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October 23, 2018

Dear Members of the Search Committee:

I write to apply for the position of Assistant Professor in Modern German History in the Department of History at George Mason University. I am a Ph.D. candidate in the Department of History at Stanford University and a social and political historian of modern Europe with interests in the history of gender and sexuality, legal history, and the history of science. I have completed a six-chapter draft of my dissertation, "Homosexuality and the State in Cold War Germany," and will defend it by June 2019.

My current book project, *Divided Minority: Gay Liberation's Path Through Cold War Germany*, offers a history of homosexuality in both postwar German states, spanning the period from 1945 until shortly after the country's reunification in 1990. It is the first monograph in German history to look at homosexuality across the Cold War and asks how Germany evolved from a nation that imprisoned tens of thousands of gay men into one of today's global hubs of queer life.

Using oral histories and sources from ten archives in Germany and the United States, *Divided Minority* unearths how gay liberation's path in Germany emerged from the legacies of Nazism, the ideological and geopolitical struggles of the Cold War, the identity politics of the New Left, and the shifting rights and responsibilities of minority citizenship. The book reveals that East and West Germany's imperative to establish legitimate rule in Nazism's wake paradoxically led West Germany to maintain harsh Nazi-era sodomy laws and East Germany to repudiate them. A widespread fear of gay conspiracies, a by-product of Nazi ideology, made both states suspicious of their gay minorities and led each country's intelligence services to foster gay espionage networks. The book shows that while differences in law and government led gay activists in the two countries to pursue dissimilar political strategies, both movements responded to the shared trauma of the Nazi period and were shaped by the realities of the Cold War. In both states, those strategies diverged decidedly from the American model. Counter-intuitively, these peculiarities intersected in a way that made activism much more successful in East Germany, a communist dictatorship that established itself as one of the world's most gay-friendly countries in the 1980s. Ultimately, the book contends that East Germany's embrace of gay rights made reunified Germany a nation more welcoming of sexual minorities.

By telling the history of homosexuality in both German states across fifty years, *Divided Minority* seeks to redefine how scholars think about sexual citizenship in postwar Europe. It demonstrates that homosexuality was a significant concern for a broad set of politicians, intellectuals, scientists, and jurists, and thereby argues that the history of sexuality is an important, over-looked piece of the Cold War. I tell this history from the perspective of ordinary men and women in order to make plain the impact of grassroots activism in both democratic West Germany and authoritarian East Germany. By revealing the paradoxical successes of gay liberation in East Germany, my book sheds new light on how the communist regime functioned and the kinds of political engagement possible under dictatorial rule. Finally, the book reconsiders what has recently come to be known as identity politics. It contends that scholarly broadsides against identity politics in recent years fundamentally misunderstand it and its historical role over the last seventy years.

My second book project, *Everyday Atrocities: Crimes against Humanity and the Making of Postwar Europe*, is a history of international criminal law in the everyday life of Allied-occupied Europe. The impetus for this project came from my discovery of court records from the occupation period, which depict ordinary Germans denouncing one other for crimes against humanity committed during the Nazi era. These denunciations typically fell along gendered lines and often related to sexual crimes. The project unearths how these ordinary women and men invoked international criminal law to settle old scores, position themselves as victims of fascism, and make sense of the catastrophe of war. I use these files to unsettle assumptions about both the nature of international criminal law, which scholars tend to view as an elite

enterprise, and how Germans coped with occupation in the war's aftermath. Though still in early stages, I envision broadening this project beyond Germany to look at how ordinary people in other parts of occupied Europe employed new criminal statutes and how the politicians and lawyers drafting these laws thought about their use on a grassroots level.

In addition to my work on postwar Europe, I recently published a study of lesbians in Nazi Berlin in the *Journal of Contemporary History* that showed that lesbians enjoyed limited tolerance under the fascist regime. The article contends this fact should lead historians to rethink the dichotomy of persecution and liberation that still defines the history of sexuality. My forthcoming article in *New German Critique* on gay suicide in nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century Germany reveals how budding scientific discourses paradoxically led to the increased incidence of gay and lesbian suicide. I am currently at work on an article about homosexuality and the origins of international criminal law.

I frequently employ digital methods to leverage data in my research, often deploying skills from my studies as a mathematics undergraduate and graduate student. In my current book project, I have gathered information to create maps of East and West Berlin's gay subcultures, which show the flux of gay life over the course of decades. I have also collected data about publications concerning sexuality to create my own n-grams, which show changing discursive habits over long periods of time. In other projects, I have used game-theoretical models to understand historical phenomena and deployed Stanford's powerful Palladio mapping tool. As a faculty member, I plan to work with software engineers to create tools that can better help researchers quickly extract data from digitized corpuses.

My commitment to teaching, for which I won the Stanford History Department's first-time teaching award, comes from my belief that engagement with the past is necessary in order to become an informed citizen. In my self-designed seminar on crimes against humanity in postwar Europe and Africa, my students confronted some of the worst atrocities of the last century and analyzed how governments and ordinary individuals alike responded to them. As a teacher, I constantly strive to reach students of all backgrounds by exposing them to history through diverse avenues. I have taken undergraduates to look at primary sources at local archives, organized a trip to a San Francisco Opera production of the *Magic Flute*, and staged mock trials of Holocaust perpetrators. These courses have also shaped my own work. The seminar on crimes against humanity inspired my recent essay in *The Atlantic* about how nations remember mass brutality.

I am prepared to teach survey lectures in a range of fields, including modern Germany, modern Europe, and global queer history. Similarly, I would be eager to teach seminars on topics including Nazism, the Holocaust, totalitarianism, crimes against humanity, the global Cold War, the history of sexuality, and the history of queer science. Among the courses I might teach at George Mason is "Outsiders: Class, Gender, Race, and Sexuality in modern Germany," my survey of German history since 1848. The course examines the period between Germany's failed 1848 revolution and the present from the perspective of marginalized communities' evolving and often-explosive relationships with the seven German nation-states that existed in that period. Looking at the country's evolution from the peripheries not only allows for a richer consideration of German history, but also makes the subject relevant to today's more diverse student body.

Helping to organize the department's intellectual life has become one of my passions at Stanford, where I have convened the history of science workshop and worked to bring scholars for campus talks and colloquia. I look forward to collaborating with faculty in George Mason's Department of History and in other programs, such as Women and Gender Studies and the Law School, possibly on an interdisciplinary colloquium on queer German history or a lecture series on the history of international criminal law.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Samuel Clowes Huneke". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long, sweeping underline.

Samuel Clowes Huneke