

In This Issue

The articles in this issue of *Law and History Review* offer an extended look at how ideas of constitutional principles and rights evolved within and across transnational and international arenas. The first three articles, by Matthew Mirow, Linda Colley, and Lorelle Semley, address the first half of that story, looking at the migration of constitutional ideas—to borrow Sujit Chourhry’s term—around the Atlantic World. Mirow’s brief historiographical essay reintroduces this topic, emphasizing the ways in which new works have begun to reshape the history of the constitutional era by engaging the constitutional histories of the Americas.

Colley’s exploration of the “contagion of constitutions,” in the age of revolutions (1776–1848) offers an example of the new historical work that Mirow’s article describes. Her article explicitly moves constitutional histories of that period away from a focus on the single nation, and into a conversation that connects the worlds of the Atlantic and Europe. Although her focus is the effect of that discussion on England, the center of the discussions she describes is London, a city of exiles. There, Italian exiles, South American independence leaders, and Spanish liberals added their voices to the debates over constitutional principles and the growing enthusiasm for written constitutions.

Colley’s look at “constitutional contagion” explores how constitutional ideas came into London from around the Atlantic and Europe, evolved, and then travelled out again on a number of different hosts. The next article, by Semley, considers how a single person, Marc Kojo Tovalou Houénou, helped transform a single constitutional idea, of citizenship, both in West Africa and throughout the French Empire. Where Colley’s study looks at how debates among elites gave rise to new constitutional principles, Semley’s looks at the transformative practices of Houénou and other colonial subjects. But Semley’s study of self-fashioning

citizenship in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century is, like Colley's, ultimately a transnational story of migration of constitutional ideas around the Atlantic World.

Although the next three articles shift the focus from constitutional orders to human rights, they continue the emphasis on the movement of ideas across national boundaries. The first, by Alison Bashford and Jane McAdam, offers a long history of the 1905 British Alien Act to argue that domestic laws and international laws of human rights need to be studied in dialogue with one another. Ultimately their study demonstrates how and why the right to asylum as set down in the 1905 act was abandoned, by Britain, in debates over the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) in the 1940s. In their account, international legal principles first shaped the Alien Act of 1905, and then, the assumptions that developed as a result of that Act influenced British positions during the debates over the UDHR in the 1940s.

The article by Bashford and McAdam traces a dynamic exchange between the national and the international. The next two articles, both of which look at the creation of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (ICERD), continue that exploration. In the first, Ofra Friesel considers how the United States, which initially hoped to add religious intolerance to the convention for domestic reasons, was forced to abandon that aim. Although the United States's Cold War agenda is the ultimate driver in Friesel's story, Friesel's article traces the way Jewish organizations tried to work with Britain, Israel and the United States to influence the drafting of the convention.

The final article in this issue, by Herbert Lovelace, Jr., looks at the role the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) played in pushing the issue of race to the forefront. In Lovelace's hands, the local pushed the international as movement activists influence the trajectory of international human rights. As significantly, Lovelace's article, like the works by Bashford and McAdam and Friesel, offers a glimpse at the important new work being done at the intersection of legal history and history of human rights.

This issue concludes with a selection of book reviews. We invite readers to also consider American Society for Legal History's electronic discussion list, H-Law, and visit the Society's website at <http://www.legalhistorian.org/>. Readers may also be interested in viewing the journal online, at <http://journals.cambridge.org/LHR>, where they may read and search issues of the journal.

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