Letter from the Editor

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LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

On behalf of the entire editorial board, I am honored to present the newest issue of the Penn History Review. Since 1991, the Penn History Review has been dedicated to promoting the study of history amongst undergraduate students. Since its founding, PHR has published exceptional historical scholarship written by students at the University of Pennsylvania as well as schools across the United States. Our spring 2022 edition exemplifies the diversity of study within our field. It includes articles that explore dynamic topics such as the reign of Elizabeth I of England, Orthodox Jewish responses to slavery, the 19th century American reform movement, and Jewish resettlement in China during World War II. These pieces embody the core values of our publication: curiosity, critical thinking, a dedication to research, and most importantly, a passion for history. Our entire editorial team deeply enjoyed working with the authors and editing these papers. We hope that you will find them thought-provoking and enjoy reading them as much as we did!


In the next article “Covenant in Crisis: Orthodox Reactions to Slavery in Antebellum America,” Samuel Strickberger analyzes the reactions of Orthodox Jewish rabbis to the institution of American slavery. In this chapter, he explores the silence of Orthodox leaders from 1848 to 1861, who were largely motivated by the self-preservation of their community.

In the third paper, “Poverty and Discipline: A Case Study of the Philadelphia House of Refuge,” Yoo Ra Do
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engages in a thorough analysis of the Philadelphia House of Refuge, one of the many examples of institutions that appeared during the 19th century reform movement in America. She explores the negative ways in which the poor were perceived by society at large, and the preconceived need to discipline and manage them.

Our final piece, “Importing Development: The Chinese Nationalists’ Support of Jewish Settlement Plans During World War II,” comes from Harril Saunders of Princeton University. In a three part analysis of the Yunnan Plans, proposed resettlement plans which were not approved, he argues that Jewish and Chinese leaders’ economic and political ideologies played a key role in their support of resettlement.

Additionally, this issue includes abstracts submitted by seniors at Penn who undertook the challenge of writing honors theses for the History Department. In doing so, PHR hopes to promote additional research and scholarship in the field of history by offering its readership a preview of this fascinating variety of topics. Congratulations to all of the senior honors students who achieved this impressive accomplishment. We encourage other history students to also embark on this incredibly rewarding endeavor.

The editorial board would also like to thank a number of people without whom this edition of the PHR would not have been possible. Our publication only exists thanks to the generous support of the Penn History Department who continues to support and fund us each year. In particular, we are extremely grateful to Dr. Ramya Sreenivasan, the Undergraduate Chair of the department, and Dr. Yvonne Fabella, the Associate Director of Undergraduate Studies. They have both offered invaluable guidance and encouragement throughout the editing and publishing processes. The dedication they have for both their students and field of study is an inspiration. In addition, we would like to thank the faculty members at Penn...
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and other universities who promoted our publication, as well as all of the students who submitted papers for consideration. This edition would not exist without your support. Thank you as well to our contributing authors, who worked patiently and diligently to refine their articles for publication.

Finally, I would like to thank our editors for their exceptionally hard work on this issue of the Penn History Review. I would especially like to recognize the contributions of our six graduating seniors: Eden Vance, Adrian Brown, Vito Acosta, Mark Wang, Bianca Serbin, and Alfredo Praticò. Their passion for history and dedication over the years have continued to make the PHR a platform for remarkable scholarship. It has been a truly enjoyable experience to work with each of them throughout my time on the board. We will miss having them in our editorial family but are confident that they will go on to do great things.

In particular, I would like to thank Eden Vance, our incredible Editor-in-Chief Emeritus. I have greatly enjoyed learning alongside him and following in his footsteps. He is disciplined, committed, knowledgeable and kind. Thank you so much for your assistance throughout my time on board and for the guidance that you have provided myself and others in your time as Editor-in-Chief. I wish you the best of luck in your future endeavors, beginning with law school and extending to whatever else you chose to pursue. I am confident that you will excel at anything you set your mind to, and I know that you will continue to challenge yourself intellectually as you embark on this new chapter of your life. It has truly been an honor to work with you and I have no doubt that PHR will eternally be a stronger publication because of your leadership. At the same time, I would like to recognize three new editors that we were especially fortunate to have added to the board this semester, Raja Promige, Ava Dove, and Jake Leff. They have already made a positive impact on our journal.
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This year marks PHR’s thirty-first anniversary as a publication, and I am honored to mark my first semester as Editor-in-Chief with this issue of our journal. I feel so lucky to hold this position as it allows me to express my love for history and expand my own knowledge, while also presenting wonderful pieces of writing to the world. I am endlessly grateful to everyone who has kept PHR going and who will continue supporting it for years to come: the Penn History Department for providing funding and support, the countless authors and editors who have worked on past editions and, of course, my predecessors as Editor-in-Chief.

Congratulations again to all of the authors and editors who participated in this edition of the Penn History Review!

Hannah De Oliveira
Editor-in-Chief