Jeremi Suri’s latest book, *Civil War by Other Means: America’s Long and Unfinished Fight for Democracy*, is both a departure from and a continuation of the author’s approach to historical scholarship. It is a departure because Suri, a professor of public affairs and history at the University of Texas at Austin, is best known for his acclaimed studies of twentieth-century US foreign policy, and this analysis of the failure of post-Civil War Reconstruction is a foray into historical terrain outside of his usual era and field of specialization. It is a continuation, however, in that the Northern Republicans’ inability to sustain the imposition of multiracial democracy on the South after the war parallels other examples from American foreign policy of winning the war but losing the peace, which Suri has analyzed to great effect in his previous books.¹

The book also is consistent with Suri’s approach to history partly as a means for engaging and educating the public about the debates and traumas of the present, since he believes it a “myth” that historians can reconstruct the past on its own terms.² In this case, Suri aims to make sense of the 6 January 2021 insurrection at the US Capitol—and the struggles over democracy during the presidency of Donald Trump more generally—as a continuation of the Civil War’s battles between multiracial democracy and white supremacist resistance, which were fought through politics rather than on the battlefield. He also proposes policy remedies to the democratic deficiencies inherited from the American past.

While there is much that could be questioned regarding Suri’s interpretation and approach, the reviewers—Gregory Downs and Chandra Manning, both of whom are eminent historians of the Civil War era—treat Suri’s self-admittedly controversial handling of his subject with generosity as well as acuity.³

Downs applauds Suri’s deft and expert narration of “complicated political histories of Reconstruction” as well as his effort to use Civil War history to help the public better understand the present crisis of American democracy and build support for needed changes to the system. However, Downs also notes the Procrustean difficulties entailed by Suri’s focus on national party and (to a lesser extent) state leadership, which scants other aspects of Reconstruction that scholars have explored in recent years.⁴ These include the

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² Suri notes that he has written about the Cold War with contemporary issues in mind in his books such as *Power and Protest: Global Revolution and the Rise of Détente* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2003) and *Henry Kissinger and the American Century* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2007).


dimensions of class and economics, the labor movement, the achievements of freed people (particularly Black women) in building power and community prior to the imposition of Jim Crow, and the impact of the West as well as the rest of the world.

Further, Downs considers Suri’s narrative of Reconstruction as having come to an end with the Compromise of 1877—a tale in which weak-willed Northern Republicans bargained away the South’s nascent multiracial democracy in exchange for the White House—to be a compelling moral lesson that is ultimately unsupported by evidence, despite its endorsement by many historians outside of the ranks of Reconstruction scholars. According to Downs, those specialists disagree over whether Reconstruction was short (ending by 1874 if it ever launched at all) or long (with widespread enfranchisement and political participation for freedmen lasting into the 1890s, enforced by the US Army and buttressed by Congressional civil rights legislation). But their rejection of what he calls “the 1877 fable” has significant implications for the lessons to be drawn from history.

Following the argument of Mark Grimsley, Downs sees Reconstruction’s demise as having resulted not because Northern Republicans lacked the right motives and moral fiber, but because they were defeated by a relentless paramilitary and political insurgency in the 1890s. Given that “even moderate Republicans advanced extraordinarily bold ideas to save Reconstruction” and still failed, this history suggests that the present crisis can be overcome not through more willpower but from active counterinsurgency, with all of the grim tradeoffs that may entail.

Chandra Manning echoes Downs’s praise for Suri’s mission of public education and his insight into the instability and violence that characterize American politics. Along with Downs, she finds particular value in Suri’s mesmerizing chapter on Confederate exiles who tried to recreate antebellum Southern society in Mexico and other foreign redoubts, although Manning too wishes that Suri had focused on Black political activism as well as national party leadership.

Unlike Downs, Manning supports Suri’s argument that the failure to maintain Reconstruction can be explained by failures of leadership (particularly by presidents other than Ulysses S. Grant), will, and political institutions. However, she challenges Suri’s characterization of the Confederacy as a herrenvolk democracy—she considers it instead a manifestation of the longstanding authoritarian impulse in

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University Press); and David Prior, ed., Reconstruction and Empire: The Legacies of Abolition and Union Victory for an Imperial Age (New York: Fordham University Press, 2022).


American politics—and wishes to see more emphasis on “how powerful leaders play upon white men’s gender anxieties to intensify their commitment to upholding white supremacy.”

Suri, in his response, registers his appreciation that Downs and Manning “recognize that we are in a moment when we must look to the past to help explain and respond more effectively to democratic crises.” He agrees with Manning that “the effect of Confederate white supremacy was to deny democratic rights for millions of Americans” but notes that Confederate officials “gained legitimacy from popular support.” He concurs that gender and African American political activism are “crucially significant” subjects but defends his focus on national politics as the area of his principal interest as well as the one “where the legacies and lessons for contemporary challenges seem most urgent.”

Suri agrees that the Democratic insurgency (as characterized by Downs) “did not undermine Northern will as much as it captured federal institutions,” at least by the time that Woodrow Wilson was elected president in 1912 and proceeded to re-segregate the federal government. However, he maintains that the 1877-centered narrative is more than a fable, given “striking evidence that Northern Republicans were unwilling to finish the job, despite their overwhelming national political dominance between 1869 and 1876.”

Civil War by Other Means is a bold and sophisticated meditation on the meaning of American history for the present. It appears at a moment when widespread anxieties over racial issues have focused attention on the failure of Reconstruction as both national tragedy and critical missed turning point.7 This roundtable review strikes me as an intellectually rich exploration of both the history and the questions raised by the effort to interpret the resonances between past and present.

Contributors:

**Jeremi Suri** holds the Mack Brown Distinguished Chair for Leadership in Global Affairs at the University of Texas at Austin. He is a professor in the University’s Department of History and the Lyndon B. Johnson School of Public Affairs. In addition to Civil War by Other Means, Suri is the author and editor of ten other books on contemporary politics and foreign policy, including The Impossible Presidency: The Rise and Fall of America’s Highest Office (Basic Books, 2017); Henry Kissinger and the American Century (Harvard University Press, 2009); Liberty’s Surest Guardian: American Nation-Building from the Founders to Obama (Simon & Schuster, 2012); and Foreign Policy Breakthroughs: Cases in Successful Diplomacy (Oxford University Press, 2015).

Professor Suri also hosts a weekly podcast, “This is Democracy.”

**Geoffrey Kabaservice** is Vice President of Political Studies at the Niskanen Center. He is the author of several books including The Guardians: Kingman Brewster, His Circle, and the Rise of the Liberal Establishment (Henry Holt, 2004), and Rule and Ruin: The Downfall of Moderation and the Destruction of the Republican Party,

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7 Another significant recent work along similar lines is Fergus M. Bordewich, *Klan War: Ulysses S. Grant and the Battle to Save Reconstruction* (New York: Knopf, 2023).
from Eisenhower to the Tea Party (Oxford, 2012) which was named a New York Times Notable Book of the Year. He has written for numerous national publications including the New York Times, Washington Post, Los Angeles Times, Politico, and The Guardian. Kabaservice has been a visiting assistant professor at Yale University, a program manager at the Advisory Board Company, a columnist for The New Republic, a visiting fellow at the Roosevelt House Public Policy Institute at Hunter College, and research director for the Republican Main Street Partnership. His research interests include politics, education, centrist and moderation, and the history of the Republican Party.

Gregory Downs is Professor of History at University of California, Davis, where he also serves as History Department Chair. He is the author of three works of History: The Second American Revolution: The Civil War-Era Struggle over Cuba and the Rebirth of the American Republic (University of North Carolina Press, 2019), After Appomattox: Military Occupation and the Ends of War (Harvard University Press, 2015), and Declarations of Dependence: The Long Reconstruction of Popular Politics in the South, 1861–1908 (University of North Carolina Press, 2011). With Kate Masur, he co-edited The World the Civil War Made (University of North Carolina Press, 2015), co-wrote the National Park Service’s first-ever theme study of Reconstruction, helped edit the NPS’s handbook on Reconstruction, lobbied for the creation of the first-ever NPS site devoted to Reconstruction at Beaufort, South Carolina, and the creation of a Reconstruction network in the National Park System, and currently co-edits the Journal of the Civil War Era. With Scott Nesbit, he designed Mapping Occupation, a digital history of the US Army and Reconstruction. He is also the author of a prize-winning collection of short stories, Spit Baths, published in 2006 by University of Georgia Press. He is currently completing the late Anthony Kaye’s manuscript on Nat Turner’s rebellion in 1831 Virginia; it will appear in 2024.

Chandra Manning is Professor of History at Georgetown University, where she teaches classes on the Civil War, slavery and emancipation, the American Revolution, and the history of baseball. Her first book, What This Cruel War Was Over: Soldiers, Slavery, and the Civil War (Knopf, 2007) won the Avery O. Craven Prize awarded by the Organization of American Historians, earned Honorable Mention for the Lincoln Prize and the Virginia Literary Award for Nonfiction, and was a finalist for the Jefferson Davis Prize and the Frederick Douglass Prize. Her second book, Troubled Refuge: Struggling for Freedom in the Civil War (Knopf, 2016), won the Jefferson Davis Prize awarded by the American Civil War Museum for best book on the Civil War and was a finalist for the Lincoln Prize. She is also a former National Park Service Ranger and continues to work closely with museums and historic sites. Currently, she is researching and writing a book about the US South.
On 6 January 2021 Kevin Seefried proudly carried a large Confederate battle flag into the US Capitol as he and his son joined a mob trying to block the 2020 presidential electoral vote count. Seefried’s hometown of southern Delaware had become a hotbed of neo-Confederate activism over the previous 15 years, topped by the construction of a monument to Delawareans who fought for the Confederacy.¹

In his punchy, public-spirited Civil War by Other Means: America’s Long and Unfinished Fight for Democracy, the distinguished historian of US foreign policy Jeremi Suri narrates his epiphany as he watched the insurrection: “Worries about a new civil war in America are misplaced because the Civil War never fully ended. Its lingering embers have burst into flames at various times, including our own” (1).

Suri doesn’t merely apply his scholarly chops to making sense of other people’s analogies; he makes his own. “Black Lives Matter is a twenty-first century echo of the Union Leagues, the Freedman’s [sic] Bureau, and African American Republican organizations across the old Confederacy,” Suri writes. “Donald Trump and QAnon are twenty-first-century replays of Andrew Johnson and the Ku Klux Klan—red hats this time born of older white hoods. History allows us to map the intricate roots buried in the soil” (262).

As a historian who has written about endpoints of the Civil War and Reconstruction, loose talk about the war never ending tends to baffle me: if made concrete, the claim is almost always wrong. If reduced to a suggestion that the Civil War continues to have unsettling relevance, the claim is also true for any significant past event.²

But Suri’s target audience is a public that is struggling to understand the current US crisis and knows little about the Civil War. That is an important audience, and it would be ungenerous to look askance at easy summaries that are advanced—as these are—to improve public understanding and support important policy changes. (About those policy changes, I will have more to say later.) As a call to action, Suri’s book is not exactly fun—Reconstruction doesn’t lend itself to mirth—but it is an old-fashioned pleasure. Suri expertly narrates complicated political histories of Reconstruction, a feat that has flummoxed many fine historians. He has read deeply but keeps his writing touch light as he efficiently incorporates stories from


leading works like Eric Foner’s *Reconstruction: America’s Unfinished Revolution* and Steven Hahn’s *A Nation under Our Feet*.³

Sometimes, the argument moves too briskly to suit this specialist. The narrative is sketchy on class, labor, and the economic basis of the ideological battle over Reconstruction, thus smoothing complex scholarship into a racial consensus history of white self-interest.⁴ Black women slip into the background of a story that defines politics more narrowly than recent work.⁵ Native history and the West’s role in Reconstruction

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fades, as does the growing field of Reconstruction and the World, though Suri does include a terrifically paced chapter on Confederates who tried to reconstitute Southern society in Mexico (37-66). In defining Republicans as a party that was committed to saving the West for white farmers, not for planters bringing enslaved people, Suri does not mention that once in power, those same Republicans passed a Homestead Act that either from its 1862 inception or by 1866, was race neutral, opening the West to what recent scholarship has shown was a surprisingly large number of Black homesteaders and casting grave doubt on Suri’s overstretched comparisons of Andrew Johnson’s and Republicans’ view of race. One wonders why Suri suggests that the Republicans who passed a Civil Rights Act and constitutional amendment to invalidate Black codes “were constrained in their efforts to undo the Black codes because they shared similar assumptions about who deserved primary place in American democracy” (115). But comprehensiveness is not the aim of the book.

What animates the book are the lessons drawn from this past to understand the present. This is of course the longstanding work of historians, but before we dive into it, we might consider its dangers. Do historians see the complexity of the present as clearly as the complexity of the past? Is it possible that this moment presents an altogether different crisis, one with roots not yet discerned, in ways that would require different solutions? The tendency to draw straight lines from present to past afflicts every historian—myself included—who wrestles with the role of historians in public. At times, Suri’s narrative falls into a narrowing of vision. For example, he calls the American tradition of claiming election fraud a Southern phenomenon (2) even though the charge was routinely deployed against immigrant voters in antebellum northern cities, well before Reconstruction. That slippage raises the question of whether the Civil War is actually the only proper analogy. Should we connect the xenophobic movement of former President Donald Trump more to the anti-immigrant campaigns in US history than to the Civil War, and what lessons would we discern if we asked such questions? Such questions do not undermine the premise of the book, they only contextualize it.


While it might be tempting to group anti-immigrant and pro-slavery positions together into a white racial consensus, the political affiliations between planters and northern immigrants and between nativism and anti-slavery were significant enough to make such generalizations untenable. For introductions to the burgeoning field of immigration and anti-immigrant views in the mid-nineteenth century see, Katherine Carper and Kevin Kenny, eds., “Special Issue: Immigration in the Civil War Era,” Journal of the Civil War Era 11:3 (September 2021): 311-405 and Alison
Since the book’s lessons are almost entirely political, it is fair to consider what political history Suri includes and leaves out. Suri deserves kudos for his attention to the latent instability in the American system, and for not casting it as a break from the historic norm or a recent import. If the book teaches the public to see violence as constitutive of American political history, it will have been a success.9

On other lessons, however, there is room for doubt. Suri’s telling of Reconstruction’s end is clear, compelling, and conventional: Reconstruction died because white Northern Republicans bargained it away in the so-called Compromise of 1877, which theorizes that Southern Democrats allowed Republican Rutherford Hayes to be elected president in exchange for the withdrawal of federal troops from the South (191-208). Drawing liberally on the work of historian C. Vann Woodward, Suri’s interpretation of Reconstruction is a morality tale. Woodward was arguably the ablest writer of Southern history of the twentieth century, but he could be an unreliable narrator, especially when it came to Reconstruction. Narrowly, historians dispute if there even was a “Bargain” and, if so, on what terms.10 More broadly, they ask whether 1877 mattered much; chronologically, the division in the field is between pessimists who see Reconstruction coming to an end between 1865 and 1874 (if ever launched at all), and optimists who trace its endurance into the 1890s (as the National Park Service’s theme study did).11 Neither argument puts much

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9 With Kate Masur, I explored this in “Yes, Wednesday’s Attempted Insurrection Is Who We Are,” Washington Post Made By History, 8 January 2021, https://www.washingtonpost.com/outlook/2021/01/08/yes-wednesdays-attempted-insurrection-is-who-we-are/.


weight on 1876–1877. The Bargain—if there was one—absolutely did not lead to an outcome that Suri mentions twice: “On taking office, Hayes removed the last US Army forces from the South” (217). The military actually moved four blocks in South Carolina and a bit farther than that in Louisiana. While the numbers were drawn down and scattered over the summer, soldiers remained in the South, in reduced numbers, throughout the era. To be fair, many other distinguished US historians have made this same error.11 Nor did the 1878 Posse Comitatus Act, which was actually an appropriations rider, have much impact on the Army’s ability to enforce civil rights laws. The Democrats acknowledged as much the next year when they demanded much more concrete, sweeping limitations on the Army; in response Hayes vetoed the appropriations bill five times, shutting down the government until the Democrats backed away. Ohio Representative James Garfield’s leadership in Congress in defending this part of Reconstruction helped lead him to the White House.12

Scholars who argue for a long Reconstruction lasting into the 1890s emphasize two things that were lost in the 1877 fable: Black political power and the ongoing, if sometimes tentative, Republican support for Black voting. More Black Republicans held local office in the 1880s than the 1870s, and Black voters not only elected congressmen but supported statewide fusion governments that toppled the Democrats in 1880s Virginia and 1890s North Carolina. President Chester Arthur oversaw a Justice Department which employed US Marshals and Commissioners to arrest more than 500 people for violating election laws in 1882 and 1883; between 1889 and 1891, President Benjamin Harrison’s Justice Department charged almost 1,000. On the ground, local Black political power mattered. Recent works in historical political economy suggest that the presence of Black officeholders or longer-lasting local US Army occupation led to significant improvements in economic and educational attainment compared to similar counties without Black officeholders or a federal presence.13 It is therefore surprising that Suri writes that “Freed slaves never benefited from a right to vote” (262).


The situation changed profoundly not in 1877, but during the early 1890s, and only after the narrow defeat of perhaps the most impressive voting rights legislation in US history to that point. When Republicans won control of the White House and both Houses of Congress in 1888 for the first time since 1874, they remade the political map, rushing the admission of western states to counterbalance the Southern states that were controlled by white supremacist Democrats, while also passing tariff and silver coinage bills.\(^{15}\) Tragically, however, the so-called “Lodge Force Bill” that would have given the federal government more oversight over congressional elections, and thus protected Black voting, died in the closing days of the session, when western Republicans prioritized breaking the Democratic filibuster in favor of another bill.\(^{16}\) Still, white Southerners like US Senator James Z. George of Mississippi were frightened enough by northeastern and midwestern Republican support for such a voting rights bill that they pressed first Mississippi, then other states, to take the risk of calling constitutional conventions in hopes that they would disfranchise Black men before Republicans could act. Over the bleak years of the 1890s, there were numerous events that could have been useful analogies for Suri’s topic: coups, paramilitary organizations in arms, and repeated denunciations of fraud.\(^{17}\)

If Suri’s account were alone in overlooking these 1880s and 1890s struggles, we might dismiss this as one of the challenges of taking up the honorable burden of writing beyond one’s core specialty. But the problems go well beyond this book—in this case Suri accurately reproduces the vision of the discipline, if not the field—and those readings lead to the drawing of dubious lessons from Reconstruction. One challenge of getting the story right is narrative: the 1877 story is riveting, the long Reconstruction confusing. The 1877

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\(^{15}\) Between 1888–1890, the states added were North Dakota, South Dakota, Washington, Montana, Idaho, and Wyoming.

\(^{16}\) Backed by Massachusetts Representative (later Senator) Henry Cabot Lodge, the Federal Elections Bill, also referred to as the Lodge Bill of 1890, and by critics as the Lodge Force Bill, was a proposed bill to ensure the security of elections for US Representatives. The Western Senators traded away their support for bill in exchange for Southern support of the Sherman Silver Purchase Act.

narrative compels us because it suggests that Reconstruction was a test of character that Northern whites failed; had Republicans simply stood tall, Reconstruction would have prevailed. Thus the story is depressing but also hopeful. The lesson is the same one that anchorman Dan Rather used as his sign-off from the CBS Evening News: “courage.”

This emphasis upon willpower avoids a much bleaker, but more illuminating narrative: insurgency. Fundamentally, white Northern Republicans did not retreat; they were defeated by a relentless insurgency, as Mark Grimsley has argued. Deploying themselves in paramilitary and political fields, using creative and varied strategies to achieve a steadfast goal, white supremacists overpowered, outvoted, and eventually outmaneuvered their enemies, and then they cut the tie that connected white Northerners to the Black South: the Black male vote. Once they were finished, they dared the federal government to act, confident that they had consolidated sufficient institutional power to outlast their enemies.

The heartbreaking thing about the history of Reconstruction is that it is full of triumphs that are too easy to overlook because they did not last. The story of insurgency suggests that the people fighting today to save multiracial democracy will not be able to rely on good motives and good morals. They will have to learn bold and even transgressive lessons; they must not lose. It casts them—let’s be honest, us scholars—as counterinsurgents, a role that none of us would eagerly fall into, knowing its gloomy history.

Rooted in the conventional narrative, the solutions offered by Suri, while well intentioned, seem inadequate. A book inspired by an insurrection ends with a list of high-minded suggestions, including a constitutional amendment guaranteeing the right to vote. But one lesson of Reconstruction is that amendments do not enforce themselves; the amendments were hollowed out by resistance, not bad wording. It is a sign of our own limitations—and our ahistoric faith in Supreme Court jurisprudence—that we assume better wording would have made the difference. So, too, is it unclear what to do with Suri’s claim that “Partisan gerrymandering is a democratic cancer, and it has to stop” (emphasis in the original, 267). Nor is it obvious what problem would be solved by calling new elections when a president leaves before the midpoint of a term, nor how any of these acts would be passed. Suri’s suggestion of a national voting administration gets one step closer, but still doesn’t answer the problem that Reconstruction forces us to examine: what if anti-democratic forces can win democratically in many states? What, then, is the safeguard for liberal democracy?

Americans are struggling with the lessons of their past. Suri writes about this ably, which is no small compliment. “We have all inherited” this history, he writes: “Visualizing the persistence of violent white supremacy is necessary to eradicate it, at last...We have lots of good work to do” (270). Hear, hear. But what

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*The field’s onetime tie to the 1877 endpoint is discussed in footnote 10. Even scholars who examine ongoing Black political efforts after 1877 often underplay Republican efforts to defend Reconstruction in the 1870s to 1890s. See, for example, Heather Cox Richardson, To Make Men Free: A History of the Republican Party (New York: Basic Books, 2014), 79-108; Richardson, How the South Won the Civil War: Oligarchy, Democracy, and the Continuing Fight for the Soul of America (New York: Oxford University Press, 2020), 124-44.

good work precisely do these times require? One wonders how he would suggest changing hearts and minds that are so resolutely set against not just this aim but liberal democracy itself? In the book’s opening pages, Suri writes that he had “underappreciated the long-standing domestic forces of destruction and exclusion” (9). As his book ends, I wondered if this is the case again.

All moments are strange, but this one strikes me as strange in a particular way: many observers sense that America is in an existential crisis, but almost no one has the experience or perhaps the heart to ask what tools an existential crisis demands. Thus the disconnect between the high state of alarm and the thin repertoire of solutions. By contrast, even moderate Republicans advanced extraordinarily bold ideas to save Reconstruction, not all of which of course were enacted: numerous constitutional amendments, several enforcement acts, an 1875 bill aiming to put much of the South under martial law (that passed one chamber of Congress but not both), lengthy government shutdowns to save the Army’s power, blistering campaign rhetoric denouncing opposing candidates as anti-democratic traitors, expulsions of numerous Democratic congressmen to open seats for Black Republicans, and, between 1889-1891, that ill-fated voting rights law. These efforts flowed naturally from 1860s decisions to unconstitutionally carve out West Virginia as a state, wave in other states to increase Electoral Votes, expel Southern congressmen, extend martial law beyond surrender, count the votes of a partial Congress as sufficient for passage of constitutional amendments, and essentially require rebel states to ratify constitutional amendments under threat of martial law. Republicans violated political and constitutional norms repeatedly to save Reconstruction. And still they ended up losing.20

Only when we disenchant ourselves from the fable that Reconstruction could have been won with more willpower will we be able to understand that defeat. Only then will we be able to ask what models we should apply to the present crisis. What lessons we might draw is for another time. Whether we will be able to face the implications, I would not want to speculate.

20 I expand on this interpretation in Downs, *Second American Revolution* and Downs, *After Appomattox*. 

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Reviewing *Civil War by Other Means: America’s Long and Unfinished Fight for Democracy*, as former President Donald J. Trump faces multiple indictments for his role in the lethal events of 6 January 2021 makes it tough to avoid parallels between the book and the present moment. Fortunately, author Jeremi Suri does not want to avoid those parallels. At its heart, the book is an extended meditation on how multiracial democracy and white supremacist resistance have struggled against each other since the Civil War. Suri argues that because political history since 1865 has consisted of an ongoing fight over what type of democracy the United States should be, violence is an endemic feature, not an occasional bug, of US politics. The book calls for a systematic rethinking of how leadership, will, and institutions have tipped the balance either toward a multiracial democracy or to white supremacy over that long history, while also inviting a deeper engagement with anti-democratic authoritarianism in American politics, including the role that gender has played in fueling it.

From the title’s allusion to Prussian General Carl von Clausewitz’s maxim that “war is politics by other means,” and throughout its eleven chapters, *Civil War By Other Means* draws attention to the persistent role of violence in US politics long past the surrender of Confederate armies in 1865. In exploring this theme, Suri’s narrative traverses fascinating paths, most notably in chapter two on Confederate exiles who, after the cessation of hostilities, continued the fight from foreign soil (23-36). Several of these men enriched themselves in the process before returning to the US, possibly contributing to the recovery of wealth in the postbellum South that was documented by a recent National Bureau of Economic Research report.

The continuation of violent Confederate resistance fostered the Republican Party’s and the Northern electorate’s emerging convictions that the Thirteenth, Fourteenth, and Fifteenth Amendments would be necessary. With the passage of those amendments, the United States entered into an unprecedented time

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The 1870s brought novel issues, including immigration, industrialization, and corporate corruption, along with the largest economic depression the nation had faced to that point. Furthermore, Republican leaders who built an anti-slavery party in the 1850s, notably Senator Charles Sumner and Congressman Thaddeus Stevens, died. A new generation of political leaders cared more about economic issues than about formerly enslaved people.\footnote{Heather Cox Richardson, \textit{The Death of Reconstruction: Race, Labor, and Politics in the Post-Civil War North, 1865–1900} (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2001). On Sumner, see David Donald, \textit{Charles Sumner and the Rights of Man} (New York: Knopf, 1970). On Stevens, see Bruce Levine, \textit{Thaddeus Stevens: Civil War Revolutionary, Fighter for Racial Justice} (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2022).}

Suri chronicles how white Southern elites noticed the waning attention to civil rights from their former adversaries in the North, and saw their chance to retake power with violence. In incidents like the rape and
slaughter of Black people in the Memphis massacre (189-90), the murder of prospective voters at the Hamburg Massacre in South Carolina (200-202), the attack on Black Union Army soldiers and office holders in Colfax, Louisiana (189-188) and many more, former Confederates and their supporters used deadly force to resist biracial democracy and impose a reign of terror that was designed to keep the government and its beneficiaries whites-only. By tracing similar threads to the present time, Suri argues that violence in US politics has been normalized.

But equally crucially, Suri argues that the violence—though persistent and normalized—has not always won. Multiracial democracy has pushed back, and the book identifies three factors that tilted the struggle toward either multiracial democracy or violent white supremacy.

One factor is leadership. Leaders set priorities and exert the power to either further multiracial democracy or to shore up white supremacist resistance. Suri argues that it mattered who was in charge at every level from party to municipality to state, but especially at the presidential level. To that end, Suri contrasts the presidencies of Andrew Johnson, Ulysses S. Grant, Rutherford B. Hayes, and James Garfield. President Abraham Lincoln’s successor, Andrew Johnson, is nearly universally regarded as a disaster, and Suri concurs. “Andrew Johnson contributed to the resistance” to multiracial democracy with every means at his disposal (119). He vetoed the Civil Rights Act and Freedmen’s Bureau, emboldened former Confederates by infusing his own speeches and actions with overt racism, and repeatedly blocked federal enforcement of the Union victory in the South. Conversely, his successor, Ulysses S. Grant, “insisted on the equal and universal enforcement of laws protecting these rights,” (159) including “immediate enfranchisement” (161). Grant “placed his presidency behind the ratification of the [Fifteenth] amendment...as a final step to complete the aims of the war and forge a new foundation for the country” (163). And when former Confederates fought back—as they did, gruesomely—Grant deployed “federal troops to combat white militias and protect Republican officials” and Black voters through 1872, a year that, not coincidentally, marked “the high-water mark for multiracial voting” (189).

Next came Rutherford B. Hayes, whom Suri portrays as well-intentioned, but naïve about the depth of white Southern resistance and hemmed in by the

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limits of US electoral institutions. However well Hayes meant, white Southern Democrats, “sensing weakness in Hayes” reversed earlier gains because Hayes “was in no way up to the task of managing the divisions he inherited, let alone healing them” (232, 236).14 Hayes’s successor, James Garfield, “made a strong case for affirmative Republican leadership,” but he, too, ran up against insurmountable obstacles (243). His assassination in 1884, for Suri, marks the end of a time when a profound and lasting Reconstruction might have worked.15

As the Hayes and Garfield presidencies show, leadership by itself could not defeat violent white supremacy, because leaders with even the best principles lacked the sufficient “mechanism for overcoming Southern resistance” (247). For that reason, the next two factors—will and institutions—are part of Suri’s overall argument. Suri poses the question, “Who would have the will and determination to force change on the other side?” Too often, he argues, the answer was “Confederate leaders” who “still had an advantage in the stubbornness of their commitment to their cause” while “Northern citizens” demonstrated “less will to use power in the South” to protect Black freedom and voting rights (157). The economic downturn in the 1870s exacerbated the problem. Once Republican leaders “could no longer promise easy prosperity,” they could no longer “justify expenditures on civil rights in the South,” and if “resources were short, Southern Democrats wanted to make certain that white men were in charge of distributing them” (183–184).16 Suri also argues that institutions themselves, not just the inclinations of the people within them, sometimes put a thumb on the scale for one side or the other. This argument is most evident in chapter six, “Impeachment,” in which Suri conflictingly expresses both his desire for the conviction of Andrew Johnson and his relief at the Senate’s narrow “not guilty” verdict as a win for separation of powers. Suri argues that US political institutions are inadequate for the protection of multiracial democracy because impeachment “is the only avenue the Constitution offers,” but is inherently anti-democratic as it overturns the will of the voters (155). “That is why it has never worked, even when a president is so obviously derelict in his duties,” concludes Suri (155).


15 Reading Civil War By Other Means gave me the idea that a great title for a James Garfield biography would be The Last Republican, but such a work is unlikely since two fairly recent biographies of Garfield exist, neither with that title. See Candace Millard, Destiny of the Republic (New York: Doubleday, 2011) and C. W. Goodyear, President Garfield: From Radical to Unifier (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2023).

Suri advocates for an essential continuity in US politics, although he undercuts his own thesis by labelling as “unprecedented” instances that were not novel at all. For example, Suri labels Black military enlistment as “unimaginable” before the Civil War, but Black men served in the armed forces for all US conflicts except the 1846–1848 Mexican-American War—and even then Black men served in the Navy during this conflict (69). Similarly, Suri writes that Black voting “had never happened before, even in the sections of the North most opposed to slavery,” when in fact Black men voted in five states without restrictions before the Civil War (161). Because the struggle between multiracial democracy and white supremacist resistance dates back even further than the Civil War, a discussion of the long roots of Black military service and Black voting would have strengthened Suri’s point about the deep persistence of this struggle.

On two key points, Suri’s argument is open to challenge, starting with his claim that the constant struggle in US politics is “not whether democracy, but what kind” (21). While one can agree that sometimes the fight has been between opposing conceptions of democracy, to posit that it has always been so rests on a facile acceptance of the Confederate position as democratic. There are problems with that premise. The most basic is that if democracy means majority rule, then white supremacist rule of Black majority states—as Mississippi and South Carolina were in the nineteenth century and as 106 counties still were in 2010—is not democratic on a purely numerical level.

Yet even if whites-only democracy were to count as a kind of democracy, calling the Confederate political position (both during and after the Civil War) democratic rests on a fundamental misunderstanding of that position. Suri defines the Confederate and white supremacist “vision of democracy” as “local control,” “home rule,” and “states’ rights” but those things were neither synonymous nor democratic in the

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18 The five states were Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, and Vermont. Additionally, New York allowed Black voting, though it subjected African Americans to prohibitively high property requirements not imposed on white men, which effectively limited the Black vote in the Empire State. Still, Black voting in these Northern states led the state of Georgia to call the electoral votes of those states invalid in the election of 1860, an irony in light of the 2020 attempts to throw out Georgia’s slate of electors after historically high Black voter turnout there. On Black voting and political mobilization before the war see DuBois, Black Reconstruction and Kantrowitz, More than Freedom.

nineteenth century (21 and passim). State rights often meant opposition to control by voters, local or otherwise. It meant control by the state legislature, which in a state like South Carolina was unicameral, apportioned by property ownership rather than population, and voted on everything up to and including presidential electors. Legislators, not voters, determined which candidate received the state’s electoral vote. The Confederate Constitution was framed by elites who forthrightly set out to curtail what they believed to be the excesses of democracy. In the preamble, they replaced “We the People” with “We the Deputies of the Sovereign and Independent States,” not to allow voters more control, but to remove control from voters and place it in the hands of leaders. The Confederate Constitution lessened the power of voters by giving the chief executive, rather than the legislature, power over the purse and over legislation through a line-item veto. Circuit courts were swept aside, and judicial review was centralized almost entirely in the Supreme Court. Voters were also distanced from the nomination process. Moreover, before the war, the language of “state rights” appears less frequently than “Southern rights,” which was an imperial position dedicated to the expansion of slavery whether local residents wanted it or not, a position far removed from local control democracy. In fact, one of the reasons that the Confederate states invariably listed for seceding was that Northern state legislatures were exercising state rights to resist the federal Fugitive Slave Act by passing their own state Personal Liberty Laws, thereby curbing the use of their own state’s resources to carry out the private, out-of-state slaveholders’ business.

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In cases like these, Confederate lawmakers and their postwar adherents were drawing not on democracy but on a different long-standing political tradition: authoritarianism. In contrast to the unpredictability and variability that governance according to the will of voters entails, authoritarianism offers reassurances against the fear of change that attracts a portion of every population, including Americans, no matter how empty the promises turn out to be. Secretary of War John C. Calhoun of South Carolina, one of the “Great Triumvirate” of national leaders in the generation that followed the Founders, worried so much about the democratic implications of the Declaration of Independence, that he once told Secretary of State John Quincy Adams of Massachusetts that the people of South Carolina would return to the British Empire and “make their communities all military” before they would tolerate that level of democracy. Calhoun grew into the patron saint of Southern politics for, among other reasons, his articulation of the theory of the concurrent majority, in which anything a majority voted for could only happen if the dissenting minority voted to allow it, thus effectively creating minority veto power over a democratic majority. Calhoun’s influence and his worries about the results of widespread democratic participation have continued to reverberate. In 1980, Paul Weyrich of the Heritage Foundation and the American Legislative Exchange Council admitted, “I don’t want everybody to vote,” because one just never knows what can happen when too many people cast ballots. “Our leverage in the elections quite candidly goes up as the voting populace goes down,” Heyrich explained. Calhoun, Confederates, Weyrich, and their followers were not debating what kind of democracy America should be; they were arguing against democracy at all.

Identifying this authoritarian impulse heightens the relevance of Civil War by Other Means to fields outside of US politics. The political scientist and philosopher Hannah Arendt’s classic definition of authoritarianism defines it as opposition to authentic popular will, citing as its Achilles heel the power of the people, whom an authoritarian ruler represses. In this understanding, the voters in a genuine democracy will never choose an authoritarian ruler, so the key to achieving authoritarian rule is to thwart the majority’s determination. Calhoun’s notion of the concurrent majority, Weyrich’s 1980 speech, and efforts like the recently defeated Ohio constitutional amendment to allow 40 percent of the population to

2010), and Thomas Morris, Free Men All: The Personal Liberty Laws of the North, 1780–1861 (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1974).

41 John Quincy Adams, who was not only a fellow Cabinet member but also good friends with Calhoun at the time, recorded the conversation in his diary directly after it occurred because it so flabbergasted him. Diary of John Quincy Adams, Feb. 24, 1820, Adams Family Papers, Reel 34, Massachusetts Historical Society. On Calhoun, see Charles M. Wiltse, John C. Calhoun (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1944-1951). Calhoun later served as Adams’ vice president (1825–1829). The two other members of the Great Triumvirate were Senators Henry Clay and Daniel Webster, both who later served as secretary of state.


over-rule the majority in a vote on constitutional amendments, all bring Arendt’s definition to mind. Civil War by Other Means places US political history into conversation with scholarship on the curbing of democracy in a comparative and international context.

Furthermore, recent revisionist scholarship challenges the premise that voters will never choose an authoritarian ruler, arguing instead that authoritarians gain power by winning voters to their side through the propagation of mythic narratives about the ruler as a salvific hero who will avenge the aggrieved masses. An examination of the violent politics of white supremacy through this lens allows for interesting comparisons between the US and other countries. When Suri describes the Colfax massacre, he notes that the former Confederate sheriff who led the charge, Christopher Columbus Nash, promised to “never allow Black Republicans to rule in the state,” and opened fire on Black office holders on Easter Sunday, a day which is redolent with salvific tones (185). Colfax was not an isolated incident in this regard. Former Confederate officer Wade Hampton’s campaign for governor of South Carolina in 1876 proceeded through a series of elaborately choreographed “Wade Hampton Days,” in which a prostrate figure, sometimes in chains and usually covered by a black robe, lay on a stage while Hampton’s adoring supporters awaited his arrival. Hampton swooped in on horseback, leapt onto the stage, threw off the robe and chains, and lifted a fair, delicate white woman wearing a flowing white gown to her feet. Hampton won, partly because of Black voter suppression, but also thanks to the adulation among white voters whipped up by these pageants starring himself as redemptive hero saving white womanhood from the newly unchained Black menace.

Exactly how Hampton gained the devotion of his followers points to a second theme that invites further exploration: gender. Civil War by Other Means is a book about those who held political power in the nineteenth century and that meant men. But gender was a tool—a weapon—that Confederate adherents used to cement power, and heeding it lends deeper insight into how they fomented white supremacist resistance to multiracial democracy. Hampton was clearly playing on white men’s conviction that the right order of things meant dependent, subordinate, white women who were reliant upon white men. This belief was deeply threatened by Black men, who must therefore be suppressed. Former Confederates continued to

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make the same point long after the Civil War, including North Carolina veteran and successful businessman Julian Shakespeare Carr who campaigned relentlessly in the 1890s to rid his state of the “crime” of Black voting, a feat achieved with an amendment to the state constitution “to take the ballot from the ignorant vicious negro.”33 That was not enough for Carr. He also worked tirelessly to install a statue of a Confederate soldier on the campus of his alma mater, the University of North Carolina, to remind the young men studying there of their duty to continue the fight for a social order in which “Anglo Saxon” men ruled. As he emphasized in his speech at the dedication, the statue was placed just yards from the spot where, upon his return from Appomattox, he “horse-whipped a negro wench until her skirts hung in shreds” because she insulted “a Southern lady, and then rushed for protection to” Union soldiers. Like Hampton, Carr was telling his audience that it took white Southern men to uphold the rightful order, one where white Southern women depended upon them, and Black women were subordinate to them with no recourse to the protection of the US government.34

Visceral connections between gender and the politics of white supremacy persist. The State of Florida wants to teach students that Black people benefitted from slavery, and also uses the law to restrict reproductive health care for women, bans psychology courses that contain consideration of gender identity, and sweeps books that feature protagonists who are not white and heterosexual from school libraries.35 Meanwhile, organizations like the Proud Boys and the Oath Keepers perceive a world where straight, white men do not rule over everyone else as such a threat that they pay fealty to a leader who promised that he “alone can fix it.”36 Attending to how powerful leaders play upon white men’s gender anxieties to intensify their commitment to upholding white supremacy would strengthen Suri’s argument about the long-running nature of violent resistance to multiracial democracy.

Civil War by Other Means—not to mention the daily headlines—confirm that in US politics from the nineteenth century to the present, multiracial democracy and white supremacist resistance to it are both opposite and true at the same time. Neither impulse alone tells the whole story, and neither is likely ever to vanquish the other once and for all. Vigilance against white supremacy remains necessary precisely because the struggle for multiracial democracy is not hopelessly doomed.

Response by Jeremi Suri, University of Texas

Gregory Downs and Chandra Manning are two of the leading historians of the Civil War era. They are also gifted writers. Their books have fundamentally shaped my understanding of warfare, politics, and American society in the second half of the nineteenth century—a period of absolutely vital importance to understanding current challenges to democracy. I am grateful for their close readings of Civil War by Other Means, their valuable suggestions, and especially their reflections on what this history means for the present.

I wrote Civil War by Other Means, as Manning and Downs note, with the 6 January 2021 insurgency and Donald Trump’s capture of the Republican Party in front of my eyes. The historical documents and the contemporary headlines filled my computer screen at the same time that I was writing the book. We imagine ourselves as historians who can lock ourselves away in some dark archive to reconstruct the past on its own terms. We impose this myth on our graduate students as we send them far away to read the letters of dead people, largely ignoring those who are alive around them. Civil War by Other Means abandons that myth and dives deeply into a distant past with self-conscious attention to the connections to democracy’s current challenges. The Civil War is not over, I argue, because the fights over the meaning and practice of self-government from that era remain unresolved. The book recovers the fights of that time to elucidate the divisions today.

Both Manning and Downs endorse this controversial approach, and I deeply appreciate it. Like other distinguished scholars, they recognize that we are in a moment when we must look to the past to help explain and respond more effectively to democratic crises. That is what our students and readers want. It is an unavoidable motivation for those of us who study politics in one form or another. Manning and Downs offer some compelling suggestions for how my approach to connecting the past and present could be improved, and I largely agree with them.

Manning’s review focuses on my overriding argument that multiracial democracy and white supremacy were simultaneously strengthened in the decades after the Civil War. She agrees that these dichotomous worldviews still contend for primacy in American politics. She disagrees, however, with my claim that white supremacy is a form of democratic argument.

I contend that figures like actor and assassin John Wilkes Booth, President Andrew Johnson, and Senator Benjamin Tillman believed they were protecting the voices of good, legitimate, suffering citizens. Johnson, in particular, resented the plantation elites who looked down upon small-town tailors, like him. He saw himself as a spokesman and a protector for a white petit bourgeoisie that was crushed between the rise of the

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2 Though Booth and Johnson are familiar figures, Tillman (1847–1918), who served as Governor of South Carolina and as a US Senator, was an effective legislator whose work ensured South Carolina disenfranchised blacks and poor whites for the first half of the twentieth century. See Stephen Kantrowitz, Ben Tillman and the Reconstruction of White Supremacy (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2000).

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freedmen and the return of the Confederate gentry. He was protecting majority rule for his majority. In excluding millions of African Americans, women, and others, Johnson raised the core question: who are the legitimate agents of democracy?

That question long preceded the Civil War. Seventeenth-century Anglo-American discussions of popular sovereignty excluded many groups, especially colonial subjects, yet thinkers like John Locke made claims about democratizing politics. The writers of the American Constitution were quite rigid in their restrictions on the franchise, but their document was surely a proclamation of democracy. There is a long tradition of advocates of democracy building their claims around a narrow concept of legitimate subjecthood. Confederate white supremacists were part of that tradition.3

Although I fully agree with Manning that the effect of Confederate white supremacy was to deny democratic rights for millions of Americans, recognizing that exclusion is part of the American democratic discourse is crucial for understanding why it does not go away. The most violent and hateful elected officials in American history gained legitimacy from popular support, not inheritance or divine right. They wielded power because they could claim that the rightful members of the nation’s democracy elevated them. They discredited their opponents, even if they were larger in number, as illegitimate—“foreign,” “unworthy,” or “criminal.” The absence of universal voting rights in the US Constitution, as I explain in my book, allows representative exclusion to linger deep within US democracy as a repressive legacy of its history. White supremacy is part of the American democratic tradition—as American and as democratic as federalism or judicial review.

Downs takes this discussion in a different, equally fruitful direction. He challenges my narration of the post-Civil War decades as a period of tenuous contention between multiracial democracy and white supremacy. Instead, Downs argues that Reconstruction was an overall success, with massive participation and representation for freedmen and others. He reminds us that the US Army continued to enforce political inclusion, and Republicans in Congress continued to legislate for civil rights, in the 1870s and 1880s.

Downs sees the smothering of multiracial democracy as a later and more concentrated phenomenon—a “relentless insurgency” in the 1890s. Downs points to the expansions of democracy before that decade, including the admission of new states to “counterbalance” Southern power and federal efforts to protect voting rights through the “Lodge Force Bill.” Resistance to civil rights was indeed strong in many parts of the country, but Downs documents its limitations, even after Presidents Ulysses Grant, Rutherford Hayes, and James Garfield had left the scene.

Downs argues that it was the “coup, paramilitary organizations, and repeated denunciations of fraud” at the fin de siècle that shut down progress and gave violent Jim Crow advocates the upper hand. After a quarter

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3This is one of the core arguments of Edmund Morgan’s scholarship on the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. See *Inventing the People: The Rise of Popular Sovereignty in England and America* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1988); *American Slavery, American Freedom* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1975).
century of continued resistance, and following a major economic depression in 1893, Democratic white supremacists finally broke the Republican vise grip on power. Woodrow Wilson’s election to the presidency in 1912, and his re-segregation of the federal government, boosted the insurgents into power as never before. The insurgency, as Downs characterizes it, did not undermine Northern will as much as it captured federal institutions.

Chronology certainly matters. Civil War by Other Means attributes many of the dynamics that Downs identifies to the 1870s and early 1880s. Downs moves them later and rejects the common narrative of failed Reconstruction. For him, the real failure was in the halted enforcement of Reconstruction during what became an age of American populism, imperialism, and progressivism. The Lincoln Republicans did their duty, in this account, but Southern insurgents captured and exploited the next generation of American politics.

I think Downs is correct, but I also think he is a little too quick to dismiss what he calls the “fable that Reconstruction could have been won with more willpower.” Surely there were many enduring accomplishments during Reconstruction—my book points to the ratification of three constitutional amendments, the passage of the Ku Klux Klan Act, and the creation of the Justice Department, in particular. More than Downs, however, I see striking evidence that Northern Republicans were unwilling to finish the job, despite their overwhelming national political dominance between 1869 and 1876. A Republican super-majority in Congress—with the necessary two-thirds in the Senate to convict an impeached president—failed to remove President Andrew Johnson, chose not to pass a voting rights amendment that prohibited state restrictions on male suffrage, and ultimately de-funded civil rights enforcement by the Justice Department.

These were missed opportunities that loom large today. They are also lessons in both the need for strong majorities in Congress and the imperative to use those majorities to force through major change. Presidents Franklin Roosevelt and Lyndon Johnson learned those lessons, and politicians who want to protect voting rights, women’s reproductive rights, and immigrants’ access to the US should pursue a similar strategy.4

Although political extremism tore the country apart, hesitation and moderation allowed unconstitutional resistance to metastasize after the Civil War. Victorious Republicans failed to do what was necessary to create a multiracial democracy. They allowed secessionists, including treasonous Confederate leaders who joined a foreign army in Mexico, to return to powerful positions in the United States. The pursuit of justice and democracy must be a non-negotiable purpose for American political parties; anything less imperils the basic values of the United States’ constitutional order—as was evident in the last decades of the nineteenth century, and again today.

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Manning and Downs identify many important subjects that I do not cover deeply, especially gender and African American political activism. Although mentioned at times in the narrative, these are not areas of focus for my writing. They are, however, crucially significant, as Manning and Downs explain, and there is a large, impressive literature on both topics.\footnote{On Black activism, see for example, Ira Berlin, Leslie Rowland, et al, eds., \textit{Freedom: A Documentary History of Emancipation, 1861–1867} six volumes, three series (New York and Chapel Hill: Cambridge University Press and University of North Carolina Press, 1985–2013). On gender, see Stephanie McCurry, \textit{Women’s War: Fighting and Surviving the American Civil War} (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2019) and Thavolia Glymph, \textit{The Women’s Fight: The Civil War’s Battles for Home, Freedom, and Nation} (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2020).} \textit{Civil War by Other Means} is intentionally focused on national politics because that is what I am most interested in, and it is an area where the legacies and lessons for contemporary challenges seem most urgent. If historical study is about understanding the present better from deep reflection on the past, then bread-and-butter political history is absolutely essential for an age of political turmoil.

\textit{Civil War by Other Means} closes with a series of modest suggestions for political reforms that are informed by history. Downs is correct to note that the suggestions are somewhat thin in comparison to the depth of resistance documented in the book. As a rule, historians do not uncover silver bullets of insight from the past to repair the present. I do, however, believe that historians must use their expertise to enter into dialogue with policymakers, at least in identifying key issues for attention.

The violent and anti-democratic legacies of the years after the Civil War linger, I explain, because of specific flaws in the American political system that shelter violent white supremacy. These include voter suppression, the Electoral College, gerrymandering, undemocratic presidential succession, and organized distortions of history. These flaws cannot be fixed overnight, and this historian has few plans for action, but it is essential to begin with some agreement on where the problems lie.

Every generation needs a new narrative of the past to help it build a new future. Ignorance of history makes a new future hard to imagine, and that is why those who fear change also fear history. A clearer understanding of how the Civil War still inflects American politics in the age of Trump may not save US democracy, but it helps to give it a chance. Other historical periods and subjects are also essential. I have, of course, written extensively about the Cold War, with different contemporary issues in mind.\footnote{See Jeremi Suri, \textit{Power and Protest: Global Revolution and the Rise of Détente} (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2003) and Suri, \textit{Henry Kissinger and the American Century} (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2007).} As Manning, Downs, and I agree, the dialogue between past and present is at the core of the American project, and a purpose of our profession. I deeply appreciate the insights of my colleagues and our collective endeavor to improve democracy through history.