

Dear Readers,

It is our great pleasure to introduce to you the Autumn 2015 issue of *Chicago Journal of History*. The last quarter of the year has seen both cheers for the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of allied victory in World War II and tears for the losses of lives in Paris, Beirut and Mali. The four months during which editors at the *Chicago Journal of History* worked to bring forth this new issue have been a time of intense resonance from the past and anxiety over the future. In light of the historical discourses surrounding our time and sometimes even our lives, we feel especially honored to add a new issue to our online and printed forums, conceived as platforms for lively exchange of ideas, sharing of research insights, and participation in a common intellectual life for history students. It is above all our hope that the journal could serve as a vivid proof of the relevance and significance of the academic work done by young scholars at the undergraduate level, a stage for adventurous spirits and a source of pleasure for curious minds.

The Autumn 2015 issue presents three studies. Each essay considers a particular historical crisis and surveys human actions in response to the challenge. In the first piece: “Autonomy or Agency? A Geopolitical Analysis of the Northern and Southern Lakhótas’ Political and Military Leadership”, Zachary Barker, then student at the University of Pittsburgh, places the Native American leaders’ decision-makings at the center of his explanation for the surge and decline of Lakhonta political power in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Critical of deterministic assumptions in Native American historiography, Barker illustrated how divergence in economic conditions, sociological structure and psychological experiences between the northern and southern Lakhontas would account for their different reactions to territorial encroachments from the east. It seems to the author that these responses, oftentimes simplified as either heroism or defeatism, were the product of both historical realities and conscious choices. Successful or not, these actions represent a historical possibility for the Lakhontas in its full sense. In a way, his comparative analysis of northern and southern Lakhonta leadership restores individuals, families and tribes as active agents capable of shaping their historical narrative and responsible for their proper historical consequences.

In “Time Machine: the Westinghouse Time Capsule, the ‘World of Tomorrow’ and the Changing Understanding of Time at the 1939 World’s Fair”, Evan Stark, then studying at Washington University in St. Louis, uses the first time capsule as a lens through which he brings to light the American and international society in 1930s. Building a collection of observations around the physical object, Stark unifies multiple dimensions into one narrative: he explores the dual identity of the capsule as technological innovation and corporate propaganda, depicts a precarious balance between future optimism and present anxiety, and examines how the time capsule’s charm was felt in corporate and popular culture. The essay concludes that the capsule challenged people’s understanding of time, but it was the epoch, full of hopes and tensions, that transformed the time capsule into a complicated symbol, something that might not have been intended by its inventors.

The third essay “‘Synergy in Paradox’: Nixon’s Policies toward China and the Soviet Union” explores the nature and extent of Nixon’s rapprochement efforts in light of important primary documents. Preston Thomas, then student at the University of Chicago, seeks to define Nixon and Kissinger’s vision as an “indirect entente” against the U.S.S.R, rather than an outright strategic rebalance. He is convinced that the trajectory of a series of talks between Chinese leadership Mao and Zhou and their U.S. counterparts Nixon and Kissinger was intentionally set within the boundary of Asia-Pacific. Hence, the strongest implication of Nixon’s rapprochement policy would concern Indian-Pakistani conflicts, solutions to the Vietnam dilemma, as well as the status of Taiwan. According to Thomas’s research, only in the long-term is the new Sino-American dynamic conceived as a force against the expansion of Soviet influences in East Asia.

It happens that the three articles in this issue cover a span of about one hundred years from first 1860s, then 1930s, to 1960s. Although they treat historical crises at modern times and with an emphasis on United States history, editors at the *Chicago Journal of History* encourage students of diverse backgrounds and specializations to submit their works on topics across a wide periodical, geographical and thematic spectrum.

Apart from the three student contributions, you will also find in this issue a conversation with Mme. Annette Becker, professor of history at l’Université de Paris-Nanterre. On November 25th 2015, Professor Becker delivered a public lecture on Raphael Lemkin and the concept of genocide at Temple d’Issy Moulineaux in Paris. On this occasion, in an exclusive interview with *Chicago Journal of History* before and after the talk, she related to the past and present of her career as a historian studying the violence of war. She reflects on Lemkin and the domain of international law as a force against war crimes, and traced through the history of war tactics in light of the novelty of terrorism. From an academic perspective, she talked about her use of images as historical sources and commented on potential differences in World War I and II scholarships in the United States and in Europe. Near the end, she gave her advice to students in the United States interested in the history of war and violence.

Again, we invite you to explore this issue and encourage you to share any afterthoughts and criticisms with us. We could be reached easily on the “Chicago Journal of History” Facebook page, and by email address: [ughistoryjournal@gmail.com](mailto:ughistoryjournal@gmail.com). It is your feedback that enables the journal to continue to enrich readers’ experiences, to cross territories of campuses and to bring together a diversity of cultural and methodological perspectives.