

# Editorial Foreword

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**MEMORY WORK** Never has the work of memory had more advocates and provoked more controversy, whether it is the new business of recovered memories of childhood abuse and national apologies for the past sins or the old business of commemorating the nation's past. Two essays explore this rapidly expanding terrain.

**Michael Kenny**, setting out from the “false memory” controversy, probes the interface between individual and collective history through three illuminating examples: Australian Aboriginal historical memory in the colonial period, the sources of the “survivor syndrome” concept, and the recent Indian residential School issue in Canada. Memory and forgetting are subject to forces that “guide what is memorable, how it should be commemorated, and what kind of story to place it.”

**Susan J. Terrio** examines “the Clovis affair.” How, or whether, to memorialize the baptism of the Frankish king Clovis 1,500 years previous was a problem that, in 1996, embroiled the French President, the Pope, the Catholic Church, and the French Republic in lively debate. The debate makes evident not only the differences between left and conservative narratives of the French nation but also a surprising agreement: that there existed a solidarity based on sameness, whether of the Catholic religion or a commitment to French culture. This assimilation model unites the nation in its concern over inassimilable “ethnic islands.” In a unified Europe, France may have to reconsider its collective memories at a deeper level. (Compare Irene Silverblatt, “Imperial dilemmas, the politics of kinship, and Inca reconstructions of history,” 30:83–102.)

**THE POETICS OF REFUSAL** Two essays consider cultural formations under the aspect of subversion and resistance, in China and in Greece, respectively.

**Erik Mueggler** elucidates the surprising destiny of ghosts of those who died of hunger, suicide, or other violence, sent on their way by the chant of a Lolop'o exorcist in Southwest China: they are dispatched to Beijing, where the king and queen of the violently dead are notorious failed Chinese national figures, Lin Biao and Jiang Qing. The Lolop'o *imaginaire* acts similarly to consign a local branch party secretary, responsible for the destruction of the reliquary box containing the spirits of their ancestors, to this faraway spectral government. Ghost stories become “a practice of time,” allocating responsibility and capacity for action.

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**Janet Hart** studies the aesthetics of culture in a political prison for women in post-war Greece, in which former partisans and “red sympathizers” were incarcerated. The prison aesthetic transmutes dire circumstances into acts of creation—song, dance, satire—yielding enjoyment of a kind. Imprisonment is a drama of citizenship, in which the identity of the demonized citizen is under attack, but in which, “anchored in a culture of defiance . . . the individual can frequently be heard speaking in a collective voice.”

**TERMS OF LABOR** These two essays, in their different ways, examine labor conditions in South American economies newly integrated into the global economy. (For the historical context, see a pair of essays in volume 25 (1983): Anthony Winson, “The formation of capitalist agriculture in Latin America and its relationship to political power and the state,” pp. 85–104, and Susan Eckstein, “Transformation of a ‘Revolution from below’—Bolivia and international capital,” pp. 105–135.)

**Jane L. Collins** and **Greta R. Krippner** investigate the mixture of permanent and short-term work contracts among agricultural workers in Brazil and Chile, working in grape production. Collins and Krippner ask under what conditions permanent contracts emerge and find they do so when supervision is important or costs of supervision are high, when employers need extraordinary tasks performed, and when there is a large body of casual laborers who are worse off. Current conditions, paradoxically, call for more controlled, “subjugated” labor, leading to adoption of a more “modern” contract form.

**Harry Sanabria** compares the position of two Bolivian laboring populations under neo-liberal reforms. The reforms, he argues, have served to consolidate the state and make it better able to confront recalcitrant workers and peasants. The state has been successful in dominating the militant miners’ union but ineffective in dealing with peasants cultivating coca, for reasons the essay explores. The object is to understand the specifics of the successes and failures of the hegemonic process.

**COLONIALISM AND DIFFERENCE** Colonial regimes, based on difference and concerned to maintain an illusion of organic solidarity, have to manage the distribution of sameness and difference. (CSSH has had a long engagement with the study of colonialism—see, for example, the pair of essays in volume 4 [1962] by Bernard S. Cohn, “The British in Benares: a nineteenth-century colonial society” [pp. 169–199], and Robert Eric Frykenberg, “British society in Guntur during the early nineteenth century” [pp. 200–208].)

**Lauren Benton** argues that the colonial legal order was by nature a plural legal order divided into jurisdictions. These were inherently unstable and constantly changing under pressure of a jurisdictional politics which the colonized and the colonizer found irresistible. The unintended effect of that politics of jurisdiction in British India and other colonial settings is to strengthen the role of

the state as ultimate arbiter of justice and, by promoting the play of difference in the legal arena, as the ultimate arbiter of political identity as well. Struggles over difference “helped give rise to a global legal order—the interstate system—in which expectations about the location of legal authority became uniform across otherwise quite diverse polities,” shaping local colonial cultures and global structures.

**Alexandra Minna Stern** reviews recent works at the intersection of citizenship and the medical scrutiny of disease and deviation. The discussion includes eugenics, criminal classes and the case of Typhoid Mary.