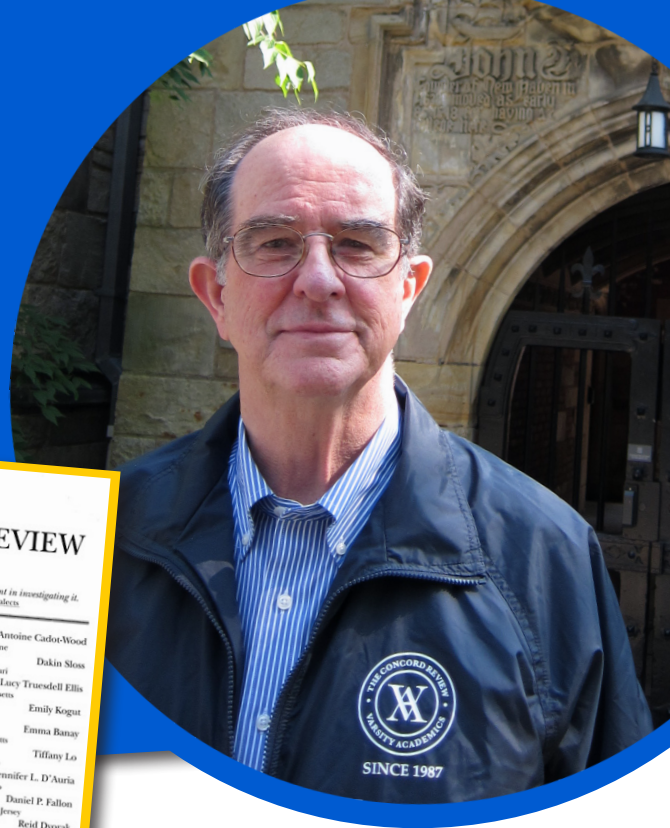
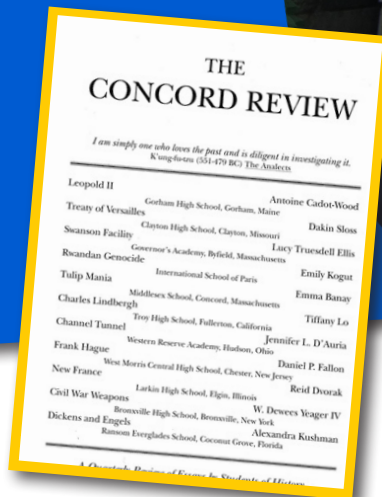


AN EXEMPLARY HISTORIAN

An interview with
Mr. Will Fitzhugh, Founder and
Publisher of **The Concord Review**



Founded in 1987, *The Concord Review* is considered the “gold standard” of history essays written by high school students. Each year, the Review selects and publishes top papers written by secondary school students worldwide. *Xiao Hua* Editor Jonathan Lu interviewed Mr. Will Fitzhugh, its Publisher, recently on the Yale University campus.

What inspired you to start *The Concord Review*?

Diane Ravitch, an American historian of education, wrote a column in *The New York Times* in 1985 about the ignorance of history among 17-year-olds in the United States, based on a study of 7,000 students. As a history teacher myself at the time, I was interested to see that what concerned me was a national problem, and I began to think about these issues. It occurred to me that if I had one or two very good students writing history papers for me and perhaps my colleagues had one or two, then in 20,000 United States high schools (and more overseas) there must be a large number of high school students doing exemplary history research papers. So in 1987, I established *The Concord Review* to provide a journal for such good work in history. I sent a four-page brochure calling for papers to every high school in the United States, 3,500 high schools in Canada, and 1,500 schools overseas. The papers started coming in, and in the fall of 1988, I was able to publish the first issue of *The Concord Review*. Since then, we have published 89 issues.

What makes for a great history research essay?

In order to write a great history essay, it is first necessary to know a lot of history. Students who read as much as they can about a historical topic have a better chance of writing an exem-

plary history paper. Without knowing a good deal about a topic, a student's paper will probably not be very interesting or very good. Of course they must make an effort to write clearly and in an interesting manner. They must also re-write their papers over and again until they believe they are excellent.







Tell us about some of the most outstanding essays you have received. What made them special?

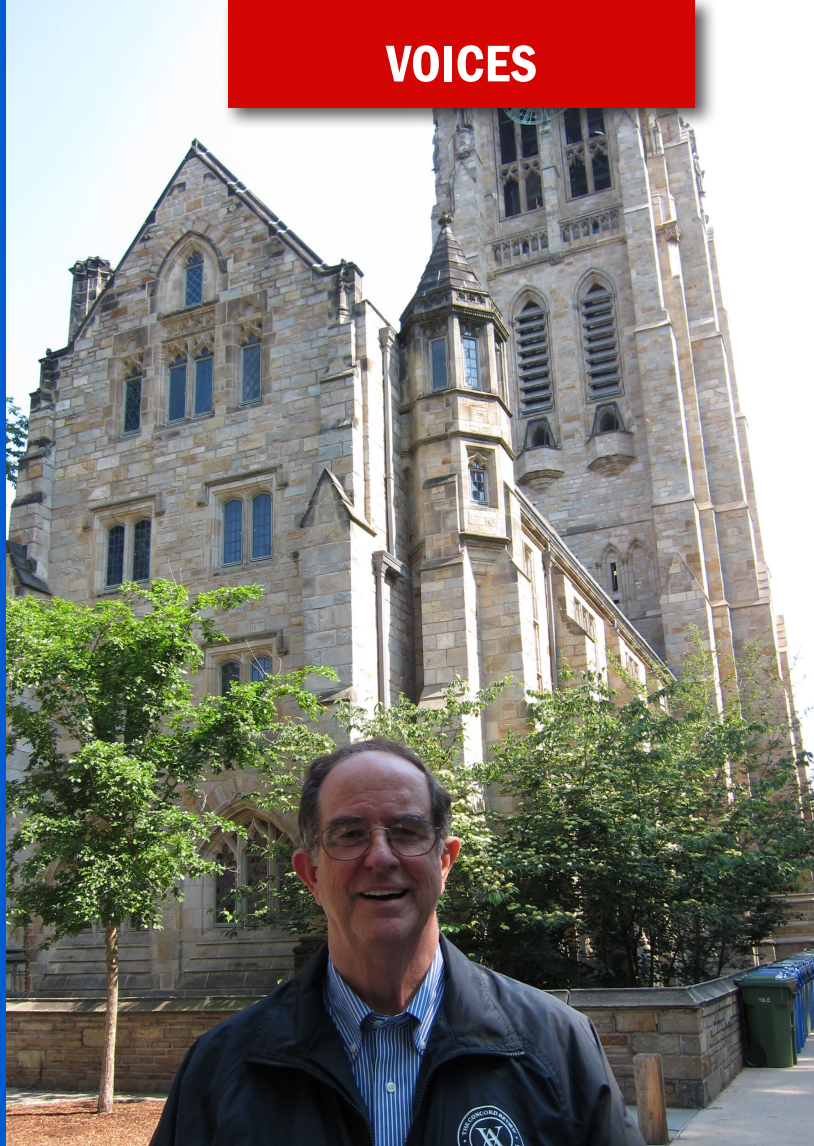
In 1995, I was able to begin awarding the Ralph Waldo Emerson Prizes for the best few papers from the 44 published in each volume year of *The Concord Review*. Many of these papers are now on our website at www.tcr.org, and students and teachers who are interested may read them there. I have several favorites. Contact me at fitzhugh@tcr.org and I would be glad to send examples to anyone who is interested.

Please tell us about some of your most interesting authors. Where did they go to college, what did they study, and what are they doing now?

About a third of our authors have gone to Harvard, MIT, Princeton, Stanford and Yale, and many have gone to other fine universities, such as Cambridge and Oxford. I know of three who were selected as Rhodes Scholars. Many are doctors and lawyers,

THE CONCORD REVIEW AT A GLANCE

-  Publishes history essays written by secondary students worldwide
-  Essays typically are 4,000 - 6,000 words
-  No restrictions on topic
-  Each year 44 essays are chosen and published quarterly
-  IB Extended Essays are an ideal format
-  **Submission information:** <http://www.tcr.org/tcr/submissions.htm>, or contact Mr. Will Fitzhugh, Publisher, at fitzhugh@tcr.org.



Will Fitzhugh, a Harvard graduate, puts on a polite smile at Yale University.

and some are professors and entrepreneurs.

*How do you evaluate and select essays for publication in *The Concord Review*?*

The purpose of *The Concord Review* is two-fold. We want to recognize exemplary work in history by secondary students (from 39 countries so far). We also want to distribute their work to inspire their peers to read more history and work harder on their own research papers, because being able to read nonfiction and write term papers are important skills for success in college and beyond, and also because students should know more history if they want to be educated. So I look for papers that are serious, historically accurate, well-researched, and worth reading.

What are your favorite books and why?

I was an English Literature major at Harvard College and I read English Literature at Cambridge. I still enjoy Dickens, Thackeray, Jane Austen, Shakespeare, Samuel Johnson, Alexander Pope, and so on, but I also have a number of favorite historians, such as Martin Gilbert, David McCullough, David Hackett Fischer, James McPherson, G.M. Trevelyan, John Prebble, Max Hastings, and others. I also read a fair number of books on education and contemporary intellectual culture.

Do you have any advice on how to write well?

As I suggested, there is no substitute for knowing a lot about the subject you are writing about. I think it helps to read your drafts aloud to a friend or family member as you go along. You will find things you want to improve or correct as you offer what you write to another person. So, read, reflect, write a detailed outline, write and re-write...that is about it. And read the good writing of other authors.

How can students best prepare themselves to do well in college?

There is a great deal of emphasis in the United States on math and science, but in my view, there is much too little attention here on the importance for secondary students to be able to read complete nonfiction books and to write serious (e.g. 6,000-word) research papers. I have heard from a few of my authors that they were mobbed when they got to college by their peers who never had to write a research paper when they were in high school and so have no idea how to do it. Students who write Extended Essays for the International Baccalaureate Diploma have an advantage, as do the many students who write history research papers on their own as independent studies and send them to *The Concord Review*.

EXTRACTS FROM PUBLISHED ESSAYS

A Failure to Modernize: The Origins of 20th Century Islamic Fundamentalism

A FAILURE TO MODERNIZE:
THE ORIGINS OF 20th CENTURY
ISLAMIC FUNDAMENTALISM

Tyler Waywell

At the height of the Islamic Empire, the Muslim community was a world leader in both economic status and military strength. However, the Islamic world's failure to modernize its cultural, political, and economic systems has resulted in widespread financial ruin...Modern fundamentalism has grown out of a belief that in order to correct the economic failures that plague the Islamic world, Muslims must disregard all Western influences and return both culturally and spiritually to a time when Islamic society was most dominant.

Established by the Prophet Muhammad in Mecca and Medina, Islam spread rapidly with the territorial victories of Muslim armies. By the time of Muhammad's death in 632 AD,

Tyler Waywell is a Senior at Riverdale Country School in Riverdale, New York, where he wrote this paper for Ms. Hannah Turlish's History II course in the 2004/2005 academic year.

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THE NAZI INFLUENCE
IN THE FORMATION OF APARTHEID IN SOUTH AFRICA

Elizabeth Lee Jemison

South African apartheid was a system developed to protect the supremacy of Afrikaans-speaking whites and to repress non-white groups through a policy of almost complete separation. The Afrikaner people, the descendants of the first Dutch settlers in southern Africa, were the dominant white minority and, once white electorates. Apartheid, the Afrikaans word for separateness, began as a governmental system after the elections of 1948 when the Afrikaner Nationalist Party, became the majority Party, and this system lasted until 1994. The Afrikaner white population developed the apartheid system in 1948 in part as an outgrowth of the ideology of Nazi Germany, an ideology the Afrikaners readily accepted because of the affinity they felt towards Germans, and because they feared being dominated by the English minority who had previously controlled the country.

The desire of the Afrikaners for complete power in South Africa began when the British took over the Cape area in 1806, in an effort to prevent Napoleon from gaining control of the region. The introduction of another European group vying for power

Elizabeth Lee Jemison is at Princeton. She wrote this paper at St. Mary's Episcopal School in Memphis, Tennessee, for Ms. Joan Traffas' Honors World History II course in the 2003/2004 academic year.

The Nazi Influence in the Formation of Apartheid in South Africa

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THE PARADOX OF POWER: AN ANALYSIS OF THE RISE OF
PARLIAMENTARY POWER WITH THE CONSOLIDATION
OF THE MONARCHY IN THE ENGLISH REFORMATION

Stephen A. Popper

The English government has a distinct claim among European nations. It has developed with a unique blend of decentralization and freedom, and a strong centralized authority. England is distinguished for its ability to combine good government with a history of freedom and protection of personal rights. Constitutional rights date back to an Anglo-Saxon individualism that, combined with Norman authority and organization, produced a government that combined strength with political freedom. England's exceptional constitutional history served her well in times of transition and revolution. This combination was particularly noted during the religious and political crisis under Henry VIII that precipitated the English Reformation. During this period a strong monarchy personified by the authoritarian Henry VIII spearheaded a revolution in Parliamentary representative government. Henry, however, did not do it alone. His accomplished advisor, Thomas Cromwell, proposed and steered legislation through Parliament and used this institution to promote and assert legislative supremacy in England. The power of the monar-

Stephen A. Popper is a Senior at the Delbarton School in Morristown, New Jersey, where he wrote this paper for Mr. John Thompson's AP European History course in the 2003/2004 academic year.

The Paradox of Power: An Analysis of the Rise of Parliamentary Power with the Consolidation of the Monarchy in the English Reformation

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THE ROLE OF THE CZECHOSLOVAK RADIO
IN THE FIRST WEEK OF THE SOVIET OCCUPATION,
FROM AUGUST 21 TO AUGUST 27, 1968

Lea Sevcik

Abstract

The aim of this essay is to determine the role of the Czechoslovak Radio during the first week of the Soviet occupation, from August 21 to August 27, 1968. More precisely, what were the functions played by the radio during the first week of the occupation, and how did the radio influence the outcome of the Moscow negotiations? It should be noted that throughout the essay, the term "Soviet" also includes, for the sake of brevity, all other countries which occupied Czechoslovakia in 1968.

The essay first examines the events of the Prague Spring of 1968, beginning with Dubcek's ascension to the post of Party First Secretary, the introduction of the Action Program and the issuing of Soviet warnings culminating in occupation. In order to establish the limits of influence of the radio, the scope of its audience is then examined. Next, the essay determines the various roles of the radio from August 21 to August 27, 1968, and ultimately

Lea Sevcik is at Dartmouth College. She completed this IB Extended Essay at the United World College of the Atlantic, in Wales, during the 1995/1996 academic year. Her teacher was Raymond Silkstone.

Chinese Democracy, 1954-1966

CHINESE DEMOCRACY, 1954-1966

Andrew Paquin

Abstract

This essay began as an investigation of the fate of democracy during the Cultural Revolution. In order to establish how Chinese democracy was changed during this upheaval, it first of all had to be determined how far Chinese democracy was in place before the Cultural Revolution. As my research into this question developed, it became obvious that this was an extended essay in itself. Hence this essay sets out to explore how far the theoretical model of Chinese democracy was in place by 1966.

A theoretical basis is given in which the role of the "yan-guard party" is discussed and more importantly, the idea of democratic centralism is introduced. This latter concept is central to the essay, as the extent of its existence decides how far democracy was in place in China.

The history of the period is then compared with this theoretical model, by looking at the major problems which confronted democracy. These problems can be split into three broad categories. Firstly, there is the inherent problem of Confucianism,

Andrew Paquin is at Harvard College. A native of New Zealand, he wrote this IB Extended Essay for Mr. Barry Drake at Li Po Chun United World College of Hong Kong, in the 1995/1996 academic year.

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THE CONCORD REVIEW

INVITES CIS STUDENTS TO SUBMIT THEIR EXTENDED ESSAYS IN HISTORY FOR CONSIDERATION

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Students who have had their essays published in **The Concord Review** are viewed favorably by admissions offices at very selective colleges and universities in the United States.

For information regarding submissions, sample essays, and back issues of **The Concord Review**, please visit <http://tcr.org/tcr/submissions.htm> or contact:

Mr. Will Fitzhugh, Publisher

The Concord Review

730 Boston Post Rd., Suite 24, Sudbury, MA 01776 USA

fitzhugh@tcr.org

If you would like an individual critique of your history paper, **The National Writing Board** provides an independent assessment service. Please visit <http://tcr.org/nwb/index.htm>.