The Reluctant Internationalists
Summer Term Newsletter 2017

In this penultimate newsletter we bring you news of our latest round of conferences and workshops, publications and awards. This term we have been busy working on a new online textbook and resource collection on the history of internationalism, to be unveiled in September. Lively conversations with children’s authors and illustrators, which we began last term, identified a number of possible partnerships with historians. We are particularly thrilled to see Francesca Sanna’s new book take shape.

Time is almost up for the Reluctant Internationalists project, but we know that our collaborations and exchanges with many of you will continue in other guises. In this period of political change and crumbling international structures, we are as convinced as ever that there is more work to be done for scholars grappling with the nature of internationalism. We are hopeful that Birkbeck’s new Centre for the Study of Internationalism will take over from where the Reluctant Internationalists will close. If you are interested in getting involved in the new Centre, get in touch! Otherwise look out for details on our blog and in our final newsletter in the autumn.

Awards and Publications

This summer Dora Varga is taking up responsibilities as co-editor of the Social History of Medicine journal, where she will be replacing Graham Mooney (John Hopkins University). Social History of Medicine is the journal of the Society for the Social History of Medicine and is published by Oxford University Press. A major platform in the field of history of medicine and health, the journal publishes original research articles, review articles, book reviews, critical assessments of archives and collections, discussions concerning the state of the field, thematic special issues and virtual issues. Dora will be joining Patricia Skinner (Swansea University) and Pratik Chakrabarti (University of Manchester) in the editorial team. Many congratulations, Dora!

Francesca Sanna has been awarded the Amnesty International CILIP Honour for her debut book, The Journey. The award

What we did this term

Johanna Conterio presented on ‘Environment and Health in the Soviet Health Resort under Stalin’ at the Boundaries of Socialist Medicine workshop, convened by Dora Varga, University of Exeter, 1-2 June 2017

Jessica Reinsch presented a paper on ‘UNRRA in early postwar Poland: an agent of socialism?’ at the Boundaries of Socialist Medicine workshop, convened by Dora Varga, University of Exeter, 1-2 June 2017

Jessica Reinsch gave a talk entitled “You never really relieved anybody”: thoughts on legacy and impact of the work of UNRRA’ at the workshop Making a Case for Interwar Internationalism, convened by Ilaria Scaglia, Freie Universität Berlin, 5-6 June 2017

Dora Varga presented a paper on ‘After the End of Polio: contesting the epidemic narrative’ at the workshop Life Times: Medical temporalities in conflict at the University of Oslo on 15 June 2017
celebrates human rights in children's literature with the winning book chosen because it most distinctively illuminates, communicates or celebrates personal rights or freedoms. Wonderful news, Francesca!

D. Esther Kim has recently been awarded the prestigious Joseph-Armand Bombardier Scholarship from the Social and Humanities Research Council of Canada for her doctorate research, commencing September 2017 at the University of Toronto. Well done, Esther!

Ana Antic’s book, *Therapeutic Fascism: Experiencing the Violence of the Nazi New Order* has been shortlisted for the *Royal Historical Society’s 2017 Gladstone Prize*. Many congratulations, Ana!

**Other Publications**

David Brydan, ‘Fascist International Health’, *Remedia*, May 2017


For previous newsletters, see here.

We are pleased to announce that a selection of podcasts from our conferences and workshops is now available to download here.

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**Our Events This Term**

Languages of Internationalism (24-26 May 2017 Birkbeck College)

At the end of May, the project hosted the ‘Languages of Internationalism’ conference, co-organised with our former Visiting Fellow Brigid O’Keeffe (Brooklyn College, CUNY). The conference aimed to shed light on the centrality of language to people’s pursuit and experiences of internationalism. The full programme can be viewed here, and all of the papers are available to listen to as podcasts via SoundCloud or through the central Birkbeck College iTunes channel.

Language is at the heart of every international enterprise, but as the conference showed, it presents obstacles and dilemmas, as well as opportunities. Several papers emphasised frictions and tensions which emerged over the use of languages in international settings. Many of these tensions stemmed from attempts to deploy language as tools of national or imperial dominance. The conference also showed how language could be a tool of communication, solidarity and unity, as well as a force of division and alienation. But it also made clear the centrality of language in the performance, experience, and pursuit of

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Where you'll see us next

David Brydan will talk on ‘International Nationalists, Fascist Cosmopolitans: The Blue Division, the ‘New Europe’ and the Eastern Front’, at *When East Meets West: The Second World War in Global Perspective*, King’s College London, 22-23 June 2017

Johanna Conterio will present on ‘The Eclogy of the Socialist City: Cultivating and Protecting the Green Spaces of Moscow, 1931-1941’, at the *Australian Historical Association 36th Annual Conference*, Newcastle, Australia, 3-7 July 2017

David Brydan will present ‘Authoritarian Internationalisms: Imagining the Global in Franco’s Spain’, at *Other Globes: Past and Peripheral Imaginations of the Global*, University of Amsterdam, 4-5 July 2017

Johanna Conterio will talk on ‘Urban Planning as Social Engineering: The politics of green space in the Soviet Union 1930s’ at the *25th Biennial Conference of the Australasian Association for European History*, Melbourne, 11-14 July 2017

Dora Vargha will present on ‘The Making of an Eradication Model: Hungary, Cuba, and the foundations of the global polio eradication program’ at the *25th International Congress of History of Science and Technology (ICHST)*, Rio de Janeiro, 23-29 July 2017

Ana Antic will talk on ‘Imagining Africa in Eastern Europe: Transcultural psychiatry and global anthropological research in
Internationalists participated in the Boundaries of Socialist Medicine workshop held at the University of Exeter. Supported by the Wellcome Trust through a Wellcome Seed Award, and organised by Dora Vargha, this workshop brought together historians of socialism, and historians and anthropologists of medicine from the UK, the United States, Canada, Germany, France, Hungary, Romania, the Netherlands and Australia. Boundaries of Socialist Health critically approached ideas and practices of health in state socialist, communist and liberal democratic contexts in the 20th century.

The workshop explored, among other questions, how models of public health and medical care travelled within and without the socialist world; in what ways did and did not regime changes and wars change concepts of socialist health; what political ideas influenced the way responsibilities of health was imagined in the Cold War; and how we might differentiate between social, socialist and socialised medicine. The conversations on these subjects will continue at a second workshop in January 2018 and on the workshop’s blog.

**Between Fact and Fiction: Refugee Narratives in Children’s Literature Workshop (9 June 2017 Birkbeck College)**

In early June, the Reluctant Internationalists held a one-day inter-disciplinary workshop with children’s authors, illustrators, publishers, booksellers, school teachers, librarians, and academics. The agenda for the day was to discuss the role of children’s literature as a vehicle for refugee stories and voices, and to think about potential collaborations between children’s authors/illustrators and historians and other scholars.

The day was structured around three sessions, each grouped around the different perspectives of people creating, selling and using children’s books. Throughout, discussions explored the opportunities and challenges currently facing practitioners seeking to broaden the field of refugee stories in children’s literature. The full workshop report can be read here.
Upcoming Events

History Teachers Network Meeting (27 June 2017 Birkbeck College)

In November last year, the Reluctant Internationalists launched a History Teachers Network, based at Birkbeck College. The Network is designed to provide an informal, social forum for secondary school teachers and teaching assistants who are currently studying at Birkbeck, or are alumni of the College.

Following a successful first meeting late last year, the Network will convene again in June to discuss developments and plans for the academic year ahead. The meeting will take place on Tuesday 27 June at 6pm.

The evening will provide an opportunity to discuss informally plans for the network and enable the project team to learn more about teaching pressures, experiences and resources.

To register your interest in attending, or for any further information regarding the network, please email reluctant.internationalists@gmail.com.

Companion to the History of Internationalism Launch Event (September 2017, date to be confirmed)

This year we have been working on a new online textbook and resource collection on the history of internationalism, entitled ‘Companion to the History of Internationalism: An Online Teaching and Learning Resource’. We are looking forward to sharing the results after the summer. Our launch will take place in late September – look out on our blog for more information.