

## The Kissinger Wars

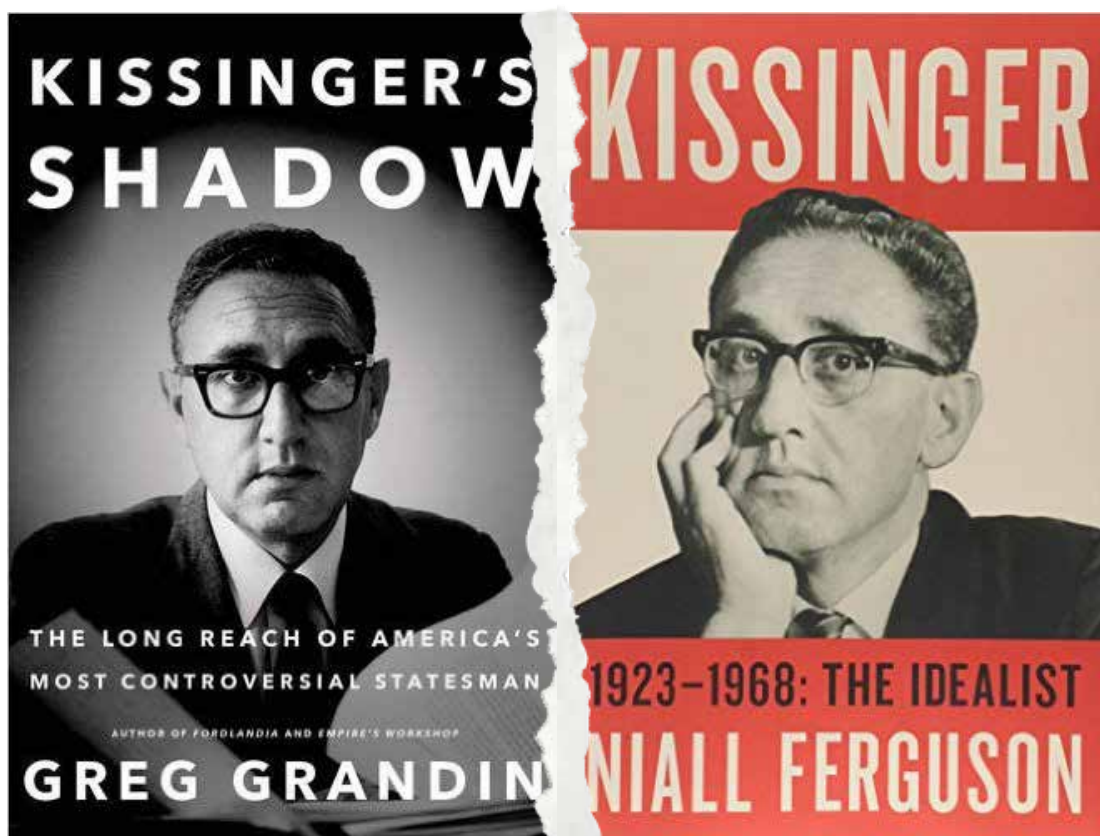
Early in their new books on Henry Kissinger, Niall Ferguson and Greg Grandin tell the same story about a decisive break between Kissinger and his former Harvard colleagues over the U.S. invasion of Cambodia in the spring of 1970. A dozen professors headed by Nobel Prize-winning economist Thomas Schelling flew down to Washington, D.C., where they took turns venting outrage and excoriating their old friend.

Ferguson and Grandin agree that this episode is revealing, and revealing it is, for their sharply contrasting uses of the story lay bare much about the assumptions and methods that underpin their two books, as well as about the battle tactics in what we might call the “Kissinger wars”: the high-stakes contest over how to appraise

the record of America’s most controversial statesman.

For Grandin, now the standard-bearer for what we might describe as the Kissinger-as-evil-mastermind camp, the Schelling story is evidence of what sets Kissinger apart from his peers: the bombing and invasion of neutral Cambodia was more cynical, more ruthless, and more inhumane than other bombings and invasions that came before, and the outrage that Schelling and his colleagues brought to the meeting underscores how far beyond the pale Kissinger had stepped.<sup>1</sup>

For Ferguson, presumptive leader of the Kissinger-as-heroic-statesman forces, the story illustrates Kissinger’s uniqueness—but this lies in



---

## Ferguson detects similarities in sensibility between Kissinger and Bob Dylan. Grandin finds them between Kissinger and Pol Pot.

---

the vitriol he provokes, not in policies that were no more brutal or cynical than those of his predecessors. In Ferguson's hands the Schelling story helps explain the caustic criticism hurled at Kissinger. The professors may have had "cogent reasons" for their anger, Ferguson acknowledges, but too many of them were insiders who had played their own roles in the Vietnam War for the encounter not to look like "staged...self-exculpation" by men hoping, in part, that their public stand might appease the insurgent undergrads threatening to trash their elegant, wood-paneled offices.<sup>2</sup>

Here are two irreconcilable views of why Kissinger attracts so much condemnation: Grandin tells us we need look no further than Kissinger's actions, to which Schelling and other critics reacted in "commonsensical" ways. Ferguson suggests the impulse to outrage is rooted not so much in what Kissinger did than in the psychology of the critics: the bitterness of bureaucratic antagonists, the envy of intellectual rivals, and the pathologies of the American left.<sup>3</sup>

At first glance the two books seem to have no common ground. Ferguson's *Kissinger, Volume I: 1923–1968: The Idealist* is the first installment in a two-volume biography. Although it clocks in at nearly one thousand pages, it takes Kissinger's life story only up until he joined the Nixon administration in 1969. Grandin's book is an extended essay framed around an argument

about Kissinger's pernicious legacy since leaving office in 1977—thus the title, *Kissinger's Shadow: The Long Reach of America's Most Controversial Statesman*. Ferguson is a leading conservative cheerleader for American empire and an authorized biographer who has been friends with his subject for more than a decade. Grandin is a leftist anti-imperialist who has long seen Kissinger as an unmitigated disaster for U.S. foreign policy. Ferguson wrote his book because Kissinger convinced him to do it and because he was enraptured by his first taste of the documents. Grandin says the trigger for writing his book was being "dr[i]v[en] ... over the edge" by an April 2014 photo of erstwhile antigenocide champion Samantha Power buddying up to Kissinger at a baseball game (though the book also builds on years of writing about U.S. imperialism in Latin America). Ferguson looks around and sees a world that is "markedly more peaceful," and he credits Kissinger with helping to build it. Grandin looks around and sees endless war, and he blames Kissinger for helping to propagate it. Ferguson detects similarities in sensibility between Kissinger and Bob Dylan. Grandin finds them between Kissinger and Pol Pot.<sup>4</sup>

Yet the books align in surprising ways. The authors share a vision of Kissinger as a "great man," a colossus bestride U.S. foreign policy. But like a yin-yang symbol, one version is painted white and the other black.

In Ferguson's view, before Kissinger joined the administration of Richard M. Nixon he was an intellectual giant whose thinking was shaped by idealism, a label that has the effect of softening and humanizing a man usually depicted as a cold-hearted, calculating realist. Grandin's argument is that Kissinger was an intellectual giant in the sense that his pernicious policies and philosophy have exerted a magnetic effect on subsequent policymakers, pulling the country into ever-more noxious imperial adventures. Each author is keenly aware of his place in the Kissinger wars, and each attempts preemptive defense. Although the two books appeared at nearly the same time, they so often aptly summarize the other side's claims that the authors almost appear to be in dialogue. Yet it remains a dialogue of the deaf, for each author seems insensible to his own double standards and flaws in reasoning. Examples of attacks failing to hit targets abound.

Ferguson argues that the charges of critics such as Grandin need to be weighed against the presumed benefits. "Arguments that focus on loss of life in strategically marginal countries—and there is no other way of describing Argentina, Bangladesh, Cambodia, Chile, Cyprus, and East Timor," Ferguson writes, "must be tested against this question: how, in each case, would an alternative decision have affected U.S. relations with strategically important countries like the Soviet Union, China, and

the major Western powers.” Grandin scoffs at such reasoning; in one section, he argues: “Guardians of Kissinger’s legacy say his accusers misread or overstate the importance of [evidence]...[offering] excuses [that suggest] truth is not found in ‘the facts of history’ but from a ‘construct’ of hypotheticals, counterfactuals, and conjectures.”<sup>5</sup>

There are hints already that Ferguson, a proponent of counterfactual history, will find in volume two that Kissinger’s costly

policies warded off worse evils. But Grandin’s rejection of counterfactuals (which comes in a discussion of Kissinger’s backchannel to Nixon about the 1968 Vietnam peace talks) is enmeshed in a double standard: in his own discussion of this episode, he jumps to a counterfactual (with a Vietnam deal, Hubert “Humphrey might have” won) and a conjecture (Kissinger “had to have been winging it”) within pages of condemning these methods.<sup>6</sup> One might even apply “construct of conjectures” as a

description of his central argument, given how little it rests on delineating actual (as opposed to presumed) lines of influence. All historical explanation is at least implicitly a reckoning with what might have been, and all sides in the Kissinger wars need to weigh the effects of Kissinger’s interventions by considering alternative scenarios.

Ferguson decries the “double standard” that animates Kissinger’s foes, who do not acknowledge that other administrations have also committed what could be considered war crimes and crimes against humanity. Grandin’s book fits this bill, for his case is fundamentally ahistorical: that Kissinger’s policies were exceptional is the starting point, not the object of argumentation. Although Grandin is a Latin Americanist intimately familiar with the long tradition of sending in the Marines to “stabilize” the region, he does not situate Kissinger within a longer history of militarism and interventionism. The formulations in *Kissinger’s Shadow* that distinguish Kissinger from his predecessors are frustratingly vague: “to a greater extent than...in the past”; Kissinger “raised the stakes”; “the totality of [Kissinger’s] vision set him apart.” The links between Kissinger and the heightened militarism and secrecy that followed are equally imprecise: Kissinger “played a key role”; “provided the blueprint”; “created the conditions”; “shed[s] spectral light” on the road to today.<sup>7</sup>



Henry Kissinger has long been a polarizing figure. But how can two prominent historians come to such disparate conclusions about Kissinger while using the same evidence to support their respective arguments?

COURTESY LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

Although Grandin offers penetrating insights about Kissinger's fateful craving to be a man of action, the methodology underpinning the main argument about the man's influence resembles collage: clip and juxtapose. Tangible evidence of influence is almost entirely absent. Kissinger offered expansive justifications for aggressive war. Obama does, too. In a particularly unpersuasive example, Grandin argues that Kissinger's belief that policymakers must act in the face of uncertainty "is an almost perfect exposition" of the "one-percent doctrine" Dick Cheney articulated in 2001: that even a one percent chance a threat will develop must be treated as a certainty. Grandin treats what is at root a banal observation—that policymakers will never have all of the information they need to achieve certainty—as identical to the idea that even wildly improbable threats demand a military response. Elsewhere Grandin writes that the United States now strikes against terrorists wherever they may be, a position that was "not widely held in 1970" when Kissinger made it fashionable—though it wasn't a fashionable idea because terrorism was only then beginning to rear its head as a threat.<sup>8</sup>

The most powerful parts of Grandin's book are its uneven but impassioned expositions of the ruthless policies—the civil wars fueled, coups abetted, invasions green-lighted, and wars fostered in Vietnam, Cambodia, Laos, East Timor, Bangladesh, Angola, Chile, Argentina, and elsewhere—that the American left views as Kissinger's rap sheet (and that Ferguson seems poised to write off as the "strategically marginal" price that had to be paid for "strategically important" gains). Grandin claims to have aimed at something different than what he describes as Christopher Hitchens's

"not very useful" effort to paint Kissinger as a war criminal in his famous 2001 polemic, *The Trial of Henry Kissinger*.<sup>9</sup> But what works most effectively in *Kissinger's Shadow* is the ramped-up version of Hitchens's effort: Grandin's book is more comprehensive in coverage, better researched (though as an extended essay its research is selective rather than thorough), and often searing in its relentless chronicling of the horrors visited on the luckless Third World peoples who ended up on the receiving end of Kissinger's "grand" strategy. The chronicle of destruction is at times mind-boggling. The United States, Grandin writes, dropped "a trillion pieces of shrapnel—either ball bearings or razor-sharp barbed darts" on Indochina; "U.S. pilots...dropped a ton of explosives for each and every Laotian"; U.S.-dropped Agent Orange hit a third of Cambodia's rubber plantations; there are 80 million unexploded cluster bombs in Laos that are still maiming and killing hundreds of people, often children, every year.<sup>10</sup>

Grandin's powerful presentment will emotionally fortify his side of the Kissinger wars, but it is likely only to further harden the other side's conviction that attacks on Kissinger rely on ahistorical, polemical leaps. Is Ferguson's ostensibly neutral biography likely to sway any of Kissinger's critics? Ferguson's volume one rests on a towering research base, and his enthusiasm for the documents and the stories they tell is contagious. It is an impressive achievement—but the agenda he advances in this and the next volume can persuade only if the calculation of "what ifs," measured against the suffering Grandin lays bare, is not predetermined. Therein lies the rub.

Ferguson is at pains to allay suspicions that he has written an admiring biography because it is an authorized one. His method, he

claims, has been simply to write what the documents revealed, in Rankian fashion: *wie es eigentlich gewesen*, or "as it actually was," as Ferguson translates it. It is the same method he said he used in his uniformly celebrated study of the Rothschilds.<sup>11</sup> It's a wildly unfashionable pretension in an era when we take it for granted that we bring unavoidable biases, assumptions, and life experiences to our reading of the documents and to when and how we find meaning in them. If the claim was at least partly sensible in the case of the Rothschilds—also an authorized study based on unique access to records, but one that dealt with people and events from a century or more ago—it falls flat here.

Ferguson considers Henry Kissinger a friend. The two men have traveled together, dined together, and shared many conversations. Kissinger was in the front row at Ferguson's second wedding. Here's how Ferguson described one working session at Kissinger's country home in Connecticut: "I'm in Henry Kissinger's swimming pool talking about his meetings with Mao Tse-tung, thinking, *I must be dreaming*." Previous biographers cautioned him that Kissinger would take offense at any portrait that was less than flattering and that the risk of a breach over volume one was high.<sup>12</sup>

Ferguson, as he let slip in an interview with Charlie Rose, does not just empathize with Kissinger, as any good biographer should; he identifies with his subject. And no wonder. Both men are conservatives who spent much time in predominantly liberal environments. Both were Harvard professors who became public celebrities. Both have reputations for brilliance and for an astonishing capacity for hard work. Both have written bestsellers that attracted public acclaim but academic criticism. Both are polarizing figures in the



---

## The broader implications of these opposing portraits, and their methodological cross-talk, underscore the challenges of historical interpretation that historians know all too well.

---

academy who feel they have attracted “cascade[s] of abuse” from the left. Because both relish the bold use of American power, Ferguson’s political causes today gain from burnishing Kissinger’s reputation.<sup>13</sup>

Ferguson has said, only half-jokingly, that Kissinger manipulated him into writing the biography.<sup>14</sup> But we are asked to believe that Kissinger’s renowned seductive powers then vanished or were entirely resisted. Ferguson repeatedly suggests that the psychology of Kissinger’s critics explains why they have made unflattering claims, and when he engages with them he is quick to point to their impure motives. But like Grandin, he sees himself as on the side of commonsense. Psychology is for the other side.

The nature of his relationship with his subject makes Ferguson less Leopold von Ranke, the German apostle of empiricism who wrote mostly about the broad sweep of the distant past, than James Boswell, the Scottish biographer who wrote a famously flattering account of a close friend, hiding his manipulations behind a façade of accuracy. Ferguson suggests that he wants to be Kissinger’s Boswell—the first line of the book is about Boswell—but he shies away from accepting the corollary. Boswell’s great innovation was to immerse himself in documents and reminiscences that gave his account of the life of Samuel Johnson the air of authenticity, but he was also

a central character in his portrait of his “illustrious friend,” and one of the traits that made his biography both an instant hit and an enduring classic was its intimate portrait of their friendship. Ferguson, in contrast, effaces himself, as though the relationship were entirely irrelevant to the book except on a few occasions when it allowed him to add “facts” to the story. But the relationship is profoundly relevant. Although the book has passages critical of Kissinger, it is striking that the higher Kissinger rises and the more there is at stake in discussing his character and his relationships, the less we hear about both. The result, especially in the second half of the book, calls to mind Charles Dickens’s complaint about biography written “by somebody who lived next door to the people, rather than inside ’em.”<sup>15</sup>

Ferguson has said in interviews that he treated Kissinger’s 1963 separation and then divorce with circumspection because he, too, went through a divorce, and the volume’s laconic account of the break-up roughly coincides with the onset of a more general reluctance to probe his subject’s inner life. Up until this point, Ferguson has explored in some depth Kissinger’s relationships with his parents, with his first mentor Fritz Kraemer, and even with his dog, often on the basis of Kissinger’s private writings. After the divorce, Ferguson busily occupies himself with Kissinger’s writings, forgetting that he has told

us that his account is “more than just an intellectual biography” and that the debate over Kissinger hinges on his character, which translated intellect into action.<sup>16</sup> In the second half of *The Idealist* we learn virtually nothing about Kissinger’s relationship with his future wife Nancy Maginnes, and aspects of the crucial relationship with Nelson Rockefeller that reveal unflattering character traits are elided. Although Ferguson relates one colorful story about Kissinger’s threatening to resign from a Rockefeller project, for example, he fails to note that the ambitious adviser’s resignation threats were a habitual crutch that is important to understanding the man’s personality and his future relationship with Nixon.<sup>17</sup>

The impression that Ferguson is soft-pedaling is strongest in his overarching contention that Kissinger should be understood as a Kantian (but, contradictorily, sometimes Wilsonian) idealist, at least before taking office.<sup>18</sup> (He began with the intention of titling his book “American Machiavelli” and may well revert to this conventional view in volume two.)<sup>19</sup> On this point Grandin agrees, and both authors leave Kissinger’s ambitious undergraduate thesis—“The Meaning of History”—groaning under the interpretive weight they place on it. But in an example of the same evidence leading to radically different conclusions, where Grandin sees Kissinger’s Kantian streak as inculcating a

radical relativism and the logic of power as an end in itself, Ferguson offers precisely the opposite take: Kissinger, he says, “aspir[ed] to loftier ends” than seeing power as an end in itself.<sup>20</sup> One of the virtues of Ferguson’s book is that he frequently gives the reader long passages of Kissinger’s own words. From these he extracts an idealist interpretation while passing over what often seems more obvious: that Kissinger was prone to nearly hysterical pessimism, fretted endlessly about credibility, and (as Grandin argues) usually favored action over compromise even if it came with high risk of war.

That the two authors approach evidence with different predispositions comes across in matters large and small. In one small matter: as a Ph.D. student Kissinger was an energetic editor of *Confluence*, the journal he helped establish, and Ferguson writes that the aspiring political scientist often asked for significant rewriting from contributors, “even Arthur Schlesinger.” Grandin shows that Kissinger not only required edits but sometimes did major rewriting himself, irritating Hannah Arendt and presumably others. In Ferguson’s telling, we see an earnest young man intent on getting the best articles. In Grandin’s hands, Kissinger is arrogant and offensive.<sup>21</sup>

When it comes to weightier matters, such as the much-debated story of Kissinger’s backchannel to Nixon about President Lyndon B. Johnson’s Vietnam peace talks during the election of 1968, Ferguson and

Grandin again sometimes reach the same revisionist take on the evidence while running with it in opposite directions. They agree that the information Kissinger had to give was of relatively little value. Grandin’s conjecture is that Kissinger played up what he had with daring, cunning, and brilliance, hoping to get a top job with Nixon. Ferguson’s take is that Kissinger’s actions were insignificant to the negotiations and that Nixon’s eventual job offer had “nothing to do with mythical leaks”—even though it must have had something to do with non-mythical assistance. Ferguson asks us (again) to dismiss critics, this time participants with first-hand knowledge, because they have “obvious incentives to present Kissinger in a bad light.” (Those who write admiringly of Kissinger are typically described as “thoughtful” and “insightful.”) Kissinger is depicted as a political naïf “indifferent to his own career prospects” who obtusely believed Nelson Rockefeller could win the nomination. Playing all sides—working first for Rockefeller and then with both the Democratic and the Republican nominees—was, Ferguson writes, not “rational.” Ferguson is right that the ascent to national security adviser could not have been planned, but the unconvincing caricature he presents should make readers wonder what is at stake for him in interpreting these events.<sup>22</sup>

The broader implications of these opposing portraits, and their methodological cross-talk, underscore the challenges of historical interpretation that historians know

all too well. In this case, two leading historians often find significance in the same evidence but draw opposite inferences. What does this say about historical method? The obvious answer was identified long ago by Samuel Johnson, who wrote that our conjectures are “easily modified by fancy or by desire.”<sup>23</sup> Emotional engagement matters: affection and animosity will produce very different colorings, and intensity of feeling sometimes produces flawed logic.

What is at stake in the Kissinger wars lies even deeper, though, for coursing through the debate are irreconcilable views of how to balance costs and benefits in foreign policymaking. For one side, strategic benefits gained by most of the world (or is it just the West?) outweigh the costs even in millions of lives lost in “strategically marginal” non-Western countries. For the other side, the costs cannot be justified by unprovable gains. What matters for Grandin is the harvest of death and destruction Kissinger’s choices reaped. Ferguson laments the couple hundred or so victims who died in the “death strip” of the Berlin Wall, but if there is a similar acknowledgment of the million-plus Indochinese deaths and the enormous suffering wrought during the years that Kissinger was visiting South Vietnam and becoming an expert on the war, I can’t find it.<sup>24</sup> This is why the Kissinger wars will not soon end: they come down to the question of who should die for what greater good. ■■■■

## NOTES

I am grateful to Mark Bradley, Frank Costigliola, Micki Kaufman, and Patrick Kelly for critical readings of earlier drafts.

1. Greg Grandin, *Kissinger’s Shadow: The Long Reach of America’s Most Controversial Statesman* (2015), 1–4, 188.
2. Niall Ferguson, *Kissinger, Volume I: 1923–1968: The Idealist* (2015) 15–16.

(CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE)

NOTES (CONTINUED FROM PREVIOUS PAGE)

3. Grandin, *Kissinger's Shadow*, 188. On the Kissinger wars, see Jussi Hanhimäki, "'Dr. Kissinger' or 'Mr. Henry?'" Kissingerology, Thirty Years and Counting," *Diplomatic History*, 27 (Nov. 2003), 637–76. On humor, see Ferguson, *Kissinger*, 12. For an example of what Ferguson would see as Grandin's inability to read Kissinger's humor, see Grandin, *Kissinger's Shadow*, 228.
4. Ferguson says the friendship with Henry Kissinger began at their first meeting over a decade ago. See Niall Ferguson, interviewed by Charlie Rose, Oct. 12, 2015, at [www.youtube.com/watch?v=SJ42RvvLCGo](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SJ42RvvLCGo). Steven Cohen, "The People's Obituary of Henry Kissinger—Before His Death," *The New Republic*, Sept. 3, 2015, at [newrepublic.com/article/122697/peoples-obituary-henry-kissinger-his-death](http://newrepublic.com/article/122697/peoples-obituary-henry-kissinger-his-death). Ferguson, *Kissinger*, xiv–xv. Cohen, "The People's Obituary." Ferguson, *Kissinger*, 29. Ferguson here leaves open the question of how much Kissinger contributed to this more peaceful world, but has elsewhere flagged that he believes Kissinger's achievements were substantial. Grandin, *Kissinger's Shadow*, 11. Ferguson, *Kissinger*, 465. Grandin, *Kissinger's Shadow*, 173.
5. Ferguson, *Kissinger*, 24. Grandin, *Kissinger's Shadow*, 47.
6. Grandin, *Kissinger's Shadow*, 43, 48. He writes that the consequences of Kissinger's policies should be treated as "fact," not as "matters of opinion, or perspective." *Ibid.*, 6.
7. *Ibid.*, 11, 154, 79, 26, 188, 189–227, 15.
8. *Ibid.*, 228–9, 32, 3.
9. *Ibid.*, 260–01; Ferguson, *Kissinger*, xiii; Ferguson interview with Michael Krasny, KQED, Oct. 8, 2015, at [www.kqed.org/a/forum/R201510080900](http://www.kqed.org/a/forum/R201510080900).
10. Grandin, *Kissinger's Shadow*, 69–72.
11. Ferguson, *Kissinger*, xiii; Niall Ferguson, *The House of Rothschild*, vol. I: *Money's Prophets, 1798–1848* (1998), xvii.
12. Niall Ferguson, interviewed by Charlie Rose; "Henry Kissinger Watches Historian Niall Ferguson Marry Ayaan Hirsi Ali under a Fatwa," *The Telegraph*, Sept. 18, 2011, [www.telegraph.co.uk/news/celebritynews/8770965/Henry-Kissinger-watches-historian-Niall-Ferguson-marry-Ayaan-Hirsi-Ali-under-a-fatwa.html](http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/celebritynews/8770965/Henry-Kissinger-watches-historian-Niall-Ferguson-marry-Ayaan-Hirsi-Ali-under-a-fatwa.html). Ferguson only hints at the extent of the relationship: Ferguson, *Kissinger*, xi–xii. Ferguson quoted in Joe Hagan, "The Once and Future Kissinger," *New York Magazine*, Oct. 24, 2007, [nymag.com/news/people/24750/](http://nymag.com/news/people/24750/). "Niall Ferguson on Henry Kissinger, in Conversation with Roy Eisenhardt," Oct. 7, 2014, [www.jccsf.org/arts-ideas/ondemand/2015-2016-season/niall-ferguson/](http://www.jccsf.org/arts-ideas/ondemand/2015-2016-season/niall-ferguson/).
13. "'Kissinger: The Idealist': The Charlie Rose Show," Oct. 14, 2015, [charlierose.com/videos/23753](http://charlierose.com/videos/23753). M. H. Miller, "Niall Ferguson Interview: 'Public Life These Days is a Cascade of Abuse,'" *The Guardian*, Sept. 26, 2015, <https://www.theguardian.com/books/2015/sep/26/niall-ferguson-interview-abuse-henry-kissinger-historian>.
14. "'Kissinger: The Idealist': The Charlie Rose Show." See also Ferguson, *Kissinger*, xv; "Niall Ferguson on Henry Kissinger."
15. Ferguson, *Kissinger*, xi, xiv, xix. John Wiltshire, *The Making of Dr. Johnson: Icon of Modern Culture* (2009), 66, 83.
16. Ferguson, *Kissinger*, 31.
17. See Michael Straight, *Nancy Hanks: An Intimate Portrait: The Creation of a National Commitment to the Arts* (1988), 57.
18. For Wilsonian idealist, see Ferguson, *Kissinger*, 513. For a debunking of the idealist claim, see Jonathan Kirshner, "Machinations of Wicked Men," *Boston Review*, March 9, 2016, [bostonreview.net/books-ideas/jonathan-kirshner-niall-ferguson-henry-kissinger](http://bostonreview.net/books-ideas/jonathan-kirshner-niall-ferguson-henry-kissinger).
19. "Niall Ferguson on Henry Kissinger."
20. Grandin, *Kissinger's Shadow*, 9, 69; Ferguson, *Kissinger*, 32.
21. Ferguson, *Kissinger*, 286; Grandin, *Kissinger's Shadow*, 24n5.
22. Grandin, *Kissinger's Shadow*, 48. Ferguson, *Kissinger*, 793. Ferguson notes that Kissinger has no records of this episode, but does not know whether he kept none or destroyed them later. Ferguson, *Kissinger*, 828, 266, 311, 796–797, 850.
23. Quoted in John B. Radner, *Johnson and Boswell: A Biography of Friendship* (2012), 9–10.
24. Ferguson, *Kissinger*, 513. We do learn of the dangers Kissinger bravely faced during his visits.



# The American Historian

ORGANIZATION OF AMERICAN HISTORIANS

## *The Politics* of **MOTHERHOOD**

ALSO INSIDE:

The Battle of  
Kissinger's Legacy

Examining the  
Realities of SoTL

Taking Advantage of  
*Hamilton's* Popularity



## CONTENTS

# The American Historian

NUMBER 10: NOV 2016

### FEATURES

- 26** Twentieth-Century American Motherhood:  
Promises, Pitfalls, and Continuing Legacies  
Jodi Vandenberg-Daves
- 36** Abolishing Abortion:  
The History of the Pro-Life Movement in America  
Jennifer L. Holland
- 41** The History of Family Leave Policies in the United States  
Megan A. Sholar

### FROM THE PRESIDENT

- 1** POTUS, FLOTUS, and...  
Nancy F. Cott

### THE CRAFT OF TEACHING

- 10** Kill the Professor and Save the Teacher:  
History Professors and the Scholarship of Teaching and  
Learning, Part I  
David Arnold

### IMPIETIES

- 16** The Kissinger Wars  
Barbara Keys

### FROM THE FIELD

- 24** History: Center Stage  
Bonnie Traymore



### DEPARTMENTS

- 6** CONTRIBUTORS
- 8** ANTE
- 46** REVIEWS
- 48** NEWS OF THE OAH
- 52** POST

# CONTRIBUTORS

**DAVID ARNOLD** is Professor of History at Columbia Basin College where he teaches survey courses in U.S., World, and Native American history. He received his Ph.D. from UCLA in 1997 and is the author of *The Fishermen's Frontier*, an environmental history of Alaska's salmon fisheries. After nearly two decades teaching at a community college, his current scholarly interest is teaching and learning, particularly how to effectively teach history to non-major undergraduates.

**NANCY F. COTT** is the Jonathan Trumbull Professor of American History at Harvard University. Her writings range widely over questions concerning women, gender, marriage, feminism, and citizenship in the United States, and include *The Bonds of Womanhood: 'Woman's Sphere' in New England, 1780-1835* (1977); *The Grounding of Modern Feminism* (1987); and *Public Vows: A History of Marriage and the Nation* (2000). Her interests also include the history of social movements, political culture, and law. Her current project concerns Americans who came of age in the 1920s and shaped their lives internationally.

**JENNIFER L. HOLLAND** is an assistant professor of history at the University of Oklahoma. She specializes in the histories of the North American West, gender, sexuality, and race. She is currently writing a book about the modern anti-abortion movement in four western states.

**BARBARA KEYS** is Associate Professor of History at The University of Melbourne and the author most recently of *Reclaiming American Virtue: The Human Rights Revolution of the 1970s* (2014). Her current projects include a book on Kissinger and China from 1971 to the present.

**MEGAN A. SHOLAR** is a Lecturer in the Interdisciplinary Honors Program at Loyola University Chicago. She is the author of *Getting Paid While Taking Time: The Women's Movement and the Development of Paid Family Leave Policies in the United States* (2016).



teaching resource

## Teaching the Journal of American History

A special project designed to guide teachers and professors on how in incorporating a featured topic from the *Journal of American History* in their classroom, "Teaching the *JAH*" bridges the gap between the latest scholarly research in U.S. history and the practice of classroom teaching. Recent topics include:



**The Power of the Ecotone:**  
Bison, Slavery, and the Rise  
and Fall of the Grand Village  
of the Kaskaskia



**Tippling Ladies and  
the Making of Consumer Culture:**  
Gender and Public Space  
in Fin-de-Siècle Chicago



**The Urbanization of  
the Eastern Gray Squirrel  
in the United States**

access all installments at [jah.oah.org/teaching-the-jah](http://jah.oah.org/teaching-the-jah)

**BONNIE TRAYMORE** is a faculty member and the History Department Chair at Pinewood High School in Los Altos Hills, California. She has a doctorate in United States and World History from the University of Hawai'i. She previously taught at Punahou High School in Honolulu, Hawai'i and has taught history courses at the University of Hawai'i and Columbia University.

**JODI VANDENBERG-DAVES** is a historian and professor of Women's, Gender and Sexuality Studies at University of Wisconsin-La Crosse. She is the author of *Modern Motherhood: An American History* (2014) and editor and co-author of *Making History: A Guide to Historical Research through the National History Day Program* (2006), as well as numerous articles on women's and educational history. Jodi teaches courses on women's history and women's leadership, and also serves as the Director of the Greater La Crosse Area Diversity Council.

*The American Historian* (ISSN: 2334-1394) is published quarterly in August, November, February, and May by the Organization of American Historians, 112 North Bryan Ave., Bloomington, IN 47408-4141; telephone: 812-855-7311; fax: 812-855-0696; e-mail: [theamericanhistorian@oah.org](mailto:theamericanhistorian@oah.org); web: <http://www.tah.oah.org>.

OAH membership. For information regarding OAH membership, please visit <http://www.oah.org>.

Postal information. *The American Historian* is published by the Organization of American Historians, 112 North Bryan Ave., Bloomington, IN 47408-4141. Please send changes of address to Membership Department, Organization of American Historians, 112 North Bryan Ave., Bloomington, IN 47408-4141.

Permission to reprint. For information on how to request permissions to reproduce articles or information from this publication, please e-mail: [theamericanhistorian@oah.org](mailto:theamericanhistorian@oah.org).

Disclaimer. Statements of fact and opinion in the articles in *The American Historian* are those of the respective authors and contributors and not of the Organization of American Historians. The Organization of American Historians does not make any representation, express or implied, in respect of the accuracy of the material in this publication and cannot accept any legal responsibility or liability for any errors or omissions that may be made.

Advertising. The Organization of American Historians reserves the right to reject or cancel any advertisement(s) at its sole discretion, including any prepaid, paid, and/or unpaid advertisement.

Copyright © 2016 Organization of American Historians

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, or otherwise without prior written permission of the publisher.

For sales of individual issues or institutional subscriptions, e-mail [oah@oah.org](mailto:oah@oah.org)

## THE AMERICAN HISTORIAN

EDITOR IN CHIEF	Stephen D. Andrews
EDITOR	Jonathan D. Warner
EDITORIAL ASSISTANT	Jessica Leach
DESIGN AND LAYOUT	Ashlee Welz Smith

E-mail us at [theamericanhistorian@oah.org](mailto:theamericanhistorian@oah.org).

## ADVERTISING SALES REPRESENTATIVE

Nami Novak and Joan Jackson  
[sales@oah.org](mailto:sales@oah.org)  
(317) 201-7223  
(317) 645-5586

## EDITORIAL BOARD

Nancy Bristow, University of Puget Sound  
Gerald Cadava, Northwestern University  
Vicki Eaklor, Alfred University  
Katherine M. Finley, OAH (ex officio)  
Kim Gilmore, History/A&E Networks  
Rachel Gross, University of Wisconsin—Madison (ex officio)  
Lu Ann Jones, National Park Service  
Lisa Kapp, St. Ann's School  
Elisabeth Marsh, OAH (ex officio)  
Stephen Robertson, George Mason University  
Mark Roehrs, Lincoln Land Community College  
Jonathan D. Warner, OAH (ex officio)  
Anne Whisnant, University of North Carolina—Chapel Hill  
Kidada Williams, Wayne State University

## ORGANIZATION OF AMERICAN HISTORIANS

### EXECUTIVE BOARD

Nancy F. Cott, Harvard University, President  
Edward L. Ayers, University of Richmond, President-Elect  
Earl Lewis, the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, Vice President  
Jay S. Goodgold, Independent Investor, Treasurer  
Katherine M. Finley, OAH Executive Director  
Edward T. Linenthal, Executive Editor, *Journal of American History*  
Patricia Limerick, University of Colorado, Boulder, Past President  
Jon Butler, Yale University, Past President  
James R. Barrett, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign  
Sarah Deutsch, Duke University  
Karen Halttunen, University of Southern California  
James T. Kloppenberg, Harvard University  
James W. Oberly, University of Wisconsin—Eau Claire  
Marcus Rediker, University of Pittsburgh  
Renee C. Romano, Oberlin College  
Stephanie J. Shaw, Ohio State University  
Barbara Clark Smith, National Museum of American History

### OAH MISSION STATEMENT

The OAH promotes excellence in the scholarship, teaching, and presentation of American history, and it encourages wide discussion of historical questions and the equitable treatment of all practitioners of history.

**Organization of American Historians**  
**112 N. Bryan Avenue**  
**Bloomington, Indiana 47408-4141**  
**(812) 855-7311**