

EDITORIAL NOTE

With this issue of *Left History*, we re-examine familiar questions and ideas as academia confronts a time in which activist scholarship has become vital to the longevity of intellectual freedom and the ongoing struggles of the Left. It is auspicious that this issue arrives as we approach the fortieth anniversary of Reinhart Koselleck's *Futures Past: On the Semantics of Historical Time*. Through the concept of *neuzeitliche* (new time), Koselleck contemplates how the often fraught process of understanding historical time can create "spaces of experiences" and produce an alternate "horizon of expectations," projecting imagined futures that merit the very struggle that crafted them.¹ Indeed, this *neuzeitliche* is a worthy category of analysis for the various struggles of our time. From the "March for Our Lives" movement, to Arizonans' struggle for education, and the current labour disruption at York University, *neuzeitliche* is shaping "spaces of experiences" and highlighting histories of class struggle while projecting alternate "horizons of expectations" rendering the present an uninhabitable reality. It is this backward-forward historicity that highlights the increasing tensions emerging in our present time, producing a powerful *neuzeitliche* that has significantly decreased the gap between our experiences and expectations.

With this backward-forward looking historicity, it is our pleasure to present an eclectic issue that, in its totality, contemplates this dyadic process of future making. Through a collection of articles, essays, and book reviews, this issue's contributors take on the task of discussing the contradictions in presentism and how various groups have imagined their future throughout critical moments in history. We begin this issue with "Third Camp Politics in Theory and Practice: An Interview with Joanne Landy and Thomas Harrison," by Kent Worcester. This interview essay asks Landy and Harrison—prominent socialist activists in the United States during the mid-twentieth century—to reflect on their place in popular struggles of the past. Worcester asks his interviewees to discuss "how two leading third camp activists responded to major international and global crises and conflicts over the past four decades." In having his subjects contemplate the various stages of their activism, Worcester presents a biographical retelling of two prominent leftist activists' spaces of experience and their struggle to reach a horizon of expectations with staunchly feminist and anti-colonial features. In having his subjects reflect on their political engagement and its impact on social and political movements, Worcester's piece asks its audience to also reflect on our collective pasts and contemplate how—and equally important, *if*—they have indeed met our expectations.

The second featured article is N. Harry Rothschild's "Severing Grandma's Phallus: A Gendered Re-examination of the Raising and Razing of Female Emperor Wu Zhao's Axis of the Sky." Rothschild contemplates evolving historical memory and the gendering process evident in the making of material culture. Rothschild contends that Empress Wu's Axis of the Sky is not merely a phallic symbol and a

physical extension of the first and only female Empress in China's history, but an "erection, ejaculation, and castration, [that is] the shifting ideological and political grounds" upon which the monument was both erected and demolished. "Severing Grandma's Phallus" highlights the importance of gender as a category of analysis in temporality and the conceptualization of historicity.

Rothschild's piece is followed by "The 'Revival' of Abram Leon: The 'Jewish Question' and the American New Left." Tal Elmaliach's article reflects on Abram Leon's seminal work, *The Jewish Question: A Marxist Interpretation*, positioning the work as a catalyst to the "internal dissent among pro- and anti-Zionists in the New Left." Elmaliach reflects on how Leon's book emerged throughout the various periods that characterized the New Left—ultimately asking how the revival of *The Jewish Question* altered the collective horizon of expectation of the New Left. Pointedly, this piece underscores a shift in the trajectory and influence of Leon's *The Jewish Question* on the New Left. Elmaliach interprets this change as the underpinnings of fractures within the movement. Conflicting opinions on Zionism's place within the New Left contributed significantly to this schism. The omission of the Palestinian question within these shifting definitions of the New Left, however, is a stark reminder of the ongoing struggle of anti-colonial and anti-racist discourses within the politics and ethics of academia.

We then follow with two review essays assessing the latest contributions on the New Left, and disability studies. Steven Fuller examines recent works on E.P. Thompson and discusses his contribution to the making of the New Left. In "What's Left of E.P. Thompson? Reflections on an Anti-Progressive," Fuller suggests that Thompson "remains a contemporary reference point" for grounding socialists' ethos. Thompson's scholarship continues to frame our assessment of our past as we make sense of present political and social movements that dictate our future. Our second essayist, Natalie Spagnuolo, considers recent works on disability studies. In "From Dustbin to Distribution: Possibilities for Disability in History," Spagnuolo discusses the field of disability studies and the need for further research to expand on this important discipline. We conclude this issue with an array of book reviews.

The content of this issue highlights the process of how we make our history in order to understand our present, and how our present helps us frame our history in order to reach an imagined future. It is then, our present moment of crisis that contributes to the fluctuating distance between our past and our future. And, as Hannah Arendt posits in her pivotal book, *Between Past and Future*, these categories of historicity allow us to "become aware of an interval in time which is altogether determined by things that are no longer and by things that are not yet."² The present is yet to be determined.

Left History would like to welcome our new Book Review Editor, Daniel Murchison. Daniel is a PhD student in Canadian History at York University. With the same regard, we say goodbye to two of our editors, Sara Farhan and Avram Heisler. Sara has dedicated nearly five years to *Left History*, occupying a variety of roles and constantly working to improve the quality of the journal. Avram's diligence as both a book review editor and article editor has been much appreciated. We wish them both luck in their future endeavours.

The Editors
Left History

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¹ Reinhart Koselleck, "'Space of Experience' and 'Horizon of Expectations': Two Historical Categories," in *Futures Past: On the Semantics of Historical Time* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1979), 255–266.

² Hannah Arendt, *Between Past and Future: Eight Exercises in Political Thought*, Rev. ed. (New York: Viking, 1968), 9.