

EDITORIAL NOTE

The articles in this issue of *Left History* address intersections of colonialism, post-colonialism, and subaltern labour. The first, by Naomi Calnitsky, traces the experiences of a group of migrant Vanuatuan labourers in New Zealand. The second, by Derrick M. Nault, reconsiders the origins of modern human rights ideas, in the context of a specific crisis of colonial labour in the Congo Free State. Whether dealing with coerced labour in colonial Africa, or the ostensibly liberating seasonal opportunities of the modern globalized market, these articles deepen our understanding of colonial powers' and settler societies' reliance on Indigenous labour. They demonstrate the detrimental (and often brutal) effects of the colonial project, and global efforts to mitigate those effects—efforts that stem both from colonial reformers and from exploited groups themselves.

Calnitsky's "Grape Vines and Orchard Lines: ni-Vanuatu in Central Otago" documents an oral history project centred on a group of migrant agricultural workers in New Zealand. Beginning in 2007, these workers were transported from the Pacific island nation of Vanuatu to the fertile Central Otago region, as part of a pilot program meant to bolster the seasonal labour force on orchards and vineyards. The New Zealand government framed this as a development initiative benefiting both nations, but problems have persisted in such programs, which are by definition impermanent and potentially exploitative. Interviewing thirteen seasonal Vanuatuan workers, Calnitsky finds a host of motivations, hopes, and strategies for dealing with some of the difficulties of migrant labour—separation from friends and family, a lack of familiarity in new surroundings, and the higher costs of living in host nations. Calnitsky also situates this particular program in contexts both global and historical, by positively contrasting its outcomes with similar seasonal patterns in North America, and presenting a longer history of labour emigration in colonial Vanuatu.

In "At the Bar of Public Sentiment': The Congo Free State Controversy, Atrocity Tales, and Human Rights History," Nault argues that the origins of "human rights" (as we have come to know them) have been poorly situated. While other scholars have traced the emergence of human rights to Greco-Roman civilization, the Enlightenment, the founding of the United Nations, or—in the estimation of Samuel Moyn—the 1970s, Nault finds precursors to modern human rights ideas emerging in response to atrocities committed in the Congo Free State. As Belgian King Leopold II consolidated his personal rule over the region in the 1890s, violence against African labourers sparked international outrage, and inspired the first notions of human rights as a concept distinct from "humanitarianism." These rights, Nault argues, are thus a product of colonial oppression and encounters between Europe and Africa, rather than an abstract invention linked to Western events, ideas, institutions, or individuals.

Three review essays examine, respectively, Canadian engagement with the “Third World,” Australian memorialization of the First World War, and a Žižekian dialogue on economic difficulties of the European Union. Nassisse Solomon’s “From the Peripheries to the Core: Re-interpreting Canada’s Historic Relations to Conceptualizations of the “Third World”” reviews the collections *Canada and the Third World: Overlapping Histories*, edited by Karen Dubinsky, Sean Mills, and Scott Rutherford, and *Canada in Sudan, Sudan in Canada: Immigration, Conflict, and Reconstruction*, edited by Amal Madibbo. These works on Canadian cultural, economic, and political ties to the “Global South” challenge conceptions of Canadian foreign relations as a series of unilateral actions intended to secure “middle power” status. Instead, Solomon shows how contributors have emphasized bilateral engagement and the “entanglements” ordinary Canadians experience with developing nations.

In “Digging Up the Past: Post-conflict Memory of the First World War in Australia,” Steve Marti considers three works: Carolyn Holbrook’s *Anzac: The Unauthorised Biography*; Nathan Wise’s *Anzac Labour: Workplace Cultures in the Australian Imperial Force during the First World War*; and the second edition of Alistair Thomson’s *Anzac Memories: Living with the Legend*. These authors all deal with the problematic mythologization of frontier masculinity, particularly in historical writing and modern commemorations of the Anzac effort during the First World War. In confronting this nationalist reading, they question its universality, assess the effects of recent military conflicts, and reposition soldiers as labourers, as well as warriors.

Finally, Raluca Bejan’s “What does Europe Want?” considers *What Does Europe Want? The Union and Its Discontents*, co-authored by philosophers Srećko Horvat and Slavoj Žižek. This back-and-forth discussion opens with a foreword by Greek Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras, and frequently references the Greek political party Syriza as a bastion against free market neoliberalism, and also the catalyst driving an increase in European right-wing extremism. Bejan engages with the economic, political, and philosophical points made throughout, and ultimately challenges the Eurocentrism of the project, as well as the association of anti-immigrant sentiment with austerity.

As always, thanks to our contributors and peer reviewers, as well as artist Emilio Valencia. This issue of *Left History* marks the departure of editor Carly Simpson. Carly’s organization, drive, and expertise in the areas of gender and sexuality have been essential to the smooth operation of the journal. We thank Carly for her tireless efforts over the years. *Left History* also welcomes editor Kevin Burris, a PhD candidate in Modern British History at York University.