Editorial

The primary focus of every contribution to this issue of *Reason Papers* is political philosophy, whether at the level of theory, public policy, or its intersection with culture. In a few of the pieces, philosophical reflection is joined with social-scientific insights from the fields of psychology and historiography. Our issue opens with a symposium on Andrew Jason Cohen's book *Toleration*. He makes a case for a classical liberal political order that is based on a principle of toleration inspired by John Stuart Mill's "harm principle" found in his 1859 classic *On Liberty*. Cohen defends his account against challenges raised by Emily Crookston and David Kelley. Crookston presses on whether the harm principle can adequately ground a principle of toleration, what role consent plays, and whether the harm principle might sometimes require interference. Kelley commends Cohen for his ability to counter ethical relativism, but wonders whether his account sufficiently clarifies what toleration means, especially with regard to thorny issues of moral judgment.

Also inspired by Mill's *On Liberty*, Danny Frederick defends freedom of expression on the ground that it is necessary for human fulfillment. He argues that exercising this right allows us to cultivate the critical rationality that he equates with positive freedom. Frederick concludes that freedom of expression requires universities to abandon their campus speech codes. Gary James Jason reviews and analyzes four early Holocaust documentaries. He does so with an eye toward understanding the psychology behind what makes for an effective versus an ineffective documentary in this genre. Jason finds that documentaries that included factually presented live footage of the horrors found in the death camps were more effective in bringing to light those atrocities than were ones whose narratives involved shaming and attempts to instill collective guilt.

In his review essay of four books about the American Founding era, Richard Salsman shows how they unseat the conventional view that the Founders were unified in their politics during war and peace. These books detail the close professional and personal relationship between George Washington and Alexander Hamilton—the "alliance that forged America"—as well as how other Founders, such as Thomas Jefferson, clashed with them over public policy in a pitched battle to shape the fledging country's future course.

We then have a pair of review essays on books emerging from studies about the Middle East. Kanan Makiya pays tribute to his mentor, Sadik al-Azm, who sadly passed away in December 2016. Originally published in 1968 and at last translated into English in 2011, al-Azm's *Self-Criticism after the Defeat* was a seminal and controversial book. It appeared shortly after the 1967 war that led to Israel's defeating Syria, Jordan, and Egypt. Al-Azm refused to take on the mantle of victimhood and shift the blame elsewhere for defeat; he instead insisted on a self-critique to understand why Arab cultures

were politically stagnating. Salim Rashid examines Timur Kuran's take on the role played by Islamic law in stymieing progress in the Middle East. While Rashid appreciates that Kuran raises important questions, he takes to task both some of Kuran's factual claims and his historical methodology. Ultimately, he concludes that Kuran has not done justice to an important topic.

Political discourse in the wider culture would be raised several notches, if more people took a cue from our contributors. We appreciate the vigorous yet collegial tone they strike, as they appeal to evidence and reason to guide their discussion of contentious issues.

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