

Global histories

a student
journal

Editorial Letter/Acknowledgements

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Dear reader,

At present, the world remains in a state of great instability. Having passed the milestone of one year of COVID-19—and the rather tragic marker of over 3 million reported deaths from the virus worldwide—most of us remain touched by the pandemic. Even with the gradual rollout of the vaccination campaign, the effort to inoculate and prevent further infections has exposed global inequalities in financing vaccines and in maintaining medical supply lines. Information campaigns questioning the science of vaccination have also proliferated globally, through vast online networks which infiltrate even the smallest of local communities. The impact of the virus thus continues to be felt by all, regardless of one's place in the world.

What does the pandemic's continuation and evolution mean for those of us at work to understand the global? For academics all over, the continuation of home office and the restricted access of spaces such as libraries and archives have meant readjusting one's expectations and goals. In our Global History MA program here in Berlin, this is no different: a hard lockdown

in Germany has been in place since December 2020, with the universities having been closed since March of that same year. For the new cohort of students who arrived—some of whom are now members of our editorial team—they have been unable to experience the same type of education in global history. Rather, they, like many others, have experimented with putting the global in digital perspective. They have participated actively in video seminars, which have come with the unexpected benefit of increased accessibility that in-person events did not always entertain; they have engaged tenfold with digital archives, considering at great length what it means to be a historian in an increasingly-digitized age; and, perhaps most importantly, they have practiced creating global communities from the safety (and occasional boredom) of their homes, demonstrating how solidarity can form even amongst conditions of isolation.

For our editorial team, the continuation of the pandemic has brought a similar reckoning with the benefits and limitations of working digitally. While the challenges of 2021 forced us to once again cancel

the annual Global History Student Conference, our journal continues in full form. This issue features seven outstanding pieces of research from students of global history, inquiring in topics ranging from colonial settlements to global labor dynamics to cultural transfusions. Marie Keulen begins by examining the role of the Moravian mission to Berbice, interrogating how the Dutch colonial officials, the Moravian missionaries, and the Indigenous populations co-existed in the eighteenth-century Atlantic. Jan Becker follows with a study of German medical missionaries to twentieth-century Java, exploring agency and power relations with intricate nuance. Zeynep Ecem Pulas engages with the theoretical foundations of E. P. Thompson to investigate how female laborers in the late industrial Ottoman Empire utilized time-discipline in their attempts to gain more rights. Omri Polatsek uses an agricultural industry as a jumping off point to explore the global nature of the Synthetic Age in British-ruled Palestine, along with the effects of local actors in establishing economic nationhood. Bella Ruhl turns colonial dynamics around

by looking at the life of an Egyptian feminist activist in the early twentieth century, disentangling narratives of Western feminism from Orientalist assumptions. José Bento de Oliveira Camassa compares and contrasts the travel accounts of two Latin American writers to analyze the colonial discourses of regions absorbed into Argentina and Brazil at the turn of the twentieth century. Last but certainly not least, Suchintan Das, using an abundance of vibrant source material, takes a closer look at the lives of American G.I.s stationed in World War Two Calcutta, illustrating the differences between soldiers and locals, as well as white and Black soldiers, in extensive detail. And in addition to these research articles, this issue includes several book reviews, where Simone Steadman-Gantous, Chi Ho Kiang, Charles Brophy, Lara Wankel, and Alina Rodríguez provide valuable commentary on four recently published texts relevant for the field of global history.

While we, as many others, remain saddened by the limitations imposed on our ability to engage with the world—both academically and otherwise—we remain hopeful that a return to

a safer, happier future is soon on the horizon. Even through the latest round of lockdown blues, we have still found the energy, resolve, and determination to come together, as authors, team members, and readers, to put together a strong, salient collection of global histories. We hope you take some of that strength with you while perusing this issue.

With best regards,
Ruby Guyot
Editor-in-chief

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