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978-1-107-10266-8 - Global Anti-Vice Activism, 1890–1950: Fighting Drinks, Drugs, and “Immorality”

Jessica R. Pliley, Robert Kramm and Harald Fischer-Tiné

Frontmatter

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GLOBAL ANTI-VICE ACTIVISM, 1890–1950

Vice was one of the primary shared interests of the global community at the turn of the twentieth century. Anti-vice activists worked to combat noxious substances such as alcohol, drugs, and cigarettes, and “immoral” sexual activities such as prostitution. Nearly all of these activists approached the issue of vice by expressing worries about the body, its physical health, and functionality.

By situating anti-vice politics in their broader historical contexts, *Global Anti-Vice Activism, 1890–1950* sheds fresh light on the initiatives of various actors, organizations, and institutions that have previously been treated primarily within national and regional boundaries. Looking at anti-vice policy from both social and cultural historical perspectives, it illuminates the centrality of regulating vice in imperial and national modernization projects. The contributors argue that vice and vice regulation constitute an ideal topic for global history, because they bridge the gap between discourse and practice, and state and civil society.

Jessica R. Pliley is an associate professor of women’s and gender history at Texas State University.

Robert Kramm is a postdoctoral research fellow at the Research Institute of Comparative History and Culture at Hanyang University.

Harald Fischer-Tiné is a professor of modern global history at the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology in Zurich (ETH-Zürich).

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[More information](#)

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JESSICA R. PLILEY

ROBERT KRAMM

HARALD FISCHER-TINÉ



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Frontmatter

[More information](#)

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Jessica R. Pliley, Robert Kramm and Harald Fischer-Tiné

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

Contents

<i>List of figures</i>	page vii
<i>List of tables</i>	viii
<i>Notes on contributors</i>	ix
<i>Acknowledgments</i>	xv
1 Introduction: a plea for a “vicious turn” in global history <i>Jessica R. Pliley, Robert Kramm, and Harald Fischer-Tiné</i>	1
PART I HEALTH AND THE BODY	31
2 Modernity, vice, and the problem of nakedness <i>Philippa Levine</i>	33
3 “Godless Edens”: surveillance, eroticized anarchy, and “depraved communities” in Britain and the wider world, 1890–1930 <i>Antony Taylor</i>	53
4 Physical culture as “natural healing”: Eugen Sandow’s campaign against the vices of civilization c. 1890–1920 <i>Carey A. Watt</i>	74
PART II DRINKS AND DRUGS	101
5 The specter of degeneration: alcohol and race in West Africa in the early twentieth century <i>Charles Ambler</i>	103

Cambridge University Press

978-1-107-10266-8 - Global Anti-Vice Activism, 1890–1950: Fighting Drinks, Drugs, and “Immorality”

Jessica R. Pliley, Robert Kramm and Harald Fischer-Tiné

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

vi	<i>Contents</i>	
6	A question of social medicine or racial hygiene? The Bulgarian temperance discourse and eugenics in the interwar period, 1920–1940	124
	<i>Nikolay Kamenov</i>	
7	Threats to empire: illicit distillation, venereal diseases, and colonial disorder in British West Africa, 1930–1948	152
	<i>Emmanuel Akyeampong</i>	
8	Medical and criminological constructions of drug addiction in late Imperial and early Soviet Russia	179
	<i>Pavel Vasilyev</i>	
9	Cigarette smoking in modern Buenos Aires: the sudden change in a century-old continuity	203
	<i>Diego Armus</i>	
	PART III PROSTITUTION AND SEX TRAFFICKING	219
10	The FBI’s White Slave Division: the creation of a national regulatory regime to police prostitutes in the United States, 1910–1918	221
	<i>Jessica R. Pliley</i>	
11	Anti-vice lives: peopling the archives of prostitution in interwar India	246
	<i>Stephen Legg</i>	
12	China’s prostitution regulation system in an international context, 1900–1937	270
	<i>Elizabeth J. Remick</i>	
13	“Hey, GI, want pretty flower girl?”: venereal disease, sanitation, and geopolitics in US-occupied Japan and Korea, 1945–1948	290
	<i>Robert Kramm</i>	
14	Global anti-vice activism: a postmortem	313
	<i>David T. Courtwright</i>	
	<i>Index</i>	325

Cambridge University Press

978-1-107-10266-8 - Global Anti-Vice Activism, 1890–1950: Fighting Drinks, Drugs, and “Immorality”

Jessica R. Pliley, Robert Kramm and Harald Fischer-Tiné

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

Figures

2.1	Pablo Picasso, <i>Les Femmes d'Alger (O.J.)</i> (1907)	page 42
2.2	A typical card produced by Fortier	43
2.3	Henri Matisse, <i>Blue Nude (Memory of Biskra)</i> (1907)	45
2.4	Richard Ungewitter, <i>Die Nacktheit in entwicklungsgeschichtlicher, gesundheitlicher, moralischer und künstlicher Sicht</i> (1907)	46
4.1	“Dr. Bruce Purdie’s Nervigorine” was the kind of “unnatural” tonic and patent medicine that Sandow denounced with increasing frequency and intensity from about 1904 onward. Nonetheless, advertisements for such products constituted an important source of revenue for publishers.	86
4.2	This photograph shows Sandow c. 1893, in his mid-twenties, during his rise to fame in the late 1880s and 1890s. He was photographed “naturally” in the nude (with a strategically placed fig leaf added later) in a statuesque pose and classical Roman motif, with muscles relaxed. The links to nudism and the life reform movement are clear.	88
6.1	This cartoon is supplemented by a short dialogue beneath, reading “Boy, why do you have crutches? Well, because my father frequented the pubs!”	138
6.2	In this figure the editor of <i>Borba</i> provided photographs of postage stamps found in his own correspondence with colleagues from Italy and Switzerland. The caption on top informs the reader that this visual was also sent to ministers in Bulgaria with the purpose to show them how alcoholism is fought abroad, while the other caption notes that such postage stamps were used to “conduct broad anti-alcohol propaganda”.	141

Cambridge University Press

978-1-107-10266-8 - Global Anti-Vice Activism, 1890–1950: Fighting Drinks, Drugs,
and “Immorality”

Jessica R. Pliley, Robert Kramm and Harald Fischer-Tiné

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

Tables

5.1	Gallons of spirits imported	<i>page</i> 106
7.1	Relative importance of VDs in European and African troops in 1944 and 1945	170
10.1	Expenditures for white slave investigations, 1910–1916	231
11.1	Age and background data for Bombay and the United Provinces	261

Cambridge University Press

978-1-107-10266-8 - Global Anti-Vice Activism, 1890–1950: Fighting Drinks, Drugs, and “Immorality”

Jessica R. Pliley, Robert Kramm and Harald Fischer-Tiné

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

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Cambridge University Press

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Frontmatter

[More information](#)

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Jessica R. Pliley, Robert Kramm and Harald Fischer-Tiné

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

Notes on contributors

xi

research on the history of the YMCA in South Asia (1890–1964). His most recent monographs are *Shyamji Krishnavarma: Sanskrit, Sociology and Anti-Imperialism* (2014); *“Pidgin-Knowledge”: Wissen und Kolonialismus* (2013, in German); and *Low and Licentious Europeans: Race, Class and White Subalternity in Colonial India* (2009). His (co-)edited volumes include: *A History of Alcohol and Drugs in South Asia: Intoxicating Affairs* (2014, with Jana Tschurennev); *Empires and Boundaries: Rethinking Race, Class and Gender in Colonial Settings* (2009, with Susanne Gehrmann); *The Limits of British Colonial Control in South Asia: Spaces of Disorder in the Indian Ocean Region* (2008, with Ashwini Tambe); and *Colonialism as Civilizing Mission. Cultural Ideology in British India* (2004, with Michael Mann). His articles and book reviews have appeared in many journals including the *American Historical Review*, *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, and *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*.

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Frontmatter

[More information](#)

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Frontmatter

[More information](#)

in the field of radical narratives of opposition to privilege and to hereditary institutions. He is the author of *“Down with the Crown”: British Anti-Monarchism and Debates about Royalty since 1790* (1999) and *“Lords of Misrule”: Hostility to Aristocracy in Late Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Century Britain* (2004). His most recent book is *“London’s Burning”: Pulp Fiction, the Politics of Terrorism and the Destruction of the Capital in British Popular Culture, 1840–2005* (2012).

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Frontmatter

[More information](#)

Acknowledgments

In the case of this anthology, writing a global history of vice has truly been a global affair. As of this writing, the editors are spread between North America, Europe, and East Asia. Bringing together the chapters featured has highlighted the challenges of building global networks even in our era that is privileged with near-instant communication. The project has also reminded us of the value of face-to-face meetings for generating valuable discourse. The chapters in this volume originate from a conference on *Fighting Drinks, Drugs and Venereal Disease: Global Anti-Vice Activism, c. 1870–1940* held on the Monte Verità in Ascona, Switzerland, in April 2012. Jana Tschurenev and Harald Fischer-Tiné organized the conference with the vital support of Judith Große and the entire team of the chair of Modern Global History at ETH Zurich and kindly funded by the Centro Stefano Franscini as well as a number of other sponsors. The gathering in Ascona was the concluding event of the larger research project “Zur Rettung der Menschheit: Die globale Antialkoholbewegung (ca. 1870–1940)” at the ETH Zurich, initiated by Harald Fischer-Tiné, coordinated by Jana Tschurenev, and funded by the Swiss National Science Foundation. We would like to thank all members of the research group, Francesco Spöring, Sönke Bauck, Nikolay Kamenov, and in particular Jana Tschurenev, for the continuous collaboration and inspiring discussions since the group came into existence in 2010. Travel support for the editors was also provided by Texas State University at San Marcos and the Bavarian American Academy.

In 2014, Judith Große, Francesco Spöring, and Jana Tschurenev published an edited volume in German titled *Biopolitik und Sittlichkeitsreform: Kampagnen gegen Drogen, Alkohol und Prostitution* (Frankfurt a. M.: Campus, 2014) with a different set of chapters based on papers that had been delivered at the conference on the Monte Verità. The two volumes and the chapters they assemble speak to one another in the attempt to cover the

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Frontmatter

[More information](#)

vast field of anti-vice activism all around the world from the late nineteenth and to the mid-twentieth century.

Gratitude is also due to Judith Große, Maren Möhring, Jürgen Martschukat, John McKiernan-González, and Philippa Levine for their help in improving the introduction of this volume and for their inspiring comments and suggestions. By the same token, David Courtwright, who was kind enough to write the afterword, was an invaluable, critical, and supportive reader and commentator on the introduction as well as all other chapters in the volume. Finally, we are deeply indebted to the two blind reviewers provided by Cambridge University Press whose comments have not only encouraged us but also helped us bind our contributions much better together. At Cambridge University Press, Deborah Gershenowitz has been a tireless cheerleader of this project and has guided it through the editing and production process with grace and enthusiasm. Needless to say, that the remaining flaws and inconsistencies are solely our own responsibility.