

EDITORIAL NOTE

The history of the left grew out of the development of social history in the 1960s and 1970s. Political activists and academics began to question the traditional approach to history, which focused almost exclusively on white men. Issues of gender, race, class, and sexuality emerged as new and interesting topics of historical inquiry. Early social historians and activists began to write the histories of marginalized groups. In this issue of *Left History*, our contributors look back on early examples of social history, asking new questions, uncovering new sources, and shedding new light on the discipline.

Scott de Groot, for example, in his article “‘A Curse on Those Who Need Heroes’? Genealogical Appropriation and the Historical Horizons of Gay Liberation, 1969-1975,” argues that early gay and lesbian liberationists in the late 1960s and early 1970s, contrary to popular belief, were very much engaged with understanding and writing about the history of their forebearers. Through an analysis of articles written in the gay and lesbian press, de Groot demonstrates the importance of history to the gay and lesbian movement.

Danielle Cooper also studies the importance of history within the gay and lesbian movement in her article “Beyond Liberation: Conceptualizations of History at the Canadian Lesbian and Gay Archives.” Cooper analyses a publication of the Canadian Lesbian and Gay Archives (CLGA), entitled *Gay Archivist/Gay and Lesbian Archivist*, in order to understand how the CLGA defined history. She argues that archives actively construct history and demonstrates that the CLGA shifted their mandate from that of locating gay and lesbian history ‘everywhere’ in the 1970s to a narrower focus on the archives holdings and future exhibitions by the early 1990s. According to Cooper the CLGA’s mandate changed in response to fluctuations within the gay and lesbian movement more broadly.

Although thematically and temporally different from the previous two articles, Henry MacAdam also challenges an earlier interpretation of social history in his article “Michael Gold and Dalton Trumbo on *Spartacus*, Blacklist Hollywood, Howard Fast, and the Demise of American Communism.” MacAdam locates an unpublished letter written by Dalton Trumbo in response to a column penned by Michael Gold and argues that this exchange motivated Trumbo to strike in May of 1959 ultimately breaking the blacklist and resulting in the studio giving him sole credit for scripting *Spartacus*. By uncovering a new source MacAdam is able to provide more details on an important moment in the history of the left and blacklist Hollywood.

The review essay in this issue “Coming to Terms with the Fleeting Post-Zionist Moment” by Yehonatan Alsheh is concerned not with the use of history in the creation of identity movements, like de Groot and Cooper, but instead with the decline of a movement through an analysis of post-Zionism. Alsheh argues that historians can better understand the decline of the Zionist movement when studied in comparison to the demise of Afrikaner nationalism. This essay calls on historians to begin to view post-Zionism as one example of a larger process of de-nationalisation and re-nationalisation.