

Eras Journal Edition Twelve, Issue Two

Editorial

We are delighted to present Issue 2 of the twelfth edition of *Eras*, the fully refereed online journal edited and produced by postgraduates from Monash University's School of Philosophical, Historical and International Studies. An international journal, Edition 12 presents the work of postgraduates from universities in Canada, Czechoslovakia, Ireland, Nigeria, Norway, UK, USA, and Australia.

With more than the usual number of submissions we divided the successful articles between two issues. The first issue published in November 2010 featured a diverse collection of writings, reflecting the School's increasingly diverse interests. This second issue, while still covering a broad range of topics, is chronologically more focused with all but one of the seven authors writing on contemporary or twentieth-century topics and concerns.

Starting with the 'exception', Liam Connell's article takes the reader to seventeenth century Connecticut and serves as a reminder of how much life has changed in the Western world over the past four hundred years. Connell's fascinating account of the emotionally charged trial of an accused witch, Katherine Harrison, reveals that the magistrates, drawing on the advice of theologians, were trying hard to stem the tide of poorly substantiated claims of witchcraft that were a feature of early colonial life.

Staying within the broad theme of women's issues, Mark McCulloch's article takes a close look at the role of the Union of Consumer Cooperatives in post war, Soviet occupied Germany to determine the extent to which the Cooperatives contributed to indoctrinating female employees and housewives into Soviet preferred policies and ideologies.

Germany also features strongly in Jonathan Murphy's provocative article which draws parallels between Hitler's Nazi regime and the troubles in Ireland to contemplate the effectiveness of British policies of appeasement. Murphy reminds us of the dangers inherent to appeasing those who have no intention of renouncing violence as a means to achieving their ends.

Straddling both the east and the west, Jenny Cho's article also adopts an historical approach to analyse why China has defined the concept of human rights differently to the West, explaining how this necessarily impacts upon China's attitude and contemporary practice. At this time of escalating unrest across many Middle Eastern nations following the overthrow of Mubarak in Egypt, any contemplation of the issues surrounding human rights is particularly timely.

Similarly, Daniel Fazio's insightful analysis of the North Korean situation provides a timely entree into understanding the motivations and circumstances behind the shelling of Yeonpyeong Island in November 2010. Critically surveying the options available to the international community with regard to dealing with North Korea, Fazio concludes that the best way to obtain a sustainable non-military solution is likely to involve a diplomatic acceptance of controlled levels of nuclear capacity in North Korea.

Nuclear capacity is also the topic of Jon Peterson's article. Investigating the U.S. based Nuclear Freeze Movement of 1982, Peterson's article turns on its head the generally accepted idea that the protest movement affected U.S. foreign policy by putting forward a strong argument that it was the Reagan administration's foreign policy on nuclear armament and their response to the Nuclear Freeze protestors which dictated aspects of domestic policy.

In a class of its own is Kiale Nyiayaana's work on cults in present-day Ogoniland in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria. Incorporating groundbreaking fieldwork involving both village-based cult members who are notoriously difficult to access and various authority figures including village chiefs, Nyiayaana melds this data with relevant historical and sociological scholarship, to track the development and impact of the destructive but powerful Deebam and Deewell cults. With their roots in the ideologically-oriented Nigerian university cults of the 1950s, the Deebam and Deewell recruited Ogoni youth who began migrating to Port Harcourt in the 1990s in search of better prospects and employment opportunities. When the cults were evicted from Port Harcourt in 2003 the youths returned to their villages where they continued to engage in violent and criminal activities. Pointing out that the Niger Delta is a wealthy oil producing area, Nyiayaana calls for governmental policies that improve the educational opportunities and economic prospects of the Ogoni people, and thus provide alternatives to cult membership that will lead to a return to

harmonious village life.

The publication of *Eras* is a collaborative process and this year's committee members Natasha Amendola, John D'Alton, Darren Dobson, Hannah Fulton, Emmeline Healey, Andrew Junor, Kate Lowry, Linden Lyons, Al Shanks, Kathy Shaw, Barry Sturman, and Ben Suelzle have all provided much appreciated support. Thanks also to Sally Allard and the Arts Online Presence team for publishing this Issue on the web, and to the staff of the School of Philosophical, Historical and International Studies for their ongoing advice and support. This is my final year on the *Eras* committee and I wish future Editors – particularly the new Managing Editor, John D'Alton – the best of luck.

Over and above a committee of editors, a refereed journal relies heavily upon two groups from the scholarly world for its survival: authors to submit articles, and academics to act as referees. Many thanks to both groups, but particularly to those academics who went beyond the call by providing lengthy reports that enabled us to work with the relevant authors to progress his or her research much more rapidly than would otherwise have been the case.

We are also grateful to all of the past editors – without your passion for postgraduate publication there would be no *Eras*, and we would not have had the opportunity to learn the craft of the editor; a craft that widens our horizons and can only make our own writing better. Enjoy Issue 2 of Edition 12; we believe it to be a very stimulating collection of writings with much in it that is relevant not only to scholars but also to present-day decision makers.