The Reluctant Internationalists
Winter Term Newsletter 2017

We are now in the final stages of wrapping up The Reluctant Internationalists project. The researchers have long left for their new posts. A final report on the project’s activities will be published shortly, and the project website will reappear in a newly archived version soon.

Several of our collaborations are still ongoing: our online teaching resource on the history of internationalism, ‘Illuminating Internationalism’, will be published later this year, and we are busy working on an edited collection. Perhaps most importantly, our wonderful network of colleagues, friends and current and future collaborators will have a chance to stay in touch via our new Centre for the Study of Internationalism at Birkbeck. We will transfer current subscribers to this newsletter to the Centre’s new mailing list and will use this to provide, as before, occasional updates on research activities and events. (If you do not wish to receive these updates, you can unsubscribe via the link at the bottom of the email.)

The Centre has a new website, and you can follow us on Facebook and Twitter. We are looking forward to our first event of the year: the launch of Elidor Mehilli’s new book, From Stalin to Mao, on 17 January.

Thank you all for being part of our project - and hope you’ll stay in touch!

Awards and News

Ana Antic received the Fellowship of the Imre Kertesz Kolleg in Jena for her project, ‘Exporting Socialism to the Global South: Socialist globalisation, transcultural psychiatry and Yugoslav experts in the decolonising world.’ The institute comprises a team of visiting fellows and permanent academic staff conducting research on the interdisciplinary and transnational study of the historical events of the twentieth century in East Central and South-eastern Europe. The fellowship will commence in September 2018.

Johanna Conterio was awarded a Kathleen Fitzpatrick Visiting Fellow, Laureate Research Program in International History, at the University of Sydney 2017. The Research Program is devoted to advancing understanding of the international and internationalist origins of the global present. Led by Professor Glenda Sluga, the team of historians is investigating the international history of globalization from the perspective of people and ideas, with special attention to how, since the nineteenth century, economic ideas have influenced

What we did this term

Ana Antic convened an international conference, Children and Politics: Violence, citizenship and political “re-education” in the twentieth century at the University of Exeter in October 2017

Ana Antic presented on ‘Transcultural psychiatry and the construction of a “global psyche” in the aftermath of WWII’ at the seminar series of the Centre for Medical History at the University of Exeter on 15 November 2017

Ana Antic spoke on the topic of her book, Therapeutic Fascism: Experiencing the Violence of the Nazi New Order, at the modern history research seminar at Cardiff University on 2 December 2017

David Brydan presented on ‘An Authoritarian History of International Health: Public Health and International Expertise in Franco’s Spain’, at the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine Public Health History Seminar, 7 December 2017

Jessica Reinisch chaired a panel at Patterns of Prejudice's
the intellectual, institutional and legal frameworks of today's global order.

Johanna Conterio received honourable mention in The European Society for Environmental History St Andrews Article Prize in European Environmental History, 2017. The prize, awarded every two years, is intended to identify and encourage innovative and well written research in the field of environmental history of Europe.

Siobhan Morris was awarded a Seed Corn Funding for Impact grant from Birkbeck College in September 2017. The award is intended to enable the impact arising out of the Reluctant Internationalists' work engaging young people with modern international history to be further developed.

A podcast of David Brydan's lecture on ‘An Authoritarian History of International Health: Public Health and International Expertise in Franco’s Spain’, which he recently presented at the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine Public Health History Seminar, is now available to download.

For previous newsletters, see here.

**Publications**

**Journal Articles**

Ana Antic's article, ‘Living in the Age of Axis Internationalism: Imagining Europe in Serbia before and during the Second World War’, will be published in the January 2018 issue of European History Quarterly.

Johanna Conterio's article, “‘Our Black Sea’: The Sovietization of the Black Sea Coast under Khrushchev and the Problem of Overdevelopment,” in “The Black Sea in the Socialist World,” special forum, Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History is in press. Johanna is also the curator of the special forum.


**Books**


As the Reluctant Internationalists project draws to a close, we are delighted that books from several members of the project are forthcoming or are under review.

Where you'll see us next

Dora Vargha is convening a workshop on Socialist International Health at Exeter, 12-13 January 2018.

The workshop focuses on the transnational and international practice of socialist health and medicine, primarily in the Cold War era and will investigate the role of professional networks in shaping medical and public health practices within regions and political blocs, and between East, West and the South.

Through a comparative analysis, the aim of this workshop is to identify key historical actors involved in making socialist international health (medical practitioners, virologists, psychiatrists, aid workers, etc.) and to track
The article examines the Mikomeseng leprosy settlement in Spanish Guinea (present-day Equatorial Guinea) which was widely promoted during the 1940s and 1950s as the embodiment of the Francoist ‘civilizing mission’ in Africa. Its prominence reflected the important role which colonial health and social policy played in establishing the legitimacy of the Franco regime, and particularly in helping to overcome its international isolation in the immediate post-war era. But a major protest by leprosy sufferers in 1946 revealed the everyday violence underpinning life in Mikomeseng, showing how the language of welfare and social justice which pervaded Francoist propaganda masked the reality of a coercive colonial system. The image of Mikomeseng as the embodiment of benevolent colonial rule was constructed by Francoist experts and officials around a brutally repressive institution, one which encapsulated the violence of Spanish colonial rule in West Africa and of the Franco regime as a whole. As the article concludes, ‘In the same way that medicine and public health in Spain were used to strengthen the regime’s legitimacy despite the repressive realities of Francoist biopolitics, so Mikomeseng and the treatment of leprosy helped to boost Spain’s international status regardless of the brutality of life both in the settlement itself, and in Spanish Guinea as a whole.’

The article is available to read on open access [here](https://example.com).

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**Blogs**

Jessica Reinisch’s essay, “Expertise is always political”, was published as part of the online forum of the International Social Science Council (ISSC) on Experts: Past, Present, Future, commissioned and edited by Frank Trentmann and Anna-Barbara Sum on 4 July 2017. The forum was designed to foster exchange between historians, social scientists and policy experts.

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**Leprosy and Rebellion in Spanish Colonial Africa**

In November 2017, David Brydan published a new article entitled 'Mikomeseng: Leprosy, Legitimacy and Francoist Repression in Spanish Guinea', in the Social History of Medicine.

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**Challenges and Opportunities in Historiography**

- David Brydan’s monograph is under review by a publisher.
- Francesca Plana’s monograph, Europe under Threat: International Humanitarian Aid and Forced Displacement in the Long Aftermath of the First World War, is under review by Cambridge University Press.
- Francesca Plana and Jo Laycock are also editing a volume on Humanitarian Aid to Armenia, which is currently under review by a publisher.
- Francesca Sanna’s new book, developed in collaboration with the Reluctant Internationalists, is due to be published in 2018 with Flying Eye Books.
- Dora Vargha’s monograph, Polio across the Iron Curtain: Hungary’s Cold War with an Epidemic, is forthcoming with Cambridge University Press.

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**Exchanges of Ideas, Practices and Technologies**

- Ana Antic will present her book, Therapeutic Fascism: Experiencing the Violence of the Nazi New Order, at the University of Zagreb and the Institute for the History and Philosophy of Science, on 15 January 2018.
- Ana Antic will give a talk at the History of Childhood seminar series at the University of Oxford, 14 February 2018.
- Ana Antic will convene a second workshop related to her current project, entitled ‘Childhood, Violence and Psychological Trauma: Transcultural perspectives’ at UCL on 2 March 2018.
- Dora Vargha and Jessica Reinisch will also be speaking at Historians without Borders, Leiden, 22-23 March 2018.
- Johanna Conterio will talk on, ‘Climate and Health on the Southern Coast of Crimea, 1928-1941,’ at Crimea Matters, Black Sea Networks: A collaborative initiative to investigate the Black Sea as a hub of cultural, political, and historical interest, Columbia University, April 2018.
- Dora Vargha will be participating in a graduate workshop on the history of science in Tel Aviv, 10-15 April 2018.
- Dora Vargha will present a paper titled, ‘The Roots of Socialist International Health: view from Eastern Europe’, at the AAHM in Los Angeles, 10-13 May 2018.
- Dora Vargha will be presenting a paper titled, ‘Hungary, the Cold War, and the Making of a Socialist International Health’, at the History of Science, Medicine and Technology Colloquium at UCLA, 14 May 2018.
- Johanna Conterio will present...
Alongside the publication of his work, David also recorded a podcast in conversation with Siobhan Morris, exploring the topic and discussing his discovery in the Spanish modern government archives of an unusual document signed with a fingerprint that led him to explore the story of the Mikomeseng rebellion. The recording was commissioned as part of the Birkbeck Voices podcast series. The series aims to provide an insight into the research being undertaken across Birkbeck and to engage the public with the work of the university. The podcast, entitled ‘Leprosy and Rebellion in Spanish Colonial Africa’, can be downloaded or listened to here.

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**From Stalin to Mao Book Launch**

*From Stalin to Mao: Albania and the Socialist World* Book Launch (17 January 2018)

On 17 January, the Centre for the Study of Internationalism (Birkbeck) and the Rethinking Modern Europe seminar series (IHR) will host Dr Elidor Mëhilli, Assistant Professor of History, Hunter College of the City University of New York and previously a visiting fellow with the Reluctant Internationalists, to launch his book, *From Stalin to Mao: Albania and the Socialist World*. The evening will see Eldor introduce his book with a short lecture, followed by discussion led by Dr Alessandro Landolo (University of Oxford) and Dr Julia Lovell (Birkbeck). This will be followed by a drinks reception.
Elidor has produced a ground-breaking history of communist Albania that illuminates one of Europe's longest but least understood dictatorships. From Stalin to Mao, which is informed throughout by his unprecedented access to previously restricted archives, captures the powerful globalism of post-1945 socialism, as well as the unintended consequences of cross-border exchanges from the Mediterranean to East Asia.

"For the first time, a source-based history of Communist Albania, the little eastern European country that defied, first, its Yugoslav neighbours, then its Soviet sponsors, and finally its Chinese protectors, only in order to build, by its own efforts, one of the world's most sectarian and cruel Stalinist dictatorships. It is a remarkable tale, well told in this book." - OA Westad, Harvard University, author of *The Cold War*.

A limited number of places are still available - registration can be completed via [Eventbrite](https://www.eventbrite.com). For further information see [here](https://www.eventbrite.com).

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**Centre for the Study of Internationalism**

'Internationalism' can refer to a number of very different ideas and practices: the search for intergovernmental agreements and conventions; the practice of international assembly; the projection of national agendas across the globe; the transfer of ideas, resources, objects or people across national boundaries. These different models of internationalism each draw on different intellectual and political traditions, and in practice are shaped by different constellations of foreign policy objectives, economic policies, humanitarian concerns, and the priorities of self-governing professions.

The Centre for the Study of Internationalism will take a broad view to make sense of internationalism in its various guises, past and present. It provides an intellectual home for researchers at all stages in their careers who are interested in internationalism, broadly conceived.

Further information about the Centre, its members and the research questions
it seeks to explore, can be found on our new [website](#). You can also follow the Centre on Twitter: [@centreinthist](#) and on Facebook: [@centreforthestudyofinternationalism](#)