

# UNIVERSITY of PENNSYLVANIA

---

School of Arts & Sciences

Department of History  
316 College Hall  
Philadelphia, PA 19104-6379  
(215) 898-5192  
bkuklick@sas.upenn.edu

Dr. Bruce Kuklick  
*Roy F. and Jeannette P. Nichols Professor of  
American History*

February 13, 2018

Dear Professors Pargas and Scott-Smith:

Herewith my belated report on my service as the first RIAS visiting professor, in the spring of 2017.

I spent seven weeks in Middelburg in April and May, and was pleased to re-acquaint myself with my old haunts. As you may remember, I was Fulbright Professor at the old RSC ten years ago. The Abdij is a wonderful place for an institute, but there was also a new spirit at RIAS, perhaps because of the energy generated by the new management.

Part of my assignment was indeed to participate in the opening ceremonies. But in addition to the lecture I gave at that time, I gave another public lecture in the aula; and two other lectures under the auspices of the University of Leiden, one in Leiden itself, and the other in The Hague. I moreover contributed to your international PhD seminar at the end of my stay. Each of these occasions allowed me to develop my ideas of the connection of the Hollywood movie to our understanding of American history; but most important were the three days of the PhD seminar, which I think of as an amazing gathering. It was significant for me to get a sense of work by students of the United States in Europe, and I believe it is more than useful for these doctoral candidates from the US, Britain, and the Continent to get criticism and support from the group of lively scholars that RIAS assembles. (And that is why I arranged, largely supported by my own funds, to be back in Middelburg in November for the second such seminar of 2017.) I hope you will continue this successful and useful enterprise. Not only is it a service to the students but it also spreads the word about RIAS.

The visit also allowed me to contact once more the people in American Studies in Groningen and Nijmegen on separate trips. I hope I was able to strengthen your connection with these programs.

I would finally like to thank you for the time I had to reflect on my own work – on the topic of fascism's coming to America. This work was the subject of two of my lectures, but I was also able to write a bit on the project, as well as to employ your very excellent library of materials from the 1930s, especially those that pertain to my interests. Most of all, I enjoyed getting to know your researcher, Dario Fazzi, an Italian national who has written on American history. I must also congratulate you on the selection of the post-doctoral student, Cees Heere,

who is an unusually talented young academic with whom I had a number of profitable conversations. I met Leontien Joosse in 2008 when she helped my wife and myself first find an apartment in Middelburg; she assisted us again last spring, and continues to be an essential element of stability in the new RIAS.

Cordially,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Bruce Kehl". The signature is written in dark ink on a light-colored background.