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A Letter From the Editor

By ERIC FISCHER
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

The most satisfying elements of my college experience, thus far, have been the breadth of new experiences and opinions to which I've been exposed and the broad range of people with whom I have experienced them.

Watching my opinions and beliefs, and those of the people around me, change over our college years has also been fascinating. Each fall when I return to campus, I notice the wide variety of summer (or, for new students, high school) experiences we carry up to the Hill, and how those experiences interact with previous

readers refine their own beliefs and develop more nuanced positions. We see this process of self-examination and intellectual refinement not as necessarily admitting the weakness of one's position, but rather as a matured, fuller understanding of what legitimate criticisms might be made of a belief. Our staff believes that if we can spur this process in the individual, we can make campus conversations more interesting and more rewarding.

What specific content can our readers expect this year? With short news cycles, and highly contentious politics salient in current affairs, our

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beliefs or positions to drive discussions. I firmly believe that Hamilton benefits from this living kaleidoscope of stories interacting and morphing, and it is my goal as Editor-in-Chief of *Enquiry* to publish stories, ideas, and passions which raise the quality and add to the variety of conversations on campus.

Enquiry publishes high-quality, original opinion pieces between 500 and 800 words on a wide variety of topics spanning the arts, cultural issues, and current affairs. Our staff's interests and perspectives vary widely, but we do share a desire to make our readers think. We hope to introduce our readers to new fields of academics or other interests, provide novel perspectives on well-discussed topics, and challenge our readers' core beliefs.

We grant our writers broad latitude in choosing topics of interest and positions on issues, so long as arguments are well-formulated and well-defended. It is our intention that readers engage with *Enquiry* through self-examination plus a critical view of our work, since we believe that offering our various perspectives makes our

staff certainly won't struggle for topics on which to write. Technology and social media are reshaping the arts and culture rapidly, giving platforms for new kinds of expression and allowing a wider variety of critics to judge art. In current affairs, an unpredictable presidential administration with its base largely intact is facing a challenge from an opposing party trying to define its own identity. A bloated field of so many Democratic candidates is throwing out policies left and left (so

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to speak) for debate in their desperate attempts to rise above the others. A growth in populist sentiment at home and abroad has led to a re-examination of political beliefs and a debate over how interconnected nations should be.

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The Fake History of Howard Zinn

By MARY GRABAR
GUEST CONTRIBUTOR

“That book will knock you on your ass,” said a 20-year-old genius working as a janitor at MIT of *A People's History of the United States*.

“That's the scumbag that has been screwing up all my friends!” said Zach, a student at Grove City College, of that book's author, Howard Zinn.

The first speaker was Matt Damon playing the titular character in the 1997 award-winning movie, “Good Will Hunting.”

The second speaker was a student of political science professor Paul Kengor commenting upon seeing my recent book, *Debunking Howard Zinn: Exposing the Fake History That Turned a Generation against America*, in his office.

Howard Zinn, whose history of the U.S. has sold a record-breaking more than 2.6 million copies as a trade book and textbook . . . has been in continuous publication for nearly 40 years . . .

The original title was supposed to be *Fake History*, but it was decided that Howard Zinn, whose history of the U.S. has sold a record-breaking more than 2.6 million copies as a trade book and textbook and has been in continuous publication for nearly 40 years, would be in the main part of the title.

It seems that people either love or hate Zinn. Leftists tend to love him because he confirms their notions about their country as imperialistic, racist, and corrupt. Conservatives hate him because his contempt virtually drips from every page.

But *A People's History* goes beyond

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All of these subject areas will develop over the course of this academic year, and *Enquiry* aims to discuss them with our fellow students. Especially because we let our staff writers have a large say in choosing their own topics for opinion pieces, we are confident that our writing will reflect and help to drive the current conversation, and showcase our writers' various interests and skill sets.

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challenge of bringing new perspectives to Hamilton's campus and eager to share and defend our positions. We hope that in engaging our campus in discussion, we sharpen our own beliefs and perspectives, growing along with our community. Our staff is always searching for talented, passionate writers interested in adding their voices to the campus conversation. Interested writers can reach out to: efischer@hamilton.edu.

THE FAKE HISTORY... *cont.*

bias—like the bias pointed out in a review of the nation's most popular history textbook, *American Pageant*, which emphasizes Democrats and their accomplishments while with derogatory language it presents Republicans as scandal-ridden.

Zinn's history is false.

Zinn violates (and not at all subtly) all the rules set out by the American Historical Association by misrepresenting sources, omitting essential evidence, borrowing primary source references from a secondary work without citing that work (i.e., pretending to have conducted research that another has done), and plagiarism.

The first five and a half, much-touted pages about Christopher Columbus's discovery of America are lifted from a book for high school students written by the novelist and playwright Hans Koning, Zinn's socialist comrade in an anti-Vietnam War group. And that book has no sources either; it is little more than a screed against Columbus and Western civilization.

The college freshmen I taught were more skillful plagiarizers than Zinn. (Of course, they received failing grades and a mark in their academic files.)

Zinn, on the other hand, enjoyed the perks of tenure and celebrity

until he died in 2010 at the age of 87.

Zinn's claims that Columbus committed genocide against the Indians, that all the native peoples in the Americas led lives of peaceful cooperation and sharing, that the American founders were racists who set up a form of government designed to enrich themselves and others of

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their class, that President Lincoln was a capitalist tool, that the American government was like the fascist regimes it was fighting in World War II, and that Ho Chi Minh embodied the democratic ideals of the Declaration of Independence that its author, Thomas Jefferson, did not really believe in, are all based on illegitimate history.

Yet his book is used widely in high schools, especially in AP U.S. History and ethnic studies. A "young people's" version is used in eighth-grade classes in Portland, Oregon public schools. Future teachers are taught American history with it, and they then use it and free downloadable lessons from the Zinn Education Project in their classes. Spin-off books, like *A People's History of Sports*, bring in royalties to his estate.

Zinn's words were read by Hollywood actors and blared out in New York City's public parks during a summer-long festival in 2018. His life is the subject of a documentary and a Broadway play. His play, "Marx in Soho," is performed regularly. Literary prizes, art works, and festivals are dedicated to him. He has been mentioned on

television shows, and by sports stars and rock bands.

Howard Zinn, who was almost certainly a one-time member of the Communist

Party, pointed in his magnum opus to socialism as the only solution to the problems plaguing an irredeemable nation. Soviet propaganda ministers would have been proud.

I hope my book, which reviewers have said "definitively discredits" Zinn's book and praised for doing "the service of exposing the mendacious, non-scholarly character" of it, will be helpful should a professor assign or recommend it. And if you have friends like Zach's, I hope they hear about it too.

Mary Grabar, Ph.D., is a resident fellow at the Alexander Hamilton Institute for the Study of Western Civilization. Her book, Debunking Howard Zinn, can be purchased from the AHI or through Amazon and other outlets.

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The opinions expressed in these articles are the views of their authors and do not represent the views of Enquiry or the Alexander Hamilton Institute.

Enquiry accepts articles of 500 to 800 words at efischer@hamilton.edu. Please be aware that we do not accept anonymous submissions.

CONTINUE THE CONVERSATION

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#Enquiry2019

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#HowardZinn