

ZOMBIE HISTORY

LIES ABOUT OUR PAST THAT REFUSE TO DIE

Fake history is not a harmless mistake of fact or interpretation. It is a mistake that conceals prejudice; a mistake that discriminates against certain kinds of people; a mistake held despite a preponderance of evidence; a mistake that harms us. Fake history is like the Zombies we see in mass media, for the fake fact, like the fictional Zombie, lives by turning real events and people into monstrous perversions of fact and interpretation. Its pervasiveness reveals that prejudice remains its chief appeal to those who believe it. Its effect is insidious, because we cannot or will not destroy those mischievous lies. Zombie history is almost impossible to kill. Some Zombie history was and is political, a genre of what Hannah Arendt called “organizational lying” about the past. Its makers designed the Zombie to create a basis in the false past for particular discriminatory policies. Other history Zombies are cultural. They encapsulate and empower prejudice and stereotyping. Still other popular history Zombies do not look disfigured, but like Zombies walk among us without our realizing how devastating their impact can be. *Zombie History* argues that, whatever their purpose, whatever the venue in which they appear, history Zombies undermine the very foundations of disinterested study of the past.

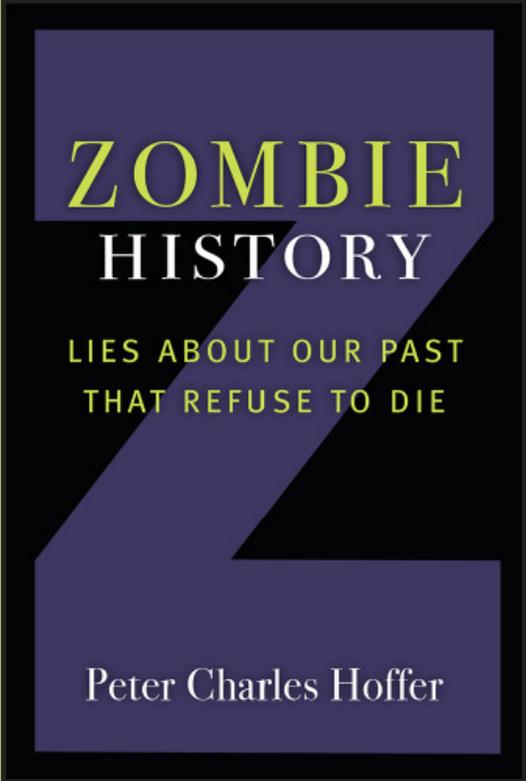
“The power and the wonder of this book is that it challenges, stimulates, and invigorates at every turn. Hoffer does not deal in conventional wisdom or conventional pieties. *Zombie History* is unfailingly fresh and original. There is virtually nothing in it that we already know or that we credit as we might when we do already know it.”

—Michael Zuckerman, University of Pennsylvania

“Throughout the work, Hoffer selects examples of history Zombies that have plagued the telling of American history. By selecting and exposing such history Zombies, Hoffer aims not only to show the danger of such misguided and prejudiced perversions of the past, but also to demonstrate why responsible, living (and not undead) history matters for the telling of the American story.”

—Richard A. Bailey, Canisius College

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6 x 9.204 pp.
Paperback 978-0-472-05452-7 | \$24.95
Hardcover 978-0-472-07452-5 | \$75.00

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