

**Executive Council Minutes, New England Regional World History Association,  
5 OCT 2020**

In Attendance:

David Kalivas, President (DK)

Dave Burzillo, Treasurer (DB)

A. J. Andrea, Secretary (AA)

Gustavo Carerra (GC)

Lincoln Paine (LP)

Violetta Ravagnoli (VR)

Luke Scalone (LS)

Heather Streets-Salter (HSS)

Kerry Vieira (KV)

**The meeting, held via the medium of Zoom, began at 6:30 PM with opening remarks by President Kalivas.**

DK: The Book Forum (held electronically on 5 October) went well, although attendance was low. Having the author present enlivened it, and the three discussants did well. The following Q&A, however, was not that engaging. Maybe in the future, rather than having submitted questions and muted mics, we open all mics? This might make it more engaging. With 50+ registrants, we only had about 14 or 16 participants from outside the Executive Council. For the next Book Forum, let's consider having a three-person panel of commentators and then open it up to general discussion. Heather has suggested Matt Bowser as a panelist.<sup>1</sup> The panelists should come up with some classroom tactics relating to the book under discussion because most participants are teachers. We should think more about using the book in the classroom. Kerry should also serve as the tech moderator, if she is willing.

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<sup>1</sup> Having received his Ph.D. in World History from Northeastern in 2020, Matt is currently an adjunct professor at Northeastern and Tufts.

KV: I am happy to host again. My Zoom at Northeastern is more dependable now, and others can serve as co-hosts. There has been a slow response to the WHA's next Baobab in two weeks.<sup>2</sup> It might be the time. Because our forum participants are largely from the East Coast, NERWHA might want to hold its forum in the morning so as to not break up the Saturday for participants.

HSS: Not too early. 11:00 to noon? Then off to lunch and enjoy the rest of the day. The forum went well, by the way, despite Zoom's being intimidating. What if we did a forum on teaching race without assigning a book? Teachers are now overwhelmed, and reading a book is just too much. We can share ideas as a panel.

DK: If we have people to do this, it will work wonderfully.

VR: So not do the book at all;<sup>3</sup> so a teaching forum.

HSS: We want it current and helpful, In November people will be overwhelmed. Make it easy on them.

DK: We can keep the book and point to it as a useful resource.

HSS: In that case, I would take part. The book is useful, but it is only one among many.

DK: I have taught the history of racism for years, so I can participate. With Matt, we have three.

VR: Call it a workshop, and keep it as background. Maybe we should have breakout rooms. Anyway, a "workshop" is less intimidating than a "forum." Also, advertise it as a workshop for teachers. And breakout rooms will make this dynamic.

HSS: The three discussants can serve as breakout facilitators.

KV: Given circumstances, in mid-November people will *want* to talk. Having breakout rooms gives us a format for discussion.

LS: The disparity between those who registered and those who showed up might be because it was without fee, but I will not suggest a fee.

LP: There is value in having an investment. Maybe, as Maine Maritime Museum does, we should charge \$5 for non-members and \$3 for members. Paying makes people think more seriously about showing up.

DK: Who cares about who shows up?

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<sup>2</sup> To be held on 17 October, beginning at 1:30 EDT. See <[thewha.org](http://thewha.org)> for details and registration.

<sup>3</sup> N.B. At an earlier Zoom meeting, the EC had selected George M. Frederickson, *Racism: A Short History* for its second forum.

LP: We should not just preach to the converted. We want to show there is value in membership.

DK: Such nominal fees are irrelevant. We do not need them. Those who want to come will come. We *are* teaching to the converted.

GC: The value of our symposia is having teachers (and I speak as a middle school teacher) show up to hear about research and scholarship. Teachers can find plenty of other places to discuss pedagogy. They want to hear about research and learn how it relates to their teaching. Fredrickson is dry, but it would be valuable to find out how instructors at advanced levels use it.

VR: We should advertise this workshop better. And in the workshop, we set up an issue and have people discuss how they deal with it.

HSS: What if we used a more student-friendly book? The Oxford Very Short Introductory series has a book on racism by Ali Rattansi.<sup>4</sup> It is global in perspective, thereby taking us out of U.S. navel-gazing, and it is *short*. See! (holds up the book.) It is so short, people might read it, and it is not dry. It is certainly more friendly for diverse audiences.

GC: I have used the series, and it is good for high school students.

DK: We can switch books. We have not yet announced Fredrickson. We can offer a list of books, including Fredrickson and Rattansi.

HSS: Great series.

KV: At the WHA we are interested in retaining high school and community college members, and every year we get a new cohort. This is a great thing to advertise to them. Let's hone in to high school teachers, and David Kalivas should send out a message to the WHA membership but aimed especially at teachers,

DK: OK. We will use this book instead of Fredrickson.

LP: Can we come back to the format? I like mixing pedagogy and scholarship as Gustavo suggests.

DK: Do you want to participate Lincoln?

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<sup>4</sup> Secretary's point of privilege: It has seven (7) books on racism, all by Ali Rattansi and all in the second edition. Go to

<https://www.veryshortintroductions.com/search?q=racism&searchBtn=Search&isQuickSearch=true> to see the list.

LP: Sure, let me see how tomorrow goes.<sup>5</sup>

DK: Heather, will you contact Matt Bowser?<sup>6</sup>

HSS: Yes, and I can talk about this book from a scholarly perspective. I am deeply into this field, and I can talk about teaching with the book.

DK: You are on, Heather, to do both.

HSS: OK.

DK: Is anyone else interested in participating? What we want to do is *discuss*. We will discuss scholarship and pedagogy and then throw it open to discussion. We can have a plenary session but followed by breakouts for 10 minutes That works.

GC: Great idea. Less intimidating.

VR: The facilitators need to offer something specific to discuss.

HSS: All of my classes are on Zoom and we use Google Forms with a prompt for breakouts. They like it. I can prepare something like that for us. And Matt is a scholar of race and is using this book. So if he is willing....

DK: Race has been a core thread in Western culture since the 15<sup>th</sup> century.

**Phone rings. David is called away by a call from son Theodore. When he returns, there is a brief discussion about grandchildren. Those without grandchildren listen in wonderment.**

DB: We have a plan! We will shift to 11:00-12:30.

DK: OK.

**Discussion then wanders into the brambles of Woodrow Wilson—racist, incompetent head of state in dealing with the influenza pandemic, which he never mentioned, and himself addled by the flu at Versailles, a sickness he also denied. Discussion of modern parallels.**

DB: The lesson of 1918 is that governments must tell the truth.

KV: They do not know history.

HSS: I will write to Matt, and we will take it from there.

DB: And Al must write up the next workshop.

AA: I missed the 25 September forum because it was my 55<sup>th</sup> Wedding Anniversary. I plan to join the workshop. And in preparation I secured a copy of Fredrickson (holds up a copy). I pass

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<sup>5</sup> He subsequently affirmed that he would participate.

<sup>6</sup> Heather contacted Matt, and he agreed to participate.

over in silence that November 14<sup>th</sup> is my 79<sup>th</sup> birthday (**obviously intrigue and skulduggery is at work here**). I will be there.

DK. Will an 11:00 start cut into your daily hiking?

AA: I will start early that day. I normally begin at 8:00 and end at 11:00. No big deal. But I will be sweaty (**thankfully Zoom does not communicate aromas**).

DK: Go forward fearlessly.

**The meeting ended at 7:15 EDT.**

Respectfully submitted,

A. J. Andrea, Secretary