

EDITORIAL NOTE

Virtually every professional and cultural space was affected by the global COVID-19 pandemic which intensified political organizing and threats to the democratic state as exemplified by the insurrection and storming of the United States Capitol on January 6, 2021. In academia, historians were struck by the restricted access to archival institutions, causing methodological pivots and challenges of rethinking analytical frameworks. In pre-pandemic democratic states of the Global North, historians took access to archives and information for granted, but in China, access to government archives had always affected the historian immensely—a topic that is historiographically addressed in Kyu-hyun Jo’s review essay. Yet, upon the realization that conclusions would need to be postponed for reasons beyond the scope of their original research questions, left historians pivoted. The pandemic required these writers to look at their questions from different angles, producing works on sport, film, and education rather than government offices, courts, and factory floors.

These historical pivots occurred within a broader context of protests, whether the National Basketball Association’s players wildcat strike against team owners’ inaction on matters of racial justice in the United States or popular relevance of independent cultural workers in an era of media monopoly. Although such topics are not new in the field of historical analysis, especially within the realm of left history, they have been reconfigured in the way in which we think about the past today. *Left History* is not a stranger to these themes and in this volume, readers will become immersed in a discussion of how historians have utilized their new understandings of power dynamics in their work.

Each article in this volume utilizes the new analytical framework of pandemic societies. James Robinson, examining the relationship between the European Worker Sport Movement and the development of the American Labour Sport Movement, identifies the wider global context of sports culture and the direct link between the democratic, socialist, working-class Worker Sport Movement in Europe and its influence on the development of the American Labour Sports Movement. Using the hierarchical nature of Communist Party structures, Robinson analyzes the relationships between individuals and worker sport organizations to better understand how socialist organizations shaped anti-fascist and anti-racist working-class athletics that took hold in the United States.

Even further, Benjamin Schmack’s “*Agents Provocateurs: State Infiltration in Black Klansman and the Greensboro Massacre,*” challenges an emerging popular narrative in the United States that foregrounds police infiltration of white nationalist, right wing institutions and obscures both the foundational role of the state for racial oppression and the leftist and collective resistance against these forces. Schmack draws on an event—the murder of Communist Worker’s Party organizers by Klansmen and Neo-Nazis—to show how the American state accommodated the KKK and failed to restrain the violence against left activists. The author iden-

tifies the forces at work in the repression of radical politics and the struggles of political hierarchies that are ongoing today.

Finally, Nathan Godfried's "Social Unionism and the Popular Front: The Cambridge Union of University Teachers, 1935-1941," also explores such aforementioned themes as he explores the power structures in place as the CUUT's episodes with social unionism are placed under an analytical microscope. He argues that institutions such as the CUUT and their role in defending the idea of academic freedom contributed to larger discourses in the roles of university faculty and in turn, societal change.

As exemplified in each article, leftist analysis and new methodological approaches produced today cannot be removed from the world in which they are written. Now more than ever before, readers can draw direct lines on the choices of the author to the power structures and confines in which they are writing. Left history has officially swivelled in a positive direction, as we can now answer complex research questions in the face of academic adversity. Lastly, we would like to thank our contributors, book reviewers, and peer-reviewers for their collective efforts. Without your work, this issue of *Left History* would not have been possible.

The Editors