[**Report**]

Report on the 126th Annual Meeting of the American Historical Association (AHA) (Chicago, Illinois, January 5–8, 2012)

David Murchie

The 126th Annual Meeting of the AHA offered a variety of seminars and presenters, as well as an extensive line-up of tours to museums and other sites of historical interest in Chicago.　As always, since the massive size of the AHA allows the organization to offer a wide variety of seminars, plenary sessions, special meetings of AHA-affiliated groups, film screenings, *et al,* the problem one faces is rarely one of not being able to find a session in which one is interested ; quite to the contrary, for this attendee, it is often difficult deciding which of two or three sessions I should attend, since many are of personal interest.　In this report, I shall offer brief summaries and a few critical remarks on the sessions I was able to attend.

1.　Teaching Workshop : "Recognizing Excellence in Undergraduate Teaching"

Part 1—"Teaching Undergraduates with Technology" (Panel presentation)
1)　Marian Mollin, Virginia Tech University

Ms. Mollin spoke on "blogging as a way to expand the analytical envelope."　Mollin uses blogging mainly in her upper level courses.　Through blogging, students interact with articles every day and write a 600-800 word review/reflection on what they read for the purpose of contributing to a discussion in the next class.　This requirement forces students to engage in reading, though, she admitted, for some it is a bit overwhelming.　Furthermore, for the teacher it involves a lot of grading.　The benefits of this kind of blogging, however, are significant.　For example, for students, the blog is a familiar medium that soon turns into an instant portfolio of their writing, a portfolio that is public and can be read by other students.　Mollin briefly explained some of the technical aspects of setting up this kind of a blogging program.　In general, she was pleased with the results of the program.　Students responded positively ; they took ownership of their work and personalized it.　The students' blogging emphasized their personal investment in the learning process.　They wrote for other students as well as for the teacher, so the quality of papers improved.　In general, the quality of the students' thinking and writing both improved dur-

ing the program. Since it was possible to put images (e.g., pictures, movies, *et al* in their blog entries [in blogs one can use multi-media, which obviously cannot be done with papers]), the entries became more lively and made it possible for students to develop a deeper connection with the past than that which is possible through writing alone. Students could also reference the writing they did earlier in the semester, in this way building on their previous work. Ms. Mollin spoke of a few unexpected results. For one, the students' portfolios led to self-referential thinking. Second, the blog entries transformed discrete assignments into a developing body of work and analysis. Third, the blogs promoted serious scholarly conversation among the students, for example, through the use of the "pingback," a means of making a direct reference to another classmate's blog. Mollin noted that pingbacks encourage students to think historiographically. Mollin's plans for the future include the addition of "tagging" to the blogging program, a means by which key words, phrases, ideas, and concepts in each blog can be "tagged" for reference. "Tag clouds" can be generated and used for concept mapping. She also plans more explicitly to use pingbacks for the purpose of teaching historiographical thinking.

2) John F. McClymer, Assumption College

Mr. McClymer dealt with the problem of getting students to interact in significant ways with a course and that course's materials. He spoke critically of the course "coverage" model, in which the teacher tries to lecture or in other ways seeks to teach a predetermined set of topics to the students. He felt that the drawback of such an approach is that students do not learn the relevance of the course for their lives ; they leave the course and soon forget what they learned. In this regard he cited the article by Sipress and Voelker, "The End of the History Survey Course : The Rise and Fall of the Coverage Model" in the *Journal of American History*. According to McClymer, though we need to engage students in historical topics and images, we face significant obstacles like coverage/information overload, an overemphasis on classroom teaching, and the fact that most students are not good listeners. He offered a critique of online texts and tests and spoke of the problem of emphasizing facts but not interpretation. He pointed to the difficulty in making open-ended questions for tests and the need to look at the various media available as, simply, tools for education. In a more extensive critique of the "coverage model," McClymer suggested that we need to emphasize learning more and grading less. He claimed we grade too much, quoting Einstein in this regard : "Those who don't make mistakes haven't tried anything new." He suggested that a lot of our testing is inauthentic, since, to answer many questions, one needs time, and in tests we often do not give enough time. He also spoke of the importance of helping students to think historically and contextually. Context is more than chronology and to do history is to contextualize narratives. Students need to contextualize, but how do we encourage that ? McClymer suggested that we must learn to use a student's *confusion* positively ; i.e., we must *legitimate* such confusion and use it as a tool for learning. Furthermore, students should actually be *doing* history ; bullet points do not replace history. In the study of history, there are many new media of which we can take advantage. However,

teachers should show students the various options they have among these media, in this way making it possible for students to learn new means of contextualizing history.

Part 2—"What Works and What Does Not Work in the Survey and Assessment"

1)   Eric J. Otremba, University of Minnesota

Mr. Otremba discussed the relation between academic history and the public preference for narrative.   He suggested that there are too many "must teach" moments in our classes, and that students tire of this approach.   He favored limiting the materials used in the course.   He believes that one of the problems we face in teaching history is our tendency to stress facts over meaningful narrative.   He said that we need to use past history to illustrate contemporary problems and thereby to connect history to contemporary issues.

2)   Daniel McInerny, Utah State University

Mr. McInerny dealt with the issue of assessing teacher effectiveness.   He began with some critical remarks on ways of assessment that do not work.   For example, in the top-down approach to teacher assessment, the methods involved do not take into account the individual aspects of the course.   According to Mr. McInerny, the assessment should be a systematic effort to understand student learning.   The assessment is very much about students—what they bring to a course, what they learn, and what they take from the course.   The central question of a good assessment is, "What should students know, understand, and be able to do when they complete our program of study ?"   To answer this question, the assessment must be done from the bottom-up and it should be discipline-specific.   We cannot effectively use one generic model for assessing all courses.   McInerny suggests that an assessment can work well if it uses clear and transparent language and if it is linked to specific developments in the students, e.g., student progress.   In developing the assessment, teachers should collaborate with colleagues at other institutions.   The process of developing the assessment must be inclusive because many "stakeholders" are involved, e.g., teachers, students, and library workers.   The assessment should seek to preserve diversity and autonomy and should not focus on a finished product ; the assessment should always be seen as a process.   In concluding his discussion, McInerny warned teachers not to "go it alone" in putting together an assessment program.   He suggested that there are good sources which can be consulted, one such being a program called "Tuning," a product of the AHA's collaboration with the Lumina Foundation, which is being used in several states in the United States (US), several other countries, and Canada.   The program focuses on the outcome of academic education.

2.   Transnational Peace Networks and Communities of Pacifism from the 1920s to the 1960s

1)   Denise Ireton, Binghamton University (State University of New York)-*Organizing for Peace as Citizens of the World : The Transnational Politics of Women Leaders between the Wars, 1930-45*

Ms. Ireton discussed the problems faced by women leaders since 1920, when peace became the main issue for many women's groups.   She pointed out that women's groups

played an important role in developing non-state activism, especially in the area of disarmament. Women's international organizations worked to make the transition from disarmament to peace, in the process earning the support of the League of Nations. At this time, women organized internationally to push for disarmament, the main focus of many in women's organizations. A disarmament conference was organized and a statement made about world disarmament, a statement that was similar to that of the League of Nations. The group attempted to draft a letter to send to Hitler, but there was too much disagreement and the letter was not sent. Mary Dingman, a leader in the disarmament efforts of women, was disappointed by the lack of action displayed by the Disarmament Committee. The problem was that the Disarmament Committee was supported by businesses who too often disagreed with the direction of the women's disarmament effort. Regrettably, disarmament turned out to be extremely hard to implement.

2) Ilaria Scaglia, Columbus State University-*The Peaceful World of Burlington House—Displaying Art, Cooperation, and Internationalism in the 1920s and 1930s*

Ms. Scaglia discussed the interesting social dynamics that developed when people of different national origins organized and presented various art exhibits at the Burlington House art museum. From 1930 to 1945, many transnational figures became involved in organizing the exhibits. There were Flemish and Belgian, Dutch, Italian, Persian and Chinese exhibits, with the Italian exhibit receiving the highest number of visitors. The organizing of exhibits at the Burlington House took much cooperation. Though the planners came from different countries, they showed a strong sense of mutual respect through their work on these international art exhibitions. Catalogs of the exhibitions expressed their overall goal as peace. The aesthetic value of the works became the universal language, and the cooperative exchanges that took place demonstrated the openness of the international community. For example, the Chinese ambassador in London celebrated the happy relationship between China and Great Britain. Countries showed their willingness to cooperate with other countries to plan and stage international, cultural events. It is important to note that the group of planners was quite diverse, even in regard to the members' politics. Nevertheless, there was much interaction among the people involved, and even among the non-state actors and the state actors. The participants were seen as pacifists. Their exhibitions were the product of the work of many different kinds of people, and their success was the result of that collaboration.

3) Shelley E. Rose, Cleveland State University—*"A Source of Energy for New Action !" Transnational Pacifism Networks and German Peace Movements, 1921-66*

Ms. Rose began by making the important point that transnationalism focuses on individuals. She explained that in the 1921-66 period, transnational connections between peace activists reached across national borders. These intermittent, direct, cross-border contacts among peace activists had the effect of raising awareness among the activists for the need for peace. In 1920 several "No More War" demonstrations had been organized by pacifist organizations, with these demonstrations receiving newspaper coverage. German

activists, impressed as they were by the work of the British "No More War" activists, organized their own "No More War" demonstrations in Berlin, emphasizing the importance of transnational participation in the demonstrations.　Peace exhibits and the way peace meetings were organized also began to reflect the importance of transnational awareness and cooperation.　In short, during this period, the common struggle for peace and disarmament raised German awareness of the importance of transnational contacts and cooperation.

3.　Plenary Session of the AHA Program Committee—"How to Write a History of Information : A Session in Honor of Peter Burke"

Panel :

1)　Paula Findlen, Stanford University—*How Information Travels : Lessons from the Early Modern Republic of Letters*

　　Ms. Findlen began her historical discussion of "mobilizing information" with remarks concerning Leibnitz's attempt to bring together several different sources of information that were available at that time.　He dreamed of tapping into the Jesuit storehouse of knowledge and worked through his contacts to construct an information system that could do that effectively.　The Society of Jesus and the Republic of Letters collaborated on developing new means of scientific observation.　They began a project of global observation in which they globalized the Jesuit network.　Leibniz contributed to the overall project by creating a system of information based on his correspondence with others, mainly missionaries.　Eventually, Leibniz became the information minister of late 17th century Europe.

2)　Randolph C. Head, University of California, Riverside—*Making Information in Early Modern European Archives*

　　Mr. Head focused on problems dealing with the establishment of the archives and the handling of a proliferation of manuscripts, problems such as how to handle *metadata*, how to evaluate the nature of archival authority, and problems of "friction" (threat of rats, moisture, *et al*) faced by manuscript collections.　In regard to the question of *metadata*, Head called attention to the relational nature of information, i.e., its meaning depends on who reads it to whom.　In the course of organizing data, one faces the problem of how to accumulate texts, how to determine and use the distinctives of various texts, and how to identify various foci in the data.　The past use of cartularies has been very beneficial because it has made finding documents easier.　For the numerous documents produced there were registers and indexes, alphabetical indexes, and text summaries that were stored by date and series.　All of these elements played an important role in the emergence of the archives.　As to the issue of *authority*, Head pointed out that in archives, authority takes the form of specialists, audiences, and law.　In regard to the role of law in archives, it is important to realize that changes in the use of evidence led to changes in the authority of archival documents.　The issue of *friction* is the issue of preserving archival documents from various threats to their existence.　These threats have involved entropy (fire, water, bugs, mice, *et al*), human action (destruction, hiding), and structural friction caused by *resemiosis* (transforma-

tions in meaning-making), concerning which Head reminded attendees that as readers change, so does the way they understand documents.

3)　Daniel Rosenberg, University of Oregon—*Data before the Fact*

　　Mr. Rosenberg was just beginning to write a history of the concept of data and spent some time talking about interesting experiences he had already had working on the project.　His early research included studies of the work of J.B. Priestly, one of the first to use the word "data" in its modern sense.　After Priestly used the word, many others began to use it.　Prior to the word's use in the 19th and 20th centuries, the word in Latin stood for something given, i.e., something taken for granted.　In the 17th century, historical data were not seen as things that could be proven ; i.e., they were not something for which one could find evidence.

4)　Paul Duguid, University of California, Berkeley—*Counting on Information*

　　Mr. Duguid spoke of the concept of information and its varied meanings to different people.　He spoke of information's "reflexive life" and its unexamined life.　As a portmanteau word, *information* has taken on various meanings judicially, philosophically, and politically.　Some have thought of information as accumulated knowledge, e.g., in the statement, "for your information."　Though all understandings of the word are not compatible with each other, *information* is understood variously as new (knowledge), as countable and cumulative, as compressible, and as causal.　Nevertheless, as Duguid explains, though information wants to be free and needs to be constrained by the author, neither is actually the case.

5)　Peter Burke-Response to the presentation of the panel members

　　Mr. Burke commented briefly on the different approaches possible in writing the history of information.　He spoke of the importance of the infrastructure and maintenance of information and of the value of comparative approaches to a history of information.

4.　"Fukushima : An International Perspective on Nuclear Accidents"

Panel

1)　Kohta Juraku, University of Tokyo

　　Mr. Juraku spoke about the dilemma of nuclear energy and the potential for future disasters.　He called attention to the Nuclear Regulatory Commission's (NRC) recent approval of a new Westinghouse reactor and the nuclear industry's claim that it has solved the problem faced by previous reactors.　The underlying problem, however, as Juraku pointed out, is that modern technology can lead to disaster.　He commented briefly on the development of the field of disaster studies in the 1980s, but also contended that there are no easy solutions ; therefore, it is essential that we understand evolving technology. Mr. Juraku also spoke about the socio-historical context of the Fukushima accident.　Because Tepco failed to contain the problem, the release of radiation could not be avoided.　Workers could not get close enough to the reactor to repair it due to the high level of radiation.　One serious problem was the centralizing of too many reactors (often several)

in one spot, compared with, for example, the US, where there are, at most, two or three in one place.   Juraku also discussed the difficult economic interrelationship of the nuclear industry and the municipalities in which nuclear reactors are sited.   The siting of nuclear power plants has contributed greatly to the financial capabilities of municipalities receiving the reactors, such municipalities, in fact, having been lured to participate in the siting through a scheme of government subsidies and tax income.   Many municipalities which have not had such facilities have seen deficits as a result of the current long-standing recession and depopulation problems.   Juraku also spoke of the *Goyo Gakusha* problem, i.e., the problem of experts who hesitate to speak out for fear of creating panic.   There is a problem of trust among the experts, but it is essential that such experts be willing independently to speak out on any problems they see in any aspect of nuclear radiation-related projects.

2)   J. Samuel Walker, U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission

Mr. Walker began by comparing the Fukushima situation with the Three Mile Island accident in the US.   Though he admitted that Three Mile Island was a major crisis, he contended that, because there was no release of large amounts of dangerous radiation, it is inaccurate to refer to it as a disaster.   According to his explanation however, at Fukushima there was a release of much dangerous radiation and the displacement of many people.   He also argued that the performance of nuclear reactors has improved since 1979.   Walker suggested that there are many issues regarding the Fukushima situation, including the need for protection against natural disasters and the reliability of back-up power systems.   The fundamental question is, he said, "Are the benefits worth the risk ?"   He stressed the importance of insisting discussions be carried out in an informed way.   He felt that public attitudes toward nuclear power are not well-informed.   He also was of the opinion that the press is harsher in its reporting on nuclear accidents than it is in reporting on other disasters.   To this attendee, that statement was a bit strange, since it would be hard to find a greater current threat to human existence than that posed by nuclear explosions ; indeed, one would hope that the press would be even more critical of nuclear disasters than it is.

3)   Sonja Schmid, Virginia Tech

Ms. Schmid had been working on a book on the Chernobyl disaster and spoke about that situation in relation to the situation at Fukushima.   She pointed out that Chernobyl was easily dismissed as a systemic disaster.   However, technically speaking, Chernobyl was functioning.   It was a pressurized water reactor and the system was working organizationally.   Responsibility for the operation of the Chernobyl reactor was not in the military department but in the ministry of electricity.   The system was growing and expanding in parallel with US President Eisenhower's *Atoms for Peace* program.   In her discussion, Schmid asked what lessons can be learned from these disasters.   She suggested that historians should play an important role in the investigation of a nuclear accident's pre-history and in the determination of what words should be used in describing the crisis.   As Schmid pointed out, the words "safe," "normal," and "danger" for example, mean different things to

different people.

4) Martin Melosi, University of Houston

Mr. Melosi commented that, according to the Russian periodical *Pravda*, Fukushima represents the end of the "nuclear spring."　Melosi disagreed, contending that nuclear energy will continue where it already is.　Nevertheless, Fukushima increased anti-nuclear sentiment, especially in Germany.　He said there were mixed signals from Japan regarding the future of nuclear power.　He pointed to a particularly critical issue of dealing with the matter, namely, the tendency to conflate the two issues of atomic weapons and nuclear power.　Pro-nuclear people argue that the two are not connected, while anti-nuclear forces contend that they are indeed related.　Melosi spoke of this as the "atomic energy paradox." He then raised a most important question, viz., where does Fukushima sit in this debate ?

5.　*A Film Unfinished*

Though I attended the showing of this film, there were so many technical difficulties in the presentation of the film that I find it difficult to offer an evaluation.　However, it certainly appears to be an important addition to the archival material on the Warsaw Ghetto experience, so I would like to include in this report the following quotation from the program notes for the film :

> At the end of World War II, 60 minutes of raw film was discovered in an East German archive.　Shot by the Nazis in Warsaw in May 1942, and labeled simply "Ghetto," this footage quickly became a resource for historians seeking an authentic record of the Warsaw Ghetto.　However, the later discovery of a long-missing reel, which included multiple takes and cameraman staging scenes, complicated earlier readings of the footage.　*A Film Unfinished* presents the raw footage in its entirety, carefully noting fictionalized sequences falsely showing "the good life" enjoyed by Jewish urbanites, and probes deep into the making of a now-infamous Nazi propaganda film.

6.　"Everyday Soldiers : The Limits of Militarization in Postwar American Society"

1) Amy Rutenberg, University of Maryland, College Park──*Failure at Fort Knox : Public Opinion and the End of Universal Military Training*

Ms. Rutenberg discussed a proposal by the US Truman administration to establish universal military training (UMT).　By 1943, America was already preparing for its next war, and according to President Truman, America needed universal preparation for war.　Following the end of the Second World War however, in spite of the president's arguments for the program, the public was not convinced.　Many opposed UMT for many and various reasons.　In response to the opposition voices, Truman initiated the Fort Knox program of militarization, a program which encouraged young men to spend one year with (but *not in*) the military.　In 1947, two thousand people visited the program site (Fort Knox).　Those favoring UMT hoped the program would encourage entrants to work together, and their

strong public relations efforts sought to convince the public of the value of UMT.　The program stressed the democratization that was a part of UMT, and the program's educational component emphasized open discussions over lectures.　As Rutenberg explained, through this program the military offered an idealized version of military service, e.g., it spoke of its efforts to instill moral values in soldiers.　As a result, in mid-1947, the Department of Defense established a program of military conscription.

2)　Rachel Louise Moran, Pennsylvania State University—*The Advisory State : Physical Fitness through the Ad Council, 1955-65*

　　Ms. Moran discussed post-World War II governmental efforts to deal with the problem of the declining physical fitness of American youth.　Following the war, government leaders became concerned when fifty percent of US young people failed standard tests for physical fitness.　To combat this decline, the government utilized the services of advertising firms to encourage fitness.　President Eisenhower established the President's Council on Youth Fitness and put his vice-president, Richard Nixon, in charge of a fitness investigation program.　Eisenhower wanted to work through private individuals rather than to initiate a program through the auspices of the federal government.　Nevertheless, by executive order Eisenhower created the President's Council on Youth Fitness (PCYF).　The purpose of the PCYF was to make fitness popular.　To this end, it sought to use popular figures to represent or push the Council's program, eventually setting up a partnership with a national advertising council.　In 1961, under the leadership of President John F. Kennedy, the program received a strong impetus from the federal government and the name of the program was changed to the President's Council on Physical Fitness (PCPF).　The first celebrity representative was Bud Wilkinson, football coach at the University of Oklahoma.　PCPF seemed to have no limits on its activities under the leadership of the ad council.　To disseminate information on the fitness program the organization used television, movies, pamphlets, music, posters, *et al*, and physical fitness councils were established across the country. In a sense, it was a test of what market-based liberalism could do with government support.

3)　Joy Rhode, Trinity University—*The Rise of the Contract State : Privatizing Social Science for National Security*

　　Ms. Rhode discussed the problems with collaboration between scholarship and national security organizations in the US.　During the Cold War, there was virtually a marriage between scholarship and national security.　Many social scientists believed that this would be beneficial for both the military and scholarship.　However, critics called for a restoration of scholarship that was independent from the military.　Though military scholarship eventually moved off-campus, intellectual life was deeply affected by the Cold War.　The Pentagon began to fund social research projects carried out by social scientists and secrecy began to shape the distribution of knowledge.　During the 1960s, there was a backlash against the military-industrial complex.　Many spoke critically of the perils of militarism, the growth of state power, and the growth of power abroad.　Many universities got rid of military research organizations that were still operating on their campuses.　The direction of

research began to change, with new foci on subjects like counter-revolution research (e.g., The American Institute for Research). Research began to cover even non-military research, as political leaders came to the conclusion that American urban populations needed to be contained. In the 1970s, though the number of government research contracts increased significantly, many opposed this development of the National Security State. Rhode pointed out that the US is still wrestling with the issue of the relation between the social sciences and militarization.

4)   In comments on the presenters, Laura McEnaney (Whittier College) called attention to the ambivalence of the military as an institution and the high degree of adaptability and staying power exhibited by militarism, and Michael S. Sherry decried the insufficiency of the limits that exist on the exercise of militarism in the U.S.

6.   "Historians, Journalists, and the Challenges of Getting it Right, Part 3 : Interpreting the Arab Spring"

Juan R.I. Cole, University of Michigan—*The Arab Spring in Historical Perspective*

Mr. Cole offered his interpretation of the background and events of the Arab Spring, speaking of that combination of revolutionary events as a good opportunity to write contemporary history. The movement began with a story about a Tunisian vegetable seller. According to the story, the seller was arrested by the police, who took his identification card, tore it up, and burned it. In response, the frustrated vegetable seller burned himself. This led many people to demonstrate against the police, and the demonstration grew to become a mass movement that put pressure on the Tunisian elite. Tunisian president Ben Ali gave instructions to shoot the demonstrators, but Ben Ali's chief of staff refused to do so. Later, Ben Ali left the country. Though some parts of this story may not be true, the story became inspirational for Tunisians as well as many outside Tunisia, especially many in Egypt. Tunisia came to represent hope for many Arab people. Much of the ongoing work of the rebellion was facilitated by the Internet, even though few (maybe 1%) in Egypt were connected to the Internet. Many rural areas in Egypt joined the revolution, though this was barely noted by the media. Four dictators were overthrown and much governmental corruption (especially much nepotism) was exposed. In Egypt, corruption probably cut 1%-3% from the Gross National Product (GNP) of the country. As Cole explained, the Arab Spring revolutions can be spoken of as social revolutions because they were revolutions against elite classes of people. In the 1960s and 1970s, 50% of the Egyptian economy was controlled by the government. It was a creation of the middle-class. Eventually, however, Egypt was pressured by the neo-liberal policies of Western nations to privatize its economy, the result being the development of a kind of insider trading that increased wealth for crony regimes. As Cole pointed out, if one is fully to understand what happened, one must know the history of the political economy of Egypt. Prior to the economic downturn of 2008 and as far back as the 1960s, parliamentary democracy in Egypt already had a bad reputation and many people were beginning to develop a favorable impression of bourgeois

democracy.   Leftist groups started a revolution, but they were unable to form a government.   One of Egypt's strong allies was the US, which also came under criticism from revolutionary groups.   Following the decline of the USSR, the US was left as the only superpower, and one with no checks or balances on what it could do.   Thus, in a sense, the revolutionary groups were also challenging the superpower status of the US.

Comments on presentation by Juan Cole

1)   Carolyn Eisenberg, Hofstra University

Ms. Eisenberg raised several important questions concerning the subjects Mr. Cole covered.   They are as follows :

How do we explain the explosion of democratic sentiment in Arab nations ?

How do we explain the role of Egypt's military ?

Why did the military stop helping the Egyptian regime ?

What is the present role of the military in Egypt ?

What is the role of the US in supporting Mubarek ?

What is the role of the US in putting pressure on Egypt regarding its relationship with Israel ?

Historians recognize that the US supports dictators ; but do people in general recognize this ?

The US was not expanding democracy in Iraq.   Therefore—

What was the US doing in Iraq ?

Was there a genuine desire to root an Iraqi government in some kind of popular support ?

Ms. Eisenberg suggested that US efforts have been "pretty messy" and that the US has done a poor job of communicating to the people at large the US's role in these conflicts.

2)   Leila Fawaz, Tufts University

Ms. Fawaz commented on the role of Islam in the events of the Arab Spring.   She was critical of the US media's exaggeration of the role of the Muslim Brotherhood in the Arab Spring, drawing attention especially to US rhetoric which has suggested that Islamic parties will seek to keep freedom from developing.   However, in many countries, Islam organizations have provided many social services to the people.   Women have been empowered ; there has been, in Ms. Fawaz's words, an "ethics of the square."   In Egyptian universities today, half of all students are women.   In addition, due to continuing economic problems, the governments of both Tunisia and Egypt have lost legitimacy.   Explaining the Arab perspective on Arab Spring, Fawaz pointed out that one cannot expect linear progress in the case of the Arab Spring.   In fact, she suggested that it would be better to refer to Arab Spring as an "Arab Awakening" which will be worked out over the next ten to fifteen years.   It is an awakening that signals the transfer of power to the young.   Arab youth believe they can bring about change ; that belief, Fawaz insisted, will continue.

3)　David Moberg

Mr. Moberg was critical of western reporting on the Arab Spring.　In particular, reporters generally offered little in the way of historical context.　Furthermore, while much of the discontent associated with the Arab Spring was rooted in economic problems, American reporters generally failed adequately to cover relevant issues of union activity, oil, Israel, stability of allies, and the major interests of the U.S. in the matter.　Moberg pointed out that reporters overemphasized US help in making democratic advances and underemphasized the negative results of US actions.　In short, US reporting on the events of the Arab Spring suffered from an uncritical view of the United States itself.

7.　"Thinking the Twentieth Century : In Memory of Tony Judt"

Panel

1)　John Dunn, King's College, University of Cambridge

Mr. Dunn spoke of Tony Judt as a man with a powerful vision and message, a man who has had a profound effect on the history of twentieth century Europe.

2)　Marci Shore, Yale University

Ms. Shore discussed the intellectualism and Marxism of Tony Judt.　She spoke of the extraordinary anger that came out in Judt's book, *Past and Perfect*.　In her words, Marxism was the air that Judt breathed, and the core of the book was self-criticism and guilt.　She called attention to the anti-utopianism and the "great silence" (i.e., the blood of others) that played such a prominent role in Judt's thought.　Ms. Shore summarized Tony Judt's intellectual legacy as the realization that epistemological questions do not always result in moral questions.

3)　Peter E. Gordon, Harvard University

Mr. Gordon, who did not know Tony Judt personally, saw Judt as a teacher of ideas.　His comments of Judt were more negatively critical than those of the other commentators.　To Gordon, *Past and Perfect* was far from a perfect book, and he decried its stringent moralism.　According to Gordon, history should seek a balance between judgment and understanding.　He pointed out that Judt was not just a child of the 1960s, he was, in many ways, a conflicted person.　Gordon suggested further that historians should delay the rush to moral judgment of Judt.　He spoke of Judt as a political historian with a capacious intellect.　Gordon pointed out that one must appreciate intellectual ideas on the basis of the ideas themselves ; according to Gordon however, Judt did not have a positive attitude toward abstraction.

4)　Timothy Snyder, Yale University

Mr. Snyder had co-authored a book with Tony Judt (a book which was still unpublished at the time of the meeting), and he offered several remarks concerning Tony Judt's teaching.　He spoke of Judt as a political historian and explained that Judt got better simultaneously as an historian and as an intellectual.　He suggested that in *Past and Perfect*, Tony Judt was castigating himself through castigating Jean-Paul Sartre.

8.   Andrew J. Bacevich, Boston University—*The Revisionist Imperative : Rethinking the Twentieth Century*

Mr. Bacevich took a critical look at how Americans have viewed their own history in the twentieth century.   He remarked that the US is one of only a few nations that believes in the efficacy of war.   In short, Americans believe in war because, for a time in American history, war worked ; war was effective, it accomplished its purposes.   By 1945, war had invigorated US institutions.   The US showed that it could do big things, e.g., the Manhattan Project.   Because of the nation's successes in war, the US had become a cultural, military juggernaut.   America's wartime successes were celebrated in movies and television programs such as the famous TV series, *Victory at Sea*.   This was the story of America ; in Tony Judt's words, for America, the Second World War became a "memory palace."   Bacevich pointed out, however, that history must ultimately speak to the present and that the time is ripe for a revision of the twentieth century canonical account of America's wars.   Seeing *history* as a widely shared, deeply internalized vision of the past and recognizing the morally hazardous nature of *revisionism*, he suggested that for citizens of the twenty-first century, the twentieth century has two stories to tell, viz., 1) the story of the "short twentieth century" (1914-1989) and 2) the story of the "long twentieth century" (the battle over who will dominate in the Middle East).   Bacevich went on to explain that in the short twentieth century, the American view of democracy left much to be desired.   Allied forces killed noncombatants and did little to postpone Hitler's "final solution."   Later, the US itself employed scientists who had worked for Hitler.   This use of Hitler by the West showed that the short twentieth century was always about politics and power.   At the onset of the postwar period, Americans were forced to look again at the morality of war.   From the late 1970s up through 1989, the country failed to produce any alternative to western, liberal democracy, and 1989 marked the rise of American triumphalism, as globalization became Americanization.   As the only surviving superpower after the collapse of the Soviet Union, the US's waging of the first Iraq war showed the world that western leaders were unwilling to view the Middle East on its own terms and that they believed that war still worked.   In the 1990s, the view that war still works for America became the view of neo-conservative politicians in America.   In a sense, as Bacevich pointed out, September 9, 2001 became 1941 all over again as a new crusade began.   War would persist as an accepted staple of American policy.   Once begun, war campaigns now go on all but indefinitely.   According to Bacevich, the American affinity for war is impoverishing the country.   Americans need to look carefully at the "long twentieth century," a century that should teach them humility.   They need a usable test for truth.   He suggested that as historians, we need to do better, and we need to develop the means to do so.

9. "Decolonizing U.S. History : The United States and Decolonization at Home and Abroad"

Roundtable Discussion

1)　Brenda Plummer, University of Wisconsin-Madison─*Race and Class*

　　Ms. Plummer described decolonization in Africa as a racist operation.　She spoke of Hugh and Mabel Smythe who worked in Nigeria and became US ambassadors to developing countries.　Plummer explained the importance of recognizing the difference between the African-American experience as a minority experience and African policy.　Not understanding this difference has caused many African-Americans to stumble in their understanding of Africa.

2)　Lorrin R. Thomas, Rutgers University-Camden─*Puerto Rico*

　　Ms. Thomas spoke of Puerto Rico as the closest thing the U.S. has had to a real colony in the twentieth century.　However, the main issue regarding U.S. colonization of Puerto Rico has not been the actual taking of land, but the patterns of imperial ideology exhibited by the US.　The first stage of US colonization of Puerto Rico took place in 1898-1917.　At that time, a debate was raging about whether Puerto Rico was actually a colony or not.　In 1937, the Puerto Rico Independence Bill was passed, removing U.S. military support from Puerto Rico.　Mark Antonio, a Representative from Harlem, argued further for the actual decolonization of Puerto Rico.　The issue was not only a US matter however, for in 1949, there was tension regarding Puerto Rico's status in discussions within the United Nations Committee on Non-Self Governing Territories.

3)　Daniel M. Cobb, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill─*Indigenous Peoples* (Mr. Cobb was unable to attend and his remarks were read by session chairperson, Andrew Jon Rotter, Colgate University)

　　Mr. Cobb commented on the human rights of indigenous peoples.　He pointed out that it is important to relate human rights to international law.　The Iroquois Indians are a good example of a people who sought recognition through international law.　After World War II, native rights advocates appealed to US humanitarianism, seeking to use US policy as a positive example of human rights policy.

4)　Bradley Simpson, Princeton University─*Human Rights*

　　Mr. Simpson pointed out that we have much research on colonization but very little on the results of the end of decolonization.　He explained that indigenous rights activism and indigenous self-determination began to change U.S. policy regarding indigenous peoples.　One problem was that within the US, there were different views on the meaning of *self-determination*.　By the 1970s, decolonization was not an act, but an ongoing process.　As many argued at the time, in the 1970s, the denial of self-determination led to many acts of terrorism.　Simpson advised that historians need to take statements on collective rights more seriously.

5)　Maurice Jr. Labelle, University of Akron―*Decolonization, Imperial Culture, and the Politics of U.S. History*

Mr. Labelle offered a more culturalist perspective on decolonization than did others participating in the roundtable discussion. He suggested that decolonization defines the twentieth century because it changed the way people thought about power and dominance. The U.S. was a culture of exceptionalism, an apotheosis of the nation-state concept itself. Citing Edward Said's *Culture and Imperialism*, Labelle maintained that U.S. history remains chained to the idea of western centricity. He pointed out that decolonization is a long, drawn-out process, not a series of disconnected events. Indeed, political decolonization is not over, for it continues to be a US process, and the US continues to be an empire. When the US has called for decolonization in the past, it has forgotten about its own colonialism. Labelle decried the reality that US history texts remain heavily influenced by the western perspective and fail to take eastern views into account in their treatments of various issues.