gilded Age would buttress Brady's discussion of race and American empire in the postwar era.

Brady concludes his chapter on the Civil War by asserting that the “edge” the Lincoln administration gained from its opposition to slavery “was less a result of its own skillful diplomacy than it was an unforced error” (179) on the part of the Confederacy. Some scholars would give Lincoln and Seward much greater credit for their successful foreign policies. Moreover, what was the South’s “unforced error”? Was it the Confederacy’s defense of and persistent effort to expand slavery, which the region considered essential to its honor, economy, and political viability, and could hardly have been expected to abandon? Or did Jefferson Davis and his government commit other more specific foreign policy missteps?

In summary, Brady’s well-researched examination of slavery’s relation to antebellum U.S. foreign relations is a valuable contribution to our understanding of the history of pre-Civil War U.S. foreign relations, and he has unquestionably achieved his objective of writing an informative, accessible synthesis of this topic. His primary arguments and conclusions are sound and useful, and his narrative promotes our understanding of the relation of slavery to complicated and controversial issues such as the Haitian Revolution, the international slave trade, U.S. westward expansion, and the American Civil War. That said, his book could be improved by the inclusion of U.S.-Indian relations, by a more nuanced view of the South’s and slavery’s role in the forging of the nation’s imperial expansion across the continent, and by more clearly linking the subsequent relationship of the Cotton Kingdom and slavery to U.S. trade policy, commercial globalization, and demands for resumption of the international slave trade.

#### Notes:

1. Matthew Karp, *This Vast Southern Empire: Slaveholders at the Helm of American Foreign Policy* (Cambridge, UK, 2016), 7, 100.

2. Robert E. May, “The Irony of Confederate Diplomacy: Visions of Empire, the Monroe Doctrine, and the Quest for Nationhood,” *Journal of Southern History* 83 (February 2017): 100.

3. Brian DeLay, “Indian Politics, Empire, and the History of American Foreign Relations,” *Diplomatic History* 39, no. 5 (November 2015): 927–42 (quote on p. 935). See also Arthur N. Gilbert, “The American Indian and United States Diplomatic History,” *History Teacher* 8 (February 1975): 229–41.

4. For a succinct account of the South’s central role in Indian removal from 1815 through 1875, see Joseph A. Fry, *Dixie Looks Abroad: The South and U.S. Foreign Relations, 1789–1973* (Baton Rouge, LA, 2003), 44–49.

5. Brian Schoen, *Fragile Fabric of Union: Cotton, Federal Politics, and the Global Origins of the Civil War* (Baltimore, 2009), 178 (quote). See also Walter Johnson, *River of Dark Dreams: Slavery and Empire in the Cotton South* (Cambridge, UK, 2013); Adam Rothman, *Slave Country: American Expansion and the Origins of the Deep South* (Cambridge, UK, 2005); and Steven Hahn, *A Nation Without Borders: The United States and Its World in an Age of Civil Wars, 1830–1910* (New York, 2015).

6. Howard Jones, *Blue and Gray Diplomacy: A History of Union and Confederate Foreign Relations* (Chapel Hill, NC, 2010); Kevin Perno, *Lincoln in the World: The Making of a Statesman and the Dawn of American Power* (New York, 2013); Walter Stahr, *Seward: Lincoln’s Indispensable Man* (New York, 2012).

#### Review of Steven J. Brady, *Chained to History: Slavery and US Foreign Relations to 1865*

Michael E. Woods

In his epic history of America’s slaveholding class, Senator Henry Wilson explained “the key to the mysteries of American diplomacy.” Torn between the noble ideals of the Declaration of Independence and the demands of a formidable southern oligarchy, the country’s foreign policy veered wildly. “The nation attempted the impossible feat of moving at once in opposite directions,” argued the Massachusetts Republican, “personating on the same stage, at the same time, the angel of liberty and the demon of slavery.”<sup>1</sup>

Writing a century and a half later, Steven J. Brady offers

an accessible overview of slavery and U.S. foreign policy that resonates with Wilson’s analysis. Brady, who has published extensively on the full sweep of U.S. diplomatic history, moves briskly from the Treaty of Paris (1783) to the end of the Civil War in 1865. The first two chapters cover Anglo-American conflict over enslaved people emancipated during the Revolutionary War and the War of 1812, U.S. wrangling with Spain over Florida as a haven for self-liberated freedpeople, and the multilateral diplomacy surrounding the Haitian Revolution. Chapters 3 and 4 focus on issues of movement and mobility, including Atlantic slave trade suppression, Liberian colonization, South Carolina’s infamous Negro Seamen Act, and controversies over transnational slave escapes, including the Creole case of 1841. The final two chapters pivot into the late antebellum and war years: chapter 5 analyzes U.S. expansion schemes in Texas and Cuba, while chapter 6 surveys U.S. and Confederate diplomacy during the Civil War.

Brady covers a lot of ground in 184 pages of text, but he never loses sight of the book’s main theses. At the most basic level, *Chained to History* argues that slavery decisively shaped pre-1865 U.S. foreign policy—an important point, but not one likely to spark much debate. More striking are Brady’s arguments about the nature of slavery’s effects on American diplomacy. First, he posits that slavery drew American policymakers into recurrent overseas entanglements that thwarted their desire to limit engagement with Europe and maintain a unilateralist stance. Second, he links slavery to several foreign policy failures. Far more than a litany of victories by belligerently cosmopolitan proslavery diplomats, Brady’s narrative emphasizes uneasy commitments, uncertain maneuvers, and unfinished business.

From its vacillating relations with Haiti, to its halting cooperation with Britain’s campaign to quell the slave trade, to the decidedly mixed results of its expansionist adventures in Texas and Cuba, the U.S. foreign policy establishment presented here resembles the Janus-faced creature described by Senator Wilson. Were American policymakers determined to defend slavery as a national priority? Absolutely. Did they have the luxury of ignoring other issues, choosing all their battles, or bending the world to their will? Certainly not.

Brady offers *Chained to History* as both a synthesis of previous scholarship and a call for more research. Refreshingly, he eschews any claim to definitiveness, and I share his hope for a flurry of new works in the field. I am less convinced, however, that the extant literature on slavery and U.S. diplomacy is quite as “meager” (219) as Brady suggests. Indeed, the need for a good synthesis—like this book—is evidence of the field’s vibrancy. Slavery and foreign policy scholarship might shrink in comparison to the mountain of material on the Cold War, but even a glance at Brady’s footnotes reveals the robustness of a literature that he knows well, cites generously, and quotes often.

Specialists will readily identify the key works integrated into Brady’s analysis: Deborah A. Rosen and Matthew J. Clavin on Florida; Tim Matthewson and Ashli White on the Haitian Revolution; Eric Burin on colonization; Matthew Karp on the expansionist moment of the early 1840s; Frederick Merk, Randolph B. Campbell, and Donald M. Pletcher on Texas annexation; Robert E. May on Caribbean filibustering; and Howard Jones and Don H. Doyle on Civil War diplomacy, to name just a few. Thus, *Chained to History* is a noteworthy achievement less for breaking new ground than for crisply synthesizing a flourishing literature.

Every synthesis becomes a new thesis, and Brady offers much to ponder in his thoughtful engagement with other scholars. He questions previous depictions of proslavery American diplomats as supremely confident, arguing that they were driven at least as much by fear as by feelings of global mastery (3). And he weighs in on several important debates, including the one on U.S. relations with Haiti. Brady stresses the importance of trade as well as slavery in shaping American policy, and for significant continuity between the John Adams and Thomas Jefferson administrations’ handling of Haitian affairs (40–41, 51–60). Brady’s critically engaged synthesis reminds us that one need not fill a yawning historiographical void in order to make a



meaningful contribution.

*Chained to History* materially advances the field by flagging topics for further study, identifying areas for productive debate, and developing emerging themes. One strength is the multilingual source base of Brady's original research. Particularly noteworthy is the use of Dutch and Russian documents that enable his analysis of Civil War diplomacy to transcend the usual focus on Britain and France. Another highlight is Brady's careful attention to the limits of U.S. power. Undoubtedly informed by current events—U.S. global clout looked very different in, say, August 2021 than in March 2003 or December 1991—this theme appears in other recent studies, most notably Daniel J. Burge's reinterpretation of the failures of Manifest Destiny.<sup>2</sup>

Brady traces several types of connections between slavery and foreign policy failure. One category includes overtly proslavery endeavors, such as the effort to acquire Cuba, which fizzled out. Another encompasses policies, including some antislavery measures, which faltered in the face of hostility from American officials who worried about destabilizing slavery at home. Belated participation in the Panama Congress and the severely circumscribed naval campaign against Atlantic slave trading, among others, belong to this group. Brady's nuanced analysis, therefore, shows how slavery stifled some of the nation's best impulses, even as some of its most brazen proslavery adventures also fell short of their intended mark.

Brady's attention to how slavery intertwined with other concerns adds additional depth to the analysis. Of course, he emphasizes slavery's significance, particularly in cases where American officials tried to downplay it, as some did with Texas annexation. But American leaders could not afford to be single-minded about slavery. Nowhere is this more strikingly clear than in Brady's intriguing account of early U.S. relations with Haiti. Haunted by the specter of Black revolt and harboring racism that crossed sectional lines, U.S. policymakers also knew that Sainte Domingue had been their country's second-largest trading partner before 1791 (35). Thus, apprehensions of losing a lucrative market mingled with more obvious anxieties to produce the shifting U.S. response to the complex geopolitics of the Haitian revolutionary era. This response included Adams's armed support for Toussaint Louverture's attack on Jacmel (51) and Jefferson's decision to help sustain Haitian resistance to Napoleonic invasion (59).

Incidentally, while Brady focuses on the Washington, Adams, and Jefferson years, racist dread and material desire continued to perplex U.S. policymakers throughout the long decades of official non-recognition. In 1835, for instance, commercial agent William Miles wrote gingerly to warn that Haiti's discriminatory tariff duties, imposed in retaliation for non-recognition, would soon drive American merchants out of the market. "I am perfectly aware of the delicacy of the question," Miles insisted, but he feared that "the entire trade will be soon lost."<sup>3</sup> In the age of Jackson and beyond, American diplomats saw in Haiti both a nation of Nat Turners and a pool of potential customers.

Finally, Brady offers keen insight into the tension between early policymakers' unilateralist instincts and the pressures, stemming from slavery, to engage in the international arena. From the precarious plantation society perched just offshore in Cuba, to the colonizationist outpost planted in Liberia, slavery pulled American diplomats deeper into a world dominated by the same European powers that Washington and Jefferson exhorted them to keep at arm's length. Some of the stated aversion to entangling alliances was likely a matter of rhetorical habit, but Brady shows how, particularly in the earliest years of the early republic, slavery intensified Americans' involvement overseas while simultaneously setting limits on what they could achieve. It has become a truism that U.S. enslavers were more cosmopolitan than scholars once believed; Brady shows that their encounters with the wider world were not always optional, comfortable, or

successful.

Future scholars might sharpen these insights by framing their analysis more precisely around the people who drew the U.S. diplomatic corps into world affairs. In *Chained to History*, "slavery" exerts a vital influence, but this institutional focus can obscure human agency and limit opportunities to explore in greater depth how different groups of people actually shaped diplomacy as they navigated the treacherous waters of the Atlantic world. Brady's coverage of the Creole case and the protracted Anglo-American disputes over wartime emancipation, for instance, could be recast as an analysis of enslaved people's ability to influence foreign affairs by taking flight and forging transnational communities.

This is hardly an unexplored issue. Scholars like Alice Baumgartner, Elena Abbott, and dann J. Brody, among others, have shown that enslaved people influenced international politics by escaping toward all points of the compass.<sup>4</sup> But greater attention to this dynamic would strengthen Brady's synthesis and perhaps inspire more research. Several generations of scholars have shown how enslaved people's resistance influenced politics within the United States. As we learn more about the diplomatic ramifications of such resistance, it is time to take stock of what we know and where we need to look next.

Similarly, more attention to pressure from U.S. enslavers who did not hold public office would also help flesh out the human agency that made slavery such a vexing issue in American foreign policy. Like many scholars before him, Brady shows how the prevalence of enslavers among U.S. officials, from Washington and Jefferson to Tyler and Upshur and beyond, kept the interests of their class at the forefront of American policymaking. Yet the influence of domestic politics and enslavers' insidious sway over internal political discourse, agenda-setting, and electoral arithmetic is not always clear here. When it does appear, Brady's analysis is excellent, as in his coverage of how John Quincy Adams, a secretary of state engaged in a fierce battle for the presidency in 1824, backed away from an Anglo-American anti-slave trade agreement that included the

mutual right of search on the high seas (77). Future research should investigate how enslavers and their allies organized and mobilized at all levels to promote specific policies designed to safeguard slavery against perceived international threats.

Historians typically interpret the "slave power" as a horizontal network of officeholders, and thanks to scholars like William Dushinberre, we know how their material and ideological interests informed their politics.<sup>5</sup> But what about the vertical networks of power and pressure through which enslavers, particularly in places like Texas and Florida, on the South's exposed flanks, sought to influence policy at the highest levels of government? The politics of enslavers and enslaved alike were forged in the gritty struggles over subsistence, labor, and mobility that they waged in fields, forests, and swamps across the South. We are beginning to learn how those struggles impinged on the highest levels of international politics. The best way to access those diplomatic histories is to focus on the people who had the most at stake in the outcome.

In *Chained to History*, Steven J. Brady offers a valuable synthesis of a flourishing field whose future is bright. Attuned to slavery's central role in shaping the modern world and accustomed to tracing stories that cross international lines, scholars are poised to expand the vibrant literature on slavery and U.S. diplomacy that Brady has woven into this volume. Additional work on the themes Brady has highlighted, and productive debate over the arguments he has presented, will sustain the field's vitality and enhance our insights into the diplomatic history of the nineteenth century's largest slaveholding republic.

Notes:

1. Henry Wilson, *History of the Rise and Fall of the Slave Power in America*, 3 vols. (Boston, 1872), 1:111.
2. Daniel J. Burge, *A Failed Vision of Empire: The Collapse of Manifest Destiny*,



1845–1872 (Lincoln, NE, 2022).

3. William Miles to John Forsyth, December 9, 1835, RG 59, *Despatches from U.S. Consuls in Aux Cayes, Haiti, 1797–1874*, National Archives and Records Administration, Washington, DC (T330-1).

4. Alice Baumgartner, *South to Freedom: Runaway Slaves to Mexico and the Road to the Civil War* (New York, 2020); Elena K. Abbott, *Beacons of Liberty: International Free Soil and the Fight for Racial Justice in Antebellum America* (Cambridge, UK, 2021); dann J. Broylod, *Borderland Blacks: Two Cities in the Niagara Region during the Final Decades of Slavery* (Baton Rouge, LA, 2022).

5. William Dusinger, *Slavemaster President: The Double Career of James Polk* (Oxford, UK, 2003).

## Review of Steven J. Brady, *Chained to History: Slavery and US Foreign Relations to 1865*

Stacey Smith

In *Chained to History*, Steven J. Brady presents a detailed account of how the institution of slavery and the international slave trade shaped U.S. foreign relations with Europe in the Atlantic World from the end of the American Revolution to the end of the U.S. Civil War. As a historian of slavery and enslaved people in the United States, I likely approached his work from a perspective different from that of U.S. foreign relations scholars. I came to the book hoping to get a better understanding of how enslaved and formerly enslaved people themselves influenced the course of American diplomacy.

In the realm of nineteenth-century U.S. political and legal history, scholars have been increasingly interested in the role that enslaved people, not just the institution of slavery, played in pushing the nation toward sectional division and war. As Scott Hancock has eloquently argued in an article on the Underground Railroad's impact on the Civil War, it is essential "to recenter agency by seeing slaves themselves—not just the institution of slavery—as a critical causal force." Hancock concludes that by escaping north to the free states, and thereby constantly pressing the issue of slavery into public discourse and into the state and federal courts, "Black people, not simply slavery, pushed the nation to war."<sup>1</sup>

Could a similar argument be made for understanding the origin of the United States' tense diplomatic relationships with Europe, especially Great Britain, before the Civil War? To what extent did enslaved people—men, women, and children who pursued their own visions of freedom—drive U.S. relationships with the rest of the world in the first critical century of the nation's existence? While older literature on U.S. foreign relations rarely addressed the enslaved, the field's more recent emphasis on non-state actors as important participants in the making of international diplomacy seems to open the way for exploring these questions.

Overall, *Chained to History* presents some tantalizing arguments about how enslaved people shaped U.S. foreign relations, but it also leaves some important avenues unexamined. It is clear from Brady's narrative that enslaved people's resistance was a driving force behind many of the issues that vexed American and European diplomats in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. The first chapter demonstrates how enslaved African Americans' decisions to run away to the British, both during the American Revolution and during the War of 1812, forced the two nations into tense wrangling over the fate of freedom seekers. As Brady's expert retelling shows, the question of whether Britain would have to return enslaved fugitives "carried off" by British forces or at least compensate American slaveholders for their losses emerged as one of "the most refractory and unsettled issues" (9) at the negotiations over the Treaty of Paris in 1783. Similarly, the status of escaped slaves "posed a seemingly insoluble irritant in postwar Anglo-American

relations" after the War of 1812 (18).

Brady's second chapter on the Haitian Revolution goes the farthest in incorporating enslaved people as central actors in the diplomatic history of the Atlantic World. Brady deftly analyzes how "self-emancipated" slaves, including the Haitian general Toussaint Louverture, reshaped global relationships by playing the Adams and Jefferson administrations off against European governments in London, Paris, and Madrid. One of Brady's most interesting insights is that the Jefferson administration, though led by a slaveholder, built an unexpectedly cooperative relationship with Black Haitians in order to stave off French influence in the Caribbean. The power dynamics behind the Louisiana Purchase take on new meaning when it becomes clear that Thomas Jefferson, rather than enjoying an unexpected political windfall from the Haitian Revolution, deliberately aided Black Haitian rebels in resisting French rule.

While not often explicitly focused on the actions of people of African descent, Brady's chapters on the suppression of the African slave trade suggest the importance of enslaved Black resistance to reordering international relations in the Atlantic World. Building on the work of Irvin D.S. Winsboro and Joe Knetsch, Brady illuminates the diplomatic significance of the "Saltwater Railroad," a clandestine network of Black freedom seekers who fled Florida by sailing to the British Bahamas, where slavery was abolished in 1834.<sup>2</sup>

British authorities refused to return individual African American refugees who sailed to freedom, even when these people were escapees from the U.S. domestic slave trade. In 1841, slave traders shipped 135 enslaved people from Virginia to New Orleans on *The Creole*. Nineteen people mutinied, killed a slaveholding passenger, overpowered the crew, and forced the ship to sail to freedom in the Bahamas. Americans demanded the extradition of the enslaved people so that they could be tried for murder and insurrection, but British authorities resisted all such demands.

Brady convincingly argues that the *Creole* incident and escape via the Saltwater Railroad were "a testament to the compelling appeal of freedom and the ingenuity of slave resistance" (93) and had both national and international significance. British refusal to return freedom seekers to bondage deepened sectional divides in the United States, as Southern slaveholders clamored for the federal government to extract compensation for lost "property." Meanwhile, white Americans' outrage over the *Creole* incident threatened to undermine delicate Anglo-American diplomatic negotiations leading up to the Webster-Ashburton Treaty of 1842. Much like enslaved people who ran to the northern states via the Underground Railroad, those along the Saltwater Railroad forced a confrontation between the British and American legal systems that threatened to unravel diplomatic relations between the nations.

In short, there is much that is suggestive about Brady's book for our understanding of how enslaved people reshaped and even undermined American diplomacy through their own acts of resistance. At the same time, there are two areas where inattention to enslaved people, especially to freedom seekers, obscures important threads of U.S. foreign policy on slavery. These areas include diplomatic relations between nations located in continental North America and the diplomatic crisis over Confederate nationhood.

One important blind spot in *Chained to History* stems from Brady's fairly exclusive focus on transatlantic foreign policy and relations among diplomats in Washington, DC, London, Paris, Madrid, and (occasionally) the British West Indies. Foreign policy in continental North America gets far less attention, which in turn leads Brady to overlook some of the key ways that fugitives from slavery shaped American diplomacy.

Long before the 1841 *Creole* incident, thousands of refugees

from slavery sought freedom in British Canada. At least as early as the 1814 Treaty of Ghent, which ended the War of 1812, British colonial officials in Canada refused to extradite fugitive slaves on the grounds that the 1772 *Somerset* decision liberated them once they touched free British soil. British courts and diplomats persisted in this policy for decades, even as escapes along the Underground Railroad increased and Southern slaveholders demanded that the U.S. federal government press Britain for reparations.

As Gordon S. Barker has shown, free and formerly enslaved African Americans were important participants in this diplomatic rivalry, not only as refugees from slavery and rescuers of those refugees but as vocal proponents of British interests in North America against the United States.<sup>3</sup> Moreover, the tense negotiations over the Webster-Ashburton Treaty emerged in part because of escapes via the Saltwater Railroad but also, more significantly, because of the highly publicized cases of thousands of Black people who fled slavery for freedom in Canada. More attention to the diplomatic impacts of freedom seekers as North American border crossers would allow for a more complete rendering of Anglo-American international relations in this period. It would also highlight the importance of enslaved people's resistance to this story.

Similarly, the role of enslaved people as southern border crossers, as refugees seeking freedom in the Republic of Mexico, could illuminate new dimensions of slavery diplomacy. Scholars such as Alice Baumgartner and Sarah Cornell have documented how the escape of between three and five thousand enslaved people from the United States to Mexico in the first half of the nineteenth century had profound consequences for American foreign policy.<sup>4</sup>

In her book, *South to Freedom: Runaway Slaves to Mexico and the Road to Civil War*, Baumgartner finds that Mexico, despite its internal political instability and territorial losses to the United States, was not a weak national power. Mexico's abolition of slavery starting in the 1820s, and later, its policy of liberating all slaves who reached Mexican soil, gave it the moral upper hand in continental affairs. In fact, the abolition of slavery in Mexico, including the territories that the United States seized in the U.S.-Mexico War, frustrated later proslavery efforts to establish African American bondage in the West and also fueled the Free Soil movement.

In all fairness, Baumgardner's compelling account of enslaved people's role in U.S.-Mexico diplomacy was probably published too recently (in 2020) for her insights to be incorporated into Brady's 2022 book. Still, her findings suggest that more attention to Mexico and southbound fugitives from slavery would have rounded out the mostly transatlantic and often Anglo-centric analysis in *Chained to History*.

The second area where attending more to the role of freedom seekers would improve the analysis is the final chapter on Civil War diplomacy. Here the omission of enslaved people seems a major oversight, because virtually all Civil War historians now put refugees from slavery at the heart of the story of U.S. wartime politics. The liberation and arming of enslaved Black Southerners repeated patterns established by the British during the American Revolution and the War of 1812. This time, too, enslaved people pushed themselves and their desires for freedom onto the agendas of world powers.

It is well established that the massive flight of around half a million slaves drove congressional and presidential policy toward slavery, from the Confiscation Acts to the Emancipation Proclamation to the Thirteenth Amendment. It is hard to imagine U.S. diplomacy with Europe having the outcome that it did—non-recognition of the Confederacy—without the pressures that hundreds of thousands of self-liberated slaves placed on the Lincoln administration, the U.S. military, and the federal legal system. The focus on high-ranking politicians and diplomats, with barely a nod to the grassroots African American freedom movement that made national emancipation possible in the first place, makes this last chapter the least satisfying in the book.

Ultimately, *Chained to History* is a useful and thought-

provoking source for historians of slavery who want to understand the role of enslaved people in world affairs. While Brady rarely elevates enslaved people to their rightful place as important players on the world stage alongside American and European diplomats, his analysis hints at the ways in which Black people themselves—as refugees from slavery, plantation rebels, slave-ship mutineers, and soldiers in liberating armies—remade the diplomatic landscape of the Atlantic World in the nineteenth century.

Notes:

1. Scott Hancock, "Crossing Freedom's Fault Line: The Underground Railroad and Recentring African Americans in Civil War Causality," *Civil War History* 59 (June 2013): 173–74.
2. Irvin D.S. Winsboro and Joe Knetsch, "Florida Slaves, the 'Saltwater Railroad' to the Bahamas, and Anglo-American Diplomacy," *Journal of Southern History* 79 (February 2013): 51–78.
3. Gordon S. Barker, "Revisiting 'British Principle Talk': Antebellum Black Expectations and Racism in Early Ontario," in *Fugitive Slaves and Spaces of Freedom in North America*, ed. Damian Alan Pargas (Gainesville, FL, 2018), 34–69.
4. Alice L. Baumgartner, *South to Freedom: Runaway Slaves to Mexico and the Road to the Civil War* (New York, 2020); and Sarah Cornell, "Citizens of Nowhere: Fugitive Slaves and Free African Americans in Mexico, 1833–1857," *Journal of American History* 100 (September 2013): 351–74.

## Author's Response

Steven Brady

I would like to start by thanking Joseph A. Fry, Brian Rouleau, Michael E. Woods, and Stacey Smith for their insightful reviews of *Chained to History*. Having contributed reviews to roundtables myself, I know very well how much effort is involved in the process, and I am truly grateful that these scholars have undertaken such heavy lifting in the case of my book. I would also like to express my gratitude to Andrew Johns for choosing *Chained to History* for a roundtable discussion. I find these exchanges highly valuable, and I look forward eagerly to finding *Passport* in my departmental mailbox each quarter. Many and sincere thanks to all.

In order to respond to the most significant question that arises in the reviews—to wit, the contribution of the book to the scholarship—I should first give some background on how I came to the topic of slavery and U.S. foreign relations. As with much of my scholarly work these days, the genesis of *Chained to History* can be found in my experiences teaching undergraduates. I have for many years offered a course on American foreign policy from the American Revolution to the Cold War. It struck me early on that slavery was such a major factor in so much of America's domestic history that it must also have been a factor in U.S. relations with the world. Naturally I decided that I needed to add something on slavery and U.S. foreign relations to my syllabus.

However, in seeking readings to assign, I was struck by the absence of a single synthetic work on the topic. I distinctly recall thinking to myself that "someone ought to write a book on this!" And then I promptly moved on to other projects. When Don Fehrenbacher's magisterial study of the U.S. government and slavery appeared in 2001, his chapter on foreign policy finally gave me a very useful, short reading to assign to my students. But Fehrenbacher's book made me even more convinced that a book-length study was necessary, so important did he make the issue of slavery and U.S. foreign relations seem. I still thought that the hypothetical "someone" ought to write that book.

After a couple of other projects I had planned to work on were "scooped" by other scholars, I finally alighted on the idea that perhaps I should take on this (rather daunting) task. I started by going back to Fehrenbacher. My approach to diplomatic history has always relied on an internationalist methodology. Inspired early in my career by such luminaries as Robert Ferrell, Michael Hunt, and Christopher Thorne, as well as a host of German international historians, I have approached American foreign policy by placing it in a broader international context, looking at whatever is necessary, in whatever language, to understand all the factors that had a part in shaping the policies that emerged from complex international interactions.



In looking again at Fehrenbacher, and then others, what struck me was the tendency to explain the foreign relations of American slavery largely by addressing factors in domestic U.S. history that led to policy developments. My plan was thus to internationalize the study of slavery and U.S. foreign relations: to look at the ways in which the interests, power, and actions of other nations shaped and constrained the results of policy decisions taken by the United States.

The book certainly contributes discrete new knowledge. For instance, I believe the discussion of the Russian reaction to emancipation in chapter 6 is a new addition to the scholarship. But the framing is a unique intervention. Internationalizing the subject, to my mind, makes a significant contribution to the debate (*pace* some of the reviewers in this roundtable). I believe that I make this point early and clearly in the book; I certainly made no effort to hide it. In the introduction, I state that “an international history . . . serves significantly to illustrate the reasons for the inability of the slaveholders who so frequently directed American foreign relations to implement some of their cherished policies, and to impose their will on the world beyond America’s borders” (4).

In the epilogue, I make the case for the book’s contribution at least as strongly, noting that “the international relations that emerged [from the foreign relations of slavery] cannot be understood merely by looking at the prejudices, interests and assumptions of a certain set of policymakers. Rather, the international context significantly conditioned the American policies that emerged from a complex set of Atlantic interrelations” (181–82). In the pages between the introduction and the epilogue, I sought to demonstrate the ways in which international relations, and not just U.S. foreign policy, are key to understanding the history addressed in the book.

This theme serves as more than a mere leitmotif in *Chained to History*. It is in fact at the very heart of the book. Whether the book is convincing in its effort to internationalize its subject I must leave to its readers. But whether it succeeds or fails, *Chained to History* analyses the foreign relations of U.S. slavery from a perspective broader than the domestic determinants of those relations and thus helps to clarify the actual *results* of American attempts to conduct a foreign policy of slavery. This point is almost completely passed over in the reviews, though I am grateful to Woods for pointing out the multilingual source base of my research and the contributions that it enabled me to make. Because I am hopeful that *Chained to History* will inspire further scholarship, I end this section of my response with an adjuration to other scholars to keep the international context in mind: there is still much work to be done.

The second thrust of the reviews centers not on the book that I have written, but on a book that I have not. I will stipulate at the start of my response to this point that there is much that is not in *Chained to History*. One of the goals of the book was to keep it at a length that would make it a candidate for course adoption. That obliged me to make decisions about what to include in the book and what to leave out. Any decision for additional inclusions would require cutting other sections down or indeed, out. My sense when I finished the manuscript was that I had been largely successful in weighing this matter. I understand, however, that scholars approaching the issue of slavery and U.S. foreign relations from perspectives different from mine would have made different choices. Such is book writing.

Since Smith focuses her review on what is not in the book, I begin with a response to her review. Her primary concern is “how enslaved and formerly enslaved people themselves influenced the course of American diplomacy.” She grants that the book does address this issue in some cases and gives its treatment of the Saltwater Railroad and Haiti as examples. I agree with her suggestion that a treatment of escapees to Canada “would allow for a more complete rendering of Anglo-American international relations in this period.”

Similarly, Smith writes that an examination of slaves who escaped to Mexico would have added to the treatment of their agency. She is, alas, correct in her suspicion that Alice Baumgartner’s impressive book on this topic appeared too late for inclusion in the final manuscript. I grant that if I had had access to Baumgartner’s book prior to completing

the manuscript, I no doubt would have made more of the matter. As it is, I sought to address this issue in my treatment of the annexation of Texas. No doubt I could have done more. But as interesting as additional discussion of Mexico would have been, it is difficult to see how it would have altered the book’s thrust and conclusions in any significant way. In the end, an author with a word limit must make decisions. Again, I concede that mine would not be everyone else’s.

My response to Fry’s suggestions falls along the same lines. According to him, I missed a “golden opportunity” by failing to address the issue of Native Americans and Southern expansionism. I agree that this is indeed a terrific topic. But I believe that it is one for a different book—one that has as its primary theme the question of American expansion and its interrelations with the issue of American slavery. I would eagerly read such a book, but I didn’t seek to write it. It is a massive subject that goes beyond the scope of a book that focuses—for weal or woe—primarily on Atlantic history. In any event, as I noted about Smith’s suggestions, I don’t see how inclusion of this topic would have altered the book’s main arguments or conclusions.

Rouleau raises a key—and fascinating—question about the definition of slavery itself. Regrettably, there were indeed bonded labor systems beyond those I address. But selecting a topic for a scholarly book necessarily raises the question of what to focus on. Obviously, I

Rouleau raises a key—and fascinating—question about the definition of slavery itself. Regrettably, there were indeed bonded labor systems beyond those I address. But selecting a topic for a scholarly book necessarily raises the question of what to focus on. Obviously, I chose to look at the chattel enslavement of people of African descent. I don’t consider this a bad definition to work with.

I chose to look at the chattel enslavement of people of African descent. I don’t consider this a bad definition to work with. As Rouleau observes at the very beginning of his review, *Chained to History* “channels the spirit of the 1619 Project.” Of course, I began working on the book several years before I became aware of that project. But I was thrilled when Nikole Hannah-Jones and company produced a work that attempted, in Rouleau’s words, to “reorient the master narrative of U.S. history around Black bondage.” It was clear to me that my project and theirs were intellectual

cousins.

My scope and argument are, of course, more limited than the 1619 Project’s, since I address only foreign relations and seek to portray slavery as a highly significant but not always dominant determinant of American policy. I fear that I repeat myself when I say that I would eagerly anticipate a book that addresses bonded labor more broadly as an aspect of U.S. diplomatic history. But this seems a massive topic to address in a book about Black slavery.

As I noted, Rouleau begins his review with a very apt mention of the 1619 Project. Woods starts off with an equally relevant quotation, unfamiliar to me until now, from Henry Wilson. Wilson’s analysis indeed reflects much of what I sought to do in *Chained to History*. I take Woods’s recommendations for future directions in the scholarship seriously, and I think they are excellent. Especially intriguing is the idea of investigating “vertical networks of power and pressure” that influenced slaveholders and their northern allies “at the highest levels of power.” Likewise, and relating back to Smith’s comments, more study of the agency of the enslaved will contribute to our understanding of slavery’s connection with U.S. diplomatic history. In other words, I agree with Woods that a “focus on the *people* who had the most at stake in the outcome” of policy decisions is warranted.

I should mention a final point on what could be added and thus what future scholars might consider rich fields to plow. The reviewers have suggested further *domestic* U.S. avenues of investigation. If I had had a greater word limit for the book, I would have liked to include even more about policies, and policymaking, in those countries that, interacting with the United States, influenced, constrained, and impelled the American foreign policy of slavery. It strikes me that there is more to be done by scholars possessing appropriate language skills, as well as training in, say, the history of Russia or Latin America. In this, I am of course admitting another limitation of *Chained to History*, though I believe that the book does a rather good job of internationalizing the story as it is.

## Call for Proposals to host the 2026 SHAFR Annual Conference

Every other year, SHAFR holds its annual meeting in a location other than the Washington, D.C., area. The SHAFR Council would like to hear from members interested in hosting the conference in late June 2026 and is especially interested in hearing proposals from people who would like to host the conference on their campus or at their institution with affordable meeting and housing facilities.

In an effort to provide as much lead time as possible for negotiating with hotels and other facilities, the deadline for submission of applications is **15 February 2023**, which will allow Council to consider them at its June 2023 meeting. Please send proposals that address the items listed below to SHAFR executive director Amy Sayward (Amy.Sayward@shaf.org).

### **General Information about the Potential Host City**

Please provide a general description of the local area in your proposal. Why is it attractive as a potential site for a SHAFR conference? Has it ever hosted a SHAFR conference in the past? If so, when? Is it home to long-time SHAFR members or important programs in the field? Does it possess research facilities that might be appealing to SHAFR members? Are there local attractions (historic and otherwise) that would appeal to our members? Is it a family-friendly venue with attractions of particular interest to children?

What sorts of venues are available for the usual evening social event (normally held on Friday), either within the potential host city or nearby? Are they accessible to persons with disabilities? And what sort of local transportation companies are available for transportation to and from the social event site? Is disability-accessible public transportation an option? What about on-site parking for attendees who might wish to drive?

### **Specific Information about Local Arrangements Committee**

Please provide information about who specifically will be responsible for local arrangements in the host city. Because hosting the annual conference is a significant responsibility, most recent non-D.C. conferences have relied on a coalition of local and regional hosts from different institutions and organizations (colleges and universities, museums, university presses, other historically based organizations, etc.). Potential hosts are encouraged to think broadly about local and regional partners.

Please provide as well information about potential contributions (financial or otherwise) from partnering institutions/organizations. While there is no standard for these sorts of contributions, in the past they have included funds to provide general support for the conference and subsidies to offset the cost of speakers, facility rental/AV costs, refreshment breaks, and the conference social event. Council also welcomes information about potential in-kind support.

### **Conference Lodging**

Feedback from members following the 2022 conference in New Orleans indicated a desire for both hotel lodging that is walkable to the conference site as well as affordable housing (such as dormitory housing). SHAFR works with a professional broker to negotiate hotel contracts for its annual meetings. Therefore potential hosts are not expected to handle arrangements themselves, but Council does want them to provide information about the availability of suitable hotel facilities. In keeping with the recent work of SHAFR's Conference Committee, potential hotels and all other facilities for the conference must be fully accessible for persons with disabilities. Pre-pandemic, non-D.C. SHAFR hotel contracts provided for a block of 150 rooms (half singles, half doubles, and a couple of suites) for Wednesday and Saturday nights and 180 rooms for Thursday and Friday nights. Potential hosts can use those numbers as a guide when formulating their proposals.

### **Conference Session Rooms**

Although the format of each SHAFR conference is a little different, past conference schedules suggest that potential host sites should contain sufficient rooms to allow for at least 10 concurrent panels during any given time slot, with some conferences including up to 12 sessions at any given time. Potential host sites should therefore have sufficient, suitable session rooms for the full run of the conference (usually Thursday mid-day through the end of the day on Saturday).

### **Plenary Session Room/Reception Space**

We usually need a room to accommodate an opening plenary session, which is sometimes held in the late afternoon but more often in the evening of the opening day of the conference. Past conferences have often utilized a hotel ballroom or similar space for this event. Space is also needed for the evening welcome reception, also normally held on Thursday. If this event is to be held immediately following the plenary session, a separate space will be required. If sufficient time is available for staff to turn around the plenary session space for the reception, then it could be held in the same place. If not, then a second location must be secured.

### **Exhibit and Registration Space**

A large, easily accessible, common space—such as a large foyer or hallway—is needed to house the conference registration as well as 8-12 exhibitors—preferably in the same shared space—for the duration of the conference. This space is also generally used for the afternoon breaks.

### **Breakfast and Luncheon Rooms**

Space is needed each morning for continental breakfast, and for catered luncheons on Friday and Saturday. The SHAFR Presidential Address is delivered at one of the luncheons; the SHAFR president arranges for a keynote speaker for the other. Information about catering costs and arrangements is appreciated but not required at this point.

### **Business Meeting Rooms**

The Society usually utilizes at least one business meeting room that can accommodate 15-18 people for the Diplomatic History editorial board meeting Friday morning and other committee meetings during the conference.

### **Transportation**

In an effort to make travel to the annual conference as convenient as possible, the SHAFR Council prefers host locations that are easily accessible via air. Potential hosts should therefore provide information about airport facilities, including distance from potential conference hotels and event sites, number and specific airlines providing service (including international service), local transportation options between the airport and hotel/event sites (taxi, bus, metro/subway), etc. If potential conference hotels provide complimentary shuttle service, please note that in the proposal as well.



# A Roundtable on Maria L. Quintana, *Contracting Freedom: Race, Empire, and U.S. Guestworker Programs*

Deborah Cohen, Evan Ward, Aileen Teague, Jessica Kim, and Maria L. Quintana

## Roundtable Introduction

Deborah Cohen

Maria Quintana's new book, *Contracting Freedom: Race, Empire, and U.S. Guestworker Programs*, is a fascinating, compelling, and disturbing read. Painstakingly researched, it posits a foundational relationship between all the so-called guestworker programs of the World War II era and beyond, whether the workers involved were Mexicans, Puerto Ricans, British colonial subjects or interned Japanese Americans. While the rhetoric and bureaucratic investment in these programs stressed their positives, those were merely "conceptual" (1, my emphasis), for the programs essentially "legitimated and extended U.S. racial and imperial domination abroad" (5).

According to Quintana, this shoring up of U.S. imperialism occurred precisely because the progressive state officials advocating for the programs equated the labor contract with the liberal state's formal extension of rights and freedoms to these migrants. "By delineating a series of legal rights to [temporary migrant] workers through the contract . . . architects of the labor programs hoped to extend the promise of freedom to Mexican and Caribbean migrant farmworkers" (7). That is, the labor contract got its power from its backing by the U.S. state; and in turn, the contract's set of seemingly formal rights and responsibilities gave further credence to the U.S. government as the arbiter of freedoms and protections. The programs, then, became the "paradigm" through which to connect and secure "the value of *formal labor contracts* [my emphasis], bilateral agreements between nation-states, and equal rights" (3).

However, as the book shows, nothing of the sort happened. Instead, as Quintana demonstrates, the processes (and personnel) that made the categorization of workers possible (i.e., enabled society to distinguish between "legal" and "illegal," in addition to other attributes) helped strengthen and extend U.S. empire.

*Contracting Freedom* draws together several compelling ideas. The first is that the labor contract broadly used in these programs was an outgrowth of and was still embedded in the nineteenth-century slave/free dialectic. The second is that looking to the liberal state for social change and social justice was a mistaken investment. Lastly, the Mexican, Puerto Rican, Caribbean, and Japanese American labor contract programs were relationally produced because of their emergence out of the liberal state project and statecraft.

By examining the programs relationally and as emerging from liberalism's internal contradictions, Quintana is then able to show us "how the exploitive realities of the labor program—wage theft, injury, displacement, isolation, and poor living conditions—were not a government failure, but a product of the liberalism by which state power became justified" (11) and people became subject to it.

This subjectification was, she argues, "an inherently racialized and imperial process" (10) in which the liberal state could offer some citizens some benefits and recognize some claims, but temporary, non-national or tenuously national labor migrants were refused the protections of racialized citizenship and remained subject to the state's whims and persecution.

Our three reviewers have high praise for Quintana's historical work. Jessica Kim contends that the book "expands our understanding not only of contract labor systems but also of the logic, projects, and philosophies of twentieth-century liberalism." While she would have preferred a more in-depth analysis of the historiography of U.S. empire and imperialism and where Quintana's work fits into this historiography, she still sees the book's focus on the contract as possibly offering an opening onto the visualization of "older" forms of U.S. imperialism, which other scholars could/should take up.

Allison Teague has a slightly different reading of *Contracting Freedom*. She is focused on the role that "U.S. intellectuals and policymakers played in" the construction and use of the "language of freedom" that undergirded these guestworker programs. As a historian who concentrates on policy and policy implications, she appreciates Quintana's acknowledgment of the "limits" on "state-centered approaches to social justice," but she would have liked further exploration into other options, such as the possibilities for [non-state] political approaches (15). These possibilities, she contends, would speak to the scholarly commitments of those working in the history of U.S. foreign relations, especially in terms of policy. The bottom line for Teague is that "[w]ithout any engagement with suggestions for even the most incremental possibilities for reform, the policy implications of the book are not altogether clear."

The perspective of Evan Ward, the only non-U.S. historian among the reviewers, largely coincides with that of Kim and Teague, but he has his own set of priorities. As a Latin Americanist, he appreciates Quintana's investigation into whether "the new trajectory of President Franklin Delano Roosevelt's liberal, reformist order transformed U.S. labor relations and, if it did, whether it moved them away from colonialism and racial exploitation or, conversely, toward them." He points especially to the ways a U.S. official's policy experience in one place would be applied to other places. For example, Rexford Tugwell, who understood Mexico's land distribution policies, applied them to the Caribbean with disastrous long-term consequences (158). The outcome was that the "farm labor importation program became a means by which the U.S. government was able to further its hegemony over the Caribbean [and Mexico], while purportedly working against the 'colonial order of things'" (190).

The reviews do the critical work of highlighting what *Contracting Freedom* provides scholars of America foreign relations and the United States in the world. Below I propose several

questions for consideration, not just in reference to Quintana's book but for the field more generally.

First, like Ward, I have reservations about equating Mexico with Puerto Rico and Caribbean territories in this era. Can historians really treat the U.S. relationship with Mexico as similar to the U.S. relationship with Puerto Rico and the Caribbean, or Mexican labor programs as similar to those in the Caribbean? The political positions of those states *vis-à-vis* the United States were radically different: Puerto Rico was a U.S. colony; the Caribbean territories were then held by Britain; and Mexico was an independent republic. Does Mexico's official national sovereignty not shift the dynamics here, especially since the country had recently taken positions against the United States?

I am thinking here of the revolutionary state's stances against U.S. border incursions and of the positions taken by Lázaro Cárdenas (1934–1940), who, in 1938, not long before the bracero program began, had nationalized the fields that belonged to Standard Oil and other big transnational companies. Cárdenas did propose compensating the companies, but only by using dollar amounts that accorded with their tax declarations, which had undervalued their holdings and brought about the nationalization in the first place. This was part of Mexico's dramatic repositioning *vis-à-vis* the United States. While Mexico did ultimately agree to the bracero program, might these oppositional stances not add nuance to how we understand its relationship with the United States? And what about the occasions during the program when Mexico refused to negotiate? What did Mexico gain, in other words, by being a sovereign nation?

My second question concerns the Mexican Revolution and the reconfigured state projects that emerged from it. By the time of the bracero program, the Mexican state had already invested in rural education programs that taught not just basic curriculum, but what it meant to be Mexican. Would not the actual upheavals of the revolution, the different state actors in place, and the rhetoric of a new state project change Mexican migrants' understanding of the program or their thoughts about who was responsible for their situation, especially at those times and in those places where the Mexican state didn't (successfully) intervene? What about the meanings that labor migrants, both braceros and the unauthorized, attributed to the program? How might Mexico's stances in relation to the United States change how braceros understood the conditions of and rationales for their journeys?

Lastly, and more broadly, is there never a positive role for the liberal state? Does it never foster positive change? Are there always negative consequences to its policies? Or are the results more mixed, especially as those policies respond to social movements and other pressures? After reading *Contracting Freedom*, one might conclude that the former is the case. Quintana sees no upside to these labor programs and no role for the state more generally. The progressive state actors she writes about only fall victim to its tangled web because they saw the state as the locus of change. They can accomplish nothing because its web has already ensnared them and made them subject to its way of thinking.

While I understand this tendency, this comes too close to a judgment about the past. I would urge historians instead to remain open to understanding the past in its context, which, if her work is read against the grain, Quintana already hints at. Though she claims her protagonists' failures are due to an unwavering investment in the state's ability to bring about change, she tells us that some did later regret their positions. We might see her examination of their regrets and of the acts of labor migrants (and, I would suggest, all non-state actors) in mobilizing against state power as providing us a window onto a dynamic relationship through which the state might be pushed and prodded. That is, while the state is not and will never be the *sole* lever of social change, it might still be a critical actor in relationships and policies that could bring about needed change. Quintana's impressive new book gives us a close look into the ways U.S. state officials attempted to bring about progressive shifts and the contradictions of liberalism that forestalled such change.

## Review of Maria L. Quintana. *Contracting Freedom: Race, Empire, and U.S. Guestworker Programs*

Evan Ward

In *Contracting Freedom: Race, Empire and U.S. Guestworker Programs*, Maria L. Quintana offers a postcolonial critique of bi-lateral U.S. guest worker programs initiated throughout the hemisphere during World War II. The broad sweep of labor history is presented in the historical context of the New Deal programs, domestically, and the Good Neighbor Policy, hemispherically. Quintana explores whether the new trajectory of President Franklin Delano Roosevelt's liberal, reformist order transformed U.S. labor relations, and if it did, whether it moved them away from colonialism and racial exploitation or, conversely, toward them.

Ultimately, she contends, even with the reformist bent of visionary administration officials, labor advocates, and freshly elected post-colonial presidents, including Rexford Tugwell, Ernesto Galarza, Clarence Senior, and Eric Williams, the U.S. government failed to uphold its individual obligations to guestworkers. She argues that guestworker programs perpetuated legacies of colonialism, exploitation, and racism. "The farm labor importation program became a means by which the U.S. government was able to further its hegemony over the Caribbean [and Mexico]," she writes, "while purportedly working against the 'colonial order of things'" (190).

*Contracting Freedom* is structured around a core argument that guestworker programs in the mid-twentieth century were effectively not much different from slavery. The evidence rests heavily on realities of conditions cited by workers in all of the programs discussed. Contracts, and more precisely their enforcement, lay at the center of whether twentieth-century labor programs would diverge significantly from conditions during slavery, debt peonage, and sharecropping.

Throughout her book, Quintana evaluates government actions on contracts between workers and farm owners, judging whether the United States had shifted towards a truly liberal, democratic nation by elevating the rights of workers (which included unionization), or if it continued to side with farm owners and their legislative advocates. In the context of current politics, Quintana's negative assessment of these issues aligns with the claims of critical race theory, which question the tenets of American liberalism as a basis for expanding freedom.

The book foregrounds bi-national labor programs with an examination of the experience of New Dealers like Rexford Tugwell, an economist who brought to the Brain Trust a knowledge of social land distribution programs in post-revolutionary Mexico. "Taking what he learned in Mexico about revolutionary agrarian reform with him to the United States and Puerto Rico," Quintana argues, "he pioneered a land reform and agricultural diversification program that had an undeniable long-term impact on the Caribbean Basin" (158). His ideals, along with similar visions of ennobling guestworker programs throughout the hemisphere, served as the basis for guest programs that ultimately fell short of contractual obligations in every case study examined.

The author uses a wide variety of sources to showcase the voices of guestworkers in the United States. These sources enumerate the ways in which farm owners did not abide by the provisions of worker contracts. It would be interesting to see the perspectives of farm owners as well. In *Contracting Freedom*, they are convicted of not delivering on their promises to the workers, although Quintana ultimately faults the U.S. government for not enforcing the terms of worker contracts.

Quintana is generally critical of guest worker programs, but she does recognize that some have improved the lives of workers. In the case of the British West Indies, for example, she notes that "the result [of these programs was] economic progress, as guestwork seemed to alleviate unemployment and raise wages" (209). However, she clearly expects much more of government

officials, who fall short of fulfilling their promises to see that the workers were treated as free people who deserved the decent conditions that their contracts guaranteed.

The author is also unsparing in her critique of liberalism elsewhere in the hemisphere. Although the land reforms of the Mexican president, Lazaro Cardenas, provided impetus for the New Deal visions of a more humane guestworker regime, those reforms largely failed, and Quintana lays blame at the feet of Mexican officials who did not enforce contractual obligations. She also censures the administrators of Operation Bootstrap in Puerto Rico and the newly independent administrations in the British West Indies. As a result of their failures, Quintana writes, “the efforts of liberal New Deal leaders in Puerto Rico in the 1950s to reform colonialism and racism rearticulated a system of racial relations that . . . reinvigorated racial capitalism, resulting in labor coercion” (170).

One of the primary contributions of *Contracting Freedom* is the geographic and comparative scope of the book. As Quintana notes, “Viewing the configuration of these labor programs together provides a more comprehensive understanding of empire and state hegemony as rooted in the political and epistemological project of liberalism and nation” (187). While the Mexico-U.S. bracero program in the United States is front and center (particularly because of the extensive coverage given to the efforts of Galarza to secure additional rights for guestworkers), Quintana also compares those workers’ experiences, spanning the period from 1942 to 1964, with those of British West Indian, Japanese-American, and Puerto Rican laborers during the same era.

One of the critiques that might be offered to Quintana concerns the roles of citizenship and sovereignty, particularly as they applied to Mexican braceros. Quintana rightly points out the different rules that applied to Puerto Rican laborers, for good or ill, in the context of U.S. legal structures, as well as the problematic status of Japanese American interns (many of whom were citizens whose property was coveted, then claimed by neighboring landowners during their guestworker contracts). In the case of the braceros, I fully acknowledge that individual farmers often fell far short of providing the conditions stipulated in contracts, but both Galarza’s pursuit of union rights for guestworkers and the author’s critique of the failed programs ignore the realities of the self-interest of nation states in reserving the benefits of full citizenship for their own citizens, as well as the concept of national sovereignty.

Ultimately, *Contracting Freedom* does a good job of examining the limitations of guestworker rights in the United States in the mid-twentieth century. Quintana succeeds in bringing to light greater cross-fertilization among intra-hemispheric attempts to enhance the working conditions and aspirational arc of laborers during World War II. She also provides a comparative basis for assessing the similarities and differences between the outcomes of those programs.

### Review of Maria Quintana, *Contracting Freedom*

Aileen Teague

In the first half of the twentieth century, the United States expanded its presence abroad and intervened to mediate conflicts across the globe. On the home front, this expansion led to a need for more labor to build infrastructure and produce food for a growing population. The need was particularly great during the Second World War, when more than six million American men were fighting abroad and required food rations to win the war. To solve its labor dilemma, the country turned to guestworker importation programs.

The implementation of contract labor programs came at a

moral and political cost. Maria L. Quintana’s *Contracting Freedom* examines contract farm labor programs using four unique case studies, which are explored both “relationally and in tandem”: the Bracero Program with Mexico, the mobilization of Japanese American laborers following their internment during the Second World War, the Puerto Rican farm labor program, and the contract labor program established with British West Indian states (1).

Between 1942 and 1964, more than 4.5 million workers from Mexico and hundreds of thousands more from the Caribbean cyclically migrated to communities from California to Connecticut to fill America’s labor void. After the war, however, guestworker programs became unpopular. Social and political concerns eventually led to the phasing out of the programs that Quintana explores, although some continued illegally. But the racist and imperial tendencies that undergirded these programs would shape new forms of contract labor plans that still exist today.

The author’s analysis is grounded in the role the U.S. government played in designing a flexible set of practices around guestworkers’ labor contracts, practices that protected government actors or agricultural employers from critiques of racism or imperial overstep. Yet according to Quintana, the supposedly race-neutral, anti-imperial import labor programs were not only “racial projects” subjecting ethnic minorities and immigrants to harsh living and working conditions; they were also a “sanitized means to expand the U.S. government’s power to manage, control, import, and deport laborers in a theoretically postimperial, post-slavery context” (9).

Quintana’s argument hinges on the role U.S. intellectuals and policymakers played in using the language of freedom to legitimize guestworker programs. New Deal progressives believed state-managed labor mobility and the voluntary or “free” nature of the guestworker programs obscured their similarities to institutions such as slavery or indentured servitude. Quintana contends that the “slave versus free” dialectic was not only misleading, but it also left space for racist, imperial actions executed through state authority. The language of freedom also manifested itself in the ways guestworker programs were advertised. To potential contract workers in Mexico, Jamaica, or Puerto Rico, the programs were presented as opportunities for migrant workers to “fight for democracy.” They were not simply an economic opportunity, the advertisements said, but a chance for migrants to do their share in the war effort (1).

In inaugurating contract labor programs, New Deal officials promoted the United States as a welcoming place for Mexican or Caribbean workers and advertised the labor contract as a protective mechanism against racial discrimination or ill treatment. But while these officials believed guestworker programs were fundamentally innovative in their approach to social justice and in their desire to improve societies throughout the Western Hemisphere, Quintana argues that the programs were deeply rooted in U.S. histories of colonialism and slavery (10). What is more, guestworker programs also advanced U.S. racial and imperial domination in the postwar period and have played a prominent role in shaping U.S. immigration policies ever since.

One innovative aspect of Quintana’s study is how it treats the relationship between liberalism and empire. Some U.S. policymakers genuinely believed they could use the guestworker programs to improve the lives of migrant farm laborers by ensuring that their civil rights were recognized (4). The problem was that the expansion of state power necessary to execute the programs justly also occurred along racial lines, which prevented the state from ensuring that migrant labor force received equitable treatment. For Quintana, liberalism—the idea that the state exists to protect and guarantee individual rights and to ensure equality—was an important rationale for the expansion of state power during the 1930s and 1940s. But *Contracting Freedom* demonstrates that in the case of labor programs involving ethnic



“others,” the government’s desire to police and expand its power in other areas made it fundamentally unable to protect migrant workers from both exploitative employers and the system itself.

Thousands of migrant workers—especially those who came from Mexico with the Bracero Program—chose to avoid labor contracts altogether by moving to less exploitative employers or traveling to the United States illegally. With the rise in illegal migrant workers in the years following the Bracero Program, the government doubled down on creating agencies to survey, interrogate, and deport illegal workers. It did so without a comprehensive understanding of how it had ultimately failed contract laborers from the outset. Instead of working to improve the Bracero Program, New Dealers placed unprotected workers into the category of “illegal” migrant, which subjected them to state control in other ways (11).

Another intriguing aspect of this book is the author’s effort to tie the story of contract labor programs into the broader history of civil rights and freedom. The book raises provocative questions about the “limitations and contradictions of state-sponsored approaches to social justice,” and it suggests possibilities for “other [non-state] political approaches”—approaches that might be of great interest to those working in the history of U.S. foreign relations (15). Given Americans’ continued dependence on migrant labor and the book’s criticism of the state as a guarantor of equal rights, it would have been fascinating if the author had further developed these other “political possibilities.” What could government or nongovernment actors have done to improve or replace contract labor programs? Without any engagement with suggestions for even the most incremental of reforms, the policy implications of the book are not altogether clear.

Outside of fervent critiques of a pernicious U.S. imperial system, Quintana mentions few concrete historical actors who can be held accountable for the ill-advised political projects they designed, which for readers of this platform, at least, portends the absence of realistic, policy-relevant insights. Though the lead character in this study seems to be the New Deal-era labor contract itself, more attention could have been paid to the specific ways historical actors and personalities effected the contracts (outside of Ernesto Galarza, discussed below). How much intentionality was involved in their actions? Did their actions produce unintended consequences? Who were the legal actors involved and how did they help construct the labor contract program?

The principal contribution of *Contracting Freedom* is certainly the comparative framework Quintana employs. It links distinct labor programs from the U.S. West to those from the Caribbean—normally examined separately—and incorporates them into a comprehensive exploration of how a variegated labor force subtly critiqued the guestworker programs of which they were a part. The study highlights how workers of different ethnicities, cultures, and geopolitical circumstances became subjects of U.S. state power.

The story unfolds across six chapters. Chapter 1 examines the genealogy of the labor contract and illustrates how the dialectic between slavery and freedom has framed U.S. policymakers’ commodification of migrant labor. The impacts of New Deal-era contract labor programs have been far-reaching. They left an indelible mark on subsequent federal immigration policies, which expanded in the mid-twentieth century to draw stark distinctions between laborers: foreign versus domestic, legal versus illegal, white versus nonwhite, etc.

Chapter 2 introduces one of Quintana’s protagonists, Mexican American labor and civil rights activist Ernesto Galarza, an official of the Pan-American Union and one of the chief architects of the Bracero Program. Though an advocate for Mexican workers, Galarza believed in the liberal politics of the era, and the author uses him as a lens to examine the social and political currents surrounding New Deal labor contracts. On one level, the

author seems to have a great deal of empathy for Galarza. She applauds his dream of improving Mexican Americans’ lives. But Galarza’s benevolent mission ultimately failed because he played a part, unknowingly, in promoting the efforts behind the coercive system that worked to the detriment of Mexican workers.

Chapter 3 shifts to the U.S. West to explore the deep interconnectedness of the Bracero Program and the incarceration of Japanese Americans during the war. Some readers will be surprised to learn that early in the war, incarcerated Japanese Americans helped to meet the country’s farm labor demands. At the same time, their incarceration would eventually contribute to the perceived labor shortage that validated the Bracero Program (85). Implicit in the rationale for both the Bracero Program and the internee work programs was the way federal power was used to develop what were supposed to be race-neutral contract labor programs for historically racialized populations. Legacies of white supremacy and imperial concerns undermined the stated intent of the programs.

Feeling abandoned by the state after beginning work in harsh labor conditions, many braceros abandoned their contracts, which, as chapter 4 explains, made their legal status ambiguous. The author argues that for braceros, going “illegal” was a way to exercise personal freedom. But the same government that was charged with protecting braceros inaugurated Operation Wetback in 1954 to intercept and deport illegal migrants. Galarza and others were convinced that the government was capable of distinguishing between legal and illegal workers delineated by the stipulations in the labor contract, but this was not the case.

Chapter 5 details the Puerto Rican labor importation program, which the author believes was a “postcolonial” model of governance in which Americans promised Puerto Ricans the right to freedom and citizenship but also continued to maintain hegemony over them. Finally, chapter 6 explores British West Indian contract laborers. With its promise of liberal protections, the United States was supposed to be different from the countries’ former British colonizers, but Quintana argues that the system of labor contracts served only to increase U.S. influence throughout the Caribbean.

Many of the conclusions generated by *Contracting Freedom* resonate with present tensions between America’s desire for cheap labor and its inability to ensure that the rights of this labor force are not violated. The study describes one of several historical instances in which the U.S. government brought migrant laborers to the United States and soon after turned them into “illegals” the state could then deport. It has happened before, and if major changes are not made to the system or the way U.S. citizens see the system, it will happen again.

One subject not adequately covered in Quintana’s study is the complicated history of backlash against immigrant labor within U.S. society. Organizations such as the American Federation of Labor often united against immigrant labor and argued furiously about the impacts on U.S. labor that bilateral agreements such as the North American Free Trade Agreement would have. Social justice was not at the root of their worries; they were afraid immigrants would take American jobs. An examination of the ways in which the ideas of upper-echelon New Deal politicians connected or clashed with those of the average white worker would have made a welcome contribution to *Contracting Freedom*.

Another subject I found myself wanting to know more about is how these varied labor contract narratives were resolved. As someone who writes about U.S.-Mexico relations, I understand the legacies of the Bracero Program—perhaps the most widely known of Quintana’s case studies—but I found myself wanting to know more about what happened to the Boricua Braceros and the British West Indian laborers in the aftermath of the contract labor programs and what impacts U.S. guestworker programs had on these unique locales.

Feeling abandoned by the state after beginning work in harsh labor conditions, many braceros abandoned their contracts, which, as chapter 4 explains, made their legal status ambiguous. The author argues that for braceros, going “illegal” was a way to exercise personal freedom. But the same government that was charged with protecting braceros inaugurated Operation Wetback in 1954 to intercept and deport illegal migrants.



In sum, Quintana's comparative framework for U.S. guestworker programs at a critical point in their history suggests that scholars are only scratching the surface when it comes to the role of labor in U.S. imperial history. That Contracting Freedom raises such far-reaching questions about labor and migration in the context of race and imperial concerns is a testament to its richness.

### Review of *Contracting Freedom*

Jessica M. Kim

Maria L. Quintana's *Contracting Freedom: Race, Empire, and U.S. Guestworker Programs* is a powerful piece of scholarship that sits at the intersection of studies on immigration, labor, civil rights, citizenship, and twentieth-century liberalism. Building on the recent work of scholars such as Deborah Cohen and Mireya Loza, Quintana broadens our understanding of contract labor both geographically and politically, arguing that policymakers in the United States, Mexico, and the Caribbean championed a variety of guestworker programs as "fairer" alternatives to the brutal earlier labor practices generated under systems of colonialism and slavery.

There are a number of significant studies of contract and guestworker programs in the twentieth-century United States, but Quintana's is the first to bring together a geographically expansive and comparative history of guestworker programs in one book and to discuss their histories relationally. The political philosophy of liberalism is the umbrella under which they all fall.

Indeed, New Deal liberalism is the fulcrum of Quintana's book and her argument about contract labor and empire in the United States during WWII and in the postwar Western Hemisphere. She contends that New Deal policymakers, their political successors, labor activists, and some civil rights leaders believed that the contracts governing guestworkers' entry into and labor within the United States epitomized the individual rights and freedoms espoused by New Deal liberalism and racial liberalism. And she successfully makes this argument across the book, tracing the various decisions that U.S. policymakers made in constructing labor programs from Mexico to the Caribbean.

In fact, the overlap between policymakers and activists across the various contractual labor programs of the mid-twentieth century is one of the most compelling parts of this book. Quintana follows a number of key individuals to demonstrate how their thinking and their roles in the U.S. government undergirded the logic of the various labor programs. These policymakers included Roosevelt's New Deal adviser on the Caribbean, Charles Taussig, and the U.S. governor of Puerto Rico, Rexford Tugwell.

Labor and civil rights activists, including Eric Williams and Ernesto Galarza, also overlapped and sometimes shaped policy. These policymakers and advocates crisscrossed the hemisphere in the mid-twentieth century, borrowing heavily from each other as they conceived the idea of contracted labor and structured and justified it within the political framework of liberalism. Galarza, for example, played a central role in the Bracero Program and then also influenced the program for Puerto Rican agricultural workers.

Quintana situates these actors and the contract labor systems they championed within a long history of free and unfree labor in the first chapter, with a particular focus on how liberalism, as it evolved in the United States in the first decades of the twentieth century, served to buttress the labor contract as a form of individual "freedom." Under this logic, the state ensured individual freedom through the enforcement of labor contracts. Through state-sponsored programs, a laborer could weigh the pros and cons of a labor contract, become a signatory "voluntarily," and have faith that the state would enforce the "fair" components of that contract. As Quintana writes, "With the goal of state-mandated rights in mind, progressive politicians and leaders invented the figure of the mid-twentieth century contract laborer as one who entered into a contract with one nation-state to legitimately travel

to another nation-state . . . [I]mported contract labor became a renewed symbol of freedom rather than slavery by 1942" (41–42). Proponents of these programs argued that contractual labor was the antithesis of enslavement, not its successor, and that free will, choice, and consent made freedom a central pillar of contract labor.

*Contracting Freedom* also dissects how the leaders and the rhetoric of mid-century civil rights championed "the contract" as the conveyor of individual rights, thereby creating a labor and civil rights movement that divorced the interests of a transnational working class from the rights of domestic workers. Focusing on the labor movement on both sides of the U.S.-Mexico border, as well as bi-national policymakers, Quintana argues that Mexican American labor activists in particular created a divide between domestic civil rights for those in the country "legally" or under state-sanctioned contracts and those who crossed into the country "illegally" or without the sometimes dubious benefit of a labor contract.

Put more concisely, the right to rights under mid-century liberalism rested on the "freedom" and protections enshrined in a labor contract. Basing their efforts on that logic, civil rights and labor leaders crafted campaigns for worker rights aligned with the domestic interests of the AFL-CIO, the ACLU, and African American civil rights organizations that advanced the rights of workers "legally" present in the country while discriminating against those who entered "illegally."

In a further innovation, Quintana also brings the history of Asian labor migrations and the WWII internment of Japanese Americans into conversation with Latin American and Caribbean guestworker programs. Her sweeping first chapter outlines how free and unfree labor were reconstituted in post-Civil War America in part around debates over the relative freedom of Asian immigrant workers. Those opposed to immigration from China, for example, argued that contracted "coolies" were inherently unfree.

Even more innovative is Quintana's third chapter, which explores the "co-constitution" of the Bracero Program and Japanese American incarceration. She argues that the hiring of thousands of incarcerated Japanese Americans into contract agricultural work at the very same moment that the federal government was negotiating the terms of the Bracero Program demonstrates how "Mexican labor importation and state-mandated incarceration were . . . remarkably similar projects" (84). In her assessment, the federal government believed that both programs had liberal democratic ends, even though they relied on racism, coercion and even violence to staff American agriculture.

In another key chapter of the book, "Boricua Braceros," Quintana moves her discussion of contract labor in a relational direction, showing how policymakers in the United States, Mexico, and Puerto Rico shared a perspective on labor programs as a pathway to "freedom" under New Deal liberalism. Growers on the U.S. East Coast, cognizant of the Bracero Program in the West and Southwest, called for a Puerto Rican farm labor program to ease labor shortages. New Deal policymakers and their Puerto Rican counterparts envisioned a program that would satisfy demands for labor while also ensuring individual worker freedom and moving the territory from colonial governance to self-rule. But as Quintana points out, "the ideological bedrock of New Deal liberalism and racial liberalism justified the expansion of Puerto Rican state power over contract workers as an anti-imperial and benevolent measure, obscuring the processes by which Puerto Rican workers became racialized subjects of the Puerto Rican and U.S. governments" (157). In other words, the language of liberalism concealed both labor exploitation and racial inequality.

Final portions of the book foreground Quintana's argument regarding empire and contract labor programs with a focus on labor programs brokered between the United States and the British West Indies. New Deal policymakers instrumental in brokering contract labor agreements with Mexico and Puerto Rico resurfaced in negotiations about facilitating the movement of workers from the Caribbean, particularly Jamaica and the

Bahamas. As in the case of Mexican and Puerto Rican contract laborers, U.S. policymakers presented the labor program as a plan that would advance and protect individual rights and freedoms through a state-backed labor contract. New Deal policymakers also fashioned Caribbean labor programs as anti-imperial, in that they would support national independence for British colonial territories and advance the economic development of those regions.

One of the particular strengths of this discussion in *Contracting Freedom* is Quintana's ability to show how workers themselves recognized and contested the limitations of liberalism for laborers in an international context. Workers and labor advocates both understood that state officials were using "liberal devices like the labor contract to describe what was once colonial labor exploitation as anticolonial, cleansing the contract of its colonial origins and perpetuating imperialism into the twentieth-first century" (216).

Ultimately, *Contracting Freedom* is a forceful piece of scholarship that, for the first time, shows the interconnectedness of various forms of state-run labor programs and the power of liberalism to justify them. That said, Quintana's argument concerning postwar liberalism and its intersection with U.S. empire could be brought into sharper relief with further evidence and discussion.

Quintana maintains in her introduction that "liberalism, as a normative political idea and practice in the modern world, cannot be divorced from empire" (5). While this might be intrinsically true, the body of *Contracting Freedom* could do more to demonstrate how. For example, in setting up her argument, Quintana writes that "rather than focusing on how empire should be defined or whether the nation-state should be defined as distinct from empire, this book unveils the processes by which people become subject to state power(s)—an inherently racialized and imperial process" (10). While empire is indeed a slippery term that is hotly debated and difficult to define, I would have welcomed a deeper engagement in *Contracting Freedom* with the historiography of American empire in the Western Hemisphere.

Quintana's work has a lot to offer scholars of American empire as well as U.S. diplomatic historians. But she leaves it up to the reader to infer much of the book's contributions to these fields, particularly in the later parts of the book that deal with the postwar era. I am left with the sense that contract labor programs and the ideology of liberalism that buttressed them could tell us much more about the role the United States played in the hemisphere after the Second World War and into the period that Greg Grandin terms "the third conquest of Latin America"—a role that was rooted in multiple older forms of imperialism.

I am also curious about how Quintana thinks mid-century liberalism (as manifest in guestworker programs) shaped not only U.S. immigration policy, a process she explores in the epilogue, but also postwar U.S. foreign policy in Latin America, which was often disastrous. After all, it was U.S. imperial interventions, often couched in anticommunist rhetoric, that led to social and economic displacement and subsequent influxes of migration to the United States, both "legal" and "illegal."

Of course, no book can do all things, and this modest critique simply raises a few questions and presents suggestions for future exploration. It does not diminish the tremendous accomplishments of *Contracting Freedom*, which significantly expands our understanding not only of contract labor systems but also of the logic, projects, and philosophies of twentieth-century liberalism. More importantly, Quintana's book unflinchingly reveals liberalism's limitations in creating true freedom and the state coercion and violence inherent in the framework of liberal policies.

## Roundtable Response to Reviews of *Contracting Freedom: Race, Empire and U.S. Guestworker Programs*

Maria L. Quintana

I would like to express my sincere gratitude and appreciation to the Society for Historians of American Foreign Relations (SHAFR) for including my book as part of this roundtable series in *Passport*. Many thanks also go to Aileen Teague, Jessica M. Kim, and Evan Ward for their encouraging and thoughtful evaluations of my book.

*Contracting Freedom* takes for granted that the U.S. nation-state is an empire rooted in white supremacy from its founding until today. Its laws have been fundamental to empire, such that guestworker programs can only be understood as an ongoing instrument of U.S. sovereignty and dominion. The book is an attempt to embed the U.S.-Mexico bracero program within the history of slavery in the United States as well as within the history of global capitalism and U.S. imperialism. In the book, I emphasize the importance of viewing the contemporaneous U.S.-Mexico and Caribbean guestworker programs relationally to unearth the role of state power and empire in recreating colonial social-structural racial inequities that remain with us today, in part through the continuation of state programs to manage labor migrations. While the U.S.-Mexico program was based on an agreement between nation-states, the Caribbean labor programs were originally based on agreements between the U.S. and the

British colonial government in Jamaica, Barbados, and the Bahamas, and with the colonial island possession of Puerto Rico. Placing the Bracero Program alongside the Caribbean labor programs thus exposes the ruse of national "agreement," reciprocity, and anti-imperialism that structured the guestworker programs.

In positioning the World War II guestworker programs relationally, *Contracting Freedom* also reveals how progressive officials and labor advocates engaged in debates over worker freedom that legitimized U.S. state power over racialized migrant

farm workers, masking but also extending colonial domination into the post-World War II era. I argue that New Deal progressives saw the farm labor programs as policy solutions that could ensure worker freedom, and as a result, unwittingly elided the history of slavery that informed the formation of contract labor importation programs in the first place. The language of liberal freedom they embraced, as embodied by the labor contract, thus reinforced and masked colonial state violence and coercion over workers, a violence which I render visible by focusing on the use of incarcerated Japanese Americans as contract farm labor alongside Mexican braceros during Japanese American "internment."

While these "guestworker" programs emerged contemporaneously, they have rarely been positioned alongside each other in the historiography. Those scholars critical of the farm labor programs as separate entities have often pointed out their congruencies with slave labor. I found this criticism of the labor programs deeply problematic, as it contributes to a historical genealogy in which workers have been marked as either "free" or "slave" as a means to expand state power over workers' lives. In chapter 1, I show how designating contract workers as "free" or "slave" resulted in the U.S. government either excluding or including people along racial lines in the expansion of immigration restriction policies from the 1860s to the 1920, resulting in the prohibition of contract labor programs. By the 1940s, contract labor programs came to be seen as vehicles of worker freedom yet again, resulting in the World War II guestworker programs.

In chapters 2 and 4, I show how after defending a Mexican contract labor program as a benevolent social measure of labor freedom in 1941, farm labor activist Ernesto Galarza spent the next twenty years of his life trying to combat the labor contract as a form of "slavery," to ensure that the braceros were not "slaves"

and that their rights were observed. In the end, he unwittingly reinforced the slave/free paradigm that has historically resulted in the expansion of state power and empire over migrant workers. I show how the transmutability of slavery and freedom for labor and civil rights advocates delimited an extended critique of the state and of capitalist labor relations in the United States and, in fact, aided in the expansion of U.S. state power over workers. Hence the title of the book, *Contracting Freedom*, which refers to the process in which the state provided a contract that offered migrant workers rights but also constricted or contracted workers' rights and freedoms.

If slavery and freedom each reproduce the other, then it makes little sense for us to refer to a neatly packaged and simplified progression from slavery to freedom in U.S. history, which reinforces U.S. exceptionalism. Instead, as I show, colonial violence continued to be reproduced in liberal institutions, discourses, and practices that embraced the logic of "freedom." In Kim's engaging analysis of the book, she asks for a precise portrait of how liberalism cannot be divorced from empire. While liberalism as an ideology requires a moral foundation upon which to thrive, based on universal freedom and equality, it also automatically implies the need for state power to support these ideals and ensure individual "rights" for those who are in need of state intervention. Therefore, it was precisely the extension of rights and freedoms to migrant farm workers that led to the expansion of state power over their lives, as the state became both manager and policeman of migrant labor. In the case of Mexican migrant workers in particular, it was the expansion of *legal* rights through the contract that produced migrant worker *illegality*, leading to the exponential growth of the U.S. Border Patrol and engendering racial state violence through the criminalization of migrant workers, worker policing, and deportation.

As I detail in the epilogue, the principal problem of guestworker programs is the centrality of worker legality, which grants authority to state governments to manage, control, and coerce workers into exploitative labor contracts that force them to go "illegal" as one of the few ways to resist exploitation and abuse. Legality thus produces illegality, in a circular logic that results in the need for the expansion of state authority to maintain a semblance of benevolence and protection through "legality." It also culminates in a system in which growers maintain ultimate control over the cost of labor, as workers have hardly any power to argue for improved conditions or wages, lest they risk deportation. In making this point, I argue for the abolition of guestworker programs, as the "self-interest" of nation-states preserves the capitalist interest of employers, authorizing worker exploitation and abuse.

The book fits squarely within a range of scholarship that excavates the role of liberalism in the maintenance of empire, including the "postcolonial" thought of Uday Singh Mehta, Lisa Lowe, Nikhil Pal Singh, Moon-Ho Jung, Julian Go, Takashi Fujitani, and others who analyze differently how liberalism reproduces empire and racial capitalism, while also revealing the exclusionary logic contained within liberalism. It takes seriously an Ethnic Studies perspective that champions the standpoint of colonized people as manifested in Franz Fanon's *Wretched of the Earth* (1961). It also advances historian Cedric Robinson's views in *Black Marxism* (1974), where he argues for the development of a notion of justice rooted in the history of imperialist expansion and the structural legacies of slavery, a conceptualization that American slavery historian Walter Johnson argues exceeds and surpasses a liberal definition of "rights." Lastly, while the field of Latinx Studies tends to be dominated by more localized and regional histories, the book contributes to the call for a transnational and cross-racial Latinx studies that decenters the nationalisms that still dominate the field and puts comparison and critique of empire at the center.<sup>1</sup>

Most scholarly examinations of American empire and U.S.

diplomatic history tend to take liberalism for granted and also therefore assume that rights and freedoms for workers through diplomacy and national policy are something worth striving for. They thus fall back on the impetus of state power, reinforcing U.S. imperialism because of their assumption that the government is capable of progressively ensuring workers' rights, even though government management of guestworker programs has rarely achieved that aim. As other scholars of the Bracero Program have pointed out, the program made the U.S. government the contractor and broker of workers in the service of agribusiness—not necessarily in the service of workers.<sup>2</sup>

The classic logic of guestworker programs—that they fill labor shortages and give workers jobs—is problematic. Although Teague mentions a labor shortage, there was no evidence of a real labor shortage during the World War II labor programs. Instead, historians have shown that farmers lobbied for labor importation programs to fulfill a perceived need for farm labor during the war and also to ensure a cheap and affordable labor surplus that they could underpay so as to achieve higher profits. Once the labor programs began, growers found that if they lowered wages sufficiently, domestic labor would not be willing to work. They thus created a superficial labor shortage that resulted in the U.S. Department of Labor's certification of more contract workers.<sup>3</sup> The temporary status of guest workers also served the dual purpose of ensuring employers that their labor force would be docile and assuring white supremacists that foreign workers would not establish settled immigrant communities.

Ward suggests that the book omits the perspective of farm owners in the labor programs, but chapter 3 in particular emphasizes how growers participated in public hearings to lobby for the removal of Japanese American growers during World War II, lobbied to replace expelled Japanese Americans with Mexican imported labor, and then pressured officials to allow them to employ incarcerated Japanese Americans as migrant contract farm workers in the fields like Mexican braceros. As I show, U.S. growers did not always plan to deliver on the contract, and many growers sought to put non-white workers back in their proper place as racialized "stoop" labor. The United States, Mexican, Puerto Rican, and British colonial governments did very little to prevent this from happening or to protect workers from exploitative growers. And, as other scholars have shown, the U.S. government worked in collusion with growers to ensure their access to a racialized caste of labor. *Contracting Freedom* thus carries forth the methodological aims of historians of the U.S. empire, like Jason Colby and Manu Karuka, whose books have examined the role of corporate power, capitalism, and violence in perpetuating U.S. imperialism.<sup>4</sup>

*Contracting Freedom* is also situated among efforts to elucidate the cross-fertilization of the U.S. empire with other imperialisms. The study of connections and exchanges between the United States and other governments is becoming more popular. We can see that with Paul A. Kramer, "Empires, Exceptions and Anglo Saxons," Harvey Neptune, *Caliban and the Yankees*, and Julian Go, *The Patterns of Empire*.<sup>5</sup> Instead of comparing and contrasting competing imperial interests in a specific time and space, I show how the labor programs resulted in a system of overlapping imperialisms in which officials from each state attempted to fashion a liberal model of governance over workers that was rationalized by a language of democracy, rights, and freedom, and also supported capitalist production.

As I illustrate, political officials like President Ávila Camacho of Mexico and Governor Luis Muñoz Marín of Puerto Rico sought to accomplish their own political and economic ends and to fulfill their own visions of state benevolence through the creation of guestworker programs in the 1940s. Viewing the labor programs together unveils the complicated ways in which each state was implicated in reproducing imperial processes. By "over-



lapping imperialism," I do not mean to suggest that these imperial projects were the same, as Mexican officials often rejected the coercion of the U.S. empire through expressions of Mexico's sovereignty. However, the United States influenced the shape and form of liberalism that unfolded across the hemisphere from the 1940s through the 1960s in favor of U.S.-led capitalism, such that each labor importation project was shaped by similar ideas regarding rights and freedoms that then expanded the power each state had to manage and coerce workers.

Put another way, *Contract Freedom* shows how nations across the hemisphere participated in liberal projects that were informed by but not always determined by U.S. imperial governance. They were thus able to fashion their own imperial projects and practices. The autonomous choices they made led me again to critique the tendency in the historiography to paint the U.S. empire as exceptional, as the only empire in the hemisphere, or at least the most "powerful." To ensure the rights of workers, each government recruited, processed, and secured laborers from Mexico, Puerto Rico, and the British West Indies for placement in the agricultural fields of the United States and it was the "freedom" implied in the voluntary signing of each labor contract that permitted workers to be coerced, exploited, and abused.

It was not that the reforms of New Deal progressives like Rexford Tugwell, Ernesto Galarza, Clarence Senior, and Eric Williams failed to fulfill their aims. Rather, their goals of democracy and freedom through the labor contract had consequences that they could not foresee. In each case, it was their optimism about the possibilities of liberalism and faith in the benevolence of New Deal state power, that afforded each state the legitimacy to expand its authority over farm workers. Although Teague would like to know how much intentionality was involved, holding these historical actors accountable for participating in processes that they were not cognizant of was not my goal. I did not set out to pass judgment upon the architects of the programs, but to unmask the hidden epistemologies that have historically reinforced colonial processes.

One common reaction to exposing and critiquing the history of guestworker programs in this way is to try to ascertain what policy changes would ameliorate or correct the errors of the past. In other words, is it possible to change the racist social structures and institutions that keep guestworkers entrenched in second-class citizenship? My aim in writing the book was not to prescribe policy, which would be an ambition far beyond the limits of my analysis. Instead, I aim to show that empire and race remain fundamental to the function and formation of guestworker programs, a function erased by the assumption that guestworker programs are an ameliorative policy capable of resolving the perceived "immigration crisis" in the United States.

*Contracting Freedom* demonstrates that guestworker programs are not a solution to the problem of restrictive anti-immigration policies, but the necessary condition upon which those

racial policies reside. Teague asks, "What could government or non-government actors have done to displace or improve contract labor programs?" This is the same question that civil and labor rights advocates asked themselves in this era, as they demanded that the state fulfill the rights written into the labor contracts. Their assumption that the state could and should ensure the rights of the contract permitted the state to expand its authority over workers, to decide along racial lines who was deserving of rights and who was not. Given the example 1950s bracero unionization efforts I provide in Chapter 4, the rights-based system of labor contracting must be eliminated, and migrant workers' voices and concerns must determine the administration and shape of the program.

We are again living in a time of flourishing temporary labor migration programs. The legacy of these programs is that guestworkers remain a "free market" solution to resolve the continued problem of unemployment resulting from imperial interventions throughout the hemisphere. In the postwar period, the United States established colonial dependency through foreign investment, U.S. military bases, and foreign aid resources like International Monetary Funds (IMF) loans. Today, expanded H2-A guestworker programs remain hegemonic political tools in the pacification of workers across the hemisphere, especially in countries where political leaders benefit from the unequal redistribution of wealth fostered by multinational corporations and the government-led privatization of public services under neo-liberalism. These programs continue to exist as deceptive "aid programs," with the labor contracts today not differing much from the contracts established in the 1940s. Given these realities, it is crucial that we shift the axis upon which these programs have historically been debated and arranged.

#### Notes:

1. Walter Johnson, "To Remake the World: Slavery, Racial Capitalism, and Justice," *Boston Review* (October 2016); María Josefina Saldaña-Portillo, "From the Borderlands to the Transnational? Critiquing Empire in the 21st Century," in *A Companion to Latina/o Studies*, ed. Juan Flores and Renato Rosaldo (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2007).
2. Kitty Calavita, *Inside the State: The Bracero Program, Immigration, and the I.N.S.* (New York: Routledge, 1992).
3. Don Mitchell, *They Saved the Crops: Labor, Landscape, and the Struggle over Industrial Farming in Bracero-Era California* (Athens, GA, 2012), 194; Jason M. Colby, *The Business of Empire: United Fruit, Race, and U.S. Expansion in Central America* (Ithaca, NY, 2011); Manu Karuka, *Empire's Tracks: Indigenous Nations, Chinese Workers, and the Transcontinental Railroad* (Berkeley, CA, 2019).
4. Ronald L. Mize, "Power (In)-Action: State and Agribusiness in the Making of the Bracero Total Institution," *Berkeley Journal of Sociology* 50 (2006): 76–119; Mitchell, *They Saved the Crops*.
5. See Paul A. Kramer, "Empires, Exceptions and Anglo Saxons," *Journal of American History* 88 (March 2002): 1315–53; Harvey Neptune, *Caliban and the Yankees* (Chapel Hill, NC, 2007); and Julian Go, *The Patterns of Empire* (Cambridge, UK, 2011).



# **2023 SHAFR ANNUAL MEETING**

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**Arlington, VA  
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# Seven Questions on...

## NATO History

*Susan Colbourn, Jeffrey H. Michaels, Timothy Andrews Sayle, and Joshua R. Shiffrin*

**Editor's note:** *"Seven Questions On..." is a new regular feature in Passport that will ask scholars in a particular field to respond to seven questions about their field's historiography, key publications, influences, etc. It is designed to introduce the broader SHAFR community to a variety of perspectives for a given field, as well as serving as a primer for graduate students and non-specialists. AJ*

### **1. What drew you to this field and inspired you to focus on your specific area of the history of NATO?**

**Susan Colbourn:** I don't have a good linear origin story about how I became a historian of NATO. The best I've got is a long-standing interest in the Cold War thanks to some excellent professors at Toronto and LSE, plus a conversation with Jeremi Suri that happened at exactly the right time in the grad school application cycle. But I stuck with it because I found the nitty gritty of alliance politics fascinating and saw NATO as central to so much of how the world was ordered post-1945, but still weirdly misunderstood. Being Canadian can't have hurt; we seem to be a fixture of NATO studies, even if the ever-popular shorthand of the United States and Europe is always leaving us out!

**Jeffrey H. Michaels:** My interest in NATO history developed from an internship on the Secretary General's staff in 2001, and immediately thereafter working as a researcher at the NATO School (SHAPE) in Oberammergau. At the time I was completely out of my depth. During my undergraduate studies I had the unusual opportunity whilst studying abroad in the UK to do a tutorial on Russian foreign policy at the Conflict Studies Research Centre located at the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst. It was through that experience that I ended up being offered the NATO internship where I focused on NATO-Russia relations. However, upon arriving at the old headquarters in Brussels, finding my way about, interacting with other officials, taking notes at various committee meetings, etc., I became increasingly intrigued by the question of how consensus is reached for NATO policy to be made. Or, to put it slightly differently, how does the requirement for consensus impact on the content of the policy that emerges, and does this requirement mean that certain policies cannot emerge at all. More than twenty years later I am still intrigued by these questions so clearly I have not advanced very far. Working at NATO HQ, one has the impression you are at the center of an enormous policy machine: the hustle and bustle of thousands of diplomats, civil servants and military personnel roaming the corridors, different national delegations engaged in horse trading, the Secretary General and International Staff sometimes acting as facilitators, at other times acting with an agenda of their own, a near constant series of high-level deliberations on international crises but more often the case on rudimentary matters, seemingly endless committees on everything from pipelines to nuclear planning, and so forth. Observing all this diplomatic activity forced me to rethink assumptions I previously held about multinational policymaking, and completely undermined any stereotypes I had about US dominance within NATO. When the

9/11 attacks occurred, I was based in Oberammergau, and from that perch I was able to discuss with visiting officials, senior officers and academics, NATO's role in the emerging "war on terrorism." Later on I worked as an analyst for the US European Command where I would regularly brief the four-star general who was dual-hatted as SACEUR. Thus it was interesting to see the same commander in two very different roles being briefed by two sets of intelligence briefers. In that post, I was able to observe the early development of the NATO Intelligence Fusion Centre and became interested in intelligence production, analysis and sharing within the Alliance. Throughout this period, I became less interested in Russia and more interested in US and NATO policymaking, trying to make sense of the system I was serving.

It was only after moving from the civil service to academia, and with the "surge" in Afghanistan and then the 2011 NATO intervention in Libya, that I began writing about the Alliance, albeit very much in the contemporary sense. Although I had several Cold War projects on the drawing board, they always seemed to remain there. It was not until the mid-to-late 2010s that I returned to them. Because of work I was doing on deterrence, nuclear weapons and Cold War history, I became quite interested in the Alliance's nuclear history as well as trying to ascertain how NATO might have responded to different types of armed attack from the Soviet Union/Warsaw Pact. This then led me to research NATO nuclear use decision-making, strategic concepts, military plans, military exercises, and the assumptions and scenarios upon which these were largely based. In part due to the widespread belief that destroying the Alliance might have been a reason for the Soviet Union, or even Russia in recent years, to undertake some sort of attack on NATO, I developed an interest in the dynamics of how NATO might fall apart. This led me down the rabbit hole of returning all the way back to the prehistory of NATO, examining the competing ideas about the Alliance's duration and why Article 13 of the North Atlantic Treaty emerged in the way it did. Finally, in order not to be left completely out of touch given the Alliance's growing interest in the rise of China, I've also worked a bit on the evolution of the Alliance's interest in, relations with, and ideas about, China.

**Timothy Andrews Sayle:** I wish I had a noble answer here, but I don't even have a single answer. I have three partial answers and I'm not sure they add up to a whole. I remember being an MA student and discussing the Ph.D. application with my MA supervisor. I had a short email from him asking "what do you want to study?" I was in the library working on something else and felt compelled to make up an answer on the spot. I replied that I wanted to understand how allied wartime planning and cooperation had carried on from the Second World War into the Cold War. When it came time to develop that into a Ph.D. application, it morphed into a plan for a bureaucratic history of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. My on-the-spot answer in the library is actually much closer to what I ended up writing. I am grateful, and so is everyone else who knows me, that I did not write a bureaucratic history of NATO. (See my answer to #4.)



Second: NATO lies at the heart of Canada's Cold War policies, and it also has a special place in Canadian nostalgia and heritage because Canadian diplomats played an important role in the creation of the alliance. Another Canadian, John Malloy, had written a book on NATO's early years and I thought maybe I'd pick up, chronologically, where he'd left off. In that sense, my choice was not particularly creative. It was amazing to me, however, to come to the United States and realize that Americans did not (yet) realize that NATO was at the core of postwar international affairs. And then, finally, in the CENFAD office at Temple, I found a sourcebook and essay by Kori Schake on the Berlin Crisis. I thumbed through it and thought I'd like to know more about the NATO side. My dissertation sort of grew up around some early work I did on NATO's Berlin Crisis in the early 1960s.

**Joshua R. Shiffrin:** I am not a historian (though I did recently stay at a Holiday Inn Express). Discussing how I ended up researching NATO's history is thus a bit of a story. The short version has to do with the quirks of political science. At its best, political science encourages scholars to speak to pressing policy debates via rigorous social science research; at its worst, reality is reduced to a series of regression tables and datasets. Thankfully, my doctoral program was in the former camp and simultaneously pushed students to "know the medium," become substantive experts in their topics of interest, and to connect their findings to contemporary concerns. In my case, this meant exploring the history of U.S.-Soviet relations at the start and end of the Cold War as part of a project examining how rising great powers behave in world politics.

Seeking the best evidence, the research led to a host of archives. The timing was particularly fortuitous for the end of the Cold War "case," where I landed at the Reagan and H.W. Bush Presidential Libraries just as documents from the period were being newly declassified (with FOIA rules promising still further evidence). When digging through the files, one could not help but be struck by the centrality of NATO to U.S. foreign policy thinking both *vis-à-vis* the USSR and in general. Of course, many of the materials were secondary to the project at hand. Still, the ubiquity of NATO to U.S. planning and the fact that virtually no scholars had seen these records before made me pay attention—even if secondary, they were just interesting. Particularly for the Reagan and Bush years, I copied the materials, filed and skimmed them, and let the substance stew in the back of my mind.

Fast forward a few years. By the mid-2010s, debates over (1) whether the U.S. had ever promised then-Soviet leaders not to expand NATO into Central and Eastern Europe, and (2) the process by which NATO began to move east were at the forefront of policy discussions—and I realized the documents I had could address these issues! Indeed, thanks to earlier findings, I realized that much of the then-consensus was deeply wrong: not only had U.S. leaders assured Soviet leaders that NATO would not go east, but the U.S. began to contemplate enlargement even as the Cold War was wrapping up. Fine-tuning these findings generated a host of published works, and further spurred follow-on questions about NATO's post-Cold War expansion into Eastern Europe—including how one assesses the merits of the move, the soundness of the decision-making behind it, and so on. A whole research agenda on NATO's post-Cold War history and its results emerged naturally. In short, I didn't set out to focus on NATO, but a combination of fortuitous timing and interest in policy debates led a political scientist to traffic in history.

## 2. Which scholars do you see as having laid the groundwork for the study of the history of NATO?

**SC:** It would be virtually impossible to talk about the historical study of NATO without mentioning Lawrence S. Kaplan. Over the years, Kaplan published a series of major works on the Alliance's origins, the U.S. role within NATO, etc. It's hard to imagine the serious historical study of NATO without Kaplan's efforts.

**JHM:** This is a very difficult question to answer in the sense that there are multiple ways of studying the Alliance, and a great deal of non-English language literature on the topic that I'm only vaguely aware of. For instance, there are various archival-based studies on Alliance history that have been written in German, French, Dutch, Norwegian, etc., that appear in the footnotes of English-language studies but trying to get a proper grasp of this vast literature would require an international scholarly effort. Indeed, a major shortcoming of the field, assuming one can define "NATO Studies" as some sort of semi-coherent entity, is the lack of any recent attempt at bibliographic control. There are a handful of bibliographic essays scattered about, as well as some Cold War era bibliographies, plus the NATO Library will occasionally produce a thematic bibliography that contains relevant material on a particular issue, but in general, chaos prevails. This shouldn't come as much of a surprise as the study of NATO includes works on Alliance history, both archival and non-archival based, studies that examine the Alliance from various IR and political science perspectives, especially on its present and future, studies of NATO as an international organization, military histories dealing with NATO defense plans during the Cold War and military operations after the Cold War, studies examining NATO policies and strategies, internal political friction, how the Alliance functions, how it is led, its role in various international crises, its relationships with nonmember states, member states' policies towards the Alliance, etc. As such, scholars contributing to the study of NATO hail from both the social sciences and humanities, with an emphasis on the former. Nor should the importance of practitioners be ignored.

In my view, the best work on the drafting of the North Atlantic Treaty was written by a Canadian diplomat, Escott Reid, who was a direct participant. Various think tanks have also produced important work on the Alliance. For example, one of the earliest analyses of NATO was a 1952 report prepared by a Chatham House study group. Important analyses by university-based political scientists and historians would only emerge later. For instance, Robert S. Jordan and David P. Calleo published several important works in the 1970s, and Lawrence S. Kaplan's major archival-based works only began to be published in the 1980s. Another crucial point to mention is that some of the best books on NATO are edited collections, such as Klaus Knorr's 1959 edited book on *NATO and American Security*, or Gustav Schmidt's 2001 edited three-volume *A History of NATO: The First Fifty Years*. In contrast, grand narratives are a rarity, albeit with some exceptions, such as Timothy A. Saylor's 2019 book, *Enduring Alliance: A History of NATO and the Postwar Global Order*. Most authors have focused on specific themes, such as Beatrice Heuser's *NATO, Britain, France and the FRG: Nuclear Strategies and Forces for Europe, 1949-2000*. Thus, one can identify certain edited books that have been influential, but somewhat trickier to identify single-authored books that have laid the groundwork for the field in the same sort of way one can identify certain influential scholars in fields such as Cold War history or the history of US foreign policy. Even so, if one were to single out a particularly influential academic on NATO, it would be the recently deceased Lawrence S. Kaplan (a student of the influential American foreign policy scholar Samuel Flagg Bemis), as he is probably the academic most often referred to as the "doyen" of "NATO Studies." Beginning in the early 1950s Kaplan started writing about NATO, tracking its early history from whatever sources were then available. Later on, his work increasingly benefited from declassified documentation and probably his best books were only published following his retirement. Notably, Kaplan founded the Center for NATO Studies at Kent State University (later the Lemnitzer Center) in 1979; the first, indeed probably the only, academic center, at least that I am aware of, dedicated to the subject. Notably, the Center's output on NATO was somewhat limited and the Center eventually expanded to include study of the European Union as well. More generally, NATO Studies never emerged elsewhere, presumably due to a lack of student demand and limited institutional enthusiasm. At best, the field consists of academics from a range

of disciplines working independently of one another and without any dedicated research centers, journals, annual conferences, etc. Moreover, compared with the number of MA modules, Ph.D. students, postgraduate researchers, and research clusters and centers focused on the United Nations or European Union, those focused on NATO are few and far between.

**TAS:** The late Lawrence S. Kaplan was referred to as “Mr. NATO” and for good reason. I think Marc Trachtenberg’s work on the postwar settlement has been absolutely essential for all the scholarship that has come next. There is a coterie of scholars who first got into the British archives, especially on the nuclear side. Now, I think it is pretty clear that Mary Sarotte has laid down the marker or the groundwork or whatever you would like to call it for basically all studies of NATO at the end of the Cold War and beyond.

I had in my Ph.D. proposal a statement like: “library shelves groan under the combined weight of books NATO.” (Now I groan when I think of that line.) This is one thing I find so strange about NATO history: There is a lot—and I mean A LOT—of political science scholarship on NATO. There is very little historical scholarship directly on NATO. And yet so many SHAFR members have touched on a part of NATO in some part of their work. NATO is such an important part of post-Second World War international affairs that almost everyone has or has had to deal with some aspect of its history, but it is often tangential. The result is strange: We do not have many historians who would call themselves “NATO historians” and yet little tidbits of NATO history are everywhere floating in a loose, uncoordinated constellation of SHAFR historiography.

**JRS:** With a topic as sprawling as a “NATO,” it’s almost impossible to list scholars having laid a groundwork: it very much depends on whether we look at NATO as a subject or actor, on the time frame, on the issue area, and so on. Likewise, my views are colored by coming to NATO scholarship by way of political science. That said, Marc Trachtenberg has probably done more than anyone else to lay a foundation for serious scholarship on NATO as both actor and subject. Among earlier scholarship, and especially for NATO’s early years, important names include Lawrence Kaplan, John Baylis, Melvyn Leffler, John Gaddis, and Timothy Ireland. On the military side, Robert Wampler, Beatrice Heuser, and John Duffield stand out. Meanwhile, James Goldgeier, Svetlana Savranskaya, Sean Kay, and Mary Sarotte have done much to advance the study of NATO in the post-Cold War era. And although not scholarship per se, memoirs by key policymakers involved in the creation or operation of the alliance—on the U.S. side, Ted Achilles, George Kennan, and Condoleezza Rice come to mind—are indispensable for thinking through the alliance’s evolution.

It’s also important to underscore that, with new evidence to light and diverse historical approaches gaining traction, a bevy of rising scholars are bringing new perspectives to debates over NATO. Timothy Sayle, Susan Colbourn, Heidi Hardt, Seth Johnston, Bryan Frizzelle, Stefanie von Hlatky, Sara Moller, Paul van Hooft, and Linde Desmaele are all standout names in this regard (not all are historians, and I’m sure I’ve forgotten others who should be mentioned). Here, I’ve been especially struck by the push to approach NATO from a transnational perspective, to consider popular reactions to NATO during and after the Cold War, and to consider NATO’s relationship with other international institutions. Given resurgent interest in the alliance, their work promises to break new ground.

### **3. Discuss how the field has evolved to include different approaches to analyzing the history of NATO.**

**SC:** Even talk of a field might be presumptuous. Work on NATO spans disciplines, and much of what has been written comes from practitioners and political scientists, not historians. Within

the field of history, NATO issues often end up covered as part of other subjects of study, be it the foreign policy of a particular presidential administration or an in-depth dive on a crisis that had major implications for NATO like Berlin.

That being said, the sheer size and scale of NATO mean that historians have gone in plenty of directions. There’s been a lot of work in recent years delving into the various committees and councils under NATO’s auspices, be it the military and political work of bodies like the Nuclear Planning Group and the Information Service or NATO’s efforts to carve out a role in scientific and climate issues such as the Committee on the Challenges of Modern Society.

**JHM:** As with most other related subjects, the history of NATO has evolved over several phases. I would highlight three as being particularly noteworthy. The first phase, running pretty much through the first several decades after NATO was founded, was characterized by works limited to non-archival sources, such as news accounts, official communiqués, memoirs, and so forth. The second phase was inaugurated as the archives of NATO member states slowly opened up beginning in the late 1970s, with archival-based monograph-length studies starting to appear in the early 1980s. The third phase kicked off in the late 1990s when researchers were finally able to access the NATO Archives. This last phase has led to some useful studies based on documentation from various NATO committees. For example, scholars utilizing these documents, such as Linda Risso and Evanthis Hatzivassiliou, have produced important studies on NATO intelligence assessments, the NATO Information Service, NATO’s Science Committee, the Committee on the Challenges of Modern Society, and Atlantic Policy Advisory Group. Importantly, whilst some member state archives continue to release relevant documentation and are slowly crossing the threshold into the post-Cold War period, the NATO Archives have not progressed beyond the mid-1960s. Another key limitation is that documentation from SHAPE, even from this early period, is mostly unavailable. Nevertheless, a good deal of the NATO Archival documentation, which incidentally is also posted online, has yet to be sufficiently mined. Regardless, one question arising from scholars’ relative access to different types of sources is the degree to which utilizing archival material has advanced NATO scholarship and offered any major revisions to what was already known. I think it is fair to say that although access to the archives has fleshed out our understanding of the Alliance, it has not radically altered it. To take one example, Paul Buteux’s work in the mid-1980s on NATO nuclear consultation from 1965 through 1980, which relied almost entirely on media reports, other open sources, and some interviews, provided a fairly reliable overview of the major Alliance nuclear debates, and has not been fundamentally challenged, despite numerous subsequent works benefitting from various archival collections. Naturally, histories addressing the evolution of NATO strategy that are based on the original NATO strategy documents can offer a degree of nuance that is otherwise lacking in studies not based on these documents. Nevertheless, even those histories that appeared prior to the full release of NATO’s classified Cold War strategy documents were still able to capture the essential features of the strategy.

**TAS:** I am not sure about this. I think the biggest change of importance for NATO studies has been the acceptance in the SHAFR world of international history (as opposed to the history of American foreign policy). I don’t mean this as a knock on anyone or anything; there’s no bogeyman here. I just think there is more room now for scholars to study NATO rather than, say, “the United States and NATO” or “the United Kingdom of NATO.” This is not totally new, of course. Marc Trachtenberg’s work on NATO in *A Constructed Peace* (Princeton University Press, 1999) is a great example of what I’m talking about. Trachtenberg modelled what was becoming possible for the 21st century: truly multi-archival research that allows scholars to see the subject from many angles. The increasing ease of international travel

(pandemic aside) and especially the digital camera have of course made this much easier than it was in the past.

**JRS:** We can think of NATO scholarship as evolving in three waves. Broadly, these waves tracked with the emergence of different approaches toward engaging history itself. First generation scholarship was, for obvious reasons, wrapped up in discussions of U.S.-Soviet relations. Particularly in early studies, the field tended to treat NATO largely as an arm of American foreign policy in general and policy toward Europe/the USSR/the Cold War in particular; partly as a result, high-level pronouncements of U.S. policy and/or NATO's direction were frequently taken at face value. For better or worse, such approaches continue to color many treatments of the history. Needless to say, it also tended (and tends) to produce somewhat hortatory work arguing the alliance is a force for "good" in the world, central to "liberal order," critical to the spread of liberal democracy, and other such ostensible hallmarks of the postwar world.

Starting in the 1960s-1970s and continuing after the Cold War, however, the growing availability of archival and other primary source evidence, the development of more sophisticated methods to assess, e.g., NATO diplomatic policy, and the growing attention to smaller actors' agency in world affairs caused the field to shift. A second wave emerged that increasingly foregrounded the role of contingency and the importance of domestic politics and intra-institutional considerations for the alliance's history. Not coincidentally, this work pushed the field to more critically examine NATO's behavior, its relationship with the Soviet Union (and later Russia), and the often-fraught relationships among the alliance's core members (including the United States and the European allies, but also among the European states themselves).

Unfortunately (in my view), the demise of the Soviet Union and decline of diplomatic history in the academy largely limited the serious study of NATO after the Cold War. Insofar as this period also saw history (and political science) develop still more approaches to empirical inquiry, scholarship on NATO tended to stagnate. Recently, however, a third wave of NATO work has begun emerging that—as noted—promises to bring new insights to bear on the material. Without rejecting traditional approaches emphasizing high politics, domestic issues, and institutional debates, the new wave has begun incorporating, *inter alia*, transnational, business-vice-economic, and gendered approaches to the subject. It has also begun investigating the range of NATO activities ranging from promoting women, peace, and security, to counterinsurgency/terrorism operations and institutional competition with the European Union—that, combined, have been part of NATO's post-Cold War role. Where this work goes is anyone's guess, but the field is becoming increasingly dynamic after years of stasis. One hopes for still more research to shed further light on NATO's history.

#### 4. What are some of the challenges faced by scholars working in the field?

**SC:** Probably the biggest problem, if I'm being honest, is NATO itself. It's an unwieldy disaster as a researcher and a writer!

Let me give just one example. Imagine we suspend the realities of thirty-year document release rules and the often-glacial pace of declassification for a moment and assume you are about to start working on a history of one of today's major NATO issues: the joint Swedish-Finnish bid to join the Atlantic Alliance. You would be interested in Swedish documents and Finnish ones, of course. You'd likely want records from NATO of the relevant Council discussions at the Headquarters in Brussels. You would want the perspectives and considerations of major allies likely to influence the decision, so the United States, United Kingdom, France, and Germany. You probably also want to touch on potential spoiler

states. That means, at the very least, documents and interviews from Hungary and Turkey. Let's assume you stop there (and don't, for instance, want to touch the hornet's nest of figuring out Russian attitudes toward Finland and Sweden joining): that's already seven languages and even more archives. And that list includes two members-in-waiting and just six of NATO's thirty members. It's not hard to see the topic can quickly become a sprawling and complicated research task.

No matter which element of NATO's history you take on, the same kinds of problems exist. NATO operated on principles of consensus, though all of the member countries did not have the same degree of influence. Historians gravitate toward the biggest players, but the history of NATO is not the history of US foreign policy in Europe or of US relations with Western Europe. (For those readers familiar with the Bernie Sanders meme, this is where you should imagine my own NATO Bernie: "I am once again asking you to stop talking about NATO and its history as nothing more than an extension of US foreign policy.") The organization's history involves members of all sizes, each with their own influence and input. To get a fuller picture, you need the perspectives and attitudes of smaller states, too. Not everything started in Washington.

As with other topics, historians interested in NATO face problems of declassification and access to relevant documents, particularly on nuclear and defense questions. There are also the struggles of balancing NATO's institutional records with those of NATO's member governments and their respective domestic politics. The NATO Archives have worked hard to make material available, but there's still reams of private office files from successive Secretaries General of the alliance that would be a boon to have, to give one example.

**JHM:** Several challenges come immediately to mind. The most important, which I alluded to earlier, has to do with access to relevant documents. Whilst the 30-year declassification rule equivalent in many national archives is grudgingly accepted, provided of course that documents are in fact made available, which all too often is not the case, that the NATO Archives has not released more documents through the end of the Cold War, with very few exceptions, is a major problem. Worse still, the document collections that have been released do not include many important records dealing with the NATO Secretary General, nor those of SACEUR and SACLANT, nor have many details of war plans and reports on high-level exercises been released either. An equally important challenge is the language problem. Simply put, depending on the national archive, some countries will release more NATO-related documents than others, yet researchers are simply unable to effectively make use of this material, assuming they are even aware of its existence, due to the difficulties of translation. This relates to another major challenge which is the lack of a proper community or network of NATO historians. To the extent interactions occur, this is done on an *ad hoc* basis, rather than in a more formalized manner. As such, many historians working in this area are simply unaware of what new materials may have been released elsewhere, with far too few transnational collaborative projects. Lastly, there is the basic problem that to study NATO in a reasonably comprehensive manner is simply an impossible task given the number of member states and other institutional actors. For the vast majority of scholars, the research focus will be limited to a national perspective, or perhaps two or three national perspectives, and they will interpret NATO history based on the national-level documents they are working with. This is not to suggest that an absence of comprehensiveness should be equated with an inability to produce meaningful research. Rather, there are certain obvious limits scholars working in this field will be familiar with, such as only being able to consult a handful of national archives, or focusing on a handful of member states.

**TAS:** What is NATO? This is one of those questions that can



drive you up the wall. Is NATO an integrated military command structure? Is NATO an international organization? Is NATO a forum for sovereign states to exchange ideas? It is at least all of these things but probably many more things, too. "NATO" is not a historical actor in the same way "Belgium" or "the President of the United States" or "the Foreign Office" can be an actor, and describing "NATO" as an entity that takes decisions or actions can be misleading. One of the greatest challenges in studying NATO is to explain both to yourself and to others just what "NATO" you are studying, and why that "NATO" matters.

The other challenge is that NATO is boring. Yes, I said it. NATO is boring. The history of Europe's Cold War is primarily a history of meetings. Little meetings. Big meetings. But they are still meetings. NATO really did not "do" anything during the Cold War. (Allies met. In Council. At dinner. In the hallway). And yet that is absolutely the whole and very important point of NATO. It was created and maintained to have a negative effect: to prevent something from happening. This created all sorts of amazing challenges for NATO, the most important of which is that if your goal is to guarantee something does not happen, then you are unlikely to have proof that you are the cause of that absence. And so people do not believe you when you say you yourself have kept the tiger away by blowing a whistle. People just say: why are you still blowing that whistle? That is, of course, until Russian armored units start rolling across borders, and then, for a few months, maybe a few years, everyone remembers why.

**JRS:** Where to begin? One challenge is substantive. As anyone who spends a few minutes on Google Scholar will discover, there is an overwhelming volume of existing work: big arguments are unfortunately few and far between, but there are literally thousands of articles, monographs, memoirs, oral histories, and documentary collections that touch on NATO in some way or form. Although it is not difficult for researchers to engage the major schools of thought and core debates, it is daunting to have to wade through these studies as part of the cost of doing business. Variation in archival access compounds the problem: relevant archival materials can be found in multiple countries, often across multiple archives within each country, but not all archives are equally accessible. This can create practical difficulties—for example, in gaining access to materials in countries where freedom of information is less than ideal while also biasing the types of questions asked and answers offered. Coupled with the fact that many issues relevant to NATO discussions (e.g., nuclear policy, relations with Moscow) are particularly sensitive for governments—meaning they may not be fully documented, let alone declassified—and researchers are often left grasping for evidence. Combined, those interested in NATO can face a wealth of studies and materials to consult, yet end up with a surprisingly thin evidentiary base; needless to say, this is a situation that, over time, can allow tentative ideas to become intellectual shibboleths.

Another issue is professional. Frankly, there is often little reward for younger scholars seeking to seriously study NATO. Traditional diplomatic and military history is dying in the academy, particularly as history departments confront falling enrollments. Meanwhile, political science has increasingly moved away from historical case studies. The net result is that those interested in studying NATO do so at significant professional risk; they often need to find somewhat niche topics to engage, embrace a creative method to get there, or accept a larger possibility of not landing a tenure-track job (bracket for now whether a tenure-track job should be the gold standard) or seeing one's work go unpublished. Professional incentives weigh strongly against working in the area.

Finally, because NATO itself is in the news these days, there can be a paradoxically limited space for interesting research. NATO as an organization monitors what is written about it; policymakers and scholars with a particular view can be jealous guardians of their preferred narratives; even open-minded scholars read political

intent into historical research. The outcome tends to narrow the space for true intellectual inquiry while rapidly leading to politicized debates—work can be readily misappropriated. This should not be a deterrent to research, but scholars working on NATO need to recognize that not all historical debates will be conducted in good faith.

**5. What are some of the significant questions in the field that you feel need to be addressed in greater detail or, alternatively, which questions need to be reconsidered by contemporary scholars?**

**SC:** There's an old quip that the history of NATO is a history of crisis. The same is true of the historiography. For an institution that has been a staple of international politics for over seven decades, we have surprisingly few histories that put NATO front and center and survey the Alliance over the decades. I would like to see even more work dedicated to the Alliance proper, looking at NATO's evolution, the continuities and changes over the years, and the interplay between allies both large and small.

I also think there's space for historians working on NATO to be in conversation with other historians thinking about international organizations and alliances to help us better appreciate what was (and was not) exceptional about NATO. I hope that a project I'm currently working on with Simon Miles, a joint history of NATO and the Warsaw Pact we're calling *Red Team, Blue Team*, has something to say on this front by telling the history of the two Cold War alliances together.

**JHM:** Let me begin answering this question by first making the distinction between Cold War NATO and post-Cold War NATO. With the latter there are an endless number of questions for which we still need to wait many years until the archives open to get more comprehensive answers, ranging from NATO's survival completely intact after 1991, to the debates about enlargement, the relationship with Russia, its roles in the Balkans, Afghanistan, Libya, and so forth. The future research agenda is enormous in this respect. I will focus instead on several issues from the Cold War I think merit some more attention. How NATO would have responded had the Cold War turned hot is one of these. Naturally as no war took place it is a very difficult topic to address. Nevertheless, the dynamics of how NATO would transition to war, how its alert system was expected to function, what political decisions would need to be made to initiate and control the Alliance's mobilization and defense, what political warnings would be communicated to the Soviet leadership, NATO's authority to direct and control important elements of the civilian sector in wartime, how the Alliance practised its transition to war in military exercises, and similar types of issues, have yet to be sufficiently explored. More generally, archival-based works examining the diplomatic role played by the NATO Secretary General would be most welcome, especially as some key books that have looked at this topic, both during the Cold War and post-Cold War, particularly those by Robert S. Jordan and Ryan C. Hendrickson, were non-archival-based studies. Yet, the relationships that NATO Secretaries General will establish with the American President, for instance, or with other member state leaders, particularly the difficult ones, is often vital to ensure the relatively smooth functioning of the Alliance, but this topic has not received as much attention from historians as is probably warranted. In addition, to return to my earlier point about still not knowing how NATO policy is made, more work is needed on NATO-related diplomacy that occurs informally at the Brussels HQ, such as the Quad, as well as member state leaders and senior diplomats coordinating their NATO policies at a bilateral level, usually in their home capitals. Although many studies will often touch on these issues indirectly, a dedicated focus would be useful. As for what questions need to be reconsidered by contemporary scholars, I would highlight the degree to which France's withdrawal from the integrated military structure undermined the Alliance's defence planning, especially since quite strong military links remained in place despite the

political fallout.

**TAS:** There is a ton of work left to do in NATO history. I'm not sure it will get done. Someone should write a history of the efforts within NATO to coordinate the national defence policy of a dozen or more allied states (I can't write "NATO's efforts" because NATO is not really an actor—see #4, point 1). I think a history like this would be exceptionally useful because the NATO allies today continue to try and coordinate their national defence policies within a NATO framework. It is also important because these decisions shaped the balance of military forces in world affairs for more than half a century. But is a Ph.D. committee going to support this topic? Is this going to help you find work in a History Department. Umm... No. Also, it will be boring in the sense there are no capes swishing on your pages and no best-seller lists in your future. Sadly, there is no guarantee that something useful and important won't be boring.

I think historians need to reconsider questions related to the development and application of power in international affairs, and we need to keep looking for ways to connect our questions and answers with the world outside of academia. SHAFR historians have developed all sorts of great tools and approaches that allow us to explain the history of state power with nuance and care. But I am worried that History Departments have ceded the study of hard power to other academic units, and increasingly the academy has ceded these issues to nonacademic pundits. Governments are going to continue to try and make foreign and defence policy, and people are going to continue to make public arguments about how the world works in a bid to shape those policies. I would prefer if these arguments or policies did not develop without everything that professional historians can bring to them.

**JRS:** NATO is nearly eighty years old, yet it is stunning how little we really know about the alliance and its operations. I'll flag three matters that need real work. First, we need sustained study of NATO's military performance during and after the Cold War. NATO was and remains first and foremost a military alliance. With a few exceptions, however, historical treatments of NATO's plans, preparations, limitations, and so on in the military domain are missing. Ultimately, how successful was the alliance in mobilizing and organizing military power during the Cold War? Was—as many people claim—American "leadership" necessary to orchestrate a successful military coalition against the Soviet Union? How did extended deterrence operate in practice, and why did so few NATO allies go nuclear, especially given perennial concerns with American protection? How did NATO's post-Cold War bargain—with the European and North American allies trading American geopolitical suzerainty for cheap security—form and evolve? How is it that most non-American members of NATO, despite having amassed impressive military capabilities during the Cold War and having pledged fidelity to NATO military standards afterwards, ended up with little functional military power only three decades later? We need answers. We do not have them.

Second, we need to understand NATO's post-Cold War dominance in Europe. The core issue—why did NATO become preeminent post-Cold War European geopolitics—is simple enough, and has been tackled in whole or part by Goldgeier, Kay, Sarotte, and others. Still, the matter is puzzling: given all the uncertainties with NATO cohesion during the Cold War, the push for novel post-Cold War security structures, intra-NATO rivalries, and the wide swings in Europe's post-Cold War security environment, it is not obvious why NATO emerged and endured as the continent's overriding security institution. With the post-Cold War era now three decades old (and counting) it's time to tackle this seminal question. Closely related, one wants a retrospective answer to whether Western and Central Europe were primed for peace after the Cold War—such that NATO and a continued American presence were largely superfluous to the continent's

peaceful integration—or whether, as many analysts had it at the time, Europe without NATO was ready to descend back into the sorts of internecine conflict that defined the first half of the twentieth century. We know that NATO helped dampen intra-Western European tensions during the Cold War—did it perform a similar function after the contest with the Soviet Union? Even if so, was it necessary (as opposed to sufficient) for peace?

Finally, it's shocking the extent to which the East—meaning the USSR and Warsaw Pact during the Cold War, and Russia after the Cold War—is missing as an active subject of inquiry in histories of NATO. Indeed, if NATO was in part founded to keep "the Soviets out" while shaping the USSR's long-term containment, we have a dearth of serious work on Soviet policy and attitudes *vis-à-vis* the alliance during the Cold War. That Soviet archives were open for much of the 1990s and 2000s—and that we have access to former Pact records throughout Central and Eastern Europe—only makes this general absence all the more notable. Key questions include whether Soviet leaders were generally deterred by the alliance; the process by which Moscow's attitude toward NATO formed and changed; and the extent to which Soviet policy was designed to split or instead accommodate the alliance. Similarly, at a time when NATO-Russian relations cut to the heart of policy and scholarly concerns, we need much more robust research on Russia's post-Cold War approach toward the alliance, including Moscow's threat perceptions (or lack thereof) and approaches to managing NATO enlargement. Surprisingly, for all we speak of transnational and multinational approaches to historical scholarship (and delving deep into causality within political science), the target of much of NATO's behavior remains absent from the conversation.

**6. For someone wanting to start out in the history of NATO, what 5-8 books do you consider to be of seminal importance—either the "best" or the most influential titles?**

**SC:** I would encourage anyone to start with *Enduring Alliance: A History of NATO and the Postwar Global Order* by Timothy Andrews Sayle. It's the best one stop shop we have on the Atlantic Alliance's first four decades. On the origins of the North Atlantic Treaty, *Time of Fear and Hope: The Making of the North Atlantic Treaty, 1947-1949* by Escott Reid remains a classic. A Canadian diplomat involved in negotiating the treaty, Reid captures the thinking and worries that drove officials to sign onto an alliance like NATO.

If I were to round out a top five right now with a SHAFR crowd in mind, they would be: Marc Trachtenberg's *A Constructed Peace: The Making of the European Settlement, 1945-1963*, Francis J. Gavin's *Nuclear Statecraft: History and Strategy in America's Atomic Age*, and Mary Sarotte's *Not One Inch: America, Russia, and the Making of Post-Cold War Stalemate*.

**JHM:** The following are eight books I have found particularly useful:

1. *Enduring Alliance: A History of NATO and the Postwar Global Order* by Timothy A. Sayle
2. *NATO, Britain, France and the FRG: Nuclear Strategies and Forces for Europe, 1949-2000* by Beatrice Heuser
3. *Time of Fear and Hope* by Escott Reid
4. *A History of NATO: The First Fifty Years* edited by Gustav Schmidt
5. *Propaganda and Intelligence in the Cold War: The NATO Information Service* by Linda Risso
6. *NATO Divided, NATO United: The Evolution of an Alliance* by Lawrence S. Kaplan
7. *Generals in International Politics: NATO's Supreme Allied*

8. *The Nature and Practice of Flexible Response* by Ivo H. Daalder

**TAS:** As I wrote above, an astounding number of SHAFRites have touched on NATO's history in one way or another, and it is difficult to narrow down the list. I am going to leave people out here and I am sorry. But the show goes on. I think anyone interested in this subject should read all the work by Marc Trachtenberg on this subject. *A Constructed Peace*, and the relevant essays in *History & Strategy* and *The Cold War and After*. The strategic and diplomatic puzzles Trachtenberg examines are the core of NATO's history. They are difficult subjects, intellectually, and I'd suggest trying to gauge whether they pique your interest before you end up in the Verbatim Records of the North Atlantic Council. I would also try and get some flavour of NATO's early years by reading Robert Wampler's 1991 dissertation "Ambiguous Legacy: The United States, Great Britain, and the Foundations of NATO Strategy, 1948-1957." Kenneth Weisbrode's *The Atlanticists* is important. I also recommend the biographies or autobiographies of those there at the beginning: Acheson, Bevin, Pearson, etc., etc.

For the early but especially the "middle" Cold War, I would strongly recommend books and some assorted works on NATO nuclear history by Beatrice Heuser, Catherine Kelleher, and Helga Haftendorn. The next smash hit on NATO's Cold Warslashnuclear history is going to be Susan Colbourn's book *Euromissiles*. And as I mentioned before, if you are interested in the end of the Cold War and onward, I recommend everything written by Mary Sarotte.

**JRS:** As noted earlier, it's incredibly difficult to identify works—let alone just books—of seminal importance given the scope and sprawl of "NATO." In lieu of a definitive list, it might be useful to instead think of works that help frame key debates, topics, conversations, etc for those interested in NATO. Keep in mind that these might reflect my idiosyncratic reading of the literature as a political scientist.

For high politics, one can do no better than Trachtenberg's *A Constructed Peace*, which brilliantly defines NATO's role in US and highlights the complex interplay of international security concerns, economics, diplomacy, and military developments driving NATO policy through the middle of the Cold War; his follow-on collection of articles (*The Cold War and After*) does much the same for the later Cold War. On the purely military side, Robert Wampler's unpublished but widely available dissertation, "Ambiguous Legacy," Duffield's articles on NATO force levels, and Beatrice Heuser's *NATO, Britain, France and the FRG: Nuclear Strategies and Forces for Europe* draw attention to the alliance's core military functions during the Cold War (one wishes for similar studies covering the post-Cold War era). John Baylis' *The Diplomacy of Pragmatism* joins Heuser in rightfully pointing out the centrality of European—as distinct from American—concerns in driving NATO forward.

For post-Cold War NATO issues, James Goldgeier's *Not Whether But When* remains foundational to understanding NATO enlargement while showing how good history can be done without access to archives; even recent treatments of the subject by Mary Sarotte (whose *Not One Inch* merits attention for its impressive research!) and others with access to archival evidence supplement rather than overturn Goldgeier's core argument. Meanwhile, Susan Colbourn's forthcoming *Euromissiles* brilliantly illustrates the importance of fine-grained attention to domestic politics for understanding NATO's history; Timothy Sayle's *Enduring Alliance* and Kyle Lascourettes' *Orders of Exclusion* bring a similar attention to detail and multi-causality for thinking about NATO's role in shaping postwar international processes (what some call "order"). Elsewhere, the excellent *NATO in the Cold War and After*—edited by Sayle, Christian Ostermann, and Sergey Radchenko—goes far in laying out a research agenda on many of the themes noted earlier. Similarly, the briefing books

and documentary collections assembled by Svetlana Savranskaya and Thomas Blanton for the National Security Archive remain indispensable for bringing primary sources to light and for their fidelity to the archival evidence on a host of topics. As for the USSR/Russia, Gaddis' *We Now Know*, article-length studies by Kimberly Marten and Radchenko, and William Hill's *No Place for Russia* are good starting points.

Again, this is not intended as an exhaustive list so much as a broad overview of some of the works that have influenced my own thinking on NATO and which may help others engage some topics of interests. Others will no doubt have other helpful suggestions.

**7. For someone wanting to teach a course on the history of NATO or add NATO to an existing course on U.S. foreign relations, what core readings and/or media would you suggest?**

**SC:** Anyone teaching a course on NATO would be hard pressed to find a better central text for the Cold War years than *Enduring Alliance*. For those looking to bring NATO into a US foreign relations course, I would recommend adding basically anything that deals with the Alliance between, say, 1955 (when the West Germans join) and 1989. Usually, NATO is founded, they figure out how to bring the West Germans in, and then the Alliance just disappears into the background, referenced obliquely, but seemingly irrelevant to the major issues until the 1990s when NATO expansion becomes a big-ticket item. The French withdrawal and the so-called NATO Crisis of the 1960s would be a great candidate—and then, a chapter from Thomas Schwartz's *Lyndon Johnson and Europe* is a must. Lastly, surprising absolutely no one, I can't miss an opportunity to say that NATO's nuclear policies, especially the widespread popular protesting against the Euromissiles in the early 1980s and the links to the Nuclear Freeze movement at home, are another excellent option. The media alone is worth it! Think *War-Games*, *The Day After*, "99 Luftballons."

In the post-Cold War world, NATO's expansion eastward to include former members of the Warsaw Pact and newly-independent states of the former Soviet Union is an obvious topic with clear contemporary relevance. The National Security Archive has amazing briefing books of conversations between Bill Clinton and Boris Yeltsin that make for great classroom use. Anyone teaching a methods class or just looking to bring methods into a US foreign relations course could assign parts of James Goldgeier's *Not Whether But When: The U.S. Decision to Enlarge NATO* and Mary Sarotte's *Not One Inch: America, Russia, and the Making of Post-Cold War Stalemate*—both fantastic!—as a way to consider the relationship between interviews (the backbone of Goldgeier's research) and archival documents (which Sarotte used to revisit many of the same episodes as Goldgeier) in the research process.

**JHM:** The most important text is the North Atlantic Treaty itself. At least 95 percent of my students have an incorrect idea about what Article 5 stipulates, and virtually none are familiar with any of the other parts of the Treaty.

After the Treaty, the most important NATO document is the Strategic Concept, of which eight have now been produced, and all of which are either unclassified or declassified. These documents should also be considered essential reading.

In addition, there are a handful of communiqués that stand out. For instance, any discussion of NATO in the aftermath of Russia's 2014 annexation of Crimea would require some engagement with the communiqués issued after the 2014 Wales Summit and the 2016 Warsaw Summit.

As a general text highlighting the US relationship with the Alliance through the late 1990s, I'd recommend Lawrence S.



Kaplan's *The Long Entanglement: NATO's First Fifty Years*.

The forthcoming 54-chapter Oxford Handbook on NATO coedited by Mark Webber and James Sperling will also be essential reading, especially as it updates and expands upon Gustav Schmidt's edited three-volume history that was published more than 20 years earlier.

I can also highly recommend Vojtech Mastny's survey article "The New History of Cold War Alliances," *Journal of Cold War Studies*, Vol. 4, No. 2, Spring 2002, pp. 5584.

**TAS:** I know Susie Colbourn did a course on NATO at Yale, so she'll have a great answer. And, look, I am biased here because I tried to write a history of NATO's Cold War that would help us understand NATO's history. Mary Sarotte's work is going to allow us to teach about the 1990s and 2000s in a totally different way. The Russian invasion of Ukraine highlights important strands of post-Cold War international history that are crucially important to understand today's world and tomorrow's (if we get there).

The question about incorporating NATO into US foreign relations is a bit more interesting now that the end of the Cold War has come into historical perspective. I think it might have been fairly standard in the past to teach about the origins of NATO in the

"start of the Cold War" section of the course. (I never took a "U.S. foreign relations" undergraduate course, but that is where it appeared in the once-standard "History of Canadian External Affairs" course.) After NATO gets created in one of these courses, it just sort of hangs around in the background. Now, I think it would be interesting for an instructor to compare the arguments for the North Atlantic Treaty made in 1949 with those made in 1989, 1990 and 1991. They are, in some ways, strikingly similar. You might pair an account of the alliance's origins with work done by Mary Sarotte, or Jeffrey A. Engel, (or me,) on why the alliance continued after the end of the Cold War.

**JRS:** I am beginning to sound like a broken record, but it depends on the level of the course and specific focus of the class. Many of the above books—some of which also have article-length treatments—would work for either undergraduate or graduate courses. Some, such as Trachtenberg's *A Constructed Peace* and Gaddis' *We Now Know*, could serve in a course covering postwar U.S. foreign policy or international history. The documentary collections and essays put out by the National Security Archive are wonderful starting points for incorporating archival materials into the classroom. I'm going to stay general on this one.

# Congratulations!

## 2022 SHAFR Election Results

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<i>Council (at-large)</i>	<b>Gretchen Heefner</b> , Northeastern University
<i>Nominating Committee</i>	<b>Justin Hart</b> , Texas Tech University

**Thank you to the 286 SHAFR members who voted in the election this year.**

**Thank you for your service  
to SHAFR!**

# A Review of Roger Peace and Jeremy Kuzmarov, *Afghanistan, Iraq, and the “War on Terror”*

Joseph Stieb

*Editor’s note:* The long-form essay referenced in this review is available online at [peacehistory-usfp.org/wot](http://peacehistory-usfp.org/wot). AJ

In their online essay, “Afghanistan, Iraq, and the ‘War on Terror,’” Roger Peace and Jeremy Kuzmarov argue that the U.S. War on Terror turned into an effort to uphold U.S. hegemony, leading to a sprawling conflict that undermined U.S. global standing and the rule of law. These historians operate the United States Foreign Policy History & Resource Guide website, which aims to “provide an accessible, accurate, principled, and resource-rich history” of U.S. foreign policy through a series of open-access, long-form essays. This project has its origins in “Historians Against the War,” an anti-war group that formed to oppose the 2003 invasion of Iraq.

Peace and Kuzmarov’s essay has its merits as a critique of U.S. foreign policy, but it is more questionable as history. The authors frequently read recent history selectively and fail to account for how historical actors interpreted situations and formed policies. These flaws stem in large part from the overtly political nature of their work. The essay does not present competing interpretations of the War on Terror; the authors operate from the presupposition that U.S. foreign policy is imperialistic and aggressive, drawing explicitly from the “revisionist” school of diplomatic history.” This ideological lens colors all of their analysis, limiting its usefulness for scholarship and teaching.

The authors argue that Bush’s War on Terror had four core dimensions from the outset: stopping future terrorist attacks, defeating al Qaeda and other international terrorist groups, compelling state sponsors of terrorism to change their behavior, and using the terrorist threat to expand U.S. hegemony. They fault Bush for several early decisions that facilitated the overextension of the rest of the War on Terror. The first was shifting the war’s focus from international terrorism to states. Bush’s top advisors were more comfortable thinking about the world in terms of states rather than shadowy transnational networks, but their approach both distorted and inflated the conflict.

Early in the conflict, the Bush administration took a unilateral path, exempting itself from oversight by institutions like the International Criminal Court and calling on allies to follow the U.S. lead or get out of the way. Bush’s next mistake was to promote the idea of a “war on terror.” Peace and Kuzmarov point out that terrorism is a strategy and not an enemy. Finally, the administration employed overheated, moralistic rhetoric that hampered critical thinking and encouraged hubristic blunders like the invasion of Iraq.

In one interesting section, the authors note that the Bush administration’s rhetoric on terrorism built on the Reagan administration’s rhetoric, which elevated terrorism to the status of an existential threat and used it to justify military interventions and support for authoritarian allies. Terrorism, as the authors rightly note, has often been a contested and malleable term that U.S. leaders have applied to certain enemies but not to allies that commit or support terrorist acts, like the Contras or Saudi Arabia.

Peace and Kuzmarov criticize not just the widely disparaged U.S. invasion of Iraq, but also the decision to topple the Taliban government. They argue that the Taliban was signaling a willingness to hand over Osama bin Laden in the fall of 2001 if the United States could provide them with a “face-saving formula” and prove bin Laden’s responsibility for 9/11. Instead, an impatient United States invaded Afghanistan and engaged in a decades-long counterinsurgency against the Taliban, a group that did not directly threaten the United States. They describe this as an illegal war because the Taliban itself had not attacked the United States, and non-violent solutions had not been exhausted when the United States struck. The Bush administration and its Afghan allies, the authors further note, ignored the Taliban’s entreaties for reconciliation after it was defeated.

This analysis of the war in Afghanistan is interesting but selective. The authors make a fair case that the war against the Taliban stemmed from a foundational error in the War on Terror: a shift in focus from non-state actors to states. Indeed, the strategic rationale for fighting the Taliban for two decades was shaky, as the Taliban lacked global reach and was a threat to the United States only insofar as it harbored international terrorists. The authors also make a solid case that the United States could have struck a deal in late 2001 with a devastated Taliban. The Trump administration’s 2019 agreement with the Taliban at Doha, in which the United States agreed to remove most of its forces from Afghanistan in exchange for the Taliban’s promise not to harbor international terrorists, looked concerningly similar to what Bush could have gotten in 2001.

This critique misses several key points, however. Pushing the Taliban into negotiations when they were weak required the initial use of force, which the authors also say was unnecessary. Moreover, Peace and Kuzmarov make too clear a distinction between state and non-state actors where terrorism is concerned. Non-state terrorists must inevitably reside in states, and al Qaeda reached its strongest point while it was being harbored by the Taliban. After 9/11, the Bush administration was not interested in simply defeating terrorist groups; it also wanted to strike at the roots of terrorism, particularly in the states that had long condoned or supported it. Overthrowing the regime that had sheltered the direct perpetrators of 9/11 was a reasonable decision, even if other parts of the early war in Afghanistan could have been implemented differently.

Furthermore, the idea that the invasion of Afghanistan was illegal under international law is dubious. States have a right to use force in self-defense, including against host states that fail to control the violence of the sub-state actors they are sheltering. Given the Taliban’s refusal to hand over al Qaeda’s leaders, who remained an active threat to the United States, there were clear grounds for the use of force in self-defense.

The authors argue that the Taliban only wanted evidence that bin Laden was responsible for 9/11 before handing him over. This claim, however, ignores the overwhelming global consensus at the time that al Qaeda was behind 9/11. It also ignores bin Laden’s pledge of fealty to Taliban leader Mullah Omar before

9/11; the material benefits al Qaeda provided to the Taliban; the ideological bonds between these groups; and Taliban denials (the most recent in 2021) of bin Laden's guilt for 9/11. The idea that the United States failed to exhaust diplomacy is true only in the philosophical sense that negotiations could have continued indefinitely in spite of the Taliban's intransigence. In the context of a wounded, angry United States attempting to defeat a demonstrated threat to its population, this claim is pedantic.

On a deeper level, the essay ignores the fact that traditional international law was written largely to govern interstate conflict. The Bush administration was dealing with a new paradigm of war in which transnational actors cooperated with sympathetic states to launch devastating asymmetrical attacks across national borders. Historians should appreciate the novel challenges of this paradigm even if they disagree with how the United States adapted to it.

Peace and Kuzmarov then show how the Bush administration used the War on Terror framework to justify the invasion of Iraq, which had nothing to do with 9/11. This account is thorough, if fairly standard. The authors present the Iraq War as a means to preserve U.S. hegemony and legitimize the right to unilaterally and preventatively remove regimes that opposed U.S. interests. They also contend that the Iraq war "had nothing to do with curbing terrorism," but this is too simplistic. On the one hand, Saddam Hussein's Iraq had no connection to 9/11 nor any meaningful relationship with al Qaeda, and the administration exaggerated the evidence on these points. On the other hand, for its supporters, the Iraq War was about terrorism in at least three ways.

First, the war's backers feared that the potential "nexus" of rogue states, weapons of mass destruction (WMD), and international terrorist groups was too dangerous to tolerate after 9/11. Regime change in Iraq, they contended, would remove one possible avenue for al Qaeda to acquire WMD. Second, regime change advocates believed that modern terrorism emerged from the perception of terrorists and anti-U.S. dictators that the United States was a "paper tiger," in Osama bin Laden's words, that lacked the resolve to decisively defeat its opponents. The Bush administration and others believed that terrorism could not be countered until the United States demonstrated its resolve, and crushing the Ba'athist regime provided one means to re-establish what political scientists call "generalized deterrence."

Third, the authors omit the Bush administration's larger vision for attacking the root causes of terrorism. Top Bush officials, as well as many neoconservative thinkers, believed that terrorism emerged from the stagnant authoritarianism of many Arab states as well as Arab and Muslim resentment of Western power, advancement, and culture. Not only did Arab autocrats often support terrorism, neoconservatives argued, their repressive governments stifled popular demands for dignity and opportunity. The resulting anger was funneled into religious extremism and ultimately, anti-American terrorism. The solution was to topple one of these autocracies, transform it into a democratic society, and hope that doing so would spark larger political reforms in the region that would transform the poisonous relationship between autocracy and terrorism.

This discussion speaks to a larger problem with how the essay explains the War on Terror. The authors veer between history and critique in ways that sometimes distort the historical analysis. Historians should unpack both how actors saw a given situation and whether their perceptions actually matched reality. In the case of Iraq, the authors fail to do the former, which leads them to present an incomplete explanation of why the Bush administration decided to invade Iraq as part of its efforts against terrorism. The authors are right about the questionable premises and disastrous consequences of this war, but their analysis is wanting as history.

This essay is most useful in showing how flawed and manipulative thinking transformed the War on Terror into a long, expansive, and destructive conflict. The accounts of how the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq developed are particularly strong and feature illuminating quotations from scholars and

historical actors. The essay also charts how the War on Terror led to a significant weakening of international law, the forfeiting of U.S. global standing, and a major loss of life.

The authors make a plausible but overstated argument that the Bush Doctrine of preventive war lowered the bar for the use of force, legitimate or otherwise, empowering a state like Russia to claim that it was "pre-empting" Ukrainian construction of WMD through an invasion. This is a fair critique, but an ultra-cynical and nationalistic regime like Vladimir Putin's would likely find some other excuse for its aggression. Moreover, Ukraine's surrender of its nuclear weapons in the 1990s was verifiable. In contrast, Iraq continued to obstruct inspectors until their departure from the country in 1998, and most intelligence agencies, including those of nations that opposed the U.S. invasion, believed that Saddam was continuing some level of WMD production.

The authors' critique of the War on Terror as excessive and unwarranted would be stronger if they had rigorously analyzed the severity of the terrorist threat itself. Without a benchmark assessment of what the United States was defending itself against, it is hard to judge how unnecessary the War on Terror was. For example, their discussion of U.S. drone strike policy does not assess how dangerous a threat the targets were and whether the drone strikes materially inhibited the actions of terrorist groups.

Peace and Kuzmarov end by arguing that the War on Terror shows the bankruptcy of U.S. empire, which they define as "rooted in a way of thinking in which superior military force and economic dominance are deemed desirable and necessary in a competitive international system." But is "empire" the best methodological lens for analyzing the War on Terror? The term means little if it simply refers to a preponderance of power, which the United States has exercised in the global system since World War II.

Empire also requires the abrogation of the sovereignty of other states, which are controlled from the outside and have no hope of being integrated on an equal basis into the metropole. But does that describe U.S. behavior in the War on Terror? The United States returned sovereignty to the new government of Afghanistan almost immediately and to Iraq in under two years. These wars led to no territorial conquest for the United States, no special economic control of these states, and little ability to shape Iraqi and Afghan politics. Empire, for too many historians, simply means the exercise of disproportionate power in the international system, a definition so broad as to make the term nearly meaningless.

The authors call for the United States to end its imperial and hegemonic roles, which to them means acting more multilaterally, pursuing security primarily through institutions like the United Nations, slashing defense spending, combating climate change, and pursuing "empathy across national borders and cultures." These are desirable goals, but this essay ignores the extent to which U.S. global power has made these goals feasible in the first place by facilitating political and economic integration, building international law and institutions, and maintaining an open global commons that has contributed to international trade and unprecedented global prosperity. To paraphrase historian Elizabeth Cobbs Hoffman, "umpire" may be a better descriptor for the U.S. global role than empire.

Critics could also note that the European Union and other institutions of modern Europe might not have been formed without the U.S. security guarantee, which defended Europe from Soviet encroachment and tamped down geopolitical competition within Europe, facilitating cooperative integration rather than competition. This project is again being threatened by Russian aggression, and it is hard to see how that threat will be countered unless the United States maintains an active global posture and deterrent capability.

It might be more useful to look at the War on Terror as an overreaction to an admittedly horrifying event that distracted from and threatened the legitimacy of the U.S. global role of maintaining openness, deterring aggression, and providing public goods. This essay's one-sided assessment in no way proves that this global role should be thrown out with the bathwater of



the War on Terror.

The essay also suffers from several technical problems that limit its usefulness. Its chronology is haphazard. For example, the reasoning behind the Afghanistan and Iraq wars is presented early on, but the background of U.S.-Afghan and Iraqi relations comes much later. It is not clear who the essay's target audience is. It is clearly pitched at progressives who are predisposed to accept its claims. However, at about 64,000 words it is too long to assign to undergraduates or to expect the elusive general public to read. And despite its thoroughness, it is not original enough to interest scholars, many of whom have already engaged this subject. For example, Karen Greenberg and Mary Dudziak have both dealt with the consequences of vagueness in the War on Terrorism for policy and law in their work. Peace and Kuzmarov might have been better off reorganizing this essay into a short book that presents their case more dispassionately.

## In the next issue of *Passport*

A roundtable on Jayitra Sarkar, *Ploughshares and Swords*

Jill Crandell on the DPAA and Family History

Seven Questions on Environmental Diplomacy

**...and much more!**

## The Tonous and Warda Johns Family Book Award

The Pacific Coast Branch of the American Historical Association invites submissions for the 2023 **Tonous and Warda Johns Family Book Award**.

The prize honors Tonous Hanna and Warda Paulis, who immigrated to the United States from Syria in 1900, married in 1906, and became U.S. citizens along with their children in 1919. Tony and Warda Johns, as they became known, emphasized the importance of education, hard work, and philanthropy to their children and grandchildren, and had a deep and abiding love for their adopted country and its history. These values—shared by so many other immigrants to the United States—profoundly shaped the lives of their descendants. In celebration of these ideals and in recognition of Tony and Warda’s continuing influence on their family, the Johns family created this endowment in the hope that Tony and Warda’s legacy will be felt and appreciated by the PCB-AHA community and that the award will encourage and recognize excellent historical scholarship.

The **Tonous and Warda Johns Family Book Award** will recognize the outstanding book (monograph or edited volume) in the history of U.S. foreign relations, immigration history, or military history by an author or editor residing in the PCB-AHA membership region.

Copies of books submitted for consideration for the award should be sent directly to each of the three members of the prize committee by **February 15, 2023**. More information is available at <https://www.pcbaha.org/tonousandwardajohnsfamilybookaward>.

Questions about the award or inquiries regarding donations to the endowment should be directed to Michael Green, PCB-AHA executive director, at [michael.green@unlv.edu](mailto:michael.green@unlv.edu).

The Pacific Coast Branch of the American Historical Association was organized in 1903 to serve members of the American Historical Association living in the western United States and the western provinces of Canada. With over 4000 members, it is one of the largest professional historical organizations in the United States.



# Reflections on the SHAFR Committee on Women Second Book Workshop

Nicole Anslover

The day before SHAFR's Annual Meeting began in New Orleans last June, a smaller group of SHAFR members gathered in the History Department at Tulane to come together for the inaugural Second Book Workshop. Not knowing exactly what to expect, participants eagerly (and some a bit nervously) started getting to know one another and waited to see what would unfold over the next two days.

The Second Book Workshop, sponsored and organized by the SHAFR Committee on Women, was the brainchild of longtime SHAFR member Ilaria Scaglia and was originally planned for New Orleans in 2020. As the world changed, so did the planning for both the SHAFR Annual Meeting and the committee's event and in Spring 2022, the committee sent out a call for applicants for a new type of workshop. The hope was that the Second Book Workshop would be a source of support and inspiration for those working on that often tricky second book. The committee prioritized applications from the following groups:

- Members of underrepresented groups (in terms of gender, race, class, and accessibility)
- People with high teaching and administrative loads
- People who lack a conducive research and mentoring environment. This includes campuses that have not made accommodations for the impact of COVID on research agendas.
- People with caregiving responsibilities (eldercare or childcare) and/or COVID era caregiving disruptions.

The application committee selected eight applicants to participate; prior to the workshop, each member circulated a set of materials related to the second book they were working on. They had the option of sending out a draft chapter (or two) or a book proposal. The Committee on Women also recruited a team of mentors, who graciously gave their time and knowledge and were a valuable part of the workshop. SHAFR members Penny Von Eschen, Petra Goedde, and Sarah Snyder offered insights as scholars who have been through the process of writing successful second books. We were also lucky enough to have two mentors from the academic publishing world—Susan Ferber (Oxford University Press) and Debbie Gershenowitz (University of North Carolina Press)—attend and guide the participants through the process of submitting a proposal to and working with an academic press.

We initially envisioned the workshop as being completely in-person, but, as we have all learned to do, adapted to be accessible to all applicants. This was especially important to the planners, as one of the main priorities of the Committee on Women is to make sure that all members of SHAFR feel supported by the organization and that we are working to meet their needs. We decided that attendees could choose to participate by Zoom or come to New Orleans. Most were eager to be back in person after endless Zoom meetings (and to enjoy the fabulous city!), but others had health concerns, personal constraints, and even last-minute flight cancellations (we can all relate). The hybrid format worked really well, with all of the workshop participants

being mindful of inclusivity and being really patient with their moderator (me) fumbling around with the unfamiliar Tulane classroom technology.

The point of keeping the workshop small was so that each participant would get a significant amount of feedback on their work. We also wanted to have nearly as many mentors as writers so that each writer could receive feedback from both a SHAFR scholar and a mentor in the publishing field. As noted, each participant distributed their work in progress a few weeks before we met, and I assigned a set of mentors to submission. I gave each mentor a chance to prioritize the projects they most wanted to comment on and those that they felt less comfortable working on. That way, they could guide the projects that most closely aligned with their scholarly interests and strengths. The other participants also received copies of each chapter or proposal so that they could follow along with the discussions. Instead of breaking into small groups for feedback, we spent time on each project and held an open discussion on each participants' work.

Each mentor came prepared with detailed feedback for all of their assigned mentees. They asked important questions, offered tips on how to flesh out arguments, suggested specific editors to work with, and led thoughtful discussions. Each participant talked excitedly about their project, discussed their process, their triumphs, and their struggles. They were open and supportive of each other. This alone would have made this inaugural workshop a success and would have accomplished what the committee envisioned. What made this experience "amazing" was that every person there had put in time before the workshop and carefully read every piece submitted. What resulted was two days of constructive, thoughtful, and helpful conversation involving the entire group that each participant benefitted from. I'm not just saying that as the facilitator—when I asked for feedback, that is what they reported.

The Committee on Women looks forward to holding similar workshops in the future. To encourage SHAFR members to be on the lookout for our calls for applications, I'd like to leave you with some quotes from our guinea pigs from New Orleans, to whom we are very grateful:

*"Thank you, thank you, thank you! I can't say it enough. The Second Book Workshop was amazing. I did not know what to expect, so I did not come with any expectations. I was just hoping to get some ideas. Everyone was so supportive and generous with their comments."*

**Terri Keeley**

*"What I would perhaps add is that the SHAFR workshop introduced me to new and for my project important colleagues (for ex. Debbie Gershenowitz) and resulted in reconnecting with once close colleagues with whom I had lost touch (for ex. Chris Endy with whom I was in grad school, we had the same adviser) in a meaningful way: we were both elated by this serendipity and have formed our own little writing-encouragement workshop. These wonderful connections and reconnections cannot be "organized" but they were made possible by this important workshop that you and SHAFR organized."*

**Michaela Hoenicke-Moore**



*"The Second Book Workshop offered a masterclass in intellectual camaraderie. It was a great privilege to be placed alongside talented authors and then to receive honest, supportive feedback from other historians and editors. I also appreciated the hybrid Zoom/in-person format. Those of us on Zoom of course missed out on the informal socializing, but we still benefited from an intense exchange of ideas and developed contacts that continue months later. Kudos to the Committee on Women in SHAFR..."* Chris Endy

We did receive some feedback for improvement that was the same from all involved: make this event longer! We hear you. We enjoyed ourselves, too!

The author wishes to thank all of the participants and mentors, SHAFR leadership, especially Amy Sayward, the SHAFR Committee on Women, notably those who participated in the workshop, including Karen Miller for tech support, and Susie Colbourn for helping moderate discussions.

# SHAFR SPOTLIGHTS

I grew up in an Air Force family, and so many of my earliest memories revolve around hopping to one military base after another before we settled down in San Antonio in the early '90s. My interest in modern imperialism and globalization, however, didn't arise until Summer 2001. I was enrolled in a (free!) spoken Latin course at the Vatican, blissfully ignorant of that year's G8 Summit in Genoa, when things turned ugly. Genoa's mass anti-globalization protest received a brutal response from Italian police, leaving one protestor dead. The violence and protests spread to other major Italian cities, including Rome. These proximate events kindled a desire to better understand the history of modern globalization, which my wonderful professors at UT Austin helped nurture. I joined UT's History Ph.D. program in 2007. In 2011, I took up a postdoc at the University of Sydney, where I finished much of the writing for what would become my first book, *The "Conspiracy" of Free Trade: The Anglo-American Struggle Over Empire and Economic Globalisation, 1846-1896* (Cambridge, 2016). In 2013, after a short stint adjuncting at Tufts, I landed at the University of Exeter in southwest England, where I've been ever since.

## **What are your favorite movies/TV shows of all time?**

Depending on mood, *The Simpsons*, *Arrested Development*, *Mad Men*, *Star Trek: The Next Generation*, and *The Expanse*. My most recent favorite is the Beatles documentary series *Get Back*, which I've rewatched an embarrassing number of times over the past year. I just can't seem to get enough of being a fly on the wall, watching those brilliant artists working on their last album and live show together, Billy Preston's inspirational collaboration, and seeing how Peter Jackson subtly teases out the documentary's argument drawn from so many hours of raw reel footage.

## **What was your most embarrassing/nerve-wracking/anxiety-producing professional moment?**

My first ever conference presentation as a second-year grad student. I was SO nervous. I just read straight off the paper. No eye contact, delivery at ludicrous speed. I still feel bad for my fellow panelists and the three people in the audience.

## **You are exiled to a desert island and can only take five novels. What do you take and why?**

*The Silmarillion*, *Unfinished Tales*, the *Fellowship of the Ring*, the *Two Towers*, and the *Return of the King*, because I have been getting lost in Tolkien's world-building from the age of twelve and will likely never grow tired of it.

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

If the historical figures also prepare said dinner, then Anthony Bourdain, Julia Child, and the inventor of xiao long bao.

## **What would you do if you won the \$500 million Powerball?**

I'd use it to (barely) cover this coming year's energy bills here in the UK.

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

What a great premise! Portishead, Sault, the Beatles, Sly and the Family Stone, Billie Holiday, Black Star, Miles Davis, Badbadnotgood, the Doors, Lee "Scratch" Perry, Grandmaster Flash, the Roots, Mulatu Astatke, and Ibrahim Maalouf. Yep. Final answer.

## **What are five things on your bucket list?**

Travel, travel, travel, travel, and more travel. The itinerant itch has only gotten stronger since the forced isolation of the pandemic.

## **What would you be doing if you were not an academic?**

Before I decided to pursue a history Ph.D., I was on track to become an actuary. My heart was never in it though, so I suppose I'd use whatever was left of my \$500 million Powerball winnings to retire early and travel the world.



**Marc Palen**

Being a complete history nerd in college, I sat down on a Friday evening one spring and read from cover-to-cover Lynda Van Devanter's autobiography *Home Before Morning* about her experiences as an Army nurse in Vietnam. That was it. I was hooked. My first book *Officer, Nurse, Woman: The Army Nurse Corps in the Vietnam War* has roots in that Friday evening's reading, and it spawned my subsequent broader interest in war, the military, and gender in the 20th century United States. I've written another book, *The Girls Next Door: Bringing the Home Front to the Front Lines*, about the military's use of women as entertainment for wartime troops, edited *The Routledge History of Gender, War, and the U.S. Military*, and co-edited *Managing Sex in the U.S. Military: Gender, Identity, and Behavior*. I'm working on a book tentatively titled "Drafting Women" and am searching for another project that might fix my craving for more oral history work with women veterans.

I'm the LCpl. Benjamin W. Schmidt Professor of War, Conflict, and Society in Twentieth-Century America at TCU in Fort Worth. I get to teach classes on war and society, war and gender, war and memory, work with some pretty impressive students, and organize an annual symposium that has focused on WWI, the Vietnam War, the wars in Afghanistan, and a range of topics in between.

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

I'm a complete sucker for sappy family dramas set in big houses, so *Dan in Real Life* ranks pretty high on my list. It also ruined *The Office* for me, as I can't watch Steve Carell play a jerk. I love all Wes Anderson films. *The West Wing* got me through some bad political eras that no longer seem as dark as they once did, unfortunately. *The Great British Bake Off* got me through the Covid shut-down. And, a friend introduced me to *The Detectivists*, which I blazed through and then nearly cried when it ended. I only need to put the show on and hear the theme song to feel better about the world.

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

Fortunately, it was my first "professional" moment, when I presented at my very first Phi Alpha Theta conference as an undergraduate. I was so nervous that I physical shook—a lot—and had to jam my knees under the table to keep them from shaking. I'm pretty sure that the entire room felt the vibrations.

**You are exiled to a desert island and can only take five novels. What do you take and why?**

Oh geez, does it have to be novels? I'm a pretty terrible fiction reader. I'd rather take my yarn and knitting needles or my sewing machine.

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

I'd have dinner with Lynda Van Devanter, who in many ways sparked my particular historical interests. Another woman I have written about—Emma Young Dickson, who served with the YMCA in World War I—would also be at this dinner. The two women's war experiences were very different, yet I think they'd find much in common. I'd also bring another war veteran to the table, Benjamin W. Schmidt, a former TCU student who became a Marine and was killed in Afghanistan. His family established the professorship that I hold at TCU, and I would love to know more about him.

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

First, vacation! An elaborate vacation to Bali or somewhere tropical. I'd probably take several trips, in fact. I'd take care of family and friends (but not too many!) and then try to do something meaningful. Lately, I've been thinking that I'd buy up a whole lot of land in my home state of West Virginia and make it public park lands.

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

Simon & Garfunkel, as well as Paul Simon the solo act, Mumford and Sons, Creedence Clearwater Revival, Baaba Maal, Bob Dylan (the early stuff), Ray Charles, and Ralph Stanley. It's a bit of an odd combination, but in the right proportions could be a funky mix.

**What are five things on your bucket list?**

I don't really have a bucket list, though the older I get, I'll probably develop one. Most of my real dreams involve travel to faraway places. I really want to go to Vietnam and to Ireland, though in different seasons, preferably. I've been to western Africa and would love to see more of the continent. New Zealand is on the list, for sure, as is India. Basically, though, I'll go anywhere. If I can bring a babysitter along for the ride, even better.

**What would you be doing if you were not an academic?**

Good question. I've never really thought of many alternatives. I might take some of that \$500 million Powerball money, though, and open a combination yarn/fabric/coffee store. I'd probably be terrible at business, so I'd need to give away all the merchandise.



**Kara Vuic**



## Lisa Namikas

I was born in the Canadian prairies already loving history, but my dad definitely sealed the deal one museum after another. Ukrainian and Irish by DNA, I was raised by a Belgian mother and a Metis father who loved to show off the culture even if he did not live by it. His lessons taught me the value of struggle and persistence. So when it came to writing about the Congo after its independence in 1960 I saw these themes reflected in a global perspective. After studying at Rutgers-Newark and the University of Southern California, work in Louisiana brought my husband and I here and we stayed. I found my niche raising three kids, then later teaching world history at Baton Rouge Community College. I later added volunteering with Catholic Charities (CC) to help resettle refugees. A passion for supporting human rights brought me to teach in Eritrean refugee camps in Tigray, Ethiopia in 2019, and in 2022 it was very cool when CCUSA named me volunteer of the year. After logging a crazy number of classes, I needed to write again. My next book is a historical memoir with an Eritrean refugee about his struggle and persistence in search of freedom. I love full circles.



Lisa Namikas

### **What are your favorite movies/TV shows of all time?**

*Sound of Music*, *The Matrix*, and whatever movie my kids are watching

### **What was your most embarrassing/nerve-wracking/anxiety-producing professional moment?**

Probably the most embarrassing moment was as a graduate student working with a new theory and trying to add it into a paper I was writing for one of my advisors, the always gentle and genteel Michael Fry. He is such an amazing intellectual and theoretical thinker, and I had developed what I crazily thought was an idea that he would appreciate. Just as I started to explain, he interrupted and asked me to clarify my point and asked how this related to anything I was writing. I realized the idea I had was not going to work, but I did not want to say that right away. I tried to go back and start over. It was so awkward but as always he had a larger point to make that I had overlooked, but hopefully eventually understood.

### **You are exiled to a desert island and can only take five novels. What do you take and why?**

Victor Hugo's *Les Mis*, because it is so long, and a required classic *11/22/63* because I promised my husband a long time ago I would read and finish a Stephen King book; Maya Angelou's *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings*, because it inspires me to write; *Americanah* by Chimamanda Ngozi Adiche because her point of view is amazing; and *The Refugees* by Viet Thanh Nguyen because I am embarrassed that haven't had time to read it yet, but I will read it by the time this is published!

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

Patrice Lumumba, of course, I have always been fascinated with the idea of meeting him.  
Winston Churchill, because I heard many interesting stories about him. Thank you Warren Kimball.  
Terri Gross, I hope she counts as a historical figure, because then we could talk about all the other historical figures I could not invite.

### **What would you do if you won the \$500 million Powerball?**

Start a charity to help refugees, buy a vacation home in Canada and a Roomba, and get my nails done.

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

In no order: Abba, Joni Mitchell, Barbara Streisand, Aretha Franklin, Celine Dione, Alanis Morrissette, Suzanne Vega, Adele, the calm version of Lady Gaga, Nora Jones, Jewel

### **What are five things on your bucket list?**

Learn to swim, go to Ukraine, travel Europe off the beaten path, write or direct a documentary, buy a self-driving car

### **What would you be doing if you were not an academic?**

I would definitely travel the globe as an international TV foodie star

I first got interested in history through World War II. The late 1990s and early 2000s were big moments for Baby Boomer reflection, and a lot of the culture from that period--*Saving Private Ryan*, *Band of Brothers*--dramatized the war in an exciting, and ultimately effective, way. I was also interested in the Holocaust, and in high school read William Shirer's *The Rise and Fall of the Third Reich* (1960), another exciting and effective book. In college, I majored in European History, and in graduate school, I began pursuing the history of exiles from Nazism, which allowed me to combine my long-standing interest in the history of Germany with my budding interest in the history of U.S. foreign policy. Recently, I have begun to turn to the history of the U.S. military-industrial complex, with a particular focus on Southern California and aircraft manufacturing. I also have a dog named Vera, who is very cool.

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

My favorite TV shows of all time are *Seinfeld*, *Arrested Development*, *Pulling*, *Derry Girls*, and *Peep Show*. I'm a comedy fan.

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

This probably isn't a good thing, but unfortunately I've never really been embarrassed or anxious in a professional setting.

**You are exiled to a desert island and can only take five novels. What do you take and why?**

*Creation* by Gore Vidal; *The Three-Body Problem* by Liu Cixin; *Jonathan Strange & Mr. Norrell* by Susanna Clarke; *Democracy in Exile* by me; and, uh, *The Bible*? I've chosen these because they are books that transport you to different worlds and are long so will hopefully keep me kind of occupied. And I've chosen my book because I'm really trying to sell 20 copies of this thing.

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

Hans Speier, because I wrote a book about him, so why not; Kurt Cobain, because I love Nirvana; and Joan Didion, because I'd like to talk to her about California.

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

I'd create thousands of tenure-track history professorships.

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

Hmm: Nirvana and The Beatles would top the list, so let's say them!

**What are five things on your bucket list?**

These mostly have to do with travel. I'd like to visit Argentina, Nigeria, China, Japan, and Sri Lanka.

**What would you be doing if you were not an academic?**

Screenwriting, probably.



Daniel Bessner



Zoe LeBlanc

I'm not sure when I first became interested in history, though I was technically born in an ambulance outside of the Royal Ontario Museum in downtown Toronto so I like to think that had something to do with it. Even if it wasn't quite fate, I did end up spending a lot of time in that few blocks radius, since that's where I got my undergraduate degree from Trinity College, University of Toronto, and where I first became interested in studying history. I had initially applied to specialize in international relations (I thought embassies and diplomats sounded very glamorous at the time) but couldn't stay awake in my first year Econ class, while I was riveted by history of Europe and foreign relations classes – so the choice seemed obvious at the time. While I like to think I was always interested in the topics I study now (histories of information and digital history), I was actually well into grad school before I had enough self-awareness to realize what I was actually passionate about (I was probably one of the last to realize). Luckily, my advisors, Thomas Schwartz and Paul Kramer, were incredibly supportive when I told them I was going to learn how to code and do machine learning for my dissertation. My luck has continued since then, since I'm currently an Assistant Professor in the School of Information Sciences at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign, where I live a few blocks from campus with my husband Dan, who is an Evolutionary Neuroscientist, and our two adorable dogs, Luthien and Lolo (short for Lothlorien).

### **What are your favorite movies/TV shows of all time?**

Such a tough question given the golden age of streaming we're in! I'll be honest that the prompt of "of all time" tripped me up initially, since on one hand there's the shows and movies I go back to for comfort watching — *Parks and Rec*, *Community*, *Superstore*, *IT Crowd*, *Moonstruck* (to name a few) — versus the ones that were particularly memorable; I remember being blown away the first time I saw *The Two Towers*, *A New Hope*, *Orphan Black*, *Mad Men*, and *Mad Max Fury Road*. I'm

already pretty much at my limit, but two of my most consistent favorites that fall into both meanings of "all time" would be *The Expanse* and *What We Do In The Shadows* (both the movie and show!).

### **What was your most embarrassing/nerve-wracking/anxiety-producing professional moment?**

Hard to think of what qualifies as the *most* embarrassing or anxiety-producing moment since, at least in my experience, academia is rife with them. If I had to pick one that I was comfortable sharing publicly, I would go with my first trip to the archives, which happened to be to the Houghton Library at Harvard University. In hindsight this was one of the nicest archives I've ever visited, but my first week there I accidentally disconnected my headphones, blasting at full volume Iggy Azalea's *Fancy* (which has a very distinctive intro for those who have never heard it). My laptop at the time was ancient, so I couldn't shut it off until halfway through the song, and for such a fancy place, no one seemed particularly enthused by my song choice.

### **You are exiled to a desert island and can only take five novels. What do you take and why?**

Since I'm already having dinner with some of my favorite authors below, I'll assume that I get their books gratis. So besides those, I would probably want some favorite comfort reads: Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice* and maybe George RR Martin's *A Song of Ice and Fire* series (ideally he will have finished them so I'm not stuck on a cliffhanger). Then I would want some beautiful prose so probably something by James Baldwin, Maya Angelou, or Zadie Smith. Finally, I would probably want some historical fiction to pass the time so maybe something by Doris Kearns Goodwin or Erik Larson. I would also likely end up inviting all of them to my answer to 4 since I love hosting dinner parties.

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

I realize I've already invited several people above, but I'm hoping I can add an extra chair because I would love to have both Ada Lovelace and Mary Shelley, as well as Ursula K. LeGuin and Octavia Butler at my dinner. We would talk about science fiction and fantasy, and mostly how we can envision other worlds — all while enjoying my two favorite cuisines: Lebanese and Moroccan, with some Malbecs to drink.

### **What would you do if you won the \$500 million Powerball?**

Putting to the side the fact that no one person should have this much money for the wellbeing of society, my current dream would be to hire all the amazing historians and scholars that are getting churned out by the collapse of the history job market into a non-for-profit focused on creating new ways of making and sharing scholarship (think lots of experimental publishing in short and long form). We would naturally also need some serious infrastructure, so a good portion of this fund would go to building alternatives to our current model of relying on Google, Twitter, ProQuest, Elsevier, etc... My hope is that this would lead to more equity in knowledge access, but at the very least I would love it if we had an alternative to Google Scholar for finding and sharing scholarship. As a backup, I guess I could always buy Twitter (assuming the stock crashes in the next year or two after it's purchased by He Who Shall Not Be Named).

### **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'm a big fan of disco and dance music so this musical festival would immediately become a giant dance party. I grew up listening to Boney M, ABBA, and Earth, Wind, & Fire, so they would all be on the lineup. But would also want to invite some more recent dance funk groups like Daft Punk, Chromeo, and MSTRKRFT. I genuinely hope some musical festival does this at some point because it would be amazing! The next day I would host a very chill recovery jazz brunch with Miles Davis, The Dave Brubeck Quartet, John Coltrane, and Nina Simone.

### **What are five things on your bucket list?**

Overall feel very lucky in my current situation so don't have much of a bucket list (also have accepted that I'm a bit of homebody after almost three years of working remotely). I guess I would love to travel again and not just for work (visiting archives and conferences are great but would also like to try this thing called a vacation some time). Also would love to go salsa dancing and see friends in-person rather than via screen. Finally hope to one day publish a fiction book in fantasy/sci-fiction (hopefully would get some good inspiration and advice from the dinner above!).

### **What would you be doing if you were not an academic?**

I'll be frank that most days I'm not sure if what I do even qualifies as a historian since I spend a good portion of my time writing and debugging code. So, I guess if I wasn't an academic, I would probably be doing that for someone else (likely in a startup if I'm being honest about the type of work environments I like). Also, if the fiction book works out, would love to try my hand at screenwriting with an adaptation.





**David Milne**

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

TV shows: *Succession, The Wire, Catastrophe, Tutti Frutti, Peep Show*

Films: *La Maman et la Putain, Before Sunrise, Goodfellas, Bicycle Thieves, The Thin Red Line*

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

At the end of my first year as a Ph.D. student at Cambridge my supervisor (Professor Tony Badger) organized a two-day colloquium with Robert S. McNamara, who was accompanied by Professor Bob Brigham. All the Ph.D. students working on a Vietnam War related topic were invited to present, so I previewed my research on Walt Rostow. It was the first time I'd ever delivered a formal talk, and President Kennedy and Johnson's defense secretary sat two metres away from me as I did so. McNamara and Brigham then responded to my paper at the end. It was a terrifying but incredible experience.

**You are exiled to a desert island and can only take five novels. What do you take and why?**

If I'm exiled with no chance of return, then there's no point in reading to self-improve. So I'll opt for the five-part Patrick Melrose series by Edward St Aubyn. I enjoyed reading this series more than just about anything over the past five years.

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

I'm going to be utilitarian here and nominate three people connected to my current project: Sigrid Schultz, Dorothy Thompson, and William Shirer.

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

Beyond the obvious things (charitable donation, savings for my children, buy a new house, travel with my family) I'd become a part owner of Norwich City FC and the Ardbeg whisky distillery in Islay.

**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 would make for a good two-day festival: Radiohead, The Beatles, Prince, The Kinks, Jimi Hendrix, Suede, Nirvana, Jeff Buckley, Nina Simone, REM, Portishead, P. J. Harvey.

**What are five things on your bucket list?**

I don't have a bucket list, but I hope I'm able to visit more US national parks. I travelled to Yellowstone recently, and Crater Lake in 2019, and found them incredible. I'd also like to spend more time in my native Scotland, climbing Munros (mountains higher than 3000 feet). I hiked part of the West Highland Way with my son recently, culminating in the ascent of Ben Nevis, the UK's tallest mountain, and it was so much fun. Finally, I'm a rugby fan, and I'd love to follow a British and Irish Lions tour of Australia, New Zealand, or South Africa.

**What would you be doing if you were not an academic?**

Pool hustler.

**SHAFR Council meeting  
Friday, September 9 via Zoom**

**Present:** Laura Belmonte (chair), Shaun Armstead, Emily Conroy-Krutz, Ann Heiss, Kristin Hoganson, Daniel Immerwahr, Kyle Longley, Sarah Miller-Davenport, Lauren Turek, Vanessa Walker, Molly Wood, and Kelsey Zavelo.

**Attending:** Amy Sayward (ex officio), Faith Bagley, and Kaete O'Connell.

**Introductory matters:**

Laura Belmonte opened the meeting, asking if there was any input on the June Council minutes and the language about the advocacy process, which were both approved by email since the last meeting. There was no further discussion.

**Discussion of virtual conference components:**

Belmonte then opened the floor for comments and discussion around the survey of the membership regarding the conference. She stated that the survey did not show a general consensus or way forward for the organization. Ann Heiss then expressed that the Program Committee for the 2023 conference has a preference for no virtual conference component next year in the coming year, especially given the relatively high expense and the very low attendance at these sessions in 2022, despite the high quality of those virtual sessions.

Discussion quickly shifted to ideas about potential virtual events throughout the year—not directly connected to the conference—which was an idea brought up by several members in the survey. Suggestions included tying content to the quarterly appearance of *Diplomatic History*, in conjunction with the annual meeting of the American Historical Association, hosting chapter workshops with graduate students and mentors, co-hosting programs with organizations such as CENFAD, and commentaries on contemporary foreign affairs issues. An example that SHAFR might adapt is the current UK-Ireland SHAFR workshop sessions headed by Elisabeth Leake. The survey of SHAFR graduate students showed a desire to be more involved throughout the year, so this is a welcome development.

Council members then discussed how best to move these ideas into implementation. The suggestion of having the Conference and Membership committees work together on this was quickly replaced with the idea that this year's Program Committee (and potentially future program committees) might consider the proposals (and other ideas from the Program Committee) to implement year-long programming. Heiss said that she would reach out to the Program Committee with the expectation that they would welcome this opportunity.

**Reports on 2022 SHAFR conference:**

Amy Sayward recapped her report on the Summer Institute—"Women in the World"—that was held in conjunction with the 2022 conference in New Orleans. She was delighted with how it went and thought that it provided a welcome opportunity to build community at the end of the pandemic and at a time when graduate programs are smaller and therefore less able to develop community. She also highlighted that additional returns will be forthcoming from the institute, including a panel proposal for the upcoming conference.

Sayward also reported that there were no code-of-conduct reports coming from the conference or institute, which was good news. She and Emily Conroy-Krutz, of the Code of Conduct Response Team, expressed the opinion that having our new external investigator serve as the initial intake person was a welcome change in our procedure.

SHAFR Conference Coordinator Kaete O'Connell joined the meeting. In response to a question about the pros and cons of campus dormitory housing, she responded that there was some discontent about the dorm housing and about the distance between the conference hotel and the campus. She also observed that this conference had about one-third the number of graduate students that SHAFR's pre-COVID conferences had enjoyed. Discussion led to a consensus that attendees choosing dorm housing need reminders about the need for shampoo, soap, and other basic amenities and that privacy issues in such housing probably need to be considered in making initial arrangements. However, it was clear that some international attendees and others very much appreciated the low-cost housing option.

**Discussion of upcoming SHAFR conferences:**

O'Connell talked about the emerging plans for a three-hour dinner river cruise on the Potomac River as the social event for the upcoming 2023 conference in Arlington, Virginia. That event will be limited to 150 tickets, and those tickets may be a little higher than usual to fit within Council limits on the subsidy for social events.

In discussing plans for the 2024 Toronto conference, O'Connell mentioned that she was currently seeking a contract bid from a hotel that is within walking distance of the University of Toronto campus. Additionally, dormitory housing will be available at \$50 Canadian. She will be visiting the campus this fall with the hopes of finalizing campus and housing arrangements as well as investigating a possible social event at Fort York. O'Connell then left the meeting.

Sayward then asked Council if it wished to issue a request for proposals (RFP) for the 2026, non-DC conference. She explained that interest had already been expressed by the Reagan Library and by Texas A&M. There being general consensus about issuing the RFP, Sayward stated that she would draft that document, with proposals then being assessed by the Conference Committee.

**Archival issues:**

Council discussed the report from Amy Offner, as our representative to the National Coalition on History, noting increased activism of late on issues related to the U.S. National Archives and Records Administration (NARA). Council did accept Offner's suggestion that SHAFR explore how the National Humanities Alliance might also assist SHAFR in advocating for issues of importance to it. There was also discussion in Council—based on a report from Historical Documentation Committee chair Sarah Snyder—about SHAFR's growing role in regularly discussing issues of declassification with archives, including both NARA and the Reagan Library most recently. Sayward added that Thomas Zeiler and Katherine Sibley—both former members of the State Department's Historical Advisory Committee—had recently accepted appointments to the committee.

#### **Electronic communications:**

Council considered the report of the Electronic Communications Editor, Brian Etheridge. Council assented to the suggestion that Kelly McFarland serve as a co-editor, with a requisite addition to the advisory committee to replace McFarland. Daniel Immerwahr asked when the podcasts recorded at the June conference would be available to the membership, and Council requested a more detailed budget for this area moving forward. There was also a suggestion that the Electronic Communications co-editors might play an important role in assisting with the year-long virtual programming of SHAFR.

Sayward, who had submitted an Executive Director's report, highlighted the oral history project that she has initiated, with a first interview with George Herring, a former SHAFR president and editor of *Diplomatic History*. Her hope is to collect additional information about SHAFR's history and hopefully to further intergenerational discussion about the field. She stated that she had discussed the idea with Heiss of conducting oral histories at the 2023 conference in the room where Council meetings are traditionally held.

#### **New business:**

Sayward pointed out that the National Coalition of History had (on Wednesday afternoon) requested questions that might be posed to the nominee for Archivist of the United States. She requested any possible questions be submitted by Monday. Molly Wood mentioned that she (as the teaching-centered representative on Council) would be co-chairing the Teaching Committee with Justin Hart (recently appointed). They are in the process of considering a diverse set of committee members who might also be appointed to open positions on the committee. She welcomed any suggestions on potential members.

Belmonte adjourned the meeting at 2:00 pm U.S. Eastern time.





## Professional Notes

**Heather Dichter** (De Montfort University) received the 2022 Lord Aberdare Literary Prize from the British Society of Sports History for her book, *Bidding for the 1968 Olympic Games: International Sport's Cold War Battle with NATO* (2021).

**Kyle Longley** has been named the Henry Salvatori Professor of American Values and Traditions at Chapman University.



## Recent Books of Interest

Afflerbach, Holger. *On a Knife Edge: How Germany Lost the First World War*. (Cambridge, 2022).

Allen, David. *Every Citizen a Statesman: The Dream of a Democratic Foreign Policy in the American Century*. (Harvard, 2023).

Bartel, Fritz. *The Triumph of Broken Promises: The End of the Cold War and the Rise of Neoliberalism*. (Harvard, 2022).

Bennett, M. Todd. *Neither Confirm Nor Deny: How the Glomar Mission Shielded the CIA from Transparency*. (Columbia, 2022).

Bernstein, Seth. *Return to the Motherland: Displaced Soviets in WWII and the Cold War*. (Cornell, 2022).

Bradford, Anita Casavantes. *Suffer the Little Children: Child Migration and the Geopolitics of Compassion in the United States*. (UNC, 2022).

Brown, Archie. *The Human Factor: Gorbachev, Reagan, and Thatcher, and the End of the Cold War*. (Oxford, 2022).

Budjeryn, Mariana. *Inheriting the Bomb: The Collapse of the USSR and the Nuclear Disarmament of Ukraine*. (John Hopkins, 2022)

Burke, Eric Michael. *Soldiers from Experience: The Forging of Sherman's Fifteenth Army Corps, 1862-1863*. (LSU, 2022).

Catherwood, Christopher. *Churchill, Eisenhower, and the Making of the Modern World*. (Rowman & Littlefield, 2022).

Cucuz, Diana. *Winning Women's Hearts and Minds: Selling Cold War Culture in the US and the USSR*. (University of Toronto, 2022).

Cuddy, Brian and Frederik Logevall, eds. *The Vietnam War in the Pacific World*. (UNC, 2022).

Demarais, Agathe. *Backfire: How Sanctions Reshape the World Against U.S. Interests*. (Columbia, 2022).

Dietl, Ralph L. *The Cold War Endgame: Geopolitics, Arms Control, and a Planned Revolution, 1984-1991*. (Rowman & Littlefield, 2022).

Downey, John T., Thomas J. Christensen, and Jack Lee Downey. *Lost in the Cold War: The Story of Jack Downey, America's Longest-Held POW*. (Columbia, 2022).

Fischer- Tiné, Harald. *The YMCA in Late Colonial India: Modernization, Philanthropy and American Soft Power in South Asia*. (Bloomsbury, 2022).

Foss, Sarah. *On Our Own Terms: Development and Indigeneity in Cold War Guatemala*. (UNC, 2022).

Fredman, Zach. *The Tormented Alliance: American Servicemen & the Occupation of China, 1941-1949*. (UNC, 2022).

Gray, William Glenn. *Trading Power: West Germany's Rise to Global Influence, 1963-1975*. (Cambridge, 2022).

Haglund, David G. *Sister Republics: Security Relations between America and France*. (LSU, 2023).

Haslam, Jonathan. *The Spectre of War: International Communism and the Origins of World War II*. (Princeton, 2022).

Hendrickson, Burleigh. *Decolonizing 1968: Transnational Student Activism in Tunis, Paris, and Dakar*. (Cornell, 2022).

Hunt, Jonathan R. *The Nuclear Club: How America and the World Policed the Atom from Hiroshima to Vietnam*. (Stanford, 2022).

Intondi, Vincent J. *Saving the World from Nuclear War: The June 12, 1982 Disarmament Rally and Beyond*. (John Hopkins, 2022).

- Jacobson, Zachary Jonathan. *On Nixon's Madness: An Emotional History*. (John Hopkins, 2022).
- Jeans, Roger B. *American Isolationists: Pro-Japan Anti-Interventionists and the FBI on the Eve of the Pacific War, 1939-1941*. (Rowman & Littlefield, 2022).
- Kaiser, Wolfram and Piotr H. Kosicki, eds. *Political Exile in the Global Twentieth Century: Catholic Christian Democrats in Europe and the Americas*. (Cornell, 2022).
- Kennan, George F. *Russia Leaves the War*. (Princeton, 2023).
- Kiethly, David M. *The USA and The World, 2022-2023, 17<sup>th</sup> Edition*. (Rowman & Littlefield, 2022).
- Kirkendall, Andrew J. *Hemispheric Alliances: Liberal Democrats and Cold War Latin America*. (UNC, 2022).
- Knott, Stephen F. *Coming to Terms with John F. Kennedy*. (Kansas, 2022).
- Kolander, Kenneth. *America's Israel: The U.S. Congress and American-Israeli Relations, 1967-1975*. (Kentucky, 2022).
- Kreike, Emmanuel. *Scorched Earth: Environmental Warfare as a Crime against Humanity and Nature*. (Princeton, 2022).
- Lanning, Michael Lee. *Patton in Mexico: Lieutenant George S. Patton, the Hunt for Pancho Villa, and the Making of a General*. (Rowman & Littlefield, 2022).
- Lefkowitz, Arthur S. *George Washington's Revenge: The 1777 New Jersey Campaign and How General Washington Turned Defeat Into the Strategy That Won the Revolution*. (Oxford, 2022).
- Maynard, Jonathan Leader and Mark L. Haas, eds. *The Routledge Handbook of Ideology and International Relations*. (Routledge, 2022).
- Moser, John E. *Japan, 1941: Between Pan-Asianism and the West*. (UNC, 2022).
- Morris, Joshua. *The Many Worlds of American Communism*. (Rowman & Littlefield, 2022).
- Painter, David S. and Gregory Brew. *The Struggle for Iran: Oil, Autocracy & the Cold War, 1951-1954*. (UNC, 2023).
- Pietrobon, Allen. *Norman Cousins: Peacemaker in the Atomic Age*. (John Hopkins, 2022).
- Powell, Julie M. *Bodies of Work: The First World War and the Transnational Making of Rehabilitation*. (Cambridge, 2022).
- Rasmussen, Dennis C. *Fears of a Setting Sun: The Disillusionment of America's Founders*. (Princeton, 2022).
- Rosenberg, Andrew S. *Undesirable Immigrants: Why Racism Persists in International Migration*. (Princeton, 2022).
- Schechter, Brandon. *The Stuff of Soldiers: A History of the Red Army in World War II Through Objects*. (Cornell, 2023).
- Silverstone, Marc J. *The Kennedy Withdrawal: Camelot and the American Commitment to Vietnam*. (Harvard, 2022).
- Sheehan, James J. *Making a Modern Political Order: The Problem of the Nation State*. (Notre Dame, 2022).
- Shkurti, William J. *Soldiering On in a Dying War: The True Story of the Firebase Pace Incidents and the Vietnam Drawdown*. (Kansas, 2022).
- Skabelund, Aaron Herald. *Inglorious, Illegal Bastards: Japan's Self-Defense Force During the Cold War*. (Cornell, 2022).
- Starks, Tricia. *Cigarettes and Soviets: Smoking in the USSR*. (Cornell, 2022).
- Stinsky, Daniel. *International Cooperation in Cold War Europe: The United Nations Economic Commission for Europe, 1947-1964*. (Bloomsbury, 2022).
- Sullivan, Dwight. *Capturing Aguinaldo: The Daring Raid to Seize the Philippine President at the Dawn of the American Century*. (Rowman & Littlefield, 2022).
- Taylor, Jordan E. *Misinformation Nation: Foreign News and the Politics of Truth in Revolutionary America*. (John Hopkins, 2022).
- Teixeira, Fernando, Alexandre Fortes, Thomas D. Rogers, and Gillian McGillivray, eds. *The Entangled Labor Histories of Brazil and the United States*. (Rowman & Littlefield, 2022).
- Valsania, Maurizio. *First Among Men: George Washington and the Myth of American Masculinity*. (John Hopkins, 2022).
- Vassiliou, Marius S. and Mir-Yusif Mir-Babayev. *US and Azerbaijani Oil in the Nineteenth Century: The Two Titans*. (Rowman & Littlefield, 2022).
- Villanueva, James. *Awaiting MacArthur's Return: World War II Guerrilla Resistance Against the Japanese in the Philippines*. (Kansas, 2022).

Voekel, Pamela. *For God and Liberty: Catholicism and Revolution in the Atlantic World: 1790-1861*. (Oxford, 2022).

Wayne, Stephen J. *The Biden Presidency: Politics, Policy, and Polarization*. (Routledge, 2022).

Weiner, Sharon K. *Managing the Military: The Joint Chiefs of Staff and Civil Military Relations*. (Columbia, 2022).

Wooley, William J. *Creating the Modern Army: Citizen-Soldiers and the American Way of War, 1919-1939*. (Kansas, 2022).

Yaqub, Salim. *Winds of Hope, Storms of Discord: The United States Since 1945*. (Cambridge, 2022).

Zeiler, Thomas W. *Capitalist Peace: A History of American Free-Trade Internationalism*. (Oxford, 2022).



## CALL FOR BOOK CHAPTERS



Routledge History of the International Protection of Minorities,  
1919-2001

Co-editors, Carole Fink (Humanities Distinguished Professor of History Emerita at The Ohio State University), Anna-Mária Bíró (Director of the Tom Lantos Institute), Jennifer Jackson-Preece (Associate Professor of Nationalism at the London School of Economics) and Corinne Lennox (Senior Lecturer in Human Rights at the School of Advanced Study, University of London), invite proposals for the edited collection **Routledge History of the International Protection of Minorities, 1919-2001**, to be published by Routledge (Taylor & Francis).

### AIMS

This interdisciplinary volume aims at documenting the history of the international protection of minority groups in the twentieth century and with a global focus. It will make the work of researchers, international officials, and practitioners available to scholars, teachers, students, and the public and indicate paths for further research and policy development.

### THEMES

- ✔ Minorities, War, and Peace
- ✔ Boundaries
- ✔ Decolonization
- ✔ Global Governance
- ✔ International Law
- ✔ International Activism for Minority Rights

Please submit your proposal which includes:

- the theme your chapter will address,
- an abstract (up to 300 words, including the provisional title), and
- an author's biography (up to 200 words).

### SUBMISSION DEADLINE: 14 JANUARY 2023

Proposals should be submitted to the Managing Editor:  
Sean Waller (International Programme Coordinator, Tom Lantos Institute) – [s.waller@tomlantosinstitute.hu](mailto:s.waller@tomlantosinstitute.hu)

### MORE INFORMATION

<https://tomlantosinstitute.hu/routledge-history-of-the-international-protection-of-minorities>





# Dispatches

To the Editor of *Passport*:

KC Johnson's review of my book on Israel-Palestine and the Israel lobby (*Passport*, Sept. 2022, p. 48) is sadly typical of the abject failure of the historical profession and perhaps especially diplomatic historians to grapple meaningfully with these issues.

The Brooklyn College professor begins with an ad hominem attack on the distinguished Israeli historian Ilan Pappé, who praised my book along with historian and Middle East expert Juan Cole and the esteemed professor of international law and former UN Special Rapporteur Richard Falk. Johnson proceeds to question whether the Israel lobby—AIPAC and myriad other groups—constitutes by far the most powerful lobby acting in the interests of a foreign country in all American history, but this issue is not debatable: it is an established fact. Even a cursory analysis will reveal that no other lobby has invested remotely the human and financial resources and possesses the influence over the U.S. Congress as the Israel lobby.

Nowhere in Johnson's review would we learn that Israel, a country of some nine million people, has received more American military assistance than any other nation in the world. Already the military colossus of the Middle East, Israel nonetheless continues to receive a \$3.8 billion annual military assistance handout as well as other a funding, all virtually without congressional debate, even though Israel is an apartheid state as judged by numerous human rights groups, including those within Israel. Nowhere in Johnson's review would we learn that the Israel lobby has impeded every effort to bring an end to the occupation and the relentless illegal settlements in the West Bank, the Golan Heights and East Jerusalem.

It is not critics, who are often charged with "singling out" Israel, it is U.S. foreign policy—diplomatic history--that distinguishes Israel through the unmatched military assistance and enabling of aggression that inheres in the "special relationship."

Historians including diplomatic historians have expressed "solidarity" with the Black Lives Matter movement and with Ukraine, but dare to mention Israel's occupation, indiscriminate violence against Palestinians (among others), war crimes, and wanton violations of international law and you are sure to be marginalized, if not labeled an anti-Semite.

Not content to advocate the denial of Palestinian human rights, the Israel lobby works tirelessly to smear critics and undermine free speech in the United States. Historians should express "solidarity" with students and academics, as the Israel lobby undermines free speech on campus and smears critics through the putrid website Canary Mission--just one of its myriad propaganda forums.

Johnson predictably emphasizes Palestinian terror attacks on Israeli citizens but fails to acknowledge the indiscriminate, asymmetrical warfare and heavily lopsided casualty ratios of dead and maimed Palestinians throughout the history of the conflict. Nor does he mention the Zionist terror groups who blew up the King David Hotel and assassinated UN mediator Count Folke Bernadotte at the foundation of Israel. For most of its subsequent history Israel has been led by men who certainly qualify as state terrorists: Menachem Begin, Yitzakh Shamir, Ariel Sharon, and Benjamin Netanyahu among them.

Historians including diplomatic historians could make an important contribution to creating a climate in which acceptance of basic truths might help propel a transition of Israel-Palestine into a democratic state respectful of human rights for all people, but instead academics like Johnson choose to do police work for the Israel lobby.

If SHAFR really cares about brown lives and victims of aggression, it should condemn the apartheid state of Israel, call for a cutoff of U.S. military assistance, and demand a just solution. Thus far, on the issue of Israel-Palestine and the Israel lobby, the historical profession is on the wrong side of history.

Walter L. Hixson  
Retired Distinguished Professor of History



## 2021 Samuel Flagg Bemis Dissertation Research Grant Report

I was grateful to be awarded a Samuel Flagg Bemis Dissertation Research Grant in 2021. These funds supported research for my revised project. Titled "Asylum Archipelago: Migration in the Borders of Empire in the Pacific and Caribbean," my dissertation examines the development and implementation of United States refugee and asylum policy in sites of U.S. empire: unincorporated territories, commonwealths, military bases and ships, and within sovereign states. After pandemic-related delays, I made trips in 2022 to the Southeast Asian Archive at the University of California, Irvine and Jimmy Carter Presidential Library in Atlanta, Georgia.

I focused on two collections at the Southeast Asian Archive: the Rosenblatt (Lionel) collection on the Interagency Task Force for Indochina Refugees and the Lam (Tony) papers. These collections include photographs, memoranda, and reports related to Operation New Life, which evacuated and resettled Vietnamese refugees to and through Guam en route to the United States' mainland in mid-1975. At the Jimmy Carter Presidential Library, I reviewed Cuban-Haitian Task Force records concerning to the Carter administration's response to Cubans and Haitians who sought asylum in the U.S. in 1980. Of particular interest were documents discussing executive plans to process asylum seekers at Fort Allen, Puerto Rico as well as Puerto Rican responses to this proposal. I also viewed Domestic Policy Staff files on immigration policy and territorial governance.

This research will support at least two dissertation chapters. The first will focus on Guam's use as a refugee processing center and site of permanent resettlement. My archival findings enable me to elucidate how refugees made a case for their resettlement and the legal and economic challenges they may have faced while doing so. My research on Fort Allen will form part of a chapter discussing how various presidential administrations used Puerto Rico, the Guantanamo Bay Naval Base, and third country safe havens to respond to Haitian and Cuban asylum seekers in the late twentieth century.

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# The Last Word: COVID and Diplomatic History— Taking a Long[er] View

*Anne L. Foster, Petra Goedde, Brian McNamara,  
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The covid-19 pandemic attracted a fair amount of attention from historians, with special issues and roundtables and conference panels comparing it to past pandemics and reflecting on its likely status as a significant historical event. These reflections began even in the pandemic's first year. *Diplomatic History* was one of those journals to devote an issue to the musings of foreign relations historians about the ways the pandemic was shaping our thinking about the profession and our subfield. Christopher Nichols, another foreign relations historian, organized two fascinating issues of the *Journal of the Gilded Age and Progressive Era*, comparing covid-19 to the 1918-1919 flu, as well as reflecting on the broader significance of the pandemic in U.S. and even world history. In some ways this attention is no surprise. Covid-19 has killed millions around the world, disrupted every aspect of people's lives from work to school to travel, shaped the global economy, and been the center of disputes about the functioning and role of public health policy. Of course, we should reflect on this global event. But in other ways it is curious that this pandemic prompted historians, who usually wait to let someone else write the "first draft of history," to engage in immediate commentary. As editors of *Diplomatic History*, we commissioned a special issue early in the pandemic in part because we thought that these reflections might be useful not only to current scholars trying to make sense of what we are experiencing, but also to future scholars of this time. These reflections will become part of the vast covid-19 historical archive.

Our reflection on the effects of covid-19 continues, with perhaps more weariness due to its continued presence, as well as more caution, as we acknowledge that what we observe may be due to covid-19. But the myriad other changes of recent years all play their part as well. As editors, we reflect constantly about how changes in our profession and especially our subfield may be influencing who writes for us, who reviews for us, whose books we review, and how *Diplomatic History* is both shaping and shaped by the broader changes around us. We would like to reflect here on some of what we have observed during the "covid years." Many, maybe even most of these changes have broader causes, but covid may have thrown them into starker relief. We hope these observations will prompt a broader discussion about the ways we in this subfield want to respond to these developments.

In terms of reviewing and editing articles, *Diplomatic History* was not much affected by covid-19. Submissions in 2020 were noticeably down from 2019, with only 69 original manuscript submissions in 2020 as compared to 85 in 2019. But submissions then rebounded quickly in 2021, with 99 original manuscript submissions in that year. We are not getting submissions this year at quite the pace of 2021, but are on track to receive about as many as 2019. We have published full issues of articles and book reviews to date. There have been some delays on the production end, resulting in some issues arriving late in mailboxes. We published all issues on time throughout the pandemic, with our usual number of book reviews and articles. From the standpoint of a reader, then, *Diplomatic History* experienced modest effects from the

events of the last two and a half years.

From our standpoint as editors and assistant editors, our work of editing the journal was remarkably unchanged by the pandemic. Even before the pandemic, we already met virtually, since we are physically dispersed with staff in various locations. Over the last three years, we have had staff living in Pennsylvania, Ohio, Indiana, Michigan, New York, and Japan. Our work takes place almost exclusively online, and we easily continued to send emails and proofs and reader reports, using Skype as we long have for our editorial meetings. The most significant change may have been that we all looked forward to those Skype calls a bit more than usual, since they allowed us to talk with people outside our immediate households during lockdowns.

Some informal observations and even some preliminary scholarship have suggested that women were most adversely affected by covid-19, professionally, since they often had to take on more care-giving duties and were less able to submit manuscripts for review during the pandemic. We do not ask authors to reveal their gender when they submit, so our figures represent our best assessments based on publicly available information. We actually experienced a small but noticeable upswing in submissions by women. During June 2020-June 2021, women accounted for approximately 26% of original article submissions, and that percentage rose to approximately 31% during June 2021-June 2022. These percentages are a slight increase from the previous years, which saw approximately 20% of submissions from women. These figures do not include submissions for the special pandemic issue; we invited men and women equally for that feature. There were nearly no submissions from women in the spring and early summer of 2020, but it is impossible to say with certainty whether that decrease was a statistical anomaly or due to covid-19. The easily counted statistics show very little change during the covid years.

Despite these apparently stable numbers, journal and book editors in history have been talking among themselves about the perceived increased difficulty of recruiting reviewers for both manuscripts and books. They also observed that reviewers are taking longer to finish reviews, with more reviewers simply abandoning their tasks. The few studies to have explored the veracity of these claims have been in the sciences and social sciences rather than humanities. Two recent studies on article submissions in journals related to food policy and ecology found, as our numbers above suggest, no statistically significant changes in submission rates, including by gender, or in the operation of peer review. A more sophisticated analysis of submissions to and peer review invitations by all journals published by Elsevier in late 2021 paints a more complicated picture. In the sciences, especially medicine and health sciences, submissions to journals increased substantially in 2020. Women's submissions lagged behind men's, especially in the first months of 2020, with younger women lagging even more than women as a whole. The likelihood of a peer review invitation being accepted also went down somewhat, with men being slightly more likely to decline an invitation than women. As the article noted, this result meant that



as men submitted more manuscripts, they accepted fewer peer review invitations. Meanwhile women took on a proportionally greater percentage of service obligations by continuing to accept peer review invitations even while submitting fewer manuscripts. As with any large and pervasive event, we'll be studying and dealing with the effects and after-effects of the covid-19 pandemic for years, discovering that some careers and scholarship flourished, while others experienced severe hardship.

Our experiences at *Diplomatic History* provide only a small subset of the data needed to complete that broader picture. These experiences may be useful, however, both to SHAFR members as we think about how to move forward, and to the broader profession as historians seek to understand this global event. To start with observations most closely related to submissions and review: *Diplomatic History* continues to receive a substantial number of original manuscript submissions, of which many are high quality. When we ask people to review these article manuscripts, they usually say yes, and they usually return those reviews in a timely fashion. We ask that reviewers complete their task in 30 days. In 2019, 14.4% of reviewers took 45 or more days; 9.6% took 60 or more days. In 2020, those rates dropped slightly to 10% taking 45 or more days and 6.7% taking 60 or more days, while in 2021 they were nearly flat at 11.3% taking 45 or more days and 7.5% taking 60 or more. *Diplomatic History* reviewers have been consistently timely and helpful, for which we are grateful.

It is difficult for us to come to any definite conclusions about the book review process, given the variety of types of books we review and the peculiarities of how our submission software program deals with book reviews. We invite people from across the spectrum of careers open to History PhDs to review books, but we do require that they already have published a monograph. We have not noticed long term systemic difficulties in recruiting reviewers, although fewer people did agree at the height of the pandemic than is usual. We responded by granting a longer time to all book reviewers, and that resulted in more people agreeing, and most of them finishing their reviews in a timely fashion. It is also the case that some people who have agreed to review a book do not end up turning in a review, although the percentage of reviewers who do this has remained relatively steady over the past few years. The broader problems with book reviews do not seem to stem from the pandemic, but rather from issues in the academy more generally.

One subtle slowdown has occurred among authors who were asked to revise and resubmit their manuscripts in response to reviewer comments. We ask that authors complete revisions within two months, and a high percentage of manuscripts do come back, revised, within that time span. Interestingly, it's quite common for these manuscripts to be re-submitted between day 55 and 59. We all seem to be susceptible to deadlines. But we remain willing to work with authors who need more time, and that number did increase significantly in late 2020 and into 2021. In 2019, 6.6% of authors submitted between day 61 and day 90 after receiving their revise and resubmit decision, while an additional 16.6% submitted after day 91. Those numbers shifted in 2020, with 14.2% submitting during days 61-90, and 9.5% after day 91. In 2020, interestingly, late submissions increased as the year proceeded. In 2021, late submissions increased significantly, to 13.6% submitted between day 61 and 90, and 27.3% at day 91 or later. It seems to the editorial staff that if authors are asked to make minor or concrete revisions, they are able to do so in a way similar to past years. But if authors need to make more substantive changes, including additional research or rethinking parts of their argument or exposition, it takes longer than in the past. This situation makes planning future issues a bit more difficult since we cannot be certain how long it will take for articles to go through the review process and move toward publication. But the broader significance is that these delays suggest to us that many authors are under significant stress in their work and personal lives, whether as a result of the pandemic or other societal changes.

As editors and historians we are also mindful of the possible effect of archive closures and travel restrictions on our scholarship. These closures and disruptions have had the most devastat-

ing consequences for our ability to do the work necessary to write articles and books. Our core research institutions, the U.S. National Archives and the Presidential Libraries, were completely closed for months. Even as we write this in late September 2022, many are recommending appointments and indicating low availability and slower access to materials than before the pandemic. Many of us conduct research in archives and libraries outside the United States, where similar access restrictions exist. People wanting to conduct research in China and Japan have not been able to do that at all, and access in other parts of the world has been uneven and unpredictable. Even when institutions have opened, the unpredictability of travel, of the possibility of getting covid while traveling, and the potential for places to suddenly close again have discouraged many of us from taking research trips we normally would have. The lack of access to archives did not show up immediately in submissions, naturally. People at the submission stage are usually relying on archival work they did months or years before. More recent submissions, though, are beginning to demonstrate how scholars have tried to compensate for the lack of access to physical archives in the midst of this global crisis. For most of us steady publication is a requirement. And as editors, we have to figure out how to maintain the rigorous standards of our published articles so that they will stand the test of time and not be disdained as "pandemic scholarship."

Foreign relations historians are clever, inventive, and tenacious. Not surprisingly, more scholars are relying on digitized sources, of which there are many. In a few areas, especially perhaps for scholarship on the recent past or pre-1800, digitized sources may be sufficient. Enough of the sources concerning topics in the recent past, were "born digital," or are only available in digital form, thus allowing researchers to produce scholarship regardless of covid. Digitization of archival sources is also well advanced in the field of early modern history to as late as 1800, helped perhaps by the fact that the total volume of available sources is smaller. For some topics, then, relying on digitized sources is not merely sufficient, but offers opportunities. Since most historians of U.S. foreign relations write about the more recent past, however, digitized sources are merely the tip of the iceberg of what is available and commonly used. However voluminous Foreign Relations of the United States became during the years after 1940, those volumes are still a mere introduction to the full range of U.S. sources a scholar is likely to need on any given topic. For historians, and for us as editors, the lack of access to archives and libraries poses an enormous dilemma. We all know archives are constructed and partial and conceal as much as they reveal. But our professional standards also require that we use the known archives fully in making claims about the past.

The standards are malleable, though, in ways that perhaps have not been sufficiently discussed. Covid may give us that chance, reminding us of the lacunae that have always been there, prompting us to acknowledge them more directly. At *Diplomatic History*, we are honored to receive submissions from scholars based in many parts of the world. Sometimes they have had access to archives as yet untapped by scholars based in the United States, Britain, or western part of Europe. But these scholars often have had no or only limited access to U.S. archives. On a case-by-case basis, we decide whether they have the right sources to make their case, using the advice of reviewers and our editorial judgement. The standard is always high, and when we reject one of these manuscripts due to inadequate access to sources from the United States, we often provide advice about how to shape the article to match the sources available. But as lack of access to sources remains a systemic problem, this task becomes more difficult if not impossible.

We have neither the funding nor the clout to offer solutions to some of these problems, but as we think and talk about these issues during our editorial meetings and work on the journal, we have had some ideas about possible ways to mitigate these lasting effects of covid. One of those is to encourage more collaborative submissions from authors based in different countries and separate continents. Archival research would become a shared task and the formulation of an argument a collaborative process. But

that raises the question of how these relationships can be forged and strengthened. SHAFR could play a role in bringing together such collaborations, through its annual conference, through specially designed workshops, and through shared work on its website.

SHAFR members have already begun a less intense method of collaboration, in the form of file sharing. James Stocker, one of the founding members of the group working on this project, provides this explanation. "The SHAFR Archival Sharing Group is a Google Group where members share or request images of archival documents. It was founded at the outset of the pandemic to help scholars to access archival documents that were at the time inaccessible. It is still available, and group moderator James Stocker welcomes new members. You can access the group [here](https://groups.google.com/a/shafr.org/g/archival-docs): <https://groups.google.com/a/shafr.org/g/archival-docs>. This approach offers significant promise, and we hope SHAFR members will continue to support it. It could be paired with more steps to help qualified researchers who are willing to serve as research assistants make connections with scholars who could use their services.

We might also encourage more article submissions on topics that rely less on national or political archives and more on published sources or sources that are readily available in digital form. That process is already underway, and such scholarship might become more prominent in *Diplomatic History* and other historical journals in the near future. Grappling with the limits and possibilities of digitally available sources provides us with an opportunity for engaging conversations about methodology in our field.

It is still too early to assess with any degree of accuracy the long-term effects of the pandemic on our scholarship, but we can probably all agree that the digitization of archival material has accelerated markedly. The digital will not replace the archival experience, but it will most likely take a bigger share of our source base in future scholarship. But whether it will also transform what kinds of historical questions we ask or what kinds of arguments we advance in the future is open for debate; a debate that SHAFR members might want to actively pursue.

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