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# Editor's Note: A Banner Year for ISCSC and the Comparative Civilizations Review

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### ***Editor's Note***

The past year has witnessed an enhanced level of dedication, by many volunteers, to the sustainability of our parent organization, the International Society for the Comparative Study of Civilization, as well as to the continuing quality of the *Comparative Civilizations Review*. Costs are down, membership is up, our journal is more popular than it has been in years, the new website continues to amaze, and our 2017 conference was a success.

#### **Costs are down.**

1. CCR has achieved a nearly 75% reduction in the cost of printing and distributing the journal. The savings are available to fund initiatives such as paid speakers for our annual conference, a first in a long time.
2. Administrative costs have been eliminated thanks to volunteers who have claimed responsibility for the necessary tasks. Liberated funds were immediately re-directed to the development of our new website, which is managed and regularly improved, for half of our previous administrative costs.

#### **Membership is up.**

Over the past year our membership has nearly doubled as a result of efforts from our journal editors, and thanks to the employment of an innovative idea to include membership benefits with our conference registration. All conference registrants are now granted a complimentary membership in ISCSC for one year.

#### ***Comparative Civilizations Review* is more popular than ever.**

The *Comparative Civilizations Review* continues to provide our membership with the journal they have come to anticipate every six months. Many of our members, as well as non-members, publish peer-reviewed papers, essays, and book reviews. The journal has been published continuously since 1979, which is a monumental accomplishment in the world of scholarly publications run by volunteer organizations. For the past 20 years Dr. Joseph Drew has served as Editor-in-Chief, shaping the journal to reflect the desires of the membership. He has been publicly thanked, most recently at the 2017 annual conference, by past-presidents of the ISCSC for saving the journal from an early demise.

The work of the editors encompasses hundreds of hours of volunteer dedication annually; it is a noteworthy example of the strength of the volunteer efforts that make the journal, and ISCSC, a successful reality.

## Have you seen the *NEW* [www.iscsc.org](http://www.iscsc.org)?

Our new website is under constant development, and will be replaced by an even newer edition in the coming months. Improvements on the website now provide a *simple and easy* way to renew memberships, subscriptions, buy back issues of CCR, and sign up and pay for conferences. Credit card processing for our site is provided by PayPal, a well known and secure website, which also provides the most cost effective payment processing ISCSC can obtain from any vendor. ISCSC is also able to accept donations using the same process, through the use of a button on the home page of the site. We hope you visit the "donate now" button regularly. Donations are tax deductible. Please consider becoming a life subscriber for \$500.

### 2017 Annual Conference.

The 2017 annual conference was held at the beautiful Marconi Conference Center, just north of San Francisco, California. Our conference speakers were Eric Trager and Daniel Chirot.

From the Washington Institute website:

Eric Trager, the Esther K. Wagner Fellow at The Washington Institute, is an expert on Egyptian politics and the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt. He was in Egypt during the 2011 anti-Mubarak revolts and returns frequently to conduct firsthand interviews with leaders in Egypt's government, military, political parties, media, and civil society. His writings have appeared in numerous publications, including the *New York Times*, *Wall Street Journal*, *Foreign Affairs*, the *Atlantic*, and the *New Republic*.

Trager is the author of *Arab Fall: How the Muslim Brotherhood Won and Lost Egypt in 891 Days* (Georgetown University Press, 2016), which chronicles the precipitous rise to power of Egypt's Muslim Brotherhood, culminating in the election of President Mohamed Morsi in 2012, and its sudden demise just a year later. The book also assesses the current state of Egyptian politics and the prospects for a reemergence of the Brotherhood.

Dr. Trager has served as an adjunct professor at the University of Pennsylvania, where his doctoral research focused on Egyptian opposition parties. From 2006-2007, he lived in Egypt as an Islamic Civilizations Fulbright fellow, where he studied at the American University in Cairo and received his M.A. in Arabic studies with a concentration in Islamic studies. He served as a research assistant at The Washington Institute from 2005 to 2006 upon graduation from Harvard University with a degree in government and language citations in Arabic and Hebrew.

From the University of Washington Department of Sociology website:

Daniel Chirot, Herbert J. Ellison Professor of International Studies at the University of Washington, has authored books about social change, ethnic conflict, genocides, Eastern Europe, and tyranny. He co-authored *Why Not Kill Them All?* about political mass murder and is the author of *Modern Tyrants* (both published by Princeton University Press).

He has edited or co-edited books on Leninism's decline, on entrepreneurial ethnic minorities, on ethnopolitical warfare, and on the economic history of Eastern Europe. Some of his publications have been translated into Chinese, Korean, Swedish, Finnish, Italian, German, Romanian, Polish, Hungarian, Albanian, and Lithuanian. His most recent works are textbooks called *Contentious Identities: Ethnic, Religious, and Nationalist Conflicts in Today's World* and a completely revised edition of *How Societies Change*.

He founded the journal *East European Politics and Societies* and has received grants from the John Simon Guggenheim, Rockefeller, and Mellon Foundations and from the United States State Department. He has consulted for the US Government, the National Endowment for Democracy, the Ford Foundation, and CARE. In 2004/05 he was a Senior Fellow at the United States Institute of Peace working on African conflicts. He has a BA from Harvard and a PhD from Columbia.

### **What next?**

In the past 12 months ISCSC has been working hard to reverse our several year decline in membership. As a result, our membership has nearly doubled. This increase in membership greatly enhances any efforts to expand the presence of our academic society in the international world of comparative civilizational studies.

CCR will continue to produce enjoyable journals twice each year that will feature a variety of scholars from the widest possible array of disciplines. We will continue to ensure that these papers are readable, and enjoyable for all members, and prospective members.

The website will continue to improve, offering more services and simpler solutions for members.

ISCSC will lead the discussion about comparative civilizational studies and will support the development of the next generation of scholars who are dedicated to the comparative study of civilizations.

Most importantly, this progress will support the mission of ISCSC:

**To provide means of cooperation among all persons interested in the advancement of the comparative study of civilizations.**

The ISCSC mission, found on the homepage of our website, makes it clear that ISCSC is an organization open to all who are interested in civilizational studies. ISCSC and CCR have a proud history of serving a variety of academic interests. ISCSC encourages participation from scholars of all types and levels of study. CCR encourages submissions from professional scholars and academicians, as well as from interested parties and independent scholars. The membership of ISCSC is proud of this legacy.

ISCSC also recognizes that in the modern world, professional success often requires specialization, and this may lead to increasingly rigid dogma. In academia this sometimes equates to a style of writing that is only interesting, or even discernible, to experts in a field of study. That ISCSC and CCR provide an accessible forum, encouraging inter-disciplinary research, and big-picture thinking, may be this society's most important contribution. In a period when intellectual thought has been eclipsed by thuggish populism, ISCSC stands as an example of respect for ideas and people, appreciation of accumulated wisdom, and hope for a future of measured reason and communal responsibility. By providing this forum, through CCR and our annual conferences, ISCSC hopes to fulfill the original mission set forth by UNESCO, which founded the organization in 1961 in Salzburg, Austria.

The Society is committed to the idea that complex civilizational problems can best be approached through multidisciplinary analyses and debate by scholars from a variety of fields. The *Comparative Civilizations Review*, which welcomes submissions from the Society's members as well as other scholars, has been published continually since its inaugural issue in 1979.

Michael Palencia-Roth, former President, ISCSC

All of us here at the *Comparative Civilizations Review* view the future of the society with optimism. We thank our members for their continuing interest and hours of volunteer dedication, and welcome all interested readers to visit our website, [www.iscsc.org](http://www.iscsc.org), and to join the International Society for the Comparative Study of Civilizations.

Peter Hecht  
Managing Editor