

The Vulcan Historical Review
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The Vulcan Historical Review

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All history students at the University of Alabama at Birmingham, including recent alumni, are encouraged to submit articles, reviews, essays, oral histories, or other works of historical interest to be considered for publication. Submissions by any currently enrolled UAB student are also welcome. Please send inquires to:

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Letter from the Editors

Each year editors of *The Vulcan Historical Review* are fortunate to work with extraordinary students on their papers. This year is no exception. A particularly unique aspect of this journal is that each article, essay, or review is written and edited by a fellow student. The editorial board members, as well as the authors, consist of a mixture of both undergraduate and graduate students. As editors, we were truly privileged to assist these individuals in transforming their papers into a peer-reviewed journal. The articles, essay, and reviews explore various areas of history from unique perspectives. While different in their own ways, each article was passionately researched.

This issue would not be possible without the assistance of several key individuals. The professors of the UAB Department of History challenged their students to write quality papers and encouraged them to submit to this journal. For that we are extremely grateful. Special thanks in this area should be extended to Dr. Colin Davis, whose Historian's Craft course continues to be a source of excellent submissions, and Ms. Brooke Becker of the UAB Sterne Library, who tirelessly assists students in a wide array of research. Without the support of Dr. Jean Ann Linney of Villanova University, securing funding for this issue would have proven difficult. The Chair of the Department of History, Dr. Carolyn Conley, provided unwavering support. Thankfully, Administrative Assistants, Ms. Jerry Smith and Ms. Andrea Brown, made quiet rooms available during edits. Our greatest thanks must be given to our Faculty Advisor, Dr. George O. Liber, for his patience and leadership. Finally, we would like to thank our fellow editors, who spent countless hours working with their assigned authors in order to make the papers the best that they can be. We hope you will enjoy this issue of *The Vulcan Historical Review* as much as we enjoyed compiling it.

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BEST LOCAL HISTORY AWARD

The recipient of this year's Best Local History Award is Clelly Johnson for his article, *Race Relations, Terrorism, and Nuclear Obliteration: The Hijacking of Southern Airways Flight 49*. The article recounts the forgotten story of a 1972 airplane hijacking that originated in Birmingham. Although the article initially inspires interest because of its local setting, the event holds a much wider significance. The author demonstrates that the incident not only directly affected U.S. domestic security policies but also raised questions concerning race relations and civil rights infringements. Perhaps most importantly, the author reinterprets the motivations behind the hijacking by attempting to understand the individuals involved.

RACE RELATIONS, TERRORISM, AND NUCLEAR OBLITERATION: THE HIJACKING OF SOUTHERN AIRWAYS FLIGHT 49

Clelly Johnson

In 1972 an airplane leaving a connection in Birmingham, Alabama was hijacked by three African American males. This action set off a series of events that became one of the longest hijackings in the history of the United States to date. The crisis had a profound impact on domestic policy, changing the way the United States viewed airport and nuclear security; yet, the disenfranchisement experienced by the three African American hijackers was never seriously considered as an explanation for their actions. Some in the media portrayed the hijacking of Southern Airways Flight 49 as a maniacal terrorist act totally outside the realm of reason, but perhaps the incident should be reexamined as a desperate but reckless reaction to social injustices suffered by the hijackers.

Statistics from the four years leading up to the hijacking of Flight 49 establish that an epidemic of air terrorism was sweeping the world. The highest spike in airplane hijackings occurred between the years of 1968 and 1972. During this time there were 326 hijacking attempts worldwide—an average of one every 5.6 days. In the United States alone there were 137 attempts during the five-year span or, one every 13.3 days. A hijacking occurred a mere twelve days before Flight 49 came under attack. The extraordinary frequency of hijackings revealed that they could happen anywhere, even in Birmingham.

In the United States, most domestic hijackings during this time period found Cuba as their final destination. The bulk of the hijackings that ended with landings in Cuba were perpetrated by Cuban nationals returning to their homes. Other hijackings were carried out by those disenchanted with the United States or evading law enforcement. Those that fell under the second category saw Cuba as a socialist safe heaven, free from the oppressive hand of the United States. These same individuals were most often African American. Hijackings to Cuba happened so frequently that most planes were equipped with flight plans that could plot direct paths to the island. One theory held that the major rise in hijackings was due to media reports, which inspired potential terrorists. Robert T. Holden concluded that many who hijacked did so because, “Hijackers are individuals who seek publicity because of psychological instability or low self-esteem, so publicity is in itself the motivation for

the hijackings.” During this time there were many inequalities facing minorities in the United States. Holden’s theory could be applied to disenfranchised young minorities, as in the case of hijacker Melvin Cale, a young African American man who had experienced several encounters with the law. When examining the life stories of Cale and his accomplices, Holden’s theory appears to be a likely explanation for the actions of the Flight 49 hijackers.¹

Twenty-two year old Melvin Cale found himself engrossed in the media coverage of hijackings, like many others. Before Cale and his two collaborators hijacked Flight 49, the marginalized youth had recently escaped from the minimum security Tennessee State Prison. Cale, sentenced to five years for grand larceny, took classes through the Tennessee State University. As a college student in prison, he spent most of his time in the library collecting research on media coverage of the hijackings. He carried with him a notebook filled with photocopies of newspaper clippings involving hijacking stories. Cale also suffered from severe intestinal problems, which made him feel depressed. Cale’s poor health and deteriorated mental state might have attributed to his fascination with hijackings. Another possible inspiration for Cale could have been the July of 1972 hijacking of a plane headed to Algeria by the Black Liberation Army, in which the individuals involved were not arrested. Having grown up in the segregated South, and now possibly inspired by a Black Liberation Army hijacking, Cale only needed a catalyst to set his plan into motion. That catalyst came to his Tennessee doorstep in the form of his half-brother, Louis Moore, a Black Panther sympathizer, and his friend, Henry Jackson.²

While Cale had been fantasizing about hijackings in Tennessee, Louis Moore and Henry Jackson had been busy attempting to get even with the Detroit police. The duo sued the city of Detroit for police brutality. Moore and Jackson also claimed that the Detroit police were constantly threatening them and their family’s lives. The city, in an attempt to save money on court costs, offered Jackson and Moore a paltry twenty-five dollar settlement. The police continued to assault Moore and Jackson when they were arrested and accused of raping nine women. The two men both adamantly denied the charges. After the men were able to make bail they left Detroit and drove south to rendezvous with Melvin Cale. Moore and Jackson were determined to obtain justice.

1 Robert T. Holden, “The Contagiousness of Aircraft Hijacking,” *American Journal of Sociology* 91 (January 1986): 874-876, 881.

2 Ed Blair and William Haas, *Odyssey of Terror* (Nashville, TN: Broadman Press, 1977), 44; Anthony Welsh, “Convicted Hijacker Shares Story, Details 1972 Threat To Oak Ridge,” posted May 25, 2011, <http://www.wbir.com/rss/article/170845/2/Convicted-hijacker-shares-story-details-1972-threat-to-oak-ridge> (accessed December 3, 2011).

In the novel *Odyssey of Terror*, the authors Ed Blair and William Haas discounted Jackson and Moore's issue with the Detroit police. The novel took several liberties to portray the hijackers as unintelligent. Several instances described the hijackers flying into a rage whenever they did not understand a term, usually technical or aeronautical in nature. Blair and Haas rarely missed an opportunity to focus on the race of the hijackers, many times simply referring to one of them as "the black." The authors even described outlandish racial stereotypes: "Morkill was playing a hunch that Moore, like many blacks, wouldn't want a corpse anywhere near him. He could imagine that the suggestion has sent shivers up and down the neck of the hijackers." Blair and Haas were middle-aged white southerners at the time of their writing, and their book was targeted to a similar audience. In the years since the publication, Detroit's first African American mayor was elected based on a platform of disbanding STRESS (Stop the Robberies, Enjoy Safe Streets), a special Detroit police unit under charge for accusations of police brutality. STRESS was consequently disbanded, and it now seems that there was merit to Jackson and Moore's claims against the Detroit police department. When viewed in this light, the hijacking may have been a cry for social justice rather than an extortion attempt.³

Once together and settled on a plan, Cale, Moore, and Jackson traveled to several southern cities in a stolen station wagon, seeking information on the security procedures at the local airports. After they arrived in Birmingham they discovered flaws in airport security measures, making this airport the perfect location to carry out their plot. One would have wondered if the hijackers thought of the irony of making Birmingham the starting point in their revenge against social injustice. The history of Birmingham had been one of long brutality toward African Americans during the Civil Rights Movement. The state was known for its governor, George Wallace, who was the face of institutionalized racism. The night before the hijacking, the men robbed a convenience store with a .22 caliber "Saturday Night Special." After the robbery they left with around two hundred dollars, but most importantly, they also left with a stolen 9mm Luger automatic pistol and a .38 caliber Smith and Wesson revolver. The following day, with their coffers filled, they purchased three hand grenades from an Army salvage store. Each man had his own weapons, which equipped him to commit the thirty-first hijacking of 1972.⁴

On Friday, November 10, 1972, Henry Jackson, Louis Moore, and Melvin Cale entered Birmingham's

³ Blair, 42, 52.

⁴ Ibid., 45.

Municipal Airport to commit an epic crime—one that they believed would make the world take notice of them. Thirty-nine years later, Moore recalled, “We decided to take it to another level.” There has been controversy about what happened that day at the Birmingham airport and how three guns and three hand grenades could pass through security. However, according to the required security measures at that time, it can be concluded that the gate agents completed their job appropriately.

Security workers inspected the three men with a handheld metal detector called a magnetometer. Cale only carried with him a camera and a pair of binoculars in a case. When airport security agents went over Cale with the magnetometer, they did not go over the binoculars case—they only casually looked inside it. The airline did suspect Moore as a possible security risk and they patted him down as well as scanned him with the magnetometer. Moore carried a coat with him that he never wore at the airport, and it was never searched. His coat concealed the weaponry that would be used to take over the plane. The magnetometer was the only security device used by Southern Airways in Birmingham. The reporters who arrived at the Birmingham airport soon after the hijacking began reported seeing no visible detection devices.⁵

Southern Airways Flight 49 flew into Birmingham as a connection in a marathon flight that originated in Memphis, Tennessee and was planned to end in Orlando, Florida. The stop in Birmingham would be a short connection only to disembark and board passengers. The crew of Flight 49 included Captain William Haas, Co-Captain Harold Johnson, and flight attendants, Donna Holman and Karen Ellis. After Birmingham, the next connection for Flight 49 would be a short, fifteen-minute flight to Montgomery, Alabama. On board and headed to Montgomery, the would-be hijackers were provided with little planning time and a limited opportunity to make their move. As the plane ascended and the lights of Birmingham began to fade away, Henry Jackson decided to put their plan into motion. Flight attendant Donna Holman recalled the initial take over:

Well, that big guy came up to me at the galley where I was fixing a cup of coffee for the captain and said someone had fainted in the back of the cabin. I started following him to the rear when he turned and stopped. He held a gun on me and said we were going to the cockpit to tell the captain the plane was being taken over.⁶

⁵ Garrett M. Graff, *The Threat Matrix* (New York: Little, Brown and Company, 2011), 44; Andrea Joiner, “Officials won’t say if metal detectors screened hijackers,” *The Birmingham Post-Herald* (November 13, 1972), 1.

⁶ Blair, 31.

When they reached the cockpit Henry Jackson simply told the captain to head north.⁷

Air traffic control soon received the signal indicating that Flight 49 had been hijacked. The ground control in Birmingham thought it odd that the plane was heading north when most hijackings headed south toward Cuba. Operators in Birmingham opened a line of communication with the FBI and relayed the information they had. Meanwhile, Captain Hass informed Jackson that the plane would soon have to refuel. Birmingham was notified that the airplane was returning to be refueled. Jackson made it clear that he did not want to return to Birmingham because he feared that the authorities would already be at the scene. Jackson's inference was correct. As controllers in Birmingham saw the plane returning, the police were notified. Police squadrons equipped with high-powered rifles surrounded the terminal and waited for the airplane to land.

With Jackson refusing to agree to land in Birmingham, the captain provided the hijackers with several options of airports in range where the plane could refuel instead. The hijackers settled on Jackson, Mississippi as their next destination. Meanwhile, Henry Jackson's accomplices ordered all of the male hostages to remove their clothes and throw them into the aisle. The hijackers reasoned that undressed men would be embarrassed and less likely to retake the aircraft. The authors of *Odyssey of Terror* described this tactic as an indignity toward the (white) passengers; it was actually part of a well thought-out strategy.⁸

Flight 49 flew one hundred and fifty miles to land at Thompson Field in Jackson, Mississippi to be refueled. As the plane refueled, the engines stayed on, as did all of its exterior lights. While refueling, Henry Jackson held a grenade to the base of the captain's neck, and Melvin Cale used his binoculars to make sure no one approached the plane from the terminals. After refueling, the captain once again flew north. When the plane reached cruising altitude, Jackson finally revealed to the crew their next destination: Detroit.

The hijackers began a system of alternating guards in the cockpit. One hijacker guarded the pilots while the other two enjoyed unending glasses of alcohol supplied by the flight attendants. Henry Jackson eventually ordered the captain to open radio contact with the Detroit airport. Jackson made the intentions behind the hijacking clear: "This is Henry Jackson and I've got me a planeload of passengers up here. If you don't want them killed, you do what I say. We want to talk to Mayor Gribbs, Police Chief Nichols, and the D.A. Cahalan, want

⁷ Ibid., 21, 25, 31.

⁸ Ibid., 28, 29; "Jetliner skyjacked after city takeoff," *The Birmingham Post-Herald* (November 11, 1972), 1.

them to know that we are going to hold these passengers, and this aircraft until they get us ten million dollars and ten parachutes.”⁹

In Detroit, Mayor Gribbs called for an emergency meeting of the city council. Gribbs initially balked at the idea of providing any kind ransom and only called for the meeting at the urging of the FBI. The whole time, Flight 49 continuously circled over Detroit. As the airplane orbited the city, an anxious Louis Moore took over in the cockpit. An update from a ground controller stated that a council meeting had convened to consider the matter. Moore flew into a frenzy: “You tell ‘em they better get in a hurry down there, or we’ll take this mother right down into the Wayne County courthouse.” While Moore was giving orders he also told radio operators that the hijackers would add stimulants to the list of demands. The city of Detroit dragged their feet in meeting the hijacker’s demands. It became apparent that representatives of Southern Airways needed an open bank in order to secure enough cash to appease the men holding the aircraft captive. Flight 49 had been circling over Detroit for over two hours when the captain informed the hijackers that the plane would again need to refuel. Jackson chose Cleveland, Ohio as the next refueling stop.¹⁰

Across the dark Mid-western skies, Flight 49 was speeding to Cleveland to refuel. On the way, Co-Captain Johnson radioed the hijackers’ instructions: “Be advised there would be no one—repeat—no one but one man coming to the aircraft to fuel the plane and to bring the money, the parachutes and the stimulants. Only one man and he is to have on swimming trunks.” Taking a cue from the Black Liberation Army hijacking earlier in the year, the hijackers added the swimsuit stipulation. The controller conceded to the refueling procedures, but told Flight 49 it may take an hour and twenty minutes for the ransom money to arrive from Detroit. Henry Jackson, aware the distance was only one hundred and fifty miles, demanded that the ransom be at the Cleveland airport in twenty minutes.

Jackson ordered the pilot to land at a point where two runways intersected. Jackson grew more nervous with every passing minute, waiting for the plane to be refueled. Little did the hijackers know that the delay they experienced was due to every fuel attendant refusing to go near a hijacked plane in swimming trunks. No other alternative arose, so a reluctant FBI agent was chosen to refuel the aircraft. No doubt confused, the FBI

⁹ Blair, 53, 58-59.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 60-68.

agent was quickly instructed on refueling procedures as well as the hijackers' demands and somehow managed to successfully refuel the plane. As the airplane refueled, Melvin Cale kept guard through the window. In the darkness he saw what seemed to be figures approaching the plane. He warned Jackson and Moore that snipers waited outside: "Get those guys back or we'll throw a grenade at them," Jackson warned. Hearing his warning over their portable field radios the agents retreated back to the terminal. Louis Moore, angered and short-tempered, ordered the aircraft to take off, back to the safety of the sky.¹¹



Figure 1. "Map Shows Route of Hijacked Jetliner."
The Birmingham News. November 11, 1972.

The new destination of Flight 49 was Toronto, Canada. When reaching Canadian airspace, the hijacking of a small regional plane that originated in Birmingham became an international event. As they flew to Toronto, Captain Haas appealed to Henry Jackson by telling him that Southern Airways had not turned a profit in years. Haas tried to express to Jackson that there was no possibility of Southern Airways being able to raise ten million dollars. Jackson assured, "We ain't got nothin' against the airline. We want Detroit to pay for harassing us the way they have. They picked on Lou and me 'cause we're black. We didn't do those things they accused us of doing." In fact, throughout the hijacking Jackson always insisted that the ransom money come from Detroit.

As the airplane landed in Toronto, the hijackers screamed at the passengers to pull down the window shades and to keep their heads down. Jackson ordered the captain to taxi down the entire runway and to turn the plane around. Then, like in Cleveland, the hijackers and passengers waited

¹¹ Ibid., 70-73.

to hear of the status of the ransom. The officials on the ground in Toronto clumsily tried to buy time. Tired of waiting, Cale said to his half-brother Moore, “They’re just stalling for time. They’re waitin’ for daybreak so they can see what they’re shootin’ at. We’re gonna have to take this thing down yonder and crash it like I said.” In a conversation with Jackson, a representative of Southern Airways accidentally let it slip that they did not have the full amount of the ransom. Having enough of the delay, Jackson shouted into the microphone, “We’re tired of all this bull. No more foolin’ around. We’re taking this [expletive] to Oak Ridge and dive into a nuclear reactor.” With that threat, he ordered the plane to take off.¹² For the first time, the hijackers had revealed what their ultimate plan would be, should they be ignored – to crash Flight 49 into the nuclear reactor at Oak Ridge, Tennessee.

Flight 49, without the hijackers’ ransom, began flying back to the United States. The Toronto ground control operators attempted to direct the path of the airplane. Toronto told Flight 49 that if the plane were to fly to Detroit the officials there would probably have raised half a million dollars by the time they arrived. Louis Moore fired back:

Look here, we done got down to the wire now. This is it. We’re on our way to Oak Ridge. You say you got a half-million down there. By the time we get to Oak Ridge somebody better run on over to Detroit and pick that stuff up there too. If that money ain’t together by the time we get to Oak Ridge, we’re putting this airplane down. Like I said—we’re not coming down with this bull no more.¹³

The Toronto ground control humbly asked where they would prefer to pick up the money. Moore leaned into the microphone and earnestly responded, “You just get it together—we’ll let you know. I ain’t talking no nonsense. Just have it somewhere near Oak Ridge. That’s where we’ll be.” The situation had radically changed. What had begun as a standard hijacking turned into what could have become the United States’ first case of nuclear terrorism. The three men who wanted to “take it to the next level” had the world watching their every move.¹⁴

While the hijacked airplane sped south toward Tennessee, plans were being implemented on the ground. On Friday, November 10, 1972, a civil defense test took place in the Oak Ridge area. The script for the exercise theoretically stated that a nuclear weapon exploded nine miles west of the city. The purpose of the exercise was

¹² *Ibid.*, 86-103; Clyde W. Burleson, *Nuclear Afternoon* (New York: Thunder’s Mouth Press, 2007), 66.

¹³ Blair, 118.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*; Burleson, 67-68.

to test communications and to practice rescue procedures for such an event. The timing of the exercise could not have come at a better time. Had the hijacking taken place earlier in the week, there would have been 13,000 employees on duty in the area; being later in the week, there were only two hundred workers present. The massive reactors of the nuclear plant were shut down and most of the staff was evacuated.

At this point, the passengers on Flight 49 faced yet another threat. According to Clyde W. Burleson's *Nuclear Afternoon*, the Air Force offered airplanes to the FBI and several fighters were deployed, supposedly to shoot down Flight 49 if the need arose. This claim has not been found in other sources dealing with the incident at Oak Ridge. However, there was a later moment during the Flight 49 saga, which can be confirmed, when fighter jets were deployed as a precaution to protect President Nixon.¹⁵

As a result of the hijacking, debate and criticism arose regarding the safety of the nuclear reactor at Oak Ridge. An Atomic Energy Commission (AEC) spokesman assured the public, "It would be like bombing any other industrial complex. Such a thing of this nature would be accompanied by localized release of radioactive



Figure 2. Birmingham Municipal Airport, c. 1960s. Source: Birmingham, Ala. Public Library Archives, File #98.23703B.

material but it would not be a hazard to anyone outside the immediate area." However, because Oak Ridge had never experienced a threat of this magnitude, how could the AEC statement be trusted? Clyde Burleson disagreed with the AEC statement. He claimed that the crash would have ruptured the protective shell of the nuclear plant, which would have sent a massive release of radioactivity into the environment, as well as

¹⁵ Burleson, 68-69; Les Sago, "Oak Ridge evacuates, shuts down," *The Birmingham News* (November 11, 1972), 2.

causing a core meltdown. More controversy surfaced, as the areas surrounding Oak Ridge were never evacuated. If Burleson's claims were accurate, the failure to evacuate the population outside of Oak Ridge would be a blatant disregard of the lives of the people who lived there. The local media had followed the hijacking saga from the beginning. The people of the Oak Ridge community feared the worst according to city spokesman James Alexander, "As I understand it, there were something like 10,000 calls that came into, not just the public information office but to Oak Ridge that came in from the public."¹⁶

The population of Oak Ridge grew increasingly afraid for their lives, while circling above them, Louis Moore demanded to speak with President Nixon. He wanted Nixon to sign a document stating that their ransom demand would be fulfilled through a grant from the United States government. As the airplane menaced over Oak Ridge a passenger reported that Louis Moore ominously said to him, "I was born to die, and if I have to take all of you with me, that's all right with me." The passengers, by this time, were well aware of the hijackers' plot.

20 After waiting for an intense few moments, a connection to the White House was finally established with the aircraft. It was decided that Henry Jackson would be the one to speak with the President. To Jackson's dismay the voice at the other end introduced himself as John Ehrlichman, Nixon's chief domestic advisor. In what Jackson most likely thought of as a haughty tone Erlichman asked, "And who am I speaking to?" The incensed Jackson shot back, "I'm up over Oak Ridge, where I'll either throw a grenade or I'll put this plane down nose first. We want a letter signed by the president declaring that our \$10 million ransom demand is to be a grant from the federal government and that we won't be prosecuted." Ehrlichman told Jackson that his demand would take time to accomplish. Jackson gravely spoke to all listening, including those below in Oak Ridge, "If you don't, I'm gonna show you the Olympics wasn't nothing—The Munich incident wasn't shit."¹⁷ Jackson referred to an event that occurred two months earlier in which eleven Israeli Olympic athletes and coaches were killed by the Palestinian terrorist group, Black September. He then placed a grenade against the back of Captain Haas' neck and ordered him to make the plane dive. Controllers saw the rapid decline of the plane and told Jackson that his money was almost in Knoxville. Jackson ordered Haas to even out the plane and to find the jetliner that supposedly held the ransom.

¹⁶ Sago, 2; Burleson, 67-68.

¹⁷ Graff, 46.

When Jackson made visual contact with the airplane and knew that he was not being lied to, he ordered the jetliner and Flight 49 to both fly to Chattanooga. Southern Airways was only able to raise two million of the ten million dollars demanded. The FBI decided to proceed with the handoff, believing that the hijackers would think the entire sum was present. When the airplane landed in Chattanooga there were crowds of people hoping to see the hijacked aircraft that was dominating the news. The hijackers received their ransom, parachutes, and stimulants. However, the three men decided to not release the hostages because the huge crowds had made them nervous. Once the hijackers acquired the items they had stopped for, the plane took off once again. High in the air, the flight attendants were forced to count the money, while the pilots set a course for Cuba.¹⁸

After leaving Chattanooga, the plane again was safely in the air and headed for what many thought from the beginning to be their destination. Jackson feared that the stimulants given to them might have been poison. He decided to make the crew of Flight 49 his guinea pigs and forced each of them to take a pill. After five minutes of seeing no change in the crew, he and his cohorts took the pills as well. Flight attendant Karen Ellis later approached Jackson and asked for another pill, after the rush of energy she enjoyed from the first. Little did Ellis know that she had ingested a placebo. At the urging of a doctor in Chattanooga the FBI gave the hijackers sugar pills instead of actual stimulants because they feared the results of the sudden decline people would have experienced when the drugs wore off. Having felt a combination of joy from receiving their ransom, and the pseudo effects of the placebos the hijackers became very generous. Jackson offered Haas and Johnson money: “You can do whatever you want with this money—we don’t have any axes to grind with the company. You can give it back, but we’d prefer that you and Harold [Johnson] keep it for yourselves.”¹⁹ Jackson’s sudden spirit of generosity was extended to the passengers as well, “I realize that this has been an inconvenience for most of you and especially you men who have lost a day’s work. I know you’ve got payments to make on your homes and other expenses, so we’re gonna reimburse you for your time and trouble.”²⁰

As the hijackers celebrated, a new situation had arisen. On the ground the FBI kept in mind the sobering fact that the hijacked aircraft was now a weapon in the hands of unhinged men. Officials had witnessed that the hijackers were prepared to kill people on the airplane and on the ground. The same hijackers might not have a

18 Blair, 122, 135; Graff, 46.

19 Blair, 85.

20 Ibid., 182-186.

problem attacking the location of the President of the United States. As the hijacked airplane was jetting across the skies of Florida, Richard Nixon was at his “Winter White House” in Key Biscayne. Though the likelihood of the aircraft being able to pinpoint the ranch home that housed the President was slim, officials still took no chances. The Pentagon contacted Homestead Air Force Base and ordered F-106 “Delta Dart” fighters from the 48th Interceptor Squadron to shoot down the hijacked jetliner if a threat seemed immediate. For the second time since the hijacking began, there was an actual possibility that Flight 49 could be shot down by the U.S. military.²¹

As the aircraft approached Cuban airspace, the hijackers demanded to speak with Fidel Castro. “His Excellency Dr. Castro is not available to talk direct to the men, but they may permit to land to talk to authorities at the airport—then they may permit to leave if not wish to stay,” stated Cuba’s air traffic control. The hijackers were not receiving the treatment that they had envisioned. Louis Moore began to have second thoughts about Cuba. The fact that they were not able to establish any kind of direct contact with Castro strengthened their fears. Captain Haas convinced them to go through with the landing and reassured the hijackers that they did not have to stay if they did not find the situation on the ground adequate. Flight 49 landed on Runway Five of Jose Marti airport at 4:50 p.m., its sixth landing in less than 24 hours.²²

For the passengers, the relief of finally landing in Cuba was short-lived. Soldiers immediately surrounded the airplane upon landing. The hijackers were under the impression that they would be welcomed as rebels against the United States. Earlier in the flight one of the passengers asked Henry Jackson why he wanted to go to Cuba. Jackson responded, “Doesn’t Castro stand for the oppressed, and hasn’t he welcomed people trying to get away from political persecution?” He believed that he would be appreciated in Cuba the way he never had been in Detroit. When they arrived they were greeted by Jose Abrantes, Castro’s security chief. Castro refused to personally meet the hijackers but was present to see the events unfold from an air traffic control tower.

Louis Moore left the airplane in hopes of being able to convince the Cuban authorities to grant him, his friend, and his half-brother refuge. Moore hoped that their two million dollars of ransom money would be the bargaining chip that would assure safe passage into Cuba, but to his dismay, the Cuban officials were not responsive to the scheme. Abrantes made Cuba’s position very clear: “The matter is one that will have to be

21 Graff, 47.

22 Blair, 188-189.

considered by the proper political authorities.” Feeling disrespected by yet another figure of authority Louis Moore returned to the plane where he explained his astonishment to the passengers, “those people wanted to arrest us. Can you believe that? Why, they’re nothin’ but a bunch of Spanish-speakin’ George Wallaces.”²³

Unwilling to have come that far and accept defeat the hijackers once again held a grenade to Captain Haas’ head and demanded that the plane be refueled. The Cuban government, not inclined to accept the responsibility of the hijacked plane should anything go wrong, agreed to their demand. There was one problem though; the Cuban fueling crew did not know how to refuel the plane. No other option existed but for Co-Captain Johnson to climb out a window and slide down the escape line to help refuel the plane. While safe on the ground the copilot was faced with a hard choice of whether or not he should get back on the plane. Years later he reflected on his decision: “I was very tempted just not to get back on the airplane. But then I thought, if I don’t get back on the airplane, then they will shoot the captain, they’ll shoot the flight attendants or they’ll shoot passengers and start kicking them out the door. And so I made the decision to get back on the airplane and go.” When the plane once again successfully refueled, the hijackers gave the order for it to head north in hopes of buying some time to think of a new strategy.²⁴

While the airplane was flying back to the United States it was decided by authorities that the situation demanded a resolution. Herbert Hoover had implemented a long-standing rule that if the FBI should take any form of decisive action during a hijacking, the pilot of the plane would be notified in advance. Months later, when addressing Congress, acting FBI Director L. Patrick Gray stated, “the pilot was not a free agent; there was no way of getting word to him.” Acting on Director Gray’s behalf, Assistant Director Robert Gebhardt radioed the Navy chase plane with the orders: “Instructions are that the hijacked craft be disabled when next on the ground.” As the FBI formulated their plan, officials decided that they would retake the plane in Orlando.²⁵

As the FBI was creating a plan for reclaiming the plane, the hijackers were developing their next move. Disappointed by the nonplused welcome they received in Cuba, they flew to Boca Chica naval air station in Key West to refuel. As the hijackers conversed with each other in private about what should be done, Captain Haas

23 Graff, 48; Burleson, 79; Blair, 124.

24 “Airline Insecurity,” CNN.com Transcripts, <http://transcripts.cnn.com/TRANSCRIPTS/0111/03/cp.00.html> (accessed November 14, 2011).

25 Graff, 48-49.

had to address yet another situation that arose. The oil in the engines was rapidly approaching a critical level. The engines had been running constantly since their take off in Birmingham. Boca Chica did not have the right kind of fuel that was needed for the plane. The hijackers did not fully recognize the severity of the plane's condition and suggested landing in a politically neutral state. When the airplane took off the pilot was radioed to ask their destination. Co-Captain Johnson responded, "Our destination is Switzerland." The hijackers felt since Cuba did not work their only other option would be the well-publicized neutrality of Switzerland. The hijackers also wanted to go directly over the Atlantic. Knowing the plane only had a range of fifteen hundred miles in its current state, ground control demanded an alternative destination. Jackson suggested that they fly to Bermuda. Over the radio, ground control aggressively repeated: "Orlando. Orlando. Orlando." Jackson begrudgingly gave in, and they changed the aircraft's trajectory toward Orlando, Florida.²⁶

24 Flight 49 landed in Orlando to refuel and to obtain the much-needed oil for its haggard engines. As the exhausted jetliner refueled, FBI agents at the airport were radioed by Assistant Director Gebhardt: "I have given [the other agents] instructions to go out there and shoot the [expletive] tires out and disable the plane. What we wanted to do is rush the plane at the same time. Mr. Gray says disable the plane and to storm the plane." As the plane refueled, FBI agents managed to make their way underneath it. Using only their side arms and shotguns, they opened fire on the plane's landing gears. Counting the casings after the event revealed that the FBI fired a total of twenty-six times. They were only able to totally disable two of the eight tires. Feeling the plane lurch to one side, both the hijackers and passengers began to panic. On the ground Michael L. Goff who volunteered to refuel the plane "was surprised by the FBI agents who came out of the darkness and opened fire as he walked away." Goff questioned the responsibility of the FBI's actions: "If they had hit the fuel truck that would have been it for me, the airplane and everything else."²⁷

After the initial moments of fear subsided, the hijackers became furious that the plane had been attacked. The focus of their anger was not the FBI, but Co-Captain Harold Johnson. Henry Jackson believed that Johnson had somehow secretly messaged the FBI to go through with the attack. In September of 2001, Johnson retold the events as he remembered them:

²⁶ Blair, 215-222.

²⁷ Graff, 49-51; "Argument erupts over FBI shooting in plane hijack," *The Birmingham Post-Herald* (November 14, 1972), 1.

They just kind of went wild. And they drug me out of my seat and flung me back into the passenger compartment. And suddenly one of the hijackers appeared in the doorway and told me to stand up in the seat that he was going to kill me. And we exchanged a few words. I told him that we tried to be cooperative, and that we'd done everything they asked us to do. And so it became quite obvious that he was going to shoot, and I dived for the floor. And as I did, he shot—the bullet went through the seat back and the tray table and into my arm, just immediately below the shoulder.²⁸

Although held hostage, the actions of Jackson came as a surprise to Johnson: “I didn’t expect them to shoot us, I don’t think they would have shot me but they were just so—shocked, surprised when the FBI shot the tires out. They just went into a rage at that point.” Panic filled the airplane as the passengers realized that the hijackers had reached a breaking point, and their deaths could be immediate. The hijackers knew it was only a matter of time before the FBI would be inside the plane. Interrupting Jackson, Melvin Cale ordered Co-Captain Johnson to, “Get your ass back in the cockpit or I will kill you.” Passenger Alex Halberstadt later summarized the mindset of the passengers at this moment: “Before we landed at Orlando, we were just on a hijacked aircraft. After the FBI acted, we were on a crippled hijacked aircraft with three gunmen going mad. They turned a bad trip into an immediate emergency.”²⁹

It was in fact an immediate emergency. As the engines fired up, rubber and debris from the tires were sucked into the engines. When the engines began there were still FBI agents under the plane, who were thrown down the runway by the engines’ force. Captain Haas was now flying a disabled plane with an injured co-captain. Flight 49 was unable to acquire the appropriate speed, and just missed a fence during takeoff. Once the plane had made it into the air a fiery exchange began between Orlando ground control and Louis Moore. Orlando pleaded with the hijackers, “Will you please return and exchange that aircraft for another one?” A still stunned Moore replied, “I am sorry sir, I cannot trust you. We’re gonna take this plane down—we’re gonna take everybody with us, nose first. We’re gonna destroy this plane and everybody on it.” Orlando control did not want to give up, especially while the plane was still in communication range: “We know your fuel status, and this is the only airport that can handle your situation.” Moore, infuriated by the persistence of ground control, threatened, “We’re not going to another airport, young man. We’re taking this thing down, nose first. Now, we warned you, didn’t

28 “Airline Insecurity,” CNN.com Transcripts, <http://transcripts.cnn.com/TRANSCRIPTS/0111/03/cp.00.html> (accessed November 14, 2011).

29 Ibid.; Anthony Welsch, “Convicted Hijacker Shares Story, Details 1972 Threat To Oak Ridge,” <http://www.wbir.com/rss/article/170845/2/Convicted-hijacker-shares-story-details-1972-threat-to-Oak-Ridge> (accessed April 27, 2012); Graff, 50-52.

we? Why would you mess us up like that? Don't you know we still got people on board? And you know why they ain't got off." The desperate men then ignored all other communications from ground control. Jackson, who was out of options, ordered Haas to fly the plane back to Cuba.³⁰

The crippled airplane was once again making its way to Cuba, only this time it was filled with passengers who truly feared for their lives, a co-captain who was barely conscious, and three gunmen who were barely holding on to their sanity. Captain Haas feared that the gunfire had penetrated the skin of the plane and damaged the pressurization system. Without any form of pressurization he had to limit the altitude of the plane to a maximum of ten thousand feet. An FBI plane following Flight 49 noticed that there were some erratic flight patterns over the Florida Keys. The chase plane observed the hijacked aircraft performing circular and figure eight maneuvers. The odd flight pattern was due to Captain Haas attempting to use up as much fuel as possible and still have enough to reach Havana. The captain was well aware that wherever the airplane eventually landed it would be a rough landing. While Haas tried to find a way to get the aircraft safely back on the ground, the hijackers continued to make threats. The men's new strategy was to threaten passengers and ground control that they would set off grenades in the plane before they jumped out wearing parachutes.³¹

The FBI's failed attempt to recover Flight 49 made its way into news reports around the country. Reports of the shooting were monitored by Cuban officials, who were able to receive news from Miami radio stations. From the reports the Cuban government knew that the plane would be returning due to its southern flight path. Fidel Castro raced back to Jose Marti airport to personally take command of the emergency. Castro ordered all available ambulances and firefighting units in the vicinity to report to the airport. A triage was established in a terminal building and Havana's main hospital was placed on full alert. While Castro prepared for the worst-case scenario, he also arranged for the possibility of a safe landing. In another terminal building he arranged for a banquet room where a crew was busy setting up for a celebration in case the situation turned out positive. Castro's handling of the emergency stood in sharp contrast to how the United States handled the situation. Time after time it seemed as though there was a major lack of planning by the U.S. government in resolving the situation. When the plane landed in Chattanooga, there was not one single ambulance on the scene. Furthermore, authorities

³⁰ Blair, 240.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 241-242; Burleson, 77.

had no way for passengers to disembark the plane in case the hijackers were to have released them. The police eventually sent cars from the airports in hopes of finding a nearby municipal bus. In the war of perception, Castro was clearly the winner.³²

While the Cuban authorities prepared for a possible crash landing, passengers were doing the same on Flight 49. Flight attendants Donna Holman and Karen Ellis went over crash landing procedures with the passengers. The flight attendants asked for able bodied men to sit next to the emergency exits. Louis Moore and Henry Jackson quickly took a position by the emergency exit on the left side of the plane. The two men made it clear that they would be among the first to leave the plane.³³

Flight 49 made violent contact with the ground as the metal rims made a loud screeching noise on the runway. The rims began to spark as Captain Haas reversed the engine controls to make the plane coast to a stop. The cabin was filled with smoke as the passengers hurriedly exited the airplane. For the first time in two days the passengers of Flight 49 stepped onto solid ground. Jackson, Moore, and Cale did not waste any time as they disembarked from the plane and ran to the cover of tall grass just off the runway. Several of the passengers, fearing that the plane would explode, ran in every direction. Eventually the authorities were able to gather all the passengers and board them on to trucks. As the passengers were being driven away they got one final glimpse of their hijackers. The men were being led away by machine gun from the tall grasses. Other than Co-Captain Johnson's shooting the only injuries to the hostages occurred after the landing. Gale Buchanan sprained his knee, and Frank Robinson broke his leg. They both received their injuries from jumping off the elevated side of the



Figure 3. "Hijacking ends in Havana." *The Birmingham News*. November 12, 1972.

32 Blair, 243-244; Graff, 46.

33 Blair, 251-255.

wing after the emergency landing. Eighty-three year old Alvin Fortson received head injuries and a sprained wrist.³⁴

The greatest damage from the hijacking was to the reputation of the FBI. The morning of November 12, 1972, FBI spokesman Thomas Bishop held a press conference where he indignantly refused to answer any controversial questions. “The FBI would have no comment on that,” repeated Bishop six times. The press left the conference without any new details concerning the fiasco in Orlando. Anger concerning the FBI tire-shooting mounted. In an interview, Co-Captain Johnson’s wife stated, “I think it was one of the worst things they could do. I believe this is endangering the people so much. I wish they hadn’t done it.” One passenger was reported to have said of the Orlando shooting, “That’s the only time I really thought we were going to die.” Acting FBI Director, L. Patrick Gray, took all the blame for the decision to fire upon the tires of Flight 49. Gray was not only the interim Director of the FBI; he was also a nominee to replace the late J. Edgar Hoover. The events that occurred during the hijacking led to the withdrawal of his nomination.³⁵

28

Immediately after the hijacking came to a conclusion, Southern Airways representatives travelled to Cuba to retrieve the aircraft and the ransom money. While making necessary repairs to return the airplane to the United States, the airline representatives were presented by the Swiss Embassy with a stack of invoices from the Cuban government. The airline was charged for the banquet, cigars, the hotel accommodations, and a breakfast that was given to the passengers. All totaled, Southern Airways was ordered to pay twelve thousand and nine hundred dollars, but Cuban officials refused to release the two million dollars of ransom. Captain Haas and representatives for Southern Airways made several unpublicized flights to Cuba in hopes of negotiating the return of the two million dollars. On August 15, 1975, two and a half years after the hijacking, Castro finally authorized the release of the money back to Southern Airways.³⁶

The month before the hijacking of Southern Airways Flight 49, Congress had before it several pieces of legislation that would help combat the growing hijacking epidemic. The legislation proposed sanctions against any nation harboring hijackers. Another bill would have installed a stringent airport screening system, as well as

34 Blair, 256-265; *The Birmingham Post-Herald* (November 13, 1972), 1.

35 Graff, 52-53; *The Birmingham Post-Herald* (November 13, 1972), 1, 10; Blair, 305.

36 Blair, 290-293.

a thirty-five million dollar airport security force. The Senate supported the measures, but the House only favored sanctions against harboring nations. Until Flight 49, it seemed as though the government was not going to take any real measures against hijackings. The media attention of the longest hijacking in American history made the issue difficult for both the public and politicians to ignore.

Politicians were also getting firsthand accounts of what happened on Flight 49 from their constituents. Passengers on the airplane immediately took action addressing their concerns. One passenger of Flight 49 who did so was Gale Buchannan who wrote to Alabama Congressman, Bill Nichols: “It was my misfortune to be included among those involved in the recent hijacking of Southern Airways Flight 49. Having been involved in the ordeal, I wish to share with you my feelings regarding such an event. I am sure you realize, just as well as I do, that experiencing one hijacking does not make me an authority on the subject. But I do feel that my ideas and impressions might be of some value in helping you in your actions in Washington.” Buchannan continued to emphasize how his experience was a nightmare: “The experience of a hijacking such as Flight 49 is something neither I nor any of the others will ever forget. A major portion of time was keen fear, but there were several hours of pure, stark terror!”³⁷

Many in the government did not believe that the public would actually want intensified security at U.S. airports. An FAA spokesman said of security before the event, “It’s an impossible problem short of searching every passenger.” But the outcry of the passengers and the public worked. In January of 1973, the 93rd United States Congress brought drastic changes to five hundred and thirty-one of the nation’s busiest airports. Armed guards were put in place to seal off access to airliners. There was a required electronic screening process installed for the passengers and their carry-on luggage. The airspaces above nuclear facilities were deemed “no fly zones.” The new security measures were a success in reducing the number of hijackings. In the first year alone the new security screeners confiscated 1,600 guns, 1,200 explosive devices, and 15,000 knives. The most staggering statistic of all was the fact that there was not a single domestic hijacking in 1973. The result was a huge feat considering the hijacking of Flight 49 was the thirty-first domestic hijacking of 1972. In 2001, Flight 49 Co-Captain Johnson commended the security measures enacted after the hijacking; but he did express that in his own

³⁷ Ibid., 295-300.

personal opinion, had the security measures gone further, the tragedy of 9/11 might not have happened.³⁸

While the skies over the United States were becoming safer, the hijackers responsible for the increased security measures remained in custody in Cuba. Captain Haas reported that Castro told him that the hijackers would be living out the rest of their days in four-by-four boxes. Henry Jackson, Louis Moore, and Melvin Cale were sentenced to life in prison, in what would be called a mock trial. The United States would have to wait for their turn to prosecute the hijackers, since diplomatic talks to extradite the hijackers from Cuba stalled. The Swiss embassy was working on the matter with Cuba, on behalf of the United States. One State Department official said of the situation, “Cuba and the United States have engaged in a dialogue of the deaf. There has been a lot of back and forth, but the Cubans have not responded directly to our proposals.” On October 28, 1980, Cuba released the three hijackers along with thirty other Americans. The three men were arraigned in Miami on charges of air piracy, and bond was set at five hundred thousand dollars each. At their Miami arraignment Louis Moore once again asserted his and Jackson’s innocence regarding the rape accusations levied in Detroit: “We want to appeal to this court that we not be tried for any alleged crimes.” U.S. Attorney Melton L. Alexander of the Northern District of Alabama in Birmingham told the press there was not any issue involving statutes of limitations because the hijackers were indicted immediately after the hijacking ended.³⁹

Eight years after the hijacking of Flight 49, the three men were brought back to Birmingham, this time before a judge. In February of 1981, the three pleaded guilty to their crimes. Louis Moore and Melvin Cale were both sentenced to twenty years and Henry Jackson was sentenced to twenty-five years. Federal Judge J. Foy Guin said that he was impressed with the way the men had changed since the hijacking and that he would recommend early parole. Cale and Moore only served seven years in prison in the United States. In 1990 Henry Jackson was still serving time and petitioned the court for release. He was most likely denied parole due to the fact that he was responsible for shooting Co-Captain Johnson. In 1991 the court ruled not to grant Jackson an early release and the court refused to consider the eight years he served in Cuba as part of his sentence.⁴⁰

Shortly after landing in Cuba, Captain Haas granted an interview with a member of the Cuban press. To

38 Graff, 53.

39 *Ibid.*, 52; *The Birmingham Post-Herald* (November 14, 1972), 1; *The Birmingham Post-Herald* (October 28, 1980), 1; *The Miami Herald* (October 29, 1980), 3.

40 *The Milwaukee Journal* (February 3, 1981), 10.

the first question asked, “What were the hijackers like?” Captain Haas responded, “Crazy—they were absolutely crazy.” This seemed to be the sentiment of almost everyone at that time. But if the hijackers were insane, how did they become that way? It would be understandable for anyone born an African-American in the 1950s to feel ostracized or abused. Perhaps these men were responding to the oppressive social conditions they were repeatedly subjected to. This explanation could be especially true for the hijackers of Flight 49, two of whom had deep ties to the American South. In an interview in May of 2011, Louis Moore stated, “A man can take so much then there is frustration. It was a matter of us fighting the government; the United States Constitution tells us we have a right to revolt and rebel.”

Throughout the entire hijacking the three men continually insisted that they wanted the ransom to be paid by the city of Detroit. If they were just after a quick few million dollars they would not have cared where it came from, but there was a principle in mind. The hijackings were an act of desperation from America’s disenfranchised who had no other medium to get their points across. Airport security has improved since 1972, but as the tragedy of 9/11 shows, security was not improved enough to prevent other disasters from occurring. The same could be said for race relations. There have been great strides for minorities in the forty years since the hijacking of Flight 49, but has there been enough progress?⁴¹ ◆◆◆

⁴¹ Blair, 281; Anthony Welsch, “Convicted Hijacker Shares Story, Details 1972 Threat To Oak Ridge,” posted May 25, 2011, <http://www.wbir.com/rss/article/170845/2/Convicted-hijacker-shares-story-details-1972-threat-to-Oak-Ridge> (accessed April 27, 2012).

THE UNITED STATES' ROLE IN MAKING CUBA COMMUNIST

Edward Savelle

When Fidel Castro's 26th of July Movement roared into Havana on January 1, 1959, his revolution enjoyed extraordinary popular support. The deposed dictator, President Fulgencio Batista, fled the country in the early morning hours. Within one day a provisional president was named, and shortly thereafter the United States extended recognition to the new government. This was *not* a communist revolution; Castro was a nationalist and vehemently anti-Batista. Although he was often enigmatic and his rhetoric appeared purposefully dissembling, he did not prescribe to communism. Nevertheless, within three years, Cuba became allied with the Soviet Union and ultimately became a communist country. However inadvertently, the actions of the United States government, in the periods both before as well as after the revolution, played a central role in making Cuba a communist state.

32 The questions of how, when, and why Cuba converted to communism offer many possible answers and opinions for contemporary debate. The peculiar relationship between Cuba and the United States, beginning as early as the nineteenth century, had an adverse affect upon the development of Cuba's national identity. This, in turn, caused an abnormal development of Cuba as a sovereign and independent nation. U.S. designs for the annexation of Cuba in the nineteenth century, and the sanctioned U.S. meddling in the island nations' internal politics, economy, and international affairs in the twentieth century, laid the groundwork for the 1959 revolution. Additional and more specific events that occurred in the 1950s and early 1960s played key roles too; but the major causal factors trace their roots to the earlier development of the American disposition toward Cuba.

Historical Background

Christopher Columbus landed in Cuba on October 28, 1492, and for a period of four hundred years afterward Cuba existed as part of Spain's colonial empire in the Americas. Havana, founded in 1519, eventually became a key port city and distribution point for the Spanish empire, and was used to consolidate and ship resources to Europe. Revolutions in the early nineteenth century cost the empire most of its possessions in the Western Hemisphere, so that by the mid-1800s only Cuba and Puerto Rico remained under Spain's colonial control. Cuba had never provided Spain with much silver or gold. Instead, the island's importance as part of the

Spanish empire stemmed from its key geographical location. By the nineteenth century Cuba emerged as one of the world's leading sugar exporters.¹

Cuba's first major war of independence began in 1868, and after ten years ended in defeat. Nevertheless, determination to be liberated from Spanish colonial control continued among the Cuban people. Encouraged by the intellectual influence and organizational talent of writer José Martí, and supported by some of the key military leaders of the ten-year war, the Cubans renewed their armed revolutionary struggle in 1895. The exceptionally cruel and bloody nature of the conflict, coupled with Spain's own internal strife on the European continent, turned the war in favor of the Cubans.

The United States entertained an interest in the annexation of Cuba as early as the beginning of the nineteenth century when President Jefferson wrote the following to President Monroe, "I candidly confess, that I have ever looked on Cuba as the most interesting addition which could ever be made to our system of States."² By the 1890s, the United States established substantial business interests in Cuba. According to historian Louis A. Pérez, "by 1894, the United States received almost 90 percent of Cuba's total exports (\$98 million), and provided 40 percent of its imports (\$39 million)."³

The brutality of the war for Cuban independence from Spain became daily fodder for war correspondents, who fanned the flames of war during the 1895-1898 period. In February of 1898, the *U.S.S. Maine* exploded in Havana's harbor. This event, combined with American public sentiment and the concern for U.S. commercial interests, led the U.S. to declare war against Spain in April of 1898. The war ended quickly with an American victory, and the countries signed a peace treaty in Paris on December 10, 1898.⁴ The nineteenth century Cuban revolution was an exceptionally hard-fought, patriotic endeavor that arguably would have resulted in Cuban independence even without U.S. intervention. The timing of the American intervention has been viewed as an opportunistic, imperialist adventure by many Cubans ever since.

1 Dale Tomich, "World Slavery and Caribbean Capitalism: The Cuban Sugar Industry 1760-1868," *Theory and Society* 20, no. 3, Special Issue on Slavery in the New World (June 1991): 298.

2 "Jefferson to James Monroe," October 24, 1823, Transcription, in *The Thomas Jefferson Papers Series 1*, American Memory, <http://hdl.loc.gov/loc/mss/mtj.mtjbib024777> (accessed December 1, 2011).

3 *Cuba: Between Reform and Revolution*, 4th edition, ed. Louis A. Pérez (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 113.

4 "The World of 1898: The Spanish-American War," U.S. Library of Congress, <http://www.loc.gov/rr/hispanic/1898/intro.html> (accessed September 6, 2011). This Treaty of Paris established the independence of Cuba, ceded Puerto Rico and Guam to the United States, and allowed for the purchase of the Philippine Islands from Spain for \$20 million.

U.S. Domination of Cuba and the Platt Amendment

In the aftermath of the revolution, some in the United States, especially those with investments in Cuba, held the belief that the Cubans did not possess the competence to govern their new nation. On the other hand, many Cubans felt that they had exchanged one colonial master for another.⁵ The United States assumed the role of protector, and the American armed forces occupied the island for the next four years. The U.S. assigned to Cuba a military governor (General Leonard Wood), took control of Cuba's foreign trade and international relations, and played an active role in the writing of its constitution. The Republic of Cuba was officially established in 1902. American armed forces were finally withdrawn after Cuba reluctantly agreed to the extraordinary provisions contained in the Platt Amendment of the new Cuban constitution. The Platt Amendment stipulations encouraged U.S. domination of Cuban commerce, domestic politics, and foreign affairs. Because of these terms, Cuba was hardly a sovereign nation and remained subject to American oversight, military intervention, commercial exploitation, and political influence through the 1950s. Fidel Castro later described this era as a "long period of imperialist and neocolonialist dominion that our fatherland endured for more than 60 years."⁶

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Over this sixty-year period, the U.S. expanded its influence over Cuba. American corporations acquired vast tracks of the best land. Infrastructure became the domain of American and Western businesses, which owned the major railroad, the electric company, and the telephone company. As with many young nations, Cuba encountered internal political unrest, leading the United States to invoke the Platt Amendment provisions and militarily intervene in 1906, 1912, 1917, and 1920. So frequent were the interventions that they came to be expected by the Cubans in times of political strife. This anticipation of military invasion thwarted the development of a sound and independent Cuban polity and caused Cuban internal political systems to develop abnormally. This argument is consistent with Fidel Castro's point of view. In an interview with the American Society of Newspaper Editors in Havana on February 28, 1959, he summarized this history from the Cuban perspective:

At the end of the Independence War the U.S. interfered [1898]. They said in the Congress that we [Cuba] have the right of being a free country. [Then] they began the war against

⁵ Pérez, 138-139.

⁶ Cuba-Mozambique Friendship Rally," July 26, 1977, Latin American Network Information Center (LANIC) Castro Speech Database, University of Texas, <http://lanic.utexas.edu/project/castro/db/1977/19771011-1.html> (accessed September 7, 2011).

Spain. After the war the U.S. stopped here, and after two years the Congress said another thing. They said they had the right to interfere in Cuba. Then what happened, the U.S. government didn't know the real picture in Cuba. Frenchmen, Englishmen, they came here, and who were their friends? Those who knew how to speak English, those who lived in the city. Not the patriots. The patriots were countrymen like those men that you see here. And those that had been friends of the Spanish began to seek the friendship of the U.S., as they signed the Platt Amendment. As the U.S. could interfere here in Cuba, when there was no good government, Cubans could not do anything because they were afraid the U.S. would interfere again and they would lose freedom. *So, the people of Cuba got accustomed to bad government and accustomed to other bad things, like waiting for the U.S. to solve the difficulties* [emphasis added].⁷

The U.S. Ambassador, Phillip Bonsal, accepted his post shortly after the Castro revolution came to power and developed a similar conclusion. Discussing the complex past of American influence in Cuban affairs, Bonsal wrote, "The existence of factors that diminished the local community's belief in its own power demonstrably drained the local political machinery of the vitality needed for its healthy functioning."⁸

American Businesses and Fulgencio Batista

In 1933, a coup known as the "Revolt of the Sergeants" brought the stenographer-sergeant Fulgencio Batista to power. This time political order was restored without U.S. military intervention. Batista's ascendancy to this new role was bolstered by the support of President Roosevelt's Special Envoy to Cuba and Under Secretary of State, Sumner Welles. Welles told Batista in October of 1933, "In my judgment he himself was the only individual in Cuba today who represented authority."⁹ Batista, ordained as it were by the highest echelons of the American government, appointed himself Chief of the Military. He ruled over Cuba, first through puppet presidents, and then as the elected President beginning in 1940. During the first year of his administration a new, more liberal constitution was adopted, and Batista enjoyed the good graces of the U.S. government and the American and Western businesses in Cuba.

In 1944, Batista retired to Florida, demonstrating another example of the close relationship between the

⁷ "Interview by U.S. Society of Editors," February 28, 1959, LANIC, University of Texas, <http://lanic.utexas.edu/project/castro/db/1959/19590310.html> (accessed October 4, 2011).

⁸ Philip W. Bonsal, *Cuba, Castro, and the United States* (Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1971), 8.

⁹ U.S. Department of State, *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1933*, Vol. V, Doc. 340 (Washington, D.C.: 1952), 470.



Figure 1. “Sumner Welles (1892-1961) U.S. Under-Secretary of State with Cuban leader Fulgencio Batista as General Malin Craig, American Army Chief of Staff, looks on, 1938.” Universal Images Group.

United States and the Cuban leader. In 1952, Batista returned to Cuba to run for the presidency. Realizing too late that he would not win the election, Batista seized the government in a second military coup and cancelled the upcoming scheduled elections. Batista had always drawn support from his military roots, and in this second era he moved continually toward a military dictatorship, supported by the armed forces and his secret police. The coup provoked immediate and strong political opposition within Cuba; nevertheless, his government was promptly recognized by the United States and most democratic governments. Batista continued to develop a very close relationship with the United States.

The Batista government granted special concessions to American and Western business interests while many Cuban people were struggling to survive. The average Cuban family earned an income of \$6.00 a week, and 15-20 percent of the workforce was chronically unemployed. Only one third of the homes on the island had

running water.¹⁰ In one glaring example of favoritism, Batista implemented an excessive telephone rate increase at the urging of the U.S. government. The rate increase was widely unpopular among Cuban citizens. However, the Cuban Telephone Company (a subsidiary of the American corporation, International Telephone and Telegraph) presented Batista with a solid gold plated telephone as an expression of its gratitude. It was clear that Batista was truly a friend to American business interests at the expense of his own people.

Batista also enjoyed a very cozy relationship with U.S. organized crime bosses such as Meyer Lansky and Lucky Luciano; vice and corruption was rampant. Havana prospered as a sort of ‘sin city of the Caribbean’ in the 1950s, with gambling casinos and brothels serving its mainly American clientele. Batista was financially benefitting from corruption in Cuba. According to *The New York Times* reporter, Herbert Matthews:

It is universally agreed that there is more corruption than ever under the Batista regime... The enormous peculations, in which President Batista is said by everyone to take a large share, is more concentrated now, being mostly in the hands of Army generals and public works contractors. There is smuggling on a great scale and Havana is becoming a wide open city for gambling.¹¹

In spite of Mr. Matthews’ report and others like it, press censorship cloaked the extent of the atrocities committed by Batista’s secret police and the army. An estimated 20,000 political opponents were either killed or imprisoned by his brutal regime.¹² As a reflective *Time* magazine article reported in 1959:

During the seven years of Dictator Fulgencio Batista’s iron regime, and during the two years of Rebel Fidel Castro’s mountain-locked resistance, Cuba got too little attention from the daily press. Scant word of Batista atrocities—of the Cubans who died at the hands of his army and his police—filtered past his porous censorship.¹³

When dead bodies appeared in the streets of Havana and elsewhere Batista sought to blame the communists and other terrorist factions, instead of his own secret police and armed forces.

10 John F. Kennedy, Speech delivered on October 6, 1960, John F. Kennedy Presidential Library and Museum, <http://www.jfklibrary.org/Research/Ready-Reference/JFK-Speeches/Remarks-of-Senator-John-F-Kennedy-at-Democratic-Dinner-Cincinnati-Ohio-October-6-1960.aspx#> (accessed October 24, 2011).

11 Herbert Matthews, “Rebel Strength Gaining in Cuba but Batista has the Upper Hand,” *The New York Times*, February 25, 1957.

12 John F. Kennedy, Speech delivered on October 6, 1960, John F. Kennedy Presidential Library and Museum, <http://www.jfklibrary.org/Research/Ready-Reference/JFK-Speeches/Remarks-of-Senator-John-F-Kennedy-at-Democratic-Dinner-Cincinnati-Ohio-October-6-1960.aspx#> (accessed October 24, 2011).

13 “Reporting on a Revolution,” *Time*, February 9, 1959, <http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,892184,00.html#ixzz1bj3kqFEV> (accessed October 24, 2011).

While the brutality of the regime was cloaked by insufficient press coverage, the United States government, with a fully staffed embassy, could not claim ignorance. Even the pro-Batista U.S. Ambassador, Arthur Gardner, would comment in a telegram to the Secretary of State on February 15, 1957, “We here now convinced [that the] recurrent killings of persons [that the] government maintains are [done by] opportunists and terrorists are actually work of police and army.”¹⁴ In June of 1957, President Eisenhower replaced Gardner with his personal friend, Earl E. T. Smith, a well-connected businessman. This was considered an odd choice inasmuch as Smith had never before held a diplomatic post and did not even speak Spanish. However, he had travelled frequently to Cuba and had business interests on the island.

It was clear that U.S. interest in Cuba stemmed from a desire to protect American investments and investors at the expense of the majority of the Cuban people. Moreover, close ties to the corrupt Batista regime fueled anti-American sentiment among members of Castro’s 26th of July Movement. Presidential candidate, John F. Kennedy, also expressed this opinion. In a campaign speech delivered at a Democratic Party dinner in October of 1960, Kennedy commented that,

In a manner certain to antagonize the Cuban people, we used the influence of our Government to advance the interests of and increase the profits of the private American companies, which dominated the island’s economy. At the beginning of 1959 United States companies owned about 40 percent of the Cuban sugar lands, almost all the cattle ranches, 90 percent of the mines and mineral concessions, 80 percent of the utilities, practically all the oil industry, and supplied two-thirds of Cuba’s imports... and perhaps most disastrous of our failures, was the decision to give stature and support to one of the bloodiest and repressive dictatorships in the long history of Latin American repression... The ineptness of our policies enabled Batista to invoke the name of the United States in support of his reign of terror.¹⁵

During the sixty-year period—from the time of the U.S. victory over Spain through the demise of the second Batista regime—the United States viewed Cuba as a profit center for American businesses. This was clearly not a bi-lateral relationship that was mutually beneficial to a majority of the Cuban people. American priorities did not include fomenting democratic institutions, developing a diversified internal Cuban economy, promoting human

¹⁴ U.S. Department of State, *Foreign Relations of the United States: 1955-1957*, Vol. VI, Doc. 289 (Washington, D.C.: 1987), 840.

¹⁵ John F. Kennedy, Speech delivered on October 6, 1960, John F. Kennedy Presidential Library and Museum, <http://www.jfklibrary.org/Research/Ready-Reference/JFK-Speeches/Remarks-of-Senator-John-F-Kennedy-at-Democratic-Dinner-Cincinnati-Ohio-October-6-1960.aspx> (accessed October 24, 2011).

rights, or encouraging a truly independent Cuba. Even as late as 1959, the U.S. Congress still determined the parameters of Cuba's sugar exports, a resource that accounted for more than two-thirds of the island's foreign exchange. Not unlike the Spanish before them, the United States' highest priority was to control Cuba as a commercial enterprise for the enrichment of Americans and American businesses. As author Morris H. Morely stated, "United States policy was not geared to any one individual or political clique, but rather to preserve the Cuban state and economic system and the American position therein."¹⁶

The United States and Guatemala – 1954

Another contribution to the argument that the United States played a central role in Cuba becoming communist—one sometimes overlooked or understated—is the U.S. intervention in Guatemala in 1954. In the 1950s, extreme anti-communist sentiments were pervasive in America. It seemed that the United States looked upon every reform-minded government as communist or communist leaning. During this era, McCarthyism and the domino theory were in full swing. The Soviets developed an atomic bomb and aggressively established a communist sphere of influence in Eastern Europe. It is with this backdrop that Guatemala elected democratic and reform-minded President Jacobo Árbenz in 1950. Seeking to improve the standard of living in this impoverished Central American country, Árbenz announced an agrarian reform program in 1952 that made land ownership more equitable. The law had a particularly significant impact on the powerful and influential American corporation, The United Fruit Company, which possessed vast land holdings and held virtual control over Guatemala's economy. According to author William Blum:

United Fruit functioned in Guatemala as a state within a state. It owned the country's telephone and telegraph facilities, administered its only important Atlantic harbor and monopolized its banana exports. A subsidiary of the company owned nearly every mile of railroad track in the country... United Fruit also had close ties to Secretary of State John Foster Dulles and CIA Director Allen Dulles, various State Department officials and congressmen, the American Ambassador to the United Nations, and others. Anne Whitman, the wife of the company's public relations director, was President Eisenhower's personal secretary. Under-secretary of State (and formerly Director of the CIA) Walter Bedell Smith was seeking an executive position with United Fruit at the same time he was helping to

16 Morris H. Morley, *Imperial State and Revolution: The United States and Cuba, 1952-1986* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 70.

plan the CIA coup. He was later named to the company's board of directors.¹⁷

When democratically elected Árbenz was sworn in as president, he stated that, "Foreign capital will always be welcome as long as it adjusts to local conditions, remains always subordinate to Guatemalan laws, cooperates with the economic development of the country, and strictly abstains from intervening in the nation's social and political life."¹⁸ Although he was a social reformer, Árbenz was not a communist. This welcoming of foreign capital by a lawfully elected president of a sovereign nation was fair and seemed to dispel any notion that Árbenz was a communist.

That assurance notwithstanding, in order to protect the commercial interests of the powerful and influential United Fruit Company, the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) was called upon to implement a coup in Guatemala. The CIA operatives quickly deposed the Árbenz government and installed a new government friendly to American interests. The new government promptly overturned the agrarian reforms put in place by Árbenz. President Eisenhower immediately extended recognition to the new regime. The operation was one of the first of its kind carried out by the CIA and provided the impetus for future CIA activities. It became the model for, and used many of the same assets as, the unsuccessful Bay of Pigs Operation in April of 1961.¹⁹

The Guatemala affair showed how brazenly the United States would use its military, its intelligence services, and its economic might to protect American businesses abroad, even if such use conflicted with democratic principles and challenged freely elected leaders of sovereign nations. It seemed that any Third World government that advocated for social reforms and improved living standards at the expense of the interloping and powerful United States could be branded as communist. Social and economic reforms somehow justified U.S. intervention.

During the covert CIA operation, Argentine physician and future Cuban revolutionary, Ernesto "Ché" Guevara, was in Guatemala supporting Árbenz. The following year, Guevara met Fidel Castro in Mexico City. The Argentine eventually became one of the three key leaders of the 1959 revolution in Cuba (along with

17 William Blum, *The CIA: A Forgotten History* (London: Zed Books Ltd., 1986), 80.

18 Stephen Schlesinger and Stephen Kinzer, *Bitter Fruit: The Untold Story of the American Coup in Guatemala* (Garden City, NY: Anchor Press and Doubleday, 1983), 52.

19 Nicholas Cullather, *Operation PBSUCCESS, The United States and Guatemala, 1952-1954*, (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Central Intelligence Agency, 1994), http://www.foia.cia.gov/docs/DOC_0000134974/DOC_0000134974.pdf (accessed October 24, 2011).

Fidel Castro and Castro's brother, Raúl). Later, Fidel Castro reflected on the impact of the U.S. intervention in Guatemala: "That made a deep impression on all the progressive forces of the hemisphere and on Latin American public opinion, because it was perceived as an interventionist action and a violation of the Guatemalan people's sovereignty. A government that had wanted to work for the people had been overthrown." Regarding Ché Guevara, Castro continued, "...these events had a great impact on him; he was in fact traumatized by what happened."²⁰

Agrarian reform and land redistribution were the cornerstones of Castro's revolution and formed the basic premise of his "Second Revolutionary Law." These laws were postulated in Fidel's well-known treatise, *History Will Absolve Me*.²¹ The coup in Guatemala deepened Castro's anti-imperialist sentiments, but, more importantly, the event solidified a deep feeling of distrust of those leaders and supporters of the 26th of July Movement that may have had American sympathies. The unmitigated U.S. intervention was unquestionably on the minds of Fidel, Raúl, and Ché, when Cuban officials later announced their own Agrarian Reform Laws (May of 1959). The enormous land holdings of the United Fruit Company and other American corporations in Cuba could only portend future conflict as Castro took over the reins of power in his country.

Fidel Castro Takes Over

As Fidel Castro's 26th of July Movement seized power on January 1, 1959, few would have predicted that this represented a significant turning point in history. The revolution began two years earlier, when eighty-two men landed on the shores of Oriente Province on December 2, 1956. After a treacherous sea voyage from Mexico, where they had planned and trained for the revolution, the invasion nearly ended in disaster. As a consequence of a shipwreck landing and initial skirmishes with Batista's forces, only twelve of the eighty-two men survived.²² Suffering the loss of trained men and most of their equipment, the rebels took refuge in the rugged Sierra Maestra Mountains of Southeastern Cuba in order to regroup. From this inauspicious beginning, Castro moved forward by exercising charismatic leadership, implementing guerilla warfare tactics, and earning the popular support of

²⁰ Fidel Castro, *Cold War: Warnings for a Unipolar World* (New York: Ocean Press, 2003), 2.

²¹ *The United States, Cuba, and the Cold War: American Failure or Communist Conspiracy?* ed. Lester D. Langley (Lexington, MA: D.C. Heath & Company, 1970), 3.

²² Sources vary on the exact number of survivors, stating numbers between twelve and twenty-two.

the peasant population. Within two years the revolution would force Batista to flee Cuba in defeat. Certainly few would have predicted that Fidel Castro would hold power in Cuba for the next fifty years, seeing eleven U.S. Presidents come and go during his tenure. However, the true significance of this turning point is that January 1, 1959, marked the beginning of the end of Cuba as a U.S. puppet state.

The revolution had achieved its initial aim. In the pre-dawn hours of January 1, 1959, Batista fled to the Dominican Republic. The 26th of July Movement unleashed extraordinary popular support as the revolutionaries gained control of the government and initiated a purge of Batista sympathizers. The Cuban Ministry of State announced the establishment of a provisional government and named Manuel Urrutia as president. Shortly thereafter U.S. Secretary of State, John Foster Dulles, made the following recommendation to President Eisenhower:

I believe that the statements of intention of the new government have been made in good faith and that it is in our national interest to recognize the provisional government of Cuba without delay. The provisional government appears free from Communist taint and there are indications that it intends to pursue friendly relations with the United States.²³

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Significantly, the Soviet Union showed no particular interest in the success of Castro's revolution. According to historian Nicola Miller, the disposition of the Soviets was more reactive than instigative. As far as the Cold War was concerned, the Soviets considered Cuba to be in the American geographical sphere of influence. There was no exchange of diplomatic recognition to the new government, and the happenings in Cuba only garnered nominal Soviet press coverage. Not until November of 1959 did the Soviets establish a permanent presence of their news organization, *TASS*, on the island.²⁴ Moreover, in his memoirs, Soviet Premier Nikita Khrushchev revealed:

At the time that Fidel Castro led his revolution to victory and entered Havana with his troops, we had no idea what political course his regime would follow. We knew that there were individual Communists participating in the movement which Castro led, but the Communist Party of Cuba had no contact with him... When Castro's men captured Havana we had to rely completely on newspaper and radio reports, from Cuba itself and from other countries, about what was happening... We had no official contacts with any of the new Cuban leaders and therefore nothing to go on but rumours.²⁵

23 U.S. Department of State, *Foreign Relations of the United States: 1958-1960*, Vol. V, Doc. 217 (Washington, D.C.: 1991), 347.

24 Nicola Miller, *Soviet Relations with Latin America: 1959-1987* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 58.

25 Miller, quoting from *Khrushchev Remembers*, trans. and ed. Strobe Talbot (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1970), 488-489.

During 1958, the 26th of July Movement united other anti-Batista groups into a coalition. Included was the Cuban Communist Party (the PSP), and it was suspected that both Raúl Castro and Ché Guevara were pro-communist. However, it is also true that by mid-summer of 1958 this broad coalition included virtually every major political force in Cuba, many of which were anti-communist. This is clearly demonstrated by the signatures on a manifesto issued by the Movement from Caracas in July of 1958. The signatures prove that virtually every major party (representing the “majority political sentiment”) had accepted Castro’s leadership. The PSP only supported the revolutionaries once it appeared that Castro and the 26th of July Movement would succeed.²⁶

The U.S. Vacillation on Batista Support

When it became apparent that Batista’s popularity had reached a low point in 1958, the United States wavered on whom to support—Batista, Castro, or another undetermined third party who was not aligned with either. President Eisenhower suspended arms shipments to Batista’s forces, recalling later, “We repeatedly seized cargoes of arms headed for Castro and in March [1958] suspended delivery of arms to Batista.”²⁷ According to Ambassador Smith, suspending arms delivery to Batista had “a devastating psychological effect on the government of Cuba—and the reverse, it gave a psychological uplift to the revolutionaries. This action was interpreted by the people of Cuba as a withdrawal of support for Batista, as in fact it was.”²⁸ In Ambassador Smith’s view there was no doubt that “the decision by the State Department to suspend the shipment of arms to Cuba was the most effective step taken by the Department of State in bringing about the downfall of Batista.”²⁹

As their former friend and ally Batista began to fall the United States sought to identify Batista’s successor—a blatant example of U.S. hubris in attempting to call the shots in Cuba. In early December of 1958, the United States sent special emissary William Pawley to bargain with Batista. According to Pawley,

I offered him an opportunity to live in Daytona Beach with his family, that his family and friends would not be molested... that the caretaker government would be men who were enemies of his, otherwise it would not work... [There was a list of] five men whom the U.S. Government had approved for the caretaker government... Batista did not accept the offer.³⁰

26 Bonsal, 19-21.

27 Dwight D. Eisenhower, *The White House Years, Waging Peace: 1956-1961* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday & Company, 1965), 520.

28 Earl E.T. Smith, *The Fourth Floor: An Account of the Castro Communist Revolution* (New York: Random House, 1962), 91.

29 Smith, 107.

30 U.S. Department of State, *Foreign Relations of the United States: 1958-1960*, Vol. V, Doc. 173 (Washington, D.C.: 1991), 281.

Fidel Castro's revolution came from below. That is to say that the "Triumph of the Revolution," a phrase Castro admirers still use today, sprang from the popular support of the Cuban people. No evidence exists to show that international communism played any role in bringing Castro to power.³¹ On January 1, 1959, Castro seemed open to many avenues for implementing his social and political reforms. In spite of and because of the long-standing and complicated attachment between the United States and Cuba, the revolution would alter the relationship between these two countries forever.

Initial U.S. Reactions to a New Cuba

Soon after Batista fled and the 26th of July Movement entered Havana, U.S. Ambassador Earl E. T. Smith "met with [his] American community committee," a group of key American and Western business leaders with interests in Cuba.³² Smith would later remark, "the U.S. was so overwhelmingly influential in Cuba that the American ambassador was the second most important man [in Cuba], sometimes even more important than the Cuban president."³³ Within a few days, Smith's group urged for the "rapid recognition [of the new government] on the basis that this government appears far better than anything they had dared hope for."³⁴ The United States had clearly intended to maintain, insofar as possible, a close and cooperative relationship with the new government.

By January 10, Ambassador Smith's resignation was requested, and after some deliberation, President Eisenhower selected Philip Bonsal as the new ambassador to Cuba. At the time, Bonsal was serving as ambassador to Bolivia, and in contrast to Smith, he was eminently qualified for the post. He had lived in Latin America for many years serving in both diplomatic and business capacities. He lived in Cuba twice and had been the desk officer for Cuba at the U.S. State Department. As would be expected, he also spoke fluent Spanish.³⁵ Bonsal arrived in Havana on February 19.

During January, the new revolutionary government began a purge of Batista's henchmen and secret police. Many were executed after brief military tribunals. By the end of March, more than 500 Cubans had been

³¹ Bonsal, 40.

³² U.S. Department of State, *Foreign Relations of the United States: 1958-1960*, Vol. V, Doc. 208 (Washington, D.C.: 1991), 334.

³³ U.S. Senate, Subcommittee to Investigate the Administration of the Internal Security Act and other internal security laws of the Committee on the Judiciary, 86th Congress, 2nd session, Washington, D.C., August 30, 1960.

³⁴ U.S. Department of State, *Foreign Relations of the United States: 1958-1960*, Vol. V, Doc. 216 (Washington, D.C.: 1991), 345.

³⁵ Bonsal, 26.

executed.³⁶ During these early periods the United States sought to understand Castro and the new government of Cuba. At the same time, Castro and other 26th of July Movement leaders attempted to transition from a victorious revolutionary army to a core group that could meld together to form a working government. Although Manuel Urrutia served as the president, Fidel Castro was named prime minister in February; it became evident that the charismatic Castro was clearly in charge. This early period was marked by many riveting and inspirational speeches from Castro, delivered to the massive crowds who adored him.

Fidel Castro was fundamentally a nationalist and a progressive reformer. He described his revolution as “humanist.”³⁷ As both an anti-imperialist and a Batista opponent, he could also be expected to be anti-American. He had good reason to be distrustful of the United States, but his personality proved enigmatic and unpredictable. As a practical matter, Cuba was still completely dependent on the United States; yet, his rhetoric fell short of appeasing the U.S. government and was frequently contradictory.

In some interviews and speeches Castro could appear friendly and nonthreatening to U.S. interests. However, speaking to a different audience on another day he could also be fiery, bellicose, and clearly anti-American. For example, when questioned by an AFP news agency interviewer on January 25 “about the new Cuban Government’s intentions regarding relations with the United States, Fidel Castro declared that ‘for the time being he did not see anything that might change the excellent relations between Cuba and the United States.’”³⁸ When later asked by the American Society of Newspaper Editors on February 28, “What is your opinion of the U.S. foreign policy towards Cuba?” Castro answered,

I am not an American citizen, I have no right to speak about the political situation. But if you ask me about Cuba, I think now it is not a bad policy. This time I think the U.S. government sent a good Ambassador [Bonsal]. Everybody says he is a good Ambassador and I feel the attitude is not against us politically. Really the official policies as I think now and observe is of friendship.³⁹

Nevertheless, in an interview on February 19, broadcasted on Cuban radio station CMQ to a Cuban audience, Castro declared, “We have been historically the victims of the powerful influence of the United States in the

36 Peter Wyden, *Bay of Pigs: The Untold Story* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1979), 27.

37 Herbert Matthews, *The Cuban Story* (New York: G. Braziller, 1961), 127-128.

38 “Public Opinion Campaign,” January 25, 1959, LANIC, University of Texas, <http://lanic.utexas.edu/project/castro/db/1959/19590125.html> (accessed October 4, 2011).

39 “Interview by U. S. Society of Editors,” February 28, 1959, LANIC, University of Texas, <http://lanic.utexas.edu/project/castro/db/1959/19590310.html> (accessed October 4, 2011).

destinies of our country. That is something that... all the leaders of our independence understood and were greatly worried about.”⁴⁰ Much of Castro’s power emanated from the Cuban people who absorbed his anti-American and anti-Batista rhetoric with alacrity. According to Bonsal, “from its earliest days, the Castro Revolution was energized by its identification with a reassertion of national independence from a real or fancied domination by the United States.”⁴¹

The new Cuban government implemented early social reforms including intervening in the management of the Cuban Telephone Company and reversing the infamous Batista/ITT rate increase. Castro’s government also decreased the cost of housing dramatically, lowering rents by 30 to 50 percent. Castro promised to hold elections at some point in the future but reasoned that elections should not be the first order of business since the revolution had enjoyed broad popular support. It would take time for the Cuban people to develop Cuban political institutions, at which time elections would be held and a new “revolutionary government” would be elected. These words did not necessarily fit neatly into the American lexicon of democratic expression, but Castro’s popularity afforded him wide latitude with the people.

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Castro Visits the United States and Economic Assistance

In April, Castro visited the United States through an invitation by the American Society of Newspaper Editors. This was not a “State visit” consistent with diplomatic protocol. In fact, President Eisenhower conveniently avoided meeting with him and delegated that honor to Vice President Richard Nixon.⁴² To coordinate the trip, Castro hired a leading American public relations firm. He proved very popular among the American public and was greeted by cheering crowds everywhere. During his lengthy stay (from April 15-26) Castro sported green fatigues and a shaggy beard. He visited liberal universities, the zoo, Yankee Stadium; he ate hot dogs and hamburgers. He showed himself to be particularly adroit at answering reporters’ questions—cool, calm, and pensive.⁴³

Castro’s entourage included his financial and economic advisors, who were generally regarded

40 “Appearance of Castro Before the Press,” February 19, 1959, LANIC, University of Texas, <http://lanic.utexas.edu/project/castro/db/1959/19590219-1> (accessed October 4, 2011).

41 Bonsal, 9.

42 Eisenhower, 523.

43 Carlos Franqui, *Family Portrait With Fidel*, ed. J.A. Sierra (New York: Random House, 1984), accessed from historyofcuba.com, <http://www.historyofcuba.com/history/franqui3.htm> (accessed October 2, 2011).

as moderates within his coterie of advisors. Despite a period of vibrant economic success during the 1950s, the corrupt Batista regime left Cuba in dire financial straits. In February, the Cuban government had appealed to the United States for economic assistance to “restore confidence and maintain the parity and free convertibility of the peso,” as well as to achieve several other economic objectives.⁴⁴ The U.S. Under Secretary of State for Economic Affairs, C. Douglas Dillon, recommended that the United States meet the request. He cited the \$800 million dollars of American private investment and the overall stability of the Cuban economy as reasons for assisting Cuba economically.⁴⁵

During the April visit, however, it became clear that while the United States could be a most willing lender, the requirements for any loans would have to be negotiated under the general performance conditions of the International Monetary Fund. Castro likely viewed the IMF stipulations as an obstruction to the revolutionary changes needed in Cuba. Additionally, the leader probably felt hesitant to sign any agreements that could make him appear acquiescent to Western influence.

While en route to the United States, Castro had instructed his advisors to not ask for aid directly again.



Figure 2. Vice-President Nixon meets with Fidel Castro during Castro’s visit to the United States in April 1959. Source: “Castro And Nixon.” Hulton Archive. Keystone.

44 U.S. Department of State, *Foreign Relations of the United States: 1958-1960*, Vol. V, Doc. 255 (Washington, D.C.: 1991), 407.

45 U.S. Department of State, *Foreign Relations of the United States: 1958-1960*, Vol. V, Doc. 255 (Washington, D.C.: 1991), 408.

In a dispatch from the Havana embassy on April 9, Deputy Ambassador Daniel Braddock advised the U.S. State Department that the embassy had been approached by “a considerable number of Cuban contacts” who opposed U.S. financial assistance to Castro.⁴⁶ Braddock characterized these contacts as Batista opponents and general supporters of the revolution. They had nevertheless cited concerns over a growing communist influence in the government and the mismanagement of government affairs. Furthermore, Braddock cautioned that granting economic aid would send an undesirable signal to other Latin American countries, considering some of Castro’s anti-American statements. The U.S. would settle on maintaining a hard line toward the issue of economic support. According to Morley, “Beyond the U.S. pressure on Cuba to seek IMF funds... it became more and more evident that no assistance would be forthcoming until the character and goals of the new revolutionary government were clearer and... the dust had settled.”⁴⁷

Castro travelled to Canada, Argentina, Uruguay, and Brazil, before returning to Cuba on May 8. While in Buenos Aires, Castro delivered a speech in which he suggested that the United States provide \$30 billion dollars in economic aid throughout Latin America over the next ten years. That same evening, Under Secretary Rubottom politely rejected the suggestion in a private meeting with Castro.⁴⁸

The Cuban Agrarian Reform Law as a Game Changer

During the first few months of the revolutionary government, Raúl Castro and Ché Guevara assumed major levels of authority. According to Bonsal, the ascendancy of these two men in particular, and the rise of communist influence in some parts of the government, concerned Castro. In a May 6 report, Bonsal expressed that “well- connected” officials informed him that there would be significant changes in top government positions when Castro returned, and that “Castro was increasingly disturbed over communist activities and Raúl’s assistance to other revolutionary groups that were planning invasions in other countries.” Bonsal cited a prediction from a reliable source that both Raúl and Ché would be assigned abroad as military attachés.⁴⁹ According to *The New York Times* reporter, Herbert Matthews, Castro had expressed that upon returning to Cuba he would “clean out all

46 U.S. Department of State, *Foreign Relations of the United States: 1958-1960*, Vol. V, Doc. 274 (Washington, D.C.: 1991), 453.

47 Morley, 80.

48 U.S. Department of State, *Foreign Relations of the United States: 1958-1960*, Vol. V, Doc. 301 (Washington, D.C.: 1991), 501.

49 U.S. Department of State, *Foreign Relations of the United States: 1958-1960*, Vol. V, Doc. 302 (Washington, D.C.: 1991), 503-504.

communists from official positions in the Cuban Government.⁵⁰ There was clearly a difference of opinion among the Cuban leadership as to the government's direction.

Cuba announced the Agrarian Reform Law on May 17, 1959. A redistribution of agrarian land was a stated fundamental goal of the revolution and should have come as no surprise to the United States. The law expropriated land holdings over certain limits, and either formed cooperatives to be managed by the newly established Institute of Agrarian Reform (INRA), or distributed land as individual holdings of 67 acres each. The reforms further stipulated that sugar plantations had to be owned by Cuban shareholders and that future land purchases could only be made by Cubans. The law provided for the compensation of landowners based on tax valuation records.⁵¹

The announcement of the Agrarian Reform Law created a turning point in American perceptions of the new Castro government. Although the law did not immediately lead to the expropriation of U.S. property, the reforms were viewed as a harbinger of possible future actions. Under Secretary of State, Robert D. Murphy, cabled the Havana embassy on June 1 expressing American concerns and suggesting that Ambassador Bonsal meet with Castro. However, his instructions also stated that the,

United States Government is not opposed to sound land reform... it recognizes the right [of] every state, in absence [of] applicable treaty provisions providing otherwise, to take property within its jurisdiction for public purposes, provided that such a taking is accompanied by payment prompt, adequate and effective compensation for property taken [sic].⁵²

U.S. Policy Begins to Shift

As early as May of 1959 the United States contemplated regime change in Cuba as it began to move away from a position of appeasement and toward that of clandestine CIA support for anti-Batista groups operating in the United States. During 1959, flights originating in the United States supplied guerilla groups operating in Cuba.⁵³ Several flights were responsible for small-scale bombings and the dropping of leaflets. Castro's anti-American rhetoric continued, and the Cuban government moved more to left.

50 U.S. Department of State, *Foreign Relations of the United States: 1958-1960*, Vol. V, Doc. 297 (Washington, D.C.: 1991), 491.

51 U.S. Department of State, *Foreign Relations of the United States: 1958-1960*, Vol. V, Doc. 306 (Washington, D.C.: 1991), 509.

52 U.S. Department of State, *Foreign Relations of the United States: 1958-1960*, Vol. V, Doc. 311 (Washington, D.C.: 1991), 515-516.

53 Jules R. Benjamin, *The United States and the Origins of the Cuban Revolution: An Empire of Liberty in an Age of National Liberation* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1990), 188.

The United States influenced its allies to follow in its lead by restricting arms sales to Cuba. Castro's government made a few purchases from Belgium and Italy, but a deal with Britain for fighter jets was abruptly cancelled due to U.S. pressure. Cuba was left only with the option of purchasing arms from the Soviet bloc nations, who were more than willing to do business with them. The acquisition of military equipment was deemed necessary to rebuild the depleted armed forces, as Castro had suspected that eventually the United States would find a pretext to invade Cuba. The revolutionary government witnessed what happened in Guatemala in 1954 and concluded correctly that something similar would eventually occur in Cuba.⁵⁴

During the first few months of 1959, the United States sought to understand Fidel Castro and the new Cuban government with guarded optimism. After the announcement of the Agrarian Reform Act, much of American attention shifted toward protecting American assets from expropriation and imposing economic sanctions, specifically on the U.S. importation of Cuban sugar. In 1959, total sugar exports comprised approximately 75 to 80 percent of Cuba's foreign exchange, and the U.S. purchased close to 50 percent of Cuba's sugar exports.⁵⁵ In spite of the growing tensions between Cuba and the United States, feelings were mixed among U.S. policy makers and businessmen regarding the economic sanctions. Some felt that reducing or eliminating the quantity of Cuban sugar imports (the "sugar quota") would deal a crushing blow to an already teetering Cuban economy and would also adversely affect the American companies involved in the sugar trade. Others felt that such a stinging blow would accelerate growing internal opposition to Castro and precipitate a change in the government. Since the sugar quota was reevaluated every two years, policy makers decided to take a wait-and-see approach before making any changes.

However, as the year progressed and the Cuban government moved closer toward social reforms at the expense of American businesses and the Cuban elite, the U.S. began to secretly plan Castro's demise. On November 5, 1959, President Eisenhower initialed a secret memo proposed by Secretary of State, Christian Herter, indicating a major change in U.S. policy toward Cuba. Herter's memo stated that the United States would now:

⁵⁴ Morley, 122.

⁵⁵ Peter Buzzanell, "Cuba's sugar industry- facing a new world order," March 1992, Economic Research Service Report, U.S. Department of Agriculture, http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_m3796/ is_1992_March/ai_12092446/?tag=content;col1 (accessed December 1, 2011).

Encourage within Cuba and elsewhere in Latin America opposition to the extremist and anti-American course of the Castro regime... [Castro] has veered towards a “neutralist” anti-American foreign policy... In view of the special sensitivity of Latin America to United States “intervention,” I would propose that the existence and substance of this current policy statement be held on a very strict “need-to-know” basis.⁵⁶

Consequently, by December of 1959, the CIA formed a task force headed by Richard M. Bissell, the CIA’s “number two” man. The task force included anti-Castro Cubans, who were already devising a plan to replace Castro, and other covert actors. Many of the participants in the operation were veterans of the 1954 operation in Guatemala. President Eisenhower formally approved the “Program of Covert Action against the Castro Regime” on March 16, 1960, and significant resources were subsequently committed to its implementation. This plan ultimately evolved into the Bay of Pigs invasion of April 1961.⁵⁷

In February of 1960, the Soviet Union and Cuba signed the first major trade agreement between the two countries. The Soviets agreed to “supply Cuba with crude oil and petroleum products as well as wheat, fertilizer, iron, and some machinery; purchase five million tons of sugar over a five-year period; and provide \$100 million credit at 2.5 percent interest.”⁵⁸ The Soviets undoubtedly viewed the deal as a chance to challenge the United States; and for their part, the government of Cuba was finally able to shed the yoke of U.S. hegemony over their economy.

By the summer of 1960, tensions heated up. The United States initiated several covert measures including consolidating several anti-Castro groups operating within the United States. In response to Cuban nationalization of American property (Texaco, Shell, and Esso oil refineries and the United Fruit Company) and Soviet-Cuban negotiations regarding a mutual security treaty, the United States cancelled Cuban sugar imports for the balance of the year, beginning in July. The cancellation of the sugar quota probably ruined any chance of a return to normalcy in U.S.-Cuban relations. Within two days, the Soviet Union agreed to buy all of the sugar intended for U.S. markets for the remainder of the year.

Cuba had now become a pawn in the Cold War. The embarrassing failure of the Bay of Pigs Operation in

56 Dwight D. Eisenhower, Presidential Library, White House Office, *Office of the Staff Secretary: Records of Paul T. Carroll, Andrew J. Goodpaster, L. Arthur Minnich, and Christopher H. Russell, 1952-61*, International Series, Box 4, folder “Cuba (1)”

57 U.S. Department of State, *Foreign Relations of the United States: 1958-1960*, Vol. V, Doc. 481 (Washington, D.C.: 1991), 850.

58 Jane Franklin, *The United States and Cuba: A Chronological History* (New York: Ocean Press, 1997), 25.

April of 1961 proved that defensive military preparations against a U.S. invasion had been warranted. The defeat of the United States at the Bay of Pigs had the dual effect of enhancing Castro's stature within Latin America and Third World countries and of escalating the Soviet-Cuba military relationship.

Conclusion

Fidel Castro first sought to eliminate the repressive and corrupt Batista government and to replace its excesses with social reforms that would benefit impoverished and disenfranchised Cuban people. In the first year of the revolution, many Cubans emigrated, principally to the United States. Those who profited under Batista or the influence of the United States could understandably be uncomfortable with the social reforms Castro represented. Moreover, some who supported the revolution initially, became disenchanted with the direction the new government was taking and left the country. According to one account, during the first year of the revolution, “of the twenty- one ministers that were appointed in January, twelve had resigned or been ousted by the end of the year.”⁵⁹ Despite occurrences such as these, Castro remained popular with the great majority of the Cuban people.

On January 1, 1959, Cuba was ill equipped to meet the immediate need for self-governance that the revolution created. Sixty years of U.S. domination had rendered Cuba more similar to a colony than a sovereign nation. Cuba had not developed independence in economic, foreign, or even domestic affairs. Furthermore, the American record of military intervention in Latin America and American support of corrupt dictatorships like that of Batista, had exposed the United States as a hypocritical enemy of good government and broad-based social reforms. After the revolution, the failure of the United States to recognize and accept the inevitable social changes that Castro would bring about impaired the likelihood of a U.S. alliance with a nationalist Cuba. Instead, the United States pursued an aggressive line by holding back on loans, broadening the arms embargo, and cancelling sugar purchases—all of which the Soviet bloc capitalized on. Finally, the Bay of Pigs invasion made Castro appear prophetic and cemented the Cuban-Soviet relationship. ◆◆◆

59 Leslie Bethell, *Cuba: A Short History* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 105.

CHILDREN ON THE MOVE: PARALLELS OF BRITISH AND KINDERTRANSPORT CHILDREN DURING WORLD WAR II

Beth Hunter

At the onset of World War II, millions of British youth set out on an unforgettable journey. With little in their possession other than a small suitcase in hand, a numbered luggage tag worn around their necks, and individually-boxed gas masks, these children only knew that their parents wanted them to be safe. They were to be housed (billeted) in the British countryside or, with a few exceptions, sent to America and the British dominions. However, they were not alone on this journey. In December 1938, during the brief period of British appeasement before the outbreak of the Second World War, the Chamberlain-led government signed a humanitarian agreement that facilitated the emigration of approximately 10,000 children from Germany, Czechoslovakia, Austria, and Poland. The emigration program was called the *Kindertransport*. While distinguishable differences occurred in both the British and *Kindertransport* evacuation plans, the goal of each was to move children to safety. While several programs were enacted to persuade British families to evacuate their children to safer places, no persuasion was necessary for the Jewish evacuees and their parents because evacuation was viewed as a matter of survival rather than safety. As the evacuation programs came to a close, distinct differences became evident between the two groups, as most of the British children had family waiting for their return. Conversely, a number of the *Kindertransport* children (*Kinders*) were orphaned. Yet, though from different points of origin and under highly differing circumstances, both sets of children shared similar experiences: they trekked side-by-side into unfamiliar surroundings, learning about the world as the world spun into war. An analysis of recollections in a variety of media help piece together a historical narrative which highlights the parallels of both groups.

As tensions grew in Nazi-aligned areas, many Jewish families with contacts and money escaped before *Kristallnacht*. For families without these means, workhouses and camps became their new homes. When the opportunity arose for Jewish children to evacuate to Britain, parents eagerly stood in lines to start the process for their children. The parents knew this would break the family apart, just as British families were separated by their evacuations. Jewish parents, however, were uncertain if or when their family would be reunited.

After *Kristallnacht* and a series of pogroms, Jewish children became very aware of impending dangers

to their families. Jewish orphanages had been purposely burned, leaving thousands of children without a home.¹ Many Jewish children had already moved several times before the *Kindertransport* as thousands had been marched to camps and a number left homeless. Germans took over Jewish property, including homes. *Kindertransport* participant, Kurt Fuchel of The Kindertransport Association, remembered how an elegant blond lady named Frau Januba appeared on the family doorstep. She handed Fuchel's mother a piece of paper he remembered as having a "silly twisted cross and several stamps with pictures of a big bird, an eagle I think." Januba declared the Fuchel home her new property and threatened to send the family to a concentration camp.²

Europe experienced a state of flux in the mid- to late-1930s. Britain declared war on Germany in September 1939. Having experienced the bombings of the First World War, the British government was confident that, given the increase in military technology and Germany's massive rearmament, the inevitable new war would cause an even greater toll on the people and landscape of Britain. The population density of the island country's six largest cities led policy makers to believe that those areas would most likely be targeted once bombing commenced.³

The Nazis invaded Poland on September 1, 1939. Political tensions had been rising for some time in Eastern Europe—even the children knew it. Despite British families not discussing the war situation, countless testimonies from child survivors stated they could read their parents' faces and realized something bad might happen. In the words of one child, "...my hat and coat and my brother's suit came out of the pawn shop and we knew something was up."⁴ Some children had hoped there would be a war, as it seemed exciting. One child had even more reason to want the war to begin: "I remember hoping that war would be declared so that I wouldn't have to go to get my teeth cleaned."⁵ At the idea of war, another child recounted: "The dreadful unknown war had just begun. I was desperate. I went out into the street, in search of comfort. I found nothing but the fear on people's faces. Later, I sat alone on the stairs. What did it mean? What would happen to us?" The children's fears

1 "Jack's Kindertransport Story," BBC, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/ww2peopleswar/stories/11/a3455011.shtml> (accessed December 1, 2011).

2 Kurt Fuchel, "Voices of the Kinder, Vienna, 1938: A Child's View," The Kindertransport Association, http://www.kindertransport.org/voices/fuchel_vienna.htm (accessed December 1, 2011).

3 Juliet Gardiner, *The Children's War: The Second World War through the eyes of the children of Britain* (London: Piatkus Books Ltd., 2005), 8.

4 Ben Wicks, *No Time to Wave Goodbye* (London: Bloomsbury Publishing Limited, 1988), 28.

5 *Ibid.*

were similar, even across socio-economic class levels. Each child attempted to deal with the looming question of war in his or her own way, often with some explanation from a parent, but regularly through a variety of media. Unspoken messages, similar to an additional sense perhaps, were picked up in a way that perhaps only children can perceive.⁶

A sobering jolt of news appeared daily in radio broadcasts and newspapers. It was inescapable. Journalists and politicians attempted to determine strategic targets and paths of resistance to impending air strikes. A large populace (individuals and families) began leaving centralized cities, eager to move to less dangerous areas. From September 1940 to June 1941, approximately “3,500,000 people had moved from the areas that were felt more likely to be the targets of German bombs.”⁷ As the Nazis began their Blitzkriegs over England, there were series of safe zones put in place, with the underground tunnels being the largest such zoned structures. On behalf of the urban population, the British government made a grand gesture by providing the city dwellers with truckloads of long metal pieces. These materials became Anderson shelters once the metal pieces were bent to form an

arbor. The government sent officials to inspect the structures after completion, as families were expected to take shelter under these arbors when bombings commenced.⁸

The propaganda behind these shelters delivered a powerful message to parents: Would their children be safe? Would they all fit in the shelter? More sophisticated means were also made, such as tables with hidden areas underneath for shelter. For those with the money and land to do so, underground shelters were dug. Churchman’s Cigarettes illustrated various shelter scenarios on the cards in each pack. These scenes detailed various forms of shelters and how to help one another. It was clear the nation wanted all its citizens to be equipped for the impending military actions. While



Figure 1. Anderson shelter.
Source: © Museum of London.

⁶ Robert Westall, *Children of the Blitz: Memories of Wartime Childhood* (Middlesex, England: Penguin Books, Ltd., 1987), 34.

⁷ Wicks, 32.

⁸ Westall, 81-83.

these shelters were better than going without protection completely, the government's main goal was to remove people, especially the infirm and children, from the cities to more rural areas.⁹

Unlike their British counterparts, the Jewish population in *Kindertransport* areas did not have government shelters. Their bank accounts were seized and mobility became increasingly limited. Even if leaving had been possible, the next city they encountered might have been less hospitable to their plight. In the years leading up to the *Kindertransport*, they had witnessed the rise of the Nazi Reich, Adolf Hitler assuming the position of Chancellor of Germany, and countless speeches about the social Darwinist ideas of the Nazi movement. Jewish children knew that the general population was turning against their families as boycotts of Jewish stores increased. They overheard conversations that altered their senses, alerting them to the fact that a dangerous situation was developing around them. Children became familiar with Hitler either through radio broadcasts or in person, as a Jewish evacuee named Sylvia recalled:

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A figure was standing up in the open car with his arm raised. It was Adolf Hitler. I was terrified. Ruth [sister] tried to keep me calm by squeezing my hand tightly. We felt trapped in the large crowd that gathered... 'Sieg Heil!' they shouted... raising their arms high to salute their leader... Were we expected to raise our right arm for the hated Hitler salute?

This type of situation clearly encapsulates the caught-between-two-worlds effect the children experienced. While they had been prompted to not stand out or call attention to themselves, they were unsure if their consciences would allow them to go as far as saluting Hitler. Surely they must have wondered what their parents would have thought had they saluted.¹⁰

Undoubtedly, Jewish children did not feel safe anywhere. According to an interview with "Ruth," one of the Jewish evacuees who grew up on the German-Polish border, "Whenever someone in a Nazi uniform came to the door, we were fearful." Ruth described how it was common for Hitler Youth to vandalize Jewish homes and threaten families. Ruth's mother "received an order to come to the police station... We were allowed to bring only a small bag with a few belongings. It was the last time we saw our home."¹¹

Not surprisingly, many Jewish children did not want to leave their homes and families, even as they were

9 Ibid., 20.

10 Anne L. Fox and Eva Abraham-Podietz, *Ten Thousand Children: True stories told by children who escaped the Holocaust on the Kindertransport* (West Orange, NJ: Behrman House Publishers, 1999),15.

11 Ibid., 19.

personally subjected to persecution at school. One survivor stated, “right after 1933 they [classmates] wouldn’t talk to me anymore.” The survivor recalled pressure from the Hitler Youth and racial politics, which turned her friends against her: “they suddenly changed.” Even Jewish students who had excelled in school had to begin sitting on the back row. Many Jewish children stopped attending school altogether.¹²

While both the *Kindertransport* and British evacuation were founded on an element of fear, the British children were more prepared. For months leading up to the evacuation, school children practiced safety measures, such as crouching under their desks. These routines would probably have provided little or no protection in case of a true bomb attack. With repetitive rehearsals, they became well-prepared for the next step in their eventual evacuation. The exporting of children began as an idea from local schoolteachers, who were concerned about classes being interrupted by the ongoing sirens and looming war. These teachers wanted to take their classrooms to safer parts of Britain and continue their studies. The teachers’ suggestion was a solid argument for the government-backed transportation program. Parents were notified of the arrangements and, in the weeks that followed, the children practiced evacuation maneuvers at the railroad station. Despite going through these drills, a number of parents did not want to go through with the evacuation if such a circumstance occurred.

Many schools closed immediately after the war started. Though the schools slowly reopened, air raid shelters were erected next to schools for the safety of the children. Some schools relocated near large, sturdy buildings so that shelter could be found nearby. Despite this, several schools were hit in the ensuing weeks.¹³ In the words of one British school child, “It was weeks before the start of the war when we were told to bring out gas-masks and some belongings with us to school the next day. When we got to school they attached a label to each of us and then lined us up and off we went down the street to the local railway station. We then turned around and went back to the school.”¹⁴

In most cases, teachers were the chaperones on the transports. A heavy propaganda campaign attempted to recruit women who would help coordinate the evacuation process. British women’s mutual aid societies had

12 *My Knees Were Jumping*, Melissa Hacker, director, IFC, 1996.

13 Westall, 34.

14 Wicks, 7.



Figure 2. WAC poster.
Source: © Museum of London.

been established several years prior to the war.¹⁵ Some of these women also became chaperones for the evacuated children. With this need for organization, women (such as the one depicted in the poster from the British National Service) served Britain in a civilian capacity while persuading parents to send their children to less targeted areas. For many parents, this was an extremely difficult decision. Children under the age of five were typically not accepted for the evacuation. However, a number of women with small children, pregnant women, and some elderly citizens were included in more than a few transports.

Due to the British acceptance of child refugees, *Kindertransport* children were included in every aspect of the British evacuee plan, yet Jewish children had a much different experience leading up to their evacuation. From their point of origins, both British evacuees and *Kindertransport* children wore

numbered tags strung around their necks. While both sets of children wore these tags in anticipation of their safe passage, only Jewish parents would have a similar experience with this numerical identification in the camps. British social workers chose which children were eligible for the *Kindertransport* according to those most in need, including children who came from camps, infirmed children, and teenagers.

After *Kristallnacht*, Great Britain was one of the only countries accepting refugees from Nazi-leaning areas. Most of the refugees were Jewish... and penniless. After consideration, the British government allowed these refugees to enter despite their lack of funds. The Nazis confiscated the contents of Jewish bank accounts, leaving families without currency. The British government recognized accepting these children would equate to an even more burdened economy. While British Jewish families took in children from the *Kindertransport*, there were not enough Jewish homes to house them all. Other religious denominations welcomed the Jewish evacuees

¹⁵ "Women's Voluntary Service (WVS) in World War II," BBC, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/ww2peopleswar/stories/71/a3384371.shtml> (accessed December 1, 2011).

into their homes. These children (including young teenagers) did not have a trade, and many of them had little or no knowledge of British culture. Their assimilation was uncertain, but as the government viewed the situation, it was a humanitarian necessity. Britain allowed temporary transit visas to accommodate these children and other refugees. Emotional appeals were made by both government officials and clergy to entice families to open their homes to Jewish and Christian children alike. With few exceptions, children were transported by rail and then by ferry to England.

While still in occupied territories, Nazis took advantage of the situation and searched children's luggage and clothing, ensuring no valuables crossed the border. Countless items were seized. *Kindertransport* survivors stated the organization in charge of the evacuation encouraged parents and children to remain calm at the separation. It was believed the Nazis might not go through with the plan if there were major disturbances in transferring children to British custody. Perhaps because children were told not to cry and that their parents would join them soon, the evacuation of 10,000 Jewish children carried out as planned. With much remorse, children later learned their parents would not be following them to their new location: "None of us realized this would be our final goodbye."¹⁶

Many Jewish children saw their trip to England as an adventure, believing their parents would soon follow. In what might be considered an odd twist of fate, trains were being utilized in England to transport children across the country while at the same time train lines were being laid across Europe and scheduled for the impending mass transportation of their parents. Ninety percent of the parents of the children of the *Kindertransport* were murdered.¹⁷ As highlighted in a collection of stories from *Kindertransport* participants and Holocaust survivors, a *Kinder* named Ilse explained:

I remember looking out the window and waving [at] my parents and my governess standing there and waving goodbye. And then it dawning on me much later that might be the last time I saw them. And I have this horrible memory of my governess – who was very spiritual –and she used to get her horoscope every year. Her reading my Tarot cards ...before I left and being mortified at something she saw. And this has been with me all my life. And I rationalize this to be that she saw that she would never see me again, which is what has happened. She obviously saw something terrible in the cards.¹⁸

¹⁶ *My Knees Were Jumping*.

¹⁷ *Ibid*.

¹⁸ *Ibid*.

While an older adult at the time of this interview, Isle recalled feelings of both a spiritual and worldly nature while attempting to rationalize her fate. Perhaps she felt survivor's guilt and was able to handle this by remembering the Tarot card story. In any case, it is interesting that her memory about this scene focused more on the governess than her parents. Perhaps she had a privileged background and felt a closeness with her governess.

According to various sources, including the documentary *My Knees Were Jumping*, in the years 1938 and 1939, "nearly 10,000 children were sent, without their parents, to Great Britain from Nazi Germany, Austria, Czechoslovakia and Poland. These children were rescued by the *Kindertransport* movement."¹⁹ A Jewish evacuee named Sara described her early experience in Britain: "I had no relatives or foster parents to meet me when I arrived in England, so I was taken by bus with other children to Dovercourt, a summer camp which was not intended to be lived in during the winter months. I will never forget the cold." Britain seemed ready to help but ill-prepared for the amount of resources needed to provide for these children. While it probably felt cruel to place children in such an environment, they were almost assuredly in a safer place than if they had stayed in their native countries.²⁰

By myriad historical accounts, British children seemed to welcome the *Kindertransport* refugees to their country. One girl from Surrey reported in *Children of the Blitz: Memories of Wartime Childhood* (a collection of remembrances) that, "In a bed next to me was a poor Jewish girl who had escaped from Vienna. She was very upset because she didn't know what had happened to her parents."²¹ Certainly the language barrier added to both sets of children's discomfort.

Evacuated children, as a general rule, were understandably upset by the constant uncertainty. Upon arrival at their new destinations, a large building was used to begin sorting children (British and *Kindertransport*) into their new homes. Children who did not already have arrangements with distant family members were instructed to line up to be inspected by the locals. The process of sorting the children was much like a slave auction. This was particularly advantageous for middle-class children who looked and dressed well, had proper clothing, and were used to being away from their families for some time. Lower-class British children and some of the unkempt

19 Ibid. The documentary, *My Knees Were Jumping*, was produced by the daughter of a surviving *Kinder*.

20 Fox, 78.

21 Westall, 44.

Kindertransport fared worse. Lower-class British parents seemed to have been more reluctant than middle-class parents in allowing their children to leave the London area. It did not help that the lower/working-class children presented poorly. As the socio-economic backgrounds of the children varied, so too did their personalities and presentation. Some children felt, perhaps for the first time, they were in competition with one another, in what could only be likened to some sort of twisted beauty contest: “When we arrived... we were taken to the Town Hall – where people chose which children they would look after. My sister Pat was very attractive, whereas I was rather plain. An old man noticed Pat and asked a teacher if he could take her.”²² Some children “were appallingly scruffy: some had lice, others relieved themselves in any convenient corner.”²³ In general, children either handled the situation well and learned to adjust, or they cried much of their first few months, no matter the assigned house. This was true for British evacuees and *Kindertransport* children alike.

The transition to new homes and families was often seen as an adventure: learning about people, their dialects, schools, foods, and cultures. Most of the evacuated children relocated to the English countryside. While topographically diverse, England remained a small country. Some evacuated children, even those from England,

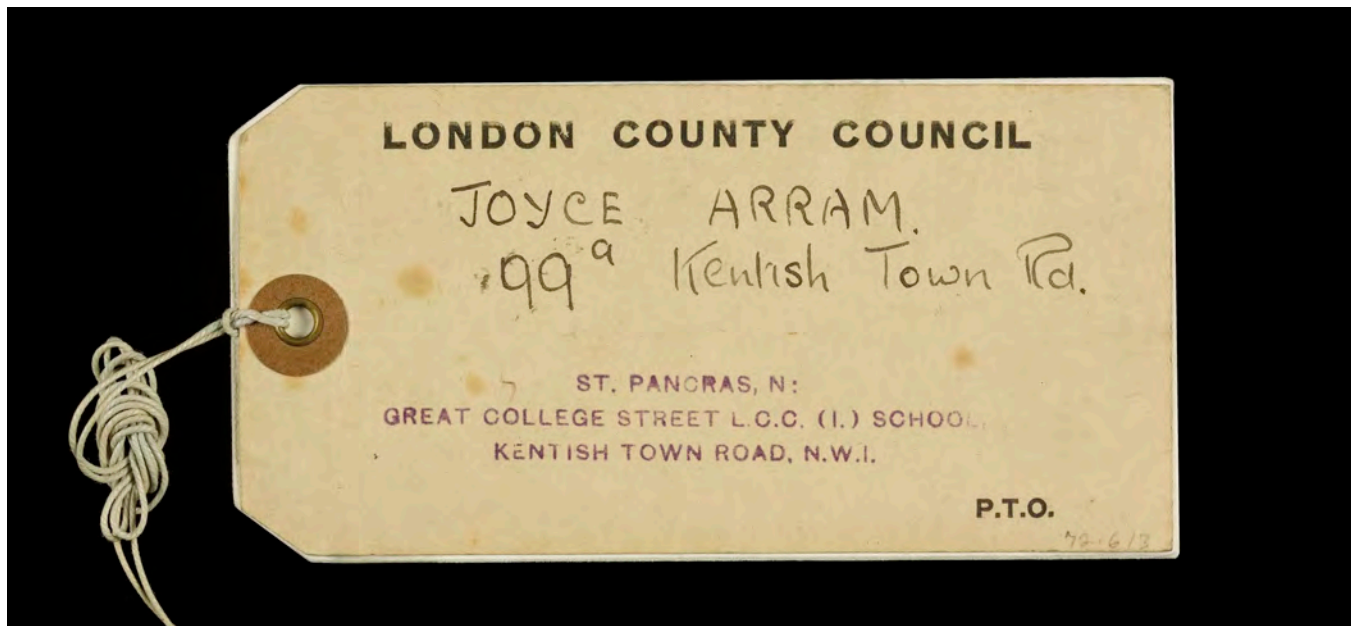


Figure 3. Name tag worn by a child evacuee. Source: © Museum of London.

²² Ibid., 46.

²³ Leonard Mosley, *The Battle of Britain* (Alexandria, VA: Time-Life Books, Inc., 1997), 102.

had never been in the presence of farm animals and felt astounded by their size and function in a family's everyday life.

In several documented cases, children from both sets of evacuees suffered abuse. One interviewee in the documentary became visibly upset when asked if she had negative experiences in the care of her hosts. The most commonly reported incidents included beatings, malnourishment, and on rare occasions, even sexual abuse. Other researched materials suggested that while these were not uncommon, the acts were also not widely known on either side as many children had no means of recourse while living with their host families.

No matter how patriotic or generous host families were, in times of war they needed financial assistance, and a number of hosts took in children they deemed presentable for work. Fit men were generally involved in a military capacity and work needed to be completed on farms and factories so potential guests in host families were routinely inspected and only the best looking and/or well-fed ones were chosen in the first round. Organizers made efforts to bring out the older evacuees first, as they were typically harder to place than impressionable young children.

There are numerous cases in which evacuated children from both groups described their successful life after the war and attributed their well-being to their time spent with their host families. However, some children were unable to come to terms with their new surroundings. While several British children returned to their families, this was never an option for *Kindertransport* children.

The living conditions varied from house to house. Some were billeted in one home and then moved to another. British children were more fortunate in this regard as numerous families had connections in which to transfer if a situation did not work out. They also had the advantage in that this was their home country. Regardless of their origin or connections, the great cost of housing these children continued throughout the war. The British government paid a small subsidy to host families. The availability of products also decreased at this time. The strain on hosts and their guests became increasingly more palpable.

The local papers were forbidden to publish certain specific activities concerning the war in Britain. However, if publications had been allowed, some Jewish evacuees might have made contact with other friends and family. It is also plausible that they would have been able to keep in touch with each other through articles

written about the Jewish evacuees and the war effort in their countries of origin. This lack of information further isolated Jewish evacuees from one another and the rest of the world.²⁴

In some ways, the *Kindertransport* and later evacuation into the country alleviated what some survivors recalled as incredible fears from their previous life. Despite being in a new area, far removed from direct Nazi oppression, Jewish children overcame language and culture barriers. Yet there were still haunting reminders. Something as simple as a doorbell ringing was usually considered a welcome noise in a household. Someone might be coming to visit or bringing a package or letter. However, one survivor vividly recalled an “enormous fear of the doorbell ringing” as she had remembered Nazi Youth entering her home and taking her family valuables, including her mother’s jewelry. She also recalled the trucks, which stopped in front of houses and took the people inside away for days. When they returned they had been beaten.²⁵

On a psychological note, one can only try to imagine the culture shock these children faced as they ran the gamut of emotions. At times they must have been constantly afraid, reminded of their abandonment; and at other times felt guilty they were alive and well. Intermingled with this were feelings of security and well-being. Because their isolation was more intense and other sociological factors played a role, it would be safe to assume that while similar, the *Kindertransport* children generally suffered greater levels of long-lasting psychological issues.

On the more pleasant side, British Jewish families were particularly welcoming toward these immigrant children. Carrying on the rituals and culture provided many Jewish evacuees a feeling of security and sense of inclusion in their new temporary families. More often than not, British families, no matter the background, felt it was their social responsibility to help those who could not care for themselves in a time of war.

For British children, they were, for the most part, hopeful they would receive small packages and letters from their parents while removed. Jewish children also wished for tokens of remembrance of their life with parents. The Jewish children’s expectations were high, and ultimately, save for a few, unmet.

As the war continued, more children evacuated to the British countryside. Increasingly, it was realized that the overall success of the children’s transport would be vital for not only children, but as a symbol of

²⁴ Westall, 153.

²⁵ *My Knees Were Jumping*.

England's survival. There was considerable fear that a Nazi invasion was imminent in Britain. The British made an effort to move children as far away from the war as possible. An organization was established called the Children's Overseas Reception Board (CORB or CORB Scheme) in June 1940 to transport children from Britain to mostly Dominion areas (i.e. Canada, South Africa and as far as Australia and New Zealand). CORB seemed to involve British children exclusively.

While many children from Britain and the *Kindertransport* had already been placed in homes and dormitories during the initial waves of evacuation, the CORB Scheme set out to place British children in private homes, occasionally with family or acquaintances. The CORB planners solicited parents to merely *temporarily* give their children exile to a friendly country while they assisted in the war effort. This act appealed to a large segment of the population, especially the wealthier families with relations abroad: "Within two weeks of the CORB scheme being announced over 200,000 applications had been made." While it was natural for parents and children to want to remain with each other, the circumstances were often severe enough to convince parents to make the difficult decision to evacuate their children. This evacuation would be a very long and dangerous journey for most of these children. It was important that parents grasped aspects of their decisions, both in distance and time. There was no turning back after the child set sail. Everyone knew that once the children left Britain, they would not be returning until the war ended, and no one could say when that would be.²⁶

As the CORB children arrived at their new home countries for the duration of the war, most governments provided their newest visitors with official welcomes at their port of arrival. New Zealand was particularly aware of the stress and emotions these children experienced in their long journey and provided several days rest and recuperation in a hostel before sending them to their host destinations. The CORB Scheme was particularly successful in the first few months: "Between 21 July and 20 September 1940, 16 voyages were made carrying 2,664 children to new lives in Canada, Australia, New Zealand and South Africa."²⁷

The CORB Scheme ended in 1944 as the war came to a close and the threat of invasion became less likely. Throughout its tenure, children were shown how to use life jackets and life boats. The intention was that

²⁶ "Children's Overseas Reception Board," The National Archives, <http://yourarchives.nationalarchives.gov.uk/index.php?title=Children> (accessed November 9, 2011).

²⁷ Ibid.

this was a formality in case anything happened to the ship. These drills were put to the test several years prior as CORB suffered a terrible loss when a ship setting sail for Canada was attacked by the German U-boat 48. The *SS City of Benares* left Liverpool on September 13, 1940, filled with almost 200 people and supplies on board. Four days later 134 passengers, including 70 CORB children were dead as a result of a torpedo. More died in the days that followed due to the weather, darkness, and place of attack in the Atlantic. As an unmarked ship carrying passengers (i.e. not a supply ship), the Germans had admittedly made a grave error. After they realized the ship they sunk carried evacuated children, the radio operator recalled thinking, “We thought what the hell has happened to do this.”²⁸

According to one survivor, Derek Bech, who was nine-years-old at the time, the scene was gruesome: “Some of the children were killed in the explosion, some were trapped in their cabins, and the rest died when the lifeboats were launched incorrectly and children were just tipped into the sea. All I can remember were the screams and cries for help.” Approximately twenty children survived the journey. As a result of this incident, British parents were reluctant to use this program for the evacuation of their children: “It was one of the worst disasters at sea concerning children, and it should always be remembered.”²⁹

This incident impacted British citizens’ morale as well. The need for victory was continually emphasized in posters, magazines and newspapers, not to mention radio messages. While many of these parents felt they were answering the call to their country, many rethought what it meant to send their children through this program. For some citizens, they used this tragedy to focus on the boundless evils of the Germans. Yet other parents felt it might be safer if their children were at home with them. By January 8, 1940, in all programs of evacuation, “734,883 children evacuated since the start of the war, [and only] 316,192 had returned to their homes.”³⁰

As the war ended, the British public rejoiced and welcomed their children home from around the globe. The Red Cross tried to match children with names on their lists to reunite both sets of evacuated children with the next closest kin.³¹ The *Kindertransport* children were not as fortunate to have homes to which they could return. Most of the Jewish evacuees had lost their parents during the war.

28 “Children of the Doomed Voyage,” BBC, http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/programmes/timewatch/diary_codv_01.shtml (accessed September 7, 2011).

29 *Liverpool Blitz 70*, <http://www.liverpoolblitz70.co.uk/page/4/> (accessed September 9, 2011).

30 Hal Buell, *World War II: A Complete Photographic History* (New York: Black Dog & Leventhal Publishers, Inc., 2002), 19.

31 Fox, 108.

As these children grew into adulthood, they scoffed at being called Holocaust survivors as they felt as though they should not truly be called survivors of the Holocaust as “nothing really happened to us...” The same speaker also admitted that “a lot did happen to us,” even though it was not in the form of Nazi persecution or living in a concentration camp.³²

A common thread at *Kindertransport* reunions is that many of the *Kinder*'s children—the second generation who had not experienced World War II—have recurring nightmares about their parents, particularly that they will be taken away from them. These range from stories of Hitler scaling their apartment building to either abduct them or their parent to fearing something—anything—might happen to their parents. Some of this might be explained in that their parents probably did tell their children a version of what happened to them as a child, which directly related to their own childhood fears. One child of a *Kindertransport* and evacuation survivor said she constantly worried something might happen to her mother, which developed into a close bond with her mother throughout their lives. This was a unique experience and one that was not transferred in the British evacuee's children.³³

In a documentary interview, a *Kindertransport* man, then elderly, was asked if he would send his children on a *Kindertransport* if similar conditions had risen when his children were small. He responded that he would not want to send them away. Perhaps his reaction was due to the fact that he had grown so close to his children as a result of his own disassociated childhood.

In some part, the children were both soldiers as well as victims of World War II. Equipped and ready to travel to unknown lands – they were fighting for survival. However, the experiences the British and *Kindertransport* children faced were dissimilar, despite participating in many of the same activities and living in the same towns. This was, at times, cruel to the Jewish evacuees as British children often received postcards, letters and small packages from their relatives. Jewish evacuees held fast to the hope their relatives were still living. Both groups enjoyed their new environment and learned much about their new surroundings and each other. Both groups noted abuses from their hosts, and it remains unclear whether or not one group suffered more abuse than the other. The British children had a sense of security in their families and government whereas the

³² *My Knees Were Jumping*.

³³ *Ibid*.

Jewish evacuees were an island to themselves. They were burdened by having little knowledge of their host country, language, food, and daily practices. Once accustomed, though, they fit in well. It might be assumed that some of the Jewish evacuees felt a responsibility to assimilate quicker, so as to assure their place in a country willing to take them in, even on a temporary basis. Both groups had the unmistakable advantage of youth and the hope for a new beginning. ◆◆◆

“I AM CAIN AND ABEL”: THE CINEMA OF ANDRZEJ WAJDA AND THE PRACTICE OF PREFERENCE FALSIFICATION

T. Gerald Archer

All art is propaganda. It is universally and inescapably propaganda; sometimes unconsciously, but often deliberately, propaganda. – Upton Sinclair

For art to truly be art, an artist must have freedom of expression. Artists express their innermost thoughts and emotions through their creations, and these thoughts and emotions are conveyed to those who encounter his or her art. All art is in some way considered propaganda. It is, basically, information that is presented to influence an audience. Sometimes those in a position of power use art to advance their own agendas, attempting to control the art and therefore the artist. Vladimir Lenin stated, “Of all the arts, for us cinema is the most important.”¹ He understood that the combination of sound and visual images was the most effective, of all the arts, to the dissemination of propaganda.

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For a totalitarian regime to maintain power it must control the thoughts of its subjects; when illegitimate rule is forced upon them, the people must be convinced that they had desired this imperative all along. The slightest flicker of rebellion must be snuffed out quickly. Propaganda serves as the chief tool used to influence people to have positive thoughts about their government. If an artist’s work is suppressed it becomes a lifeless shell and does not reflect the artist’s true thoughts and feelings. In a society where the power structure exercises strong censorship of the arts, artists are faced with a dilemma. They can either practice self-censorship in order to please those who control access to the arts, or they can stand by the principle of freedom of expression but have their work buried under a sea of bureaucracy. By submitting to control, the artist accepts living a double life. They produce art that may, in some way, influence the viewer to accept the ideology of the power structure, while also concealing their own internal desires. The inner conflict of the oppressed artist is captured best by a sign found hanging on the altar of an East German church after the fall of the Berlin Wall. The sign read, “I am Cain and Abel.” The sign encapsulates the idea that a person can be both the sinner and the saint; the one who pleases the power structure and the one, who by interpreting the rules differently, is rejected. It is a conflict now termed

¹ Richard Taylor, *Film Propaganda: Soviet Russia and Nazi Germany* (London: Croom Helm, 1979), 15.

“preference falsification.”² This concept is exemplified in the life and work of Polish film director, Andrzej Wajda.

Andrzej Wajda, one of the founders of the Polish Film School, has had a career spanning some of the most turbulent periods in Polish history. At the end of World War II, Poland shook off its yoke of Nazi oppression only to become dominated by the Soviet Union. Like many artists under the oppressive Soviet regime, Wajda made choices in regard to the content of his films. Wajda’s work reflected key events in Polish history and the evolving political and social climate of the country. His films serve as an example of how one man’s preference falsification can fluctuate over time. His moments of boldness, along with those of other artists, helped the Polish people to voice their internal thoughts. Wajda’s film, *A Generation*, addresses the post-war period in Poland and the struggle of the Polish people to deal with exchanging one oppressor for another. Two films about the Polish labor movements of the 1970s and 1980s, *Man of Marble* and *Man of Iron*, also typify Wajda’s unique perspective. Finally, *Danton*, a film concerning the French Revolution, exemplifies the political and social issues of contemporary Poland through the guises of French history.

First, it is important to understand the meaning of the term “preference falsification.” Alexander Solzhenitsyn asked rhetorically, “What does it mean *not to lie*?” His answer was, “not saying what you don’t think.”³ Preference falsification occurs when one hides their internal beliefs, due to sociological pressures. An example would be an individual who attends the latest romantic comedy with a group of friends and afterward voices his approval of the film along with his group of friends. The individual may not have cared for the film, but if the majority of the group expresses how much they loved the film, the individual may agree that he loved it as well. The individual may have felt that the characters were under-developed, the plot had numerous holes, or he may dislike romantic comedies in general. By agreeing with the group, he is falsifying his preferences in fear of being ostracized. If he does not reveal his personal preferences, he is concealing that information from his friends and not only misleading the group as to his preferences, but also denying them information concerning aspects of the film. If he had spoken truthfully, he may have been able to persuade some members of the group to think differently about the film. He is therefore doing a disservice not only to his personal integrity, but also to the

2 Timur Kuran, *Private Truths, Public Lies: The Social Consequences of Preference Falsification* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1995), 123.

3 *Ibid.*, 119.

other members of the group by falsifying his preferences.⁴

The revolutions that swept Eastern Europe at the end of the 1980s surprised many outside observers. Many expected change to come about more slowly. Timur Kuran, author of *Private Truths, Public Lies*, asserts that preference falsification is the reason that these revolutions astonished the world. He maintains that everyone has what is called a “revolutionary threshold,” or the point at which an individual feels that the cost of remaining silent surpasses the cost of speaking their innermost thoughts. Depending on a variety of factors, revolutionary thresholds vary across a population and across time. Most individuals will not act until they feel there exists a sufficient number of others that have the same opinions. As more and more members of a population reach their threshold, a cascade effect occurs. As more individuals find the courage to express their innermost thoughts, more individuals feel safe to step forward. Denying information through preference falsification curtails the number of those reaching their revolutionary threshold and strangles the possibility of any mass social movement emerging.⁵

After World War II, the people of Poland fell under the control of the Soviet Union. This new era in Polish history ushered in Stalinism, an extremely oppressive system of government requiring the extensive use of propaganda and designed to gain hegemony over the countries of Eastern Europe. Joseph Stalin had risen to power in the early 1920s by eliminating rivals and taking drastic measures to secure his power. The leader implemented totalitarian rule over the Soviet people, and consolidated his power by attempting to exercise complete control over the thoughts and actions of all Soviet citizens. A “cult of personality” formed around him, and all media was persuaded to champion the idea of Stalin as a great, almost god-like and benevolent leader. Images of Stalin decorated most walls and criticism was not tolerated. Freedom of expression, or least the expression of views that did not reflect the policy of the state, was not allowed; to do so would result in severe social and physical consequences. The state quickly suppressed anyone expressing an individual thought.

Andrzej Wajda was born on March 6, 1926 in Suwalki, Poland. The son of a Polish cavalry officer, his family lived in various provincial posts throughout Poland. In 1939 Andrzej’s father, Jakob Wajda, was captured by the Red Army and taken to the Soviet Union. There he became a victim of the brutal execution of Polish officers in 1940 known as the Katyn Massacre. During the war, the young Wajda joined the Home Army

⁴ Ibid., 3-5.

⁵ Ibid., 247-62.

resistance group in the Nazi occupied city of Radom. For a time he functioned as a courier, as did many boys his age, until a mass arrest eliminated most of his superiors. He fled Radom to live with his uncles in Krakow, and hid there, working in a locksmith's workshop for the rest of the war. As a youth Wajda became interested in art and began to pursue his interest in painting. In 1946 he initiated his studies at the Krakow Academy of Fine Arts. Despite winning awards at the academy, Wajda felt that he did not have the talent to be an artist and left the school in 1949. However, a continuing interest in art and several helpful introductions to a few filmmakers while at the academy later led him to enroll in the new Łódź Film School in July 1949.⁶

The Łódź Film School was founded on March 8, 1948, and quickly became the most notable school for young filmmakers in Poland. The institution had been created to promote socialist ideals under the sponsorship of the nationalized Polish film company, Film Polski, funded by the Ministry of Culture and Art. Most of the students, including Wajda, found the school too rigid in its instruction and believed the structure of socialist realism to be too confining. Although the pupils learned a great deal about the technical aspects of film, many desired a more creative vision of filmmaking.⁷

The Soviet Union invented the artistic style of socialist realism in which all artistic expression strove to convey the ideals of socialism. Expressionism and abstract art were not allowed; only idealized interpretations of the socialist worker followed the basic tenants of socialist realism. All stories followed a master plot that took a humble "positive hero" and led him to accept the role of Marxism-Leninism in history.⁸ The Soviets introduced this style in literature, cinema, music, and all other forms of art. As Poland came under Soviet rule, the new communist government imposed this style on its citizen artists. Prior to Stalin's death in 1953, the socialist worker had been represented as a cog in the machine, but after Khrushchev's "thaw," there was a shift to more individualized stories.⁹

The post-Stalinist "thaw" that began after 1953 saw the loosening of the socialist realism standard. The Łódź School was the most resistant of all the schools from the dictates of the communist government, but censorship still prevented complete freedom of expression. As a result of being forced to practice preference

6 Janina Falkowska, *Andrzej Wajda: History, Politics, and Nostalgia in Polish Cinema* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2007), 11-13.

7 Ibid.

8 Katerina Clark, *The Soviet Novel: History as Ritual* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2000), 9-10.

9 Ibid., 215-16.

falsification outwardly in their day-to-day lives, the young filmmakers found that much could be hidden in metaphor, irony, and circumvention. A group of Łódź graduates, including Wajda, along with such notable directors as Andrzej Munk, Jerzy Kawalerowicz, and Stanislaw Różewicz, began making films that broke away from the previously limiting standards. Inspired by Italian neo-realism, these directors began to challenge the attempt of the new socialist state in Poland to follow the Soviet style of filmmaking. They worked to break free of the shackles that the authorities tried to place on them, and through this effort the group of young filmmakers collectively became known as “The Polish Film School.” The incorporation of “Polish Romanticism” into Wajda’s films and its associated themes of nationalism and the tragic hero earned him the title “Father of The Polish Film School.”¹⁰

A Generation

72 Andrzej Wajda happened upon the opportunity to make his first film, *A Generation*, by chance after the Polish director Aleksander Ford turned the project down.¹¹ As a staunch Stalinist in the late 1940s, Ford gained control of the national film industry and transformed Polish cinema into a tool of socialist propaganda. He headed various state-run departments seeking greater control and censorship in films and eventually oversaw the nationalization of the entire industry. At a Congress of Filmmakers in Wisla in 1949, delegates adopted socialist realism as the official style of filmmaking in Poland. In the late 1940s a political “wind of change” challenged Ford, causing him to be forced from his directorship of Film Polski in 1947. He had been accused of failing to actively promote socialist ideals in Polish film. By 1955—the year *A Generation* was released—Ford worked his way back onto the committee responsible for the approval of all scripts. He proved his dedication to socialism by making a highly praised socialist realism film, *The Youth of Chopin* (1952). Ford also served as an instructor at the state-run National Film School in Łódź. Wajda had been Ford’s apprentice and directed the film, *A Generation*, to complete his degree requirements.¹² Ford’s supervision is apparent in Wajda’s work, which possesses some of the outdated aspects of socialist realism.

Wajda’s departure from the usual socialist realism format can be seen in the film’s plot which concerns the

10 Annette Insdorf, *Double Lives, Second Chances: The Cinema of Krzysztof Kieslowski* (New York: Miramax Books, 1999), 8-10.

11 Falkowska, 36.

12 Anna Misiak, “Politically Involved Filmmaker: Aleksander Ford and Film Censorship in Poland After 1945,” *Kinema* (Fall 2003), <http://www.kinema.uwaterloo.ca/article.php?id=114&feature> (accessed April 24, 2012).

political awakening of a young man, Stach Mazur, a youth living in the slums on the outskirts of Warsaw during the Nazi occupation. The young man is poor and directionless and resorts to petty thievery. A carpenter at a local shop, Sekula, takes young Stach under his wing and helps him to gain employment at the shop. Sekula stands out from the rest of the men by seeming to be wiser and more fatherly than the others. While in the pub, he drinks ale instead of hard liquor like the rest. With alcoholism being a major problem in Poland, Sekula discourages Stach from drinking to keep the boy off this dangerous path. Sekula appears well groomed, neat, and well-dressed while most of the men have uncombed hair and wear tattered and patched clothes. Sekula is surely fitting the socialist ideal. The carpenter begins to educate Stach in the principles of socialism. He explains to the young man the concept of “surplus value,” observed by Karl Marx, in which the owner of the shop earns a substantial amount of profit while paying the workers very little.¹³ He refers to Marx as a “wise man with a beard,” conjuring up a similarity to the bearded savior Jesus Christ. While Christ would save men’s souls in the next life, Marx would save men’s lives in this one.

Like every good socialist archetype, Stach is handsome, bright, and hard working. His ideology quickly grows under Sekula’s tutelage and he becomes a leader among his peers. The transformation of Stach is not solely due to Sekula’s education. Attending a Nazi mandated Catholic school at night, Stach meets a woman named Dorota. As the young men are leaving class, Dorota begins an impromptu rally, asking for the young men to join the Communist People’s Army. Dorota is the ideal socialist woman—smart, brave, and beautiful.¹⁴ Wajda leaves the question open as to whether Stach wants to join the Army because of his principles or because he is smitten with Dorota. Regardless of the reason, Stach makes the transition from naïve boy to the mature socialist man, fulfilling the transformative ritual of socialist realism. Through the master plot of class struggle, the “positive hero” grows as a man.¹⁵

There are several ways in which the film promotes the superiority of socialism over other systems. Only the common man can be the hero of a socialist realism film. All other organizations outside of the Communist Party are seen as opposed to the plight of the working class. Despite the importance of religious and nationalistic

13 “Andrej Wajda: Ideology in *The Generation*, video interview,” Web of Stories. <http://www.webofstories.com/play/13575?o=MS> (accessed November 20, 2011).

14 Falkowska, 43.

15 Clark, 15.

organizations in Poland, socialism is portrayed as the only system capable of bringing liberation to the working classes. With the majority of the Polish people identified as Roman Catholic, they were allowed to maintain religious institutions under Soviet rule. Despite the legality of religious institutions, Wajda still presents a negative view of the Church's role in society. The only time representatives of the Church are seen is in the school where the priest is harsh and condescending toward the students. He questions the religious knowledge of one of the boys as an indication that he might not be a true Catholic and must be an atheistic communist subversive instead. The Church is clearly portrayed as not friendly to socialism, and perhaps even as being directly in conflict with the socialist ideal.

The Nazis are naturally portrayed as cruel and harsh. At the start of the film a Nazi is seen shooting a young teenager with as little pause as he would give to shooting metal cans. A later scene shows Nazis casually walking around several hanging bodies of what are obviously Polish citizens. In contrast to the unfeeling Germans, groups of Poles stand looking at the scene in horror. This interpretation of a historical event might have originated from Wajda's incorrect belief that the Germans executed his father at Katyn. Likewise, many other Poles initially believed that the Nazis had been responsible for the massacre.¹⁶ By 1955, it was clear to all that the Soviets ordered the murders of the Polish officers at Katyn. Although Wajda was devastated by his father's death, he still portrayed the communists in a positive light and chose not to show the Soviets as persons capable of as much cruelty as the Germans. Wajda's film seems to ignore the fact that the Red Army occupied parts of Poland with the Nazis.

Representatives of the Polish Home Army are not portrayed in a much more positive light than the Germans. The Home Army represented the Polish Government in exile, which operated from London. The shop owner, Berg, supports the Home Army in their fight against the Nazis, but he is not completely committed to the cause. He warns that he does not want to continue hiding weapons in his shop because it could cause problems for him with the Nazis. Berg plays both sides. He placates the Germans for the sake of his business, and this aspect of his character obviously serves as a criticism of capitalism. During an inspection by German officers, one of Berg's men behaves foolishly as he climbs on a bunk frame to show how sturdy it is made. He bounces around in

16 "Andrzej Wajda: What we knew about Soviets, video interview," Web of Stories. <http://www.webofstories.com/play/13550?o=MS> (accessed November 20, 2011).

a clown-like way and draws the laughter of the Germans. His lack of dignity, shown to amuse the Nazis, comes across as a humiliation to the Polish people in the face of the occupation. Later, when a missing pistol is traced back to Stach, a Home Army officer searches Stach's home for the firearm. The officer's behavior is cruel and harsh, not far removed from the behavior of the Nazis. The people of the area are stirred to come to the defense of Stach and his mother, threatening the Home Army men with violence. This negative portrayal of the Home Army, despite his own background, is a strong indicator that Wajda exercised preference falsification.

In the two other films of his war trilogy, *Kanal* (1956) and *Ashes and Diamonds* (1958), Wajda glorifies the heroic members of the Home Army.¹⁷ They are portrayed as brave, self-sacrificing, and willing to fight against impossible odds. He is clearly vilifying the Home Army in *A Generation* to please those above him who control the future of his career.

Although Wajda followed the basic guidelines of socialist realism, he did show signs of rebellion with *A Generation*. He went against the wishes of Bohdan Czeszko, the author of the screenplay (originally titled *Candidate Term*). Czeszko's vision included a coming-of-age story about a young man maturing with the ultimate goal of becoming a member of the Communist Party. Wajda instead made the story more personal. He directed a tale of a young man starting out as an innocent and naïve youth who, through hardship and heartbreak, grows into a seasoned and melancholy rebel fighter. Stach Mazur is a more three-dimensional character, rather than the typical one-dimensional characters of socialist realism.¹⁸

Wajda portrayed the feeling of oppression visually with the lighting and sets of the film. Most of the sets are small and have a sense of confinement. Even outdoor scenes are shot in tight streets or in between the walls that formed the boundaries of the Warsaw ghetto. Many of the scenes were filmed in underground sewers contributing even more to the sense of confinement. Shot in black and white, Wajda borrowed heavily from the *Film Noir* genre and most of the scenes are very dark, giving the film an almost nightmarish quality. Although these elements are used to convey the feeling of oppression under the Nazi occupation, the audience of 1955 Poland could easily apply the same sentiment toward the current communist regime.¹⁹

17 Falkowska, 44-64.

18 Ibid., 192-93.

19 Ewa Mazierska, "A Generation: Wajda on War," The Criterion Collection. Posted on April 25, 2005, <http://www.criterion.com/current/posts/1053-a-generation-wajda-on-war> (accessed November 20, 2011).

One of Wajda's more complex characters is Jasio Krone, who questions whether he should be involved in the People's Army, vacillating back and forth with his level of commitment. Although he is one of Stach's friends in the shop, he is reluctant to join Stach's group. Jasio professes to be part of the resistance, but is conflicted. Representing the more cerebral side of Polish society, he wears a white coat similar to the coats popular among Western intellectuals in the 1950s.²⁰ The critic Boleslaw Michalek wrote: "It is a fair guess that the inner world to which Wajda personally felt most attuned was that of Jasio Krone—edgy, troubled, bewildered, switching from one extreme to the other."²¹ He has a strong look of fear on his face as he passes the bodies of those hanged by the Nazis for their subversive actions. He seems paralyzed by this fear, and it is apparent that he does not wish to fight. When Stach later approaches him about joining the People's Army group, Jasio refuses. While he is telling Stach "No," Jasio is subconsciously wrapping a leather strap around his hand suggesting that he is imagining a noose being wrapped around his neck. However, Jasio is the first to act in irrational violence, shooting the German officer in the pub. He seems to gain a sense of bravado because he has a gun in his hand. Although he later repudiates violence and declares he is against killing, his change of heart only occurs just after a pistol is taken away from him. He is told that weapons belong to the whole group and he must share. Without the weapon the fear returns and he claims, "I am just a civilian. What can I do?" He is once again immobilized by fear.

Jasio's resolve is finally set by the pressure of Polish family honor. Strong themes of Polish nationalism run through the film. Jasio's now elderly father was a veteran of the Polish Army and talks frequently of his military exploits. When Jasio encounters a former Jewish neighbor trying to escape the Germans, he clearly agonizes over what to do, but tells the man that there is nothing he can do. The words of Jasio's father are what finally cause him to commit fully to the resistance. Just after the Jewish man leaves, his father says, "You're right. Stay out of it. You're a journeyman now, not a hero." As the father says this, he is sitting under a painting of himself as a young man in uniform. Wajda emphasizes this idea of family honor by using Jasio's face as the young face of his father in the painting. This clearly symbolizes that it is now Jasio's time to step into the uniform and fight for his family and for Poland. Contrary to most socialist realism films, Jasio joining the communist rebels is not a *fait de compli*. He takes part not out of some high socialist ideal, but out of a sense of personal honor,

20 Ibid.

21 Ibid.

nationalism, and compassion.

A Generation departs most notably from the standard socialist realism form through the various tragic endings. Sekula disappears to the Jewish ghettos, Dorota is eventually arrested and taken away to her certain death by the Nazis, and Jasio throws himself off of a winding staircase when he is cornered by the Germans. Death was not the normal ending for a socialist hero, but in a more authentic wartime environment, real socialist heroes encounter death. Stach has to watch as Dorota is taken away by the Nazis. He has fallen in love with her and wants to rescue her, but he resists knowing that it is useless and he must live to fight another day. At the end of the film, Stach sits, grieving the loss of Dorota with a tear running down his face. Wajda contrasts this sadness with the appearance of a group of youthful, bright-eyed recruits who meet Stach. They are full of energy and eager, very much like Stach was when he first began. It is a somber conclusion compared to typical socialist films that end with heroes walking off into the Marxist utopia.

Knowingly or not, Wajda illustrates the principles of preference falsification in *A Generation*, as all of the characters lead double lives.²² They have a persona that they present for the Nazi occupiers, while having a private self with ulterior motives. The Germans view most of the men in the film as being simply normal factory workers, but they are secretly rebel fighters working in opposition to Nazi rule. Even the owner of the shop, while furnishing the Germans with bunk beds, is secretly storing weapons for the Home Army. This duplicity surely resonated with the Polish audience, who by the time of the film were accustomed to not revealing their inner thoughts.

Man of Marble

As Wajda's career progressed, his status as a top Polish director, along with changes in the country's political climate, allowed him to be increasingly critical of the communist government. By the 1970s, Poland saw an economic decline leading to social unrest and criticism of the failing socialist system. Because of this dissatisfaction with the government, Wajda, and fellow director Krzysztof Zanussi, started a movement known as the "cinema of moral concern," a style that addressed the hardships of the Polish people under the communist government. His fame allowed him to reveal inner preferences that he could not express before. Despite this new

²² Ibid.

freedom, Wajda limited his voice to veiled comments within his films. To protect his career, and his art, Wajda did not openly join any dissident movements.²³ Although he started revealing some of his innermost thoughts, Wajda had not reach his revolutionary threshold yet.

In 1977 Wajda released *Man of Marble*, a film that in many ways reflected his own experiences as a director. The main character wades through the same mire of bureaucracy that Wajda encountered. Producing the film was not without difficulty. In the works since 1964, the film had to be postponed due to censorship.²⁴ Finally winning approval for *Man of Marble* required considerable maneuvering on the part of Wajda, and the finished product reflected this challenging process.

With a contemporary setting, the film chronicles a young female film student, Agnieszka, while she makes her thesis film. Told through a series of flashbacks, Agnieszka attempts to uncover the fate of a socialist worker hero, Mateusz Birkut, after his fall from grace in the early 1960s. Agnieszka, like Wajda, is interested in uncovering the truth of the past. Throughout the film, Wajda is encouraging the Polish public to question the history that has been presented to them by the communist government. In this way, he is giving others information that preference falsification would normally deny.

Wajda is highly critical of the propaganda system that produced early socialist films. He illustrates how the institutions of power exploit the humble and naïve Polish worker, who is only to be discarded when no longer needed. Included in the film are two fictional socialist realism films, *The Beginning of the Town* and *Architects of Our Happiness*. Wajda's treatment of socialist realism serves as a function of catharsis for the director.²⁵ As an admission of guilt for his contribution to these types of films, Wajda symbolically lists himself as the assistant director of *Architects of Our Happiness*.

Of all of Wajda's films, *Man of Marble* appears to be his most autobiographical, and this can be seen on two different levels. One representative of Wajda is the fictional director, Jerzy Burski, who discovers Birkut, and wants to make a documentary of him as the ideal socialist worker. From the start it is clear that Burski and the party officials are manipulating the image of Birkut and making sure that every aspect of the documentary

23 Falkowska, 21-22.

24 Ibid., 166-67.

25 John Orr, *The Cinema of Andrzej Wajda: The Art of Irony and Defiance* (London: Wallflower Press, 2003), 42-43.

they are producing is flattering to socialism. Through this aspect of the plotline, Wajda shows how images were cultivated in early socialist realism films.

When Agnieszka tracks down Burski, he is now a famous director, like Wajda. The tenacity of young Agnieszka impresses Burski, and he allows her to accompany him back to his villa. The contrast between the two filmmakers is symbolic of the difference between the younger and older versions of Wajda. Burski now lives at a level of comfort well above the average Polish citizen. He has compromised his principles to gain a high level of success in the communist system. The flashback is actually Burski's version of the story, and he readily admits to staging parts of the documentary. It is believed that Wajda saw himself as the aging Burski. He had compromised his values in the past to gain a venue for his art, paving the way for its subsequent success. Agnieszka stands in sharp contrast to Burski; instead of a large house and servants, her only possessions are the drab clothes she is wearing and a small duffle bag of belongings.²⁶

Agnieszka represents a combination of who Wajda was in 1977, as well as the filmmaker he wishes he had been. She is bold, unafraid, and passionate. Despite discouragement from her producer and from government officials, she does not surrender her vision. She engages in several arguments with her producer as he attempts to steer her in a safer direction. He insists that she should create a film about the steel mills showing how industrialization has improved communist Poland. She argues that a film about Poland in the 1950s would be more interesting to youths.

The 1950s were a turbulent time for Poland and other countries in Eastern Europe as these nations struggled to obtain more independence from the Soviet Union following Stalin's death. The General Secretary of the Polish Communist Party, Wladyslaw Gomulka, averted a Soviet armed intervention, like the one Hungary experienced in November 1956, by practicing subservience. This decade and Poland's subjection to the Soviet Union was not something the Soviets wanted the Polish people to revisit and reflect on. Considering this, Agnieszka's proposal for a film concerning the 1950s is extremely controversial.

Agnieszka searches the back rooms of the national museum for socialist realism statues from the 1950s. When she comes across a statue of the socialist hero, Birkut, she is immediately drawn to it and decides to focus

²⁶ Falkowska, 161.

her film on him. She desires to discover the truth behind what happened to Birkut. While the director Burski appears relaxed and casual, Agnieszka pursues the truth with a chain-smoking manic energy. Agnieszka's prying into such a sensitive subject causes the school to suspend her project and confiscate her equipment. The film has an abrupt ending after Agnieszka locates Birkut's son, Maciej Tomczyk, and learns that Birkut is dead.

The film concludes with Agnieszka and Tomczyk walking down the hall of the school with looks that imply an impending confrontation with school officials over her suspension. The driving force of the film is the question of what became of Birkut, but that question is left unanswered. The viewer never learns the circumstances of his death. On occasion a filmmaker will leave an open ending to their film for artistic purposes; however, the ending does not seem to be Wajda's intention. In fact, the final scenes were determined through censorship. The Script Assessment Commission removed a scene that explains that the fictional Birkut had been killed in the clashes at the Gdansk shipyards in 1970, as well as a scene of Birkut's funeral. The government allowed the film to be released to quell tensions, but the connection to the real events at the shipyards and the portrayal of the emotional funeral was more than they could allow.²⁷ It would be another four years before Wajda could reveal the missing scenes and the fate of Birkut in the sequel *Man of Iron*.

The protest that led to Birkut's death in 1970 surfaced again in the 1980s. Rising food prices and stagnating wages led to general strikes at the Lenin shipyard in 1980. As other shipyards joined in the general strikes, the movement evolved into the independent labor union known as Solidarity. Solidarity succeeded in breaking the will of the Polish government and the Polish Communist Party First Secretary, Edward Gierek. On August 31, 1980, the union and the government settled on the Gdansk Agreement, which recognized the right of Polish citizens to establish trade unions independent of Communist Party rule.²⁸ For a time the government tolerated Solidarity and those associated with the union experienced unprecedented freedom, but this was not to last. With possible Soviet military intervention looming, Polish Prime Minister, General Wojciech Jaruzelski, imposed martial law on December 13, 1981. With swift action, Jaruzelski took the Solidarity leaders off guard, and the union leaders backed down, choosing non-violence.²⁹

²⁷ Orr, 4.

²⁸ Michael Dobbs, K. S. Karol, and Dessa Trevisan, *Poland/Solidarity/Walesa* (Oxford: Pergamon Press, 1981), 48-64.

²⁹ John Lewis Gaddis, *The Cold War: A New History* (New York: Penguin Press, 2005), 221-22.

Man of Iron

Between the time of the Gdansk Agreement in August of 1980 and the beginning of martial law in December of 1981, Wajda experienced a sense of freedom that allowed him to express his inner preferences completely. On December 16, 1980, he was chosen by organizers to preside over the unveiling of the *Monument to the Fallen Shipyard Workers of 1970* at the Lenin Shipyard in Gdansk. Wajda directed the entire ceremony and incorporated many symbols of national unity. One of Wajda's leading actors, Daniel Olbrychski, recited the names of the 42 fallen workers, and as he did so, the crowd responded, "He is with us."³⁰ It was during this time of unprecedented freedom that Wajda hastily produced *Man of Iron*, the follow up to *Man of Marble*. The film continues the story of Maciej Tomczyk, the son of *Man of Marble's* Mateusz Birkut, and is recognized more for its historical importance than its quality. Disjointed and roughly edited, *Man of Iron* includes a collection of events that document the rise of Solidarity. The fictional character, Tomczyk, plays the part of the real-life leader of the trade union movement, Lech Walesa.³¹

After Solidarity rose to a position of power, the Polish government still exercised influence over most media outlets. All news flowing out of these censored sources criticized the trade unions and distorted the facts in favor of the communist government. In a bold move, Wajda was the first to deal with the subject of Solidarity. It seems that he felt an imperative to inform the public of the events that were being hidden from them.

Being well acquainted with socialist realism, Wajda incorporated many of its stylistic elements, but instead of supporting the communist establishment, he promoted the cause of Solidarity. In *A Generation*, the Soviet-backed government promoted this style because the information benefitted the communist state. Communism had been seen as the better alternative to Nazi domination or the Polish government in exile. Wajda now turned socialist realism against its creator.³² Once again the worker is the hero, but now the revolutionary government has turned on the worker and subjugated him again. Wajda's characters in *Man of Iron* are very one dimensional. Those who favor Solidarity are seen as pure while those of the communist government are seen as malicious and evil. This idea of good versus evil struck a chord with the predominantly Catholic audience. *Man of*

30 Timothy Garton Ash, *The Polish Revolution: Solidarity* (New York: Vintage Books, 1985), 102.

31 Janina Falkowska, *The Political Films of Andrzej Wajda: Dialogism in Man of Marble, Man of Iron, and Danton* (Providence, RI: Berghahn Books, 1996), 155-66.

32 Ibid., 145.

Iron has far more religious imagery than *Man of Marble*.³³

On October 16, 1978, Karol Wojtyła became Pope John Paul II, the first ever Polish pope and the first non-Italian pope since the early 16th century. His election was widely celebrated in Catholic Poland. Because of the country's deep religious roots, the Catholic Church had become identified with patriotism.³⁴ The Pope was a strong supporter of human rights and would become a dominant participant and symbol in the Solidarity movement. Shortly after his election, John Paul II made his first official visit to his home country, in June of 1979. The occasion was the nine-hundredth anniversary of the martyrdom of Saint Stanislaw. Stanislaw had been Bishop of Krakow, as had John Paul II. According to legend, Stanislaw was martyred for chastising King Boleslaw the Bold.³⁵ It was fitting that the pope would visit Poland to celebrate a saint who defied the institution of power in the country. First Secretary Gierek and his advisors recognized the potential for civil unrest that the Pope's visit posed. In an effort to curb the impact of the visit, the Communist Party issued instructions for teachers that summarized the threat they perceived:

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The pope is our enemy, because he celebrated the mass for Pyjas. [Murdered opposition group member that was probable victim of police brutality] Due to his uncommon skills and great sense of humor he is dangerous, because he charms everybody, especially journalists. Besides, he goes for cheap gestures in his relations with the crowd, for instance puts on a highlander's hat, shakes all hands, kisses children, etc. It is modeled on American presidential campaigns... He is dangerous, because he will make Saint Stanislaw the patron of the opposition to the authorities and a defender of human rights. Luckily we managed to maneuver him out of the date May 8... The visit will cause some complications in our relations with the Soviet Union, because the pope will demand the, so-called, equal rights for the believers in the countries... His visit will cause some problems, because we will have to pacify 156 oppositional activists for its duration... Because of the activation of the Church in Poland our activities designed to atheize [sic] the youth not only cannot diminish, but must intensely develop. We must strive at all cost to weaken the Church activities and undermine its authority in the society. In this respect all means are allowed and we cannot afford any sentiments.³⁶

During World War II, Stalin had shown contempt for the Catholic Church by asking, "How many divisions does the Pope have?"³⁷ Little did he know that the Church would come to play a pivotal role in ending the Soviet

33 Falkowska, *Andrzej Wajda: History, Politics, and Nostalgia in Polish Cinema*, 189.

34 Dobbs, 42.

35 Jan Kubik, *The Power of Symbols against the Symbols of Power: The Rise of Solidarity and the Fall of State Socialism in Poland* (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1994), 130-33.

36 Ibid., 134-35.

37 Denis MacShane, *Solidarity: Poland's Independent Trade Union* (Nottingham: Spokesman, 1981), 99.

domination of Poland.

The pope's visit had the effect that the communists feared. Solidarity and the Church fused together in a common human rights goal. In *Man of Iron* this partnership is symbolized in the cross Tomczyk makes to mark the sight of his father's death. The iron cross, welded together by Tomczyk in the same manner he would weld something at the shipyard, has a pointed base which he thrusts into the Polish soil in a stabbing gesture, as if to say that the combination of the Church and the workers will strike at the heart of the country.

In the film, Tomczyk and Agnieszka take on messianic qualities. Party officials seek to find evidence to slander Tomczyk, but like in the case of Christ, nothing can be found. He is pure of heart and motives, serving as one of the saviors of the Polish working class. The wedding of Maciej and Agnieszka takes on an iconic quality. Attended by the saints of Solidarity, Walesa and Walentynowicz, they both stand by giving their blessing to the mother and father of the labor movement. After Agnieszka becomes pregnant she takes on a Madonna quality. While her husband is in prison, shipyard workers bring offerings of money to the "holy mother." When Agnieszka tries to refuse they say, "It is not charity, it is a symbol of our solidarity." Wajda also incorporates numerous scenes of documentary footage of a religious nature. For instance, the film includes footage of real masses that were held during the strikes, stressing the importance of religion to the movement.

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Danton

It is possible that a person liberated from preference falsification can return to a level of falsification if his environment changes to the point that he no longer feels safe enough to reveal his beliefs. Wajda's next film, *Danton*, was released in 1983, less than two years after the imposition of martial law. Wajda's denial of a political message in *Danton* may have been a return to preference falsification on his part. He was due to return to Poland to direct a theater production and may have been concerned about his status and safety at home. Author David Sterritt states,

It's possible that *Danton* has more biting political meanings and intentions than Wajda cares to let on, fearing for his status in the Polish artistic community... or his personal well-being. 'There are moments in the history of our country when we can afford to make... a political film that one is not ashamed to put one's signature to,' [Wajda] told Marcel Ophuls, adding that, 'right now, this is not the case in Poland.'³⁸

38 Falkowska, *The Political Films of Andrzej Wajda: Dialogism in Man of Marble, Man of Iron, and Danton*, 50.

Wajda retreated to the relative safety of using a historical event in France as a metaphor for modern Poland. Despite Wajda's denial that *Danton* had anything to do with the current political climate in Poland, the public found the parallels too striking to be mere chance. The film was made in France as a joint venture between the French, West German, and Polish film industries. Its reception in France and Poland was very different. The French disliked the film because of its blatant disregard of historical fact, while Polish audiences praised it because they saw the contemporary parallels to their own lives.³⁹ Wajda departed greatly from Stanislaw Przybyszewska's original play, *The Danton Affair*, in which Robespierre was depicted in a much more favorable light.⁴⁰ *Danton* is not about the conflict between the French revolutionaries, Georges Danton and Maximilien Robespierre, but rather the conflict between Solidarity leader, Lech Walesa, and Polish Prime Minister, General Wojciech Jaruzelski.⁴¹ There are strong similarities between the character of Robespierre and the way the Polish people perceived Jaruzelski to be.

Robespierre is rigid, serious, and very private. He is devoted to the strict principles of the revolution.⁴² Even when his close friend, Camille Desmoulins, is numbered among the traitors, Robespierre pleads for him to turn against Danton but will not stop the arrest in order to save Camille. Robespierre appears to be tortured mentally and physically by his revolutionary principles. Jaruzelski is likewise stiff and rigid. Like the film's Robespierre, Jaruzelski wore a corset under his clothing.⁴³ Always dressed in his uniform, and wearing sunglasses, because of an eye ailment, Jaruzelski was seen as very reserved and serious. Although Wajda would not have known at the time, Jaruzelski was conflicted in his actions just as Robespierre had been. Jaruzelski explained in later years that the decision to impose martial law was made because a Soviet invasion was imminent. The invasion of the Red Army would have had a far greater risk of bloodshed than what occurred during martial law.⁴⁴

As in *Man of Iron*, there are poignant commentaries in *Danton* of the pitfalls of revolution. Both Georges Danton and the Bolsheviks were revolutionaries who experienced the misfortune of seeing their own revolution become corrupted and turned against them. The character Danton is symbolic of the entire working class. The

39 Falkowska, *Andrzej Wajda: History, Politics, and Nostalgia in Polish Cinema*, 202-204.

40 Paul Coates, *The Red and the White: The Cinema of People's Poland* (London: Wallflower Press, 2005), 11.

41 Falkowska, *Andrzej Wajda: History, Politics, and Nostalgia in Polish Cinema*, 200.

42 Ibid., 205.

43 Ibid., 200.

44 Jan Repa, "Profile: Poland's last communist leader," BBC News, Posted May 16, 2001, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/1332541.stm> (accessed April 24, 2012).

Bolshevik revolution was supposed to be a triumph of the worker, and should have brought about the rise of the common man. However, the bourgeoisie was quickly replaced by revolutionaries who corrupted the system into a totalitarian bureaucracy. The common man was once again put back under oppression. Danton was also a revolutionary. He had been a founding member of the Committee of Public Safety, a committee that eventually turned against him. Just as Solidarity felt that the communist system had turned on the workers who helped create it, so too did the Committee of Public Safety betray Danton. In a review of *Danton*, Ireneusz Leczek commented:

Those who start the huge machinery of a social movement become its victims, thrust out by others. Private intentions mix with social ones. Naïve activists operate alongside experienced political players yearning for power and money. All this is very close to recent Polish affairs. Consequently, my opinion is that *Danton* is much more Polish than it may seem.⁴⁵

The Bolshevik Revolution intended to offer freedom from oppression, but instead brought bondage to the very people that it claimed to liberate. The film is full of issues that paralleled Poland under communism. The film depicts French citizens standing in line for bread, just as the Polish people had to stand in line for food because of the increase of prices imposed by the government. As French soldiers escort an unidentified prisoner past the bread line, a young woman in line comments on how handsome he is. Just as in contemporary Poland, this expression of internal thought was subject to punishment, and secret informants were commonplace in Poland. The girl is overheard by a man on the street and he promptly reports her to a soldier and the woman is arrested and led away for her comments alone. She has not committed a crime, and as in Poland, she is arrested for mere suspicion of guilt.⁴⁶

Wajda comments on the state of the Polish judicial system through his portrayal of the trial of Danton. There are so many similarities it is hard to believe that the parallels were not drawn intentionally. Similar to reports of trials in Poland under the communists, Danton was not given a fair trial. The charges were fabricated by the Committee of Public Safety, and Danton's group was forced to sign depositions incriminating them. The trial by the tribunal is clearly a formality. The rules seem flexible under the Committee's oversight. The jury is shortened from twelve members to nine because only nine men could be trusted to deliver a guilty verdict. Just as the Polish judicial system functioned as an arm of the communist apparatus, the military tribunal conducting the

⁴⁵ Falkowska, *Andrzej Wajda: History, Politics, and Nostalgia in Polish Cinema*, 199.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 201.

trial functioned as the arm of the Committee.⁴⁷ This is best exemplified through Robespierre's exclamation to the trial's presiding judge, "We send you the republic's enemies! Your duty is not to judge them but to destroy them!"

A key document of the French Revolution, *The Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen*, plays an important role in *Danton*. Copies of the rights are seen throughout the film, most notably displayed on both the door to Robespierre's bed chamber and early in the film as a boy is featured memorizing the rights. While stating the tenants dealing with a citizen's inherent freedom, the boy is punished for making a mistake. This is an obvious contradiction to a person's freedom to learn or not learn about freedom. At the end of the film, the boy is brought before Robespierre to recite these rights. Lying ill in bed, his face covered by a sheet, Robespierre listens uneasily to the boy. Symbolic of the illness of communism and in light of what has just taken place on the screen, it appears that Wajda is showing that everything that the revolution represented has been sacrificed in the name of protecting the revolution. It reflected the popular belief that communism had betrayed its basic mandate in order to protect the system. Wajda ends the film after the boy recites the first four rights:

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1. Men are born and remain free and equal in rights. Social distinctions may be founded only upon the general good.
2. The aim of all political association is the preservation of the natural and imprescriptible rights of man. These rights are liberty, property, security, and resistance to oppression.
3. The principle of all sovereignty resides essentially in the nation. No body, nor individual may exercise any authority which does not proceed directly from the nation.
4. Liberty consists in the freedom to do everything which injures no one else; hence the exercise of the natural rights of each man has no limits except those which assure to the other members of the society the enjoyment of the same rights. These limits can only be determined by law.

These four seem to be the most condemning of the communist system, especially as to its lack of a pluralistic political system and the implementation of laws that are not deemed to be harmful to the general public.

Wajda expressed in an interview that he felt *Danton* illustrated, "One of the tragedies of every revolution: the point when those who bring it about are no longer in a position to determine how it develops."⁴⁸ All revolutions, he said, are threatened by two possible scenarios: a premature end and a tendency to be taken over by

47 Rhett A. Butler, "Poland-Judicial System," Mongabay.com, http://www.mongabay.com/history/poland/poland-judicial_system.html (accessed December 11, 2011).

48 Falkowska, *The Political Films of Andrzej Wajda: Dialogism in Man of Marble, Man of Iron, and Danton*, 50.

a new group. Just as Danton is doomed, he prophesizes that Robespierre will soon follow him to the guillotine. In the scenes involving the artist Jacques-Louis David, Wajda further reinforces the idea that the original leaders of the revolution eventually will lose power. As Robespierre enters David's studio to pose for a painting, the artist is seen instructing an apprentice in glazing David's painting *The Death of Marat*. Along with Danton and Robespierre, Jean-Paul Marat was considered one of the three main driving forces of the French Revolution and was the first of the three to lose his life. As Danton is being led to his execution, David is seen sketching him from a nearby window. This seems to complete the trinity of the martyrs of the revolution being committed to canvas.

In *Danton*, Wajda shows both sides of the revolutionary threshold as pertaining to preference falsification with the film's characters. One of Danton's supporters, Bourdon, is encouraged to speak up and defend Danton. Trembling, Bourdon gets up but instead of defending Danton, he condemns him. This is clearly an example of a man who is unwilling to risk the repercussions of speaking his beliefs. In contrast, when Robespierre offers Camille Desmoulins a chance to falsify his preferences and save his own life, the clearly fearful Desmoulins refuses the offer. Desmoulins reached his revolutionary threshold and would rather die than not speak his own truth.

Conclusion

Socialism in Eastern Europe proved to be unsustainable. The bureaucracy needed to sustain the communist governments and the corruption that flourished in such complexity proved to be fatal to the Soviet Union's control. By June of 1989 Solidarity convinced the Polish government to allow pluralistic elections. Of the 261 seats being contested in the parliament, Solidarity won 260. The landslide victory took everyone by surprise, even Solidarity's leaders. They feared that such a strong showing would provoke a Soviet reaction, and this anxiety suggested that even they were not prepared for the results.⁴⁹ In December of 1989 a free-market economy and democratically elected government was formed. By January of 1990, the Communist Party that held sway over Poland for almost fifty years disbanded. The people of Poland were finally able to reveal their personal preferences and their preference was a rejection of communism.

⁴⁹ Kuran, 263-64.

Although Wajda tempered his personal thoughts at times, he could also make bold films that challenged convention. Over time, the Polish people gained access to information that aided in their realization that they were not alone in their negative opinions toward their government. Wajda had achieved the one thing that would help to protect him, fame. His success insulated him from some of the harsher repercussions that befell lesser-known dissidents. He could not just disappear, or at least not disappear without a violent outcry from the public. This fame helped to lower his revolutionary threshold and gave Wajda a great deal of power to reveal his true beliefs. He had taken the totalitarian tool of propaganda and turned it against the communist rulers. In 2007 Wajda made a film, *Katyn*, which was free of any need for preference falsification. *Katyn* told the story of the massacre that had taken his father. The film is a harsh criticism of the Soviet Union and the horrendous acts Soviets had perpetrated. Throughout his career, Wajda's art sometimes pleased the Polish people with its truthfulness, while at other times he tempered his films to protect himself. His art could be benevolent because of what it revealed, or it could be harmful because of what it did not say. He was the Polish son who pleased his parents and the one who displeased them at the same time. He was Cain and Abel. ◆◆◆

THE SUCCESSES OF THE ANTI-SLAVERY FRAMERS AT THE CONVENTION OF 1787

Charles Brooks Etheredge

By 1847, the debate concerning slavery in the United States had reached a fever pitch. Though the principle argument pitted slavery's entrenched, largely Southern advocates against a growing group of abolitionists around the country, there was also internal dissent within each camp. Abolitionists disagreed about the manner in which to go about achieving such an arduous and lofty goal. William Lloyd Garrison and Fredrick Douglass, arguably the two most prominent abolitionists of the antebellum era, exemplify this debate. In 1847 Douglass, who had up to this point worked with Garrison at his fervently abolitionist newspaper, *The Liberator*, cited major differences with Garrison and made the decision to break away and form his own paper, *The North Star*. Among the primary disagreements that divided the two abolitionists was their view concerning the manner in which the United States Constitution should be interpreted with regard to slavery.

In typical, radical rhetoric, Garrison asserted that the Constitution was a “covenant with death, and an agreement with hell.”¹ On quite the other hand, Douglass believed that slavery could be abolished most effectively by working within the framework of the Constitution. This belief stemmed from the manner in which he interpreted the document itself—as anti-slavery in nature. In 1849, Douglass wrote, “On a close examination of the Constitution, I am satisfied that if strictly ‘construed according to its reading,’ it is not a proslavery instrument...”² Soon afterward, Douglass’ thinking had evolved to the point where he was proclaiming the Constitution to be, in fact, staunchly anti-slavery.³

The Douglass-Garrison disagreement provided an interesting inception for a debate that, almost 165 years later, was no more resolved than the day it began. Recent scholarship, although there are certainly some exceptions, has trended toward upholding the Garrisonian view of a pro-slavery constitution. Two of the foremost proponents of this view have been William Wiecek and Paul Finkelman. For his part, Wiecek asserted the

1 Speech by William Lloyd Garrison, July 4, 1854, to the rally sponsored by the Massachusetts Anti-Slavery Society.

2 Frederick Douglass, “The Constitution and Slavery,” in P. S. Foner, *The Life and Writings of Frederick Douglass: Early Years, 1817-1849* (New York: International Publishers, 1950), 352-353.

3 Frederick Douglass, “The Constitution of the United States: Is it Pro-Slavery and Anti-Slavery?” in Foner, *The Life and Writings of Frederick Douglass*, Vol. II, 479-487.

following:

The Constitution embodied a mediation of sectional differences that were based chiefly on slavery [and] in this mediation, the most determined parties to the bargaining, the deep-South bloc, were able to secure more for their position than the other groups because they were demanding where their opponents were tepid and ambivalent, and because they knew just what they wanted, where their opponents had no particular program concerning slavery.⁴

Likewise, Finkelman made his interpretation of a pro-slavery constitution clear, arguing that “on every issue at the convention, slaveowners...won major concessions from the rest of the nation, and [in general] they [gave] up very little to win these concessions.”⁵

Closer to Douglass’s side of the debate have been Earl Maltz and, to a certain extent, William Freehling. Maltz has argued that the Constitution is neither pro- nor anti-slavery, but a reflection of a series of true compromises in which each side made many concessions in order to obtain union.⁶ Freehling’s argument is a bit more veiled, and tends to place an additional emphasis on other founders, (such as Thomas Jefferson, who was in France serving as an ambassador when the Convention of 1787 took place) rather than exclusively focusing on those who had a direct hand in framing the 1787 Constitution.⁷

The historiography that has taken shape since Douglass and Garrison has failed to allow for the idea that the Constitution is, as Douglass said, a largely *anti*-slavery document or that the anti-slavery framers were the true winners at the convention. The claims of Garrison, Wiecek, and Finkelman are not justified or reasonable. In addition, Maltz and Freehling, though much can be gleaned from their writing as they are definitely on the right track, do not go far enough. Even Maltz and Freehling do not leave enough room for explaining what happened after the Convention of 1787, (i.e., slavery’s gradual downfall over the next 78 years) which undoubtedly was due to the great successes of the anti-slavery framers at the convention. Maltz and Freehling could do more to acknowledge the possibility that the anti-slavery framers purposefully and deliberately took strides to ensure

4 William Wiecek, “Sources of Antislavery Constitutionalism,” as quoted in Maltz, “The Idea of the Proslavery Constitution,” *Journal of the Early Republic* 17, no. 1 (Spring 1997): 38.

5 Paul Finkelman, “Making a Covenant with Death,” as quoted in Maltz, “The Idea of the Proslavery Constitution,” *Journal of the Early Republic* 17, no. 1 (Spring 1997): 38.

6 Earl Maltz, “The Idea of the Proslavery Constitution,” *Journal of the Early Republic* 17, no. 1 (Spring 1997): 38.

7 William Freehling, “The Founding Fathers and Slavery,” *The American Historical Review* 77, no. 1 (Feb. 1972): 81-93.

slavery's eventual demise.

Scholars must at least leave open the possibility that the framers of the Constitution did more than has previously been thought to eliminate slavery and that, throughout the summer of 1787, the anti-slavery framers took calculated steps to ensure that slavery could not and would not endure for long. The simple fact is that the anti-slavery framers outmaneuvered, outsmarted, and showed much better foresight in their compromises than did the pro-slavery framers (who admittedly had the disadvantage of simply being outnumbered). The Constitution of 1787, when properly examined in its own context and not our own, should be read as decidedly anti-slavery.

This argument is predicated upon four primary ideas, each dealing with a different part of the Constitution's wording that affects (either directly or indirectly) the issue of slavery. First, the Three-Fifths Compromise must be examined. This clause is greatly misunderstood today, and is not a victory for the pro-slavery framers, but a crushing defeat. Second, the incredible ability of the anti-slavery framers to convince their pro-slavery counterparts to actually sign and approve the Constitution of 1787 (putting an effective end to their very livelihood and ensuring the eternal demise of the institution of slavery) should be viewed by historians as a remarkable victory for the anti-slavery cause. Setting into motion a process by which the international slave trade would be eliminated a mere twenty years following the convention is perhaps the single greatest victory of the anti-slavery framers. Third, one must acknowledge that the further one moves away from 1787, the more difficult it will be to ascertain the true, original intentions of the framers of the Constitution. It stands to reason then that those closer to the Constitution's framing stand a much better chance at accurately discerning the intentions of its framers. Therefore, an additional viewpoint can be provided by examining the commentary of the pro-slavery, anti-federalists throughout the ratification debates, which followed the 1787 Convention. Last, the idea that the pro-slavery framers won a major concession with the inclusion of Congress's ability to raise an army to suppress insurrections is untrue. Finkelman proposed that the pro-slavery framers achieved their purpose throughout the majority of the convention, while conceding little. However, utilizing existing historiography in new ways can prove that historians must leave open the possibility that much of slavery's demise is, in fact, owed to a proverbial "lighting of the fuse" by the anti-slavery framers of the 1787 Constitution.

The Three-Fifths Compromise, Re-examined

One of the most misunderstood and misinterpreted phrases of the Constitution holds that, “Representatives and direct Taxes shall be apportioned among the several States which may be included within this Union, according to their respective Numbers, which shall be determined by adding to the whole Number of free Persons, including those bound to Service for a Term of Years, and excluding Indians not taxed, *three fifths of all other Persons* [emphasis added].”⁸

The three-fifths clause is not in any way meant to be a representation of the perceived “worth” of slaves as a whole. The phrase did not apply to freedmen or Northern blacks, many of whom were fully counted for matters of representation. Many Southerners wanted to exclude slaves altogether for taxation purposes, but include them fully for matters of representation. Therefore, how slaves were “counted” in any scenario has absolutely nothing to do with measuring their worth. Rather, sometimes it was politically expedient to regard slaves as full and whole people whereas other times the pro-slavery delegates would have preferred them relegated to “property” status. The Three-Fifths Compromise, it could be argued, has very little to do with race at all (aside from the obvious fact that there were many black slaves in the South). After all, can one reasonably deduce that Northern blacks (or freed, Southern blacks for that matter) were viewed as having the full worth of a white man? Was it the *geographical* nature of the Southern black that made the delegates decide that he was worth only 60% of the average white man? Surely not.

To make such an assumption (as New York Congressman Charlie Rangel recently did by saying, “I wasn’t even three-fifths of a guy!”⁹) shows a gross misunderstanding of the purpose and the overall intent of the three-fifths clause. If the clause had proposed any kind of measure of human worth, the pro-slavery delegates would have been fighting for less representation for slaves, probably attempting to relegate them to “property” status in all matters. In actuality, the Three-Fifths Compromise greatly reduced the potential power of the slaveholding states by denying them representation in the lower house of Congress and the Electoral College. Therefore, the idea that the clause is somehow antithetical to the revolutionary ideal of all mankind being created equal is wholly

⁸ The United States Constitution. Article 1, Section 2, Paragraph 3.

⁹ Interview with Congressman Charlie Rangel by John Stossel. The Fox Business Channel. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7UCneyfeJcE> (accessed October 14, 2011).

untrue. If anything, by diminishing the representative power of the slaveholding states, the framers placed their new country on the path to greater equality.

Had the anti-slavery framers taken a hard line and denied the slave states *any* representative numbers for slave populations, (as Elbridge Gerry, a Massachusetts delegate had proposed) the Constitution would not have been ratified, leaving the hope for the new Union forever dashed.¹⁰ South Carolina, Georgia, and Delaware were each in favor of counting slaves equally as members of a state's population for the purposes of tabulating any representation that was to use population as its basis, rather than setting a fixed number. The clearest examples of this were to be the House of Representatives and the Electoral College. The rightful top priority of the framers was to escape from the Philadelphia statehouse as one, unified nation. This issue could have been the convention's ultimate deal breaker, and it could have spelled a massive victory for the pro-slavery forces. Charles Pinckney of South Carolina proposed a three-fifths plan for representation upon arrival in Philadelphia, perhaps realizing that one-for-one representation might be unattainable.¹¹

With the necessity of unity firmly cemented in all of the framer's minds regardless of their views on slavery, the Southern states could have demanded equal representation for all members of their population, and their demands might have been met. If they had stood their ground, threatened to leave, and refused to ratify the new Constitution (which was suspect enough, as the convention had only been called to revise the Articles of Confederation), who can say what the outcome might have been? The bottom line is that the true populations of the Southern states were not represented as heartily as the true populations of the Northern states. Forty percent of slaves were not to be counted into representation-based figures. The Southern states walked into the convention perhaps expecting to boast full representation of slaves and walked out with forty percent less. This simply was not the clear-cut victory for the Southern states that most modern historian make it out to be. The slave state interests were to remain a minority in both the House of Representatives and the Electoral College.

Detractors might argue that such a protection for non-slave state interests was not enough to ward off the massive economic interests of slaveholders in the long-term. After all, with the slave trade still legal, the South

¹⁰ Max Farrand, *The Records of the Federal Convention of 1787*, Vol. I (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1966), 201.

¹¹ Howard A. Ohline, "Republicanism and Slavery: Origins of the Three-Fifths Clause in the United States Constitution," *The William and Mary Quarterly*, 28, no. 4 (Oct. 1971): 563-584.

could pad their numbers through the importation of hundreds of thousands of new slaves, earning themselves a majority of representatives at some point in the future. This argument is largely invalid. The anti-slavery founders at the convention were well aware of that possibility, so they ensured the South would only be able to import a finite number of slaves in the future – twenty years worth, to be exact. To sweeten the deal even more, the anti-slavery delegates provided themselves with this protection by convincing the Southerners to agree to their potential worst nightmare – federal regulation of international trade (i.e., the slave trade). This is especially important in light of research by Robert McGuire and Robert Ohsfeldt, which “suggests [that] delegates who owned slaves or represented slaveowning constituents were more likely to oppose issues favoring a national form of government.”¹² These findings only further exemplify the extreme difficulties facing the anti-slavery framers upon their arrival in Philadelphia.

94 The eighteen slaveowners present at the convention owned an average of over 95 slaves each, with five owning an excess of 100 persons. Unless other issues were to divide them, the Southerners, who had incredible leverage by virtue of their already prevalent trepidation to central government, had the potential for a mighty coalition. McGuire and Ohsfeldt further assert that slaveowners had an inherent fear of *any* government comprised of a Northern majority.¹³ The fact that the anti-slavery framers achieved union at all, much less that they effectively struck a deathblow to slavery in the process, is all the more impressive when considering this research.

As Maltz clearly illustrates, the Senate, elected through equal representation, would ultimately work to prolong slavery by becoming the ultimate “guardian of southern interests.” Though the respective Congressional houses’ eventual actions cannot reasonably be expected to reflect the original intent of the framers, “it does reinforce the conclusion...that the ultimate makeup of the federal legislature did not reflect the abject surrender to slave state interests described by Wiecek, Finkelman, and like-minded scholars – either in principle or practice.”¹⁴ The existing historiography illustrates these ideas even more so. As Ohline argues, when properly examined in its eighteenth century context, the idea of counting slaves for representative purposes was in no way an endorsement

12 Robert McGuire and Robert Ohsfeldt, “An Economic Model of Voting Behavior over Specific Issues at the Constitutional Convention of 1787,” *The Journal of Economic History*, 46, no. 1 (Mar. 1986): 77-111.

13 *Ibid.*, 88.

14 Maltz, 50.

for slavery. Instead, the three-fifths rule actually “held out an inducement to southerners to free their slaves by promising to increase their representation in proportion.”¹⁵

The Slave Trade Clause

By the time delegates convened in the summer of 1787, slavery and slaveholders had prospered in America for nearly two centuries. Of course, it was not the Founding Fathers who brought the evil of slavery to American shores, but the English. Thomas Jefferson, a prominent slaveholder himself, even rebuked the English crown’s thwarting of colonial efforts to restrict or ban the international slave trade in the decades leading up to independence.¹⁶ Further, John Jay asserted that it was the 1776 Revolution that marked a turning point in the country’s view on slavery: “Prior to the great Revolution, the great majority...of our people had been so long accustomed to the practice and convenience of having slaves that very few among them even doubted the propriety and rectitude of it.”¹⁷ William Freehling echoes this sentiment, arguing that abolition was first made popular by the Revolution of 1776 and the ideal of equality for all mankind.¹⁸ It is inarguable that slavery was an evil institution not invented or championed by most of the framers of the Constitution, but one that had been inherited by them. It was a generations-old problem, left by their English ancestors for the Revolutionary generation to deal with.

Article I, Section 9, Paragraph 1 of the 1787 Constitution protects the international slave trade from Congressional interference until 1808. Traditionally, this clause is cited as a major victory for the slaveholding representatives at the convention, and for the institution of slavery itself. Such interpretations show a lack of ability to consider the historical context of such a measure, and they demonstrate a tendency by modern historians to examine legislative measures from two centuries ago through today’s moral lenses. Freehling had a slightly different, but perhaps still apt, view of such interpretations: “Any judgment of the Founding Fathers’ record on slavery must rest on whether the long or the short run is emphasized.”¹⁹

15 Ohline, 582.

16 Thomas Jefferson, *The Writings of Thomas Jefferson*, Vol. I, ed. Alber Ellery Bergh (Washington D.C.: Thomas Jefferson Memorial Association, 1903), 34.

17 John Jay, *The Correspondence and Public Papers of John Jay*, Vol. III, ed. Henry P. Johnston (New York: G.P. Putnam’s Sons, 1891), 342.

18 Freehling, 81-93.

19 *Ibid.*, 92.

Knowing that unity was essential upon leaving the convention, Southern delegates could have demanded assurance that there would be absolutely no interference in the slave trade. Refusal to sign any document that did not contain an indefinite ban on Congressional interference with the slave trade probably would have resulted in a major concession by the anti-slavery framers. Surprisingly, it was the pro-slavery delegates who would end up making the concession.

Convincing a man to willingly agree to surrender the principle source of the entirety of his livelihood is a difficult task. Somehow, the anti-slavery framers were able to accomplish this while still prioritizing their foremost goal of establishing a unified country. That the southern states agreed to the Slave Trade Clause is miraculous by any measure; they had effectively sunk the knife into the heart of their own economy.

This interpretation is supported by evidence cited by Gavin Wright in his book, *The Political Economy of the Cotton South*. With the law of supply and demand being well known by 1787, the anti-slavery framers probably knew the enormous economic impact that abolishing the slave trade would have:

...the evidence does contain a suggestion that the rising values of slave property in the 1850s had their ominous side, not because they threatened to make slavery unprofitable, but because they were making slaves too expensive for most Southern farmers to gain a share of the profits. The very forces that were strengthening the *economic* incentives for slaveowners to retain slavery were slowly weakening the *political* supports for the institution. Slaveowners as a fraction of Southern families had been declining for some time, and the increasing geographic concentration of slavery meant that in many of the border states the relative numbers of slaveholders were becoming quite small indeed [emphasis added].²⁰

Years before Winfield Scott's Anaconda Plan would ultimately do its part to eliminate slavery, much of the profitability of the system had been sharply reduced by the Constitution. Whether the anti-slavery framers knew that slavery would enter a great decline cannot possibly be proven. However, the possibility must be allowed for, especially when considering their incredible foresight in many other areas. The Constitution ended the supply of new slaves by 1808, thus drastically raising the price of the average slave and effectively preventing the majority of Southerners from owning slaves. In a land where majority ruled, slaveholders were forced into minority status, even in the South! Their institution could not last long without the importation of new slaves from international

²⁰ Gavin Wright, *The Political Economy of the Cotton South: Households, Markets, and Wealth in the Nineteenth Century* (New York: Norton, 1978).

markets.

In the years following the convention, as the argument for abolition became increasingly more widely accepted, Congress acted swiftly to take steps toward eliminating slavery. As mentioned before, one of the South's primary fears in taking the leap from the state-friendly Articles of Confederation to the central-government-friendly Constitution was the cession by the states of the power to regulate international trade. This fear was justified, as Congress would almost inevitably use the new Constitution to regulate, restrict, and eventually eliminate slavery.

Congress did not wait until 1808 to further legislate against the importation of new slaves, but passed the Slave Trade Act of 1794 less than a decade after the convention. The law prepared for and hastened the elimination of the slave trade by outlawing the building or outfitting of ships in the United States for use in the international slave trade. By 1807, Congress could wait no longer. Ensuring that the abolition of the slave trade be enacted at the earliest opportunity, the fifteenth Congress passed a law to eliminate the trade effective January 1, 1808. The knife, sunk into the heart of the institution of slavery twenty years previously by the anti-slavery framers at the 1787 convention, had now been twisted. In actual practice, the institution of slavery would bleed out in 1865 following America's bloodiest war.

Had the cotton gin not been invented, slavery might have ended much closer to the time of the convention itself, in which case the anti-slavery framers would probably have received more credit for setting the process in motion. Unfortunately, none of the framers lived to see their vision come to fruition in 1865. Wright provides an economic model showing the manner in which the end of the slave trade ultimately led to the end of slavery itself. Wright proves (perhaps unintentionally) that the framers' success in eventually abolishing the slave trade ensured that slavery could not survive in the United States.

The changing mood of the times was reflected at the ballot box, where increasingly lower percentages of the voting public felt inclined to vote for politicians that supported slavery (especially in the crucial border states of Kentucky, Ohio, Delaware, Maryland, and what would become West Virginia). This development eventually led to a split in the Democratic Party, which allowed Lincoln to win the election of 1860. Granted, there were undoubtedly still ways to add slaves to the population without a legalized slave trade, (procreation, smuggling,

etc.) but these methods were obviously less effective than simply importing large numbers of enslaved people.

One might argue that the increased influence of the elite, planting class offset the relatively small population in some states, especially in places like South Carolina. Wealth was inescapably tied to the right to vote, and influential planters actively petitioned the government to maintain slavery. Wright proves that the end of the slave trade meant slaves would skyrocket in value throughout the next few decades. This relegated elite planters to a smaller portion of the population, making their influence less powerful. These examples demonstrate that the anti-slavery framers showed a keen understanding of the way the world works as well as the long-term ramifications of governmental policy.

A Matter of Context

Clarity can be gained by examining the manner in which the document ultimately agreed upon by the framers (the eventual Constitution of the United States) was either accepted or rejected by various citizens at the time it was originally made public. This can be accomplished by studying two central forces: the ratification debates and the views of the anti-federalists.

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The South Carolina delegates must have been nervous returning home from the 1787 Convention. On August 21st, John Rutledge, a South Carolina delegate to the convention and a former governor, declared, “The true question at present is whether the Southern states shall or shall not be parties to the Union.”²¹ These downcast words cannot be those of someone who, as Finkelman and other scholars have asserted, prevailed constantly and yielded very little in the process. South Carolina’s delegates achieved no real victory for the deeply entrenched slave state and accrued several notable losses (such as 40% of their 107,000 slaves for representative purposes, the second most of any state). Upon their arrival home, the question remained: how would the rest of the state legislature and the citizenry at large accept this compromise?

Maltz describes the manner in which Rawlins Lowndes, a former South Carolina governor turned state legislator, vehemently argued against ratification. The politician argued that placing the slave trade in the palm of the federal government’s hand was tantamount to central control over South Carolina’s economy as a whole.²² Lowndes knew that the compromises agreed on at the convention would be the death toll for slavery. Charles

²¹ Farrand, *The Records of the Federal Convention of 1787*, Vol. II, 364.

²² Maltz, 56.

Pinckney responded to Lowndes' ideas by asserting that the current Constitution's twenty-year allowance actually avoided quicker, harsher statutes against the slave trade. Maltz asserts that Pinckney's rebuttal serves as evidence that those who lived in the context of the Constitution saw the document as one that limited rather than advanced the institution of slavery.²³

Despite this step in the right direction, Northern anti-federalists were busy arguing an opposing viewpoint – that the new Constitution was unacceptable because the document allowed the slave trade to remain legal for the next twenty years. Ultimately, the Northern abolitionists had achieved major results at the convention. They simply did not want to wait twenty years for these gains to take effect. Clearly, slaveholding Southerners had not experienced a triumph; the institution responsible for their livelihood now had a time limit.

Revolutionary hero Patrick Henry, a prominent Virginia legislator and anti-federalist, held a particularly poignant opinion of the new Constitution. The example of Henry demonstrates the manner in which many people in the Constitution's own day viewed the document as decidedly anti-slavery. An accomplished orator, he was among the most outspoken opponents of the Constitution, campaigning fervently against ratification throughout 1788. He analyzed the draft once it was made public late 1787, and was consistently drawn to make one, major complaint – the new Constitution doomed the institution of slavery: “Among the ten thousand implied powers which they [the federal government] may assume, they may, if we be engaged in war, liberate every one of your slaves if they please.”²⁴ Robin Einhorn summarized the speech Henry delivered June 24, 1788, to the Virginia convention:

‘Have they not power to provide for the general defence and welfare?’ Henry asked, ‘May they not think that these call for the abolition of slavery? – May they not pronounce all slaves free and will they not be warranted by that power?’ In fact, Henry claimed, if the Constitution were adopted, Congress inevitably would free ‘your slaves’... Over time, slavery’s evil would ‘press with full force on the minds of Congress,’ which would free the slaves... Henry rejected the Constitution because he feared that a democratic majority – even of white men only – would refuse to protect the institution of slavery.²⁵

The very nature of the new Constitution, in that it inevitably diminished state sovereignty, meant that the pro-

23 Ibid.

24 Robin L. Einhorn, “Patrick Henry’s Case Against the Constitution: The Structural Problem With Slavery,” *Journal of the Early Republic*, 22, no. 4 (Winter 2002): 549-550.

25 Ibid., 550

slavery delegates' illusion of having won something tangible with the three-fifths or slave trade clauses was only an illusion of victory. Henry knew that slavery was not morally defensible, and that a new central government with broad legislative powers and responsibilities would act swiftly to combat this great moral evil. The Constitution spelled catastrophe for the slaveholding states.²⁶

Henry was correct in envisioning the long-term effects of the new Constitution, and his beliefs were undoubtedly emblematic of many others in the Southern states. Anti-federalists (including Patrick Henry and George Mason) argued against the Constitution, claiming the document was anti-slavery in nature. They imagined various scenarios in which the free states could and inevitably would eliminate slavery in the years to come.

Dividing Lines: More than just Slave vs. Free

Never at any point in the convention did the slave states form a majority. Had delegates from New York attended the entire convention and had Rhode Island delegates attended at all, the slave states would have been well outnumbered. As it stood, the slave states included Georgia, South Carolina, North Carolina, Virginia, and Maryland. They were, at their absolute strongest, a union of five states in a convention of eleven. However, the pro-slavery delegates did hold one major advantage. The pro-slavery bloc knew what their goals were from the beginning of the convention and possessed just enough numbers to be stubborn on issues. South Carolina delegates repeatedly showed their tenacity in pursuing the goal of leaving the convention with the assurance that slavery would continue unimpeded.

However, another interpretation of the Constitution shows that the size of a state's population was a much better indicator of how delegates would vote, rather than the influence of slaveholding interests. On some issues, a state's size was over twice as influential than whether or not it was a slaveholding state.²⁷ McGuire and Ohsfeldt show that, in contrast to the views of Garrison, Finkelman, and Wiecek, voters were certainly beholden to other interests besides slavery. The anti-slavery framers were able to neutralize and divide the pro-slavery bloc on points of disagreement between small and large states. Highly populated states tended to favor a stronger national government. Slave states tended to fear a powerful national government and favored strict limitations of the central government's power. This undoubtedly put a large, slaveholding state such as Virginia in a complicated

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 559-560.

²⁷ McGuire and Ohsfeldt, 107-108.

quagmire, one that the anti-slavery framers were likely able to exploit.²⁸

Furthermore, Jillson and Anderson show that coalitions among states, such as the “pro-slavery” voting bloc, were far more complicated to form and maintain than traditionally thought. For instance, delegates from those states with large bank interests or public security holdings formed coalitions that transcended both state size and ties to slavery.²⁹ Many other issues heavily influenced voters. For example, Jackson Turner Main asserts, “Individuals from coastal areas [because they were cosmopolitan and more commercial] supported the movement for a strong national government while individuals from inland areas [because they were localist and less commercial] opposed the movement.”³⁰ Such a reality would have even further fragmented the pro-slavery bloc. McGuire cites examples of categories that caused voter fragmentation and demonstrates that states could form divisions on the most trivial matters. Examples included the number of English descendants in each state or whether the individual states owed money to the central government.³¹ Many other fragmentations and overlapping interests surely existed that may never be known, but it is evident that the supposed coalitions were fluid depending on the issue in question.³² Such findings show how unlikely it would have been for the delegates of the five pro-slavery states to inexorably band together, despite their differences, and greatly influence the convention.

If the pro-slavery delegation won victory after victory as Wiecek and Finkelman assert, then why did slavery come to an end less than 80 years after the Convention of 1787? Slavery was given every conceivable advantage in the decades after the Constitution was enacted and still, it could not survive. The invention of the cotton gin in 1794 and its profound effect on the profitability of agriculture serves as one example. Additionally, slavery was aided by westward expansion into largely agrarian terrains and the dynamic personalities of characters like John C. Calhoun, who equated slavery with states’ rights. Westward expansion, including the annexation of Texas, the Mexican-American War, and the Louisiana Purchase, should have bolstered the case

28 Robert McGuire, “Constitution Making: A Rational Choice Model of the Federal Convention of 1787,” *American Journal of Political Science*, 32, no. 2 (May 1988): 492.

29 *Ibid.*, 506.

30 McGuire is quoted, referencing Jackson Turner Main, *The Antifederalists: Critics of the Constitution, 1781–1788* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2006), 506.

31 *Ibid.*, 513.

32 Thornton Anderson and Calvin Jillson, “Realignments in the Convention of 1787: The Slave Trade Compromise,” *The Journal of Politics*, 39, no. 3 (Aug. 1977): 712-729.

for maintaining the institution of slavery in the United States of America. Yet, despite all these advantages, 1865 spelled the end of slavery. This would have been impossible if not for the anti-slavery framers.

Still, Finkelman asserts that the pro-slavery delegates are the convention's winners, because he believes they forfeited little and benefitted much.³³ However, even if one views the Three-Fifths Compromise and the Slave Trade Clause as victories for the pro-slavery delegates, it is still a huge stretch to argue that they gave up very little to gain these concessions. Instead, they corroded the long-term viability of their institution. In a world where sons depended on inheritances from their fathers, the pro-slavery delegation agreed to the Slave Trade Clause knowing that this would ensure that most of them would see the end of the slave trade in their own lifetime.

Even if one argues that the pro-slavery delegates secured advantages for their constituents, these benefits were inconsequential and temporary, quickly fading after the first twenty years of the new Constitution. In contrast, slavery's planned obsolescence became an unstoppable force despite the institution having every conceivable advantage to prosper in the years following the convention. In this regard, even Maltz (who has typically resisted the Garrison-Finkelman-Wiecek thesis) does not carry his argument far enough, as he claims that "delegates from the slave states did secure important concessions that...provided direct and indirect protection for the institution of slavery itself."³⁴ Though the assertion that both sides compromised cannot be disputed, historians must leave open the possibility that the pro-slavery delegates surrendered much more than their anti-slavery counterparts. The pro-slavery framers agreed to a document in which they gave up any hope of the institution on which they depended being viable on any kind of long-term basis.

To Quell Insurrection

One of the primary arguments of Finkelman regards Article 1, Section 8, Paragraph 15 of the 1787 Constitution, which gives Congress the power to raise a militia in order to "suppress Insurrections." Simply examining the manner in which various coalitions had formed prior to this vote at the convention makes Finkelman's assertion extremely unlikely. By the time this issue surfaced, the Southern states had very little influence over any vote's outcome. There had already been "crucial realignments sufficient to constitute a shift of

³³ Paul Finkelman, "Making a Covenant with Death," as quoted in Maltz, "The Idea of the Proslavery Constitution," *Journal of the Early Republic* 17, no. 1 (Spring 1997): 38.

³⁴ Maltz, 38.

power to the north...” as the Southern coalition had begun to fragment by July 26 due to peripheral disagreements concerning the Navigation Acts and the slave trade.³⁵

The clause provides some protection to slave states in the event of a massive slave rebellion, but it was clearly Shays’ Rebellion that was foremost in the minds of the framers as they created this provision. Daniel Shays’ Rebellion sent panic across the colonies as rebels in Massachusetts began wreaking havoc in the countryside, moving toward the capital. As news of the rebellion spread, citizens quickly looked toward their newly founded government, wondering when the rebels would be stopped. Citizens found that the weak national government created by the Articles of Confederation gave the current governing body no power to crush such insurrections.

The inability of the central government to protect, defend, and maintain itself from being overthrown was one of the most glaring weaknesses of the Articles of Confederation. Consequently, Shays’ Rebellion became one of the primary catalysts of the 1787 Convention. It was this unrest caused by rebels, not potential slave uprisings, which plagued the minds of the framers as they drew up the provision for a federal militia. For what reason should the framers have been worried about large-scale slave rebellions? There had not been any sizeable slave insurrection that required central government interference prior to 1787. Indeed, the slaveholding states were not even lobbying for such a provision.

According to James Madison’s notes, John Rutledge of South Carolina, who held the second most slaves of anyone at the convention, “was not apprehensive of insurrections and would readily exempt the other states from (the obligation to protect the South...against them).”³⁶ However, as Maltz has pointed out, “the two clauses protected the governments of both slave states and nonslave states equally.” The clause was indeed used to put down slave rebellions upon adoption, many of which would have probably loved to overthrow the entire government. However, Maltz yields too much, as he says, “The domestic violence provisions might be viewed as proslavery in the broadest sense.”³⁷ The provisions, in fact, are neither pro- nor anti-slavery. They are simply a matter of national security. Every government with any hope of long-term viability must have the ability to keep itself from being overthrown, whether the insurgents are slaves, angry Revolutionary War veterans, or anyone

35 Anderson and Jillson, 725.

36 Farrand, *The Records of the Federal Convention of 1787*, Vol. II, 364.

37 Maltz, 41.

else. The United States government maintains this right today. It would be wholly inaccurate to say that the inclusion of this clause is in some way a concession to or a victory for the pro-slavery delegation rather than a quite normal and prudent measure to which every reasonable government past, present, and future has a right.

Conclusion

Despite obscene profits for slaveowners, innumerable deeply entrenched interests, personal fortunes, and the personality of John Calhoun, slavery would end in 1865 following the Civil War. The anti-slavery framers probably intended for it to conclude much sooner, but dozens of advantages for the institution over the next few decades would prolong the inevitable. The anti-slavery framers set the process in motion. Historical changes of this magnitude rarely happen quickly without something as drastic as an all-out revolution. There must be room in the current academic debate for the possibility that this is partly due to the steps that the anti-slavery framers took in the summer of 1787.

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If anything, *not* drafting the Constitution, or at least not mentioning the issue of slavery within its contents, could be viewed as decisively pro-slavery. The Articles of Confederation, though they achieved a measure of national unity, allowed the issue of slavery to go by unmentioned. As a result, the institution continued to thrive and prosper. A similar mistake could have been made in the summer of 1787 in the name of unity, but the anti-slavery framers simply would not let it happen. They chose instead to confront the issue head on. As Einhorn asserts, “Every time this problem [slavery] arose, questions of justice and morality lurked in the background with the potential for erupting into the foreground. . . . Slavery depended on silence at the national level.”³⁸ The anti-slavery framers would remain silent no more.

In effect, the slave states surrendered their livelihoods the moment that they gave up the moral justification behind slavery (that is, the inequality of mankind), tying themselves to the anti-slavery colonies in order to fight the war for independence as one, unified body.³⁹ William Freehling further expounds upon this idea: “This pattern of . . . marrying the meaning of America to the continuation of a particular government . . . would persist, producing endless compromises and finally inspiring Lincoln’s war.”⁴⁰ An average, Southern, pro-slavery

38 Einhorn, 566.

39 Ibid., 569.

40 Freehling, 86.

delegate may have walked into the convention in May of 1787 with no end in sight for the slave trade, future profits assured, a handsome living for himself and future generations, no federal regulation whatsoever of slavery or the slave trade, and no real prospect for a strong central government in the future. By September, everything had changed.

In every possible way, the nation's new Constitution destabilized the institution of slavery. Every time that the anti-slavery framers could strike a blow against this morally backward institution without the pro-slavery delegates completely abandoning the convention or refusing to sign the document, they did so. Unity was obviously the key to such a massive governmental overhaul. Scholars today are often duped into a modern, hindsight-perception that the anti-slavery founders could have walked into the convention and eliminated slavery simply because it was the right thing to do. However, they could not attack slavery at the expense of the existence of the union, so the anti-slavery framers had to force the pro-slavery delegates to compromise on the strength and longevity of their institution. Attacks upon the longstanding, extremely profitable industry had to be veiled (though some, like Patrick Henry, saw through these attempts). It was a correct prioritization of goals. In so doing, they were able to forever yoke the slaveholding states to the ideals of the Declaration of Independence. Only then would majority rule root out this great evil over time.

Though it undoubtedly cannot be proven that the Founding Fathers “worked tirelessly” to end slavery, (as Republican Presidential Candidate Michele Bachmann recently gaffed)⁴¹ it certainly can be argued that many of the Founding Fathers took deliberate action to ensure slavery's demise in their new country. They dared to propel what could have become a secondary issue into the limelight in order to establish a framework in which the young country could, with some reasonable speed, put an end to one of mankind's worst ideas. Moving forward, scholarship in this area should leave open the possibility that the anti-slavery framers outsmarted, outmaneuvered, and in general won great concessions from their pro-slavery counterparts. Through sheer determination and ingenious legislative strategy, they were able to begin the process of eliminating the institution of slavery from the fabric of their new country. Such genius and resolve constitutes a debt that modern generations could not hope to repay, though giving the anti-slavery framers the credit they deserve for creating the eventual downfall of slavery would certainly be a good start. ♦♦♦

⁴¹ Speech by Michele Bachmann, January 24, 2011, in Iowa.

UNDERGRADUATE SPOTLIGHT AWARD

The Undergraduate Spotlight Award recognizes the work of an undergraduate history student who has produced an article that sparks interest, challenges existing interpretations, demonstrates superior writing style, and displays an advanced understanding of a topic. This year's Undergraduate Spotlight is awarded to Thomas Kulovitz for his article, *Under the Influence: The Works of Jacques-Louis David*, which explores artwork of the French Revolution and Napoleonic Eras. Thomas' article examines the propagandistic nature of David's paintings and proves its thesis by explaining the artwork within its larger context. The article compares and contrasts David's work to that of other artists, both contemporary and non-contemporary, communicating the significance of each painting to the reader.

UNDER THE INFLUENCE: THE WORKS OF JACQUES-LOUIS DAVID

Thomas Kulovitz

Perhaps the most well-known time in French history is the late eighteenth to the early nineteenth century. During this time period France's political atmosphere forwent drastic changes, beginning with the French Revolution which then progressed to the Napoleonic Era. With a career spanning both of these political movements, French artist Jacques-Louis David left a profound impact on the political events of the time period within his paintings. Commissioned by the French aristocracy, David's paintings give a greater insight into French society. At first glance, David's paintings captured historical events of the time, reflecting insight of how some of the events he witnessed or was informed of appeared. However, a deeper look into David's paintings reveals that his historical portrayals do not accurately depict the historical narratives. Indeed, four of David's most famous works that pertain to certain political events all intended to manipulate the viewer's opinion.

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Born in Paris on August 20, 1748, David was the son of a tradesman. His mother's family held positions as architects. Though his father died when David was only nine years of age, the benefit of his family's substantial wealth allowed David to attend the College de Beauvais and the College des Quatre Nations. Deciding to become an art student, David created his first works in the early 1770s, winning the Prix de Rome which led him to Rome for further study until 1780.¹ David returned to Paris that same year, where he quickly gained popularity within the Parisian salons. Often gathering places for nobility, the salons were where France's philosophical and literary movements originated.² More importantly the salons served as venues to publicly debut and exhibit an artist's work. The success of an artist within the salons was crucial to their livelihood. David's popularity within salons, as well as winning the Prix de Rome garnered him the first of several wealthy, aristocratic patrons over his career. Soon he received a royal commission from the king of France, Louis XVI, beginning work on *The Oath of the Horatii* in 1784.

The Oath of the Horatii visually depicts an event from Ancient Rome in which Rome chose soldiers to

¹ Warren Roberts, *Jacques-Louis David, Revolutionary Artist: Art, Politics, and the French Revolution* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1989), 4-5.

² *Ibid.*, 3-5.



Figure 1. Jacques-Louis David, *The Oath of the Horatii*, 1784 [Photo: Gérard Blot/Christian Jean] Réunion des Musées Nationaux/Art Resource, NY. The Louvre, Paris, France.

fight with the neighboring territory of Alba after a feud over cattle. Instead of going to war, both states selected men to settle the conflict. In the painting, the sons of the Horatii family extend their hands outward to swear allegiance to their father before heading to battle against the Alban Curatii family. To the right of the painting two women are depicted, both appearing displeased with the event taking place before them. The reason for this displeasure involves a family connection in which one of the Horatii wives is the sister of one of the Curiatii sons. She is expectedly anguished at the thought of her relatives fighting against each other in the upcoming battle. In the background of the right side of the painting, the child of one of the brothers appears, who may become an

orphan after the battle. The painting was finished in Rome alongside Francois-Hubert Drouais, David's pupil, who himself won the Prix de Rome that same year.³ The subject of the painting was chosen by David, and within eleven months the work was completed. Though commission called for a ten-by-ten foot work, David increased the dimensions to an eleven-by-fourteen foot canvas, justifying this choice by saying, "I ceased to make a picture for the king, and did it for myself."⁴ Careful not to let anyone see the work before its completion, David showed it briefly in his Rome studio before bringing it to Paris to be displayed at the salon in August 1785. Despite the painting's belated debut, this worked as an advantage because critics deemed it to be "[A] [s]uperb picture, [an] absolutely new composition" before its arrival in Paris.⁵ It immediately became the most popular and discussed painting within the salons of 1785, challenging David's rival Jean-François Pierre Peyron's *Death of Alcestis*. *The Oath of the Horatii* solidified David's membership to France's noble class.

Although *The Oath of the Horatii* is indeed a depiction of a historical event, its subject matter and status as a royal commission raise serious questions about David's intent of the work. The historical setting of the painting perfectly juxtaposes two seemingly conflicting emotions. The left side is dominated by the concept of allegiance and duty, depicting the brothers' outstretched arms as they declare an oath to their father who holds their swords for battle out in front of him. In contrast, the right side of the painting contains the sadness of the wife, whose husband, brother, or both will likely be killed in the upcoming battle. The allegiance and duty of the brothers in spite of the women's sadness is meant to connect to the larger theme of politics. David historian Warren Roberts agreed, "The subject of the painting was historical, and it emphasized patriotic dedication and sacrifice of the individual to the state, very much the stuff of politics."⁶ These political themes, combined with the fact that the painting was commissioned by Louis XVI, support the idea that the painting can also be construed as propaganda. Indeed, the Horatii father is intended to be a parallel to the king himself, while the brothers are meant to represent the people of France. In conveying this, the picture becomes a call to arms, as well as a portrayal of what being a French citizen is all about. Loyalty to the king is symbolically depicted as the grieving sister.

Interestingly, the modern interpretation of *The Oath of the Horatii* differs from this view. Though the

³ Ibid., 15.

⁴ Ibid., 16.

⁵ Antoine Schnapper, *David* (New York: Alpine Fine Arts Collection, 1982), 74.

⁶ Roberts, 17.

themes of patriotism and sacrifice still exist, the Horatii father is thought to represent the French state. This interpretation attempts to cite the work as a great symbol of the French Revolution by turning the audience's attention away from the king and toward the state. However, this is not an entirely accurate interpretation of the painting's original intent. For one, the work was painted in 1784, predating the French Revolution's pivotal year of 1789 by five years. There was no sign of a republican or anti-monarchical movement in 1785 France, when the painting was first shown.⁷ These reasons, combined with Louis XVI's commission of the painting, diminish the French Revolution interpretation. Nonetheless, this is still a popular interpretation of the work to this day.

Only a few years after his success from the *Oath of the Horatii*, David soon found himself in the middle of the French Revolution. The country's turmoil had begun by 1789, with conflict between the monarchy and the republicans. This conflict resulted from a financial crisis that originated a decade earlier when France provided financial aid to the American colonists during the American Revolution. The movement featured the infamous storming of the Bastille and culminated with the execution of Louis XVI and his wife, Marie Antoinette. The impact of the French Revolution on French society cannot be understated. The absolute monarchy that ruled the nation for over one thousand years was gone, paving the way for new rulers and leaders of France. Thus, it is not surprising that David's next prominent work would use the French Revolution as its subject.

One of the most famous events of the French Revolution featured the radical journalist Jean-Paul Marat. Marat's infamous murder at the hands of Charlotte Corday in July 1793 provided the perfect inspiration for what arguable became David's most famous work. Marat suffered from a skin condition, a possible form of psoriasis, involving him to take long, hot baths where he wore a vinegar-soaked cloth wrapped completely around his head like a turban. He often did paperwork while he was in the bathtub, using a wooden board that functioned as a table. Unfortunately for Marat, Corday was an anti-royalist revolutionary who had been plotting his murder for weeks. Corday was encouraged by the remarks of Charles-Jean-Marie Barbaroux de Marseille, a deputy to the National Convention who had proclaimed that Marat was the enemy of France.⁸ Corday murdered Marat by stabbing him in the chest while in his bathtub; this event became the subject of David's next work, *The Death of Marat*.

⁷ Ibid., 18.

⁸ *Jacques-Louis David's 'Marat,'* eds. Will Vaughn and Helen Weston (Cambridge, MA: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 3-5.



Figure 2. Jacques-Louis David, The assassination of Marat, 1793 © Royal Museums of Fine Arts of Belgium, Brussels [Photo: J. Geleyns/www.roscaan.be].

The painting features Marat slumped over in the bathtub shortly after Corday stabs him in the chest. In his left hand is a letter that upon closer inspection was written by Corday herself in order to gain entry into his apartment. His right arm extends over the edge of the bathtub and is holding a quill, which he was likely writing with at the time of his death. On a box in front of the bathtub is inscribed both the names of Marat and David. Again, the painting represents an actual event, but a closer look reveals that David's depiction intends to alter the details of the incident and the opinions of the French people.

As the engraving on the box in the foreground would imply, David was good friends with Marat at the time of his death. David became much less supportive of his former patron, Louis XVI, and began believing and sharing in the ideas of Marat. To call Marat a radical would be an understatement. He often publically denounced his rivals and those who were politically lukewarm. He openly advocated the use of the guillotine, especially for those with whom he had disagreements regarding France's new identity. In fact his assassinator, Corday, pretended to be one of Marat's informants. She reported to Marat about his enemies, who were thought to be responsible for the recent uprisings in Caen (in Northwest France). Marat remarked that his opponents would soon be guillotined, maintaining his advocacy of violence.⁹

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Despite these facts, David does not present Marat as he truly was at all. The first indication of this can be seen by looking at Marat's body in the painting, which is presented in great physical condition, aside from the knife wound in his chest. David does not depict Marat's skin disease, except for the vinegar-soaked turban atop his head. Art historian Dorothy Johnson comments on Marat's portrayal further, "[David] idealized and made regular Marat's facial features and transformed the sickly, thin body, covered with sores, into one that in its contours and musculature, is heroic and powerful."¹⁰

Corday's letter shows another of David's attempts at altering reality. The letter shown in the painting does not contain a list of traitors' names used by Corday, as she pretended to be his informant. On the contrary, this letter is written by David himself. Translated from French, the letter reads, "It's enough that I'm truly unhappy to have the right to your benevolence."¹¹ The inclusion of the letter, aside from being historically inaccurate, is a

⁹ *Ibid.*, 5.

¹⁰ Dorothy Johnson, *Jacques-Louis David: Art in Metamorphosis* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1993), 106.

¹¹ "Simon Schema: Power of Art: Jacques-Louis David: Airbrushing the Revolution," BBC, November 25, 2011, (originally aired November 10, 2006).

clear sign of propaganda by David, attempting to make Marat come across as a victim.

Contributing to the idea of Marat as the victim is the positioning of Marat's body to resemble a completely blameless figure. The victim or blameless figure was not a new archetype in David's time and can be seen in earlier works of the Italian Renaissance featuring Jesus as the subject. In Michelangelo's *Pieta*, a dead Jesus lies in the arms of his grieving mother, Mary, shortly after being taken down from the cross after his crucifixion. The position of Marat's body in David's work mirrors that of Jesus in the *Pieta*. Art historian William Vaughan agreed, "The picture appears to owe something to Michelangelo's famous *Pieta*."¹² The most apparent correlation between the two is that the right arms of both figures are bent in almost the exact same fashion, at the exact same angle. Just as Michelangelo intended for Jesus to be a solemn, sympathetic figure in his sculpture, so too did David by positioning Marat in an identical position.

David also uses light to increase the painting's dramatic power. In Caravaggio's *The Entombment of Christ*, a work of the Counter-Reformation, Jesus is shown lain in a tomb by his disciples shortly after his crucifixion. Caravaggio uses light to add a sense of drama to the work and illuminates the importance of the event. All of the characters in the painting are cast in bright light with the body of Jesus being the brightest, imposing him as a figure of great importance. Likewise, in *The Death of Marat*, David paints Marat in the same kind of bright light to indicate that he is a figure of the utmost significance in the same way as Jesus in Caravaggio's work.

In Michelangelo's *The Entombment of Christ*, Jesus' body position is similar to Marat's, although not to the same degree. British art historian Simon Schama took this apparent portrayal of Marat as a Christ-like figure even further by noting, "the wound [of Marat] is unmissable, yet at the same time, almost delicate like the incision in the side of Christ on the cross."¹³ Whether or not Marat can be labeled a Christ-like figure in terms of David's work is debatable. However, what cannot be debated is that David's positioning of Marat's body and lighting have at least parallels to portrayals of Christ centuries before, and are intended to instill the belief of Marat as an important figure and a martyr to the audience. Schama illustrates this point when he states, "So why do I like

12 William Vaughan, "Terror and the *Tabula Rasa*," in *Jacques-Louis David's 'Marat'*, eds. Will Vaughn and Helen Weston (Cambridge, MA: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 84.

13 "Simon Schema: Power of Art: Jacques-Louis David: Airbrushing the Revolution."

David? Well, I don't. He's a monster, but he makes ideas blaze in dry ice. He is a fantastic propagandist—no one better.”¹⁴ Indeed, Marat's pristine body, its positioning, the lighting, and the inclusion of Corday's letter written by David all clearly mark *The Death of Marat* as a work of propaganda intended to support David's former political ally and his political beliefs.

David would not stay in good favor with the French government for long. Maximilien Robespierre, head of the Committee of Public Safety, was supported by David alongside his deceased friend, Marat. Yet Robespierre was soon overthrown, bringing to an end the Reign of Terror, which had resulted in tens of thousands of deaths. While imprisoned, David began to regain the prestige he lost in the aftermath of the French Revolution by painting. Soon after he was freed, David obtained a room in the Louvre where he displayed his newest work, *The Intervention of Sabine Women*, in 1799, two months after the coup d'état of General Napoleon Bonaparte. Napoleon's coup overthrew the Directory, the government established after the Reign of Terror. Napoleon established the Consulate, with himself as First Consul, and over time would evolve into the emperor of France in 1804. After the coup, Napoleon became fascinated with the popular works of art and decorations that traditionally accompany power. Napoleon unsuccessfully tried to win over David before seizing power in 1799. However, in 1800, David officially became the *peintre du gouvernement*, essentially making him the “first painter” of France.¹⁵

The painting *Bonaparte Crossing the Alps at Mont Saint Bernard* launched David's return to prominence in French society, at the side of Napoleon. This painting depicts the general at the beginning of the height of his military career, crossing the Alps en route to defeating the Austrian army at Marengo. Napoleon is seated atop a horse dominating the painting with his clothes flowing in the breeze. While his horse is slightly rearing back, Napoleon is gesturing, presumably to the French army, to move forward across the Alps into battle. David inscribed the name “Bonaparte” into a stone in the bottom left corner of the work. The painting was commissioned by King Charles IV of Spain as homage to Napoleon to be stored in his Royal Palace in Madrid. In spite of the patrimony of King Charles IV, Napoleon still had a large influence on the final version of the painting. While David's original vision included having Napoleon with sword in hand, the emperor refused to pose simply because he did not like doing so and insisted that he be seated atop a horse. This change made David's artistic

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Philippe Bordes, *Jacques-Louis David: Empire to Exile* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2005), 1-2, 10-11, 19, 26, 29-30.



Figure 3. Jacques-Louis David, Bonaparte crossing the Alps at Mont Saint Bernard, 1801 [Photo: Gérard Blot] Réunion des Musées Nationaux/Art Resource, NY. Chateaux de Malmaison et Bois-Preau, Rueil-Malmaison, France.

process more difficult, especially since he lacked a model.¹⁶

Again in *Bonaparte Crossing the Alps at Mont Saint Bernard*, David depicted a real historical event that was well-known at the time, but as he had done before, he enhanced and altered several details that exaggerated the reality of the event. Most noticeably, Napoleon's outward gaze provided some sort of connection with the viewer while the positioning of his body atop his horse revealed a sense of leadership. Napoleon's hand gesture served not only to signal the French troops to march ahead, but also depicted the majesty and power that David attempted to convey. The same can also be said for the dramatic lighting, shining exclusively on Napoleon and his horse, a technique also employed in *Marat*. The size of Napoleon and his horse is heavily exaggerated, overshadowing both the Alps and the French soldiers in the background of the painting. This is possibly due to Napoleon's famously short stature, which is not accurately depicted in the painting. Napoleon's clothing represented his high rank within the French Army and as Pierre-Jean-Baptiste Broussard, a French art critic of the time, pointed out: "The cloak of [Bonaparte] is thrown to make one imagine, as [David] was telling me, the wings of a demigod gliding through the air."¹⁷ This painting portrays Napoleon's godlike figure, a status usually reserved for monarchy. This idea is reflected by Napoleon's pose in the painting, the exaggeration of his size, and his bright illumination atop his horse.

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David extended the concept of Napoleon's power even further by changing historical details in his narrative. This is in contrast to the portrayal of Napoleon by French artist Paul Delaroche whose painting entitled, *Napoleon Crossing the Alps*, was meant to be a more historically accurate portrayal of the event. While David was Napoleon's contemporary, Delaroche's painting was completed forty years after the event. Art historian Dorothy Johnson describes Napoleon's actual crossing of the Alps saying, "Bonaparte crossed the precipitous peaks of Mt. Saint Bernard on a mule, not on the beautiful stallion of the painting and did not accompany the troops, but followed them with some delay."¹⁸ Delaroche's work attempts to portray the reality of the narrative, and is far less interested in Napoleon as a military hero. Attempting to show historical accuracy, Napoleon is presented atop a mule, travelling with a guide, and appearing the same size as the other figures in the painting. Gone is the

¹⁶ Roberts, 144.

¹⁷ Bordes, 85.

¹⁸ Johnson, 179.



Figure 4. Paul Delaroche, *Napoleon crossing the Alps*, 1848, Courtesy National Museums Liverpool, Walker Art Gallery, Liverpool, England.

idealized figure from David’s work, replaced with a Napoleon more grounded in reality—from his clothing to his much more natural pose.

It is worth noting that Napoleon was unsurprisingly quite pleased with David’s version in 1800, ordering multiple copies. David was rewarded handsomely (24,000 francs for the original and 20,000 francs for each copy).¹⁹ Similar to David’s earlier work, *The Death of Marat*, the painting *Bonaparte Crossing the Alps at Mont Saint Bernard* presents a heroic figure that transcends into an almost godlike status. On the other hand, the two works differ in terms of David’s connection to the subject and his control of the painting. Because Marat was a close personal friend of David, the artist was given free rein to depict him, even though this would rarely have been the case in a typical commissioned work. Conversely, Napoleon

commandeered David’s work, outlining how he was to be depicted. This, coupled with David’s substantial payments, indicated that when dealing with Napoleon, the paintings were not driven by David’s own personal beliefs, as with *Marat*. Nevertheless, both works are both convincing cases of propaganda, seeking to glorify their subjects to the eyes of viewers. David remained in the patronage of Napoleon for a lengthy time, including Napoleon’s transition from his rank as First Consul to Emperor in 1804 until his downfall after the Battle of Waterloo in the summer of 1815. During this time, David painted several portraits of the emperor, including his coronation ceremony on December 2, 1804, which hangs in the Louvre in Paris today.

The painting entitled *The Coronation of Napoleon and Josephine* is yet another example of the technique

¹⁹ Ibid., 147; Anita Brookner, *Jacques-Louis David* (New York: Harper & Row, 1980), 148.

David perfected throughout his career, by which he altered historical narratives to elicit a greater appreciation of the subject. The immediate impact of the coronation painting is its size; at over 20 by 32 feet, it is twice as large as most of David's other paintings. Set in the Notre Dame cathedral, it also contains many more figures than David normally depicted, as each figure corresponds to an actual person, showing the significance of the occasion. Surprising to many, Napoleon actually crowned himself, rather than following the tradition of the pope crowning the monarch. However, David portrays Napoleon already crowned, preparing to place the crown atop the head of his wife, Josephine, who is kneeling at the bottom of the steps. David originally intended to paint Napoleon crowning himself with one hand and gripping a sword with another, but changed his mind at the urging of one of his students, Francois Gerard. Gerard informed David that he believed Napoleon would better appreciate the painting if he were crowning his wife instead, to which David agreed.²⁰ Also depicted were high-ranking officials



Figure 5. Jacques-Louis David, *Coronation of Emperor Napoleon and Josephine at Notre-Dame on December 2, 1804*, 1805-1807 [Photo: Hervé Lewandowski] Réunion des Musées Nationaux/Art Resource, NY. The Louvre, Paris, France.

²⁰ Roberts, 156.

of the Catholic Church, including Pope Pius VII. These members of the clergy were dressed in white and seated behind Napoleon, implying the Church's approval.

Coronation once again shows David's ability to portray historical events, while inserting symbolism to persuade the viewer's opinion. At the time of the coronation, Napoleon faced the challenge of choosing his rightful heir. His brothers, Joseph and Lucien, were both obvious choices initially. However, since Joseph only produced two daughters, and Napoleon disapproved of Lucien's recent marriage, the situation became complicated. This dispute led to feuding among the brothers. Even Napoleon's mother, who disapproved of Napoleon's marriage, sided with his brothers and was not in attendance at the ceremony.²¹ Despite this, David depicts her in the gallery, behind Josephine. For art historian Warren Roberts, the reason for her inclusion in the painting is obvious. He writes, "And of course even to include her in the painting was a necessary invention, an act of artistic legerdemain that projected the type of official image that Napoleon obviously wanted."²² David also included himself in the work, seated with his family behind Napoleon's mother. David did attend the ceremony, and whether his inclusion was to commemorate his own presence or whether some larger meaning existed is debatable. Nevertheless, this painting illustrates the relationship that existed between David and Napoleon.

Conveying the reality of Napoleon's personality was not David's position; he was simply there to convey the message the emperor wanted the French people to receive. This aspect of David's paintings can be seen throughout his entire career and exposes him as the great propagandist, whether willingly or not. David's paintings were a medium used to manipulate the French people by portraying the beliefs of his patrons.

The works of Jacques-Louis David are some of the most famous paintings of any artist in history. From his time as a rising artist, he made a name for himself in Paris and later as the official painter of France under Napoleon, David's images visualized the movements of the French Revolution and the Napoleonic Era. However, his artwork also served as a means for David to impose his own or his patron's viewpoints upon the audience through symbolism and alteration of the truth. David was certainly not the first artist to work in propaganda. The practice can easily be traced back to the Ancient period in Egypt and Rome as lavish statues and buildings were erected and dedicated to numerous pharaohs and emperors. Far from being the only Napoleonic propagandist,

21 Ibid., 158.

22 Ibid., 160.

Antoine-Jean Gros painted additional flattering portrayals of the emperor around the same time period.

Propaganda as an art form has, for centuries, gone hand-in-hand with those in power. The position of power in any society will always strive to convey a narrative of glorious symbolism, though perhaps not to the extravagant degree of Jacques-Louis David. The significance of David's work is that it demonstrates how his amazing artistic talents were overshadowed by the political climate of the time and the pressure levied on him by his patrons. His works are more than just historical depictions and visualizations of France in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries; rather, they are depictions of ideals and values for the people of France. The exact nature of those ideals and values will likely never be agreed upon by everyone. Certainly David seemed to believe the answer to this question could be found in his artwork, which inarguably, unlike David himself, will always be remembered. ◆◆◆

RELIGION AND REBELLION: THE INFLUENCE OF NEW ENGLAND PURITANISM IN THE PRE-REVOLUTION YEARS

Dawn Noel

The pervasive Revolutionary rhetoric that inspired many of the American colonists of the mid-eighteenth century cannot be attributed to one concept or idea. Instead, the Revolution represented a synthesis of ideas that, when brought together, created the perfect storm. On the most basic level, the institution of certain acts by the British Parliament, such as the Stamp Act, inspired the colonists to revolt. However, Enlightenment philosophy, the influence of “classical antiquity,” and religious ideology also played a particular role in influencing the Revolution by providing a framework for the colonists’ arguments. New England Puritanism, more than any other ideology or act had the greatest and most enduring, pervasive effect on fueling the rhetoric of rebellion. Individual liberty, the arbitrary nature of Parliament, and ultimately the desire to separate from what many colonists began to believe was an unjust form of oppression and tyranny became defining elements of the religious movement in the colonies. At the center of the contentious political debates lay the Puritan inspired ideas of the covenant and divine providence. Many viewed the final act of separation as necessary and morally right, as the king had broken his covenant with the people of the colonies through his attempts to diminish, or in some cases abolish, the authority of colonial assemblies.¹

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The Puritans held a complex set of values and beliefs that incorporated a sense of individuality and personal responsibility, a sincere belief in the importance of a covenant, and a fear of oppression by the monarch and Parliament. The idea of the covenant was a unique and important tenet of Puritanism. The concept harkened back to the Old Testament in which the omnipotent God voluntarily limits his power. Puritans viewed God’s relationship with man as a sort of contract – “a mutual agreement” between God and man.² A covenant was seen as “the very essence of God’s created order,” something that man consented to of his own free will, something that should not be violated by either party.³ As boundaries were drawn, which included both a concern for individuality as well as concern for the collective community, “a new sense of self and society” seemed to

1 Bernard Bailyn, *The Ideological Origins of the American Revolution* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1992), 22-24; Lazar Ziff, “Revolutionary Rhetoric and Puritanism,” *Early American Literature* 13 (Spring 1978): 45-49.

2 Janice Knight, *Orthodoxy in Massachusetts* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1994), 87-91.

3 Leonard J. Trinterud, “The Origins of Puritanism,” *Church History* 20 (March 1951): 37-57.

emerge.⁴ According to writer Adam Seligman, Puritans adhered to the strongly-held belief that “each individual consciousness contain[ed] something of the ‘divine’,” which in later years greatly influenced both “political and social theory.” Of equal importance was the debate concerning differing types of covenant theology.

The Puritans’ “values, ideas, and attitudes” often centered around the idea of being called by God to “serve Him by serving society and himself in some useful, productive occupation.” Man’s next obligation was to work diligently and faithfully in his chosen occupation. Thrift and frugality were seen as important tenets of the Puritan ethic. This ideal is set forth in many of the political sermons of the eighteenth-century. Ministers were concerned about the repercussions of what many perceived as lavish, sinful, lifestyles enjoyed by the English and the Colonists as well. There was a suspicion of those in commerce as well as those who were prosperous for that very reason – divine retribution for the sinful nature of man. Puritan ethic implored individuals to make the world a better place. The jeremiads (literary works that lamented society), delivered by ministers, sought to awaken the virtue of the successful by reinforcing the idea that in actuality, they had failed.

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Many of the Founding Fathers, such as Benjamin Franklin and John Adams, appear to have been greatly influenced by the tenets of New England Puritanism. A number of Puritan elements had been incorporated into the religious oratory of the clergy from many different denominations and congregations – although these ideals seemed to be most prominent in Presbyterian and Congregationalists beliefs. Benjamin Rush and Samuel Adams were members of those congregations, while Henry Laurens and Richard Henry Lee were Anglicans who arguably would have heard similar sermons in their respective churches. As mentioned earlier, even Franklin and Jefferson, who were Deists, followed this same line of thinking.⁵ When the pervasive nature of these Puritan ideals (embodied in the sermons of this era) is considered, a reasonable argument can be made that Puritan ethics directed the conversation of Revolution in a substantial way.

A sense of spiritual individuality eventually began to extend beyond the boundaries of religion and became more prominently portrayed as a “love of universal liberty.” It could be argued that this was a direct response to both “civil and ecclesiastical tyranny” during the time of the Reformation. New England clergymen

4 Adam Seligman, “Inner-Worldly Individualism and the Institutionalization of Puritanism in Late Seventeenth-Century New England,” *The British Journal of Sociology* 41 (December 1990): 537-557.

5 Edmund S. Morgan, “The Puritan Ethic and the American Revolution,” *The William and Mary Quarterly* 24 (January 1967): 3-43.

desired a certain degree of autonomy, an independence that reflected their fear of oppression by those in positions of authority within the governmental sphere. These beliefs included a desire to keep and maintain private property and emphasized the importance of industry, virtue and piety.⁶

As the eve of the Revolution drew near, these were the very ideals which were integrated into the colonial rhetoric espousing liberty, freedom, and the inherent rights of man, which clearly echoed tenets of covenant ideology. “Dissident Protestantism” seemed to tolerate no “interference with the spirit of liberty.”⁷ In his writings, Edmund Burke seemed to imply that the evangelical character of American Protestantism provided a “strong claim to natural liberty.” The hope of the clergy was to provide a safe-haven of both political and civil liberty for religious dissenters. This ideology was encouraged by the ubiquitous fear that England would appoint Anglican Bishops in the colonies, or allow Catholicism to flourish in the colonies or neighboring Canada. A commonly held belief was that “true liberty could survive only if English Protestants maintained their military dominance over the Catholic nations of Europe.”⁸

By the early 1740s a new movement, the Great Awakening, emerged, which took the Puritan ideals and beliefs and incorporated them into an evangelical resurgence that included revivals. Here ministers sought to prepare the “chosen Anglo-Americans to provide leadership in preparing the world for the Second Coming.” This movement was adopted and encouraged by ministers who felt that Evangelical Christianity had become both remote and cold. A number of the New England clergy chastised their congregations for a perceived “declension from the virtues of their fathers.”⁹ Many of the English clergy had viewed the colonies, New England in particular, as “a model of hope for their own society.” In essence, this movement crossed an ocean to foster an unlikely partnership among the American and English dissenters. American historian Christine Leigh Heyrman has suggested that the Great Awakening drew both men and women from “elite families into the Congregational churches... consolidating their social and political leadership.” This movement seemed to enhance the autonomy and authority of the clergy. It has also been suggested that the Great Awakening was a precursor to many of the

6 Ziff, 45-49.

7 David S. Lovejoy, *Religious Enthusiasm in the New World: Heresy to Revolution* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1985), 215.

8 Bruce Tucker, “The Reinvention of New England, 1691-1770,” *The New England Quarterly* 59 (September 1986): 315-340.

9 Alan Heimert and Perry Miller, *The Great Awakening: Documents Illustrating the Crisis and Consequences* (Indianapolis, IN: Bobbs & Merrill, 1967), xv-xvii.

colonial debates.¹⁰

The revivals of the Great Awakening, in order to be successful, needed to be kept within a certain context. First, a society or culture that expected “a periodic showering of God’s grace and recognizes the signs of a genuine revival,” was more apt to be captured by the message delivered by the minister. Second, the participants needed to believe that there was a need for a revival, a perception that society had sunk to a new low. Third, revivals seemed to occur when both the clergy and laity “employ[ed] means” in order to prepare society for “a special outpouring of divine mercy.”¹¹ The Great Awakening was seen as “destined to revolutionize colonial society.” The revivals served as an early unifying concept within the colonies and aided the colonies as a political coalition began to form in the early years of the Revolution.¹²

Ministers such as George Whitfield and Jonathan Edwards were just two of the myriad clergymen who took up the mantle of this cause and held widely popular revivals in colonial America. Whitfield, an Englishman, seemed to be an unlikely advocate for the colonists, but he espoused the principles of liberty, virtue, and eventually, freedom from the “tyranny” of Parliament and king. Edwards hosted an early form of the revival in 1735, in what some saw as a prophetic act considering the emergence of Whitfield only a few years later.¹³ Historian Harry Stout suggests that, as the mid-eighteenth century approached (an era defined by “upheaval and tension”), many colonists became susceptible to the rhetoric of this movement. Additionally, their beliefs provided them with some sense of mental fortitude to confront the challenges that eventually would arise. Stout also infers that this movement gave participants an outlet and a means of channeling their “frustrations and hostilities” with society into the relatively innocuous venue of revivals. While the Great Awakening incorporated many of the older Puritan values and beliefs, it also espoused change and essentially became a “radically new message” delivering a spiritual, political, and social meaning. Many of these reformed ministers took their message on the road, speaking to a wide audience that included both the wealthy and the poor; the educated and the illiterate. A compelling argument could be made that by taking their message to the masses, despite class or gender, these

10 Bruce Tucker, 315-340; Harry Stout, “The Great Awakening in New England Reconsidered: The New England Clergy,” *Journal of Social History* 8 (Autumn 1974): 21-47.

11 Frank Lambert, *Inventing the “Great Awakening”* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1999), 22-23.

12 Charles Hartshorn Maxson, *The Great Awakening in the Middle Colonies* (Chicago, IL: Kessinger Publishing, LLC, 1958), 2.

13 Lovejoy, 4.

itinerant ministers were in large part an impetus for the acceptance of Revolutionary rhetoric.¹⁴

The Great Awakening was seen as an “evolution” of the colonial mindset. The experience was purported to have a “democratizing” effect upon the people. Religion became of the people and centered around the individual—not just a concern of the ecclesiastical elite.¹⁵ The ideals of this movement were adapted, to some degree, by the clergy of a number of New England congregations. Certain sects of Baptists, Congregationalists, and Presbyterians incorporated this theology into their sermons.¹⁶ Writer Alan Heimert points out that it became popular for the clergy to deliver what were commonly known as “election sermons.” Ministers took this opportunity to “expound on political theory, to assess social conditions, and even to propose policies to the legislature.” These sermons often took the form of a jeremiad, a literary device that could be described as a lament of the deplorable state of mankind. The literary form often focused on a loss of piety and usually predicted an ominous end for society based upon its current state of sinfulness.¹⁷ Many congregations were warned by their ministers of the impending retribution by God for their shortsightedness, selfishness, and corruption of virtues.¹⁸ Both during and after the Great Awakening, ministers spewed the fiery rhetoric of evangelical Protestantism and political ideology from their pulpits. One clear example of this is the speeches of Jonathan Mayhew of Boston, Massachusetts. For over nineteen years his pulpit was the epicenter of “Boston theology,” as well as an “outpost of Colonial resistance” to both British political and ecclesiastical over-reaching. Mayhew’s own core beliefs were acquired during his tenure at Harvard University. Professor Edward Holyoke, who was considered to be “a liberal thorn in the side of Calvinism,” influenced Mayhew as well as many other future patriots such as Samuel Adams, John Adams, James Otis, and John Hancock. Mayhew relied not just on his ability to perform a moving oratory, but on his pamphlet writing skills as well. He made many friends along the way, including Englishmen who had colonial sympathies. Mayhew seemed to fear the potential threat of England and the established Anglican or Catholic Church. John Adams waxed poetic about this same issue when he asserted that “Methodistical bishops, bishops of the church of England, and bishops, archbishops and Jesuits of the church of Rome” were hoping to

14 Ibid.

15 Martin E. Marty, *Religion, Awakening, and Revolution: Faith of Our Fathers* (Wilmington, DE: Consortium, 1977), 73-99.

16 Trinterud, 37-57.

17 Lambert, 35.

18 Heimert and Miller, 3-4.

influence and/or benefit from “constitutional authority” by Parliament over Colonial America.¹⁹

As a minister, Jonathan Mayhew seemed to labor willingly to promote both religious and political freedom, using both his oratory and writing skills to enlighten his followers and the public. In response to the enactment of the Stamp Act, Mayhew in his sermon of August 25, 1765, referenced Galatians 5:12-13, which he used to enforce the idea that the people had been “called unto liberty.” Historian Clinton Rossiter strongly suggests that “no sermon did more to stiffen resistance” to this perceived unjust act. Mayhew seemed to equate the struggle for “private judgment” in religion and the fight for personal liberty as being one and the same. He seemed to eschew the tenets espoused by George Whitfield and other Great Awakening zealots. According to some he evinced a “humanistic, liberal, rational, natural religion.” Mayhew seemed to support the idea that man was capable, through the use of his own pragmatic thinking and the revealed word, to logically and rationally consider and understand the message God had sent.

Another critically important religious discourse delivered by Mayhew on January 30, 1750, was in response to the anniversary of the death of King Charles I. Many considered his sermon to be the “first responsible public expression in colonial America of the sacred right and duty of resistance to tyranny.” This was followed several years later, in 1754, by an “election sermon” espousing the idea that “political power” was something that was held in sacred trust for the sovereign people. This had been a long-held philosophical belief for Mayhew, seen as Lockean in design, but purely Mayhewian in deliverance. Finally, right before his untimely death, in celebration of the repeal of the Stamp Act, Mayhew delivered a powerful sermon entitled “The Snare Broken” dedicated to the statesman William Pitt, who was seen as a friend to America. His unwavering belief in free government, the consent of man in all forms of civil rule, and the importance of both “piety and patriotism” were critical elements of his religious oratory.²⁰

Some viewed the sermons of these so-called patriot ministers as merely instruments of propaganda meant to fuel revolutionary rhetoric and incite the masses. However, there were many more who saw this discourse as necessary and inspirational based upon the circumstances of the era. Some of these sermons and pamphlets referred to “divine providence” and inferred that the colonists were the “chosen people of God.” These concepts

¹⁹ Clinton Rossiter, “The Life and Mind of Jonathan Mayhew,” *The William and Mary Quarterly* 7 (October 1950): 531-558.

²⁰ Ibid.

and others were prevalent in sermons delivered between the years of 1735-1776 and beyond.

Benjamin Franklin was just one of the adherents to this philosophy. Franklin contrasted the corruption of values and morals in England with the “glorious public virtue” of the colonies. In his view, any type of reunion with England could only be negative because England would “drag us after them... their wide-wasting prodigality and profusion is a gulf that will swallow up every aid we may distress ourselves to afford them.” Alexander Hamilton saw Parliament as “an old, wrinkled, withered, worn out hag.” The idea that England, and especially Parliament, had become morally and ethically corrupt inspired many of the clergy and writers to see colonial America as a more just, moral, and virtuous society. Since the early 1760s colonial writers had begun to promote the idea that America was the new Promise Land: a “principal seat of that glorious kingdom which Christ shall erect upon in the latter days.” According to Bailyn, many of these writers and their discourses strongly suggested that submission to tyranny was unacceptable. And furthermore, no obedience was necessary to an arbitrary government that promoted “unconstitutional edicts calculated to enslave a free people.”²¹

As one begins to examine the politicized sermons, especially those delivered between the years of 1730 and 1776 by many of the New England clergy, the social and political influences of early Puritanism and Great Awakening fervor became apparent. John Wingate Thornton observed that as these early radicals were “already imbued with the spirit, they gradually adopted the principles of Independency, absolute democracy, essentially as held and taught by their Plymouth brethren.” Although the issue of various taxes imposed by Parliament was “trifling,” when viewed in the context of individual freedom, unfair taxation became an issue of principle. The ideas of “political ethics” and “the liberty of the gospel” were an inherent part of the language of the New England clergy. According to Thornton, “the pew and the pulpit had been educated to self government.” New England clergymen were accustomed to thinking for themselves.

John Quincy Adams explained that the “principles” of civil government and the religious discourse of Christianity became intertwined during the years leading up to the Revolution. The people began to associate the “superciliousness” of an Anglican bishop with the excessive pomp and circumstance of a king. Since many of the clergy in the colonies already feared that England would attempt to override the religious freedoms established in

21 Bailyn, 138-143.

America by appointing Anglican bishops, they chose to blend the ideals of religious freedoms with those of civil liberties, independence, and a desire for democracy. Because many of the New Englanders were descended from early dissenters, they jealously guarded the religious independence that their ancestors had acquired for them through unimaginable hardships.²²

Many of these clergy equated submission to a tyrant as something completely incompatible with Christianity. The evolution of Protestantism led a number of these clergymen to use their pulpit to reinforce the idea of dissent, especially reiterating the importance of resistance when applied to any type of spiritual tyranny. Eventually their ideals morphed into the concepts of civil liberty and freedom, espoused by those in favor of rebellion. The clergy greatly influenced the discourse of this era by combining the language of rebellion with New England Christian theology. The importance of religious liberty should never be underestimated as a catalyst for the patriotic cause in Revolutionary-era America.

In a sermon delivered on August 13, 1730, Jonathan Belcher discussed the importance of the religious influence on government. He asserted that no nation could stand only “on the like basis of a just and righteous humane government.” Going further, he inferred that the “stability of the state” was based upon the judicious rule of both “superior and inferior magistrates.” He suggested that if “the peace of God rule not in men’s hearts; if their passions shake’em and they clash with one another... the house totters” and ultimately falls. His assertion seems to rely on the belief that when those in power are led by a sincere desire to serve both God and man, they will rule justly. Furthermore, Belcher stated that the success of a nation depended upon its virtue, honor, and the favor bestowed upon it by God. A faithful people, pious in their attitudes toward God and religion, would be rewarded.

At this point, most sermons were still referencing fair and impartial rulers and reinforcing the concept that one should obey those chosen by God to rule. Sermons often cited biblical examples to bolster the idea of submission to monarchy, such as Romans 13:1-5, which commands: “Let every Soul be subject unto the higher Powers: For there is no Power but of God.” However, Belcher stated that those in power had an obligation to those they served. He asserted that if “government is the pillar of the earth, so religion is the pillar of government.” If those in power do not submit to God, “tyranny” will abound.²³

²² John Wingate Thornton, *The Pulpit of the American Revolution* (reprinted NY: Burt Franklin, 1860; 1970), xiii-xxxiii.

²³ *Political Sermons of the American Founding Era*, ed. Ellis Sandoz (Indianapolis, IN: Liberty Fund, 1998), 11-24.

By 1740, Joseph Sewall, in his sermon entitled “Nineveh’s Repentance and Deliverance,” called for the cities of Boston and London to deal justly with God. He did not merely suggest, but plainly stated, that both cities were searching for “worldly glory” and running rampant with sin. He spoke of the retribution by God to an unjust ruler – his kingdom and power are taken away. He continued by emphasizing God’s covenant with his people, incorporating the concept into both the religious and political spheres. He implored his congregation to repent and “cry to God in prayer with fasting” in order to hopefully avert any divine retribution by God. He warned his congregation that they should be willing to act for the greater good of the public, and when casting their votes “to consider what is right in the sight of God,” – to look at the character of the individual.²⁴

The sermon delivered in Boston in 1744 by Elisha Williams entitled, “The Essential Rights and Liberties of Protestants” went a step further. Williams began in the form of a letter he wrote to a friend in which he briefly discussed the importance of religious freedom. He then went on to espouse the Puritan ideal of religious individuality, in that “every Christian has a right of judging for himself what he is to believe and practice in religion.” According to Williams, no civil magistrate had the right to create or enforce laws with respect to religion, and every Christian should “stand fast in that [inherent] liberty.” He reinforced the idea that man is born free and must freely submit to government. Williams even went so far as to assert that the fruit of one’s labor belonged only to that individual—in essence promoting the idea through analogy that taxation without representation is morally and ethically wrong. He strongly believed in the right of every man to choose his own religion and in the right of every nation to follow its own laws, made by its elected representatives.²⁵

A sermon by Charles Chauncy entitled “Civil Magistrates Must Be Just, Ruling in the Fear of God” was delivered in Boston in 1747 before Governor William Shirley. Chauncy spoke of the important role of civil government in maintaining order in society. However, he went on to suggest that an orderly government cannot exist where tyranny or arbitrary rule abound. In his opinion, the role of government leaders was to rule in a manner consistent with the general good of all: “to keep confusion and disorder out of the world; to guard men’s lives; to secure their rights; to defend their properties and liberties.” He suggested that those in power must be just and “rule in the fear of God.” Those in power had an obligation to recognize the extent of their power and go no

²⁴ Ibid., 25-50.

²⁵ Ibid., 51-118.

further. They should “guard commerce” and be “fair and honest” in their dealings with others. Most importantly, a ruler should “express... care” by “seasonably and faithfully placing a proper guard against the designs of those who would rule in a despotic manner, to the subversion of the rights... of the people.” He warned that the liberty of the people could just as easily be endangered by those in modest positions in government as well as those in more powerful positions. Rulers should earnestly attempt to prevent the encroachment upon the liberty of their subjects. With each passing year the sermons seem to become more infused with political ideology. With this in mind, it becomes easier to see just how the edicts of Parliament came to affect the religious discourse in the colonies.²⁶

The political sermon delivered by Jonathan Mayhew in Boston on May 23, 1766, at the time of the repeal of the Stamp Act (entitled “The Snare Broken: A Thanksgiving Discourse”) is particularly interesting. He spoke of divine providence in relation to the recent repeal by Parliament of the highly contested Stamp Act. Mayhew reinforced the message of earlier ministers by inferring that “we only exercise that liberty, wherewith Christ hath made us free.” He pointed out that Americans were not a subjugated people in the past, but subjects of England: “we have a natural right to our own will.” Mayhew discussed England’s ability to destroy commerce and trade, effectually challenging any chance of survival for the colonists. When speaking of the Stamp Act he characterized the legislation as unconstitutional, oppressive, grievous, and ruinous. He referred to it as a snare and Parliament as “greedy for their prey.” While he implored his congregation to be dutiful to Parliament, he recognized that arbitrary rule essentially absolved one from obedience or obligation. Once again, a minister was using his pulpit for the purpose of espousing political views.²⁷

Both Thomas Jefferson and John Adams held the belief that, since the Americans were “the sons of expatriated men who had possessed the natural right of going in quest of new habitation,” they essentially became free once again according to the laws of nature and could only bind themselves voluntarily. Adams espoused the idea that America was “discovered,” not “conquered,” once again reaffirming the natural God-given right of man to form a society and voluntarily consent to a form of government. In the case of Massachusetts, this compact (or, covenant), was with the king. The historian Merrill Peterson argues that a war could not be fought and that

²⁶ Ibid., 137-177.

²⁷ Ibid., 231-264.

rebellion could not occur until a united public opinion had been formed.²⁸ How better to form a national opinion than through the rhetoric of a religious discourse? The concept of willing submission to governmental authority was reinforced in many pamphlets, books, and sermons. Historian Jack Greene argues that at the outset of the Stamp Act, many of the colonists were “cautious in their approach” in figuring out just exactly how to respond.²⁹

Last, a sermon delivered by John Allen in New London on December 3, 1772, entitled, “An Oration upon the Beauties of Liberty” serves as a prime example of this phenomenon. Allen began by reading a letter written to the Earl of Dartmouth in which he asserted the rights of man in regards to liberty and freedom. He implored the Earl to understand the colonists’ right to “stand fast in the liberty wherein they were made free.” The tactics by which the king and Parliament had attempted to subjugate the colonists was enumerated as well. His sermon outlined the importance of protecting the rights of the people. He asserted that King George needed only to look at his actions and those of his Parliament to understand the reason why the colonists had written such inflammatory tracts against his rule. In Allen’s opinion, a king was not worthy to reign if he was not considerate of the rights of his subjects. He further suggested that “whatever power destroys their rights, destroys at the same time his right to reign” or any right to his kingdom or crown. Allen plainly stated that Parliament ruled only over Great Britain, and therefore could not “justly make any laws to oppress or defend the Americans.” He expressed that the British Constitution was experiencing a state of decline, English liberties were waning, and British military power was “oppressing.” This highly charged political sermon went so far as to potentially incite the congregation to action by telling churchgoers that danger and death were “near.”³⁰

Of all the sermons mentioned, the Allen discourse was the strongest in denouncing both the king and Parliament. All of these sermons had in common the element of political discourse presented in a religious context. In reading these sermons, one can gain a sense of how these sermons evolved over time, in direct correlation to the political climate of the day. The sermons of the early 1730s, which contained some political content, stand in stark contrast to the sermons delivered one decade later in which the clergy espoused their anger and disfavor with Great Britain. This evolution and merging of religious and political ideas transmitted from the

28 Merrill D. Peterson, “Adams and Jefferson: A Revolutionary Dialogue,” *The Wilson Quarterly* 1 (Autumn 1976): 108-125.

29 Jack P. Greene, *Peripheries and Center: Constitutional Development in the Extended Politics of the British Empire and the United States, 1607-1788* (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 1986), 86.

30 Sandoz, 302-325.

clergy to the laity, reinforces the idea that politicized sermons fueled in some way the rhetoric of rebellion.

The sermons of the 1740s were filled with references asserting that England was a righteous nation having “purged itself of tyranny in the Glorious Revolution,” but this concept very quickly began to change.³¹ Once the colonists began to perceive the actions of the king and Parliament as contentions, arbitrary, and unconstitutional their anger and distrust of those in England was reflected in both their civil and religious discourse. Many of the New England clergy struggled with how they were bound to behave (in a biblical, moral, and ethical way) in response to the perceived arbitrary rule of Parliament and King George III. Many came to the conclusion that “a ruler who violates God’s law and desolates the church may be resisted.” Essentially, because the king and the people “obligated” one another in the form of a covenant, once the covenant was broken, neither party was obligated to continue the relationship. Historian J. Wayne Baker infers that the importance of the covenant in America extends back to the Mayflower colony. He also describes the Declaration of Independence as another example of a social compact or covenant.³²

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American patriots seemed to agree that virtue and piety were essential in any form of good government. They found solace from the pulpits of their respective congregations through the clergy’s seeming support of rebellion. Politicized sermons were not only found in the prominent churches, but in the meetinghouses of other religions, and synagogues.³³ Some argue that the spirit of rebellion started at least forty years before the actual Revolution began.³⁴ Early Puritan emigrants had become imbued with the idea that they had been assigned a special mission by God.

Both loyalists and Patriots utilized religion to assert their point of view. In the past, religion had been used to “bolster monarchical authority,” especially among the ordinary citizenry. It became a way to manipulate and control the uneducated, superstitious masses. However, over time, with the onset of the movement for religious toleration and freedom, this began to change. It could be reasonably argued that religion was still used as a means of manipulation. Instead of containing the masses, it inspired them to seek freedom and liberty, to

31 Tucker, 315-340.

32 J. Wayne Baker, “Faces of Federalism: From Bullinger to Jefferson,” *Publius* 30 (Autumn 2000): 25-41.

33 Benjamin L. Carp, *Rebels Rising: Cities and the American Revolution* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), 18-25.

34 Frank Lambert, *The Founding Fathers and the Place of Religion in America* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2003), 205-246.

stand up to what many perceived as a tyrannical government in order to fulfill their providential destiny. While loyalist clergy chose to promote war as a sin, patriot ministers (also known as the “Black Regiment” by loyalists) chose to promote the concept that subjugation by an arbitrary power was equivalent to slavery, and that a free people have the right to disavow a corrupt ruler. In the eyes of many patriots, Americans were fighting for “self-preservation.”³⁵

The politicized sermons of the early and mid eighteenth-century were imbued with the rhetoric of rebellion, individuality, liberty, and freedom from tyranny, and inspired many to join the patriot cause. For colonists who came of age during this time period, religious-political discourse was all they knew. It was a rhetoric that was seen as multi-generational in that it had been prevalent for decades. These politicized sermons were not just found in churches, meetinghouses, and synagogues, but they were published in pamphlets so that even those who did not regularly attend religious services had easy access to these speeches. While there were certainly other influences and contributing factors which led to dissent, it would be difficult to find one that had more impact on a daily basis than the theology of rebellion, delivered within the context of Puritan ethics and espoused by so many of the New England clergy. ◆◆◆

35 Carp, 18-25.

CHRISTIAN PILGRIMS AND HOLY MEN IN LATE ANTIQUITY

Billy D. Mann

Pilgrims were an integral component of Christian culture in the third, fourth, and fifth centuries C.E. Their writings offer a unique glimpse of the period even if seemingly embellished or fabricated. This era – Late Antiquity – witnessed a fascinating rise of holy men and holy places throughout the ancient world; subsequently, pilgrims traveled to observe and experience the holiness associated with this developing tradition. At first, the relationship between pilgrims and their venerated destinations seems only complementary. Yet, by closely exploring pilgrims of this period, a complex and interdependent relationship between the traveler and the journey’s end is unveiled. This relationship often exists despite denials from the most pious of holy men. Pilgrims satisfied their desire for a renewed spiritual closeness with God through seeking holy men and holy places. The relationship between pilgrims and holy men demonstrates their combined effect on the cult of the saints. In this, one may assert that pilgrims and holy men engaged in a co-dependent relationship that benefitted pilgrims and holy men alike. Together, they thrived, enlarged the influence of Christianity, and promoted the lasting importance of the cult of the saints beyond Late Antiquity.

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Pilgrims were not an anomaly on the desert landscape. Masses of Christians committed some portion of their life to visit a holy person or holy place. Exact numbers are impossible to identify, but writings from the period offer some insight. In *The Life of St. Simeon Stylites*, Theodoret of Cyrrhus described the crowds of the fifth century: “As they all came from every quarter, each road is like a river, one can see collected in that spot a human sea into which rivers from all sides debouche.”¹ This natural symbolism encourages readers to envision roads of perpetual movement, in which travelers felt congested by the masses as they sought spiritual encounters. According to Athanasius, Antony was visited in the desert at the Inner Mountain “[by] great numbers from all over the world and all the different nationalities rejoiced to see this man fighting so valiantly against the devil.”² Athanasius’ account emphasized that the crowds visiting Antony appeared not only large but also originated from distant lands. As many accounts highlighted, droves of pilgrims abandoned their mundane lives to embark on a

1 Robert Doran, “The Syriac Life of Saint Simeon Stylites,” in *The Lives of Simeon Stylites* (Kalamazoo, MI: Cistercian Publications, 1992), 75.

2 Athanasius, “Life of Antony,” in *Early Christian Lives*, trans. Carolinne White (London: Penguin Books, 1998), 65.



Figure 1. Landscape view of 6th century church in Syria. Source: “North Church (561 A.D.), general view from southeast,” Howard Crosby Butler Archive. Department of Art and Archaeology, Princeton University.

taxing journey. This undertaking demanded a high level of motivation in order to form small or large pilgrimage groups.

The word “pilgrim” derives from the Latin word *peregrī*, which translates loosely to “a traveller [sic] in a foreign land.”³ The modern era provides a more explicit definition: “someone that travels to a sacred place for religious reasons.”⁴ Neither definition properly represents the essence of Christian pilgrims of Late Antiquity.

The vague phrase “religious reasons” fails to capture the emotion and passion Christian pilgrims associated with

³ *Webster’s Unabridged Dictionary*, 2nd ed., s.v. “peregrī.”

⁴ *Ibid.*

the concept of religious journeys, particularly those of the third, fourth, and fifth centuries. The motivation for individuals to embark on a lengthy journey, in order to seek the intangible, becomes difficult to explain without accepting a broad goal. Pilgrims hoped to experience the holiness of the biblical past and a supernatural closeness with God that seemed impossible in the routine of everyday life.⁵ While contemporary knowledge may question the factuality of pilgrim explanations regarding their motivations, studying pilgrims requires an acceptance of their determination at face value. Supernatural experiences described by pilgrims may seem unlikely from an outsider's perspective, but it was these very events that inspired spiritual journeys.

In *The Memory of the Eyes*, author Georgia Frank identified the motivations of pilgrims. According to Frank, pilgrims sought destinations to satisfy a curiosity of the marvels of distant lands (exoticism), perceived divine presence through visual cues (sensory engagement), and participated in traditions or sacred moments of the Bible's past (Biblical Realism).⁶ Pilgrims viewed their uneventful village life as an impediment preventing a powerful closeness with God.⁷ Curiosity and visual cues proved significant. Active religious engagement with the sites demonstrated that the pilgrim and travelogue readers transformed holy sites and holy men into a tool for approaching God. Divine presence transformed objects of no significant intrinsic worth into relics.

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An arduous journey of this sort could only be fruitful with a planned travel route and destination. Certainly, while many pilgrims began journeys without a *specific* person or place in mind, these types of journeys were inspired by their final destinations, which inevitably brought pilgrims to particular regions. Pilgrimages acted as passageways from the present into the biblical past. These pilgrimages became the tools by which a pilgrim might achieve a spiritual encounter, and seemed to hold a special power.

Frank refers to those pilgrims unable to physically embark on a journey as “armchair pilgrims.”⁸ While unable to travel, armchair pilgrims still absorbed stories about the saints written by conventional pilgrims on their travels. Through vicarious pilgrimages, these individuals sought the same goals as their traveling counterparts. Spiritual renewal could be found in the readings because ultimately, the destination—not the journey—served as

5 Georgia Frank, *The Memory of the Eyes: Pilgrims to Living Saints in Christian Late Antiquity* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000), 29.

6 Ibid.

7 Ibid.

8 Ibid., 4.

the source of the pilgrims' inspiration. Therefore, in order for a spiritual awakening to occur, one needed only to imagine a holy man or holy place. This concept satisfies Frank's aforementioned outline of pilgrims' motivations. Despite the armchairs' inability to travel, their curiosity and the visual cues provided by journeyed travelers proved strong enough to affect their spirituality. For pilgrims and armchairs alike, the encounter with holy men and holy places superseded the actual journey.

Pilgrims zealously pursued holy men who were believed to bridge life on earth with heaven. Like timeless biblical personalities, a strong belief existed that holy men possessed the ability to communicate directly with God.⁹ During this communication, witnesses legitimized the holy man by validating his connection to heaven. The perception that these ethereal individuals resisted the temptations of Satan served as a source of encouragement and inspiration for others. The magnetizing personalities of the "spiritual athletes"¹⁰ pulled the pilgrims closer to the holy men to view firsthand the "evidence of contact with the supernatural world."¹¹ Forms of legitimizing the spiritual leaders included performing miracles and demonstrating the pious discipline of an ascetic lifestyle. Jerome referred to holy men as "the heavenly family upon earth."¹² The common perception of a holy man was that he lived the life of an angel with "unceasing prayer, prophecy, healing, and exorcism."¹³

The writings of pilgrims fueled this fascination with holy men and inspired more pilgrimages through their own narratives. In fact, according to Frank, "some men and women became so deeply attracted to this world that they set out to see the living saints [holy men] for themselves."¹⁴ While one might question the factual validity of these stories, their content included interesting narratives, embellished or otherwise. For example, the story of St. Simeon Stylites, a man willing to stand on a sixty-foot pillar for thirty-seven years, certainly served as an alluring read.¹⁵ Another example illustrates Antony's survival while enduring relentless physical beatings from the devil and his demons. Other writings, such as the tale of demoniacs healed with mysterious oil on an island

9 Gérard Vallée, *The Shaping of Christianity: The History and Literature of its Formative Centuries (100–800)* (New York: Paulist Press, 1999), 135.

10 "Athlete" is an interesting term used to characterize ascetic holy men who typically fasted and lived in isolation from society. In the Ammonius *Report* holy men are described as "exceedingly pale" and "incorporeal" (2). By modern definitions it is certainly inaccurate. However, Christians of Late Antiquity consistently referred to those that resisted temptation as "athletes" through various texts, i.e. Fourth Maccabees (6:10, 17:15, 17:16), Theodoret's *Religious History* (13), and *The Syriac Life of Saint Simeon Stylites* (1).

11 Vallée, 135.

12 Frank, 1.

13 Vallée, 135.

14 Frank, 2.

15 Vallée, 135.

eleven miles out to sea, surely piqued the curiosity of potential travelers.¹⁶

Holy sites provided a spiritual encounter by placing pilgrims in the footsteps of their biblical heroes. The importance of holy places is too great to overlook. However, much of the spiritual encounter associated with holy places required holy men to supplement the experience. Some holy places would have been unknown without the presence of holy men to provide a location, a story, and a spiritual encounter to enhance the pilgrims' visit.

Egeria's *Travelogue* provides an example of how holy men created a spiritual encounter for pilgrims. Egeria visited the Sinai region over the course of a month, from December of 383 C.E. to January of 384. A native of Western Europe, it is presumed she directed her narrative account to nuns.¹⁷ Egeria's account shows the significance of holy places for pilgrims, but more importantly, how holy men enhanced the spiritual encounter. Egeria, guided by holy men to Mount Sinai, traversed to a church built on the site "where the Law was given."¹⁸ She continued to the location where Moses received a second set of tablets after he destroyed the first in anger because of the sins of his people. Later, Egeria and the holy men visited the site of the burning bush, which she noted to be alive in the rocky landscape of the region. Each stop on her tour served as more than just an eyewitness account, it inspired a spiritual moment strengthened by the holy men that led her journey. Holy men created personal spiritual relationships along their route by reading from Exodus, making offerings to God, participating in earnest prayer, and offering communion. Egeria fondly recorded each stop in her journey and expressed her most sincere words to the holy men who served as her guides.¹⁹ Egeria understood that her expedition would have been fruitless without holy men directing her and fostering a spiritual encounter with God.

A cursory glance at the relationship between pilgrims and their destinations appears one-sided. Despite their desire to remain in solitude, holy men were constantly pursued by pilgrims who offered little in return other than perhaps glory and fame. Holy men provided services such as healing, prophecy, and wisdom, which were desired by pilgrims.²⁰ Even though it would appear to the contrary, holy men relied on the economic support

16 Presumably the mysterious oil referred to as "rock oil" in the text is petroleum, as noted in Daniel F. Caner's "Piacenza Pilgrim," in *History and Hagiography from the Late Antique Sinai* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2010), 261.

17 Egeria was most likely from Spain. Nuns are presumed to be the intended readers of her narrative, as she addressed her writing to "sisters." Egeria, "Egeria, Travelogue I-IX," in *History and Hagiography from the Late Antique Sinai*, ed. Daniel Caner (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2010), 211.

18 *Ibid.*, 220.

19 *Ibid.*, 225.

20 Frank, 4.

provided by pilgrimages.

As countless throngs of pilgrims relentlessly sought their divine intervention, holy men often retreated from the crowds. As an example, while on a mission to help the Outer Mountain inhabitants, Antony found himself simultaneously longing to return to his life of solitude.²¹ It is worth noting that Antony found the crowds to be “annoying” but ultimately he “*allowed*” [emphasis added] himself to be taken.²² The language of Antony’s account suggests that he could have resisted being taken to the Outer Mountain but chose not to do so. He desired solitude, but also accepted his burdensome role as a holy man.



Figure 2. Interior of 7th century church in Syria. Source: “Church dated 602 A.D., interior of east end from west,” Howard Crosby Butler Archive. Department of Art and Archaeology, Princeton University.

²¹ Athanasius, “Life of Antony,” 62-63.

²² *Ibid.*, 62.

Holy men particularly benefitted from pilgrims through the replenishing of supplies. While most holy men labored to be self-sufficient, the nature of their isolation made the acquisition of basic necessities challenging.²³ The “Piacenza Pilgrim” account described a journey by an Italian man to various sacred sites throughout Egypt, Syria, Mesopotamia, and Constantinople.²⁴ In a mid-sixth century example, a pilgrim found a monastery near the city of Elusa. The pilgrim noted that while the nuns had a grindstone, they were dependent on Christian pilgrims to provide the grain needed to survive in the desert.²⁵

As in the above mentioned examples, most holy men pursued solitude. However, a closer examination reveals that holy men needed the pilgrims despite their insistence to the contrary. This relationship was co-dependent; each participant thrived in the presence of the other. The exemplary life of a holy man was wasted if not lived to influence others. Pilgrims projected the influence of the holy men beyond the desert. They accomplished this by spreading holy men’s fame, authoring pilgrim narratives, and supporting the monasteries economically. Athanasius suggested that what pilgrims received from Antony was valuable enough to be considered compensation for their journey.²⁶

The primary purpose of holy men involved bridging God with humanity. In his article, “The Rise and Function of the Holy Man,” Late Antiquity historian Peter Brown discussed how holy men made intercessions for mankind and presented God as an available and relevant part of everyday life. While God often appeared to be remote, the holy man was approachable. Brown wrote, “The holy man carried the burden of making such a distant God relevant to the particularity of human needs.”²⁷ Stories concerning St. Simeon Stylites support Brown’s assertion that the holy men were active intercessors with heaven. In one account of early fifth-century Syria, the villagers’ prayers for rain seemed to fall on deaf ears. When they requested prayer from Simeon Stylites, a different result occurred. With a drought choking the region, villagers approached Simeon and asked him to pray to God on their behalf. He responded, asking the people to “bring an offering to the Lord your God; turn away from evil and do good; then, turning, immediately he will have mercy upon you.”²⁸ When the people

23 The argument for the benefit of labor among monastics is well documented in Daniel Caner’s *Wandering, Begging Monks*.

24 Caner, “Piacenza Pilgrim,” 252.

25 *Ibid.*, 254.

26 *Ibid.*, 65.

27 Peter Brown, “The Rise and Function of the Holy Man in Late Antiquity,” *The Journal of Roman Studies* 61 (1971): 97.

28 Frederick Lent, “The Life of St. Simeon Stylites: A Translation of the Syriac Text in Bedjan’s *Acta Martyrum et Sanctorum*, Vol. IV,” *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 35 (1915): 140.

did as instructed, the rain began to fall, as expected for the season. The actual effectiveness of Simeon's response and prayer is debatable. However, through Simeon, the villager discovered an audible voice from God, which would not have been found by his or her own volition. To a pilgrim, this account solidified Simeon as a holy man because he directly related the practical needs of the people to an omnipotent God. Significantly, narratives of the event inspired praise for "God the sustainer," and recognized Simeon's part in producing praise for God.²⁹ Such stories created an impetus for pilgrimages and cultivated a desire to visit holy men.

In hopes of motivating others to obtain their own spiritual encounter, pilgrims documented their discoveries. This was especially effective for "armchair pilgrims," who trekked vicariously through these writings.³⁰ As larger numbers of pilgrims made these journeys, holy men such as Simeon benefitted from the increased opportunities. Narrative accounts also inspired additional spiritual encounters for pilgrims, such as healings. Furthermore, by performing these healings, holy men validated their connection with God. Pilgrims not only sought holy men for healing, but also to marvel at the healings of others.

As intercessors, holy men acted as agents of God while being careful not to take credit for the miracle of healing. In one example, a military officer had a daughter who was thought to be possessed and tormented by an evil spirit. Antony used this opportunity to turn the father toward God. Antony proclaimed: "Why do you ask me for help, you who are a mortal man? I too am mortal and share your weakness. But if you believe in Christ whose servant I am, go and pray to God according to your faith and your daughter will be healed."³¹ The father did as instructed, and his daughter was healed. Antony was sought for a specific purpose but claimed no divine power of his own. Rather, he used his role as a holy man to foster greater spirituality in the father. Such accounts inspired pilgrims to seek Antony for healing. Athanasius later wrote that Antony believed "[healing] does not belong to me or any other human being but to God."³² God healed the girl, but Antony was the destination for the father who felt unable to access God's power.

Holy men were more than just miracle workers. They were also ancient social workers providing services beyond their spiritual calling. For example, St. Simeon Stylites often served in a capacity that entailed far more

29 Ibid., 179.

30 Frank, 4.

31 Athanasius, *Early Christian Lives*, 38.

32 Ibid., 44.

than performing miracles of healing. In fact, many of his tasks were borderline petty and at best mundane. Robert Doran explored elements of St. Simeon's ability to provide social assistance. For pilgrims, Simeon's role as a social worker reassured his elevated status by proving he was an intercessor to God and confirmed that miracles could be seen in other forms besides healings. Simeon achieved widespread fame, most likely, because he became the face of a faceless God.

Pilgrims and villagers alike longed for Simeon's influence. In one account, a widowed father approached the pillar of Simeon to plea for assistance for his hungry children after thieves ravaged his fields. The father wanted more than justice; he wanted advice concerning his livelihood and his ability to provide for his children. Simeon restored the father's confidence and assured him that God would provide for his children by multiplying the remaining beans into abundance.³³ Another account described leather workers who petitioned for Simeon's help. These workers experienced unfair taxes on red dye, which affected their ability to provide for their families. Simeon became more than an intercessor between the workers and God; he was a mediator among the villagers. As a result of Simeon's efforts, the taxes on dyes were reversed.

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Despite holy men's insistence that pilgrims were often undesirable and at times a nuisance, they depended on pilgrims to validate their commitment to God. Ironically, the holy man's detachment from society made him valuable to the masses.³⁴ The holy man became a fascinating marvel and served as an objective outsider to all people no matter where they resided. The line between holy man and wandering idiot is a fine one and subject to the interpretations of pilgrims. Travelers saw what they wanted to see, and were usually influenced by their prior readings.³⁵ However, witness recordings of their actions, such as unflinching discipline and the performance of miracles, proved essential to the holy man's authenticity. For the holy man's influence to travel beyond the village borders, he required a mobile audience. Pilgrims fulfilled this need.

Due to the pilgrims' verbal and written accounts, holy men were recognized throughout the Roman Empire. Athanasius observed the following about Antony: "The remarkable thing about this man was that he who lived in obscurity on the furthest edge of the world found favor with the emperors and was honored by the whole

33 Doran, 9.

34 Brown, 80-101.

35 Frank, 37.

imperial court.³⁶ Emperor Constantine sought out Antony through letters, yet Antony seemed uninterested in engaging the ruler simply because of his title. As a holy man, Antony's allegiance followed Christ rather than the leader of the Roman Empire. At the urging of his brothers, Antony provided a perfunctory reply to Constantine. In his letter, Antony thanked Constantine and reminded him that Christ was the *true* king and encouraged him not to let his position be a distraction in serving God. Constantine seemed fascinated by Antony, and not vice versa, thus overturning the normal social hierarchy. Pilgrim accounts of Antony's life spread both his fame and influence throughout the Roman Empire during the fourth century. Solitude may have been the longing of his heart, but surely the opportunity to direct an emperor to Christ was a notable accomplishment in his quest to honor God.

Author Stephen J. Davis characterized the cult of the saints as an accumulation of the social practices and institutions that accompanied them.³⁷ These social practices included radical asceticism or the display of images prominently in the home.³⁸ Pilgrimage offered another radical method for contributing to the cult of the saints. Pilgrims were active participants in the rise of the cult of the saints throughout Late Antiquity.

As part of the rise of the cult of saints, there was a strong desire to physically touch a religious object, or relic. By doing so, pilgrims hoped to enhance their spiritual encounters, and they satisfied this void by acquiring relics on their pilgrimages. The cult of the saints became widespread. By having touched a religious object, pilgrims developed a continued closeness with God after the holy man was gone. For example, the pillar of St. Simeon Stylites, that once stood sixty-feet tall, has been reduced to less than ten by pilgrims desiring to feel and possess a part of what made him unique. As such, the cult of the saints was given credence by the role of pilgrims. Relics ranged from utilitarian items, such as the bucket used by Christ to drink from the well of the Samaritan woman, to the bizarre, such as the head of John the Baptist in a jar.³⁹ Each example demonstrated a desire to physically clutch an object of holiness rather than relying on mere written words. By doing this, pilgrims were active participants in the cult of the saints and furthered the reach of holy men throughout time and space.

Pilgrims were the lifeblood of Christianity throughout Late Antiquity. Their actions helped encourage the spread of Christianity throughout the Roman Empire and the world. They traveled great distances to

36 Athanasius and White, 59.

37 Stephen J. Davis, *The Cult of St. Thecla: A Tradition of Women's Piety in Late Antiquity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 4.

38 Ibid.

39 Frank, 119-120.

relive the biblical past and experience closeness with their God. Narratives of their journey invigorated others and emboldened future generations of pilgrims. This resulted in a near endless stream of travelers searching desperately for holiness. Ironically, their passionate pursuit of spiritual renewal needed more than observation of a site. Both pilgrims and holy men promoted Christianity as the religion developed. Pilgrims needed holy men for a destination, for guidance, and for validation. Holy men needed pilgrims to disseminate their message, persuade the masses, and spread their influence beyond the boundaries of their solitary existence. In fact, this co-dependent relationship transformed a region and, eventually, the world. Pilgrims and holy men became much more than just travelers and ascetics. They became reliant on one another, engendered the cult of the saints, and became each other's closest ally. ◆◆◆

INVITED ESSAY: INTRODUCTION

The University of Alabama at Birmingham contains one of the most diverse student bodies in the country. Home to leading medical and research institutions, UAB draws students from around the globe. The University is fortunate to have Farah Al Farhan as a student in the College of Arts and Sciences. An undergraduate double majoring in political science and economics, Farah has carried her studies around the world and to her native land, the Middle East.

In the following essay, Farah describes the political and social atmosphere of Syria while vacationing in 2010. Although glad to return to the Middle East to visit relatives, she was unprepared for the events that would take place in the following months. Through Farah's essay, the editors hope that readers will gain a new perspective on the Arab Spring revolutions and the way that these movements have transformed the outlook of young people living in the region.

INVITED ESSAY

WHAT'S IN THE ARAB SEASONS?

Farah A. Al Farhan

146 In July of 2010, I visited relatives in Syria. Most of my relatives are Iraqi citizens, and some of them still live in Iraq. For years, Iraqis left their homes and the scorching summer heat and spent the season in the surrounding countries, such as Syria and Jordan. Last summer was just that; a break from the blazing sun, the tense security, and a time to catch up with family members living elsewhere. Although the Syrian and Iraqi governments and the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) differ in their estimates, there are approximately 800,000 to 1.6 million Iraqi refugees living in Syria.¹ When the Arab Spring revolutions started gaining momentum in Syria in March of 2011 and the Baathist regime began killing off “traitors,” life for many people living there changed dramatically, including my friends and family. People were tracked down by the authorities for making provocative Facebook posts, some left their hometowns as a result of heavy bombings, and others fled their summer houses in Syria because they were no longer safe. I realized I might not be able to visit Syria again for a very long time.

While in Syria, I learned an interesting unwritten rule. Saying the word ‘lion’ in Arabic (*Asad*) is strictly prohibited because it sounds too similar to the surname of Bashar Al-Assad, the current ruler. If any government official heard the word, they would instantly assume that the speaker was using sarcasm and analogies to mock their leader. Yet, the threat seemed unnecessary. Most Syrians I knew were exceptionally proud of their ruler (prior to the revolutions, anyway). Signs covered Damascus (and other cities, I am sure) with the message: “We love you, Bashar.” Perhaps everyone was too afraid to say anything that might be considered revolutionary, or perhaps they thought they were satisfied with the current ruler until he began utilizing violence against protestors.

Looking back on my trip, I wish I had paid more attention, listened more carefully to what was being said in the streets, shops, markets, and crowded family dinners about the Syrian government and the people’s level of satisfaction with it. I might have expected a revolution to occur if I had been more aware of my environment.

¹ As of January 1, 2009, the United Nations High Commission for Refugees estimated that there were between 1.2 and 1.4 million Iraqi refugees living in Syria. Anne Evans Barnes, “Realizing protection space for Iraqi refugees: UNHCR in Syria, Jordan and Lebanon,” UNHCR.org, <http://www.unhcr.org/cgi-bin/texis/vtx/home/opensslPDFViewer.html?docid=4981d3ab2&query=iraqi%20refugees%20syria> (accessed April 28, 2012).

Instead, I was completely shocked when it happened.

The Arab Spring has become synonymous with the Arab youth movement. The revolutions were successful in altering many perceptions and misconceptions about the Middle East, but the view that saw the most dramatic shift was the inner perspective of the youth themselves. I remember seeing a documentary a few years ago that followed the lives of Tunisian teenagers. One of the young adults explained: “Everybody is looking for a chance, an opportunity to leave, a way out of the country.” Emigration seemed to be the most reliable way to obtain better education and life opportunities. However, the outlook has reversed since the outbreak of the revolutions. Now, young people do not wish to leave their country for another because of the lack of prospects. Instead, they plan to initiate, demand, and create the opportunities and the quality of life they believe they deserve. The possibility of rebuilding their country and changing the political and social system to incorporate their values suddenly seems attainable. Everyone is looking for a chance to contribute. Before, emigration was regarded as a method to avoid the hassles associated with local education; but now, people realize that there is potential for change, and that acquiring local education or local employment is feasible. However, this optimism is limited only to certain countries that were able to successfully overthrow the former dictatorship and establish a working provisional government that withstood the costs of the revolution. Some countries, such as Egypt, are still afflicted by instability.

In terms of these revolutions, the first step to achieving success is removing the current dictatorial regime. Only then can a new government lay the keystones for a strong political and social foundation. Historically, the revisionary government is quite different from the prior regime in beliefs and political ideals. Many associate the new platform with notions of equality and freedom from tyranny and oppression. However, these abstract notions soon become very vague and unrepresentative of the people’s needs. The post-revolutionary government tends to become unresponsive to the population as the political agendas of key players start to take precedence over the people’s wishes. A lack of clear leadership causes all kinds of problems to emerge, most commonly the rise of extremist parties.

In pre-revolutionary Tunisia, the regime created a very strict secular society, one very similar to the French system of a secular state. Under the previous regime, Muslim women were barred from wearing the head

covering, or *hijab*, in public. They were required to remove it in schools and universities. Some teachers and college professors allowed women to wear their *hijabs* in the classroom, but once these women walked out of the room, they were subject to the state's laws. In the post-revolutionary period, it became clear that an Islamist group would found a new government order in Tunisia. They would stand against everything the previous regime had enforced, such as secular society, even though this was clearly not in the best interest of the people.

The Renaissance Party of Tunisia (*Ennahda* Party) is an Islamist group who won the majority of seats in the Tunisian Parliament. They selected a female candidate to head the election campaign. She does not wear the *hijab*, and as she walked around neighborhoods convincing people that *Ennahda* was on their side, she reinforced the notion that women had the right to choose whether or not to wear the *hijab*. The propaganda was successful; the party won the majority of seats, but problems arose. College professors were scorned for not covering their hair. Muslim "brotherhoods" and "sisterhoods" appeared out of nowhere and influenced the government to make everyone conform to Islamic rules and regulations. Instead of focusing on critical issues, such as rising unemployment and poverty, government resources are currently utilized to enforce outward forms of spirituality. Even the real motives behind the government's spiritual agenda are questionable.

Other social problems arose with the revolutions, including looting of personal and public property, sectarianism and sectarian-based violence, and conflicting political interests among different groups. In Tunisia, hundreds of political parties emerged before the elections. One such party was the Tunisian Pirate Party (one of a few parties not recognized by the Interior Ministry during the upcoming election).² In Libya, concerning reports surfaced of the lynching of African migrants and blacks by rebels. In Egypt, mass looting of archaeological sites and museums occurred during the revolution, resulting in the loss of some of the country's most valuable assets. All of these social issues that emerged during and after the revolutions created widespread unrest and a lack of security.

Instability is the consequence and the dilemma of the Arab Spring. What began in the spring turned into the Arab Summer, the Arab Fall, and at the time of this writing, the Arab Winter. And still, the fighting, violence, and bloodshed have not stopped. In Egypt, the Supreme Council for the Armed Forces (SCAF) has become the

2 Sam Bollier, "Who are Tunisia's Political Parties?" Al-Jazeera, English, <http://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/features/2011/10/201110614579390256.html> (accessed April 28, 2012).

interim government of the country (in early February of 2011) since the ousting of Egyptian dictator, Hosni Mubarak. Since then, peaceful protestors have faced violent responses from the SCAF officers. In more than one instance, shocking videos surfaced in national and international media of army vehicles hitting protestors in the streets. Ironically, the SCAF heads the new provisional government even though the ousted leader, Mubarak, was also a member of the SCAF.

Political and economic turbulence are inevitable outcomes of any revolution. For those of us removed from the uprisings, this would seem to be common sense. Having thousands of protestors in the streets deters others from going about their daily business, causes congestion in major cities, and halts commerce. The continued protests against the government discourage foreign companies from investing in the country due to concerns about long-term vitality. As foreign investment declines, so does the economy, plunging it into a recession. The collapse of the economic system and the escalation of internal tensions are unfortunate by-products of the path to a more democratic government.

The countries that revolted will face years of political uncertainty and unsteadiness. During the revolutions, the people made it clear what they did *not* want. However, in the post-revolutionary world, citizens are still trying to answer the question: What *do* we want? Unfortunately, there is no simple answer to such a broad question, and there will certainly be different solutions and outcomes for each of the countries. The Arab Spring did not resolve any problems; it has only created the chance to fix them.

Tunisia, Libya, Egypt, Bahrain, and Syria will never be the same again, politically or socially. The revolutions showed the people of those countries, as well as the rest of the world, that these populations will not tolerate dictatorship and oppressive regimes. Nothing can silence them again. However, these countries constitute less than one third of the Middle East region. Other Arab countries may have assisted the rebels with food and medical aid or even publicly declared their support for the revolution. But only a handful of countries showed their support initially; and even then, many endorsed the rebels of one country, only to ignore the rebels of another.

The international community largely disregarded Bahrain's revolution. Ironically, other leaders did not want to interfere with the monarchy in Bahrain, but everyone wanted Libya's Muammar Gaddafi out. Every state



Figure 1. “Christians protecting Muslims during their prayers in Tahrir Square.” Source: © 2012 Nevine Zaki. Used with permission.

seeks to maximize its own self-interests, despite various principles and international treaties. When Arab countries became involved in aiding revolutions in other countries, many acted through a desire to protect their interests and to ensure the long-term continuation of their interests in the revolting countries.

Even the press has its interests. Prior to the Arab revolutions, Al-Jazeera News channel was regarded as one of the few reliable news sources in all Arab countries. People often gathered around televisions during family dinners to watch the station. In the midst of the Arab revolutions, Al-Jazeera News was widely acknowledged as the only source of trustworthy and dependable news concerning the situation in the Middle East. At a time

when American news channels spared only a few minutes to cover the events unfolding in the region, Al-Jazeera broadcasted from the Middle East for hours and hours at a time. But even then, Al-Jazeera did not mention Bahrain. Due to its sources of funding, Al-Jazeera did not broadcast news concerning Bahrain as vigorously as it covered Egypt and Tunisia.

Syria, of course, was not the first country to witness revolutionary uprisings, but it is the one I have visited most recently. The Arab Spring started with Tunisia, Libya, Egypt, Yemen, and then Syria and, to a certain extent, Jordan. (Jordan stands in a different category because King Abdullah II quickly responded to protestors by dissolving Parliament, replacing several prominent political figures, and promising to abide by the Jordanian people's wishes.)

Many consider Egypt to be the leader of the Middle East revolutions. In general, Egypt has received plenty of attention in the West, and has always been famous in Western popular culture as the home of the pyramids and a place of great fascination. Due to these reasons, Egypt appeared less foreign to Western observers than some of the other Arab countries that experienced revolutions. In a sense, while not the first country to lead the revolutions, the outcome of Egypt certainly had the most impact in the rest of the Arab world.

Egypt is the most populous Arab country and the one most involved in influencing others in the region. Egypt became the symbolic leader of the Arab Spring as Egyptians truly displayed the ideals they fought for: equality, justice, and freedom of expression. In a picture that went viral over the internet in just a few weeks, Egyptian Christians were shown holding hands to form a human shield around Egyptian Muslims who were performing the *Juma'a* prayer, or Friday prayer, in Tahrir Square. The human shield was to protect the Muslims from any attack while they were praying. This picture represents the essence of the revolution and is very meaningful to me personally. People all around the world today use it to show interfaith solidarity and strength among the Egyptians during that time of volatility.

There is no simple consensus determining the future outlook regarding the Arab Spring revolutions. We have already witnessed several countries' struggles and their first steps after the revolutions. Many scholars would argue that the revolutions are part of an escalating battle for natural resources, or that the revolutions occurred in response to a change in the political power structure in the world. But as a student, I know one thing for sure:

change did not happen overnight. Several events fueled the Arab Spring, from people's emotions, to political structures, to foreign policy. There is no one person or event to credit for the revolutions. Political transformations always carry with them both positive and negative interests: those of the citizens who initiated the change and those of the individuals who actually took power. Ultimately, it is up to people like you and me and the Egyptians and the Syrians to shape that change into more good than bad and more transparency than corruption. ◆◆◆

BOOK REVIEWS

BOOK REVIEW

THE PERMISSIVE SOCIETY: AMERICA, 1941-1965.

BY ALAN PETIGNY. (NEW YORK: CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS, 2009.

Pp. 204. ISBN 978-0521757225.)

Reviewed by Ben Cheney

Perhaps more than any other era of American history, the 1950s have been romanticized in modern culture as a time of social stability and conservatism. This view has been perpetuated by television shows such as *Leave It To Beaver* and *Happy Days*. University of Florida professor Alan Petigny seeks to deconstruct this picturesque image of post-war America in his book, *The Permissive Society: America, 1941-1965*. He proposes that the cultural revolution of the 1960s was not juxtaposed to the cultural stability of the 1950s, but rather was a product of the changes that occurred during the earlier era.

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The advent of the 1960s and the election of John F. Kennedy did not miraculously spawn the Women's Liberation movement, the counterculture, and the sexual revolution. These social developments all had their roots in the dynamic decade that preceded it: "The behavior that was hidden in the 1950s," Petigny explains, "finally exploded into public view the following decade." (249) Instead of treating the 1950s as a static era that should be skimmed over in order to reach the 1960s, Petigny pauses to uncover the trends that emerged. Students began wearing blue jeans and singers like Pat Boone and Elvis Presley began sharing airtime with Frank Sinatra. By 1960, birth control pills were made available with a prescription.

Splitting his analysis of the era into areas such as psychology, religion, feminism, and youth culture, Petigny systematically dissects each, paying careful attention to public figures, books, magazine articles, and studies conducted. At times, for example in the case of Liz Cohen's *A Consumer's Republic: The Politics of Mass Consumption in Post-war America*, Petigny actually re-examines the study's findings, revealing that the data collected actually makes a different assertion than originally intended. While Liz Cohen's study argues that gender roles were still rigidly set in regard to some areas of a married couple's finances, Petigny demonstrates that women had gained ground in almost every aspect of decision making in the financial partnership. Additionally, Petigny eschews traditional sources used by cultural historians. Changing rates of suicide, crime, and charitable

giving are avoided in lieu of changing trends in psychology, parenting, and religion, which are more difficult to discern.

Petigny attributes most cultural changes to World War II. To him, the shortages and rations of the pre-war period inspired the “Renunciation of renunciation” in the years of post-war abundance. Petigny hangs his thesis on the impact of renunciation on the American public and the resulting turning away from “reticence, guilt, and self-mastery—qualities we generally associate with a religiously conservative vision.” (248)

Overall, *The Permissive Society* is a well-written, thoroughly researched work, and suffers only in its desire to meticulously explicate its logic. Petigny uses most of the latter part of the work to explain his theory that the perceived peacefulness of the 1950s was due to the difference between values and norms. The last two chapters and most of the conclusion are devoted to explaining the divergence of a society’s values and the actions taken by individuals. While many casual readers could easily get bogged down in the lengthy explanation, historians can definitely benefit from understanding that popular culture is not always an accurate barometer of the latest trends in society. For this assertion and for the ground gained in the study of 1941-1965 America, Alan Petigny’s *The Permissive Society* is a valuable resource and a landmark work in the literature of post-war America.

BOOK REVIEW

STEVE JOBS.

BY WALTER ISAACSON. (NEW YORK: SIMON AND SCHUSTER, 2011.

Pp. 627. ISBN 978-1451648539.)

Reviewed by Jacob Fleming

In *Steve Jobs*, Walter Isaacson eloquently chronicles Jobs' life from his modest upbringing through his death in 2011 from pancreatic cancer. Isaacson believes that the late Apple CEO distinguished himself from his counterparts by deftly combining "creative" impulses with "technological" business ventures. (561) He considers that Jobs significantly improved six vital "industries," including personal computers, animated movies, music, cell phones, tablet computing, and digital publishing. Isaacson's work depicts a fastidious executive who strove for perfection in every facet of life. While Jobs' volatile behavior commonly antagonized everyone associated with him, his diligence and intelligence helped Apple develop from a fledging business operating in his parents' garage into the most powerful technological brand in the world.

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The book has emerged from interesting circumstances. Jobs wanted Isaacson to write his biography. After initially refusing to work with Jobs, the former CNN and *Time* magazine correspondent experienced a change of heart and received unprecedented access to one of the most private men in the world. Overall, Isaacson's linear narrative was straightforward and palatable. A few sections of the work seemed rushed and contrived but this is to be expected in a work hastily published (Isaacson released this book immediately following Jobs' death).

Isaacson conducted more than one hundred interviews, predominately with Job's relatives, friends, colleagues, and business rivals, to construct the book. Isaacson beautifully incorporated these interviews into riveting anecdotes. Jobs' childhood, spiritual journey to India, and clashes with various important business and political leaders were the most engaging stories. Jobs was notorious for entering into public arguments with other figures and of publicly castigating such figures as former Disney executive Michael Eisner and President Barack Obama. In one instance, Jobs stated that he believed that his products could solve many problems afflicting American society, including public education in the United States. He contended that his new technology would drastically improve student performance, and at the same time, admonished President Obama in his failure to

ameliorate the problems facing public schools. Because of this, Jobs predicted that President Obama would not be reelected in 2012. (544-545)

These anecdotes vividly display the development of Jobs' complicated personality. For the most part, Isaacson veered away from portraying Jobs as a "great man of history." Professionally, Jobs was an extremely demanding CEO who publicly scolded employees who submitted shoddy work. Most workers claimed that Jobs existed in a "reality distortion field" as he commonly required his workers to meet unreasonable deadlines. (xx) He quickly became irritated and feuded with his business partners.

In the author's opinion, Jobs behaved terribly at various times of his life. He routinely deserted people who depended on him the most. Isaacson ascribed Jobs' questionable conduct to a lifelong sense of abandonment stemming from being an adopted child. He refused to acknowledge Lisa Brennan as his daughter until he accepted the results of a paternity test. Jobs discarded and sabotaged faithful employees who significantly helped Apple flourish. He held deep grudges and refused to work with outsiders. However, Jobs was not an inherently evil person; he merely refused to become a well-rounded person. Despite his shrewdness, Job's coworkers considered him socially awkward and aloof. This threatened his career numerous times.

Isaacson's decisive book is beneficial to students of American business history. His work provides new perspectives on how a prosperous company functions. This book should be required by every student interested in American economic history.

BOOK REVIEW

1812: THE NAVY'S WAR.

BY GEORGE C. DAUGHAN. (NEW YORK: BASIC BOOKS, 2011.)

Pp. 417. ISBN 978-0465020461.)

Reviewed by Jeff Hirschy

In *1812: The Navy's War*, historian George C. Daughan reexamines the naval history of the War of 1812. The conflict between the United States and the United Kingdom, at the height of the Napoleonic Wars, was viewed as a second war of independence in the United States and as somewhat of a nuisance in the United Kingdom. During America's post-Revolutionary War period, Americans continued to suffer what they considered to be injustices at the hands of Britain's Royal Navy. In reaction, the United States finally decided it could stand no more and declared war on the United Kingdom in 1812. It quickly became evident that the war's primary battlefield would be on the high seas. Daughan attempts to prove that the Navy saved the United States and its war effort in the War of 1812, preserving American independence and establishing respect among the Royal Navy, the United Kingdom, and other nations in Europe. *1812: The Navy's War* demonstrates how the officers and men of America's relatively small navy managed to fight and win battles against the colossal Royal Navy, while maintaining American independence and gaining esteem on the high seas.

When the War of 1812 began, the situation looked grim for the United States on both the high seas and on land. The American Navy contained only around twenty ships while the British Royal Navy possessed over one thousand. Drawing on reports, journals, and letters from both sides, Daughan describes how America's makeshift navy managed to hold its own against the might of the Royal Navy from the eastern Pacific Ocean to the Great Lakes of North America. American ships were able to emerge victorious from battles with the Royal Navy by a combination of sheer bravado, keen nautical ability, and a series of heroic captains. The captains mentioned—Oliver Hazard Perry, Stephen Decatur, John Rogers, and Isaac Hull—bravely and heroically led their ships and men into battle, often against overwhelming odds. From Brazil to the Mediterranean, American naval leaders held their own against the might of the Royal Navy. By 1815, when the United States' land campaigns had failed to impress, Americans could hang their hats on the fact that their navy had fought well against the Royal Navy.

After the conflict ended, Americans realized that the Navy (and privateers) had held enough ground for America to come out of the conflict victorious. The Army's record was full of defeats, with only a few victories sprinkled into the mix; but the Navy could boast a record the exact opposite of the Army. The fleet came out of the war with a series of sparkling victories and only a few defeats.

George Daughan's work, with its clear writing style and well-researched chapters, ably explains how the U.S. Navy saved the day during the War of 1812. In the dark days of the Fall of 1814, when it appeared that America was going to lose the conflict, the triumphs of the Navy kept the hope of victory alive for the average American. In 1815, peace would be declared, but not before pirates, privateers, and sailors from the Navy worked in conjunction with General Andrew Jackson to win the great American victory at New Orleans. Daughan demonstrates that the United States won the war and gained the admiration of not only the Royal Navy and the United Kingdom, but other European nations as well. The United States joined the family of nations on the back of its navy. *1812: The Navy's War* can serve both the average reader, looking to learn more about the U.S. Navy's role in the conflict, and the historian, seeking an interesting new survey of the naval aspect of the war.

1812: The Navy's War is a fascinating look at the War of 1812's naval campaigns. One will be able to see that while the Army's campaigns for the most part bogged down and failed, the Navy was able to achieve several victories over the Royal Navy on the high seas. These victories established the respect that was lacking between the American and British Navies and merchant fleets. While the Americans did not win any new territories or new powers they did finally achieve a certain level of recognition from their former colonial masters. The United States and the United Kingdom came close to war several more times during the nineteenth century but never actually went to war again.

BOOK REVIEW

WITH THE OLD BREED, AT PELELIU AND OKINAWA.

BY E. B. SLEDGE. (NEW YORK: OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS, 2007.)

Pp. 352. ISBN 978-0195067149.)

Reviewed by Courtney L. Spencer

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The author of *With The Old Breed: At Peleliu and Okinawa*, Professor E. B. Sledge, served in the United States Marine Corps during World War II and fought in the battles of Peleliu and Okinawa in the Pacific Theatre. This autobiographical work is written from personal experiences in training and in combat with Company K, 3rd Battalion, 5th Marine Regiment, 1st Marine Division during the Peleliu and Okinawa campaigns. In the preface of his book, Sledge states his purpose for putting the events of Peleliu and Okinawa into words for the world to read: “In writing it I’m fulfilling an obligation I have long felt to my comrades in the 1st Marine Division all of whom suffered so much for our country.” (11-12) This regiment and division of the Marine Corps remains the oldest standing company, with more battle flags attached to its banner than any other. Sledge continues to explain the purpose of this work by dedicating the book to these marines by writing, “We owe those Marines a profound debt of gratitude.” (12) E. B. Sledge concludes *With The Old Breed* by discussing how war “is brutish, inglorious, and a terrible waste” leaving “an indelible mark on those who are forced to endure it.” (321) Sledge’s book brings to life the horror and sacrifice this company went through during the war as a way to show the dedication of the soldiers he fought with and to honor them.

World War II was one of the most devastating losses of life in the history of the world, with over 400,000 American lives claimed. In *With The Old Breed*, Sledge focuses on the valor and dedication of the 1st Division marines who fought against the Imperial Japanese Army in the Pacific theatre at the campaigns of Peleliu, Operation Stalemate II, Okinawa, and Operation Iceberg. His personal accounts of these events are enriched with resources from the Historical Division of the Marine Corps and stories published by other comrades. Sledge is proud of those he served with and continuously reiterates that these marines “did their duty so a sheltered homeland can enjoy the peace that was purchased at such a high cost.” (12) His first-hand accounts bring to life the extremely horrendous conditions that marines faced, as well as their loyalty and spirit, which he argues

sustained them through the nightmare of war.

As all troops during the war, the marines of the 1st Division suffered many casualties and were subjected to extreme living conditions. Sledge tells the story of one young man who was afflicted with mental illness while serving in the Pacific Theatre, Sledge recalls that this marine's "tragically tortured mind had slipped over the brink." (118) After several attempts at silencing the man's screams, another member of the battalion had no choice but to end the soldier's life. Sledge wrote of the event and the men involved: "They had done what any of us would have had to do under similar circumstances. Cruel chance had thrust the deed upon them." (118) According to the author, this unenviable task was carried out for the greater good of the company. Beyond casualties, the troops suffered through horrible living conditions, including living among their dead and suffering from trench foot at Okinawa due to the torrential rains. However, even through all this the marines of Company K, kept their sense of spirit and duty.

Sledge begins this story with his decision to enlist and his experience at boot camp. Sledge writes, "Marine Corps training taught us to kill efficiently and to try to survive. But it also taught us loyalty to each other— and love. That esprit de corps sustained us." (321) He continues to focus on the fact that camaraderie kept his company moving through the turmoil of war. He cites the morale and preparation of the company as the reasons for his survival: "I'm convinced that our discipline, esprit de corps, and tough training were the ingredients that equipped me to survive the ordeal physically and mentally..." (169) While he believed that his military duty with his comrades was a privilege, he also felt compelled by his company's dedication and patriotism.

Despite witnessing the horrors of war, the men of Company K preserved the morality and strength of the unit. Sledge's memories of the soldiers he served with and the events they experienced are successfully incorporated in his memoir. The author also includes an honor roll at the conclusion of the book, which lists the twenty-six marine survivors of the Battle of Peleliu. Sledge's in-depth personal account can be helpful to both students and those interested in the history of the Pacific Theatre because the work offers a unique perspective from one marine who participated in these notorious events.

FILM REVIEWS

FILM REVIEW
THE HELP.

2011, DREAMWORKS. DIRECTED BY TATE TAYLOR. EXECUTIVE PRODUCED BY L. DEAN JONES, JR., JOHN NORRIS, MARK RADCLIFFE, JEFF SKOLL, AND TATE TAYLOR. TOTAL RUN TIME: 146 MINUTES.

Reviewed by Brittany Richards Foust

In August of 1955, Emmett Till was brutally murdered and dumped into a river for allegedly whistling at a white woman in Mississippi while he was visiting family. In 1962, James Meredith became the first black student enrolled at the University of Mississippi. As a result, widespread violence and rioting whites were controlled through the assistance of 5,000 federal troops sent by President John F. Kennedy. In 1963, a member of the Ku Klux Klan murdered the NAACP field secretary, Medgar Evers, right outside of his home, in front of his children. The man responsible, Byron De La Beckwith, was not convicted for the murder until thirty years later. In 1964, the Ku Klux Klan murdered three civil-rights workers, one black and two white, because the activists registered black voters. In 1963, President John F. Kennedy was assassinated in Texas while riding in the presidential motorcade. As the nation grieved, Lyndon Baines Johnson pushed through the nation's largest Civil Rights bill. These events, only a few among thousands, were symptomatic of the hostile and erratic environment that characterized the South in the 1960s.

The film, *The Help*, opens in 1962 in Jackson, Mississippi, in the center of the events unfolding during the peak of the Civil Rights Movement. Focusing on the lives of two black women, Aibileen Clark (Viola Davis) and Minny Jackson (Octavia Spencer), and one white woman Eugenia "Skeeter" Phelan (Emma Stone), the movie explores the relationships between black maids and the white families they looked after. Skeeter, an aspiring writer, begins authoring a book that considers the current state of society from the point of view of "the help." As she points out to her New York editor, Elaine Stein (Mary Steenburgen), no one has ever asked these black women what it feels like to raise white children, only for them to grow up and become their bosses in the end. Stein is hesitant but offers her a chance before the Civil Rights Movement has passed. The film goes on to chronicle the events that lead up to the publication of the book.

The movie offers a peek into the lives of both black and white women in Jackson, in the 1960s. Heavily segregated and set in its ways, Mississippi is not filled with people moving toward social change. Skeeter approaches Aibileen about the possibility of discussing what it is like to work for Elizabeth Leefolt (Ahna O'Reilly), Skeeter's long-time friend. Understanding the risks, Aibileen refuses, as she fears for her own safety and for those around her. However, while in church as the preacher is speaking, Aibileen understands this is her opportunity to change things, or at least try.

After Aibileen's participation, Minny volunteers to be interviewed by Skeeter as well. Minny worked for Hilly Holbrook (Bryce Dallas Howard) and her mother, Missus Walters (Sissy Spacek), prior to being fired for using their bathroom. She then worked for Celia Foote (Jessica Chastain). The women recount the negative and the positive moments they experienced throughout their employment for white people in Mississippi. It is through these events and stories that the viewer gains an inside look at what 1960s Mississippi might have been like. Several other maids volunteer to assist in the book as well, and the book eventually becomes published.

As the movie winds down, the viewer witnesses a rebirth of three women. Skeeter obtains a job in New York City working for Harper & Row. Despite being let go from her job at the Leefolt's, Aibileen understands that she holds the opportunity to begin her life anew. Minny finally gains courage as well, and she leaves her abusive husband in order to provide her children with a safer environment. Each finds her own path, and begins a new life; as Aibileen puts it, they are now "Free."

The film is based on the novel by Kathryn Stockett, and while it is always a challenge to shorten a book of 522 pages into an average feature film's allotted running time, director Tate Taylor successfully covered the most important and crucial elements included within the novel. It should be noted that this is a fictional novel and is not based on true events, but does portray the atmosphere and general juxtaposition of two roles in society during the 1960s—high society whites and lower class blacks.

In addition, the film touches on some major events that occurred during the Civil Rights era. For instance, while it is not central to the film's plot, the movie does include the historical events of the assassination of Medgar Evers and John F. Kennedy. By using authentic radio broadcasts and television clips of these events, the movie transports viewers into the time and evokes the emotions of fear and sadness as these scenes play out. The movie

represents the feel of the 1960s down to the clothing, styles, vehicles, and even the choice of books displayed on shelves.

The film features an incredible cast, including Octavia Spencer, who is an Alabama native and attended college at Auburn University. The accents and mannerisms of the cast were believable, and the thoughtful casting only added to the value of the movie by bringing audiences closer to the period.

The movie has been criticized for “whitewashing” history. In other words, some believe that the movie plays to a stereotype of a white savior rescuing downtrodden blacks. Granted, the film does present an array of stereotypes of Southern people during the 1960s. However, it is likely the main criticism of the film has been drastically blown out of proportion and has become a grave injustice to the film and its purpose. Perhaps most misunderstood by critics is the purpose of one of the movie’s central characters. While Skeeter appears at first glance to headline the movie, this is not the case within the contents of the film. The film opens with Skeeter interviewing Aibileen in the kitchen of her home. The camera never focuses on Skeeter nor does it attempt to make her the savior; instead, she serves as the messenger. Skeeter is an integral character in the movie, but her importance pales in comparison to Aibileen and Minny, whose stories are the focus of the movie. By the movie’s conclusion, we see that Aibileen and Minny have not only found their own way, but they have helped Skeeter to find her direction as well.

At the end of the day the movie is a high-budget Hollywood release meant to entertain audiences. The film accomplishes this, while at the same time, exposing a mass audience to a segment of history that many of them did not experience firsthand. It is safe to assume that some audience members had never heard of Medgar Evers prior to reading Stockett’s book or seeing the film. However, the movie is not intended to provide an entirely accurate, scholarly history lesson that may change the way Americans regard race relations in the 1960s. What the audience does walk away with is outstanding and memorable performances from the entire leading cast that evoked numerous emotions through the entire length of the film. The movie is funny, deeply moving, and inspiring. Because of the film’s success in portraying a time period many viewers did not experience firsthand and because of the stellar performances by the cast, it would be a shame to dismiss the movie based on minor details and the views of a few. The criticisms of the film unjustly eclipse the overall meaning and purpose of

the movie. *The Help* offers at the very least a new perspective on an aspect of history, one that should always be acknowledged.

FILM REVIEW

THE RESURGENCE OF THE GOLDEN AGE OF FILM: HUGO, THE ARTIST, AND MIDNIGHT IN PARIS.

HUGO.

2011, PARAMOUNT PICTURES. DIRECTED BY MARTIN SCORSESE. EXECUTIVE PRODUCED BY DAVID CROCKETT, BARBARA DE FINA, CHRISTI DEMBROWSKI, GEORGIA KACANDES, AND EMMA TILLINGER KOSKOFF.

TOTAL RUN TIME: 126 MINUTES.

THE ARTIST.

2011, LA PETITE REINE. DIRECTED BY MICHEL HAZANAVICIUS. EXECUTIVE PRODUCED BY ANTOINE DE CAZOTTE, DANIEL DELUME, AND RICHARD MIDDLETON. TOTAL RUN TIME: 100 MINUTES.

MIDNIGHT IN PARIS.

2011, GRAVIER PRODUCTIONS. DIRECTED BY WOODY ALLEN. EXECUTIVE PRODUCED BY JAVIER MENDEZ. TOTAL RUN TIME: 94 MINUTES.

Reviewed by Reggie Woods

During the ceremonies at the Academy Awards in 2012, celebrated American film director Martin Scorsese commented on his film, *Hugo*, a biography about French film pioneer Georges Méliès: “It is a picture about a time when everything Méliès knew was changing, much like the time we are in right now.” The two biggest winners from Oscar night, *Hugo* and *The Artist*, as well as another Oscar winner, *Midnight in Paris*, all reflect the nostalgia of Paris or Hollywood in the 1920s—a time and place considered by all three films to be a golden age in the history of art cinema. Each film longs for this golden era in which art seems abundant, lively, confident, and most of all, appreciated. In our modern times, technology is completely transforming the way that films are made and the way that audiences gain access to and view them. In reaction to the challenges now faced by the film industry, the filmmakers of *Hugo* and *The Artist* explore themes of innovation in order to reassure

themselves that they will indeed survive these changes. At the same time, the two films strive to remind audiences how wonderful and magical going to the movies can be.

The director of *The Artist* utilizes the obsolete form of silent film, with the old square aspect ratio format. For some viewers, this throwback may come off as experimental or unique, but the film is in fact a very generic Hollywood movie (albeit, a good one). Most of today's audience has never seen a silent film, much less viewed one in a theater. Despite any initial fascination current moviegoers of traditional film might have, *The Artist* will likely be one of the few blockbuster silent movies of this generation.

Throughout the film, director Michel Hazanavicius seems to remind the audience, "Look! Remember how charming and heart warming movies were back in the good ole days? In the golden age of Hollywood?" The audience may, for a brief moment, wonder why people do not make silent films anymore and then, remembering, think, "Oh yes, we prefer sound, color, and widescreen." The format Hazanavicius employs is meant to enchant the audience, while the story behind *The Artist* seems to serve as self-assurance for Hazanavicius and his fellow filmmakers, attempting to confirm that they will still be making films five years from now. This deeper theme of insecurity in the film industry can be understood by considering the evolution of film technology and the subsequent effects of this transformation over time.

Silent films were an international commodity unaffected by language barriers until the invention of synchronized motion picture sound. Once silent films fell out of fashion and sound became the new norm, the careers of stars like the fictional George Valentin suffered because of their inability to speak English. Many such stars' careers were finished when silent films gave way to "talkies." This development has had significant influence on filmmakers today, many of whom feel that technological changes will increasingly keep people out of the theaters and, instead place them in front of their televisions. Despite this looming fear, Hazanavicius shows that Valentin can adapt (he transitions to the talkies with his magnificent dancing skills). If he can find his feet, then surely the filmmakers of today can adjust as well.

Another film, *Hugo*, explores similar themes. Director Martin Scorsese utilizes the story of Hugo, an orphaned boy living in a train station, with a knack for machines. Scorsese attempts to give children a history lesson in French cinema, as well as reassure himself and his fellow filmmakers that there will always be an

audience for their work. *Hugo* explores film technology of the World War I era, particularly the techniques of the director, Georges Méliès. Méliès became the first filmmaker to realize that the medium could transform the impossible or merely imaginable into something viewers could watch and enjoy. Unfortunately, after the war began, Méliès' audience had seen such horrific and unbelievable events occur right in front of their eyes that his dream worlds no longer held interest for that jaded generation. Méliès took a devastating hit when many of his films had to be sold and melted down to make heels for shoes, as the materials were more important than film at the time. He gave up filmmaking altogether after the war broke him, both financially and emotionally. Of course, in Scorsese's adaptation, the orphaned Hugo comes along and shows the old man (Méliès) that he is still considered a genius and his films continue to hold interest.

Similar to Hazanavicius' *The Artist*, Scorsese reassures himself and other filmmakers that even though going to the movies may not be *en vogue* at the moment, there will always be an audience who will want to see these movies, some of them on the big screen. It is somewhat unfortunate that millions are turning to television and watching movies on other devices – cell phones, iPads, computers, etc. – often as the result of illegally downloading. However, there will always be a small niche audience willing to pay to see quality films on a large movie screen.

Although *Midnight in Paris* does not explore the technical aspects of film, the movie speaks to nostalgia for Paris in the 1920s and the art scene surrounding this era. Salvador Dali and Luis Bunuel, two experimental filmmakers of the time, make very brief appearances, but this is not the focus of the film. Director Woody Allen is less fearful of the changes moviegoers currently experience and warns the audience and his fellow filmmakers about the dangers of glorifying the past. *Midnight in Paris* shows that, in actuality, this golden era was not all that different from today. The characters which produced the works that are now treasured are all quite flawed and insecure in their own ways. More so, the creative spirit of these individuals can be quite difficult to detect when standing face-to-face with the supposed genius. The most telling moment of *Midnight in Paris* occurs as Adriana tells Gil how she longs for the golden age of Paris (*Le Belle Epoque*)! At this moment, Gil (played by Owen Wilson) has an epiphany: He realizes everyone idolizes the past, and by putting pen to paper, he can help found his own golden age.

Allen selects the setting of Paris in the 1920s because this tradition is easily recognizable as a hotbed of superb art. In addition, the artists of the time were innovative, took risks, and tried new and unproven ideas with varying degrees of success in their own lifetime. Allen sends a challenge to the filmmakers (and artists) to create, put their work out there, and turn this age into one considered golden in the future. Allen's most relevant message to the creative forces of today is the one of taking chances. All too often those in Hollywood are more than comfortable to recycle the same old material and unwilling to back a new and unproven idea. Falling ticket sales and audiences *ennui* with current film most certainly are the consequences of a lack of innovation. Thankfully, Allen practices what he preaches by making movies out of original scripts, and *Midnight in Paris* brought him his highest grossing movie of all time and an Oscar.

170 The 2012 Academy Awards served as a constant barrage of nostalgia from famous filmmakers, actors, and actresses romanticizing their experiences of going to the movies when they were younger. However, the question remains – do these same people still go to the theater? The Academy was basically on its knees begging people to keep going to the movies and reminding us of all the fond memories they have given moviegoers over the years. The Iranian director of *A Separation* and the Pakistani director of *Saving Face* gave acceptance speeches that showed that they believe movies still have the power to make an impact and cause change. Hollywood has spent so much time remaking old classics, creating sequels, rereleasing successful films in 3D, and basically doing anything except creating something new. This shows that they have forgotten how to adapt, and that they are very scared for their future. Filmmakers continue to console themselves by remembering the obstacles they have overcome in the past. The film industry continues to rely on the loyal fan base of film lovers to keep them afloat; but, ultimately, if they do not adapt, they will fail to survive. In the 2010 Oscar-nominated film, *The Illusionist*, (a silent, animated feature adapted from a Jacques Tati story) the prediction for the future of film is much bleaker. The struggling magician, whose old tried-and-true magic act cannot compete with the new forms of entertainment, is forced to declare to his last and only fan, “Magic does not exist.” Until the magic has been eliminated, movies such as Scorsese's *Hugo*, Hazanavicius' *The Artist*, and even old favorites such as Méliès' *A Trip to the Moon* will continue to delight moviegoers – both young and old.

ABOUT THE AUTHORS & EDITORS



T. Gerald Archer is completing his Bachelor of Arts degree in History with the intention of pursuing an M.A. degree in History upon graduation. With a specific interest in pop culture and cinema, Gerald believes that through art forms we can gain an understanding of our history and culture. Art, he believes, can speak for a people, and cultural history can teach us that our common interests bring us together, not drive us apart. When asked what the most important lesson he has learned from history is, he replies that our time is fleeting. Our lives are just one small act in the whole human drama, and we need to look to what came before us, as well as what effect we will have on the future.



Chelsea Baldini is currently pursuing a Bachelor of Arts degree in History. Her research interests include the effect of Social Darwinism on the racial policies of Nazi Germany. Chelsea also holds an interest in the field of Art History and enjoys discovering the effects of socio-political conditions on artists and their work. Upon graduation, Chelsea hopes to teach. She wishes to share her knowledge of history with children in low-income areas.



Charles Brooks Etheredge is working toward earning his Master of Arts degree in History with a specific focus in American history and the period surrounding the framing of our nation's Constitution. Brooks hopes to provide others with an understanding of the relevance of the Constitution to the modern age. He notes that constitutional and political theory never lose their meaning. The most important lesson he has gained through pursuing the study of history is the realization that despite every modern scholar's belief that they know best, people from the past may have been much cleverer than we are. Sometimes, he adds, it is best to just listen to the past and let it speak for itself.



Brittany Richards Foust is currently completing her Master of Arts degree in History. Her interest in history was sparked at a young age thanks to her father and one particularly inspirational teacher in high school. Her research interests include women in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. To Brittany, the most important aspect of history is that it is an area where there is room for exploration and interpretation. With history, one document reads differently to multiple parties, and this leads to a greater understanding of the past, as well as the achievements of the present and the possibilities of the future. She is optimistic that future generations will learn the importance of history and the reality that our future is built on our history and what we take from it.



Beth Hunter is completing her Master of Arts degree in History, and hopes to teach, continue to conduct research, and edit publications in the future. She enjoys Alabama history and the particular topic of subsistence homesteads and farms. Outside of Alabama history, Beth also finds the plight of children during WWII to be an extremely fascinating subject. The subject is one that she feels is important because the children of WWII possessed a unique perspective in that many had not yet experienced the prejudices of the world. To Beth, a key aspect of being a good global neighbor is learning more about other cultures, because without this knowledge, it is difficult for people to find common ground to work together.



Clelly Johnson is working toward a Bachelor of Arts degree in History, and has had a passion for history ever since he can remember. His research interests include gender and sexuality, terrorism, and Russian and Eurasian history. His interest in the subject matter stems from the fact that many groups that are discriminated against do not possess a voice within their own society. For Clelly, the knowledge that everyone has a story and every story is an important thread in the fabric of the past is the most important lesson he has learned from his study of history.



Thomas Kulovitz is currently seeking a Bachelor of Arts degree in History. He enjoys examining how various civilizations were structured and how they lived at various points in history, particularly in comparison to our current society. He hopes to attend graduate school to obtain a Master of Arts degree in Library Science. To Thomas, the most critical aspects of history are the understanding of how the past relates to the present and the recognition that the nature of the world today is a result of all of the developments of the past. Given the opportunity to sit down with one historical figure, Thomas would ask Augustus Caesar how he learned to play the political game so well.



Billy Mann graduated in 2011 with a Master of Arts degree in Secondary Education. He notes the importance of history in every young person's education and loathes that history courses have developed such a negative reputation in the classroom. His career focus as a teacher is to make the study of history be relevant to the students in his classroom. He wants his students to actively participate in history by exploring the past and not just act as passive recipients of knowledge. His appreciation of the past, and how it shapes the present is what sparked his interest in history at an early age. His favorite aspect of history is that it is incomplete and constantly being explored to learn greater truths.



Dawn Neel is currently pursuing a Master of Arts degree in History after successfully completing her B.A. in English. Her central focus is the history of the early American republic. Her interest in history is fueled by the recognition that we possess the ability to learn from the lessons of the past. To Dawn, the fact that history seems to repeat itself is imperative to understanding our studies. When asked what is the most important lesson she has learned from the study of history, Dawn replies that one should never judge what happened yesterday in the context of today.



Maya Orr is currently completing her Bachelor of Arts degree in History, with a minor in English literature. Her research interests include twentieth-century history, with a focus on the developments of the modern era and the effects of globalization on societies. She wrote her senior Capstone project on communist Czechoslovakia and the impact of Vaclav Havel's essay, "The Power of the Powerless." To Maya, the joy of history comes with analyzing and writing. She hopes to pursue a career in the publishing industry after obtaining her degree.



Edward Savela is currently completing his Master of Arts degree in History. He holds an undergraduate degree in Business and previously served as a CPA and corporate financial executive. He has owned two businesses, and served in Naval Intelligence during the Vietnam War. With his experience, he has gained a broad view of world affairs. With a specific interest in twentieth-century history and Latin American history, his main goal is to apply his knowledge through writing. He hopes that through his writing he can convey the history of U.S.- Cuba relations, of which most Americans are not aware. He believes that through the study of history, we can grasp an understanding of the present conflicts around the globe and find ways to ameliorate them.

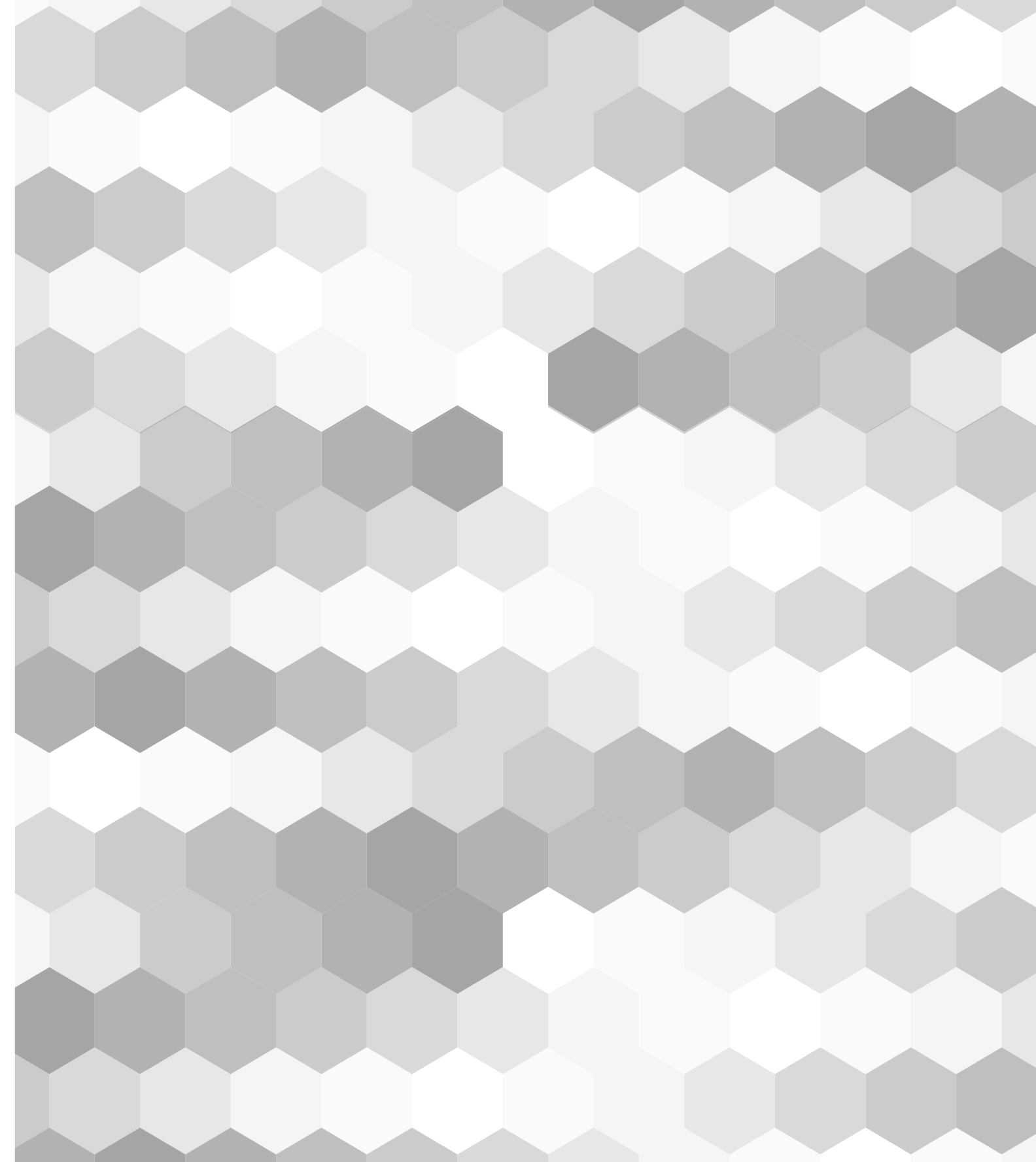
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