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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

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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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1890–1950

*Fighting Drinks, Drugs, and “Immorality”*

JESSICA R. PLILEY

ROBERT KRAMM

HARALD FISCHER-TINÉ



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## Notes on contributors

**Emmanuel Akyeampong** is Professor of History and of African and African American Studies at Harvard University, and received his PhD in African History from the University of Virginia in 1993. He has been awarded the Zora Neale Hurston Fellow at the Institute for Advanced Study and Research in the African Humanities at Northwestern University, named a Corresponding Fellow of the Royal Historical Society, and was nominated to be a Fellow of the Ghana Academy of Arts and Sciences. At Harvard, he was a board member of the Du Bois Institute and former chair of the Committee on African Studies. He has published many articles in journals such as the *Journal of African Development* and the *Journal of African History and Social History*. He is author of *Drink, Power, and Cultural Change: A Social History of Alcohol in Ghana, c. 1800 to Recent Times* (1996) and *Between the Sea and the Lagoon: An Eco-Social History of the Anlo of Southeastern Ghana, c.1850 to Recent Times* (2001), edited *Themes in West Africa's History* (2006), and co-edited *The History of Ashanti Kings and the Whole Country Itself and Other Writings* (2003) and *Dictionary of African Biography*, 6 Vols (2012).

**Charles Ambler** is Professor of History and Dean of the Graduate School at the University of Texas at El Paso. He earned his PhD in African History from Yale University. He is the author of *Kenyan Communities in the Age of Imperialism* (1988) and co-editor of *Liquor and Labor in Southern Africa* (1992) and *Drugs in Africa* (2014). He is the author of a series of articles and chapters on the history of alcohol and drug use and control in modern Africa and other topics in modern African history. He has been a visiting scholar at the University of Nairobi, the University of Zambia, the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London, and St. Anthony's

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College, University of Oxford. In 2010 he served as President of the African Studies Association.

**Diego Armus** is Professor of History at the Swarthmore College and received his PhD in history at the University of California, Berkeley. He has been a visiting scholar at Harvard University, Columbia University, and New York University and at the Ibero-American Institute in Berlin as well as the Institute for Social History in Amsterdam. As an invited visiting professor, he has taught graduate seminars in Argentina, Chile, Mexico, Brazil, Puerto Rico, Colombia, and Italy. In 2012 he received the R.A.I.C.E.S Award from the Sciences’ Ministry of Argentina. He has published extensively on the history of disease and health in English, Spanish, and Portuguese. Among others publications, he is the author of *The Ailing City: Health, Tuberculosis and Culture in Buenos Aires, 1870–1950* (2011; Spanish version 2007), and editor of *Disease in the History of Modern Latin America: From Malaria to AIDS* (2003), *Cuidad, Controlar, Curar. Ensaíos Históricos sobre Saúde e Doença na América Latina y Caribe* (2004), and *Avatares de la Medicalización en América Latina* (2005).

**David T. Courtwright** is Presidential Professor at the University of North Florida (UNF). In 1979 he received his PhD in history from Rice University after completing a dissertation on “Opiate Addiction in America, 1800–1940.” From 1979 to 1988 he was Assistant and then Associate Professor of History at the University of Hartford; from 1983 to 1984 he was also a Mellon Visiting Faculty Fellow at Yale University. In 1988 he became a full professor at UNF. He has published books and articles on the history of drug use, drug commerce, and drug policy. His drug-related books include *Addicts Who Survived: An Oral History of Narcotic Use in America before 1965*, revised edition (2012), *No Right Turn: Conservative Politics in a Liberal America* (2010), *Forces of Habit: Drugs and the Making of the Modern World* (2001), and *Dark Paradise: A History of Opiate Addiction in America*, expanded edition (2001). The recipient of an NEH Public Scholar Award for 2016–17, he is writing a global history of pleasure, vice, addiction, and capitalism.

**Harald Fischer-Tiné** is Professor of Modern Global History at the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology in Zurich (ETH-Zürich). He holds a PhD in South Asian history from the University of Heidelberg and has published extensively on global history, South Asian colonial history and the history of the British Empire. From 2010 to 2015, he directed a research group on the global history of the anti-alcohol movement. Currently, he is doing

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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*.

**Nikolay Kamenov** earned a PhD at the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology (ETH-Zürich) in 2015 on his work on the global entanglements of the temperance movement in Bulgaria. He is presently a Postdoctoral Research Fellow at the Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies in Geneva, working on a project on the global history of the cooperative movement, with a regional focus on India and Ghana. His first major article has appeared in the edited volume *Vergessene Vielfalt. Territorialisierung und Internationalisierung in Ostmitteleuropa von 1850 bis zum Beginn des 20. Jahrhunderts* (2013), edited by Steffi Marung and Katja Naumann.

**Robert Kramm** is currently a Postdoctoral Fellow at the Research Institute of Comparative History and Culture at Hanyang University and is the appointed Junior Fellow at the Center for Excellence’s “Cultural Foundations of Social Integration” research initiative at the University of Konstanz. He earned his PhD at the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology (ETH) in Zurich, Switzerland and received his MA, also in history, at the University of Erfurt. He has conducted research at various Japanese universities (Yokohama National University, Gifu University, and Waseda University). From 2010 to 2012 he was a lecturer at the Department of Chinese and Korean Studies at the Eberhard Karls University Tübingen. He has published peer-reviewed articles, reviews, and conference reports in *Geschichte & Gesellschaft*, *ASIEN*, and *H-Soz-u-Kult*. He is the author of a chapter in the edited volume *Biopolitik und Sittlichkeitsreform: Kampagnen gegen Alkohol, Drogen und sexuelle Devianz in globalhistorischer Perspektive* (2014).

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**Stephen Legg** is a Professor of historical geography at University of Nottingham and received his PhD in geography from the University of Cambridge. His research focuses on the urban and imperial geographies of the interwar world, with an empirical focus on India. He has published on colonial urbanism (residential segregation, policing, and urban improvement), the regulation of prostitution (red light districts, national policy formation, and international conventions), and the cultural geographies of anti-colonial nationalism. He draws upon a range of theoretical material from postcolonial and governmentality studies to theories of memory, scale, and the subaltern. He is the author of *Spaces of Colonialism: Delhi's Urban Governmentalities* (2007); *Prostitution and the Ends of Empire: Scale, Governmentalities and Interwar India* (2014); and the editor of *Spatiality, Sovereignty and Carl Schmitt: Geographies of the Nomos* (2011).

**Philippa Levine** is Mary Helen Thompson Centennial Professor in the Humanities and Co-Director of the British Studies program at the University of Texas at Austin where she teaches in the history department. She has written on the British Empire, gender, sexuality, and eugenics. Her *Eugenics: A Very Short Introduction* is forthcoming.

**Jessica R. Pliley** is an Associate Professor of women's and gender history at Texas State University and holds a PhD from the Ohio State University. She served as a visiting assistant professor and the inaugural Human Trafficking and Modern-Day Slavery Fellow at the Gilder Lehrman Center for the Study of Slavery, Resistance, and Abolition at Yale University. Her book, *Policing Sexuality: The Mann Act and the Making of the FBI*, was published in 2014. Her articles have appeared in the *Journal of Women's History*, the *Journal of the Gilded Age and Progressive Era*, and the *Journal of the History of Sexuality*.

**Elizabeth J. Remick** is an Associate Professor in the Political Science Department at Tufts University and received her PhD from Cornell University's Government Department. Her latest book is *Regulating Prostitution in China: Gender and Local Statebuilding, 1900–1937* (2014). On the topic of regulated prostitution in China, she has previously published articles in *Modern China* in 2003 and 2007. Her earlier work on taxation, public finance, and the local state in China includes the book *Building Local States: China in the Republican and Post-Mao Eras* (2004).

**Antony Taylor** is a Professor of modern British history at Sheffield Hallam University in the UK. He has written widely in the field of popular politics in Britain in both the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. His interests are

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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).

**Pavel Vasilyev** is a Postdoctoral Fellow at the Center for the History of Emotions at the Max Planck Institute for Human Development in Berlin. He holds a PhD in Russian History from the St. Petersburg Institute of History of the Russian Academy of Sciences and an MA degree in Central European History and Jewish Studies from the Central European University in Budapest, Hungary. His research interests include history of alcohol and drugs, history of medicine and health care, social and cultural history of late Imperial and Soviet Russia, and the history of emotions. His publications include book chapters in *Food and War in Twentieth-Century Europe* (2011) and *Russia’s Great War and Revolution, 1914–1922* (2016), as well as articles on addiction research in *Jewish Studies at the CEU*, *Social Justice: A Journal of Crime, Conflict and World Order*, and the *Bulletin of the German Historical Institute, Moscow*.

**Carey A. Watt** is Professor of South Asian and World History at St. Thomas University. He did his BA and MA at Concordia University and received his PhD at the University of Cambridge. His research and teaching explore citizenship, physical culture, Boy Scouts, popular music, philanthropy, colonialism, post-colonialism, and nationalism in South Asia and globally. He is author of *Serving the Nation: Cultures of Service, Association and Citizenship in Colonial India* (2005) and co-edited *Civilizing Missions in Colonial and Postcolonial South Asia: From Improvement to Development* (2011). He has published articles in peer-reviewed journals such as *French Cultural Studies* and *Modern Asian Studies*.

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## 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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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.