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FOREWORD

CLIO AND GORBY

One of the criteria used by the editors of this year's Historical Discourses in selecting essays was the ability of contributors to pose complex or timely and original questions. Generally this cannot be done without the help of Clio, the Muse of History. Fortunately she visits McGill and Montreal from time to time. Today, as I write these words, she came in the shape of an opinion piece in the New York Times by Mikhail Gorbachev's pleading for the return of freedoms lost in Russia over the last 25 years.¹ Which brings me to an historical vignette connected to the generation of HSA members who graduated in the late 80s:

The event took place on April 29, 1994. The Soviet Union no longer existed. Gorbachev was widely given credit both by his enemies and by his friends for its disappearance while the agony of its vanishing act continued. Gorbachev – or Gorby, as he was still affectionately and widely named – was welcomed to McGill by Pierre Trudeau, who was fond of Mikhail Sergeevich. In fact, Trudeau invited Gorbachev for coffee at his house on Pine Avenue. This could have been a strategic move since earlier in the day Trudeau, Professors Charles Taylor, Reuven Brenner and myself discussed some of the questions we thought Gorby might wish to ponder. One was the “new world order” – a term he frequently used in Moscow and which was tirelessly employed by Western politicians before our own economic crisis of last year made it unfashionable. Trudeau had of course turned this around in his customary fashion and quipped about what he called the “world disorder”! The discussion – conducted in three tongues – went rather well since both Trudeau and Gorby were in good aggressive form. Trudeau began by seemingly flattering Gorbachev – “Vous avez tout changé” – but the praise had a sting to it. Socialism (in Trudeau's eyes) was not very different to the kind of

liberalism to which he himself aspired. But both agreed on the need to protect minorities and the dangers they faced to their identities because of the massive economic integration now making itself felt. Curiously, both Charles Taylor and Gorbachev spoke of our need for spiritual change in the West and in the East. As to agrarian reform – Reuven Brenner was the only economist at the table – according to Gorbachev, NOTHING had worked in twentieth-century Russia, nor was there any point in Russians’ imitating what the Chinese had done with land tenure, since Russian attitudes to land were unique. Did any of our speakers have anything positive to say about the future? Gorbachev, Trudeau and Taylor agreed that nationalism in various forms posed the greatest danger. In that sense, Trudeau believed we were living through a period such as that of 1914. No one had anything convincingly positive to say about NATO, the United Nations, nor about environmentalism, which Gorbachev had written much about (in Russia he started the environmental movement as early as 1986). After the session came to an end, Gorbachev’s suite walked westward along Sherbrooke Street. By this time there were hundreds of students accompanying him, including my TA. She wished to shake Gorbachev’s hand, but the chain of bodyguards would not let her through, so she turned to Gorby with a question which exceeded in importance anything said at the round-table: “Mr Gorbachev, Vam nravitsa Kanada?” (Mr Gorbachev, do you like Canada?) The great man pushed a bodyguard’s arm away, shook her hand and nodded: “Da. Ochen.” (which means: “I do. A lot”).

Although to me the vignette above represents the high point of “Gorbymania” in Canada, a few years earlier, to celebrate Gorbachev’s achievements, some enterprising spirits in the McGill History Students’ Association produced a T-shirt which, at first glance, looked like a paean to Stalin. To catch the full flavour of this epic product, I shall reproduce the wording on either side. At the back, the words quite starkly proclaimed STALINISM:

THE FAREWELL TOUR 1989/90. And below this in blood-red letters and a rather prominent moustache was the likeness of the man whose appetite had helped swallow Poland, Hungary, Czechoslovakia, East Germany, Romania, Bulgaria and Lithuania. The last named had a question-mark after it since that courageous country's future status had yet to be determined. The front of the T-shirt – I had the historical foresight (Clio advised me herself) to purchase several – had a good-looking likeness of Gorbachev with these unforgettable words from Joyce's *Ulysses* below it:

HISTORY IS A NIGHTMARE FROM WHICH
I AM TRYING TO AWAKE.

This item sold well at McGill, having been pre-empted the year before by the very first T-shirt the HSA produced: it was dark blue and took its cue from Samuel Butler:

GOD CANNOT ALTER THE PAST, BUT
HISTORIANS CAN.

Today's fascinating Gorbachev piece in the New York Times (entitled "Perestroika Lost") gives some idea yet again of how complex it is to work with Clio. But I do find it encouraging that Gorby has not abandoned his faith in liberty. Contributors to this issue of *Historical Discourses* may or may not agree with some of his musings, but our relationship with Clio has never been easy. Readers beware!

Valentin J. Boss

14 March 2010

1. Gorbachev, Mikhail. "Perestroika Lost" New York Times, 14 March 2010, p. 9

INTRODUCTION

This year, after receiving innumerable submissions, twenty-five excellent undergraduate history papers were short-listed before the editorial board could decide on a final, now published, ten. As Professor Boss explained, the questions formulated in the minds of the authors ultimately substantiated their inclusion in the journal. The right question can shine a piercing light through the threads of historical time, while alternately, as Thomas Pynchon quipped in “Proverbs for Paranoids #3” of his 1973 work *Gravity’s Rainbow*, “if they can get you asking the wrong questions, they don’t have to worry about answers.” Not that history is a vocation for paranoids, of course, but in a discipline overwhelmed with choice, the right question is an essential first step in the unfolding of a rigorous study or a simple vignette.

In constructing this edition, we had the privilege to accept ten papers for publication that reflect the wide range of themes and fields that constitute the study of history, while we chose to accept two pairs of papers that complement each other with regards to subject, chronology and geography.

The first pair displays the significance of music in recent social, cultural and political history. Laura Petryshen’s paper demonstrates the importance of Motown music in popularising and promoting the 1960s American Civil Rights Movement. Similarly, Behrang Farshi’s work explains the rise of 1980s metal music in the United States and reveals how its lyrics and music videos elicited both differing and overlapping responses among socially conservative, moderate and liberal Americans.

Marianna Reis recounts the history of female Palestinian suicide bombers during the Second Intifada and reveals the power and importance of dominant gender roles in recent Israeli-

Palestinian conflict. Sami Ahmad's paper is an excellent and succinct military history that details the rise of warlords in Qing China and the inability of China's last emperors to maintain national unity in the face of foreign incursion.

Tess Lanza's Canadian history account details post-Second World War eugenics practices in Alberta and British Columbia and demonstrates that rationale for government policy often develops within the context of evolving societal and generational values. Similarly, Michael Baillargeon's paper details American foreign policy during the Soviet-Afghan War, explains the political and social framework of American strategy and depicts the long-term implications of American involvement in the conflict.

Ashley Joseph's paper recounts the history of the nineteenth-century 'slave' revolt known as the Zanj Rebellion and questions the manner in which it has been remembered. In his work on Saint Antony, Stefan Rinas explores the importance of textuality in history and shows that historical memory is both evolving and interpretive.

Finally, we chose two papers that discuss contrasting, yet influential movements in pre-1945 Germany. Justin Scherer discusses the rise of militarism in interwar Germany in his densely-researched paper on the Freikorps movement. Sarah Cline's insightful environmental history reveals the depths of Nazi conservationism despite its obscure location in historical memory.

INTRODUCTION

Cette année, après avoir reçu une centaine de dissertations intéressantes, notre conseil éditorial a choisi vingt-cinq essais excellents comme candidats pour cette revue. Malheureusement, nous avons dû choisir seulement dix pour publication. Comme Professeur Boss explique, les questions formulées dans l'esprit de chaque auteur justifient l'inclusion de leur article dans *Discours historiques*. Une bonne question peut provoquer et stimuler une nouvelle façon d'analyser un sujet, une période ou un événement dans les études historiques. Or, comme Thomas Pynchon établit dans "Proverbs for Paranoids #3" de son livre *Gravity's Rainbow*, "s'ils vous convainquent de poser les mauvaises questions, ils ne doivent pas s'inquiéter de vos réponses." Dans une discipline souvent éblouie par le choix, une bonne question est un premier pas essentiel pour l'auteur d'une étude rigoureuse ou pour l'écrivain d'une courte analyse.

Dans la construction de cette édition, nous avons eu le privilège d'accepter dix dissertations pour publication qui reflètent la diversité de thèmes disponibles à l'étudiant d'histoire. En même temps, nous avons choisi deux paires d'essais qui parlent de la même géographie et partagent des sujets et des chronologies similaires.

Le premier couple démontre l'importance de la musique dans les études récentes de l'histoire sociale, culturelle et politique. Laura Petryshen illustre la puissance de la musique de « Motown » et son rôle dans la popularisation et la promotion de la lutte pour les droits civiques aux États-Unis dans les années 1960. L'article de Behrang Farshi raconte l'histoire de la popularisation du genre musical « metal » dans les années 1980 et montre que la musique, les paroles et les vidéo-clips de ce genre ont provoqué plusieurs réponses différentes et communes entre les Américains conservateurs,

centristes et libéraux.

Marianna Reis expose l'histoire des candidats féminins palestiniens à l'attentat suicide pendant la Seconde Intifada. Elle illustre que la décision de presque chaque femme a été considérablement influencé par une aspiration de compenser pour leur incapacité de réaliser le rôle d'une femme traditionnelle. Sami Ahmad présente une excellente dissertation d'histoire militaire qui détaille la croissance des chefs militaires indépendants dans la Chine de la dynastie Qing et démontre comment ces empereurs chinois n'ont pas pu maintenir l'unité nationale contre l'invasion des forces étrangères.

La dissertation de Tess Lanzarotta présente l'histoire de la politique d'eugénisme en Alberta and en Colombie-Britannique après la Deuxième Guerre mondiale and montre que les raisonnements de la politique gouvernementale changent souvent en accordance avec l'évolution des valeurs générationnelles et sociétales. L'article de Michael Baillargeon raconte la politique étrangère des États-Unis durant la Guerre d'Afghanistan de 1979-1989 et les conséquences de cette stratégie à long-terme.

Ashley Joseph parle de l'histoire de la rébellion connue sous le nom : la Révolte des Zanj, et elle met en doute l'histoire traditionnelle de cette insurrection. De plus, le travail de Stefan Rinas sur Sainte Antoine explore l'importance de textualité dans le domaine d'histoire et explique que l'interprétation historique évolue selon le temps.

Enfin, nous avons choisi une paire de dissertations distinctes qui relie deux mouvements importants de l'Allemagne avant 1945. Justin Scherer parle de la croissance du militarisme en Allemagne après la Première Guerre mondiale dans son essai sur le mouvement « Freikorps. » D'ailleurs, l'histoire environnementale de Sarah Cline révèle un sujet peu connu : la conservation environnementale sous le régime des Nazis.

We would like to thank all the organisations and departments who made this journal possible - Nous voulons remercier toutes les organisations et tous les départements qui ont fourni les fonds nécessaires pour cette revue : the McGill University Arts Undergraduate Society Journal Fund, the Student Society of McGill University Campus Life Fund, the McGill History Undergraduate Students' Association and the Department of History of McGill University.

Nicholas P. van Beek
Brendan Shanahan
April 2010

“Someday We’ll Be Together”: Integration and the Motown Sound

Laura Petryshen

Building an interracial organization at the time I started Motown was a natural for misconceptions. A black-owned organization with white employees- trying to capture the general market?

- Berry Gordy, in *To Be Loved: The Music, The Magic, The Memories of Motown*¹

It is difficult to overstate the success, influence, and musical brilliance of Motown Records during its golden years from 1963 to 1970. The lyrics of the “H-D-H trio” (Eddie and Brian Holland and Lamont Dozier), a roster of singers such as Marvin Gaye, and instrumentals by the Funk Brothers band combined to create hit after hit out of ‘Hitsville, U.S.A.’ (the nickname of Motown’s studio in Detroit). Motown’s music united America and gained worldwide popularity. According to the documentary *Standing in the Shadows of Motown*, the Funk Brothers band “had played on more number one hits than the Beach Boys, the Rolling Stones, Elvis, and the Beatles combined.”² However, the company was black owned - by Berry Gordy, a former Detroit auto worker. Motown’s success was in large part responsible for the desegregation of American popular music at a time when the often-violent Civil Rights Movement was at fever pitch. This has led to much discussion of Motown’s political meaning. To some, Motown is an exemplar of black entrepreneurship and artistry. To others³, Motown represents the

1 Berry Gordy, *To Be Loved: The Music, The Magic, The Memories of Motown* (New York: Warner Books Inc., 1994), 13.

2 *Standing in the Shadows of Motown*, DVD. Directed by Paul Justman. USA: Rimshot LLC, 2002. This documentary, which explores the lives and experiences of the surviving Funk Brothers, gives a fascinating glimpse of life in Detroit in the 60s and Motown’s unique production style.

3 Nelson George, *Where Did Our Love Go? The Rise and Fall of the*

betrayal of black culture by greed and ambition. Economic viability - not ideals - inspired Motown Records to appeal to the widest possible audience. Integration, or the mingling of African-American and white cultures, individuals, and values, was a cornerstone of Motown Records' philosophy, which aligned well with its business strategy. In order to capture the largest market share, musical styles, employees and even behaviours and appearances were rigorously integrated. This resulted in economic advances for Motown's employees and interracial understanding among its audience. By the early 1970's, however, Motown's integrative approach also drew accusations of diluting black culture, such as, for example, Craig McGregor's dismissal of Diana Ross as a "whiteface minstrel."⁴ Motown Records, therefore, can serve as a window to understanding the motivations for and anxieties surrounding integration in the 1960s and early 1970s. While integration could successfully combat stereotypes and strengthen African-American business, it could also hasten the loss of black cultural distinction.

Before Motown's rise, African-American musical styles had languished under the label of 'race music' for African-Americans only. The barriers were institutional: for example, Columbia Records created a subsidiary company called Okeh Records for "blues" or "rhythm and blues" recordings, which were not marketed to white audiences.⁵ While white musicians such as Elvis Presley and Jerry Lee Lewis drew inspiration from these musicians and became wildly successful, the African-American pioneers of these styles were relegated to obscurity.⁶ However, the enormous popularity of R&B-inspired acts among white audiences meant that black musicians

Motown Sound (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1987); Craig McGregor, "Nothing Like A Shot of Soul to Pep Up Rock," *New York Times*, September 12, 1971, D23.

4 McGregor, Craig. "Nothing Like A Shot of Soul to Pep Up Rock", *New York Times*, September 12 1971, pg. D23

5 Nelson George, 51.

6 *Standing in the Shadows of Motown*, DVD, directed by Paul Justman, (USA: Rimshot LLC, 2002).

could possibly enjoy wealth and prestige if their music reached the mainstream.

That the Motown sound came from Detroit was no accident. Many of Detroit's black families had arrived during the Great Migration of the early 20th century, attracted by the promise of a better life: steady jobs at car factories and the supposed racial equality of the North. Berry Gordy's father had moved to Detroit in 1916 from Georgia⁷ while Florence Ballard (the founder of the Supremes) came from Mississippi⁸ and the Funk Brothers came from a variety of southern states such as South Carolina and Tennessee.⁹ However, the majority of black Detroiters remained poor, disproportionately affected by the Great Depression. As a child, Berry Gordy crowded into a small bed with his seven siblings and subsisted on welfare. During Gordy's childhood and into his adult life, music provided an escape from everyday struggles.¹⁰ The story of Gordy's childhood is similar to many of those who worked for Motown and is essential in understanding the company's emphasis on profits. As Gordy explained, "Coming from a business family, my father and mother always talked about the bottom line...You know, are you making money or not?"¹¹ Breaking down racial barriers was not simply a matter of justice, but of economics. Gordy's aspirations to move up in the world mingled with pride in his hardworking roots. In 1967, Gordy described the 'Motown Sound' as: "It's rats and roaches, love, guts and talent. We haven't forgotten where we came from. We were like a thousand other kids on the streets of the Brewster and Douglas projects. Don't misunderstand...it's not just climbing out of poverty. Escaping from it. It's being young, creating, doing things with dignity. It's pride."¹²

7 Gordy, 13.

8 The Lost Supreme: The Life of Dreamgirl Florence Ballard. P. 2

9 *Standing in the Shadows of Motown*, DVD. Directed by Paul Justman. USA: Rimshot LLC, 2002.

10 Gordy, 14.

11 Nelson George, 26.

12 Robert Dundee, "'Supremes' Carve Amazing Success Story," *The*

Furthermore, Motown's music managed to combine commercial appeal with African-American musical styles. Gordy himself started out as a songwriter who intended to reach the white-dominated pop charts. As he said, if you made pop music, "the record sold a million copies. 'Pop' means popular and if that ain't, I don't know what is. I never gave a damn what else it was called."¹³ Motown achieved broad appeal by writing songs that blended R&B and pop styles, much like the white musicians who had done so with inspiration from R&B. *Come To Me*, an early song written for singer Marv Johnson in 1959, is described as "a clean R&B record that sounded as white as it did black,"¹⁴ meaning it successfully melded pop and R&B. Gordy's songwriting style was also designed to appeal to as many people as possible. A firm taskmaster, he insisted that his songwriters write about universal themes – love and heartbreak. As Richard Lingeman wrote in the *New York Times*, the music mostly dealt with "the yearnings of adolescent love, in a direct or energetic manner that avoids sopiness."¹⁵ He was right: Motown's greatest hits all deal with the vagaries of romance. Motown's artists had very little choice over what they recorded because that was decided by the songwriters, according to Gordy's specific formula. This formula, coupled with quality in performance and production, succeeded wildly. Motown produced hit after hit, including classic songs that are still well-known today, such as 'My Girl' by the Temptations.

Despite the music's brilliance, Motown had to devise a strategy to get airplay on white radio stations. For this reason, Berry Gordy hired white employees to promote his records – most notably, Barney Ales as head of the Sales department. Indeed, most of the sales department as well as key consultants and vice-presidents were white. Gordy used an interesting analogy to explain why he hired

Washington Post, Times Herald, January 21, 1967, B5.

13 Gordy, 95.

14 Nelson George, 26.

15 Richard H. Lingeman, "The Big, Happy, Beating Heart Of the Detroit Sound," *New York Times*, November 27, 1966, SM25.

Ales: "I had remembered back in 1947 when Jackie Robinson broke the baseball color barrier and became the first black to play in the major leagues...any team that had the guts to hire the best person for the job, no matter what their color, could win. I wanted to win."

¹⁶ Here, Gordy attempts to present his hiring of Ales as colorblind. It was anything but: Ales was hired not only for his skill, but for his ability to get white disk jockeys to listen to Motown's music. As Gordy put it, "I knew for anyone to want to buy my records they first had to hear them."¹⁷ He acknowledges his practical solution to the colour divides of the radio world. When Richard Lingeman, a New York Times reporter, visited "Hitsville, U.S.A." in 1966, he observed that the studio was in an integrated neighbourhood and that Motown employed at least one white singer, Chris Clark. Lingeman commented that "one sees a healthy sprinkling of white faces in every department and it is integrated at all levels of management."¹⁸ White Americans were a key demographic for Motown and hiring white employees to help them reach this audience was an important business strategy. The depiction of Motown as an 'interracial', rather than purely African-American organization, helped allay the anxieties of white consumers,

While Motown's music bridged R&B and pop and while white employees promoted these records, the image of Motown's artists also had to resemble the audience that it was seeking. Thus, Motown created an "Artist Development" department, an innovation among record labels at the time. Its goal was to give Motown's artists a bourgeois polish that would play well to nightclub audiences and appeal to the middle-class audience Motown sought. One teacher in the "Arist Development" department was Maxine Powell, a former beauty-school headmistress. She demonstrated to female singers general "charm, finesse, and glamour,"¹⁹ teaching them how to walk,

16 Gordy, 194.

17 Ibid.

18 Lingeman, SM25.

19 Cynthia J Cyrus, "Selling an Image: Girl Groups of the 1960s," *Popu-*

sit, stand and give graceful interviews, as well as banning sexy dance steps. Another teacher was Cholly Atkins, a former nightclub dancer. He choreographed Motown's routines, giving the Supremes their famous finger-snapping-and-swaying dance steps. In describing of his job he underlined the integrative goal of the Artist Development Department: "I get a big bang out of servicing my clients...because I take R&B artists and teach, educate, and prepare them for that transition from the chitlin' circuit [the derogatory nickname for African-American venues] to Vegas."²⁰ There is no doubt that the "Artist Development" Department played an enormous role in the success of the Supremes, by far Motown's most successful act. Though their music was accessible and though they were young and beautiful, the glamour and class they exuded drew the most attention and commentary. In the New York Times, Diana Ross was described as having been "polished and preened like a new car"²¹ and "sexy, yes...but very, very classy."²² The Supremes' femininity and style, including their refined hair-dos, were reminiscent of white girl groups of the 1950s²³, which added an air of familiarity to their white audience. Their sophistication, sex appeal, and relatable music were an unstoppable combination. The Supremes were an all-American rags-to-riches story. However, it was also a sign of the racial polarization of their age that their success involved rising from black circles to white ones.

At the height of Beatlemania in 1966, Motown was expected to gross \$15 million.²⁴ Though Beatlemania and the British Invasion

Popular Music 22, issue 2 (2003), <http://journals.cambridge.org/action/displayFulltext?type=1&pdfType=1&fid=163350&jid=PMU&volumeId=22&issueId=02&id=163349>, 187.

20 Nelson George, 91.

21 Richard Goldstein, "The Super Supremes: 'Stop in the Name of Love'," *New York Times*, July 23, 1967, 75.

22 Ibid.

23 Cynthia J Cyrus, "Selling an Image: Girl Groups of the 1960s," *Popular Music* 22, issue 2 (2003), <http://journals.cambridge.org/action/displayFulltext?type=1&pdfType=1&fid=163350&jid=PMU&volumeId=22&issueId=02&id=163349>, 187.

24 Lingeman, SM25.

left the rest of the American music industry faltering, Motown was still a powerhouse. Its success was also buttressed by the Beatles' declaration that Detroit groups had inspired them, drawing many more British and continental fans to Motown.²⁵ Motown had smashed barriers to the point where the differences between "R&B" and "pop" music seemed completely irrelevant. As a disc jockey at New York pop radio station WMCA explained in 1966, "These boundaries no longer mean a damn thing. You have whites out in WASP areas buying as much Negro music as they do white... There is no longer even a straight 'white sound'."²⁶ In the late 1960s, all of America and beyond was dancing to the Motown Sound, which was a tribute to Motown's musical virtuosity as well as Berry Gordy's brilliant business strategies, considering the racial tensions of the era.

Motown's breakthrough appeal contributed to the political advancement of African-Americans in several ways. Firstly, the music's universality created a space for interracial understanding. The fact that Motown songs were about love created an opportunity to understand the artists on a personal level that transcended racial differences. Michael Eric Dyson argues that the duets of Marvin Gaye and Tammi Terrell "protested malevolent stereotypes of black domestic unions. While they implicitly made the point that black folks are like all others, they made the equally powerful point that all others can learn and benefit from black love."²⁷ This argument can be applied to most Motown songs: heartbreak as much as love provides an opportunity for understanding and sympathy. By producing such relatable songs, Motown actually combated stereotypes of African-Americans as depraved. This broad appeal also provided a platform from which Motown artists could make

25 Derek Jewell, "Detroit Assembled the Beatles' Beat," *The Washington Post, Times Herald*, March 28, 1965, G1.

26 Lingeman, SM25.

27 Michael Eric Dyson, *Mercy, Mercy Me: The Art, Loves and Demons of Marvin Gaye* (New York: Basic Civitas Books, 2004), 37.

their political opinions heard. At a 1964 Supremes concert in Los Angeles, with President Lyndon B. Johnson in attendance, Diana Ross inserted a monologue in support of integration into her performance of “Somewhere” from *West Side Story*. Johnson was so affected that he approached Ross after the show, saying “It’s going to happen. Little by little, we’re getting there.”²⁸ Furthermore, the wealth generated by Motown enabled Berry Gordy to use this capital to promote black advancement. For example, in 1967 Gordy announced he was setting up the Lucy Wakefield Business Career Clinic to help “bright young Negroes further their ambitions.”²⁹ Berry Gordy was a role model and proof that African-Americans could indeed own successful businesses. Furthermore, Motown’s experience as a successful, racially integrated company was living proof that an integrated society could succeed. Gordy himself explained that “I saw Motown much like the world Dr. King was fighting for – with people of different races and religions, working together harmoniously for a common goal.”³⁰

In the 1970s, however, a shift in public consciousness sharply countered the idea that “crossover appeal” truly meant black advancement. This new conception of black music and business set out to celebrate black cultural forms, not make concessions of style. These critics of Motown argue that the attempts of Motown artists to make their music and demeanour appeal to white audiences marked a disturbing trend towards the dilution of black identity. Early criticisms appear in a 1966 interview with Diana Ross. When the interviewer asked about the Supremes’ ‘white sound,’ Ross replied “‘The white sound means the commercial sound,’ she [explained] a little hotly, as if to say, ‘this is our sound, baby, not theirs.’”³¹ The conflation of Motown’s commerciality with white assimilation had begun, but the most virulent criticisms arrived in the early 1970s.

28 Nelson George, 96.

29 “Gordy Sets Up Job Clinic For Negroes,” *Billboard*, April 29, 1967, 3.

30 Gordy, 194.

31 Lingeman, SM25.

An article by Craig McGregor, appearing in the New York Times in 1971, pointed out that “Black singers have rarely managed to break through to a national audience without adapting their music to white tastes at the same time.”³² McGregor contested that the Supremes had not revolutionized the music industry because they had simply assimilated. At Motown, “original, gutsy black music... can be dressed up, watered down, straitjacketed into sequins and Copacabana wig...until you get Diana Ross, the last of the whiteface minstrels, breathing husky banalities into her own TV special.”³³ McGregor found it unjust that African-American singers had to compromise their values for white ones. In praising new Motown artist Edwin Starr, McGregor urged Motown to help him “get through to a national audience without turning him into Marvin Gaye or a jumpsuit Diana Ross.”³⁴ McGregor was one of many who criticized Motown’s perceived assimilation. In David Morse’s 1971 book *Motown and the Arrival of Black Music*, intended as a guide to Motown for British fans, Morse called on Motown to develop more forms of black music because Motown “owes it to the black community.”³⁵ This reflects early 1970s anxieties that integration carried with it the threat of assimilation, which meant potentially losing what made black culture unique.

These criticisms were tied directly to the Black Power movement and to dissatisfaction with the Civil Rights Act of 1964. In one of the first ‘Black Power’ speeches, Stokely Carmichael, in 1966, argued “For us to get better, we don’t have to go to white things...we must build strength and pride among ourselves.”³⁶ Carmichael was sceptical of integration itself, fearing that African-Americans would

32 Craig McGregor, “Nothing Like A Shot of Soul to Pep Up Rock,” *New York Times*, September 12, 1971, D23.

33 Ibid.

34 Ibid.

35 David Morse, *Motown & The Arrival of Black Music* (London: Studio Vista Ltd., 1971), 37.

36 Laura M. Miller, “‘Black Power’ Speech (28 July 1966, by Stokely Carmichael),” *Dictionary of American History*. Ed. Stanley I. Kutler. Vol. 9. 3rd ed. New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 2003.

lose their “strength and pride” by accepting white values. That this viewpoint had gained real currency by the early 1970s is reflected in the dismissals of Motown as having “given in” by accepting white standards of taste. David Morse wrote that “the idea of Black Power, however interpreted, and the new role of pop music as an outlet for white American dissent have made Motown and its tuxedo-clad artists seem both square and Uncle Tom.”³⁷ Nelson George argued that the tastes of the teenage crowd had changed: “Hip whites and progressive blacks were beginning to find Berry’s yearning upward mobility and occasionally overbearing production values a bore.”³⁸ He also remarked that Gordy’s practice of hiring whites caused “an increasing number of blacks to suspect that Gordy had secretly sold out to white interests.”³⁹ The defection of several of Motown’s most prominent employees, such as the Holland-Dozier-Holland trio and David Ruffin of the Temptations, in the late 1960s added another layer of criticism. Both the “H-D-H Trio” and Ruffin left Motown amidst rumours that they being were not adequately compensated. Gordy protested that their remuneration was “on par with the industry,”⁴⁰ but this weak response made Motown seem even more like other large labels that undercompensated black stars. Ironically, interest in less integrated, ‘real’ African-American music had actually been brought about in part by Motown. A 1971 article in the New York Times documenting the growing popularity of gospel music among white youth explained that gospel’s influence on mainstream music, like Motown’s records, had caused increased interest in a traditional African-American musical form.⁴¹

In response to these criticisms, Motown Records actually changed its business strategy to make music that was less ‘commercial’

37 David Morse, *Motown & The Arrival of Black Music* (London: Studio Vista Ltd., 1971), 38.

38 Nelson George, 91.

39 Ibid.

40 Gordy, 194.

41 Thomas A. Johnson, “White Youths Attracted by Gospel Music,” *The New York Times*, September 28, 1971, 46.

and more 'authentic'. In a 1968 Temptations' album cover, the five singers are in black tie dress, dancing in a row. However, on the cover of their 1971 album, the Temptations are casually dressed and sprawled across the stairway of a dilapidated urban house. This album features songs such as "Slave" and "Message From A Black Man,"⁴² on which they sing lyrics such as "No matter how hard you try/You can't stop me now."⁴³ These are lyrics that would have been unimaginable in Motown's early days. Motown artists were now afforded unprecedented control over their own material, which resulted in songs that dealt more obviously with African-American experiences. By 1972, Diana Ross had left the Supremes, grown an Afro - in stark contrast to the Supremes' processed bouffants - and starred in a movie about Billie Holliday.⁴⁴ By the early 1970s, Motown's critics were not merely disgruntled purists, but represented a shift in perception on what black culture and music should be.

Motown's critics pointed out an important contradiction in its business strategy. Although Motown Records was as ambassador of black music, their kind of black music was tailored specifically to appeal to white as well as black Americans, distorting what might have been if Motown's music had been created according to only the black community's tastes. The black music business was perceived to have no alternative in the 1960s but to acquiesce to white tastes if they wished to succeed. In their critiques, David Morse and Craig McGregor are not only criticizing Motown but bemoaning the fact that black artists and black-owned companies were forced to compromise. However, what critics - particularly Nelson George - fail to see is that Berry Gordy himself saw no contradiction, which allowed him to make gains for the African-Americans community. Gordy viewed his business strategy not as a capitulation to white culture, but as a road to interracial understanding as well as to

42 David Morse, 38.

43 Whitfield, Norman. *Puzzle People*. The Temptations (Eddie Kendricks, Dennis Edwards, Melvin Franklin) Motown Records, GS 949 CD.

44 "New Day for Diana." *Life*, December 8, 1972, 44.

wealth. Gordy then proceeded to use his own money to help African-American businessmen succeed. Motown's critics created something of a false dichotomy: Gordy's strategy allowed him to combine integration with advocacy.

Gordy was most interested in upward mobility, gaining capital and reaching out to white youth; McGregor and George believed that African-American interests could only be advanced if no cultural compromises were made to the white community. George's hypothesis that Gordy had 'sold out' to white interests demonstrates the cultural minefield Berry Gordy referred to at the opening of this essay: at that time, he could not work with white employees and escape accusations that he was a traitor to his race. Ironically, however, Motown's commercial strategy actually did create an interest among the white audience for exactly the type of 'honest' black music Motown's critics wanted. The Motown Records of the 1960s was a stepping-stone to a type of black music that did not compromise its style, but was commercially successful.

The popularity of Motown's music can be attributed to the talents of its musicians, yet its shrewd business strategies and the unique historical moment also helped create the phenomenon that was Motown Records. Informed by their hardworking upbringing, Berry Gordy's and his employees' desire for success was the impetus for the famous 'Motown Sound,' which had a distinctive quality that eludes definition. Perhaps key to Motown's spirit was integration itself – of musical style, of employees, of message, of appearance and image. The joy apparent in Motown's music was itself a political statement about integration's possibilities. As African-Americans were on the national stage in the 1960s like never before, it was fitting that African-American musicians also entered mainstream consciousness. Motown can be understood as shifting along with the popular opinion of American youth – promoting an integrationist strategy during the heyday of the Civil Rights movement, then later shifting its focus to the African-American experience. However,

Motown would never again equal its success in the 1960s. Motown's move to Los Angeles in 1972 marked the end of its supremacy over the pop charts.⁴⁵ Although many of its artists, such as Stevie Wonder, continued to work in Detroit and remained extremely popular, Motown was no longer the powerful cultural force it once was. Similarly, the Civil Rights Movement, which had informed so much of the public's fascination with Motown, had dissipated as well. As such, Motown Records moved to the Sun Belt, as thousands of Americans would a decade later, which bookended the initial Great Migration that had led to Motown Records' formation.

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45 Nelson George, 148.

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The Parents Music Resource Center and the Heavy Metal Cultural Revolution

Behrang Farshi

Things looked bleak for the Democratic Party in 1984. Ronald Reagan was re-elected in a landslide victory, the Republican Party was able to hold on to the Senate, and Republicans made significant gains in the Democratic-controlled House of Representatives. In the wake of the 1984 election, the Achilles' heel of the Democratic Party became clear: morality. Influential moral authorities like Reverend Jerry Falwell had compared liberals to pornographers "who are corrupting our youth."¹ Yet from the ashes, a few stars emerged for the Democrats, including the newly-elected Senator from Tennessee, Al Gore. The Senator's wife, Tipper, along with Treasury Secretary James Baker's wife, Susan, would go on to found the Parents Music Resource Center (PMRC) in 1985.

The PMRC was an organization devoted to informing parents about explicit material in the popular music being marketed to children. Heavy metal became its main target. As a particularly explicit genre of music, heavy metal seemed to offend parents regardless of their position on the political spectrum. The music thus provided an ideal mark for a party which wanted to attract conservative voters without alienating its liberal base. However, it would be going too far to say that the PMRC was simply founded in order to boost the popularity of the Democratic Party; as a bipartisan organization, the PMRC instead reflected a general trend of increasingly conservative attitudes towards family values in 1980s

¹ Falwell, Jerry. *Listen, America*. Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1980, pg. 20

America. Eager to provide a new generation withwith a soundtrack for rebellion, heavy metal attacked parental authority without allying itself with either the political Left or Right. The story of the PMRC is ultimately the narrative of how heavy metal was able to alienate the rebellious youth of the 1960s, pushing them to organize, along novel lines, when their own children rebelled in the 1980s.

Tipper Gore and Susan Baker founded the PMRC on the premise that American society was a compromise between “individual liberty and shared moral values.”² In *Democracy’s Discontent*, Michael Sandel defined the fundamental struggle in American politics between the republican tradition emphasizing that “liberty depends on sharing in self-government” and the liberal tradition that “emphasizes toleration and respect for individual rights.”³ Since the PMRC defined its mission as informing parents without asking for any government legislation, the organization was clearly dividing public and private responsibilities.⁴ The ‘compromise’ between individual rights and shared morality was the promotion of parental republican authority in the home while maintaining the government’s authority within a liberal framework. This provides a better structure for analysis than seeing the struggle as part of the ‘culture wars,’ defined by historian Sean Wilentz as a struggle that began in the mid-1980s over “issues of civil rights ...blend[ing] with broader convulsions over gender, sexuality and race.”⁵ Other historians like James Davison Hunter explicitly include the PMRC on the ‘conservative’ side of the culture wars.⁶ This inclusion seems

2 Gore, Tipper. *Raising PG Kids in an X-rated Society*. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1987, pg. 12

3 Sandel, Michael J. *Democracy’s Discontent: America in Search of a Public Philosophy*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1996, pg. 4-5

4 *Record Labeling: hearing before the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation, United States Senate, Ninety-ninth Congress, first session, on contents of music and the lyrics of records, September 19, 1985*. United States. Congress. Senate. Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation. U.S. G.P.O, pg. 1

5 Wilentz, Sean. *The Age of Reagan: A History, 1974-2008*. New York: Harpercollins, 2008., pg. 186

6 Hunter, James Davison. *Culture Wars: the Struggle to Define America*. New

presumptuous as the organization was both bipartisan and was opposed to government intervention on its behalf. The PMRC, though it resembled an opening battle over culture, was in fact something in between the two theoretical poles that made up this conflict, checking liberalism in the public sphere with republicanism in the private sphere.

Allan Bloom, like many cultural critics of the time, argued that “nothing is more singular about this generation [the youth of the 1980s] than its addiction to music.”⁷ Tipper Gore seemed to agree when she cited music as more influential than television or movies.⁸ What was it about music that made it gain widespread recognition as representing the authority of popular culture? A number of studies on child consumption of entertainment in the 1980s found that the time spent listening to music far exceeded other forms of entertainment. Most shockingly, children were found to spend more time listening to music than going to school.⁹ There seemed to be a general consensus among concerned cultural critics in the 1980s that music was the crown sovereign of popular culture.

New technology, especially the invention of the Sony Walkman, added to concerns over music’s influence on adolescents. A Professor of music associated with the PMRC, Dr. Joe Stuessy, claimed heavy metal was loud in order to force children to put on headphones to avoid bothering others around them. This gave the music an “unfettered freeway straight into the mind.”¹⁰ Concerns over technology fed into an already long tradition in Western culture that connected moral temptation with music.¹¹ Examples of this

York: Basic Books, 1991, pg. 228

7 Bloom, Allan. *The Closing of the American Mind*. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1987, pg. 68

8 Gore, pg. 56

9 Nuzum, Eric D. *Parental Advisory: Music Censorship in America*. New York: Perennial, 2001, pg. 62

10 Hearings, pg. 124

11 Nuzum, pg. 116

include Mephistocles' disguise as a musician when tempting Faust, or rumors that blues guitarist Robert Johnson was taught how to play by the Devil. For concerned adults, new technology provided new opportunities for moral temptation.

Heavy metal was not a new phenomenon in popular music. Founded in the late 1960s by British bands like Black Sabbath and Led Zeppelin, the genre's more acoustically and lyrically abrasive take on rock music emphasized pessimism and fantasy over optimism and protest: where the Beatles sang "all you need is love", Black Sabbath screamed "is it the end my friend? / Satan's come around the bend."¹² The Rolling Stones' free concert at Altamont was the source for much of this pessimism. Hoping to replicate the spirit of love captured at Woodstock in August 1969, the December concert at Altamont quickly descended into bloodshed. With one homicide and three accidental deaths, the concert dispelled the myth that love was enough to unite the new generation. As Stuessy aptly observed, what was new about metal was its unabashed devotion to "hatred," a product of the flower power generation's devotion to love withering away by the decade's end.¹³ Metal thus reflected the newfound pessimism that emerged as the messages of peace and love proved untenable by the beginning of the 1970s.

The messages of pessimism and fantasy did much to propel heavier bands like Led Zeppelin to the top of the British and American charts in the early 1970s. This music shunned the utopian idealism so characteristic of the previous decade, and focused instead on observing rather than changing society.¹⁴ However, by the decade's midpoint, the intricate guitar solos and long winded elitism of metal

12 The Beatles. "All You Need is Love." *Magical Mystery Tour*. 1967: Capitol Records, Parlophone. ; Black Sabbath. "Black Sabbath." *Black Sabbath*. 1970: Vertigo, Warner Bros.

13 Hearings, pg. 122

14 Schulman, Bruce J. *The Seventies : The Great shift in American Culture, Society, and Politics*. New York: Free Press, 2001, pg. 146

bands gave way to the resurgence of 1960s simplicity and protest. In Britain, Punk represented this resurrection. The accessibility of bands like The Clash and The Sex Pistols restored what historian Bruce Schulman calls a “rock purity or asceticism” to music.¹⁵ The simple riffs and politically charged lyrics of these bands captured the imagination of Britain’s youth. By the late 1970s, heavy metal was clearly on the wane in its homeland.

While heavy metal was collapsing on the home front, the genre was simultaneously losing its foothold in America. Whereas in Britain the focus was on the 1960s tradition of protest, in the United States, Disco relished the 1960s legacy of ‘free love’ and drug abuse. The vices that were enjoyed on the fields of Woodstock in the 1960s were brought inside by Studio 54 in the late 1970s. Like Punk, Disco was defined by its emphasis on catchiness and simplicity. Music fans in both nations seemed to indicate their newfound boredom with the complex cacophony of heavy metal.

Many of the criticisms leveled against metal were exemplified by Led Zeppelin’s 1976 song Achilles Last Stand. With cryptic lyrics like “To seek the man whose pointing hand, the giant step unfolds/ With guidance from the curving path, that churns up into stone,” the eleven minute track proved too exhausting for most music listeners in the 1970s.¹⁶ Responding to the criticisms leveled against heavy metal, a new wave of British metal bands emerged at the beginning of the 1980s to reverse the genre’s decline. Bands like Judas Priest and Iron Maiden, significantly cut down their song lengths, and simplified their chord progressions. As both Punk and Disco became more and more redundant, these new metal bands were able to strike an appealing balance between simplicity and complexity. Upon taking over the music charts in Britain, these British bands led a second British musical invasion to the United States. By 1983, major

15 Schulman, pg. 153

16 Led Zeppelin. “Achilles Last Stand.” *Presence*. 1976: Swan Song.

British metal acts consistently sold out American music venues.¹⁷ Reviving itself from the brink of extinction, heavy metal was back and more popular than ever.

In the 1980s as in the 1960s, the revolution that had originated in Britain would find its American home in the Golden State. In the 1967 song San Francisco, Scott McKenzie sang of the new “generation” from “all across the nation” migrating to the city’s Haight-Ashbury district.¹⁸ San Francisco in the late 1960s provided a home for runaway youth looking to rebel against their parents’ authority, and in the 1980s Los Angeles served a similar purpose.¹⁹ By 1983, as a result of the popularity of British metal, a new wave of metal bands formed in southern California playing primarily in clubs on the Sunset Strip. One of these bands, Quiet Riot, was signed to a major label in 1983. The band was able to sell four million copies of its debut album *Metal Health*, precipitating an explosion of LA metal bands signed to major labels.²⁰ Whereas sales of metal albums had made up eight percent of the market in 1983, in 1984 the number suddenly jumped to twenty percent and youth from all across the nation rushed to West Hollywood hoping to participate in the new music scene either as fans or musicians.²¹

MTV was a crucial contributor to metal’s ascendancy. The new music medium’s structure and goals fit neatly into metal’s own attack on the popular culture of the previous generation. As explained by historian David Szatmary, the channel was founded in 1981 to promote music to the under-25 generation “which had been

17 Christe, Ian. *Sound of the Beast: the Complete Headbanging History of Heavy Metal*. New York: Harper Entertainment, 2004, pg. 69

18 Scott McKenzie. “San Francisco (Be Sure to Wear Flowers in Your Hair).” [Single] 1967: CBS Records, Ode Records.

19 Christe, pg. 160

20 Christe, pg. 153

21 Martin, Linda ; Segrave, Kerry. *Anti-Rock: the Opposition to Rock ‘n’ roll*. New York: Da Capo Press, 1993, pg. 232

neglected by radio.”²² Simultaneously, music critics who won control of music radio and print in the 1960s universally panned metal, as in 1983’s *The New Rolling Stone Record Guide*. Beginning as subversive elements in popular culture, the cultural institutions of the 1960s had simply become elitist by the 1980s. The new wave of British metal bands circumnavigated these pop culture elites by putting on elaborate stage shows that spread their popularity by word of mouth.²³ Bored with the lingering music tradition of the 1960s, MTV and metal both arose to provide a new generation of youth its own voice in popular music.

Heavy metal’s emphasis on the visual experience of the performance made the genre ideal for the new medium of music videos. WASP, one of the bands most hated by the PMRC, had a live show that included exploding codpieces, torture instruments, skulls on poles and as music historian Ian Christe describes it, “more fire, smoke, and lights than Halloween in the Munster’s front parlor.”²⁴ MTV and metal were thus perfectly designed for symbioses. MTV discovered the genre in 1984, and the subsequent heavy rotation of metal videos helped fuel both the channel’s popularity and the sales of metal albums.²⁵ A cultural revolution had thus begun as the old monarchs of popular music were dethroned in the video age.

Heavy metal was not the only new genre of music to emerge in the wake of punk and disco, yet it was attacked by the PMRC as the pivot of all popular music. This is best seen in an example Tipper Gore gave to demonstrate the subversion of 1960s music. Gore argued that the album cover for the Rolling Stones’ 1983 album *Undercover*, which portrayed a woman in bondage, was an attempt by the band to remain relevant in the wake of metal’s

22 Szatmary, David P. *Rockin’ In Time: A Social History of Rock-And-Roll*. Englewood Cliffs: Prentice Hall, 1991, pg. 252

23 Christe, pg. 69

24 Christe, pg. 64

25 Martin and Segrave, pg. 232

popularizing of explicitly violent and sexual themes.²⁶ Heavy metal depicted “women as sexual playthings,” essentially “objects of pleasure designed, like alcohol and drugs or fast cars, for men to use and abuse.”²⁷ The concern seemed to be that metal had transformed the 1960s sexual culture of promiscuity into hedonistic male domination. Moreover, unlike pop music, Gore saw metal as having an “evangelical” quality, which made the music particularly effective as a tool for indoctrination.²⁸ For the PMRC, heavy metal was not a manifestation of general trends in popular music, but instead the source of music’s increasingly subversive nature.

This reference to the Rolling Stones was used as more than a tool to criticize metal. The PMRC was trying to distance itself from previous censors of rock music. The most famous example of rock censorship in the genre’s early days was the appearance of Elvis Presley on The Ed Sullivan Show in 1956. During the filming of the show, the cameras were prevented from recording the gyrations of the singer’s lower body. When news of this act of censorship made it to Elvis, the singer criticized the people who thought his show was too provocative as “frustrated old types.”²⁹ In an interview with the Los Angeles Times, PMRC cofounder Susan Baker made sure to emphasize her love of rock music, listing over half a dozen classic bands from the 1950s.³⁰ Like Baker, Tipper Gore emphasized her love of rock music, and made sure to distinguish between her love of the genre itself and concerns over explicit material getting into the hands of children.³¹ Resembling their own generation’s cultural rebellion, the rise of heavy metal was criticized by the PMRC in ways that distanced the new generation’s concerns from the moral

26 Gore, pg. 55

27 Gore, pg. 54

28 Gore, pg. 120

29 Washington Post, Ellen Goodman, *Rock Ratings*, pg. A19, September 14, 1985

30 Los Angeles Times, Aug. 25, 1985

31 Gore, pg. 82

panics of their own parents. The PMRC was trying to hide that the generation that had come of age in the 1960s was experiencing the second cultural revolution of their lives, this time from the perspective of the monarch.

The PMRC would focus its attack on metal, yet the inspiration for the organization came from an encounter between Tipper Gore and pop music in May 1985. As she relates in her book *Raising PG Kids in an X Rated Society*, Gore was shocked when she overheard her daughters listening to the song *Darling Nikki* by Prince, which described the titular character “masturbating with a magazine.”³² According to Gore, she then turned on MTV. Watching about half a dozen metal music videos convinced her that popular music had become too explicit. Gore would later relate her disgust with what she saw to Susan Baker. Baker, a Republican, was equally outraged and the two decided to form the PMRC as a bipartisan initiative.³³

Initially, the PMRC called for record industry labels to mark albums under four specific categories that gave parents insight into why the music was explicit. These labels were planned as ‘X’ for sex, ‘O’ for the occult, ‘D/A’ for drug/alcohol abuse, and ‘V’ for violence.³⁴ The organization released a list of bands it saw as particularly offensive, later dubbed the ‘Filthy 15.’ Nine of the groups cited were metal bands. Moreover, while all the pop musicians were listed for sexual content, metal bands were found in all four categories. The PMRC pushed for the holding of a Congressional Hearing on the issue of record labeling, a request that was granted and scheduled for September 19, 1985. With its requests clearly outlined, the organization was ready to take its qualms to Capitol Hill.

From its inception, rock music triggered a number of

32 Prince. “Darling Nikki.” *Purple Rain*. 1984: Warner Bros.

33 Gore, pg. 17

34 Goldberg, Danny. *Dispatches from the Culture Wars: How the Left Lost Teen Spirit*. New York: Miramax, 2003, pg. 104

controversies over sexual content.F, the term ‘rock n roll’ itself beginning as a euphemism for sex. In the 1980s, more conservative cultural critics like Bloom blasted the androgyny of pop music, a trend he saw beginning in the 1960s.³⁵ The philosopher could just as easily have cited metal bands, considering the trend was also present there. Most of the groups that emerged after 1984 were classified as ‘glam,’ a subgenre obsessed with sexual ambiguity. As music historian Ian Christe describes them, adherents of the subgenre, “dyed, bleached, and teased their hair into synthetic floral displays then spent their last pennies on platform boots, vinyl pants, ripped T-shirts, and extra-strength mascara.”³⁶ As much as Prince or Michael Jackson, these metal bands were continuing rock music’s tradition of criticizing conservative gender roles, feeding an ambiguous sexuality to a new generation of music fans.

Though pop and metal seemed to match each other’s criticisms of gender roles, metal went farther in that it simultaneously offended liberal sensibilities. Though dressed like women, metal bands did not shy away from sexist and misogynistic sentiments. Even analysts sympathetic to metal’s non-discriminatory nature, like Robert Walser, admit that the bands most cited by the PMRC, such as WASP and Mötley Crüe, were consistently sexist.³⁷ A scene from *This is Spinal Tap* (1984), a mockumentary about a fictional metal band helps clarify the paradox of glam metal’s misogyny. The scene contains a hostess complaining about the sexist artwork for the band’s new album, only to have the manager respond, “This is 1982, Bobbi, c’mon!” The hostess responds: “That’s right, it’s 1982! Get out of the 60s.”³⁸ The 1960s had a legacy of breaking down conservative taboos, yet this pension for rebellion simultaneously pushed a new

35 Bloom, pg. 79

36 Christe, pg. 154

37 Walser, Robert. *Running with the Devil: Power, Gender, and Madness in Heavy Metal Music*. Hanover, NH : University Press of New England, 1993, pg. 117

38 *This is Spinal Tap*. (1984) Directed by Rob Reiner. Embassy Pictures [DVD]

generation of musicians to undermine the rights women gained in the 1970s. As liberal values became the mainstream in the wake of the 1960s, metal bands inherited the complex legacy of continuing rock's criticism of conservatism while simultaneously attacking the newfound authority of liberalism.

While sex was a constant point of contention for critics of rock music, the citation of the occult was something very particular to the 1980s. Satanic Ritual Abuse (SRA), the concern that secret satanic societies were abusing children in cult rituals, was a phenomenon that, like glam, came out of Southern California. In 1983 at the McMartin preschool in Manhattan Beach, a student accused staff of including him in a variety of strange cult rituals that suggested devil worship.³⁹ The media seized on this story. Though all staff members were either found not guilty or never charged, accusations and rumors of SRA would abound until the end of the 1980s, fed by news programs as mainstream as ABC's 20/20.⁴⁰ The fear of Satanism that had lain dormant in American society from the time of Puritan pilgrims had resurrected itself in the 1980s.

The PMRC, as a media savvy organization, could not help but participate in this craze. The organization sold "Satanism Research Packets" which included news clippings of crimes connected to Satanism and heavy metal.⁴¹ However, Gore emphasized that the concern was not over the morality of Satanism, as was the case with conservative watchdog groups. Rather, she was concerned

39 Critcher, Chas (editor). *Critical Readings: Moral Panics and the Media*. Maidenhead [England]; New York: Open University Press, 2006. Article: Jenkins, Philip and Maier-Katkin, Daniel. Satanism: Myth and Reality in a Contemporary Moral Panic, pg. 88-102, pg. 89

40 Critcher, Chas (editor). *Critical Readings: Moral Panics and the Media*. Maidenhead [England]; New York: Open University Press, 2006. Article: Young, Mary De. *Another Look at Moral Panics: The Case of Satanic Day Care Centers*, pg. 277-290, pg. 283

41 Victor, Jeffrey S. *Satanic Panic: the Creation of a Contemporary Legend*. Chicago: Open Court, 1993, pg.165

about Satanism as an indicator of teen suicide.⁴² Avoiding the more contentious and nebulous issue of protecting children's souls, the PMRC was appealing to universal parental fears over the safety of children.

To parents in the 1980s, it appeared as if the rapid rise in teen suicides was prompted by the increasing popularity of metal. Gore cited a 1980s study that found suicide amongst 15-20 year olds had increased by three hundred percent since 1950.⁴³ Other studies at the time found that while the average rates for suicide attempts by teens was eight percent for men and fourteen percent for women, the equivalent for teen heavy metal fans was twenty percent and sixty percent respectively.⁴⁴ As in her analysis of metal's pernicious influence on other genres of music, Gore looked at the proselytizing effect of metal. Her criticism focused on "cluster suicides," the phenomenon of one suicide suddenly causing a chain reaction.⁴⁵ Reverend Jeff Ling, a witness for the PMRC at the Congressional hearing, complained of music's "move from the area of being a reinforcer and an encourager into the role of educator" when asked about suicide.⁴⁶ This argument reflected Gore's view of Satanism's popularity coming from it being the "ultimate form of rebellion,"⁴⁷ with the suicidal influences of the ideology increasing as children separated themselves from the authority of parents. Heavy metal was thus seen as an audio Trojan horse lulling large numbers of teens into committing suicide.

Divorce seems to be the operative factor in piquing Tipper Gore's concerns. According to a study by the National Center for Health Statistics, rates of divorce rose drastically in the 1970s. While

42 Gore, pg. 122

43 Gore, pg. 104

44 Nuzum, pg. 61

45 Gore, pg. 111

46 Hearings, pg. 46

47 Gore, pg. 121

this trend peaked in 1981, divorce rates remained high throughout the rest of the decade.⁴⁸ The study also found that more the rates of children were growing up in single parent families was at its highest in than at any other time in American history. Many of these children were either left unsupervised in the home, or left under the supervision of daycare center employees. Critics of popular culture, like Bloom, seemed to mirror Gore's concerns when they worried that the breakdown of the family would destroy the "moral education" of children as music took the place of parents.⁴⁹ PReducing the purview of patents, prompted by changes in society that reduced the purview of parents, the PMRC's concern with Satanism merely reflected anxieties , was really a concern over maintaining parental authority rather than alleged.

Where did heavy metal's obsessions with Satanism come from? Early bands in the genre, like Black Sabbath, adopted satanic lyrics and imagery as a means to make protest songs more shocking. Their 1970 anti-war song War Pigs exemplified this tactic. With lyrics like "Generals gathered in their masses/ just like witches at black masses,"⁵⁰ the song used Satan to protest the political establishment. However, as the music progressed in the 1970s, Satanism was extracted from its use for protest and instead used to create shocking fantasies for its audience. Like Virgil leading Dante into the Inferno, metal fans could turn on, tune in, and descend into hell with their favorite records. For a rebellious genre looking to shock its audience, Satan's fall from grace provided a system of symbols able to represent a new generation's desire for independence.

Heavy metal was not an innocent bystander in its association with Satanism, and it seemed instead that bands in the 1980s had

48 "Advance Report of Final Divorce Statistics, 1988" (PDF). *Monthly Vital Statistic Report* **39** (12 (supplement 2)). 1991-05-21. http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/mvsvr/supp/mv39_12s2.pdf.

49 Bloom, pg. 76

50 Black Sabbath. "War Pigs." *Paranoid*. 1970: Vertigo, Warner Bros.

actively embraced Lucifer. The band Venom was particularly influential in this regard. The band's 1984 album *At War with Satan* greatly increased the amount of satanic imagery in heavy metal.⁵¹ Bands like Metallica were well aware of the growing concerns over breaking this particular taboo, and consciously avoided using satanic imagery.⁵² Conversely, bands like Slayer embraced this dark imagery with albums like 1985's *Hell Awaits*. Unlike early rock bands accused of secretly being under the devil's spell, heavy metal was advertising its devotion to the Dark Lord.

This rise in satanic imagery was coupled with an increasing emphasis on rebelling against the authority of parents. This was most apparent in the 1986 music video for Megadeth's song *Peace Sells*. At the song's midpoint, the video cuts to a young child watching MTV, only to be interrupted by his father who forcefully changes the channel to the news. In response to this, the child, clearly wearing a Slayer t-shirt, yells back at his father "this is the news," and turns the channel back right as guitarist Dave Mustaine tears into the guitar solo.⁵³ The bass line from the song would subsequently be taken as the theme music for MTV news. This made it appear as if the two old cohorts of MTV and heavy metal were working together in order to turn children against their parents. Thus the PMRC was responding to challenges made by popular whitemetal bands continued to actively embracing their association with Satanism and aggression against parents.

Many of the musical greats of the 1960s, like Jim Morrison and Jimi Hendrix, tragically died as a result of their addiction to drugs and alcohol. It is in this area where metal seemed to have the

51 Christe, pg. 104-105

52 Christe, pg. 127

53 Megadeth. "Peace Sells." *Peace Sells...but Who's Buying?*² [Music Video] 1986: Capitol, Combat.

least novelty. As Tipper Gore put it, the “drug-use messages that the Woodstock generation of rock bands began” was simply being made more explicit by metal bands.⁵⁴ As was the concern with about Satanism, popular music’s endorsement of substance abuse could potentially push children to pursue a fundamentally suicidal lifestyle. In this instance, however, Tipper Gore seemed to be a little out of date: by the decade’s midpoint, the rates of substance abuse by metal musicians had drastically decreased as the music became more sophisticated, requiring greater sobriety to perform masterfully.⁵⁵ Having witnessed their musical heroes fade away as a result of drug addiction, the baby-boomers seemed to fear the same fate awaited their beloved children.

However, glam metal musicians seemed to love boasting about their excessive consumption of recreational substances. An example of this is WASP’s guitarist Chris Holmes who, in the band’s music video for the 1984 song *I Wanna Be Somebody*, guzzled down a beer.⁵⁶ This glamorous image of intoxication and substance consumption abuse was dispelled with the musician’s participation in an interview for the 1988 documentary *The Decline of Western Civilization Part II: the Metal Years*.⁵⁷ In one of the film’s more disheartening moments, Holmes was interviewed floating in a pool while his mother watched poolside. The camera witnessed the musician pour bottle after bottle of vodka down his throat until he passed out from intoxication. The camera periodically cut to a close up of his mother’s face, capturing an increasingly terrified expression with each successive shot. The scene can serve to represent the fear that Gore expressed in regards to children going too far in trying to “rebel against a generation of adults who have broken quite a

54 Gore, pg. 127

55 Welser, pg. 139

56 WASP. “I Wanna Be Somebody.” *W.A.S.P.* [Music video] 1984: Capitol Records.

57 *The Decline of Western Civilization Part II: The Metal Years*. (1988) Directed by Penelope Spheeris. New Line Cinema [DVD]

few taboos themselves.”⁵⁸ Even within the metal community, this image did not sit well. In the VH1 documentary *Heavy: the Story of Metal*, a number of metal musicians trace the decline of the genre’s popularity in the 1990s to the myths of glamour dispelled by scenes such as this.⁵⁹

The massive failure of the over-budget 1980 western film *Heaven’s Gate*, was a factor in convincing movie studios in the 1980s to focus on action blockbusters with increasing levels of violence. However, the PMRC’s criticism of violence in metal was exclusive from this general pop cultural trend. Tipper Gore interestingly saw rape not as an act of sex but an act of violence.⁶⁰ The idea of rape as an act of violence can be traced to the radical feminist Susan Brownmiller’s 1975 book *Against Our Will: Men, Women, and Rape*.⁶¹ Gore also drew from feminism’s protest tradition. In 1976, feminist organizations like the National Organization for Women (NOW) had threatened to boycott record labels who released albums with cover art depicting violence against women.⁶² As in her criticism of substance abuse, Gore blamed her own generation for turning sex into an act of pleasure with few responsibilities attached to it.⁶³ It seems the concern here was over ‘free love’ turning violent, with Gore’s discontents and strategy drawing from the feminist tradition of the 1970s.

Metal itself did much to invoke feminist fury by conflating violence and sex. As cited by Tipper Gore, Dr. Joe Stuessy found that the incidence of comparing the penis to a weapon had drastically

58 Gore, pg. 50

59 *The Decline of Western Civilization Part II: The Metal Years*. (1988) Directed by Penelope Spheeris. New Line Cinema [DVD]

60 Gore, pg. 90

61 Brownmiller, Susan. *Against Our Will: Men, Women, and Rape*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 1975.

62 Martin and Segrave, pg. 275

63 Gore, pg. 90

increased within metal music.⁶⁴ WASP's song *Animal* (Fuck Like a Beast), listed in the PMRC's 'Filthy 15,' was a favorite example used by the organization. The cover of the single sleeve depicted a circular saw protruding from a man's codpiece. As with gender roles, metal had been able to offend both conservative sensibilities with its explicit portrayals, and liberal-feminist sentiments over its depiction of violence against women.

On September 19, 1985, the media descended on Capital Hill as the PMRC and representatives of the music community met before the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation. The hearing ostensibly fit under the committee's responsibility to monitor communications related to business within the United States. In the four months between the PMRC's founding and this congressional hearing, over 150 articles on the issue of the explicitness of popular music were published, including cover stories in *Newsweek* and *People*.⁶⁵ The media presence was so large that one of the Senators on the congressional committee, Senator John Exon, mentioned "this is the largest media event...that I have ever seen."⁶⁶ The PMRC's strategy of embracing the media had clearly paid off with the frenzied turnout at the congressional hearing.

The hearing was not without precedent. Similar hearings were held in 1955 and 1958 concerning the connections between rock music and juvenile delinquency.⁶⁷ As outlined by the chairmen of the committee, John Danforth, the "reason for this hearing is not to promote any legislation" but instead to "provide a forum for airing the issue itself."⁶⁸ The legal stakes were thus ostensibly low. However, the interaction between the US government, the PMRC, and popular musicians revealed the fundamental concerns of all

64 Gore, pg. 88

65 Nuzum, pg. 20

66 Hearings, pg. 49

67 Nuzum, pg. 52

68 Hearings, pg. 1

actors involved.

Republican Senator Paula Hawkins, the first female senator from the state of Florida and the chairman of the Children, Family, Drugs, and Alcoholism Subcommittee, opened the hearing. Showing how the PMRC was able to unite parents across political lines, the conservative senator hinted at big government solutions to the problem. Complaining of how parents are given sole blame if their children gotting addicted to drugs or committedting suicide, Hawkins asked, “How much guilt can we place on these parents without giving them some assistance?”⁶⁹ Moreover, like the PMRC had done, the senator distanced the committee’s actions from the censorship of Elvis on The Ed Sullivan Show. The senator emphasized that “much has changed since Elvis’ seemingly innocent times” with “subtleties, suggestions, and innuendo” giving way to “overt expressions and descriptions.”⁷⁰ The Republican Party appeared willing to compromise on its small government values when confronted with the specter of popular music.

Representing the PMRC, Tipper Gore and Susan Baker gave their testimony next. After a meeting between representatives of the major record labels and the PMRC, the organization had abandoned its four category scheme because of the “logistical and economic problems” it posed. Instead, the organization sought a singular designation similar to the ‘R’ rating for films.⁷¹ Speaking to the convergence of Naderism and Reaganomics, Gore began by framing her dispute as “truth in packaging...a time honored principle in our free enterprise system.” Furthermore, Gore stressed she was “not advocating any Federal intervention.”⁷² Instead, she wanted record companies to form “a one-time panel to recommend a uniform set of criteria” for labeling music deemed too explicit

69 Hearings, pg. 6

70 Hearings, pg. 6

71 Hearings, pg. 12

72 Hearings, pg. 13

for children.⁷³ This emphasis on avoiding government intervention brought positive responses from a number of the Senators on the committee. This suggestion also revealed the organization's pursuit of republicanism in the private sphere. The PMRC was essentially asking the various record companies to police themselves, substituting government oversight with trust in the private industry. It seemed that the landslide victory for Reagan in 1984 had pushed Democrats to realize traditional big government solutions would be poorly received. By dressing their arguments under the rubric of free enterprise capitalism, the PMRC was able to satisfy both the laissez-faire spirit of the 1980s and the 1960s anti-censorship tradition.

The hearing included a number of musicians submitting testimonies. The first of these was legendary counter-cultural icon Frank Zappa. A musician who made his name in the 1960s, the aging rock star continued to enjoy moderate success and trained such famous metal guitar virtuosos as Steve Vai. Dressed conservatively in a suit with his hair tied back, Zappa looked more like an accountant than a California rock star. Zappa accused the PMRC of attempting to censor music. He insisted that although the organization publicly denied this, it was working towards "hidden agendas."⁷⁴ The musician's concerns with the PMRC stemmed from its potential as a political lobbying group: women associated with the PMRC were personally connected to ten percent of the Senate.⁷⁵ Thus, it was the organization's potential rather than its actions or initiatives that piqued Zappa's concerns.

When asked by the committee how he would deal with the issue of explicit material being sold to children, Zappa suggested including printed lyrics with albums. This suggestion was particularly liked by Senator Ernest Hollings, who saw it as "perhaps even better

73 Hearings, pg. 12

74 Hearings, pg. 56

75 Christe, pg. 119

than rating” because it gave parents direct access to assessing the content of their children’s music itself.⁷⁶ Zappa felt the responsibility for including printed lyrics fell under the responsibility of the federal government rather than musicians or record labels.⁷⁷ The approach the famed rocker suggested undermined the PMRC’s attempt to appeal to small government values. He was inextricably tying the government to informing parents about explicit material in music.

Zappa continued to press the committee on whether legislation for censoring music would be passed. His continued prodding paid off when Senator John Exon, in response to the musician’s inquests into censorship, affirmed his desire to pursue legislation regardless of the PMRC’s requests. Exon stated that “unless the free enterprise system, both the producers and you as the performers, see fit to clean up your act,” he would pursue either regulation or legislation.⁷⁸ While his language left room open for private enterprise to resolve the issue itself, the Senator had explicitly threatened censorship. The PMRC’s campaign against popular music had potentially sparked the federal government to move towards legislation, going beyond the organization’s more modest goal of informing parents.

The most significant precedent for censorship at this time was the 1973 case *Miller V. California*. The Supreme Court found that only material deemed obscene for sexual content could be censored. Moreover, “contemporary community standards” could define what was considered obscene.⁷⁹ Because of this stress on ‘community standards,’ standards of obscenity could vary widely between states, and even within states themselves. Exon’s threat of censorship could thus only be realized if a new legal precedent was set that allowed for federal oversight on the issue.

76 Hearings, pg. 60

77 Hearings, pg. 55

78 Hearings, pg. 52

79 Chastagner, Claude. *The Parents’ Music Resource Center: From Information to Censorship*. Popular Music, Vol. 18, No. 2 (May, 1999), pp. 179-192, pg. 182

The question of applying community standards to censor music revealed how New Deal Democrats like Hollings and Exon followed the New Deal Democrat model by were placing the PMRC's concerns into the framework of a culture war. Historian James Davison Hunter argues that the conservative side of this war emphasizes community standards when deciding what is appropriate, contrasting the liberal policy of trusting the art community itself.⁸⁰ In his opening statement, Hollings actively portrayed the music cited by the PMRC as fitting the provisions of censorship outlined in *Miller v. California*. Referring to the music as “porn rock,” the Senator stressed that “the redeeming social value [for the music in question]... is inaudible.”⁸¹ Hollings and Exon were Democrats of the old generation, both born in the early 1920s. Having grown up under nearly sixty years of big government, the Senators seemed inclined to distrust the private industry and instead promote government intervention. New Deal Democrats were thus turning the issue into a liberal redefinition of individual rights, while moderate Democrats like Tipper Gore wanted to solve the problem through republicanism in the private sphere.

Many members of the committee seemed very sympathetic towards Zappa's testimony, Senator Gore himself even mentioning he was a fan of the 1960s icon's music.⁸² The committee would not be as gentle on its next witness, Dee Snider, however. Snider was the vocalist for the glam metal band Twisted Sister. This group enjoyed immense popularity as a result of the music video for its song *We're Not Gonna Take it*. Though Twisted Sister would fade into obscurity by the end of the 1980s, at this point in time, Snider was one of the most recognizable faces in popular music.

The singer quickly attacked the mythos around metal

80 Hunter pg. 243

81 Hearings, pg. 2

82 Hearings, pg. 55

decadence. Snider emphasized he was a Christian, a father, and “believe it or not, I do not smoke, I do not drink, and I do not do drugs.”⁸³ The music of Twisted Sister was amongst the most innocuous in the metal scene, and it seemed the band’s inclusion on the ‘Filthy 15’ was more related to the group’s popularity than its content. Tipper Gore had claimed the Twisted Sister song Under the Blade was about sadomasochism, bondage and rape. Snider responded that the song was merely about surgery, saying that the “only sadomasochism, bondage, and rape in this song is in the mind of Mrs. Gore.”⁸⁴ In response to this attack on his wife, Senator Al Gore asked Snider to tell the committee what the name of his band’s fan club was. Snider responded, “The Sick Mother Fucking Fans of Twisted Sister.”⁸⁵

Before he was effectively disrupted by Al Gore, Snider’s strategy had been to play on the committee’s biases towards metal musicians. Unlike Frank Zappa, Snider did nothing to hide his vocation, later recalling his appearance by saying: “I’m there in my cut off denim, my skin tight jeans, my snake skin boots, and a little bit of eye makeup left underneath, and my big hair.”⁸⁶ Moreover, Snider described taking his speech out of his back pocket as a crumpled piece of paper “like a bad kid bringing his homework to school,” all to coax the committee into thinking he was unintelligent.⁸⁷ Snider was drawing upon a pop culture stereotype of metal musicians and fans, a stereotype that was portrayed multiple times by actor Keanu Reeves. In 1986’s *River’s Edge*, the actor portrays a rebellious teen that frequently skips school, the film’s soundtrack composed largely of the music of Slayer. Reeves reprised this character in 1989’s *Bill and Ted’s Excellent Adventure*, although this time within a comedic

83 Hearings, pg. 73

84 Hearings, pg. 74

85 Hearings, pg. 77

86 *Metal: A Headbanger’s Journey*. (2005) Directed by Sam Dunn. Seville Pictures [DVD]

87 Headbanger’s Journey

setting. Both films stressed that heavy metal fans were rebellious towards their parents, bad students, and unable to speak eloquently.⁸⁸

With the setback of his fan club's name behind him, Snider pressed on to make the case for heavy metal. With the music video for *We're Not Gonna Take It* entered into evidence earlier in the hearing, the vocalist felt pressed to justify its validity as art.⁸⁹ The video portrays a child playing an electric guitar only to have his father enter and ask him to stop playing heavy metal. The child cranks the volume and blasts the noise in his father's direction, the sound wave tossing the father out the window into the driveway beneath. As Snider explains, the video was "simply meant to be a cartoon with human actors."⁹⁰ The video indeed more resembled a traditional Warner Brothers cartoon than an explicit portrait of violence.

Twisted Sister was an exception to many of the trends that had piqued the PMRC's concerns with popular music. In regards to women's rights, the rock star emphasized his continued commitment to "fight[ing] against sexism."⁹¹ In addition, unlike other glam musicians who tried to look like glamour models, the members of Twisted Sister wore heavy coats of make-up that made them look like clowns. The band was in many ways a diluted parody of glam metal; the humorous nature of their makeup did little to question gender roles. Even the band's anti-parental authority anthem *We're Not Gonna Take It* was about as innocuous as the comic book character Dennis the Menace. Snider's music did little to demonstrate anything but how sterile some of the popular bands truly were.

88 *River's Edge*. (1986) Directed by Tim Hunter. MGM Home Entertainment [DVD]; *Bill & Ted's Excellent Adventure*. (1989) Directed by Stephen Herek. Orion Pictures [DVD]

89 Twisted Sister. "We're Not Gonna Take It." *Stay Hungry*. [Music Video] 1984: Atlantic.

90 Hearings, pg. 74

91 Hearings, pg. 80

Though it was met by a lot of media fanfare, the congressional hearing passed with few results. Two months after the hearing, the Record Industry Association of America (RIAA), which controlled the release of eighty-five percent of American popular music, met with the PMRC. They agreed on a compromise. The RIAA would allow artists to choose whether to put lyrics on their cover art or a sticker indicating explicit material. Most bands chose the latter.⁹² The PMRC had thus successfully assured an agreement without the need for federal intervention.

Politicians seemed satisfied with the private resolution of the matter. Senator Hollings' press secretary released a statement saying the compromise, "while welcome, did not rule out the possibility of future legislation," though the senator abandoned his efforts after this announcement.⁹³ In the interim period between the congressional hearing and the November 1st, 1985 agreement, President Ronald Reagan also involved himself in the issue. At a speech largely devoted to tax cuts, the pPresident seemed to endorse government intervention when he stated his doubt that "our Founding Fathers never intended to create a nation where the rights of pornographers would take precedence over the rights of parents."⁹⁴ The president however devoted about as much time in the speech to the explicitness of popular music as jokes relating to his age. Like Hollings, Reagan soon abandoned the issue. It seemed the government had little desire to override agreements reached in the private sphere.

The agreement was not however a complete victory for the PMRC. The problem with this compromise for Gore was that small independent labels would not be bounded to the scheme.⁹⁵ The story

92 Chastagner, pg. 184

93 NYT, Nov 2, 1985, pg. 14

94 *Remarks at a Fundraising Luncheon for Virginia Gubernatorial Candidate Wyatt Durrette in Arlington, Virginia, October 9, 1985.* <http://www.reagan.utexas.edu/archives/speeches/1985/100985b.htm>

95 Martin and Segrave, pg. 310

of WASP's 1984 song *Animal* (Fuck Like a Beast) clarifies why this was a concern.⁹⁶ WASP was signed to a major recording company, Capital Records, which refused to release the song on their debut album. Capital Records "planned to release it as a single only in Europe, in a black plastic bag with a sticker warning of offensive lyrics."⁹⁷ This action was suggested one year before the PMRC was formed. However, the record company allowed the band to pursue a one-time recording contract with the independent record company, Music For Nations, who would release the song without editing or compromise on the album art.⁹⁸ Major record companies were thus taking independent action to curtail the release of offensive material before the PMRC's formation with minor record companies serving the needs of more explicit artists.

Adding to the pyrrhic quality of the PMRC's victory, the private sphere seemed unwilling to adopt a rigorous system of policing. In the November 1st agreement, the RIAA had agreed to pressure small independent labels that fell outside its jurisdiction. This essentially republican scheme was undermined when the organization largely abandoned its promise.⁹⁹ The RIAA's reaction had shown the private sphere's commitment to a liberal business model, ignoring the republicanism wanted by the PMRC by respecting the autonomy of small record labels.

Though the PMRC avoided using the authority of the government to attack musicians, the congressional hearing seemed to inspire a number of copy-cat court cases by parents against metal musicians. The most famous of these were cases against British heavy metal bands Ozzy Osbourne and Judas Priest. Both trials concerned

96 WASP. "Animal (Fuck Like a Beast)." [Single] 1984: Music For Nations.

97 *The Official WASP Nation Website*, <http://www.waspnation.com/history.html>

98 *The Official WASP Nation Website*, <http://www.waspnation.com/history.html>

99 Martin and Segrave, pg. 310

the role of music in influencing children to commit suicide. The case against Ozzy Osbourne was a fairly straightforward question of whether the lyrics to the song Suicide Solution could be blamed for inspiring the 1986 suicide of teenager John McCollum.¹⁰⁰ The case against Judas Priest was very different, and it spoke to the fears over the new technology already felt by parents with the invention of MTV and the Sony Walkman, such as MTV and the Sony Walkman which parents were feeling. The allegation leveled against the band was that it employed ‘backmasking,’ the recording of secret messages in reverse into the music. The prosecution argued that the mind was more vulnerable to messages introduced in this form, though evidence from experts strongly disagreed with this point of view.¹⁰¹ In both trials, the judiciary sided with the bands, and no government action was taken. The PMRC had correctly surmised that the American legal system was committed to liberal values and thus disinclined from setting precedents for censoring artists.

The passage of time would bring many of Tipper Gore’s predictions to fruition, yet it would also undermine much of her prophecy. By 1990, the now famous “Parental Advisor/Explicit Lyrics” sticker was universally adopted, even by the small record labels who realized that the sticker actually increased record sales.¹⁰² Parents also seemed more convinced of the dangers of music. When asked if they felt it was “desirable or necessary for records to be rated” in 1985, twenty-two percent of parents had answered in the affirmative. By 1991, the number rose to fifty-three percent.¹⁰³ The years between the 1985 hearing and Tipper Gore’s 1987 book *Raising PG Kids in an X Rated Society*, saw a revolution in extreme metal. San Francisco’s Possessed founded ‘death metal,’ while extreme genres established in the early 1980s like thrash and black

100 Nuzum, pg. 57

101 Walser, pg. 145, Victor, pg. 169

102 Heins, Marjorie. *Sex, Sin, and Blasphemy: a Guide to America’s Censorship Wars*. New York: New Press; Distributed by W.W. Norton, 1993, pg. 88

103 Nuzum, pg. 42

metal slowly gained an audience.¹⁰⁴ Though it seems unlikely that Gore understood the nuances between these genres, she actually had a sophisticated understanding of this change. Gore specifically cited her concern that “black metal” “t[h]rash metal” and “death metal” would become mainstream with the passage of time.¹⁰⁵ Her concerns over thrash proved true. Thrash metal bands in the 1980s migrated away from LA’s tamer glam scene to San Francisco, and in the early 1990s thrash groups like Metallica and Megadeth sold millions of albums.

Black and death metal would not however enjoy the same success as thrash, however. The same technological revolution that had allowed for metal’s ascendancy, would keep more explicit bands from joining the mainstream. TV and radio channels in the 1980s increasingly devoted themselves to more specific topics, producing a slew of music stations catering to very particular interests.¹⁰⁶ In this context, black and death metal carved out their own niche in popular culture separate from the mainstream. The explicitness of mainstream metal had simply reached its apex in the mid-1980s.

Since the 1950s, the passage of time slowly pushed underground music into the mainstream, yet thrash was the last relic of this tendency. New technology in the 1990s, like the internet, ensured a plethora of musical genres could develop without reference to the mainstream. This meant metal was no longer dependent on the new pop cultural authority of MTV, which had both ignored new extreme metal genres and begun to cut back on metal videos in general starting in 1985.¹⁰⁷ For the women associated with the PMRC, it also meant there was no central pop cultural authority to monitor. The monolith of popular culture parents had grown up

104 Christe, pg. 115

105 Gore, pg. 104

106 Schaller, Michael. *Right Turn: American Life in the Reagan-Bush Era, 1980-1992*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2007, Pg. 175

107 Martin and Segrave, pg. 232

with had simply fractured by the beginning of the 1990s.

These changes in technology were also coupled with changes in popular culture. Grunge, a less explicit genre of rock music originating in the Pacific Northwest, came to dominate the music industry by the early 1990s. Its ascendancy destroyed many of the gains made by metal in the previous decade. Rap also emerged as a force in popular music that completely negated much of the musical tradition of the previous generation. Much like the original rock ‘n roll bands of the 1950s, rap was a new genre of black music that challenged mainstream moral standards. By the late 1980s, rap became the main target of the PMRC, and in 1990 the Miami rap group 2 Live Crew became the first musicians to be successfully charged with obscenity.¹⁰⁸ Their song *Me So Horny*, which contained a chorus sampling a woman moaning the song’s title, and lyrics like “put your lips on my dick and suck my asshole too,” was easy to charge under the *Miller v. California* obscenity scheme.¹⁰⁹ In contrast to the repetition of the cultural revolution seen in the 1980s, the struggle between parents and popular music in the 1990s would more resemble the struggle over rock’s initial ascendancy in the 1950s.

The move towards adopting a model of republicanism would not sit well with many traditional Democrats. Tipper Gore was forced to answer to these critics. Danny Goldberg, founder of the anti-PMRC group the Musical Majority (a play on the name of Reverend Jerry Falwell’s organization the Moral Majority) represented one of the many groups protesting Gore’s new strategy of utilizing republicanism. As Goldberg explains, the “fun of this argument [the attack on the PMRC] for a longtime lefty like myself was that, for a change, we were defending the status quo instead

108 Heins, pg. 80

109 2 Live Crew. “Me So Horny.” *As Nasty As They Wanna Be*. 1989: Life Records.

of attacking it.”¹¹⁰ Goldberg and Gore would “anticlimactically” meet a few months after the 1985 congressional hearing. Tipper Gore complained of Goldberg’s constant reference to herself as “conservative,” and stressed that she was a “liberal Democrat.”¹¹¹ Both Gore and Goldberg had in fact referred to their ties to the American Civil Liberties Union when promoting their respective organizations.¹¹² The PMRC thus split the traditional citadels of the American Left.

Tipper Gore’s actions also hurt the funding of her husband’s 1988 bid for the presidency. In stark contrast to the 2000 presidential campaign, the 1988 campaign largely lacked donations from the entertainment industry.¹¹³ The supremacyascendancy of Al Gore as Vice President under the moderate Democrat Bill Clinton seemed to quell the criticism of Tipper Gore in the 1990s. In stark contrast to the failed elections of traditional liberals like Walter Mondale and Michael Dukakis, Clinton’s rise to power proved that Democrats could win if they were more favorable to business interests. In hindsight of this Democratic takeover, the PMRC was remembered as a harbinger of change, showing the party’s need to compromise traditional liberalism in a new more conservative America.

The rise and fall of the PMRC speaks to the inhibitions of a generation of parents experiencing the intermediary phases of a technological and pop cultural revolution. In the wake of Reagan’s attack on big government resulting in two landslide victories, Tipper Gore represented a new generation of Democrats willing to solve social problems without government intervention. Simultaneously, MTV and heavy metal attacked the authority of 1960s popular music, and so the struggle over parental authority became a clash

110 Goldberg, pg. 118

111 Goldberg, pg. 121

112 Goldberg, pg. 110; Gore, pg. 37

113 *Tipper Gore and Al Gore On Porn Rock*. <http://crm114.com/algore/tipper.html>

of cultural revolutions. Challenging both conservative and liberal sensibilities, it seemed heavy metal was a full assault on parental authority. Legally speaking however, the PMRC achieved very little in curbing metal's influence. Big labels were unwilling to bully their smaller counterparts into curtailing the release of explicit material. With new technologies and genres of music emerging in the 1990s to splinter popular culture, the labeling of explicit records became more and more irrelevant. This brave new world of popular culture was coupled with the rise of a new Democratic party, turning Gore's attack on metal into a largely forgotten 1980s relic. Therefore, the PMRC's attack on heavy metal represented a moderate Democratic response to a revolution in popular culture, melding conservative and liberal values to appeal to a more conservative America.

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Making the Personal Political: Gender, Nationalism, and the Emergence of the Female Palestinian Suicide Bomber During the Second Intifada

Marianna Reis

On January 27th 2002, Wafa Idris became the first Palestinian woman to carry out a suicide-bombing mission in Israel.¹ Between Idris' suicide attack and May 2006, sixty-seven women were reported to have been planning to carry out suicide attacks. Of these sixty-seven women, eight carried out their missions to completion, while the remaining women were intercepted by Israeli police forces before they could accomplish their missions. Some scholars have suggested that the emergence of women suicide bombers indicates a transformation of gender roles within Palestinian society, an improvement in the status of women in the Arab world, or an increased interest Islamic feminism and subversion of gender norms among Muslim women. This interpretation has also been adopted by Arab media campaigns and incorporated into the nationalist rhetoric espoused by Palestinian resistance groups such as Hamas, Fatah, and the ruling Palestinian Authority, all of whom have encouraged the idea that these female martyrs, or *shahidas*, represent a new calling for women in resistance efforts against Israeli oppression and occupation. Gleaning a greater understanding of the emergence of this phenomenon, however, requires an historical analysis that explores the relationship between gender and Palestinian nationalism at the outbreak of the First Intifada and the resulting effect on gender roles during the interim peace period and Second Intifada. Interviews with family members of female suicide bombers, as well as women arrested before completion of their suicide missions make it clear that many of these

1 "Female Bomber's Mother Speaks Out" *BBC News*. Jan. 30 2002.
http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/1791800.stm>

women, often divorced or unmarried thus not fulfilling the expected role of wife and mother of the martyr, chose to martyr themselves in order to restore honour to themselves and their families, rather than as a blatant act of nationalism or symbol of empowerment. The presence of female suicide bombers in Palestine was used to strengthen this identity, although the motives of these shahidas appear to be personal rather than nationalistic. The suicide acts were subsequently co-opted by nationalist and Islamist movements, in order to strengthen weakened nationalist identities, despite the initial hesitance to include women in suicide missions.

Gender and Nationalism in the First Intifada

In the wake of the beginning of the First Intifada in December 1987, the Palestinian nationalist movement called for the people to actively participate in the resistance against Israeli occupation. The formation of the Unified National Leadership of the Uprising (UNLU) in the early stages of the Intifada meant that demonstrations and other forms of resistance were tightly organized and nationalist messages had a central voice. Nationalist ideals espoused by the UNLU reflected traditional gender roles found in Arab society and were careful to function within the boundaries outlined by cultural and religious norms common to the region. Rooted in “the principles of collectivity,” Palestinian society emphasized the needs of the community over the needs of the individual. Patriarchal rule was the established mode of social hierarchy that prevailed in both Palestine and the rest of the Arab world, as well as in other societies, and informed the way gender was governed and perceived.

The main unit around which life revolved was the family and all family members were obliged to remain loyal and uphold domestic honour. Obedience, modesty, and childbearing were

markers of a woman's worth, and transgressions from expected womanly behaviours were a reflection on her family's ability to raise an honourable daughter.¹ These cultural norms regarding family and gender were reproduced in Palestine, especially during calls for national unity and action and the First Intifada would draw heavily upon these prescriptions.

In November of 1988, the Declaration of Independence was released, which clearly outlined the separate ways in which men and women were to participate in the nationalist resistance movement.² Palestinian women were heralded as "the guardian of our survival and our lives;" this concept was echoed and elaborated upon in subsequent communiqué's released by the UNLU. The woman as the guardian of the lives of the Palestinian people took on literal and figurative forms. In the literal sense, women were encouraged to reproduce as the ultimate form of resistance; the birthing of sons who would fight on the front lines against Israel "unequivocally ascribed her place" within the private, domestic sphere, while figuratively their roles in the struggle were integral to the birth of an independent Palestinian state.³ The prescription of gender roles was not new to the nationalist discourse and was quite reminiscent of the nationalization of women's fertility during the 1936-39 Arab revolt in Palestine which protested the mass immigration of Jewish settlers to the then British Mandate of Palestine. Slogans popularized by the media during the revolt such as "the woman who rocks the baby's cradle with one hand, rocks the nation with the other" explicitly incorporated women's reproductive capabilities into the nationalist

1 Anat Berko & Edna Erez, "Women in terrorism: a Palestinian feminist revolution or gender oppression?" *Intelligence and Terrorism Information Center at the Center for Special Studies*, (Dec. 9 2006) 2-4.

2 Joseph Massad, "Conceiving the Masculine: Gender and Palestinian Nationalism" in *Middle East Journal*, Vol. 49, No. 3 (Summer 1995): 473-474.

3 Mira Tzoreff, "The Palestinian *Shahida*: National Patriotism, Islamic Feminism, or Social Crisis" in *Female Suicide Bombers: Dying for Equality?* Ed. Yoram Schweitzer for the Tel Aviv Center for Strategic Studies, (August 2006) 14.

narrative.⁴

The UNLU Communiqué No. 5 describes women as the soil (*manabit*) on which “manhood, respect, and dignity” flourish. This analogy implies an impermeable connection between men and women perpetuated in Palestinian culture through nationalist rhetoric; the women provided the basic needs for birth and child rearing, which would allow the men to become “nationalist agents.” According to historian Joseph Massad, Communiqué No. 29 also gives mention to “the mother of the martyr and her celebratory ululations, for she has ululated twice, the day her son went to fight and was martyred, and the day the state was declared.”⁵ Although women were sometimes heralded in the nationalist rhetoric, gender hierarchies still placed them in a subordinate position to men. Massad notes that several communiqués released by the UNLU listed women alongside “occupational groups such as merchants, peasants, students, and workers.” Identifying women as separate from peasants, students, and workers, typically male roles, solidified women’s place within the domestic sphere. Furthermore, the denial of domestic work as an occupation implied that a woman’s domestic duties of birthing and raising her sons into resistance fighters was her sole purpose in life.

The placement of women within the home and the traditional duties of child bearing and rearing removed her from participation in the “loftiest possible” nationalist act: militant resistance against Israel, potentially resulting in martyrdom. Martyrdom in the context of the Palestinian nationalist movement played an important role in securing the liberation of the nation from Israeli occupation. In birthing the men who would be fighting and dying for Palestinian liberation, women were exalted in their

4 Ela Greenberg, “The Cradle in One Hand, the Nation in the Other: The Portrayal of Women in the Palestinian Press: 1920-1930s” in *Hamizrah* *Hehadash* 43 (2002): 61.

5 Massad, 474.

role as mothers of martyrs. The gendering of liberation nationalism functioned within the patriarchal framework of Palestine, in which women's agency was limited to their participation in the struggle. Themes of reproduction manifested themselves in various forms during the first Intifada; allusions to miscarriages were found in the discussion of women's "suffering at the hands of the occupier." The treatment of women as mothers of martyrs, however, was one of the most prominent in this discourse, as found in several UNLU communiqués that commended them for their duties as mothers of martyrs and extended sympathy to those who were grieving the loss of their sons on the frontlines.⁶

In addition to the UNLU, Hamas also delivered gendered, albeit Islamized, rhetoric that capitalized on notions of martyrdom and reinforced the relationship between women's modesty and male honor. Hamas' 1988 Charter stated "the Muslim woman has a role no less important than that of the Muslim man in the battle of liberation. She is the maker of men. Her role in guiding and educating the new generations is great."⁷ Furthermore, Article 18 of the Charter explicitly laid out the responsibilities of the Muslim Palestinian woman:

"Woman in the home of the fighting family, whether she is a mother or a sister, plays the most important role in looking after the family, rearing the children and imbuing them with moral values and thoughts derived from Islam. She has to teach them to perform the religious duties in preparation for the role of fighting awaiting them. That is why it is necessary to pay great attention to schools and the curriculum followed in educating Muslim girls, so that they would grow up to be good mothers, aware of their role in the battle of liberation.

She has to be of sufficient knowledge and

6 Ibid, 475.

7 The Covenant of the Islamic Resistance Movement (Hamas), (August 18th 1988) Article 17.

understanding where the performance of housekeeping matters are concerned, because economy and avoidance of waste of the family budget, is one of the requirements for the ability to continue moving forward in the difficult conditions surrounding us. She should put before her eyes the fact that the money available to her is just like blood which should never flow except through the veins so that both children and grown-ups could continue to live.”⁸

The visibility of women’s participation during the First Intifada eventually increased through the creation of female activist organizations, supported by the UNLU and other nationalist groups, who responded to activist zeal and maintained a framework in which women could publicly participate. Although women’s role in the resistance had begun to take on an increasingly public role, their actions remained within the realm of the feminine. The UNLU, encouraged women to participate in demonstrations on International Women’s Day as part of their motherly responsibilities and praised them for “subordinating gender issues to national ones.”⁹ The future of Palestine as an independent state continued to be framed as being dependent on the dedication of women to their roles as mothers and nurturers and men as front line resistance fighters. Although gender norms placed men in the public and women in the private sphere, a strong women’s movement found channels by which they could challenge agency in a ways that did not necessarily stray from these roles, but rather recognized and emphasized the importance of women’s participation in the Intifada and in Palestinian society.¹⁰ Many women’s initiatives focused on knitting garments and baking bread for the community, acts that “politicized conventional

8 Ibid., Article 18.

9 Massad, 476.

10 Ibid., 481.

domestic tasks.”¹¹ As women’s associations gained momentum, so did the possibility for greater political representation, challenges to the patriarchal Palestinian system, and a shift towards a more democratic system of governance.

Although women’s committees were initially created within the confines of gendered Palestinian nationalism, they began to develop into a space where “mainly urban, college-educated women began to explore their own gender oppression.” These young, urban women expressed the desire to have smaller, planned families and some suggested that they did not plan to marry or have children at all.¹² However, this hope would soon be quelled in the wake of the 1993 Declaration of Principles, which set the terms for a peace negotiation between Israel and the occupied territories and installed the Palestinian National Authority as the governing body for Palestine.

Interim Period – Political and Social Change in Palestine

The Declaration of Principles on the Interim Self-rule for Palestinians (DOP) came out of a series of negotiations between recently elected Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin and the Palestinian Liberation Organization in an effort to forge agreements to bring peace to the region and deal with the autonomy of the West Bank and Gaza Strip. Limited autonomy was granted to Palestinians living in the Gaza Strip and sections of the West Bank, with the expectation that a Palestinian state would be negotiated and created over the coming years. The non-contiguous nature of the Palestinian territorial divisions complicated the sense of a literal and figurative Palestinian unity as a meaningful process towards the

11 Sherna Berger Gluck, “Palestinian Women: Gender Politics and Nationalism,” *Journal of Palestinian Studies*, Vol. 24, No. 3 (Spring 1995) 9.

12 Ibid, 8-9.

creation of a fully independent Palestinian state grew further out of sight.

The installation of the Palestinian National Authority as the governing body for the Gaza Strip and the West Bank came on the heels of the recognition of United Nations Resolutions 242 and 338, originally drafted in the aftermath of the 1967 Arab-Israeli War. Resolution 242 called for Israel to withdraw from the occupied territories, which also “implied [Palestinian] acquiescence to the concept of land for peace.”¹³ Leadership change in Palestine led to a re-ordering of political and social issues; women’s rights efforts, once again, took a backseat to sovereignty and peace efforts. The transfer of power from grassroots organizations to government bureaucracy also weakened the women’s activist movement. The Palestinian Liberation Organization was not interested in making women’s rights a priority during the interim period, as evidenced by the first draft of the Basic Law in December 1993 which functioned as the constitutional framework for the interim regime. The Basic Law did not guarantee full equality between men and women; this was met by censure on the part of women’s activist groups. Only by the third drafting of the Basic Law were concerns of gender equality satisfied.¹⁴ Lastly, increasingly dire economic conditions contributed to the reduction of free space, leaving little room in which the women’s movement could operate. Sherna Gluck notes in spite of the efforts made on behalf of women’s movements, by the mid 1990s there was little to show for previous successes and improvements in gender equality and women’s agency “remain[ed] personal, at best.” Gluck also asserted the “leadership of the nascent Palestinian state never developed a vision that acknowledged women’s diverse roles,” and instead maintained a position that “reflected a belief of

13 Ruth Margolies Beitler, *The Path to Mass Rebellion*. (Oxford: Lexington Books, 2004).

14 Gluck, 11.

women's primary role as the mainstay of the family.”¹⁵ The deflation of the women's movement under the Palestinian Authority would eventually have major consequences on women in the Second Intifada who had fewer vehicles for mobilization as result of, and in protest of, unsatisfactory economic and political opportunity.

The Second Intifada – Women's Roles and Nationalism

On September 28th 2000 Ariel Sharon, leader of the Likud Party in Israel, entered the Temple Mount holy site in Old Jerusalem, home to the venerated Al-Aqsa mosque despite warnings that this visit might exacerbate tensions between Palestinians and Israelis in the face of failing peace negotiations. Palestinian frustration had been mounting as a result of Israel's reluctance to remove Jewish settlements from the territories and allow the return of Palestinian refugees, along with collective discontent with the perceived inaction of the Palestinian Authority in regards to negotiations of sovereignty.¹⁶ In the days after Sharon's visit, violent protests erupted marking the beginning of the Second Intifada, also known as the Al-Aqsa Intifada.¹⁷ By the conclusion the Second Intifada's first month, the number of casualties equaled those of the entire first year of the 1987 Intifada.¹⁸ This was only one of the many differences that existed between the First and Second Intifada; divergences were evident in nationalist and activist identities, particularly in the way women participated in the uprisings. A fundamental importance to shaping public support for the Second Intifada was the failure by the Palestinian Authority to provide necessary social and welfare services such as access to education and health care. These administrative

15 Ibid., 13.

16 Frances Hasso, “Discursive and Political Deployments by/of the 2002 Palestinian Women Suicide Bombers/Martyrs,” in *Feminist Review*, No. 81, Bodily Interventions (2005) 26.

17 http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/3677206.stm

18 Tzoreff, 15.

failures coupled with allegations of corruption, and lack of progress towards actual sovereignty from Israel, support for the Palestinian governing body had begun to wane significantly.

New and changing roles for female activists during the first Intifada conflicted with Palestine's traditionally patriarchal system and these two sides converged in a crisis of modernity. Whereas the struggles of the first Intifada were located in the streets and within communities, the Second Intifada took place among the fragmented areas of the "Oslo checkerboard," limiting "access to livelihoods, social contact and national unity."¹⁹ The resulting crisis of national identity and political confusion led to the demobilization of the women's movement, crippling the potential for progression of women's rights and marking a return to patriarchal hegemony. The call for Palestinian resistance against Israel's increasingly excessive force once again specified the need for female reproduction to bear sons who would be trained as fighters against Israeli occupation.²⁰ In fact, the burden placed on women during the Second Intifada was much larger than during the First Intifada due to the "higher human cost." This necessitated the return of women to the private sphere to fulfill duties of reproduction and care for the injured and/or permanently disabled during violent clashes.²¹

Interestingly, amidst the degeneration of gendered notions of nationalism a new phenomenon emerged that both challenged and reinforced the Palestinian patriarchal dominion: the female suicide bomber. The appearance of shahidat emphasized the differences between the First and Second Intifada in terms of the geopolitical and gendered spaces in which they occurred. The glorification of

19 Penny Johnson & Eileen Kuttub, "Where Have All the Women (And Men) Gone? Reflections on Gender and the Second Intifada," *Feminist Review*, No. 69, *The Realm of the Possible: Middle Eastern Women in Political and Social Spaces* (Winter 2001) 31.

20 Johnson & Kuttub, 29.

21 Ibid, 31.

emerging shahidat by resistance groups and the media suggested a shift towards gender equality in Palestinian society. In reality, however, the motivations offered by the families of shahidat and by women arrested by Israeli intelligence units before they were able to carry out their missions, indicate a much different story.

Understanding the Emergence of Shahidat

Wafa Idris was 28 years old when she detonated a 22-pound bomb on Jaffa Road, a busy street in downtown Jerusalem, killing an 81-year-old man and wounding more than 100 other civilians. Following the attacks, the Al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigade took responsibility for dispatching Idris, claiming she had “intended to die” as a martyr. Her family expressed scepticism regarding Idris’ political intentions, citing difficulties in her personal life as a more reasonable explanation for her attack given her apparent lack of interest in political activism.²² Idris, a divorcée and volunteer paramedic for the Red Crescent, had been living with her widowed mother in the al-Am’ari refugee camp just north of Jerusalem. Over the course of her decade-long marriage she discovered that she was unable to bear children. After her divorce she took on several other burdens: including being a divorced woman and financially dependent on her parents. In the eyes of the patriarchal Palestinian society, she was “non-normative” and the “chances of building a new life for herself were close to zero.” Historian Mira Tzoreff posits that, in order to restore honour to herself and her family only one option remained: become a martyr “for the sake of her nation.”²³

After Idris’ martyrdom, other women quickly followed suit. In February of 2002, 21-year-old student Dareen Abu ‘Aisheh
 22 James Bennet, “Israelis Declare Arab Woman Was in Fact a Suicide Bomber” in *New York Times* <http://www.nytimes.com/2002/02/09/world/israelis-declare-arab-woman-was-in-fact-a-suicide-bomber.html>

23 Tzoreff, 20.

carried out a suicide mission in Jerusalem.²⁴ Abu ‘Aisheh’s loss of her ex-husband in a violent clash with Israeli military forces just months after their divorce was cited as a motivating factor behind her decision to become a shahida. The divorce denied her of the esteemed status of wife-of-martyr and she was instead left with the societal shame of being divorced woman. In martyring herself, she was able to avenge her ex-husband’s death and redeem herself of her “inferior status.”²⁵

In October of 2003, Hanadi Jaradat, a 29-year-old lawyer from a small village in West Jenin, carried out a suicide attack in a crowded restaurant in Haifa that left 21 dead and 51 injured.²⁶ Though highly educated, Jaradat’s unmarried status “refused to recognize her as an educated and economically independent woman,” leaving her subject to increasing scrutiny as she developed into “advanced age.”²⁷ Statistics released by the Center for Women’s Issues in Gaza in 1994 found that 41.8 percent of girls living in areas under the jurisdiction of the Palestinian Authority were between the ages of 12-17 at the time of marriage. Within this context, it is not surprising that a 29-year-old unmarried Palestinian woman would find her prospects for marriage and childbearing quickly diminishing.²⁸

Several Palestinian women caught and imprisoned before being able to carry out suicide missions expressed similar concerns and feelings of shame when interviewed by researchers eager to delve into the psyche of the elusive female suicide bomber.²⁹ Thouria

24 Hasso, 24.

25 Tzoreff, 20.

26 Arnon Regular, “Profile of the Haifa suicide bomber”

<http://www.haaretz.com/hasen/pages/ShArt.jhtml?itemNo=346913&contrassID=1&subContrassID=1&sbSubContrassID=0&listSrc=Y>

27 Tzoreff, 20.

28 Ibid, 17.

29 Yoram Schweitzer, “Palestinian Female Suicide Bombers: Reality vs.

Khamour, born in 1976, was one of these women. Khamour was arrested in her own home on May 19th 2002, the day before she was scheduled to enter Jerusalem and detonate an explosive device attached to her body. In an interview conducted ten days after her arrest, she cited “rejection by society and her family’s objections to a man who wished to marry her” as the motives behind her attack.³⁰ Khamour expressed anger towards her father, because he “destroyed her only chance of getting married,” explaining that “sometimes a person is subject to such great pressure and mental distress that it leads to an explosion.”³¹ Subsequent interviews conducted in 2002 revealed that her inability to complete school, find a husband, and fulfill her duty as a wife and mother by the time she was 25 had caused her family to consider her “a weak and difficult person who should be watched carefully so that she would not dishonour her family.”³² With limited potential for social progression, she decided to become a shahida and contacted a recruiter for suicide missions; from this point, it was only a matter of weeks until she was ready to complete the mission then interrupted by Israeli security forces.

Faiza ‘Amal Juma’a’s story diverges slightly from this trend, but ultimately shows the power of Palestinian gender roles over women’s psychological state and feeling of worth during a time where these roles are to be performed to their fullest in order to realize the nationalist calling. Unmarried and 35 years of age, Juma’a was physiologically female, but internally identified as male. Her family expressed pity that her trans-sexuality would render her unmarried and childless; Juma’a was aware of the social implications of her trans-sexuality, and in an interview conducted in prison she asked, Myth” in *Female Suicide Bombers: Dying for Equality?* Ed. Yoram Schweitzer for the Tel Aviv Center for Strategic Studies, (August 2006) 31.

30 Schweitzer, 32.

31 F. Lainet, “Suicide Bombers: Victims or Murderers?” in *Suicide Bombers: The Psychological, Religious, and Other Imperatives*, ed. Mary Sharpe, Vol. 41 NATO Science for Peace and Security Series – E: Human and Societal Dynamics (July 2008) 76.

32 Schweitzer, 32.

“Who will want to marry someone like me?” In becoming a shahida, her death would mark her as a martyr and was the only way she saw to “redress her sin.” However, she was ultimately caught and imprisoned before she could carry out her mission.³³

Interviews with thirteen imprisoned Palestinian women conducted by Dr. Anat Berko and Professor Edna Erez revealed that of all, only one was married. The findings revealed that these women turned to terrorism either to avenge a family member or loved one’s death or to “solve a personal problem,” some of which included “family or social problems” often related to marriage. Those who expressed personal motives related to personal and familial turmoil cited “the path of terrorism as a way of erasing their past or a direct route to realizing their expectations, including among other things, the promise of reaching paradise.”³⁴

Co-opting Women’s Struggles for the Palestinian Nationalist Cause

In the aftermath of Wafa Idris’ suicide attack, the Palestinian and Arab media immediately declared her a heroine, and a role model for the Palestinian people. In response to subsequent suicide attacks carried out by Palestinian women, Palestinian media and nationalist groups played up the development of a “feminist dimension” that focused on political rather than personal motives.³⁵ Despite the fact that Idris’ family claimed she was not politically involved, the Palestinian Authority and Al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigade praised her martyrdom publicly. Zaad Abu Ayin, member of the Movement Committee of Fatah, openly referred to Idris’ suicide bombing as an

33 Tzoreff, 21.

34 Berko & Eretz, 7-8.

35 Avi Issacharoff, “The Palestinian and Israeli Media on Female Suicide Terrorists,” *Female Suicide Bombers: Dying for Equality?* Ed. Yoram Schweitzer for the Tel Aviv Center for Strategic Studies, 43.

act of “heroism” and proudly proclaimed her a representative of the Fatah Movement. The Al-Quds media network also reported the Al-Aqsa Martyr’s Brigade had created a women’s division named in honor of Wafa Idris.³⁶ The Palestinian Authority recognized the potential for the phenomenon of female suicide bombers to serve as inspiration for Palestinian men and women and to revive support for the Second Intifada and the Authority itself.³⁷

A September 2004 interview with Khamour that appeared in *Maariv* magazine showed a transformation in the motives behind her suicide mission: what was once a story of a woman pushed to her emotional limit by the pressures placed on her to conform to the socially prescribed ideal of the Palestinian woman was now an altruistic struggle against Israeli occupation. Khamour insisted that the motive behind her mission was to “become a shahida and sacrifice myself for Palestine by killing many Jews.” She also insisted “it wasn’t easy to make such a decision” and that it was her “faith in God” and “love for Palestine and Jerusalem” that helped ultimately sealed her fate as a shahida.³⁸ In a subsequent interview conducted for the German newspaper *Der Spiegel* in September 2004 she portrayed herself as a “fearless warrior”. The transformation that occurred during her time in prison is indicative of the indoctrination of these would-be shahidas acts by nationalist resistance groups who then incorporated their stories into a greater narrative intended to reinvigorate nationalism and dedication to Palestinian liberation. Yoram Schweitzer, who conducted interviews with Kharoum, observed many cases in which “female suicide terrorists....[underwent] indoctrination in prison...adopting national and religious explanations, full of altruism and heroism

36 Itamar Marcus, “Encouraging Women Terrorists” *Special Report #39: Palestinian Culture and Society*, Palestinian Media Watch (March 12 2002) <<http://www.pmw.org.il/specrep-39.html>>.

37 Marcus, 2002.

38 Schweitzer, 33.

against a demonized enemy.”³⁹

The 2004 Hamas-organized dispatch of Reem Rashi marked the first time the organization sent a woman out on a suicide mission. In the wake of Wafa Idris’ suicide bombing, Hamas leader Sheikh Ahmed Yassin “categorically renounced the use of women as suicide bombers,” and continued to do so in response to other women martyrs, later stating “we have no need for acts of suicide by women.”⁴⁰ In March 2002, after a Fatah-supported suicide bombing carried out by a woman, Yassin asserted again that Hamas was “far from enthusiastic” about women’s participation in militant action, citing “reasons of modesty.” Half an hour after Rashi carried out her attack at the Erez crossing, a new message was being broadcast by the Hamas leader: “jihad is an imperative for Muslim men *and* women.”⁴¹ The realization that women were going to continue participating in suicide missions, coupled with increased desperation to defeat Israeli occupiers in the Palestinian territories caused nationalist resistance movements to begin using women martyrs as political tools. Amidst mounting discontent with the regime’s inability to satisfy the needs of the Palestinian people, the failure to reclaim the Palestinian state and remove Israeli presence in the occupied territories, and increasing violence and casualties during the Second Intifada, a new framing of nationalist rhetoric was needed to inspire the population. Thus, militant nationalist movements in the Palestinian territories appropriated the idea of the female suicide bomber.

39 Schweitzer, 34.

40 Tzoreff, 21, Arnon Regular, “Mother of two becomes first female suicide bomber for Hamas,” *Haaretz*, January 15 2004. <<http://www.haaretz.com/hasen/pages/ShArt.jhtml?itemNo=383183&contrassID=1&subContrassID=5&sbSubContrassID=0&listSrc=Y>>

41 Regular, “Mother of two becomes the first female suicide bomber for Hamas.”

Conclusion

The involvement of Palestinian women in suicide bombings during the Second Intifada has raised many questions as to the motives and possible political, social, economic, or ideological impetuses that may have sparked this phenomenon. While historically Palestinian women's role in the resistance against Israeli occupation was predicated upon the need to birth and raise sons who would engage in violent resistance, and relegated to the private sphere, the new forms of activism that emerged allowed women to navigate freer spaces within the traditionally patriarchal Palestinian system. The weakening of the women's activist system resulting from political and economic turmoil during the interim period led to a return back to rigid binary of gendered roles, which emphasized the need for women to maintain honour within their families and society through their reproductive capacities. Palestinian nationalist movements have appropriated the struggles of women who deviated from gendered scripts under the banner of equality and nationalism, when in fact efforts to dismantle the patriarchal system in favour of a more gender-egalitarian system have not been made. This begs the question: when will Palestinian women, normative and non-normative, be able to achieve equality and agency in life, rather than in death?

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The Rise of Warlords during the Late Qing and the Failure of the Self-Strengthening Movement

Sami Ahmad

During the mid-nineteenth century, the Qing Dynasty faced seemingly overwhelming challenges and veered on the brink of collapse. Externally, it was threatened by aggressively mercantile European colonial powers, especially Britain. China experienced humiliating defeats during the First (1839-1842) and Second (1856-1860) Opium Wars which resulted in the 'Unequal Treaties'. Internally, China faced the massive Taiping Rebellion (1850-1864), the Nien Rebellion (1851-1868), the Panthay (1856-1873) and Dungan (1862-1877) Muslim Rebellions and the Punti-Hakka Clan Wars (1855-1867).¹ Loss of life was in the tens of millions, while infrastructure degradation cannot be measured – although it likely contributed to subsequent famines. When these conflicts are further contextualized according to war indemnities to Western powers, ecological disasters and demographic turmoil, the Qing were in dire straits indeed. From another perspective, the turmoil was a result of and further contributed to a weak 'centre' at the Qing court. In order to survive the trying times and maintain some level of functionality, the centre was forced to delegate power to local administrators, commanders and *mandarins*.² This short-term survival tactic paved the way for the emergence of regional warlords with autonomous armies. Contrary to the view that China was static during the Qing decline, serious efforts were mounted to reform China's military situation and resurrect it geopolitically. This is best exemplified by the

1 Spence, Jonathan D. *The Search for Modern China*. Norton, 1999. pages 167-191.

2 Wright, Mary Clabaugh. *The last stand of Chinese conservatism: the Tung-Chih restoration, 1862-1874*. Stanford press, 1967. page 105.

Self-Strengthening Movement.³ However, even after the rebellions were crushed and the Western powers lessened their assertiveness, the persistence of warlords undermined cohesive reform efforts. Despite investment in more advanced military hardware, the warlord system prevented the emergence of a national army that could protect China's sovereignty against aggressive foreign incursions from the late nineteenth to early twentieth century. In addition, the warlord system is intertwined both with the long-term decline and immediate collapse of the Qing, as well as the later rise of the People's Liberation Army (PLA) and Kuomintang (KMT) forces as a response to its inherent flaws.

Even prior to the establishment of the Qing state, when the Manchus were still a rising Jurchen tribal confederation around Liaoning under the leadership of Nurhaci, they required the services of the Han Chinese to operate their lands.⁴ The subsequent rise of the Qing and their conquest of China in the mid-seventeenth century was no simple task. The Manchus entered China as invaders, and their entry was only made possible due to the collapse of the Ming dynasty. While Manchu forces could attempt to subdue sections of the Han population through violent and coercive means – the Massacre of Yangzhou being a prime example – dread was insufficient to ensure a stable rule.⁵ From the onset of their campaign, they formed tactical alliances with local commanders. The most prominent Han Chinese leader to collaborate with the Qing was former Ming general Wu Sangui, who proved instrumental in first permitting the Qing to traverse the Shanhai Pass and then to bolster Qing forces in their struggle against Li Zicheng at the Battle of Shanhaiguan in 1644.⁶

3 Ibid, 196.

4 Fairbank & Twitchett, *The Cambridge History of China, Volume 8, The Ming Dynasty 1368-1644, Part 2*. Cambridge Press, 1998. page 271.

5 Struve, Lynn (Translation) “*Horrid Beyond Description*”: *The Massacre at Yangzhou*. Yale University Press, 1993. pages 24-48.

6 Elliot, Mark C. *The Manchu Way: The Eight Banners and Ethnic Identity in Late Imperial China*. Stanford University Press, 2001. page 1.

Over the next 29 years, Wu Sangui would provide distinguished service as a Qing vassal. Rewarded for his extensive services, Wu was labeled *Pingxi Wang*, “the Prince who Pacifies the West” and granted enormous fiefdoms at Yunnan, Guizhou, Hunan, Sichuan, Gansu and Shaanxi. Two other Han defectors enjoyed similarly privileged positions: Shang Kexi in Guangdong and GengJingzhong in Fujian.⁷ With most of the trappings of independent kingdoms – especially independent armies – the ‘Three Feudatories’ were able to mount a massive revolt against the Qing in 1673. The revolt failed by 1681, in part due to poor coordination between the three Han rebels, but also because the Qing court and military were under the firm and decisive control of the Kangxi Emperor. Thus, early Qing history demonstrates the necessity for the court to use intermediaries in order to govern a land as extensive and ‘foreign’ as China, but also the risks associated with decentralization – especially in the field of the military. Nonetheless, the then-strong centre was capable of handling excessive regionalism and insurrection.

The Revolt of the Three Feudatories likely taught the Qing administration a valuable lesson regarding the autonomous power of local (Han) elites. Subsequent Qing emperors during the High Qing Era would use a bureaucratic system run by mandarin administrators in order to govern the provinces while using the Banner Armies and local levies to engage in military conflicts. While the eight Banner Armies would become increasingly multi-ethnic, three were accountable directly to the Emperor and five were commanded by Manchu *tie maozi wang* “Iron Cap Princes”. Banner forces were bolstered by the lower-status and majority Han Green Standard Army in a form of garrison diarchy.⁸ The vast local-level militia system was irregular and did not yet provide sufficient opportunity for commanders to make a serious bid for power. Indeed, the Qing military appeared successful over the one and a half centuries

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Spence, 50-51

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Elliott, Mark C. page 128.

following Emperor Kangxi's victory over the Three Feudatories. The Banner Armies proved triumphant during Emperor Yongzheng's frontier wars against the Dzungars. Emperor Qianlong's costly Ten Great Campaigns are further evidence of Qing power at the time. The Qing state had masterfully adapted to its situation: power was effectively centralized, and no military elite existed that could foster a major revolt. The Qing military was also well-positioned to defend against external threats from an Asian context, such as the Gurkhas, Central Asian tribes or Southeast Asian tributary states.

Qing paramountcy and security would experience a drastic reversal during the nineteenth century, which would result in a renewed reliance on powerful regional elites. While Qing military forces seemed able to dominate the battlefield in a regional East Asian contest, the dynasty's obsolete weapons, tactics and power projection were made clear during confrontations with Western powers. The Opium Wars are not only notable for their outcome in the 'Unequal Treaties', but for their lopsided loss exchange ratios.⁹ The First Opium War, the empire's first major defeat, revealed the need for the Qing to reform their tactics and weaponry. Unfortunately for the dynasty (and for China's future security and stability), the loss of prestige and indemnities from this war contributed to a series of massive insurrections throughout the nineteenth century. Manchu weakness and foreignness became contributory causes for revolt. As the Qing system had evolved, it had effectively prevented elite opportunities for betraying the government. However, this could not prevent popular uprisings based on various underlying factors from rallying around anti-Qing ideologies or causes. Even before the Opium Wars, in a foretaste of things to come, the Qing faced a significant popular revolt in the White Lotus Rebellion (1796-1804).¹⁰ At this time, the dynasty still had the prestige it would later lose through the Opium Wars, and Emperor Jiaqing could focus on the

9 Martin, Robert. *China: Political, Commercial, and Social; In an Official Report to Her Majesty's Government*. Madden 1847. page 80

10 Spence, 112-113

one issue. By contrast, during the 1850s and 1860s the Empire faced rebellions in the South, North and West simultaneously and rebel forces were sufficient to mount large armies that could exact serious defeats on the Qing. Strapped for cash (owing in part to British extortion) and struggling to survive, the Qing Dynasty grew to rely on independent local commanders for its salvation.¹¹

Initially, overextended imperial Qing forces could not cope with the peasant mobilization, guerilla and unconventional tactics employed by the Taiping forces, including the use of female regiments and disguised infiltrators.¹² At their peak, the Taiping were in control of roughly half of China. This situation of failure for the regular imperial forces provided opportunities for *mandarin* proto-warlords to raise new volunteer armies and seize the initiative. The most notable examples are Zeng Guofan, who organized the Xiang Army of Hunan, which was financed by local aristocrats rather than the central government. Zuo Zongtang with the Chu Army and Li Hongzhang as lieutenant of the Ever Victorious Army and later commander of the Anhui and Beiyang Armies were in comparable situations. Where the official Qing banners failed, these emergent provincial armies proved far more successful. Zeng, Zuo and Li, the first generation of prominent mandarin-warlords, continued service under the Qing on other fronts.¹³ But when major fighting had ended during the Tongzhi Restoration, and the government moved to reform the country's equipment and infrastructure, the Qing were either unwilling or unable to re-centralize the military. In fact, loaded with titles and power, commanders such as Li Hongzhang himself were behind the Self-Strengthening Movement.¹⁴ The Qing use of warlords during the mid-nineteenth century rebellions has recently been dramatized in the 2007 film, *The Warlords*. Unlike their depiction in the movie, however, the warlords of the era tended to be

11 Murphey, Rhoads. *East Asia: A New History, 4th Edition*. Pearson Longman, 2007. page 290.

12 Spence, 174-175

13 Spence, 185, 186, 190.

14 Ch'en, Jerome. *Tsun Shih-K'ai (1859-1916)*. Stanford University Press, 1961. page 244.

technocratic mandarins rather than front-line combatants.

Despite their effectiveness against internal rebellions, the emergent warlord-commander class under Qing suzerainty proved woefully inadequate against foreign enemies. While they paid homage to the Qing court, they lacked a firm monarch who could have potentially made their disparate armies into a cohesive fighting force. Alternatively, an ideology such as nationalism might have rallied the Qing commanders (not to mention boosted the infantrymen's morale) into better coordinating their tactics. The Sino-French War of 1884-1885, which originated in part from Chinese support for the warlord Liu Yongfu in Tonkin, was plagued by such factionalism and the desires of different commanders to preserve their own forces rather than defend the country or pursue a national objective.¹⁵ For example, Qing Admiral Zhang Peilun's Fujian Fleet was not bolstered by Li Hongzhang's *Beiyang* "North Ocean" Fleet and suffered destruction at French hands.¹⁶ The Qing had invested heavily in equipment, but the technology gap was no longer the most significant obstacle to China's defence. Regional military men – some of whom had saved the dynasty in previous decades – were now a burden, and the Qing Dynasty and the Manchu people themselves were becoming popular scapegoats for China's defeats.

Concurrent with China's struggle against its massive mid-nineteenth century rebellions, Japan was undergoing the Meiji Restoration. Both China and Japan had been made painfully aware of the deficiencies of their global military and economic capabilities – China after the First Opium War in 1842 and Japan after Commodore Perry's display of force in 1854.¹⁷ Accordingly, both the Qing government and the Japanese Meiji oligarchs attempted

15 McAlcavy, H., *Black Flags in Vietnam: The Story of a Chinese Intervention*. New York, 1968.
page 230.

16 Rawlinson, J., *China's Struggle for Naval Development, 1839–1895*. Harvard, 1967. Pages 113–

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17 Spence, page 158; Murphey, page 281.

to modernize and invest in capital and military hardware. A key difference between the two attempts at modernization was that Japan was able to forge a national identity (in a Western context) and consolidate power decades prior to China. Meiji Japan had its own ruling elite, namely the former *samurai* of Satsuma and Chōshū Provinces, most notable of whom were the *Ishin no Sanketsu* “Three Great Nobles.”¹⁸ These leaders were able to co-operate for national security and were not entrenched in regional rivalries. This system would evolve into a Prussian-modeled constitutional monarchy with a *diet* (parliament) on November 22nd, 1890, and in theory granted supreme command of all Japanese armed forces to the Emperor.¹⁹ One possible reason for the Qing dynasty’s failure to foster nationalism in China could be the Manchus’ own precarious position within China, compared to smaller and more homogenous Japan. This explains one reason why the Qing, fearful of mass-enfranchisement but eager to remain in power, would not address the inefficiencies of regional warlordism. The matter is addressed by prominent late Qing scholar Liang Qichao, who suggests the abolition of all Han-Manchu barriers for the strengthening of both races, as based on social Darwinism.²⁰ The presence of nationalism and internal consolidation on the Japanese side, when juxtaposed with the warlordism prevalent amongst Qing forces, provides a clear strategic explanation for the decisive Japanese victory during the First Sino-Japanese War of 1894-1895. Comparison of the two countries’ military equipment reveals no overwhelming advantage on either side. With considerable investment, the Qing *Beiyang* Fleet was the largest in Asia, boasting heavy German-built battleships such as the *Dingyuan* and *Zhenyuan*, while the *Beiyang* Army (successor to Li’s Anhui Army) was a large, Western-trained force and the

18 Kornicki, Peter F. *Meiji Japan: Political, Economic and Social History 1868-1912, Volume III*. Routledge, 1998. page 4.

19 *The Constitution of the Empire of Japan* (1889). <http://history.hanover.edu/texts/1889con.html>

20 Rhoads, Edward J.M. *Manchus & Han: Ethnic and Political Power in Late Qing and Early Republican China, 1861-1928*. University of Washington Press, 2000. pages 3-4.

best that China could field.²¹ Considering that they had superior numbers, were on the defensive and were not significantly lagging in technology, the Chinese defeat could be attributed to superior Japanese tactics, but the underlying answer is Late-Qing warlordism. It is notable that as in the Sino-French War, different armies did not move to bolster a beleaguered one, meaning China's quantitative advantage could not be brought to bear to repel the invaders. Off the battlefield, warlords such as Li Hongzhang – then Viceroy of Zhili and Minister of Beiyang – proved incapable of negotiating a reasonable armistice with the enemy.²²

After suffering defeats to Japan, Qing warlord-led armies again proved somewhat effective against domestic threats. During the Boxer Rebellion (1899-1901), general Yuan Shikai emerged to prominence as Li Hongzhang's successor in control of *Beiyang* forces (also known as the 'New Army'). However, the role of warlords was no longer primarily that of generals under imperial service, but rather self-interested political actors who often held the balance of power. Yuan tactfully entered the court rivalry between Qing reformists and conservatives, eventually siding with the conservatives led by Empress Cixi and delivering "the kiss of death" to Emperor Guangxu's Hundred Days Reform.²³ In January 1909, in the aftermath of the deaths of these two powerful imperial figures, Yuan, as head of what was still China's mightiest army, was able to dominate court politics. This led to his appointment as Prime Minister-Chancellor of China during the Qing's twilight year of 1911-1912. Although he clearly held imperial power, he would use the Xinhai Revolution to further his ambitions: negotiating the abdication of Qing Emperor Puyi (who was six years old), he demanded the republican rebels accept him as President of China. Being in a militarily weak position, the

21 MacKinnon, Stephen R. *The Peiyang Army, Yuan Shih-kai and the Origins of Modern Chinese Warlordism*. Journal of Asian Studies, 1973.

22 Paine, S. C. M. *The Sino-Japanese War of 1894-1895: perceptions, power, and primacy*. Cambridge University Press, 2003. page 185.

23 Ch'en, page 62.

rebels were forced to compromise. The Qing were ousted after almost 270 years in power, and the Tongmenghui ruled in coalition with Yuan. Yuan's presidency (1912-1916) would be marked by constant friction between his own power and that of the emergent Kuomintang. This culminated in his short-lived full seizure of power as Emperor of China in 1916. His attempts to centralize power failed, in part due to his acquiescence to Japan's Twenty-One Demands.²⁴ Yuan's downfall resulted in the loss of any central authority figure in China and the rise of a new generation of overtly decentralized warlord cliques – the so-called Warlord Era of 1916-1928 – although warlords would continue to plague China well into the 40s.²⁵ Yuan Shikai exemplifies the dangers of autonomous military commanders: of limited importance to the defence of the Qing state, he instead undermined reform efforts, then ousted his patrons altogether when it was politically expedient. However, he was unable to replace the Qing with a strong new regime, and his actions resulted in China spiraling further into disunion.

Historically, scholars have identified many culprits as the bearers of responsibility for China's weakness between the mid-nineteenth and mid-twentieth centuries. Foremost amongst these is 'Confucianism', for its rigid stratification and the supreme power it allows the person of the emperor.²⁶ Ironically, if a Hegelian China 'where no other legal power or institution is extant, but the superintendence and oversight of the Emperor' had been implemented, modernization efforts may have been pursued more coherently, internal divisions would not have emerged and the country could have been secure enough to weather foreign assaults.²⁷ Instead, autonomous warlords failed to defend the country and subsequently turned on the dynasty. 'Reformist' commanders and political elites did exist, such as heroes of the Taiping War Li, Zeng and Zuo, but

24 Spence, 281.

25 Murphey, 407.

26 Yao, Xinzong. *An Introduction to Confucianism*. Cambridge University Press, 2000. page 4.

27 Hegel, Georg Wilhelm Friedrich. *The Philosophy of History*. Harvard University Press.

they were only keen on the West's "solid warships and accurate cannons" rather than self-strengthening via political reform – they were contented with the underlying Qing imperial Confucian system and their own status within it.²⁸ Regardless of how dysfunctional domestic administration would become, the prevailing elite view of the time is best exemplified by Zhang Zhidong's '*Chinese learning for fundamental principles and Western learning for practical application*'.²⁹ In the longer term, only ideology and nationalism were forces capable of rallying the country against Japan and consolidating it for future development.

Besides providing a geopolitical lesson on centralization and balance of power, the Warlord Era and the Second Sino-Japanese War were crucibles of blood for the emergence of the People's Liberation Army and the Kuomintang, two very ideological forces. Both parties recognized the threat to China's security from the post-Qing warlords – who were by no means a monolithic bloc – going so far as to form short-term alliances against 'warlords of the feudal type' concurrent with the struggle against Japan.³⁰ The People's Republic of China has often been criticized for its unitary, centrist and draconian tendencies. When we contemplate the maelstrom that the regime emerged from, the constant checks on regionalism or disunity seem rational policies. Indeed, it was the PLA's very organizational centralization when compared to regional warlord cliques and the KMT that allowed it to effectively resist Japanese forces during the 1930s and 40s prior to seizing power in 1949 – despite being in a numerically and technically disadvantageous military situation.³¹ Meanwhile, for the general populace, "the era of the warlords, which did give China a period of pluralistic, competitive politics involving provincial power bases, was such a humiliation to the Chinese that it

28 Zhao, Suisheng. *A nation-state by construction: dynamics of modern Chinese nationalism*. Stanford University Press, 2004. page 52.

29 Guillermaiz, Jacques. *A history of the Chinese Communist Party, 1921-1949, Volume 1*. Payot, 1968. page 17.

30 Spence, 313.

31 Murphey, 372.

drove them once again to centralized politics... Increasingly Chinese saw their “national salvation” as a single goal of “strengthening the nation””, providing a possible explanation for the appeal of a solid yet totalitarian regime.³² The legacy and costs of warlordism and excessive decentralization of the late Qing are therefore still evident in China’s contemporary political-military system.

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32 Pye, Lucian & Mary. *Asian Power and Politics: The Cultural Dimensions of Authority*. Harvard University Press, 1985. page 188.

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Zhao, Suisheng. *A nation-state by construction: dynamics of modern Chinese nationalism*. Stanford University Press, 2004. “Incapable of Intelligent Parenthood”

The Sexual Sterilization Acts and the Persistence of Eugenics in Canada

Tess Lanzarotta

Any history of eugenics must begin with Francis Galton, the Englishman who developed eugenic theory in the late nineteenth century. He was influenced by the work of his cousin, Charles Darwin, and his predecessor in pessimistic population theory, Thomas Malthus. He concluded that without intelligent control the English race was in peril, because “those whose race we especially want to have, would leave few descendants, while those whose race we especially want to be quit of, would crowd the vacant space with their progeny.”¹ His ideas were repugnant, but they had a powerful presence and remarkable resilience throughout the twentieth century. Canada was certainly not exempt from the influence of eugenic theory. The Canadian eugenics movement had many facets, but it is most notable for the longevity of its reliance on coercive and frequently nonconsensual sterilizations of the mentally ill and mentally disabled. The only two definitive historical studies on the Canadian eugenics movement do not examine the period beyond the 1940s. Angus McLaren’s study concludes at the end of World War II and emphasizes the public realization that eugenics could be taken to horrifying lengths.² Ian Robert Dowbiggin posits a similar thesis and explains that the Eugenics Society of Canada collapsed in 1940 as a result of revulsion with the Nazi programme.³ The association of the word “eugenic” with the Holocaust is certainly

1 Francis Galton, *Inquiries into Human Faculty and its Development* (London: Macmillan, 1883), 318.

2 Angus McLaren, *Our Own Master Race: Eugenics in Canada, 1885-1945* (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1990), 168.

3 Ian Robert Dowbiggin *Psychiatry and Eugenics in the United States and Canada, 1880-1940* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1997), 187.

strong and still elicits a visceral response from many people.

The eugenics movement was strongest and most systematic in Alberta and British Columbia. Both provinces had Sexual Sterilization Acts (hereafter, the Acts), which were repealed in 1972 and 1973, respectively. The decision-making bodies that directed the systematic sterilization of the mentally ill and mentally disabled were called the Boards of Eugenics. The contradiction between the historiography's traditional endpoint of the Canadian eugenics movement and the continued existence of these laws and bodies in the Western provinces can be easily dismissed if the legislation fell out of use and was dismissed as archaic in the 1970s. However, in the year the Act was repealed in Alberta, 55 people were sterilized.⁴ In Alberta, the peak years for sterilizations were between 1934-1938, when 438 sterilizations were performed, and between 1964-1968, when 446 sterilizations were performed.⁵ The years following World War Two see a reduction of several hundred per four-year period, but never a complete pause.⁶ The persistence of this practice has not been adequately explained. By examining the issue from a range of sources, we can begin to understand why sterilizations continued. The few criticisms issued against the acts reveal much about how contemporaries understood the sterilization of institutionalized patients and what purpose they believed the practice served. Additionally, the beliefs of the medical professionals and legislators involved in establishing and consolidating the power of the Board of Eugenics demonstrate a strong belief in sterilization as beneficial, although not therapeutic. These beliefs were never universal, but they also never disappeared, even after the Acts were repealed. The persistence of eugenic sterilization in Canada was a result of the way the Sexual Sterilization Acts were written and applied. They

4 David Gibson, "Involuntary Sterilization of the Mentally Retarded: A Western Canadian Phenomenon," *Canadian Psychiatric Association Journal* 19(1974): 59.

5 Douglas Wahlsten, "Leilani Muir versus the Philosopher King: Eugenics on Trial in Alberta," *Genetica* 99(1997): 188.

6 Ibid.

were adaptable to changing social and cultural circumstances.

The nature of the source material prevents historians from addressing the persistence of eugenics sterilization or the evidentiary flaws. The evidence is fragmented at best and thus necessitates an approach that sometimes results in suggestions, rather than conclusions. However, a close examination of the various pieces of evidence available allows for more in-depth explanations than suggesting without evidence, as Dowbiggin does, “that eugenics thrived notably in countries like Canada and Germany with significant statist medical traditions.”⁷ In 1987 all but twenty percent of the Alberta Board of Eugenics records were destroyed.⁸ We do know that close to 3000 sterilizations were performed in Alberta during the years the Act was in place; the numbers for British Columbia are unknown, but thought to be significantly smaller.⁹ Since little investigation into the sterilizations occurred until the late 1980s, many of the people involved died without leaving testimonies of any kind, making it difficult to establish their intentions.¹⁰ However, occasionally their statements were recorded in court, or they wrote of their motivations and beliefs, and these sources are used whenever possible.

British Columbia stopped its sterilization programme in 1968 – since then, the records of the Board of Eugenics have been lost or destroyed.¹¹ For this reason, much less is written about sterilization in British Columbia. Any emphasis on Alberta is due to disparities in evidence. The provinces are also addressed in separate time periods because the court cases brought against the Provincial Governments release evidence from different decades. The information for British Columbia comes from court evidence drawn from the records of the Essondale Provincial Mental Hospital. The information for Alberta

7 Dowbiggin, 238.

8 Jana Grekul, “Sterilization in Alberta, 1928 to 1982: Gender Matters,” *Canadian Review of Sociology* 45.3(2008): 251.

9 Wahlsten, 188.

10 *D.E. et al v. HMTQ*, 2003 BCSC 1013, par. 13, (CanLII.)

11 McLaren, 159.

comes from court evidence drawn from the records of the Alberta Board of Eugenics. Public opinion on these matters is also difficult to discern, as there is no evidence of popular support or popular protest. Newspaper articles and medical publications relating to sterilization most often convey a tone of ambivalence. This tone likely reflects a widely felt uncertainty about the morals and motivations around sterilizing the mentally ill and mentally disabled. Whatever moral qualms were felt, systematic sterilization did take place and if we start at its inception, we may begin to understand why.

In Alberta, between 1901 and 1926, the population grew eight-fold – typical for Western Canada in these decades. Population growth, combined with rapid industrialization and urbanization, created anxieties about the moral and physical health of the Western provinces.¹² Although the majority of immigrants were Anglo-Saxon Protestants, Eastern European immigration was increasing and there was widespread public concern that the ‘true Canadians’ would be overwhelmed by this influx.¹³ This intensified during recruitment for World War One, when many men were declared unfit for military service and even more so after the war, when these anxieties were compounded by the strain returning injured men placed on the finances and resources of the medical system.¹⁴ Eugenic theory provided an explanation for social problems that reaffirmed the supremacy of Anglo-Saxon Protestant Canadians, and provided the ideological basis for potential solutions. It was not a marginal movement; many prominent social reformers and members of the medical profession supported eugenics.

Tommy Douglas wrote his masters’ thesis on “The Problems of the Subnormal Family,” and regularly expressed an affinity for eugenic theories that encompassed hereditary notions of morality

12 Ibid., 538.

13 A. Naomi Nind, “Solving an ‘Appalling’ Problem: Social Reformers and the Campaign for the Alberta Sexual Sterilization Act, 1928,” *Alberta Law Review* 38(2000): 538-9.

14 Ibid., 539.

and vice.¹⁵ Three of the five prominent women involved in the Person's Case were also outspoken supporters of the eugenics movement.¹⁶ Agnes McPhail, who became the first female Member of Parliament, spoke at a meeting of the United Farm Women, an Alberta group who were heavily involved in promoting eugenic legislation, and she "affirmed...that it was immoral to allow defectives to breed."¹⁷ Free and compulsory education was established in the early nineteenth century and allowed the creation of the category of the "feeble-minded" child who had sub-par performance in school. Standardized testing and medical examination began in public schools in Western Canada in the first decades of the nineteenth century to "gauge the extent to which 'racial degeneration' had spread."¹⁸ Many leading scientists were also involved in the eugenics movement. One of Canada's most prominent geneticists, Madge Thurlow Macklin, published an article in 1934 defending eugenic theory. The statistics that she presented claimed that "a policy of non-elimination has therefore increased the percentage of feeble-minded and has lowered the percentage of normals...not only has the mentally defective population been increasing every decade from 1871-1931, but the rate of increase has been accelerating."¹⁹ It was in this context of anxiety and broad support from prominent social reformers and scientists that the move to sterilization legislated occurred.

British Columbia initiated a Royal Commission on Mental Hygiene in 1925. It held sessions in Victoria and Vancouver and heard evidence from scientists, police officers, and various community groups from Canada and the United States.²⁰ Although the evidence

15 McLaren, 8-9.

16 Richard Cairney, "'Democracy Was Never Intended for Degenerates': Alberta's Flirtation with Eugenics Comes Back to Haunt It," *Canadian Medical Association Journal* 155.6(1997): 790.

17 McLaren, 121.

18 Ibid., 91-92.

19 Madge Thurlow Macklin, "Genetical Aspects of Sterilization of the Mentally Unfit," *Canadian Medical Association Journal* (1934): 193-194.

20 McLaren, 96.

presented was not unanimous, it was fairly conclusive in stating that sterilization was an economic necessity at a time when mental illness was believed to be incurable and hereditary, and asylums were full. The most convincing evidence for this case was put forward by Paul Popenhoe, a prominent American eugenicist who reported on the success of the sterilization program in California.²¹ A Canadian expert who attended, Dr. C.B. Farrar from the Toronto Psychopathic Hospital, wrote in 1926, "The single greatest cause of mental defectiveness is heredity."²² He went on to explain that sterilization would help prevent crime, immorality, and the future economic burdens of the mentally defective, and to applaud the efforts of British Columbia and Alberta in moving toward legislation for such purposes.²³ The Sexual Sterilization Act was passed in British Columbia in 1933. In Alberta, similar arguments were made, largely promoted by the organizations like the aforementioned United Farm Women, and the United Farmers of Alberta.²⁴ The United Farm Women went on speaking tours after the first reading of the bill to promote it and to spread public awareness of the threat of mental deficiency.²⁵ The Canadian National Congress on Mental Hygiene carried out a survey in Alberta that was published in 1921 and insisted that widespread mental deficiency in the province caused, "frightening social inefficiency and immorality."²⁶ Dr. Farrar was also heavily involved in the investigation that brought this information, along with reports of the appalling overcrowding of provincial institutions, to George Hoadley, the Minister of Health.²⁷ Hoadley eventually tabled the sterilization bill, three years after he announced that the provincial policy towards the mentally ill was

21 Ibid., 97.

22 C.B. Farrar, "Social Aspects of Mental Deficiency," *Canadian Medical Association Journal* (1926): 1235.

23 Ibid., 1235-1237.

24 McLaren, 99.

25 Nind., 543.

26 McLaren, 99.

27 Nind, 542.

motivated by largely financial concerns.²⁸ When the proposed Bill was given a second reading, Hoadley spoke to society's need to be protected from the "menace" of the mentally ill and said that the act was necessary if Alberta wanted to prioritize the quality of its population over the quantity.²⁹ The Sexual Sterilization Act in Alberta was passed in 1927.

The Acts reflected a belief in the hereditary nature of mental illness, criminality, and immorality that many members of Canadian society and the medical profession ascribed to at the time. The Acts were widely accepted as necessary. An article in the *American Journal of Psychiatry* from 1935 congratulated Alberta on its progress, stating "with respect to the British Commonwealth of Nations, Alberta is the pioneer in legislation of this character and...must be given the credit for the vision and courage that has placed this statue on the books of the province."³⁰ The writers go on to describe some of those who were sterilized. One case was a 17-year-old girl described as, "promiscuous, venereal disease. Father and paternal uncle alcoholic...mother and maternal grandmother psychotic, suicided."³¹ Sterilization reportedly freed her from the potential social evils of "unmarried motherhood and illegitimacy."³² Significant efforts were made to have eugenic legislation passed in Ontario after the Eugenics Society of Canada was founded in Toronto in 1930.³³ Among the members of the executive committee was A.R. Kaufman, who later helped secure the legal sale and distribution of birth control.³⁴ Doctors in the sickroom at his

28 Ibid., 541.

29 Timothy Caulfield and Gerald Robertson, "Eugenic Policies in Alberta: from the Systematic to the Systemic?," *Alberta Law Review* 35(1996): 62.

30 C.A. Baragar, A. Davidson, W.J. MacAlister, and D.L. McCullough, "Sexual Sterilization: Four Years Experience in Alberta," *American Journal of Psychiatry* 91.4(1935): 897.

31 Ibid., 906.

32 Ibid.

33 Linda Revie, "More Than Just Boots! The Eugenic and Commercial Concerns Behind A.R. Kaufman's Birth Controlling Activities," *Canadian Bulletin of Medical History* 23.1(2005): 125.

34 Ibid., 120.

Parent's Information Bureau, a covert birth control clinic, sterilized approximately 400 "feeble-minded" wives of his employees between 1930-1935.³⁵ He had nurses canvas his employees, or those who had been recently laid off, based upon their class; those who met his criteria for fit parenthood were denied sterilization.³⁶ The President of the Eugenics Society of Canada was Dr. W.L. Hutton who wrote about the danger of "race suicide" in 1934 and warned, "The group from which the feeble-minded spring is reproducing itself much faster than the general population."³⁷ However, his attempt to convince the Province of Ontario to legislate the sterilization of the insane and feeble-minded failed to become law.³⁸ The Catholic Church opposed sterilization and although their low membership in the West muted their protest, in Eastern Canada the Church stood firmly in the way of sterilization laws.³⁹ Despite the opposition of the Catholic Church, there was support for eugenic sterilization, and a belief in its principles, within a significant portion of the population all across Canada throughout the 1920s and 1930s. The laws were a reflection of commonly held medical and moral beliefs.

However, the particular way the laws were written and applied contributed to their continued use for many decades. They were adapted to different medical and moral circumstances. The British Columbia legislation stipulated that sterilization could be performed if,

"Upon such examination of the inmate the Board of Eugenics is unanimously of the opinion that procreation by the inmate would be likely to produce children who by reason of inheritance would have a tendency to serious mental disease or mental deficiency...[the operation] shall not be performed unless the inmate

35 Ibid., 128.

36 Ibid., 129-131.

37 W.L. Hutton, "Tendencies in Human Fertility," *Canadian Medical Association Journal* (1934): 74.

38 Revie, 135.

39 McLaren, 120 and 156.

has consented thereto in writing, if in the opinion of the Board of Eugenics the inmate is capable of giving consent, or, if in the opinion of the Board the inmate is not capable of giving consent...the husband or wife...parents of guardian...has consented thereto in writing...[the operation will be performed.]”⁴⁰

The Act also indicated that its intention was for sterilization to render patients suitable for release from the institution, without the burden of possible parenthood.⁴¹ The legislation in Alberta was similar, but was amended twice in crucial ways. First in 1937, the Act was amended to allow for sterilization if there was a risk of “mental injury” to the patient or their progeny.⁴² In 1942 further stipulations allowed the Board of Eugenics to sterilize patients with neurosyphilis, epilepsy with psychosis or mental deterioration, and Huntington’s Chorea.⁴³ No documentation is available for the reasons these changes were made. An Edmonton newspaper made a brief mention of the changes to the Act in 1942, but provided no explanation or commentary.⁴⁴ Despite their innocuous beginning, these changes, the first in particular, had a profound affect on how the Act was used. The Alberta Board of Eugenics adapted its sterilization program to a new set of circumstances and changing social understandings of mental illness and morality.

In particular, the Board of Eugenics emphasized the idea that the patient could cause “mental injury” to their future offspring. During the previous decades, women used the language of maternity and the idea that they were the mothers of the nation, to gain access to political and citizenship rights. Although this had some undeniable benefits, it also contributed to essentializing women’s roles to motherhood.⁴⁵ This helps to explain why the typical

40 *D.E. et al v. HMTQ*, 2003 BCSC 1013, par. 36-37. (CanLII)

41 *Muir v. Alberta*, 1996 CanLII 7287, page 12 (AB Q.B.)

42 Nind, 549.

43 Ibid.

44 Ibid.

45 Marina Morrow, “Our Bodies, Ourselves in Context: Reflections on

candidate for sterilization in Alberta was female and under the age of 18.⁴⁶ The causes of social deviance also came to be understood and accepted as more environmental in the later 1940s and the 1950s.⁴⁷ This meant that poor parents posed a serious risk to their offspring. The stipulation that patients could be sterilized if they posed a risk of “mental injury” to their potential offspring provided a way to eliminate the potential for faulty parents. The Board of Eugenics “interpreted sterilization as a therapeutic measure because it would unburden the targeted groups from the onerous responsibility of child bearing and rearing.”⁴⁸ One surviving member of the Board of Eugenics, interviewed by Richard Cairney in 1997, recalled that mental patients regularly engaged in sex and asked, “The children that were produced--now what kind of prospects did those children have?”⁴⁹ The records of the Alberta Board of Eugenics, with regards to its female patients, largely focus on issues like “sexual misbehaviour, alcoholism, poor performance in school, unemployment status, distant relative’s escapades...”⁵⁰ The case files often mention female patients having sexual urges they were incapable of understanding.⁵¹ Female mental patients were not perceived as intentionally seeking out parenthood or sexual activity, but rather as unconsciously responding to urges they could not control. The few files that deal with male patients focus more on specific criminal acts – rape is the most frequently cited – rather than on potentialities of bad parenthood.⁵² The case files provide in-depth family histories with a distinct emphasis on patients’ abilities to create an appropriate

the Women’s Health Movement in Canada,” In *Women’s Health in Canada: Critical Perspectives on Theory and Practice*, eds. Marina Morrow, Olena Hankivsky and Colleen Vascoe (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2007): 38.

46 Grekul, 254.

47 Dowbiggin, 182.

48 Kristen Savell, “Sex and the Sacred: Sterilization and Bodily Integrity in English and Canadian Law,” *McGill Law Journal* 49(2004): 1119.

49 Cairney, 792.

50 Grekul, 257.

51 Savell, 1104.

52 Ibid., 260.

environment for raising children.⁵³ The Board of Eugenics implied that there was “some general understanding about the sort of person who will make an adequate parent.” Whether patients had a genetic condition was far less important than assessing their capacities to be parents. This was a social assessment, rather than a medical assessment, and one that was focused on female patients.

An example from a major legal case illustrates the emphasis on the capacity for future motherhood. In 1959 a 14-year old girl named Leilani Muir was sterilized. Her case concisely stated the reason for the decision as, “incapable of intelligent parenthood.”⁵⁴ However, the Alberta court later found that Leilani Muir was of normal intelligence and that she was wrongfully sterilized because she would have been capable of being a parent. In 1996 she was awarded nearly \$750,000 for pain and suffering endured as a result of her sterilization.⁵⁵ Former members of the Board of Eugenics, like David Gibson, excused such actions by asserting, “Prevailing opinion was that independent social and economic life would be tenuous enough without added ‘family’ responsibility.”⁵⁶ He elaborated further on the beliefs of the board by saying that anyone whose mind was halted at an age younger than 18 years would likely have children who were socially handicapped.⁵⁷ When critics drew attention to the Alberta Act in the late 1960s, they were motivated by the “surprisingly articulate” requests of women who were sterilized in their teenage years and now wanted the operations reversed.⁵⁸ The critique further notes that many of the people sterilized under the Act in Alberta had high enough IQ levels to serve in the American Marine Corps.⁵⁹ The authors conclude that, “Therefore

53 Ibid.

54 *Muir v. Alberta*, 1996 CanLII 7287, page 3 (AB Q.B.)

55 Ibid., page 8.

56 Gibson, 60.

57 Ibid.

58 K.G. McWhirter and J. Wiejer, “The Alberta Sterilization Act: A Genetic Critique,” *The University of Toronto Law Journal* 19.3(1969): 424.

59 Ibid., 426

the question must be asked whether retardation is a guarantee of incompetence for parenthood.”⁶⁰ These criticisms demonstrate that the purpose of the Sexual Sterilization Act was perceived to be the prevention of inadequate parenthood by external observers, as well by the Board of Eugenics. The criticisms accuse the Act of not performing this task properly.

The British Columbia Sexual Sterilization Act did not contain a stipulation for the “mental injury” of potential children. The purpose of the Act was its ability to allow for the safe discharge of patients. Sterilization was increasingly thought of as a method of birth control and deinstitutionalization.⁶¹ The British Columbian case, perhaps influenced by the 1960s emphasis on the importance of sexual freedom, cast sterilization as a form of liberation that freed female mental patients from the burdens of their reproductive system.⁶² The language used was not without moral judgment, but it indicates a resignation with regards to the sexual behaviour of female patients. One typical 1963 record from the superintendent at Essondale notes, “It seems unfortunate that this patient, because of her affectionate nature and many years of reproductive life remaining, has to remain on a close ward because she has not been sterilized. The possibility of sterilizing her will be looked into, so that she can at least have ground privileges.”⁶³ Another case from 1964 states that a patient’s “promiscuity and poor control oblige us to keep her under constant supervision and to restrict her from any privileges.”⁶⁴ The superintendent continued, “the patient would have more freedom in the hospital if she were sterilized.”⁶⁵ Almost all of the recommendations that the superintendent sent to the Board of Eugenics contain the text, in standard form, “I believe

60 Ibid..

61 Dowbiggin, 182.

62 Kavell, 1124.

63 *D.E. (Guardian ad litem) v. British Columbia*, 2005 BCCA 134, par. 46 (CanLII)

64 Ibid., par 52.

65 Ibid., par. 53.

that if she is discharged therefrom, without being sexually sterilized, she would likely bear children who by reason of inheritance would have a tendency to serious mental disease or mental deficiency.”⁶⁶ However, the more detailed notes from the superintendent show that the emphasis was placed on allowing the patients more freedoms within the hospital and in their future outside of it.

Criticisms of sterilization also reflect the fact that it was used as birth control in British Columbia. The argument of critics in 1969 was that, “intrauterine devices as well as pharmaceuticals can be applied without exposing the genetically unfit to inhumane and unethical surgical procedures.”⁶⁷ The wide availability and social acceptance of birth control by the late 1960s made it difficult to defend sterilization for contraceptive reasons.⁶⁸ By the 1970s the women’s movement represented motherhood and childbirth as formative female experiences that women could choose to have, rather than social roles, which they might or might not be suitable for.⁶⁹ The Acts were repealed with the fall of the Social Credit governments in both British Columbia and Alberta in the early 1970s.⁷⁰ The Social Credit governments certainly played a role in the maintenance of systematic sterilizations, but explanations that see the repeal of the legislation as a direct result of the end of conservative authoritarian regimes “with little regard for external criticism,” are incomplete.⁷¹ This explanation ignores a changing social context, which the form of the legislation could no longer be adapted to fit. The options of birth control and female social roles other than motherhood eroded the purposes of sterilization. Explanations that blame the Social Credit governments also ignore the glaring fact that criticism was not particularly widespread, and the idea that sterilization of the mentally ill or disabled was beneficial for the individual and for

66 Ibid., par. 29.

67 McWhirter and Wiejer, 431.

68 Morrow, 42.

69 Morrow, 41.

70 McLaren, 1972.

71 Grekul, 252,

society was still quite prevalent in Canadian society.

In the 1969 article criticizing the Acts, the writers point out that the Boards made decisions on behalf of patients who were not considered able to give consent and who did not have families to act on their behalf.⁷² This was certainly true, but David Gibson issued the same argument in 1974 in defense of his participation in the sterilization program. He wrote that although the lack of consent was “disagreeable” it was the only way to allow institutionalized patients who had no family support some degree of self-reliance and freedom.⁷³ The member of the Alberta Board of Eugenics who spoke with Richard Cairney stated unrepentantly, “My attitude is that at the time it was a reasonable approach to a very difficult problem.”⁷⁴ Furthermore, critics complained that, because the science behind the Acts was out of date, “The most serious damage lies in the fact that this ignorant and perverted legislation poisons the atmosphere and holds up advances in modern preventative eugenics, which must be based on consent.”⁷⁵ They recommended changes to the structure of the Board of Eugenics and a new emphasis on “positive” eugenic methods.⁷⁶ This was not an isolated point of view. A 1969 *Globe and Mail* article reported on the observations of Dr. Blair, the head of Psychiatry at the University of Calgary, “Dr. Blair said that there is growing evidence that eugenic sterilization of mentally ill and retarded persons...is scientifically justified. He recommended that the Provincial Board of Eugenics...be enlarged to five members, two of them trained in psychiatry.”⁷⁷ Although the sterilization program was certainly a violation of the rights of the patients, as we understand them now, it was never wholly or universally condemned even when the legislation was being repealed. Eugenic sterilization had simply

72 McWhirter and Wiejer, 429.

73 Gibson, 60.

74 Cairney, 792.

75 McWhirter and Wiejer, 430.

76 Ibid.

77 “Lag Found in Alberta Mental health System, Legislature is Urged to Reorganize System,” *Globe and Mail*, April 21, 1969.

become inapplicable to the social and medical circumstances.

In 1978, a woman named Shirley Desroches took her 9-year old daughter for a checkup in Scarborough, Ontario. She was shocked when the doctor asked her if she was planning to have the child sterilized and “he went on to say that we had to consider the interests of society and not run the risk that she’d produce more retarded people.”⁷⁸ In that same year a report from Ontario’s Official Guardian announced the discovery that in 1976 over 300 mentally handicapped children, almost 250 of them female, were illegally sterilized.⁷⁹ The Health Minister, Dennis Timbrell responded that “opinions vary” with regard to the legality of this practice and that further study would be done before the Province would make a formal statement.⁸⁰ Furthermore, one 1983 article in *Canada’s Mental Health* noted that the rights of those incapable of voicing an opinion were hard to define, but that surely “each child deserves to enter the world with a biological integrity sufficient to permit him or her to lead a full and satisfying life.”⁸¹ The authors asserted that until genetics was fully understood, the idea of sterilization would come up “from time to time.”⁸² In 1986 the Supreme Court of Canada finally resolved the issue of non-therapeutic sterilizations performed without the consent of the patient when “Mrs. E” tried to have her mentally handicapped adult daughter “Eve” sterilized, because she “could not adequately cope with the duties of a mother.”⁸³ The Supreme Court found that this violated the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms because of “the grave intrusion upon a person’s rights and the certain physical damage that ensues from non-therapeutic sterilization without consent, when compared to

78 Michael Best, “Sterilization Shock Reopens Controversy,” *Toronto Star*, December 16, 1978.

79 Stan Oziewicz, “Retarded Children Sterilized Illegally, Guardian Contends,” *The Globe and Mail*, December, 12, 1978.

80 Ibid.

81 Katherine L. Dicken and Bruce A. Ryan, “Sterilization and the Mentally Retarded,” *Canada’s Mental Health*, 31.1(1983): 4-5.

82 Ibid., 6.

83 *E. (Mrs.) v. Eve*, [1986] 2 S.C.R. 388, page 4 (CanLII.)

the highly questionable advantages that can result from it.”⁸⁴ Once the Charter was in place in 1982 there was a firm language of rights and equality that left room for debate, but not compromise. The Sexual Sterilization Acts, and the practice of eugenic sterilization in Canada, persisted because the legislation was applied in ways that suited the changing social contexts until the 1970s. It was adaptable. The beliefs that underpinned the laws never fully disappeared from society or the medical profession, even after the legislation proved to be unsuitable for the social, political and medical conditions of the 1970s.

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The CIA's Secret War in Afghanistan

Michael Baillargeon

Introduction

During the 1980s, the United States implemented a number of anti-communist foreign policy programs. Campaigns conducted by the CIA in Nicaragua, Angola and Cambodia are often grouped together with the covert war in Afghanistan. However, not all of these operations were popularly supported. The campaign in Nicaragua for example, became embroiled in controversy when it was discovered that, with the authorization of President Ronald Reagan, arms were traded for hostages in an attempt to gain funding for the anti-communist Nicaraguan Contras. The war in Afghanistan however, once it became public, enjoyed wide popular support. Interestingly, more than twenty years later, the controversial event that took place in the Nicaraguan conflict, namely, the Iran-Contra affair that was condemned in the 1980s is considered foolish, whereas programs that enjoyed vast popular support during the 1980s, like the war in Afghanistan, for example, have had severe consequences on the security of the United States. The wide spectrum of outcomes is due to the fact that there was little to no variance in the nature of the aid programs to anti-communist guerillas around the world. While Ronald Reagan's anti-communist agenda guided much of the United States' foreign policy during the 1980s with little or no lasting consequence, one event in particular, the CIA's covert war in Afghanistan, has had severe, long-lasting consequences.

When the United States decided to intervene in the affairs of Afghanistan, under the Jimmy Carter administration, the goal was to contain the Soviet Union and prevent it from taking control of the shipping lanes, ports and natural resources of the Persian

Gulf. The CIA also hoped to destabilize and topple the communist-friendly regime in control of the government of Afghanistan. What the United States failed to realize was that the Soviet Union had pledged to assist the government of Afghanistan to preserve a communist-friendly regime. The United States decided to aid the rebel *mujahideen*, or Islamic holy warriors, despite warnings that a continued destabilization of the Afghan government would trigger a Soviet invasion.¹

After President Carter lost the 1980 Presidential Election, the CIA's covert Afghanistan operation came under the control of the Ronald Reagan administration. Aside from the United States' national security concerns as stated by President Carter, under Reagan many government officials, including Representative Charles Wilson, saw the war in Afghanistan as an opportunity to get the Soviet Union bogged down in a conflict that it had no chance of winning, but during which it would spend millions of dollars and endure thousands of military casualties. As Representative Wilson had said in a 1985 interview with CBS, he "wanted to hurt them... wanted them to count body bags going back to Moscow."² With mounting pressure from Congress, Reagan decided to expand the aid program to the mujahideen, providing them, for the first time, a victory plan and enough aid to help them complete it.

To paint the CIA as an organization that went about its business in Afghanistan haphazardly is disingenuous. A certain leeway needs to be granted to an agency that conducts much of its operations in secret, and relies on that secrecy to protect the nation. When that secrecy is abandoned however, as it was in March 1985 with the shipment of the American made Stinger missile to the mujahideen, the CIA should have altered their training, recruitment and distribution program in order to limit the long-term

1 There are many different variations in the spelling of *mujahideen*. I will remain consistent unless quoting from a source.

2 Andrew Hartman, "'The Red Template': US Policy in Soviet-Occupied Afghanistan," *Third World Quarterly* 23 (June 2002): 467-489

consequences of their actions.

While it is true that the Soviet Union was the United States' single largest enemy during the Cold War period, the CIA should have placed greater emphasis on the potential for severe long-lasting consequences, or "blowback," as a result of their covert war when presenting the plans to administration officials.

In the years following the Soviet withdrawal, the failure of American foreign policy in Afghanistan became painfully apparent. The mujahideen warlords used the weapons the CIA provided in attempts to seize control of the government. Thousands of Arab volunteers who answered the call to *jihad*, or holy war, in Afghanistan returned to their home countries, after having networked with other anti-imperialist Muslims. Therefore, not only did the CIA program leave behind a country in chaos, but it also left a network of highly trained guerilla warriors with state-of-the-art weapons and training. A number of the veterans of the Soviet-Afghan War, including Ramzi Yusef, who attacked the World Trade Center in 1993, Osama bin Laden, the al-Qaeda terrorist network mastermind, and Khalid al-Mihdar, one of the September 11, 2001 hijackers, have committed acts of terrorism in their home countries and abroad.³

President Reagan's (and America's) generally anti-communist attitude blinded foreign policy makers during the 1980s to possible consequences that could have occurred. Whereas President Reagan escaped from the Iran-Contra affair virtually unscathed, the United States did not emerge from Afghanistan as cleanly.

Afghanistan before the Soviet Invasion

Dating back to the 1950s, Afghanistan was largely ignored by both the United States and the Soviet Union, despite both countries' Cold War strategy to exercise their own influence wherever and

3 Lars Andersen and Jan Aagaard, *In The Name of God: The Afghan Connection and the U.S. War on Terrorism. The Story of the Afghan Veterans as the masterminds behind 9/11*, (University Press of Southern Denmark, 2005), 201, and Jane Mayer, *The Dark Side: The Inside Story of How the war on Terror Turned into a War on American Ideals* (New York: Doubleday, 2008), 13.

whenever possible. A 1950 United States Joint Chiefs of Staff report stated that, "Afghanistan is of little or no strategic importance to the United States."⁴ The reasons that the United States avoided Afghanistan were both physical and political. Physically, the country had very poor infrastructure and was composed of incredibly rugged terrain. Politically, Afghanistan had very poor relations with Iran and Pakistan, and the United States was very reluctant to become involved.⁵ When, however, the United States and Pakistan signed a Mutual Defense Agreement in 1954, the Soviet Union and Afghanistan began a trade relationship. A United States National Intelligence Estimate reflected the belief that "increased Soviet attention to Afghanistan is part of a general effort to counter recent Western (particularly U.S.) gains in the Middle East-South Asia area," and went on further to predict,

Soviet objectives probably remain those of: (a) limiting Western influence and especially preventing the development of Western military facilities in the country, (b) maintaining the Afghan Governments' responsiveness to Soviet pressures and influence, (c) building up Soviet subversive capabilities within Afghanistan; and (d) developing facilities that would be useful in the event of a decision to invade the Indian subcontinent.⁶

United States' policy toward Afghanistan was summed up by the United States National Security Council report 1954c. The report stated that the United States should favor Pakistan over Afghanistan, should refrain from encouraging Afghanistan to seek U.S. military aid, should discourage Afghan participation in any regional military alliances and if the Soviets were to invade Afghanistan, the U.S. government would oppose the invasion at the

4 David Gibbs, "Does the USSR Have a 'Grand Strategy'? Reinterpreting the Invasion of Afghanistan," *Journal of Peace Research* 24 (December 1987): 365-379.

5 Gibbs, "Grand Strategy," 365-379.

6 United States Department of State, National Intelligence Council, *National Intelligence Estimate*, October 19, 1954, 1491.

United Nations or through other *diplomatic* means.⁷

Given that both the Soviet Union and the United States hesitated to exert their influence in Afghanistan, a catalytic event must have taken place to change both the foreign policy of the U.S. and USSR. That catalytic event was the destabilization of Afghanistan's government. Destabilization of Afghanistan began in 1964 when King Zahir enacted a new constitution that legalized political parties and resulted in the formation of the communist People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA).⁸ Almost immediately after its formation, ideological factions within the party caused it to split, rendering it incapable of effecting political change.⁹ The internal strife in the country was noted by Soviet Colonel V.A. Runov who observed that Islamic fundamentalist resistance to "any member of the ruling clique who pandered to the modernization of Islam or the penetration of the country with communist ideas," increased during this period of time.¹⁰

In 1968, Soviet leader Leonid Brezhnev pledged his support for any and all socialist regimes around the world, in what became known as the Brezhnev Doctrine by stating that, "a threat to the security of the socialist commonwealth as a whole [is]...a common problem, the concern of all socialist parties."¹¹ Therefore, in the event of dire circumstances, the communist Afghani government could rely on the Soviet Union for assistance.

In the early 1970s, the military staged a coup d'état against the king and former Prime Minister Mohammad Daoud installed himself as President of the new Republic of Afghanistan.¹² Daoud

7 United States Department of State, National Security Council, *National Security Council*, (1954c), 1152-1153 (emphasis added).

8 Gibbs, "Grand Strategy," 365-379.

9 Gibbs, "Grand Strategy," 365-379.

10 Russian General Staff, *The Soviet-Afghan War: How a Superpower Fought and Lost*, trans. Lester W. Grau & Michael A. Gress (Lawrence, KS: University of Kansas Press, 2002), 9.

11 Henry S. Bradsher, *Afghanistan and the Soviet Union* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1985), 137.

12 Gibbs, "Grand Strategy," 365-379.

began instituting a number of policies that would gradually make Afghanistan less reliant on Soviet aid. Concerned with the new policies, the Soviet government encouraged the factions of the PDPA to resolve their differences. Daoud's continued hard-line opposition politics and his repression of PDPA members led the two factions to reconcile their differences and, on April 27, 1978, to seize control of the country. Mohammad Taraki was now the prime minister of Afghanistan and Babrak Karmal was the Vice President.¹³

In December 1978, the Soviet Union and Afghanistan, under the control of the communist PDPA, signed the "Treaty of Friendship, Good Neighborliness and Cooperation." The agreement was exactly what had been predicted by the National Intelligence Estimate in 1954. It allowed the government of Afghanistan to request that the Soviet Union "send forces into Afghanistan *and provided the legal basis for such an action*," if the Afghan government need assistance.¹⁴

On February 1, 1979, America's strongest ally in the region, the shah of Iran, was replaced by the Ayatollah Khomeini. The Islamic revolution that had gripped Iran was now complete, and the Islamists had won. With the support of Iran against the Soviet Union no longer a forgone conclusion, the burden of containing of the USSR fell more heavily on the shoulders of the United States.¹⁵

In March 1979, an armed rebellion led by Islamic fundamentalist mujahideen groups in Afghanistan began in Heart, spread rapidly throughout the rest of the country, and destabilized the government.¹⁶ Seeing the opportunity to unseat a communist-friendly government, the United States Central Intelligence Agency began working on a plan for intervention. On July 3, 1979, President Carter authorized the CIA to assist the mujahideen with \$500,000 to be spent on propaganda, psychological operations,

13 Russian General Staff, *Soviet-Afghan War*, 8.

14 Russian General Staff, *Soviet-Afghan War*, 10 (emphasis added).

15 Andersen, *In the Name of God*, 130.

16 Russian General Staff, *Soviet-Afghan War*, 9.

radio equipment, medical supplies and cash, but no weapons.¹⁷ As the situation continued to deteriorate, Afghanistan began to turn to the Soviet Union for increased assistance. On July 19, the government of Afghanistan requested two motorized rifle divisions as well as an airborne division be sent to Afghanistan. Thanks to the covert aid, the mujahideen progressed. Taraki asked the Soviet Union to provide his security and requested a larger scale military intervention, “to increase the effectiveness of the [Afghan army’s] fight against the mujahideen.”¹⁸ According to Soviet Colonel Runov, “the Soviet government was in no hurry to grant these requests.”¹⁹ The USSR sought a political solution to the instability in Afghanistan and only began to consider military intervention in late 1979, and even then, only as a contingency to political reconciliation.²⁰ As the resistance continued to grow stronger and it became clear that the Taraki government would not provide a solution to the unrest, a new leader emerged. On October 14, 1979, supporters of Hafizullah Amin murdered Taraki and placed Amin in control of Afghanistan’s communist regime.

In December 1979, Carter expanded the aid program by authorizing the CIA to begin purchasing weapons and shipping them to Pakistan for distribution to the mujahideen. The first weapons that were provided were Lee Enfield .303 single-shot bolt-action rifles as well as rocket propelled grenades.²¹ According to political scientist James M. Scott, the aid was designed to “harass” the Soviets; it was a “bleeder strategy designed to hurt Moscow and raise the costs of its occupation.”²² As the conflict between the mujahideen and the PDPA dragged on in Afghanistan, it became clear to the Soviet

17 Steve Coll, *Ghost Wars: The Secret History of the CIA, Afghanistan, and bin Laden, From the Soviet Invasion to September 10, 2001* (New York: Penguin, 2004), 46.

18 Russian General Staff, *Soviet-Afghan War*, 10.

19 Russian General Staff, *Soviet-Afghan War*, 10.

20 Gibbs, “Grand Strategy,” 365-379.

21 Coll, *Ghost Wars*, 58.

22 James M. Scott, *Deciding to Intervene: The Reagan Doctrine and American Foreign Policy* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1996), 46.

leadership that the best way to prevent the United States from gaining any political advantages in the region would be to assassinate Amin, who was thought to be conspiring with the CIA, and install Babrak Karmal, Taraki's Vice President, as the leader of the government before launching a military invasion.²³ In fact, Zbigniew Brzezinski, Carter's National Security advisor warned the President that "this aid was going to induce a Soviet military intervention." Regardless of the threat of Soviet military intervention, Brzezinski said he and Carter, "knowingly increased the probability that [the Soviets] would [invade]. The secret operation...had the effect of drawing the Russians into the Afghan trap."²⁴

On December 27, 1979, the Soviet Union invaded Afghanistan, "with the mission of rendering international aid to the friendly Afghan people and establishing advantageous conditions to prevent possible actions by the governments of neighboring countries against Afghanistan."²⁵ While this was the officially stated objective, there were other strategic advantages as well, including keeping control over the Persian Gulf and Indian Ocean (including the natural resources, most importantly oil), maintaining a balance of power in the region with respect to China, and attempting to ebb the growth of Islamic fundamentalism in Central Asia.²⁶ The invasion of Afghanistan certainly gave the USSR breathing room in the United States' policy of containment that had been in effect since the end of World War II. An American assessment of the invasion stated that it was "undeniable that the occupation enhanced the Soviet geostrategic capabilities in the region with regard to Iran, the Persian Gulf, Pakistan, India and China."²⁷

In his 1980 State of the Union Address, President Carter acknowledged these concerns by stating, "the region which is now

23 Coll, *Ghost Wars*, 48-49.

24 Hartman, "Red Template," 467-489.

25 Russian General Staff, *Soviet-Afghan War*, 1.

26 Anderson, *In the Name of God*, 137.

27 Tad Daley, "Afghanistan and Gorbachev's global foreign policy," (Santa Monica, CA: Rand/UCLA Center for Soviet Studies), 1-19.

threatened by Soviet troops...is of great strategic importance: It contains more than two thirds of the world's exportable oil," and acknowledged the importance of the shipping lanes in the Indian Ocean "through which most of the world's oil must flow," while leading the American people to the conclusion that "the Soviet Union is now attempting to consolidate a strategic position...that poses a grave threat to the free movement of Middle East oil."²⁸ It was this enhancement of the Soviet Union's capabilities that alarmed United States' policy makers.

If the invasion is viewed within the context of the agreements that were signed between the Soviet Union and Afghanistan, however, it is quite clear that the Soviet Union was acting on its promise to the Afghan government in the mutual agreement signed in 1978. President Carter did not see the invasion as such. He said, "the Soviet Union must pay a concrete price for their aggression." He went further to state what would become known as the Carter doctrine, "an attempt by any outside force to gain control of the Persian Gulf region will be regarded as an assault on the vital interests of the United States of America, and such an assault will be repelled by the use of any means necessary including military force."²⁹ Because the aid program to the mujahideen was covert, Carter neglected to mention that American involvement in Afghanistan had begun less than six months prior to his condemnation of the invasion. He also neglected to mention that it was the destabilization of the Afghani government, enhanced by American aid that had caused the Soviet Union to invade.

If the United States had understood that a destabilization of the communist government in Afghanistan would prompt a Soviet invasion, as Brzezinski had predicted and as the 1978 treaty between the Soviet Union and Afghanistan gave precedent for, it would have been in the United States' best interest *not* to aid the mujahideen

28 President James Carter, "State of the Union Address" (Washington, DC, January 23, 1980).

29 Carter, "State of the Union Address," 1980.

against the PDPA. The United States viewed the invasion as both a threat to the Persian Gulf and as an act of expansionism, yet the United States had practically invited the invasion by helping the mujahideen destabilize the government in the first place. Given that U.S. aid to the mujahideen would draw the Soviet army into Afghanistan, it is clear that the United States wanted to draw the Soviet Union into the “Afghan trap” and keep them there as long as possible. In so doing, the CIA and the United States managed to enable the emergence of a completely new national security threat: Islamic fundamentalism.

Foreign Policy During the Soviet-Afghan War

President Carter failed to win reelection in 1980, and Ronald Reagan became the 40th President of the United States. He brought a different set of ideologies with him to the White House. As far as policy pertaining to Afghanistan, the main difference between the Carter Doctrine and the Reagan Doctrine was that the Carter Doctrine was designed to “harass” and “bleed” the Soviet Union, whereas the Reagan doctrine was designed to help the Afghans actually *win* the war.³⁰ When Reagan took office in January 1981, his CIA director, William Casey was intent on increasing the U.S. initiative in Afghanistan, to do more than “bleed them,” but rather, “make them feel the heat.”³¹

The Reagan Doctrine entailed a two-fold policy. The first component was offering U.S. support for anti-communist guerillas in the Third World by providing either economic or military aid, or both. The second aspect was that the U.S. would take a hostile approach to combat terrorism.³² Some critics of the Reagan Doctrine have pointed out the inherent problem with the Reagan Doctrine

30 John Prados, *Safe for Democracy: The Secret Wars of the CIA* (Chicago, IL: Ivan R. Dees, 2006), 484.

31 Scott, *Deciding to Intervene*, 47.

32 Morley, Morris, H. ed., *Crisis and Confrontation: Ronald Reagan's Foreign Policy* (Totowa, NJ: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 1988), 151.

condemning terrorism, while at the same time offering support to guerilla warriors, who often used terror tactics to achieve victories. In personal letters and public speeches, Reagan did acknowledge the issue of terrorism when he said, “we must take a stand against terrorism in the world and combat it with firmness.”³³ However, in his mind, terrorists were the morally wrong and the guerillas his programs funded were morally right. He clearly differentiated the mujahideen from terrorists, when in a personal letter from December 1979 he referred to the Afghan mujahideen as “freedom fighters.”³⁴ Reagan also offered a different perspective on economic sanctions. After lifting the grain embargo placed on the Soviet Union by Carter, he explained his reasoning by stating, “I lifted the grain embargo because...the Soviets are facing grave economic problems, our sale of grain further drains them of hard cash.”³⁵ This policy of spending the Soviet Union into defeat was uniform throughout the Reagan administration and can also be seen in his policy regarding the nuclear arms race. His idea was that socialism, as an economic practice, could not support a large-scale arms buildup. The same mentality also applies to the conflict in Afghanistan. Many people in the government at the time felt that Soviet occupation in Afghanistan could be exploited to keep the Soviet Union “embroiled in a costly and ugly war.”³⁶ Reagan’s policy of spending the Soviet Union into defeat then, was consistent in all of his foreign policies.

Reagan did not however, immediately increase the scope of aid to the mujahideen immediately upon taking office. The United States and the President of Pakistan, Zia ul-Haq feared that a greater increase in aid might lead the Soviets to attack Pakistan as well. Along those same lines, the U.S. decided to limit aid for fear of American made weapons being discovered by the Soviets and triggering a larger response. Many also believed that the mujahideen would be

33 Skinner, *In His Own Hand*, 483.

34 Skinner, *A Life in Letters*, 591.

35 Skinner, *A Life in Letters*, 377-378.

36 Morley, *Crisis and Confrontation*, 151.

unable to win the war against the Soviets.³⁷ If the third reason had indeed been the case, that many believed that the mujahideen could not win the war, then the aid being provided to them was clearly for one purpose only, to “bleed” the Soviets. This matched the Carter administration’s goals in Afghanistan, but did not coincide with the general emotional feeling about the “freedom fighters” in Reagan’s Washington.

While the public policy statements on Afghanistan discussed “arriv[ing] at a political settlement that would require the Soviet Union to withdraw its troops,”³⁸ Democratic Senator Paul Tsongas of Massachusetts introduced Senate Concurrent Resolution 126, which declared,

it should be U.S. policy to: (1) support the people of Afghanistan in their struggle to be free from foreign domination; (2) provide the Afghans, upon request, with material assistance; and (3) pursue a negotiated settlement of the war in Afghanistan based on the total withdrawal of Soviet troops and the recognition of the right of the Afghans to choose their own destiny.³⁹

While the bill failed to make it to the floor for a vote, its motivation signaled a change in the attitude toward the conflict in Afghanistan. Prior to Resolution 126, the U.S. did not believe the mujahideen could win the war. Now policy makers were shifting toward increasing the aid program so that they would win the war. In January 1983, President Reagan did not cave in to Congressional pressure and expand the aid program. He signed National Security Decision Directive 75 (NSDD 75) that stated, “The U.S. objective is to keep maximum pressure on Moscow for withdrawal and to ensure that the Soviets’ political, military, and other costs remain high while the occupation continues.”⁴⁰ It is clear then that the United States

³⁷ Scott, *Deciding to Intervene*, 47-48.

³⁸ Scott, *Deciding to Intervene*, 56.

³⁹ Senate Concurrent Resolution 126, *A concurrent resolution calling upon the United States Government to support the people of Afghanistan with material assistance in their struggle to be free from foreign domination*, 97th Cong., 2nd sess., 1982.

⁴⁰ President of the United States of America, National Security Coun-

was quite content to preserve the status quo in Afghanistan through its program of covert aid to the mujahideen, while, according to Fred Halliday, Professor Emeritus of Political Science at the London School of Economics, the United States “reaped the rhetorical advantages of supporting supposed freedom fighters.”⁴¹

As a result of Congressional and administrative efforts the cause of the Afghan mujahideen, now commonly referred to as “freedom fighters” became incredibly popular. President Carter’s publicly stated goals in Afghanistan had been to keep the Soviet Union from gaining control of the oil reserves and the warm water ports in the Persian Gulf, and to “bleed” and “harass” the Soviet army. As the administration changed in the early 1980s, there were not significant changes to policy in Afghanistan either, as reflected in Reagan’s NSDD 75, which did not acknowledge the desire of Congress to increase the aid program. Public opinion polls from 1982 show that Americans felt the United States had done enough. Thirty-eight percent of the country felt that the United States’ response to the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan was just right, while thirty percent would have liked to have seen the United States take more active role.⁴²

Pressure from Congress continued. The language used in the bills being introduced to the floor changed the tone of the conflict. Before the early 1980s, the American goals in the Soviet-Afghan war had very little to do with the actual Afghans. However, as American aid and Soviet occupation continued, attitudes in Washington began to change and Congress continued to seek policy changes that would reflect that. Senate Concurrent Resolution 126 was reintroduced to Congress the following October as Resolution 74 and stated, “it

cil, *National Security Decision Directive 75*. (Unfortunately, other NSDDs relating to Afghanistan are classified, including 166 and 270.)

41 Morley, *Crisis and Confrontation*, 151.

42 Survey by Chicago Council on Foreign Relations and Gallup Organization, October 29-November 6, 1982. Retrieved April 14, 2009 from the iPOLL Databank, The Roper Center for Public Opinion Research, University of Connecticut. <http://www.ropcenter.uconn.edu/ipoll.html>

would be indefensible to provide the freedom fighters with only enough aid to fight and die, but not enough to advance their cause of freedom.”⁴³

It had never been Carter’s intention from the beginning of the aid program to advance the cause of Afghani freedom. His goal was to use the mujahideen to “bleed” and “harass” the Soviet Union, similar to what the United States had experienced in Vietnam. However, in Reagan’s Washington, anti-communist sentiment and emotionalism about a democratic crusade in the Third World against the “Evil Empire” began to take place and guided policy directors toward expanding the aid program. A 1986 article entitled “The CIA in Afghanistan: ‘The Good War’,” captures the attitude of Congress at the time with respect to the war in Afghanistan. An administration official is quoted as saying, “As the Nicaraguan operation became the bad war, the one in Afghanistan became the good war.”⁴⁴ The war in Afghanistan was different from other proxy wars against the Soviet Union because Soviet soldiers were dying at the hands of “freedom fighters” intent on gaining their freedom and self-determination. The United States aided a small band of rebels and helped them fight against one of the world’s superpowers.

As a result of the changing attitude in Washington, CIA director William Casey traveled to Pakistan in October 1984 to meet with General Mohammed Yousaf, the Pakistani director of covert operations in Afghanistan. After a few discussions, Casey left for Washington with the understanding that the United States and its allies would expand the aid funneled through Pakistan to the mujahideen.⁴⁵ In March 1985, President Reagan signed a new National Security Decision Directive 166 that effectively ended the Carter administration’s policy in Soviet-occupied Afghanistan

43 Scott, *Deciding to Intervene*, 51.

44 John Stork, “The CIA in Afghanistan: ‘The Good War’,” *Middle East Report* 141, Hidden Wars (July-August, 1986): 12-13.

45 Scott, *Deciding to Intervene*, 57.

and changed the course of the conflict.⁴⁶ In his Proclamation on March 21, 1985, President Reagan declared the observance of Afghanistan Day, and used the opportunity to further declare that, “all Americans are united on the goal of freedom for Afghanistan... all Americans are outraged by this growing Soviet brutality against the proud freedom-loving people of Afghanistan.” In the same speech, he pledged to “continue to do everything we can to provide humanitarian support to the brave Afghan people.”⁴⁷

At the same time as the United States was discussing its plans to increase their efforts in the conflict, the Soviets commissioned a top secret study on Reagan and his foreign policy. The study found that the Reagan Doctrine was, “directed in practice against the Soviet Union and socialism as a whole,” and that Reagan’s objective was, “not only to stop the further spread and consolidation of positions of socialism in the world, but also to ‘exhaust’ the USSR and its allies...wearing it down in conflicts in different regions of the world.”⁴⁸ The results of the study and the continuation of the war in Afghanistan without an end in sight, raised serious concerns within the Soviet leadership that the USSR was “in danger of becoming bogged down,” in Afghanistan.⁴⁹

However, the death of Soviet leader Konstantin Chernenko in March may have distracted the Soviet leadership from the conflict just as American leadership was beginning to increase their aid to the rebels. The newly appointed General Secretary Mikhail Gorbachev skirted the issue of the Afghan war in many of his early press releases and official statements. In the absence of political pressure from within the Soviet Politburo to change the policy in Afghanistan, the

46 Scott, *Deciding to Intervene*, 59.

47 “Proclamation 5309: Afghanistan Day.” The Public Papers of President Ronald W. Reagan. Ronald Reagan Presidential Library. <http://www.reagan.utexas.edu/archives/speeches/1985/32185c.htm> (accessed 31 March 2009).

48 Peter Schweizer, *Reagan's War: The Epic Story of His Forty-Year Struggle and Final Triumph Over Communism* (New York, NY: Doubleday, 2002), 210.

49 Scott, *Deciding to Intervene*, 58.

only reason for the increase in Soviet military operations was in order to respond to the increased American aid for the mujahideen.⁵⁰ The escalation of American aid to the mujahideen was so effective that it nullified increased Soviet attention. Frustrated with the lack of positive results in Afghanistan, in August 1986, Gorbachev described the war as, “a bleeding wound,” for the Soviet Union.⁵¹ After nearly seven years of fighting, it was becoming clear to the Soviets that there would be no easy military solution in Afghanistan.

As the fighting continued, so too did the UN-mediated peace talks. By 1988, nearly ten years after the initial invasion, the Soviet Union had had enough of the conflict, and signed the Geneva Accords that were mutually agreed upon between the governments of the United States, Soviet Union, Pakistan and Afghanistan. On February 15, 1989, the last Soviet troops exited Afghanistan.

The Mujahideen: the boots on the ground in Afghanistan

The mujahideen, or holy warriors, were established as early as 1978 in the Afghanistan-Pakistan border town of Peshawar as an opposition force to the communist PDPA government controlling Afghanistan. The mujahideen was not a homogenous organization of Muslims; rather, there were many different political parties, groups, and movements. The two main wings of the mujahideen were the fundamentalists led by Burhaneddin Rabbani, the leader of the Jamiat-e Islami group, and two radically fundamentalist groups, Hizb-e Islami, led by Gulbuddin Hekmatyar and the Ittihad Party, led by Abdul Rasul Sayyad. There were seven groups in total that comprised the mujahideen. The other four were Sunni Muslims and were relatively moderate.⁵²

The United States was not alone in providing aid against the Soviets to the mujahideen. Among the list of allies were Pakistan,

50 Bradsher, *Afghanistan and the Soviet Union*, 268-270.

51 Milton Bearden, “Afghanistan: Graveyard of Empires,” *Foreign Affairs* 80 (November-December 2001): 17-30.

52 Andersen, *In the Name of God* 142-144.

Saudi Arabia and China. The Pakistani ISI was directly in charge of distributing the arms, financing, and training given to them by the CIA to the mujahideen.⁵³ The Pakistani village of Peshawar acted as the mujahideen training and supply camp.⁵⁴ Saudi Arabia matched the United States' monetary contributions dollar for dollar.⁵⁵ China provided the mujahideen with weapons in the beginning of the conflict, but as their regional interests in the context of their rivalry with the Soviet Union grew, they began to expand their aid to include military training of those Muslims from the Xinjiang province who wanted to answer the call of *jihad*, or holy war, in Afghanistan.⁵⁶

Thus, the largest covert war in the history of the United States and the Central Intelligence Agency was organized. Between 1979 and 1985, the nature of United States aid was covert. The need to preserve "plausible deniability" was regarded by the CIA and American policy makers as the most important factor in protecting national security. If the Soviets had captured or killed mujahideen and discovered American made weapons and ammunition, the United States feared that they would retaliate directly against America.⁵⁷ For this reason, the CIA shipped only old British Lee-Enfield rifles and Soviet bloc weapons to the mujahideen.

The March 1985 Presidential finding advocating a "victory plan" for the mujahideen, prompted the shipment of American-made "Stinger" surface-to-air missiles (SAMs). The Stinger missile was an ideal weapon to combat Soviet attack helicopters. It was easily transportable, easy to learn how to operate and it only required one person to fire. It was also ideal because of its effectiveness under 10,000 feet altitude.⁵⁸ Prior to the shipment of

53 Andersen, *In the Name of God*, 145.

54 Prados, *Safe for Democracy*, 473.

55 Hartman, "Red Template," 467-489.

56 Andersen, *In the Name of God*, 147-148.

57 Hartman "Red Template", 467-489.

58 Friedman, *What America Did Right: The Weapon Systems, Events, and Leaders that Brought Us to Victory in the Cold War* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1996), 28.

the Stinger, Soviet attack helicopters such as the Hind/Mi-24 were able to fly at relatively low altitudes and decimate the mujahideen forces that had no defense against the low-flying helicopters.⁵⁹ The introduction of the Stinger missile was intended to turn the tide of the war in the favor of the mujahideen, and it did exactly that. In the first attack, the mujahideen destroyed three Mi-24 helicopters. Subsequent attacks resulted in the destruction of approximately one or two Soviet helicopters per day.⁶⁰ Since Soviet strategy prior to the introduction of the Stinger was centered upon low-altitude attack runs, once their helicopters were being destroyed, the Soviet pilots began flying above 10,000 feet where they were ineffective.⁶¹ Overall, the mujahideen destroyed some 270 Soviet helicopters with the Stinger missile.

While the successful integration of the Stinger SAM into the mujahideen's arsenal allowed them to repel one of the Soviet's most effective offenses, instances of individual missiles going missing offer an excellent opportunity to analyze a number of other issues relating to the entire CIA program in Afghanistan.

Misplaced Trust

For a number of reasons, the introduction of the Stinger missile was not unanimously looked upon favorably by those in the decision making process. One problem that arose was the loss of plausible deniability. Should combatants armed with state-of-the-art American weapons get captured or killed in possession of such weaponry, there would be no denying American involvement. Second, the possibility that the Stinger might fall into the wrong hands also concerned critics of the program.⁶² As former U.S. Army Officer and designer of U.S. defense systems Herbert Friedman

59 Friedman, *What America Did Right*, 28.

60 Bearden, "Graveyard of Empires," 17-30.

61 Friedman, *What America Did Right*, 28.

62 Prados, *Safe for Democracy*, 491.

notes, the “Stinger is a very dangerous weapon in the hands of renegade personnel.”⁶³

It is clear then, why some had concerns about shipping these weapons to the mujahideen. Their concerns turned out to be correct. Of the 1,000 missiles that were shipped to the resistance in Afghanistan, only 350 were reported fired. Stinger missiles eventually appeared on the international black market. Missiles that cost the United States \$35,000 each were bought back by the CIA for up to \$150,000. As of 1994, 400 of the surface-to-air missiles were still reported missing.⁶⁴ The Stingers were not the only weapons to go missing however. As aid crossed the nearly 200 mountain trails cutting across the Pakistan-Afghanistan border, tribes would take a cut of whatever it was that was moving through their territory. The mujahideen received barely half the amount of supplies and weapons that they should have received.⁶⁵ As John Prados, senior analyst with the National Security Archives notes, the weapons, personnel and strategy, “that had positive effect in one paramilitary campaign became a long-term security and terrorism headache.”⁶⁶ This analytical insight can be applied to the entire conflict itself.

There were a number of flaws with the CIA program that led to the long-term security and terrorism threats. The fact that the CIA's involvement was limited to procurement of arms and funds and the ISI was in charge of the distribution of arms, funds and training presents an issue. The ISI had their own agenda in the Soviet-Afghan war, and they used the CIA aid to the mujahideen to carry out that agenda. According to 20th century American historian Andrew Hartman, they sought to turn “the Afghan jihad into a global war waged by all Muslims against the Soviet Union.”⁶⁷ The ISI regularly shortchanged groups that were not in their favor.

63 Friedman, *What America Did Right*, 119.

64 Prados, *Safe for Democracy*, 491.

65 Prados, *Safe for Democracy*, 478.

66 Prados, *Safe for Democracy*, 491.

67 Hartman, “Red Template,” 467-489.

Furthermore, approximately two-thirds of the aid went to the most radical religious groups, such as Gulbuddin Hekmatyar's Hizb-e Islami.⁶⁸ Because of the CIA's hands-off approach to the war, they had very little control over who was getting how much aid, and they also allowed the ISI to recruit Islamic extremists from around the world.⁶⁹

Islamic fundamentalism is commonly traced back to the writings of Egyptian scholar Sayyid Qutb. In his work, *Milestones*, Qutb discusses how Muslims are called to *jihad* against "authorities...which prevent people from reforming their ideas and beliefs, forces them to follow deviant ways, and make them serve other humans instead of their Almighty Lord."⁷⁰ In this instance, Islamic fundamentalists would consider both the Soviet Union and the United States as the "authorities" to which Qutb refers. It was absolutely necessary then, for the United States to have exercised extreme caution when aiding the rebel groups that were largely composed of these Islamic fundamentalists, based on the fact that if they were perceived as an oppressive outside force, *jihad* would be declared against not only the Soviet Union, but also against the United States.

Steve Coll, *Washington Post* bureau chief of the South Asian division from 1989 to 1992, described Hekmatyar's forces as "the most radical anti-Western, transnational Islamists fighting in the jihad – including bin Laden and other Arabs who arrived as volunteers."⁷¹ Hekmatyar's mujahideen were just handful of the over 35,000 Muslims from 40 different Islamic countries that answered the call to jihad in Afghanistan.⁷² Hekmatyar used the CIA aid he received from the Pakistani ISI to fight the other mujahideen groups to set himself up to control Afghanistan once the Soviets withdrew.

68 Prados, *Safe for Democracy*, 477-478.

69 Hartman, "Red Template," 467-489.

70 Sayyid Qutb, *Milestones*, (Indianapolis: American Trust Publication, 1990), 45.

71 Coll, *Ghost Wars*, 119.

72 Hartman, "Red Template, 467-489.

He did this to such an extent that the CIA believed him to be a secret KGB agent sent to “sow disruption within the anti-communist resistance.”⁷³

Yet, despite all of these negative characteristics, the “CIA... embraced Hekmatyar as the most dependable and effective ally,” a CIA report concluded, “analytically, the best fighters – the best organized fighters – were the fundamentalists.”⁷⁴ It was not just Hekmatyar’s forces that were radical. According to a Pakistan CIA chief speaking about the mujahideen, “they were all brutal, fierce, blood thirsty and basically fundamentalist.”⁷⁵

It is hard to believe that the United States and the CIA would engage in a proxy war with the Soviet Union without first assessing the risks involved in the plan. In the case of the Soviet-Afghan war, the intelligence community did assess the risks, and despite a number of investigations that concluded that the mujahideen were less than desirable, decided to proceed with their plans anyway. As stated earlier, the goal of the United States involvement in the conflict had originally been to keep the Persian Gulf from falling under Soviet control. As the war waged on however, that goal seemed to have evolved into something bigger, an ideological war that pitted the freedom of a democratic society against the evils and repression of a communist regime. It is no wonder then, why the Afghan cause gained so much popularity. In 1988, fifty-two percent of the country felt that the Reagan administration had done enough diplomatically to bring peace in Afghanistan, and sixty-four percent believed that United States aid to Afghanistan was an important factor in the Soviet Union’s decision to withdraw.⁷⁶

Just because the war enjoyed popular support amongst the American

73 Coll, *Ghost Wars*, 120.

74 Coll, *Ghost Wars*, 120.

75 Hartman, “Red Template,” 467-489.

76 Survey by Americans Talk Security and Martila & Kiley, July 31-August 7, 1988. Retrieved April 14, 2009 from the iPOLL Databank, The Roper Center for Public Opinion Research, University of Connecticut. <http://www.ropercenter.uconn.edu/ipoll.html>.

public does not mean that it was necessarily the right course of action. The unfortunate aspect of the entire scheme is that a plan that had originally begun as a means of protecting American national security interests abroad had evolved, President Reagan noted, into a struggle between freedom and Soviet communist oppression. As Hartman suggests, United States involvement in Afghanistan may have advanced the freedom of the Afghan population at the time, but it also, “in large part created some of the deadliest urban guerilla warriors in the world.”⁷⁷

The United States could have done many things differently. In March 1985, the new Presidential finding that advocated a victory plan for the mujahideen and authorized the shipment of the Stinger SAM provided the CIA with the perfect opportunity to increase its control of the program. Prior to the shipment of the Stinger, the CIA was committed to maintaining plausible deniability to prevent the Soviet Union from directly attacking the United States. The CIA achieved this goal by funneling weapons through the Pakistani ISI and allowing them to train and recruit the mujahideen. When the United States introduced the Stinger to the battlefield however, plausible deniability was lost. At that point in time, the CIA should have taken more control from the ISI. Had they done this, they would have been able to ensure that weapons were distributed to the mujahideen groups evenly, and would have been more careful in doing so since they would be more responsible for any blowback that would have occurred. The reason that they did not increase their control after the shipment of the Stinger began is perhaps because the CIA did not want to be directly held accountable for any blowback that did occur. By not taking control of the Afghanistan operation, and using the Pakistani ISI as a scapegoat, the CIA maintained plausible deniability for their actions, while the United States was placed squarely in the crosshairs of a new enemy.

77 Hartman, “Red Template,” 467-489.

Afghan Veterans Disperse

Following the Soviet withdrawal, the thousands of Arabs that had been recruited for the jihad in Afghanistan returned to their home countries. The Afghan government that had been installed by the Soviet Union began to fall and the country descended into a period of civil war and anarchy.⁷⁸ The various leaders of the mujahideen resistance turned the weapons that were given to them by the CIA against each other and began to fight for control of the government until the Taliban managed to control the majority of the country in 1994.⁷⁹ The Pakistani ISI supported the Taliban because as an Islamic society themselves, they saw the Taliban as an opportunity to stabilize their characteristically unstable neighbor to the west.⁸⁰ As for the Afghan veterans that returned to their home countries, two individuals are of particular interest: Ramzi Yusef and Osama bin Laden.

Ramzi Yusef was responsible for the first attempt to destroy the World Trade Center in New York City in February 1993. By October of 1993, after investigations into the terrorist plot had found that all of the individuals involved were Afghan veterans, it was becoming clear, as Lars Andersen, Denmark's leading international terrorism researcher stated, "what kind of enemy [the Americans] had created in Afghanistan."⁸¹ Osama bin Laden also answered the call to jihad in Afghanistan. After the Soviet withdrawal, he left Afghanistan and traveled to Sudan seeking to effect changes in that country with acts of terrorism. Because of his actions, Saudi Arabia stripped him of his citizenship while international pressure on the Sudanese government to expel bin Laden increased.⁸² Bin Laden also captured the attention of the FBI who attempted to track his movements and tap his phones, but because of the training that he

78 Scott, *Deciding to Intervene*, 74.

79 Prados, *Safe for Democracy*, 490.

80 Coll, *Ghost Wars*, 291.

81 Andersen, *In the Name of God*, 201.

82 Coll, *Ghost Wars*, 9.

had received from the CIA program during the Soviet-Afghan war, he was very well acquainted with American technology and was able to thwart it.⁸³ Without Saudi Arabian citizenship, after expulsion from the Sudan, bin Laden decided to return to Afghanistan where the Soviet withdrawal had prompted an American cessation of aid which had facilitated the country's descent into anarchy.⁸⁴ It was in the mountainous rugged terrain of the Hindu Kush Mountains that Osama bin Laden delivered the manifesto of the terrorist organization, al-Qaeda.

In this document, bin Laden cites a number of "crimes and sins committed by the Americans," and calls them, "a clear declaration of war on God, his messenger, and Muslims."⁸⁵ When Iraq invaded Kuwait in the early 1990s, bin Laden had approached the Saudi Royal family and proposed that the response to the invasion should be handled by a coalition of Arab states and organizations, such as the one he was building, without any help from American or other Western countries.⁸⁶ When the Saudi Royal family contracted the Americans to handle the response to the Iraqi invasion, bin Laden was infuriated. He viewed the seven-year American occupation of the Arabian Peninsula as "a spearhead through which to fight the neighbouring Muslim peoples."⁸⁷ As a result of his anger toward America for what he saw as its meddling in the affairs of Arab states and assault on the Islamic faith, bin Laden issued a *fatwa*, or opinion on Islamic law stating that, "the ruling to kill the Americans and their allies – civilians and military – is an individual duty for every Muslim who can do it in any country in which it is possible to do it... this is in accordance with the words of Almighty God."⁸⁸

83 Andersen, *In the Name of God*, 202.

84 Coll, *Ghost Wars*, 9.

85 Osama bin Laden, "Founding Statement of al-Qa`ida" (Afghanistan, February 23, 1998) as translated and reproduced in Fred Halliday, *Two Hours that Shook the World: September 11, 2001: Causes & Consequences* (London, Saqi Books, 2002), 218.

86 Andersen, *In the Name of God*, 197.

87 bin Laden, "Founding Statement of al-Qa`ida."

88 bin Laden, "Founding Statement of al-Qa`ida"

On August 7, 1998, less than six months after the issuing of the *fatwa*, United States embassies in Dar es Saalam, Tanzania and Nairobi, Kenya were simultaneously bombed by members of the Egyptian Islamic Jihad, an affiliate of al-Qaeda. On October 12, 2000, 17 sailors aboard the *USS Cole* anchored in Aden, Yemen, were killed by a suicide bomb attack by al-Qaeda operatives. Less than one year later, on September 11, 2001, the United States was attacked by al-Qaeda in the worst act of violence ever committed on American soil by an outside force. Four commercial jet airliners were hijacked by al Qaeda operatives on the morning of September 11. Two were flown into the twin towers of the World Trade Center in New York City, eventually destroying them, another was flown into the side of the Pentagon in Washington, D.C. and a fourth crashed in an open field in Shanksville, Pennsylvania. All of these acts were perpetrated by a man who was allied with the United States in the 1980s, trained and financed by the CIA, and who, a decade after the Soviet withdrawal, became the FBI's most wanted man in the world.

Evaluation of the Covert War in Afghanistan

It is quite clear given the evidence at hand that the United States foreign policy decisions made during the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan led directly to the rise of international Islamic terrorism. Aside from decisions to arm radical fundamentalist Muslims with state-of-the-art weapons and training, as well as funding billions of dollars toward the cause, the last poor decision made by the United States was to withdraw aid after the Soviet withdrawal from the conflict. This cessation of aid does not support the argument that was used throughout the Reagan years following the escalation of the conflict, that the United States was aiding the mujahideen to help them win their freedom. Secretary of State George Shultz commented, "upon Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan, [U.S.] support for the Mujahiddin, having served its purpose, would cease."⁸⁹

The United States then was committed to aiding the mujahideen as long as the Soviet army occupied Afghanistan. As soon as they left, attention was paid elsewhere. As John Prados notes,

the facts [of the Afghan civil war] make a mockery of pious arguments that the United States intervened to support democracy in Afghanistan, and the evaporation of American aid after the Russian withdrawal shows Washington's proclivity to discard pawns that outlive their usefulness.⁹⁰

The Afghan civil war however, is only one aspect of the aftermath left behind after the Soviet withdrawal and American withdrawal of aid. Other consequences of the United States program in Afghanistan include: the growth of radical Islamic fundamentalists who came into contact with each other during the conflict, and who, after the war, shared the same hatred for the United States as they did for the Soviet Union (for example, Osama bin Laden and the al-Qaeda terrorist network), the disappearance of weapons that were given to the mujahideen, the fact that the CIA overlooked the mujahideen leaders' involvement in the heroin trade, and the United States' failure to recognize Pakistani attempts to build nuclear weapons.⁹¹ As John Arquilla, Ph.D. in International Relations notes, "given that these fiery insurgents ended up as the hydra's teeth from which al Qaeda and its affiliate would rise, the unintended consequences of this generally useful strategy against the Soviets have turned out to be enormous."⁹²

Furthermore, the necessity of United States aid to the mujahideen needs to be questioned. The Soviet-Afghan war is commonly cited as one of the most important events in the Cold War that led to the downfall of the Soviet Union. What is often ignored however, is that at the same time, changes within the USSR

90 Prados, *Safe for Democracy*, 490.

91 Scott, *Deciding to Intervene*, 79-80.

92 John Arquilla, *The Reagan Imprint: American Foreign Policy From the Collapse of Communism to the War on Terror* (Chicago, IL: Ivan R Dee, 2006), 222.

itself were causing destabilization to occur. While the “what if” game is an incredibly uncertain area in the study of history, it is important to address what could have happened had there not been a CIA war in Afghanistan. In Prados’s evaluation, “if there had been no CIA secret war in Afghanistan, the Soviet Union would still have collapsed in the 1990s.”⁹³

Prior to the attacks on the United States by al-Qaeda and its affiliates, James Scott stated in his 1996 evaluation of the CIA program in Afghanistan that “it is not clear that strengthening these groups, in particular Hekmatyar’s Islamist forces, benefited the United States in the long run.”⁹⁴ Given the events that have taken place since the publishing of his and other books immediately following the conclusion of the Soviet-Afghan war, it is certainly now clear, that the CIA secret war in Afghanistan did not benefit the United States in the long run, and it may have endangered the United States even more.

The CIA war in Afghanistan was successful in the short term as it did indeed cause the Soviet Union to withdraw from Afghanistan. However, the long term consequences far outweigh the short term gains. The United States blatantly ignored the anti-American attitudes of the very individuals they were arming because Islamic fundamentalism was seen as a lesser evil than the spread of communism. The war in Afghanistan is an example of President Reagan’s anti-communist driven foreign policy obscuring the real goal of foreign policy in general, which is national security. Rather than focusing on American national security, the Reagan administration focused on rolling back communism, not just in Afghanistan, but elsewhere around the world, including Nicaragua, Cambodia and Angola. The United States’ plan was simple: arm anti-communist guerrillas to prevent communists from expanding their sphere of influence. The problem with that plan was that the

93 Prados, *Safe for Democracy*, 491.

94 Scott, *Deciding to Intervene*, 81.

nuances between the anti-communist guerrillas around the world were ignored and United States foreign policy was applied to these numerous areas as a blanket policy. Apparent dangers were ignored, and America was placed in graver danger as a result of the CIA covert war in Afghanistan.

From the Afghanistan example, it is imperative that foreign policy makers realize the necessity of creating area-specific foreign policies. They must be aware of all possible consequences of those policies. In the 1980s foreign policy makers were blinded by anti-communism, and today, the United States is in danger of making a similar mistake. In the War on Terror, it is important that foreign policy makers are not blinded by an anti-Islamic-fundamentalist-terrorism attitude and that foreign policy programs are area-specific, rather than blanket policies, such as those that were used in the 1980s fight against communism.

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A Revisionist Look at Slave Agency and Resistance in the Uprising of 9th Century Iraq

Ashley Joseph

The Zanj rebellion of 9th century Iraq, as it has come to be known, represents a unique and isolated event within this time period and region, one that has been the subject of debate in recent years. Contemporary historical chroniclers Al-Tabari (839-923)¹ and Al-Mas'udi (896-956)² provide the two most important accounts of the event. These two narratives have laid the foundation for the history of the Zanj rebellion as it stands today. Out of the corpus of works devoted to the Zanj revolt, a handful represent important turning points in the interpretation of this complex historical event. Theodor Nöldeke's examination of the revolt, entitled "A Servile War in the East" in his Sketches from Eastern History, represents the earliest effort to understand the Zanj rebellion.³ Faysal al-Sâmir's Thawrat al-Zanj, published in Baghdad, builds on Nöldeke's work, examining a broader range of factors that contributed to the escalation of the rebellion.⁴ Ahmad Suhail Ulabi's work of 1961, The revolt of the Zanj and their leader 'Ali b. Muhammad, builds further on the work of Nöldeke and Sâmir, providing deeper insight into the subject.⁵ Ulabi's book was followed by Alexandre Popaovic's 1976 work entitled The Revolt of African Slaves in Iraq in the 3rd/9th Century, which has largely informed the essay that follows. These works

1 Al-Tabari, The Revolt of the Zanj (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2009), v.

2 Dionisius Agius, "A selfish pursuit in a slave uprising of third/ninth century Iraq," Slavery & Abolition 4.1 (2009), 2.

3 Alexandre Popovic, The Revolt of African Slaves in Iraq in the 3rd/9th Century (Princeton, New Jersey: Markus Weiner Publishers, 1976), 4.

4 Ibid., 5.

5 Ibid., 5.

have provided the basis for the history of the Zanj rebellion, but the work of revisionist historians, such as Ghada Hashem Talhami, have been just as valuable in furthering the present knowledge and understanding of the revolt. Talhami's work has been instrumental in grasping the origin, meaning and application of the term 'Zanj', and, in turn, understanding the role of the East African slaves within the larger movement.

The question remains open as to whether or not the Zanj revolt was a slave rebellion in nature. It seems clear that the rebellion does represent a significant instance of slave resistance, in which Basra's slaves engaged in a hostile reaction to their living and working conditions. However, in recent works, scholars have emphasized the role of other oppressed members of society as well as groups from surrounding areas, as equally important players within the revolt. Several questions remain open to debate regarding the Zanj rebellion: Was the revolt driven by the Zanj slaves? Was it an expression of their discontents or, rather, the social and political goals of their leader, Ali b. Muhammad? Was it a slave revolt in nature or did the slaves play a subordinate role within the larger movement? In this paper, I will analyze the research already available on the Zanj revolt of 9th century Iraq in order to decipher the critical factors that impacted the course of the movement. The points I will focus on include, first, a discussion of the term 'Zanj', its derivation, definition and application, second, the degree to which the agenda of Ali b. Muhammad propelled the revolt, third, the role of East African slaves, and fourth, the state of slavery as an institution before, during and immediately following the revolt. These subjects will be examined in the hope of illuminating the degree of slave agency and resistance involved in the Zanj rebellion, as well as understanding its character as an attack on slavery or a larger social revolution.

The Events of 869-883 in Basra

The Zanj revolt was a monumental uprising spanning 15

years near the city of Basra, Iraq in the 9th century. A preliminary series of insurrections occurred in the late 7th century under the Umayyads, but these uprisings were of little importance compared to the greater revolt that would occur two hundred years later. However, these smaller insurrections show that Basra's slaves were already living under deplorable conditions.⁶ During this period, the Zanj were employed as laborers working on the marshlands to reclaim land and extract salt in work camps located to the east of Basra. Overseers were appointed from among the emancipated slaves and, being "eager to justify their promotion," made the work "even more grueling" for the slaves.⁷ This form of slavery was highly uncommon in Islamic countries during the Middle Ages, where slaves were primarily used for domestic servitude and not large-scale plantation-based projects.⁸ Furthermore, the conditions under which the Zanj slaves lived and worked were highly unusual in the Muslim world, which might help to explain the isolated nature of this historical event. When Ali bin Muhammad approached the Zanj slaves with his plan, they were presented with a means by which to express the frustration they felt towards their oppressive masters. It also presented an opportunity for them to improve their social conditions. Ali was able to acquaint himself with certain influential personalities when living in Samarra, the Abbasid capital, and succeeded in gaining a following. From there, he traveled from city to city, intercepting slaves on their way to the work camps. Ali and his followers would bind the landowner's hand and foot and free his slaves. The first of these attacks took place on September 7, 869, and were repeated quite frequently. The freed slaves swelled the ranks of the Zanj insurgents, which soon grew to a group of five hundred.⁹

At its outset, the rebellion was limited to local riots waged

6 Alexandre Popovic, *The Revolt of African Slaves in Iraq in the 3rd/9th Century* (Princeton, New Jersey: Markus Weiner Publishers, 1976), 22.

7 Ibid., 24.

8 Ibid., 24.

9 Alexandre Popovic, *The Revolt of African Slaves in Iraq in the 3rd/9th Century* (Princeton, New Jersey: Markus Weiner Publishers, 1976), 40.

against neighboring villages in which large numbers of slaves and peasants were provoked to rise up against the upper class.¹⁰ In these encounters, the Zanj rebels mainly had to contend with local villagers and were usually successful with the villages either surrendering or being wiped out.¹¹ As the rebellion progressed, the Caliph began to take notice and deployed troops to suppress it. Despite their lack of proper equipment – some men fought with household objects such as plates – the Zanj rebels consistently triumphed over the Abbasid troops, swelling their ranks.¹² The failure of the central government to control the Zanj rebellion marked an important turning point in the escalation of events, in which the caliphate was “confronted with more pressing concerns,” such as the Saffarid movement in Persia, and for this reason “allowed the problems posed by the Zanj to recede in importance.”¹³ Ali bin Muhammad continued to encourage the rebels on in their offensive and the rebellion quickly escalated into a full-scale massacre. The rebels were headed by a number of generals who led the troops into battle while Ali remained within the capital, set up at al-Mukhtara.

The Origins and Application of the term ‘Zanj’

As discussed by Ghada Hashem Talhami in “The Zanj Rebellion Reconsidered,” the main issue that has obstructed a clear understanding of the Zanj revolt is closely linked with nomenclature. Talhami, a scholar specializing in the subject, has led a revision of the history of the Zanj revolt that centers around the term ‘Zanj,’ its employment, meaning and derivation. Talhami asserts that the use of the term in defining the rebellion is inaccurate and misleading, arguing that the revolt was social and religious in nature and was fought by the greater oppressed populations of Basra and not solely by the Zanj slaves. She begins her argument by calling into

10 Ibid., 45.

11 Ibid., 45.

12 Ibid., 46.

13 Ibid., 56.

question whether any significant number of 'Zanj,' or East African slaves, were being employed in the Muslim world at the time. As she points out, there is little mention of a slave trade between the Muslim world and the territory known as 'the land of the Zanj' in contemporary accounts. Talhami examines the works of Persian and Arab geographers and historical chroniclers, citing the work of Ibn Battuta, among others. In his work on the Swahili coast, Ibn Battuta "emphasizes the gold of Sofala and the habit of conferring gifts of slaves or ivory in cities such as Kilwa, but mentions neither slave markets nor an oceanic trade in slaves."¹⁴ Furthermore, Ibn Battuta, "who must have read accounts of the Zanj Rebellion by earlier Arab historians, does not link the coastal cities he visited with the rebellious slaves of Basrah."¹⁵ Like Battuta, Al-Mas'udi does not mention slavery when describing the commerce of the "shores of the Zanj sea".¹⁶ Talhami cites a number of medieval scholars, all of whom remain "silent on the subject of a slave traffic between the coast and Muslim countries."¹⁷ This omission, Talhami argues, cannot be regarded merely as an oversight during this time period "when geographical research was based on the principle of *'iyan* (observation) and not on *qiyas* (theory), with the journey (*al-rihlat*) the prerequisite to scholarship of any significance."¹⁸ Jere L. Bacharach, a scholar specializing in Middle East Studies, confirms this suspicion, asserting that "the silence in the Arabic chronicles on the numbers and activities of African military slaves in Iraq from 210/825 to the Zanj rebellion (255/869-271/883) may reflect their absence or, more likely, their relative unimportance in the eyes of

14 Ghada Hashem Talhami, "The Zanj Revolt Reconsidered," The International Journal of African Historical Studies 10.3 (1977), 447.

15 Ghada Hashem Talhami, "The Zanj Revolt Reconsidered," The International Journal of African Historical Studies 10.3 (1977), 447.

16 Chapurukha M. Kusimba, "Archeology of Slavery in East Africa," The African Archeological Review 21.2 (June 2004), 63.

17 Ghada Hashem Talhami, "The Zanj Revolt Reconsidered," The International Journal of African Historical Studies 10.3 (1977), 448.

18 *Ibid.*, 448.

the chroniclers.”¹⁹ The possibility of intentional omission of a taboo subject can also be excluded in light of the full accounts that exist on the slave trades of other countries during the same time period. Thus, Talhami calls in to question the likelihood of a significant number of East African or ‘Zanj’ slaves living and working in Basra during the time of the Zanj rebellion.

As Talhami points out, the application of the term ‘Zanj’ has led to certain faulty deductions on the nature of the Zanj rebellion.²⁰ Al Tabari’s account of the rebellion provides an example of the way in which the term ‘Zanj’ was employed indiscriminately to all slaves of African descent in 9th century Iraq. Tabari uses the term ‘Zanj’ interchangeably with ‘al-Sudan’ to denote black slaves of the eastern Abbasid Empire. Tabari’s “recurrent and indiscriminate reference to all the rebels as either ‘Soudan’ or ‘Zanj’...does not designate a place of origin” but rather, groups the slaves under a general African identity.²¹ Following the example set by Tabari, Theodor Nöldeke in his Sketches from Eastern History also interchangeably uses of the terms ‘Zanj’ and ‘Soudan’, meaning ‘blacks’.²² This exemplifies the broad and ambiguous application of the term, as well as the persistence of its misapplication within modern scholarship. Nöldeke also employs the term to denote linguistic difference, as owing to their more recent capture. He defines the Zanj, or ‘Zenj’, as being “ignorant of Arabic” whereas “others of the negroes – from more northern countries (Nubia and the like) – already spoke Arabic.”²³ It can be inferred, from these accounts, as well as from the account of Al Mas’udi, who also does not link the Zanj slaves with the East African coast, that the term was used indiscriminately for all black slaves and did not

19 Jere L. Bacharach, “African Military Slaves in the Medieval Middle East: The Cases of Iraq (869-955) and Egypt (868-1171),” World Archeology 33.1 (1981), 4.

20 Ghada Hashem Talhami, “The Zanj Revolt Reconsidered,” The International Journal of African Historical Studies 10.3 (1977), 452.

21 Ibid., 459.

22 Ibid., 452.

23 Theodor Nöldeke, Sketches from Eastern History (Beirut: Khayats, 1963), 153.

denote East African origin specifically. Furthermore, though Arab geographers refer to ‘the Land of the Zanj’ or ‘the Sea of the Zanj’, these are “often only rough estimates or even completely contrary to the truth.”²⁴ Talhami identifies, in her article, a number of slaves of wholly different nationality and ethnicity, thus concluding that the rebellion of 9th century Iraq “was not restricted to slaves of East African origin.”²⁵ She also highlights the wide range of participants in the revolt, including Bahranis, Bedouins, and the greater lower class of Basra. Citing Ali b. Muhammad’s own religious and social agenda, she goes on to argue that the Zanj revolt was not a slave uprising in character at all. Thus, through a more critical approach to terminology, revisionists have disputed the widely accepted view of the 9th century revolt of Basra as having been a rebellion comprised mainly of East African slaves. Rather, it was composed of a diverse spectrum of nationalities and social groups, including Persians, Bedouins and ‘free’ Arab peoples, while most rebel ‘Zanj’ slaves actually came from northeast Africa.²⁶

Ali bin Muhammad

The revisionist view of the Zanj revolt has made it clear that this event was not an uprising comprised solely of East African slaves living in and around Basra in the 9th century. This revision must also take into account the degree to which the Zanj rebellion was orchestrated by Ali bin Muhammad and motivated by his personal ambitions. Ali seems to have capitalized greatly on the unsteady political and economic climate of Iraq during this time period, as well as the plight of the Iraqi peasantry. With eloquent speeches, laced with religious ideology and promises to better the lot of the

24 Alexandre Popovic, *The Revolt of African Slaves in Iraq in the 3rd/9th Century* (Princeton, New Jersey: Markus Weiner Publishers, 1976), 16.

25 Ghada Hashem Talhami, “The Zanj Revolt Reconsidered,” *The International Journal of African Historical Studies* 10.3 (1977), 460.

26 Gwyn Campbell, “Slave Trades and the Indian Ocean World” in *Africa in India, India in Africa*, ed. John C. Hawley (Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press, 2008), 5.

lower classes, Ali consolidated his power and pursued his agenda. However, Ali's agenda was aided significantly by certain political and economic factors, which made the people of Basra especially vulnerable to his claims of messianism.

The period between 861 and 870 was marked by a high degree of political upheaval within the Abbasid Empire. In addition to several concurrent military campaigns being waged on all fronts, the Caliphate was also facing an economic crisis. This crisis was rooted in heightened military spending, territorial losses, deficits in agricultural income due to a series of natural disasters, excessive spending on the part of the Caliphs and their court, and a demand for increased wages among Turkish officials.²⁷ As expressed by Popovic, "Basrah was destined to furnish the first example of the destructive social crisis of the city in Islam, when social restraints were broken, when usury, indirect taxes, government borrowing were rampant, and the opposition was exasperated by the luxury of the wealthy."²⁸ Ali bin Muhammad began his campaign precisely during this period of crisis in the Abbasid Empire, taking advantage of the state of disorder. Ali began to seek out black slaves working in the marshlands of Basra, conversing with them and inquiring about their working and living conditions, salary and diet. In this way, Ali placed himself on the same level as the Zanj slaves, whereas the Arab populations, for the most part, took pains to distance themselves from African slaves. The Zanj slaves lived and socialized in an environment entirely separate from the rest of society. Arabs were cautioned to "beware of the Zanjī", who were described as being "a distorted creature."²⁹ Ali had to employ a translator to overcome the linguistic barrier between him and the slave populations.³⁰ Thus, he

27 Ghada Hashem Talhami, "The Zanj Revolt Reconsidered," The International Journal of African Historical Studies 10.3 (1977), 454.

28 Alexandre Popovic, The Revolt of African Slaves in Iraq in the 3rd/9th Century (Princeton, New Jersey: Markus Weiner Publishers, 1976), 24.

29 Dionisius Agius, "A selfish pursuit in a slave uprising of third/ninth century Iraq," Slavery & Abolition 4.1 (2009), 11.

30 *Ibid.*, 10.

went to a certain amount of trouble to familiarize himself with the Zanj and express a regard for their wellbeing.

According to the dictates of Islam, slaves were not necessarily unfree at this time:

The believing slave in accordance with the Qur'an is the brother of the freeman in Islam and before God, and the superior of the free pagan, a point which is reiterated frequently in the hadith. Thus, although the slave is a possession, he is also a human being with a particular religious status and rights under the shari'a... In a society where the state was legitimized by the religion, the predominant influence was the Divine Will as reflected in the Qur'an, therefore slaves were people, not possessions.³¹

However, Iraq's slaves in the 9th century were certainly enslaved by their economic situation, which put them in a position of helplessness before the meager offers and high demands of the landowning and ruling classes. The system of plantation slavery in place in Basra in the 9th century was a highly isolated instance in the Muslim world at this time, where slaves were generally used only to serve domestic and military duties.³² The Zanj slaves worked under appalling conditions, charged to clear the nitrous soil of the marshes while, at the same time, extracting the salt from it. For their efforts, the Zanj received a salary of "flour, semolina and dates" while being "exposed to fatal sicknesses as a result of the dampness and dirt."³³ Ali was aware of these deplorable conditions and took advantage of the vulnerability of the Zanj, recruiting them for his revolt by promising to improve their situation. It must be emphasized here that Ali's promises did not entail social equality. He promised, rather, to reverse the slaves' situation and turn them into wealthy

31 Vanessa Martin, The Qajar Pact: Bargaining, Protest and the State in 19th Century Persia (London: I.B. Tauris & Co. Ltd, 2005), 151-152.

32 Dionisius Agius, "A selfish pursuit in a slave uprising of third/ninth century Iraq," Slavery & Abolition 4.1 (2009), 10.

33 *Ibid.*, 10.

masters of slaves. The ideological basis of the Zanj rebellion did not entail a utopian goal of social harmony and egalitarianism. Ali seems to have used religion, specifically the doctrines of Kharijism, to support his operation, which was largely political in nature. As Tabari concluded, despite Ali's lofty claims of divine right and humanitarianism, he "was seeking honour for himself."³⁴

As in the case of many charismatic figures throughout history, Ali employed certain techniques to manipulate and win over his subjects. Ali was especially predisposed to a position of leadership due to his aptitude for writing and oration. While living in Samarra, Ali served as a poet at the court of Caliph al-Muntasir.³⁵ There, he also observed first hand the degree of political instability in the capital, while he had the opportunity to meet and acquaint himself with some influential slaves of the Caliph's court.³⁶ In his speeches from the time of his campaign, a clear ideology of rebellion is articulated. In one piece, Ali writes:

May my noble horses be taken from me if I do not
bring them back mounted by armored horsemen of
noble race;

Mounted by the men of Temîm headed by the glorious,
valiant men of Kulayb, son of Yarbû;

Sa'd forming the center; Numayr and the excellent
swords of Kilâb on the flanks!

If no accident prevents me, I will surprise 'Âmir and
Muhârib in the morning with a blow that will smash
them.

Does 'Uryân think that I forget my horsemen who fell
on the day of the attack near the dike, when death
hung from them?

Ali b. Muhammad's claim to divine right further strengthened his effort to win over and maintain the loyalty of the Zanj slaves. He claimed to be a prophet, stating that "God had revealed His

34 Ibid., 6.

35 Alexandre Popovic, The Revolt of African Slaves in Iraq in the 3rd/9th Century (Princeton, New Jersey: Markus Weiner Publishers, 1976), 35.

36 David Waines, "The Third Century Internal Crisis of the Abbasids," Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient 20.3 (Oct. 1977), 301.

word only to him, and since childhood he had heard the voice of God calling him: ‘Oh Ali’, to which he answered, ‘Here I am’.”³⁷ Assembled under the flag for prayer, Ali preached to the rebels of his visions and prophecies in which God expressed his mission to revolt against the caliphate. He assured them “that God had chosen him to be the instrument of their deliverance.” However, it seems likely that these elaborate religious claims were merely tactics used to win over the loyalty of the masses. By claiming to be the messiah of the rebels, and by proclaiming allegiance to Kharijism, a highly egalitarian doctrine, Ali was able to secure a powerful charismatic bond. Ali “was not much concerned with a religious movement based on the true teachings of Islam...and his self-interested claims turned out to be political with the aim, later on, of establishing a dynasty.”³⁸ Appointing himself “Commander of the Faithful”, Ali systematically amassed an army, comprised mostly of slaves, Bedouins and peasants and artisans from in and around Basra. When the Zanj were successful, as they were in their military triumph over Basra in 869, Ali asserted that it was “supernatural forces that sent great white birds to capsize the enemy boats.”³⁹ The rebellion had certain religious overtones throughout the course of its execution including the establishment of a new state based on a mix of Shiism and Kharijism. However, religious goals were nevertheless secondary to Ali’s social and political objectives. Without the leadership of Ali bin Muhammad, it seems likely that the Zanj rebellion might never have occurred or, at least, been as widespread, despite the extreme destitution of the slave population.

Solidarity and Resistance

According to the primary sources, slaves did not constitute

37 Dionisius Agius, “A selfish pursuit in a slave uprising of third/ninth century Iraq,” *Slavery & Abolition* 4.1 (2009), 6.

38 Dionisius Agius, “A selfish pursuit in a slave uprising of third/ninth century Iraq,” *Slavery & Abolition* 4.1 (2009), 7.

39 Alexandre Popovic, *The Revolt of African Slaves in Iraq in the 3rd/9th Century* (Princeton, New Jersey: Markus Weiner Publishers, 1976), 54.

the majority among the rebels of the Zanj rebellion. Basra's slave population represented just one group among the oppressed classes who acted out against social injustice. Though they came from different nations, classes and vocations, the rebels came together in a mutual hatred of the caliphate and the landed aristocracy.⁴⁰ United under the leadership of Ali bin Muhammad and under the common goal of changing their place in society, a strong sense of solidarity must have existed among the Zanj rebels. However, it seems as though Basra's African slaves maintained a sense of community and solidarity independent of the larger faction of rebels. Despite the appalling conditions in which the slaves lived and worked, a certain communitarian spirit seems to have persisted within the group, motivating them to persevere through their hardships. "In spite of the deplorable conditions under which the Zanj were living there seemed, nonetheless, to exist a community consciousness of workmanship that stimulated a feeling of affection for each other and a feeling of bitterness against their masters."⁴¹ The solidarity that existed among the African slaves in Basra was arguably rooted in the shared experience of being forced into exile from their home countries. As has been shown, the slaves that rose up in 9th century Basra were of varying nationality, originating from various places. They were unified, however, in the shared experience of difference and bondage. The circumstances of the slave trade led to the formation of an African community existing outside of Africa, in this case, within the Muslim world. This community constituted a 'victim' diaspora, "as opposed to trade, labour, imperial and cultural diasporas."⁴² Forced into exile as slaves, these circumstances would have fostered bonds based on shared experience.

40 Ghada Hashem Talhami, "The Zanj Revolt Reconsidered," The International Journal of African Historical Studies 10.3 (1977), 455.

41 Dionisius Agius, "A selfish pursuit in a slave uprising of third/ninth century Iraq," Slavery & Abolition 4.1 (2009), 10.

42 Gwyn Campbell, "Slave Trades and the Indian Ocean World" in Africa in India, India in Africa, ed. John C. Hawley (Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press, 2008), 2.

In the case of African slaves living within the Muslim world, the sense of difference from the rest of society, resulting from exile, would have been exaggerated by racial difference. The primary sources on the Zanj rebellion make clear the way in which the Zanj, as they were known, were regarded and treated within the Muslim world. Generally, the Zanj were disliked by the Arabs and were highly stigmatized. This may be explained, to an extent, by their state of abject poverty and the environment in which they lived and worked. The slaves and local peasants who worked on the marshlands were “grouped in camps of 500 to 5000 workers, packed in without family or hope.”⁴³ While these factors likely contributed to the segregation of African slaves from the rest of Basran society, the stigma placed on them was founded on racially-based ideologies that associated blackness with primitivism and savagery: “The hungry Zanj steals; the sated Zanj rapes.”⁴⁴ Arabs were cautioned to stay away from the ‘savage’ and ‘distorted’ Zanj slaves who were considered to be “the worst of the blacks.”⁴⁵ Many Arabs even “refused to eat the meat of any animal killed by a Zanj” who was seen as “a hideous slave.”⁴⁶ It should be noted that some positive accounts of the Zanj did exist, but these descriptions were applied to an imagined and romanticized class of people thought to reside in the lands from which the slaves originated. These “genuine Zanj” were described as being “a people of extraordinary strength, and brave, with a remarkable generosity and other honourable qualities,” but were clearly differentiated from the “captives who came from the coasts and forests and valleys of Qanbuluh, from our menials, our lower orders, and our slaves.”⁴⁷

The slave diaspora of Basra defined itself in contradiction to their

43 Alexandre Popovic, The Revolt of African Slaves in Iraq in the 3rd/9th Century (Princeton, New Jersey: Markus Weiner Publishers, 1976), 24.

44 Ibid., 20.

45 Dionisius Agius, “A selfish pursuit in a slave uprising of third/ninth century Iraq,” Slavery & Abolition 4.1 (2009), 10.

46 Alexandre Popovic, The Revolt of African Slaves in Iraq in the 3rd/9th Century (Princeton, New Jersey: Markus Weiner Publishers, 1976), 21.

47 Dionisius Agius, “A selfish pursuit in a slave uprising of third/ninth century Iraq,” Slavery & Abolition 4.1 (2009), 10.

host society, who regarded them as a residual, undesirable class of outsiders. The African slaves in 9th century Basra seem to have adapted to their circumstances through passive resistance, forging ties with other slaves and forming a community among them.

The degree to which the Zanj rebellion was an act of active resistance on the part of African slaves must be examined in light of the passive way in which they resisted their bondage prior to the coming of Ali bin Muhammad. There is no doubt that Basra's slaves were discontented in their servile state and felt a definite resentment towards their masters, but they had always resisted passively before Ali's incitement. Considering the rapidity with which the Zanj revolt escalated and the amount of violence involved, it seems unlikely that it was motivated solely by the will to break the bonds of slavery. Rather, the revolt seems to resemble more of a mass, social uprising, comparable to the French Revolution, where the lower classes rose up united against the upper classes and against their state of poverty. As was mentioned earlier, slaves within the Muslim world did not necessarily constitute the lowest level of society at this time. In light of this, the Zanj slaves might have been living in a state similar to other non-enslaved members of society, who rallied to their side in the struggle against the landowners.⁴⁸ The escalation of events and the factors that triggered them lend the Zanj rebellion to a Lockian reading of revolution. According to Locke, man returns to a state of nature and revolution ensues when the sovereign is no longer fulfilling his role and society is no longer functioning. This forces people into and results in the dissolution of society and the subsequent need to reestablish it. In the case of the Zanj rebellion, the Caliph had arguably failed in his role as sovereign, which in turn forced the people to rebel and reestablish order. The Zanj rebellion is said to represent the beginning of the end of the Abbasid dynasty. During this period, the caliphate was struggling to overcome financial,

48 Alexandre Popovic, The Revolt of African Slaves in Iraq in the 3rd/9th Century (Princeton, New Jersey: Markus Weiner Publishers, 1976), 137.

military and social problems throughout the empire.⁴⁹ Discontent was widespread among the people due to the well-known luxuries and spending of the court. The rural parts of the caliphate were marked by extreme poverty, owing to the large gap between rich and poor, left by the luxurious spending of the upper classes. The caliphate could no longer pay their soldiers and were subsequently struggling to control the army. This circumstance heightened the gravity of the caliphate's already precarious military situation. The Abbasids were fighting off multiple enemy threats on all fronts of which the most menacing was that posed by Ahmad bin Tulun and his army in Egypt.⁵⁰ The Zanj uprising benefited from the support of the Tulunids, many of whom joined their ranks throughout the course of the rebellion. They fought alongside Bedouins, lower class Basrian workers and members of neighboring nations, all with the same cause in mind – bringing down the oppressive caliphate and bettering their position in society.

Attitudes towards slavery in the Zanj Rebellion

Another feature of the Zanj rebellion that calls into question its longstanding characterization as a slave rebellion is the way in which Ali and the revolutionary masses adapted the institution of slavery with their victory, rather than abolishing it. The structure of the Zanj State is telling of this feature. Society was stratified and Ali bin Muhammad acted as 'Mahdi', or 'absolute ruler'. He and his family were at the top of the hierarchy, followed by Ali's close companions, the revolutionary masses, the subject population, and finally the slaves.⁵¹ Within this context, the revolutionary masses, many of whom were previously enslaved, became the slave-owners. Thus, it seems that Ali bin Muhammad fulfilled his promise of

49 Alexandre Popovic, The Revolt of African Slaves in Iraq in the 3rd/9th Century (Princeton, New Jersey: Markus Weiner Publishers, 1976), 25.

50 Jere L. Bacharach, "African Military Slaves in the Medieval Middle East: The Cases of Iraq (869-955) and Egypt (868-1171)," World Archeology 33.1 (1981), 4.

51 Alexandre Popovic, The Revolt of African Slaves in Iraq in the 3rd/9th Century (Princeton, New Jersey: Markus Weiner Publishers, 1976), 137.

improving their lot “so that one day, they, too, might have beautiful homes and slaves.”⁵² This statement, provided in Tabari’s account of the rebellion, clearly expresses the goals of the Zanj rebellion and the fact that it was not an attack on the institution of slavery, but rather, a fight to reverse the social barriers that kept the Zanj in bondage. They were less interested in full-scale social revolution, resulting in a change in the social hierarchy, than they were in bettering their positions within it. “They showed no desire, for example, to abolish slavery but thought of retaining it.”⁵³ Al-Mas’udi also provides an account of the Zanj enslaving their previously noble captives. According to his account, the Zanj rebels enslaved the women of the most noble Arab families and sold them for very little money:

“The crier would announce her genealogy in these terms: ‘Such-and-such, daughter of so-and-so, from such-and-such family!’ Each owned ten, twenty and even thirty of these women, who served them as concubines and performed humble tasks for their wives. One of these captive women who, through Hasan, descended from Ali, son of Abu Talib, and belonged to a black, begged Ali b. Muhammad, leader of the Zanj, to give her another master and free her from the one who owned her. ‘No,’ replied the leader, ‘he is your master and suits you better than any other.’”

From this, it seems clear that the Zanj rebellion was not an attack on the institution of slavery. The uprising nevertheless indicates a high degree of agency and resistance on the part of the slaves, evidenced by their drastically improved social conditions. It should be noted that although their situation was radically changed, the Zanj still faced certain impenetrable social barriers within the new state. For instance, “there were no Zanj among Ali b. Muhammad’s high officials.”⁵⁴

52 Ibid., 46.

53 Dionisius Agius, “A selfish pursuit in a slave uprising of third/ninth century Iraq,” *Slavery & Abolition* 4.1 (2009), 11.

54 Alexandre Popovic, *The Revolt of African Slaves in Iraq in the 3rd/9th Century* (Princeton, New Jersey: Markus Weiner Publishers, 1976), 131.

Despite the continuance of slave holding within the Zanj State, the rebellion arguably had some degree of impact on the conditions of slavery in the region. As explained by Jere L. Bacharach in his article on African military slaves in the medieval Middle East, there was a marked decline in the numbers of African military slaves in Iraq from the 9th century on. However, Bacharach argues that this decline comes more as a result of political and economic factors than social changes. He asserts that this marked decline, visible from the records of the period, was not a result of anti-African sentiment or prejudices. He points, instead, to the increased use of Dailimi infantrymen, who were geographically closer to Baghdad, were cheaper and were available in greater numbers. He also cites certain military obstacles along the major trade routes to Africa, which might have impeded the caliphate's capacity to move large numbers of African slaves overland to Iraq.⁵⁵

Conclusion

The term 'slave rebellion' has certain definitive connotations, calling to mind images of slaves breaking their chains and rising up against the institution of slavery. The Zanj rebellion has been labeled as such in scholarship over time, its players taken to be large numbers of East African slaves who rose up against their oppressive Arab masters. However, this uprising represents a highly unique and isolated event within the medieval Muslim world and upon closer look, does not seem to fit within the framework of the prototypical 'slave rebellion' such as that of Spartacus in Ancient Rome. The erroneous inferences on the nature of the Zanj rebellion have been seemingly perpetuated via the nomenclature. The term 'Zanj' was arbitrarily applied to denote large numbers of African slaves in the medieval Middle East, whose origins could not be accounted for. According to the accounts of geographers like Ibn Battuta and Al

55 Jere L. Bacharach, "African Military Slaves in the Medieval Middle East: The Cases of Iraq (869-955) and Egypt (868-1171)," *World Archeology* 33.1 (1981), 7.

Mas'udi, large numbers of East African slaves did not exist in 9th century Iraq. Furthermore, the Zanj rebellion was acted out by a number of different social classes and not solely by Basra's African slave population. In light of this, the Zanj rebellion seems to resemble the French Revolution more closely than that of Ancient Rome. Nevertheless, this uprising demonstrates a remarkable degree of agency and resistance on the part of the oppressed classes of Basra, including its slaves, who collectively rose up and forced the Caliph into accountability for his actions centuries before anything like the Magna Carta had been conceived.

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Imitation and Inspiration: Living and Recording the Life of Antony

Stefan Rinas

In the life of the desert father Antony, Athanasius of Alexandria found the perfect muse to embody his orthodox vision of Christianity. His compelling portrait of the fourth Century Egyptian in *The Life of Antony* supplanted the martyr with a new model of Christian heroism: the virgin ascetic. In his espousal of faith as something needing constant cultivation, Antony demonstrated the essential potential for conversion that served as a model to the Christian community, and a catalyst in winning over non-believers. *The Life of Antony* is a work that both inaugurated the genre of hagiography,¹ and supplanted the martyr with the virgin saint as the Christian hero. With regards to this transition scholar Thomas Heffernan states: “Once the period of persecutions had passed, however, the forces supporting extreme encratism were so strong that the virgin assumed the crown formerly held by the martyr.”² Taking inspiration from the Apostles, Anthony’s specific form of discipline was often related in the language of “dying daily.”³ Such a program allowed for Antony’s followers to attain a status of bloodless martyrdom, a process Athanasius wrote of with decidedly political intentions. Athanasius’ motivations are explained by scholar David Brakke in this passage from his work *Athanasius and the Politics of Asceticism*: “By echoing the old-fashioned rhetoric of martyrdom literature, Athanasius used his theme of imitation of the saints to rally Christians to his side in his conflict with the imperial authorities

1 Athanasius. *The Life of Antony and The Letter to Marcellinus*. Translated by Robert C. Gregg. (New York: Paulist Press, 1980), XIII.

2 Thomas J. Heffernan. *Sacred Biography: Saints and Their Biographers in the Middle Ages*. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988), 249.

3 Athanasius. 45.

and to reclaim from the Melitians the title of martyr Church.”⁴ The ideal of martyrdom is not lost on Antony, as Athanasius relates his desire for such status: “For, as I said before, he also prayed for martyrdom. He seemed, therefore, like one who grieved because he had not been martyred, but the Lord was protecting him to benefit us and others.”⁵ Although Antony was, by way of this protection, unable to be martyred in the way he had hoped; Robert C. Gregg states in his introduction to *The Life of Antony* that he was to become a new kind of martyr:

Where the monk’s austerities could not be imitated, they could be admired. And ordinary people of the Christian community were always imaginative enough to participate vicariously in the trials and triumphs of these heroic figures who underwent a new kind of martyrdom, martyrdom of the conscience.⁶

Antony’s perusal of his ascetic discipline involved abstaining from all physical pleasure, and his celibacy, according to Heffernan increased the appeal of the church to women, as it disassociated them from their traditional roles: “Because the vocation of Christian celibacy was a radical disavowal of one’s sexuality, the role of the celibate within the young church minimized the importance of gender.... Celibacy freed them from the demands of the roles of wife and mother.”⁷ Antony’s approval of this pursuit on the part of women in their efforts towards holiness in this statement from chapter fifty-four: “He too rejoiced then, both seeing the ardor of the monks and seeing also that his sister had grown old preserving the life of virginity, and herself guided other virgins.”⁸ Antony’s joy in the

4 David Brakke, *Athanasius and the Politics of Asceticism*. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), 166.

5 Athanasius. 66.

6 Ibid, 7. It is also related in chapter forty-seven that Antony was “daily being martyred by his conscience” (66)

7 Thomas J. Heffernan. *Sacred Biography: Saints and Their Biographers in the Middle Ages*, 242.

8 Athanasius. 71-2.

situation is understandable, as the comment is made upon his return home, which he had specifically left due to its association with sexual temptation. Scholar Peter Brown expands upon this connection in this statement:

In the normal course of events, the villagers would have expected to retain Anthony, by providing him with a bride. The struggle to overcome his sexual needs, therefore, was a necessary by-product of the self-imposed annihilation of Anthony's social status as a whole."⁹ Ironically, the aforementioned women whose company Antony had shunned, were inspired to virginity by him without his knowledge: "And how many young women who had men hoping to marry them, on simply seeing Antony at a distance, remained virgins for Christ!"¹⁰

Although these women were converted to his ways without Antony's knowledge, in taking him as an inspiration they demonstrated his notion that celibacy was something to be practiced with the entire Christian community in mind. This entailed transforming one's conscience into one appropriate for the public domain. If one believed that their contemporaries would hear of everything they did they would not be tempted to forgo their celibacy. Antony explains this process of converting the inner self in this passage from chapter fifty-five: "So then, just as we would not practice fornication if we were observing each other directly, so also will we doubtless keep ourselves from impure thoughts, ashamed to have them known, if we record our thoughts as if reporting them to one another."¹¹ Such a sentiment demonstrates a synthesis of Athanasius' theology and political views, which Brakke sees as being inextricably connected:

9 Peter Robert Lamont Brown. "The Body and Society: Men, Women, and Sexual Renunciation in Early Christianity" *Lectures on the history of religions* (1988): <http://quod.lib.umich.edu/cgi/t/text/pageviewer-idx?c=acls;cc=acls;rgn=full%20text;idno=heb01093.0001.001;didno=heb01093.0001.001;view=image;seq=238;node=heb01093.0001.001%3A15;page=root;size=s;frm=frameset> (accessed November 22nd, 2009), 214.

10 Athanasius. 95.

11 Ibid., 73.

“As Athanasius himself understood it, his ascetic programme of self-formation was also a political programme of Church formation.”¹² In the *Life of Antony* this self-formation was one directed by the layman’s desire to imitate the Saint, who in turn strove to become as close as possible to a perfect imitation of Christ.

The story of Antony’s becoming “the perfect image of Christ”¹³ is only possible with his convertibility and capacity for personal growth. In his preface to the Paulist Press edition of *The Life of Antony*, scholar William A. Clebsch states:

The story begins, to be sure, with a conversion, but not to Christianity- rather to the convertibility of one on route to Christian salvation. Just what Augustine and his friend Ponticianus later found so arresting in the story is exactly what Athanasius took pains to put there- Antony’s convertibility to even more elevated ranges of spiritual attainment against onslaughts of the evil one.¹⁴

Whether it is a more extreme form of fasting, isolation, or bravery in the face of the chimeras which he dispels often by invoking the name of Christ;¹⁵ Athanasius presents Antony’s Christianity as latent with the potential for perfection.

We see this exemplified early in the work with the virtue of poverty. In the space of a single chapter we witness Antony evolve from pondering poverty in the abstract, to hearing it explained in a passage from the Bible and later actively giving away all his possessions. Antony demonstrates his ability to perfect his virtue when upon hearing a second passage on a different occasion, he gave away what few possessions he kept for his sister.¹⁶ Such quick changes demonstrate a character Athanasius saw as needing direction in the form of an unchanging Word of God. The importance of this idea to Athanasius’ work is related in this statement by David Brakke:

12 Brakke, 266.

13 Weinandy, 61.

14 Athanasius, XV.

15 Ibid., 38, 39, 40, 48, 99.

16 Ibid., 31.

According to Athanasius, imitation was required for created beings because, unlike the divine Word of God, they were changeable and unstable, in need of constant need of self-definition. He explained that the divine Word was by nature virtuous and God's Son; in him these attributes were unchanging.¹⁷

Perfecting the virtue of charity was just one of many ways Antony's future Saintliness was foreshadowed by Athanasius. Among the foremost characteristics contributing to what Clebsch refers to as Antony's "convertibility" are his observant nature and willingness to learn. Athanasius speaks of a young Antony as one with budding potential: "For the eagerness the resided so long in his soul produced a good disposition in him, so that when he received from others even a small suggestion, he showed great enthusiasm for it."¹⁸ This enthusiasm found an outlet in learning the scriptures, a process at which he was extremely adept, as Athanasius relates: "For he paid such close attention to what was read that nothing from the scripture did he fail to take in- rather he grasp everything, and in him memory took the place of books."¹⁹ These sentiments display a fertile mind that would prove itself equally capable of pursuing its own desires, as Antony studied the life of pious men and spent time: "gathering the attributes of each in himself."²⁰

Such rigorous molding of one's inner world is something Antony preached as well as practiced. Athanasius tells us that later in life when speaking to his fellow monks Antony stated: "Let us examine ourselves, however, and those things we are lacking let us hurry and complete. And may this remark serve as a precaution so that we might not sin: Let each one of us note and record our actions and the stirrings of our souls as though we were going to give an account to one another."²¹ Such a statement reflects David

17 Brakke, 166.

18 Athanasius, 36.

19 Ibid., 32.

20 Ibid., 33.

21 Ibid., 72.

Brakke's opinion that Athanasius' program of ascetic self-formation was also a political program of church formation.²² We will now see how Antony's convertibility manifested itself in the outer landscape in addition to the inner.

Throughout his lifelong commitment to his ascetic discipline, Antony's fame increased as he triumphed over visions of demons and preformed countless miracles. However scholar Peter Brown sees these as being secondary aspects of what demonstrated Antony's convertibility and captured the interest of the faithful: "It was his triumph in the struggle with hunger that released, in the popular imagination, the most majestic and the most haunting images of a new humanity. Nothing less than the hope of Paradise regained flickered, spasmodically but recognizably, around the figure who had dared to create a human 'city' in a landscape void of human food."²³ Thus Antony's convertibility simultaneously entailed a progression in the ascetic discipline, and a transformation of the body and soul back into their original prelapsarian state in which they are devoid of want and united with God.

The notion of Antony converting his desert home into a new Paradise is not singular to Brown. Scholar Thomas Weinandy draws a similar parallel in his work *Athanasius: A Theological Introduction*:

In Antony, Athanasius found a person in whom the salvific work of Christ had found perfection. Moreover as the old Adam had founded, in a lush garden, a city of sin and death, so Antony now founded, in a barren desert, a new city of holiness and life.²⁴

This salvific work takes place in the corporeal realm wherein Antony's body, instead of wasting away under the harsh living conditions of the ascetic, maintains its strength.²⁵ Weinandy sees this maintenance of physical vigor demonstrating not so much a suspension of decay

22 Brakke, 266.

23 Brown, 218.

24 Weinandy, 131.

25 Athanasius, 39.

as it did a conversion:

The theological point that Athanasius is making is that, having become a new man in Christ, Antony possessed not the physical signs of sin and death but the physical signs of the new life of the Holy Spirit. He had already taken on the marks of his own resurrection for he had become, even in this life, the perfect image of the risen Christ.²⁶

For Brown, Antony's virtue is not only manifested in his body's miraculous health but his countenance, which had become enigmatic to the point of where people could recognize him instantly: "Visiting monks and lay pilgrims, would know at once, in that dense press of black-garbed figures, which one was the great Anthony. He was instantly recognizable as someone whose heart had achieved total transparency to others."²⁷

In the following passage from chapter seventy, we see Brown's celebration of Antony as magnetic character synthesized with a number of salient themes of *The Life of Antony*: "And there also the Lord cleansed many people of demons through him, and cured those who were mentally impaired. Many Greeks asked only to touch the old man, believing they would be benefitted. It is beyond a doubt that as many became Christians in those few days as one would have seen in a year."²⁸ While simultaneously touching on the Saintly quality of performing miracles, and Antony's role in demonstrating the power of Christianity to non-believers; this passage also contains the language of imitation, a concept from which *The Life of Antony* accrues much of its power.

For as much as Athanasius emphasizes Antony's good character as a source of his potential convertibility to higher levels of sanctity, there is also a great deal of importance placed on the imitation of ideals. Antony gives voice to this importance when

26 Weinandy, 61.

27 Brown, 226.

28 Athanasius, 83.

confronted by two Greek philosophers questioning the merits of Christianity, wherein he states: “But if you consider me wise, become as I am, for we must imitate what is good. If I had come to you I would have imitated you; but since you came to me, become as I am; for I am a Christian.”²⁹ For scholar Virginia Burrus, imitation was a means by which ascetics could strive to come as close as possible to becoming one with Christ:

Thanks to God’s grace in the incarnation, all may now practice the ascetic disciplines that allow them to draw as close as possible to a perfect imitation of Christ. Through such discipline, sublimated bodies mime the incarnate Word, and adopted sons ape their only-begotten Brother in controlled performances that ‘congeal over time to produce the appearance of real substance.’³⁰

As Antony imitated Christ, his holiness increased and thus Athanasius relates his acts not so much being his own but as the acts of the Lord occurring through him.

Antony’s progress in his ascetic discipline was one where he came as possible to fulfilling his wish of a young man to be united with “divine and future realities.”³¹ This wish was fulfilled in the form of the Lord removing Antony’s agency from his own deeds, wherein he became a vessel for His work. Athanasius places Antony in this mediatory role in chapter forty-eight, where he writes: “Through Antony many other things have been done by the Lord.”³² Athanasius had Antony progress into an understanding of this idea, as shown in this selfless statement of his regarding the power to heal: “For this good deed is not mine, that she should come to me, a pitiable man; rather, her healing is from our Savior who works his

29 Athanasius, 84.

30 Virginia Burrus. *‘Begotten, Not Made’ Conceiving Manhood in Late Antiquity* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2000), 70.

31 Athanasius, 58.

32 Ibid, 67. In chapter five Antony says of his victory over the devil: “It is not I, but the grace of God which is in me.” (34)

mercy everywhere for those who call on him.”³³ Such a distinction is expounded by Gregg: “The spirituality that Athanasius portrayed in Antony remained even at the end that of a man-god, not that of a god-man. For to have become man-god, Antony had to be made so (*theopoiesis*) by the god-man.” In other words, what Antony embodied in this hagiography is exactly what Irenaeus decades before had written to epitomize the salvation of Jesus Christ: “He became as we are that we might become as He is.”³⁴ Gregg’s distinction is important as it is at the heart of Athanasius’ anti-Arian theology.

The views of his contemporary Arius, by which Athanasius was so repulsed, arose out of the belief that God is singularly one;³⁵ so singular that it would be impossible for him to create another eternal being. From this stemmed the position that Christ was creaturely rather than eternal. Thus Antony’s ability to only imitate and not become one with Christ, is a demonstration of Athanasius’ theology; one largely defined by its support of the Nicene Creed and its emphasis on Christ’s unity with God’s divine nature.³⁶ Athanasius relates that Antony believed firmly in the unity of Father and Son in this statement from chapter sixty-nine, in which he speaks against the Arians to the people of Alexandria: “He taught the people that the Son of God is not a creature, and that he did not come into existence from nonbeing, but rather that he is eternal Word and Wisdom from the essence of the Father.”³⁷ Weinandy emphasizes the importance of Antony’s elocution of this statement in reflecting the importance of the Nicene Creed: “Antony’s confirmation of the Nicene faith affirmed, for Athanasius, that it accurately expressed the truth of salvation for Antony himself was a living confirmation of its saving power.”³⁸

However, we must be wary of such relations of Antony’s life

33 Ibid, 74.

34 Ibid, XVI.

35 Weinandy, 53.

36 Weinandy, 77.

37 Athanasius, 82.

38 Weinandy, 131.

that congeal so perfectly with Athanasius' theology. In his statement Weinandy may be, in the words of David Brakke, ignoring a form of 'correction' which takes place in *The Life of Antony*: "Most scholars agree that, in writing the *Life of Antony*, Athanasius was engaged in a process of 'correction', modifying earlier texts or traditions to present a picture of Antony congenial to his own theology."³⁹ This lack of historical accuracy in *The Life of Antony* is further explored on the plane of geography by Neal Kelsey in his article "The Body as Desert in the Life of St. Antony."⁴⁰ Scholar Andrew Louth sees the debates surrounding historical elements of *The Life of Antony* as ultimately immaterial, due to the work's inclusion of the miraculous, a fact researchers should keep in mind when approaching the text:

"What survives as historically usable often has little to do with the saints themselves: such material can provide evidence for historical events through which the saint lived, or by which his biographer marked the course of his life; it can also provide evidence for the social history of the period."⁴¹

In spite of its questionable ability to provide objective truths about Antony in the eyes of modern scholars, the *Life of Antony* succeeded in becoming an instant success in its own time, providing, in the words of Weinandy the "paradigm *par excellence*"⁴² for Christian holiness. By the sixth Century, *The Life of Antony* had already been translated into Latin and Persian Syriac from the

39 Brakke, 203.

40 Neil Kelsey, "The Body As Desert in the Life of Saint Anthony" *Semeia* no. 57 (1992), p 143. <http://web.ebscohost.com/ehost/detail?vid=7&hid=103&sid=7761cddc-b6d8440e9bfc71bfb6f78c5%40sessionmgr14&bdata=JnNpdGU9ZWhvc3QtbGl2ZQ%3d%3d#db=rft&AN=ATLA0000864014#db=rft&AN=ATLA0000864014> (accessed October 30th 2009), 143.

41 Louth, Andrew, "Hagiography" *The Cambridge History of Early Christian Literature*. Cambridge Histories Online (2009) p. 358-361 http://histories.cambridge.org/uid=1763/extract?id=chol9780521460835_CHO-L9780521460835A041 (accessed November 22, 2009), 4.

42 Weinandy, 130.

original Greek.⁴³ The Western Mediterranean came to know of Antony through Martin of Tours,⁴⁴ and later St. Augustine, whose friends were famously converted to the ascetic life after reading of Antony in Athanasius' work.⁴⁵ Formally *The Life of Antony* inaugurated the tradition of Hagiography, and established themes recreated throughout the ages.⁴⁶ Such an impact was surely felt because of both the sharp quill of Athanasius, who Robert Gregg sees as possessing "the temperament and mind required"⁴⁷ to defend Christianity, and the virtue of humble Antony. In his demonstration of the endless convertibility of a true believer alongside unflinching faith, Antony provided an exemplary model of holiness for his contemporaries, and the perfect muse whereby Athanasius could inaugurate a new form of Christian hero.

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43 Arthur Urbano, "Read it also to the gentiles: the displacement and recasting of the philosopher in the Vita Antonii." *American Society of Church History*, 77:4 (December 2008) <http://web.ebscohost.com/ehost/detail?vid=8&hid=104&sid=7761cddc-b6d8440e9bfe71bfb6f78c5%40sessionmgr14&bdata=JnNpdGU9ZWhvc3QqbGl2ZQ%3d%3d#db=rth&AN=ATLA0001699056> (accessed October 30th 2009), 914.

44 Anthony C. Meisel and M.L. del Mastro. *The Rule of St. Benedict*. Translated by Anthony C. Meisel and M.L del Mastro. (New York: Image Books, 1975), 18-19.

45 Saint Augustine. *Confessions*. Translated by R.S Pine-Coffin. (London: Penguin, 1961), 167.

46 Andrew, 358-361. http://histories.cambridge.org/uid=1763/extract?id=chol9780521460835_CHOL9780521460835A041 (accessed November 22, 2009), the entire article speaks of Antony's archetypal role in the genre.

47 Athanasius, 18.

[idx?c=acls;cc=acls;rgn=full%20text;idno=heb01093.0001.001;didno=heb01093.0001.001;view=image;seq=238;node=heb01093.0001.001%3A15;page=root;size=s;frm=frameset](http://web.ebscohost.com/ehost/detail?vid=7&hid=103&sid=7761cddc-b6d8440e9bfde71bfb6f78c5%40sessionmgr14&bdata=JnNpdGU9ZW9vc3QtbGl2ZQ%3d%3d#db=rh&AN=ATLA0000864014#db=rh&AN=ATLA0000864014) (accessed November 22nd, 2009)

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Alienated from Peace: The Freikorps Movement in the Weimar Republic

Justin Scherer

Any attempt at a unified, cohesive narrative of the Freikorps movement would be reductive and unfaithful to the multifarious character of the movement. Though hundreds of independent Freikorps began to emerge after the War in 1918, every single one of them had a unique individual character. This study will occupy itself with some of the salient questions surrounding the Freikorps movement. They are as follows:

When, why, and by whom was the Freikorps movement founded?

How were the Freikorps organized?

Why, after the experiences of World War One, did men volunteer for more fighting?

What effect, if any, did the Freikorps have on the stability of the Weimar Republic?

What is the relationship between the Freikorps and later National Socialism?

A Movement Born of Chaos

The immediate cause of the Freikorps's was a desire of Ebert, the newly appointed Chancellor of the Weimar Republic, to quell the chaotic, revolutionary upheaval rampant throughout the country. The need for stability was most acutely felt where the government was seated: in Berlin. A vivid description of the chaos in Berlin in the early days of November is left by a Lieutenant Fischer, the adjutant to the Command of Berlin:

“Disorder, insecurity, plundering, wild commandeering, and house prowling had become the order of the day[...]the barracks were like so many bedlams[...] Each group acted on its own hook...The only masters of Berlin were Disunity, Licentiousness, and Chaos[...] And day and night, senseless shooting—partly from exuberation, partly from fear. Berlin lived, danced, drank, and celebrated.”¹

Amongst the tumult, Ebert, tried to save the Republic from leftist extremism, and to do so, he needed an armed force which could bring about the “*Ruhe und Ordnung*” he so desperately needed.

There were soldiers in Berlin, but they had either completely broken away from the chain of command, joined the revolutionary soldiers’ groups (like Liebknecht’s “National Association of Deserters (*Reichsbund der Deserteure*)” against the government, or were fighting each other for ascendancy in the streets. Emil Eichhorn, Berlin’s self-appointed Chief of Police was building a “Security Force” (*Sicherheitswehr*) as shock troops for the Independent Socialists. Dorrenbach’s “notorious” Peoples’ Naval Division (*Volksmarine Division*) had taken over the Imperial Palace and the Stables, and was using them as a base for their “looting forays.”²

The soldiers from the front, though, had not yet returned home, and it was known that whoever controlled the returning armies could control the course of the revolution. This army, however, was quickly splintering. Ebert’s choice was as follows: He could choose to side with the quickly mushrooming “Workers’ and Soldiers’ Councils,” disorganized and unruly though they were, or he could seek the support of the *Oberste Heeresleitung* (OHL) or “Supreme Command”—that is, those who controlled the Kaiser’s former armies. He chose the latter.³

1 As quoted in Robert G.L. Waite, *Vanguard of Nazism: The Free Corps Movement in Postwar Germany, 1918-23*, (Cambridge Mass.) Harvard University Press, 1970, 3.

2 Waite, 2-3.

3 Waite, 5.

Ebert and the majority Socialists did not have much of a choice in the matter. Politically, they were moderates who had achieved their goals with the October reforms. Ebert viewed the revolution as unnecessary and harmful because it complicated the overwhelming tasks the infant republic faced: total defeat in the War, conversion of a war-time economy to a peace-time economy, demobilizing and reabsorbing the masses of soldiers returning from the Front, maintaining the unity of the Reich, execution of the armistice terms, and preparation for peace negotiations. The majority socialists knew that they could not complete these tasks without the support of the OHL and the civil service. That they did not side with the increasingly radical Workers and Soldiers' Councils should come as no surprise, then.⁴ Furthermore, Germany was under the mandate of the Allies who threatened to invade, and desperately sought a favourable peace settlement. During the cabinet meeting of 18 November, Ebert notes that the Allied Forces would surely invade Germany to prevent the rise of Bolshevism.

[The] Entente is willing to meet the present bourgeois-socialist republic halfway in the matter of peace terms and food supplies, but only as long as the government adheres to its present composition under Ebert's leadership. The Entente would, however, intervene with all its might to forestall the rise of Bolshevism. If Joffe, for one, were to return, that alone would suffice to alter the prospects of peace.⁵

Thus, to help insure a favourable peace settlement, and to stabilize the republic, Ebert needed a reliable military force capable of consolidating the Republic. He had nowhere to turn, except to the OHL.

Ebert's agreement with the OHL took the form of a "pact."

4 Eberhard Kolb, *The Weimar Republic*, 2nd ed., trans. P.S. Falla and R.J. Park, (New York) Routledge, Taylor, and Francis Group, 2005., 12.

5 Charles B. Burdick and Ralph H. Lutz eds., *The Political Institutions of the German Revolution, 1918-1919*, (New York) Frederick A. Praeger, Publishers, 1966, 70. Adolf Joffe was the soviet ambassador to Germany, and was expelled on 5 November for propagandizing.

The agreement took place, it is generally believed, in early November 1918. Ebert—in his office; with signs reading “Down with the Traitors of the Revolution” and “Down with Ebert-Scheidemann” to be seen amongst the masses milling around outside; with strains of *die Internationale* drifting through his window from Wilhelmsstrasse below—received a call from General Wilhelm Groener at the Army Headquarters at Spa. The conversation was reconstructed by E.O. Volkmann as follows:

Ebert: “How will you conduct yourselves regarding the Workers’ and Soldiers’ Councils?”

Groener: “Command (*Kommandostellen*) is to be relied upon to deal with them through conciliatory (*guetlichem*) means.”

Ebert: “And what do you expect from us?”

Groener: “The Fieldmarshal expects the nation’s government to support the Officer Corps, maintain discipline, and preserve the punishment regulations in the Army. He expects that satisfactory provisions will be made for the complete maintenance of the army.”

Ebert: “What else?”

Groener: “The Officers’ Corps expects that the government will fight against Bolshevism, and places itself at the disposal of the government for such a purpose.”

Pause

Ebert: “Convey the government’s thanks to the General Fieldmarshal.”⁶

In one telephone call, Ebert made the OHL the protector of his government. And to recapture the *Schloss* and *Marstall* (Castle and Stables) of Berlin was the Imperial Army’s first task.

They emphatically failed. General Lequis opened fire on the *Schloss* at 7:40 on the morning of Christmas Eve. The sailors, with

6 E.O. Volkmann, *Revolution über Deutschland*, (Oldenburg) Gerhard Stall-ing, 1930, 68. My translation.

little ammunition and no reinforcements were disadvantaged against the Imperial troops. They raised the white flag at 9:30 to achieve a twenty minute truce. However, as soon as the shooting had begun, USPD and Spartakist leaders drove through the streets of Berlin yelling, “Monarchist Counterrevolution! [...] The Republic is in Danger! [...] Come to the Schloss and save the Republic!”⁷ By 9:45, an angry mob had emerged to confront the Imperial Army. The sailors took advantage of the resultant disorder, took women and children as shields, and opened fire on Lequis’s troops. Completely surrounded by a chaos of civilians and soldiers, Lequis’s men threw down their rifles and retreated.⁸ The following telegram was sent to OHL headquarters by Major von Harbou (Lequis’s Chief of General Staff):

The troops of Lequis are no longer capable of action[...]The result of the current conflict could be catastrophic for the government[...]The government could only be helped by an entire army[...]I consider it best to demobilize local troops.⁹

Thus, the OHL and Ebert could not depend on traditional Imperial troop divisions to defend the new government. Ebert looked to a new man and a new system of troop organization for support.

That man was Gustav Noske, and the system would come to be known as the Freikorps. In another telephone conversation, on 26 December, Groener demanded that Ebert find a replacement for the Independent Socialists who had resigned from the cabinet after the Schloss debacle. Ebert quickly recommended his friend, Gustav Noske—the one who had quelled much of the revolutionary unrest in Kiel—the one responsible for preventing Kiel’s revolutionary sailors from joining Dorrenbach’s “mutineers who had revolted against the

7 Waite, 11.

8 Waite reconstructs the scene in the most detail from several “nationalist” primary accounts, 58.

9 Quoted by Volkmann, 163. My translation.

government.”¹⁰ Groener was quick to second the nomination. On 27 December, Noske was called to Berlin to assume the duties of Minister of National Defence. In Ebert’s office, someone challenged Noske, “Get it done then!” (“*Dann mach’ du doch die Sache!*”), to which he replied, “Of course! Someone must become the Bloodhound, I don’t shy from the responsibility!”¹¹ He describes the crowds outside, lifting him up in the air in celebration. He called to them, “Put me down! I will bring order to Berlin.”¹² The so-called “Bloodhound of the Revolution” quickly replaced Eichhorn with Eugen Ernst as Chief of Police in Berlin. With the permission of the OHL, he replaced the disgraced Lequis with General von Lüttwitz, and proceeded to take back key positions in Berlin. Now, he needed to find his army.

What Noske discovered was that, all over Germany, volunteer Freikorps of soldiers who had returned from the front had sprung up. General von Maercker invited Noske and Ebert to Camp Zossen on the outskirts of Berlin, 4 January 1919, to view a group of volunteers that Maercker had organized into a Freikorps. What they found was a highly disciplined, well-trained, well-equipped group of soldiers ready to fight for the government. Noske and Ebert could not have asked for more. Maercker records in his memoirs that, as Noske and Ebert left the field, Noske clapped Ebert on the back and said, “You can relax now. Everything will be alright!”¹³

Thus, it was to stabilize the chaos of revolutionary Germany that the Freikorps movement was given official status by Noske and Ebert. It is neither possible nor fruitful here to discuss the emergence and organization of every Freikorps group in Germany. Rather, we will take as an example one of the first Freikorps to be founded, General Maercker’s Landesjägerkorps, upon which the organization of

10 Gustav Noske, *Von Kiel bis Kapp: Zur Geschichte der deutschen Revolution*, (Berlin) Verlag für Politik und Wirtschaft, 1920, 54. My translation.

11 Noske, 68. “*Meinetwegen! Einer muss der Bluthund werden, ich scheue die Verantwortung nicht!*” My translation

12 Noske, 69. My translation.

13 Waite, 16.

most other Freikorps was to be based.

The Organization of the Freikorps: General Georg Maercker's Freiwilligen Landesjägerkorps

General Maercker's Freikorps was one of the first of its kind, and a model for other Freikorps. It would be beneficial, therefore, to take a moment to examine its organization. On 12 December 1918, General Maercker submitted a memorandum to the OHL outlining his plans to form a volunteer rifle corps. After quick approval, he wrote the "First Constructive Order of the Volunteer Rifle Corps" (*Grundlegender Befehl Nr. 1 der Freiwilligen Landesjägerkorps*).¹⁴ The salient points of the order were that men would be recruited only on a volunteer basis, that strict punitive measures would be taken against plunderers, looters, and robbers, and that trusted men (*"Vertrauensleute"*) would sit on courts martial and act as intermediaries between the officers and the men.¹⁵ Maercker's Freikorps were also typical of the movement in their use of young officers and NCOs (*Unteroffiziere*) to command the troops. "Youth," Marcker noted, "has the advantage of carelessness, of enterprising spirit, and above all, of patriotic fervour on its side—qualities that are not to be despised."¹⁶ When he had his recruits, Maercker organized his troops similarly to the shock troop units of World War One. Each company was self-sufficient, with its own machine gun and trench mortar sections. When necessary, heavier artillery, flame-throwers, and armoured cars were added.¹⁷ Maercker's operational procedure was simple: March into a city (simultaneously occupying it and intimidating it), instate martial law, dissolve revolutionary councils, organize new civil

14 C. Paul Vincent ed. *A Historical Dictionary of Germany's Weimar Republic, 1918-1933*, (London) Greenwood Press, 1997, 298.

15 General Ludwig Maercker, *Grundlegender Befehl Nr. 1 für das Freiwillige Landesjägerkorps unter Maercker vom 14.12.1918* (Auszug), accessed 5 October 2009. URL: <http://www.novemberrevolution.de/dokument.php?key=maercker>.

16 Quoted in Waite, 35.

17 Waite, 36.

guard units, and withdraw. This was often accomplished without a shot being fired.¹⁸

Officers and NCOs all over the country began to form their own bands loosely based on Maercker's model. Although, most other groups were neither as well-equipped nor as well-disciplined. How these groups found their recruits—that is, why men joined the Freikorps—remains to be seen.

Reasons for Joining the Freikorps: Chaos, Money, and the Impossibility of Demobilization

Though the motivations of the *Freikorpskämpfer* are undoubtedly as multifarious as the movement itself, many joined initially to fight the extreme left, for money, or simply because they did not know how to do anything else. As soldiers returned home from the front, the Germany for which they had fought—for which their comrades had died—looked nothing like what they had left.¹⁹ A soldier returning to Wilhelmshaven on 27 January 1919 gives the following description of the city under leftist rule:

Before us was troop after troop of soldiers armed to the teeth. Before the public buildings stand powerful guards with red armbands, hand grenades on their belts, cartridge belts hanging. With jeering faces they let us pass unharmed, but not one hand rose in salute[...]

That night, the Ehrhardt Brigade took over the town. He gives the following description: "A post stood at the door—without red armbands. He greeted us properly as we entered."²⁰ Another soldier, Hans Zöberlein, was greeted by a group of socialists upon his return to revolutionary Munich. They jeered at him, "What's with the

18 Vincent, 299.

19 Not all of the Freikorps volunteers had served in the war. There was a minority of volunteers that were students when the war ended. Ernst von Salomon is an example of such a volunteer.

20 Skroz, „Der Brigade erster Tag“ pp. 60-1 in Bert Roth ed. *Kampf: Lebensdokumente deutscher Jugend von 1914-1934*, (Leipzig) Philipp Reclam jun. Verlag 1934., 30-1. My translation.

insignia (*Kokade*)? Get rid of it!” and ripped them off his shirt.²¹ These are two examples of many homecomings where soldiers returned to a society in upheaval, which derided them or was strange to them. One Freikorps founder, Colonel Wilhelm Reinhard, wrote in his memoirs that his goal in forming a Freikorps was “the creation of a troop that could annihilate the Republican gangs, and in so doing, re-establish order in Berlin.”²² Thus, the desire to retake Germany from the extreme left is a motivation for joining the Freikorps, whose job under Noske was to do just that.

Apart from a desire for stability, many returning soldiers joined for the money. The Freikorps offered real material advantages in a time of economic uncertainty. An average *Freikorpskämpfer* could expect a daily base-pay of thirty to fifty marks; he was guaranteed two hundred grams of meat and seventy-five grams of butter per day; his service in the Freikorps counted towards his worker’s pension; he still received his stipend for demobilized soldiers; he was clothed completely at government expense. Officers also received extra bonuses. Rudolph Mann, a volunteer with the Ehrhardt Brigade, commented as follows: “Noske added five marks [to the regular pay], and the Bavarian government another five. Then too, we got plenty of beer and cigarettes and a quarter litre of wine per day. We had a good time.”²³ Naturally, conditions varied slightly based on where a unit was stationed. Regardless of location, though, the Freikorps offered steady and stable employment with enticing material benefits for returning soldiers.

Many soldiers could have gone back to their better pre-war jobs, though. These others joined simply because, psychologically, they could do nothing else—rather than integrate into society, they found ways to continue being soldiers. The war had irrevocably changed them. Zöberlein asks in his memoir, right after the passage

21 Zöberlein, Hans, *Die Glaube an Deutschland: Ein Kriegserleben von Verdun bis zum Umsturz*. (Munich) Zentralverlag der NSDAP, 1936, 877. My translation.

22 Quoted in Waite, 36.

23 Waite, 41.

that describes him being accosted by socialists, “What should I do at home anyway? In this cold, strange place which had once been my homeland?”²⁴ The only solace he found was reverie about his time as a soldier. He remembers fragments of his soldier’s oath: I swear—by God the All-powerful—to never be untrue—in storm and battle—in war—as in peace.” He ends his memoir with the following: “The struggle for Germany continues! Volunteers to the Front!”²⁵ Another Freikorps volunteer, Friedrich Wilhelm Heinz, described a similar inability and unwillingness to reintegrate into civilian life. “People told us that the war is over. That made us laugh. We ourselves are the War[...][We] marched onto the battlefields of the post-war era just as we had gone into battle on the Western Front: singing, reckless[...] deadly, remorseless in battle.”²⁶ One of the *Freikorpsführer*, Manfred von Killinger, said, “The main thing for [the Freikorps volunteers] was that they *were* fighting[...]War had become their career. They had no desire to look for another[...]War made them happy—what more could you ask?”²⁷ Ernst von Salomon, a famous Freikorps volunteer, did not serve in the war (he was too young), but joined the movement afterwards, and describes the soldiers’ return home, saying,

The army had not been conquered [...] They were coming home and they would knit up all the old bonds[...]and they took no notice of us either. Was it because they were still so filled with the horror of what they had lived through[...]Suddenly, I realized these were no workers, farmers, students, they were not labourers, clerks, shopkeepers, or officials. They were soldiers[...]They had a vocation, they came of their own free will, and their home was in the war zone.²⁸

Such men, it would seem, were ripe for the picking. They had

24 Zöberlein, 879, My translation.

25 Zöberlein, 890. My translation.

26 Quoted in Waite, 42.

27 Ibid.

28 Ernst von Salomon, *The Outlaws*, trans. F.D. Morrow, (London) Jonathan Cape, Ltd., 1931, 27-31.

returned to what was supposed to be a homeland, only to see that the experience of war had alienated them from it.²⁹ It was men like these that Noske collected for his army.³⁰

Shortly after his the abovementioned meeting with Maercker, Noske instituted a massive, nationwide recruitment campaign, establishing recruitment offices throughout the country. All of the above mentioned reasons for joining the Freikorps can be seen in some of the advertisements to which the returning soldiers responded. Consider the following from Berlin in January 1919:

VOLUNTEERS!

From the West—March to the East!

FLAME-THROWER PERSONNEL

Enlist in the flame-thrower section of

THE LUETTWITZ CORPS

Immediate pay plus 5 marks daily bonus.

Free food and equipment.

COMRADES

The Spartakist danger has not yet been removed.

The Poles press ever farther onto German soil.

Can you look on these things with calm?

NO!

Think of what your dead comrades would think!

Soldiers, Arise! Prevent Germany from becoming the laughing stock of the Earth. Enroll **NOW** in

THE HUELSEN FREIKORPS [...]

29 How, exactly, this happened, is a psychological question.

30 Some scholars also mention that there was an element of class conflict in the social make-up of the Freikorps. The revolution was a powerful example of working-class agency, and the middle class became acutely aware of their political impotence. Perhaps the fact that the Feikorps volunteers were primarily from the middle class is symptomatic of this class dynamic. However, arguing based on class is an oversimplified explanation for the willingness of Freikorps volunteers. See James M. Diehl, *Paramilitary Politics in Weimar Germany*. Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press, 1977, 20.

VOLUNTEERS, FALL OUT!

Patriotic Germans, join the fierce and foolhardy

LÜTZOW FREIKORPS³¹

The following comes from Wilhelmshaven:

15 February 1919: “German Marine Soldiers! Our fatherland has sunk so low (*liegt tief darnieder*). German territories are beset by the Poles. Our brothers there are robbed and murdered. Miscreants (*irregeleitete Volksgenossen*) and criminal elements attempt to shatter (*zertrümmern*) the last of what we fought for in the War[...]it is still not too late, but we cannot hesitate any longer. [...]”³²

9 March 1919: “Comrades! Whom should the government call in its need, if not you, who are bound to protect it? Consider: only a mobile troop can rescue us[...]why do you hesitate?[...]Comrades! Come to us! We feel well (*fühlen uns wohl*) in the Brigade, and are happy and joyful. Campaign with us for Freedom, Fatherland, Civil Well-being (*Volkswohl*), Truth, Honour, and Justice (*Recht*).”³³

Freikorps volunteers responded to advertisements that appealed to a desire for stability, nationalist sentiments, their honour and identity as soldiers, and to money. These were the salient reasons for joining. Which of these enticements was the most important, however, depended on the individual case 3.

a. Brutality and Consolidation.

The Freikorps had a paradoxical relationship to the Republic. Noske and Ebert encouraged the Freikorps to consolidate

31 Waite 38-9.

32 Quoted in Gabriele Krüger, *Die Brigade Ehrhardt*, (Hamburg) Leibniz-Verlag, 1971, 20. My translation.

33 Krüger, 21-2. My translation.

the Republic and stem the revolutionary tide of the extreme left throughout the country. They did this very well, especially in Berlin (January and March 1919), and in Munich (May 1919).³⁴ The pronounced brutality they displayed during the fighting, though, meant consolidation of the republic would come at a high human cost.

The violent destruction of the so-called Spartakist Uprising in Berlin, January 1919, and the subsequent pacification of the city is the first instance where Noske's new force helped to stabilize a floundering republic. General von Lüttwitz was responsible for reconquering Berlin from the radical socialists. A force comprised of several Freikorps brigades was being assembled in the Gross-Lichterfelde-Zossen area just outside the city.³⁵ The early days of January were the darkest for the government. By 5-6 January, Berlin was in the hands of hoards of rebels, and the streets were filled with armed workers. Of the twenty thousand or so soldiers in Berlin, the government could rely upon only a few hundred. Suppe's Freikorps managed to defend the Chancellery. By 11 January, Noske's forces were ready. He entered Berlin at the head of a column of three thousand men marching in tight formation. He did this primarily to intimidate the rebels. The formations were cheered by citizens because they were a sign of hope for future order.³⁶ By 20 January,

34 These were not the only military actions undertaken by Freikorps during the Weimar Republic. Extensive and significant actions were taken in the Baltic, in Silesia, in the Ruhr, etc. These instances have not been included because of space restrictions. Important, though, is that these actions displayed the same general characteristics as the "March Days" in Berlin and the reconquest of Munich: abhorrence of communists, brutal violence, and nationalist sentiments.

35 Harold J. Gordon Jr., *The Reichswehr and the German Republic, 1919-1926* (Port Washington N.Y.) Kennikat Press, 1972, 27. The Freikorps who assembled there were as follows: The Guards Cavalry Rifle Division, the Naval Brigade from Roden, Noske's Iron Brigade from Kiel, Maercker's Landesjägerkorps, von der Lippe's Deutsche Schutz Division, Detachment Held, Freikorps Hülsen, von Roeder's Landesschützenkorps, Major Meyn's Free Berlin Rifle Corps, and others.

36 Gordon, 29.

the government felt that Berlin was secure enough to pull out most of their troops.³⁷ The relative stabilization depended primarily on the actions of the Freikorps.

It was during the fighting, though, that the brutal character of the Freikorps began to emerge. For example, on 11 January, the Potsdam Freikorps subdued Belle-Allianz-Platz. The socialists surrendered at approximately 8:15 am. Rather than arresting the rebels or negotiating surrender, "The furious soldiers of the Potsdam Regiment rounded up the Spartakists and shot them without court-martial."³⁸ The revolutionary fervour of the radical left was on the decline, and by 13 January, the Revolutionary Foremen accepted defeat and called on the people to surrender and avoid useless bloodshed.³⁹ Amidst the tumult, on 15 January, the Freikorps committed the first of a long list of political murders. Members of the Volunteer Division of Horse Guards arrested Liebknecht and Luxemburg. Liebknecht was shot on the Charlottenburg Highway. Luxembourg was bludgeoned to death and thrown into the Landwehr canal. One historian remarked that Noske had not brought about peace, "but the quiet of death. Not freedom, but the unfettered terror of the Freebooter."⁴⁰ Thus, the characteristic brutality for which the Freikorps system was repeatedly denounced emerged during its first manoeuvres.

The Freikorps, with similar brutality, quelled radical socialist unrest all over the country. The pattern was fairly regular. Radical leftists (mostly Spartakists) took advantage of the lack of Republican soldiers to create extremist governments. Noske would move a Freikorps regiment into the city, brutally crush the extremist government, replace it with the previous government, and pull out of the city. Bremen, Mühlheim, Halle, Bremerhaven, Cuxhaven,

37 Waite, 62.

38 Quoted in Waite, 61.

39 Gordon, 29-30.

40 Quoted in Waite, 63.

and Wilhelmshaven were all subdued similarly.⁴¹

In Berlin, during the so-called “March Days” of 1919, the Freikorps suppressed yet another radical uprising. The fighting in March was much more protracted and bloody than it had been in January. So much so that Noske had to resort to more extreme measures to end the conflict. He issued his controversial “shooting order” of 9 March 1919: “Every person who is taken, arms in hand, fighting against government troops, is to be shot immediately.”⁴² The *Freikorpsführer*, however, interpreted this order as a sort of *carte blanche* for carnage. One interpretation, by Captain Pabst of the Guards Cavalry Rifle Division, was taken to be the “guiding principle” of the unit:

Whoever offers armed resistance or plunder belongs immediately against the wall. Every leader is responsible for the execution of this order. Further, all occupants of houses from which troops are fired upon are to be driven out into the streets, even if they protest their innocence[...]suspected persons on whom weapons are actually found are to be shot.⁴³

This paradoxical directive, to bring order through chaos, dominated the “March Days” in Berlin.

The re-conquest of Munich had a similar character. Munich had been ruled by an independent Soviet Republic (Räterepublik). Food shortages, misrule, and “Red Terror” characterized its existence.⁴⁴ For example, as the Freikorps brigades neared Munich, Rudolf Eglhofer, Commander of the Red Army, massacred dozens of unarmed prisoners in the Luitpoldgymnasium. The Republican soldiers surrounded Munich in an “iron ring” and closed in on the city. Major Schulz of the Lützow Freikorps set the tone for the battle, saying, “Anyone[...]whose conscience bothers him better get out. It is a lot better to kill a few innocent people than to let one guilty person escape[...]you know how to handle it[...]shoot them and report that

41 Waite, 66-7.

42 Quoted in Gordon, 31.

43 Quoted in Gordon, 32.

44 See Waite, 79-86.

they attacked you or tried to escape.”⁴⁵ The Freikorps began the attack on 30 April. The number of dead was so overwhelming, that the public health officials could not properly bury all the bodies. They constituted a health menace, and so the *Freikorpskämpfer* dug shallow ditches and shoved the bodies in.⁴⁶ Yet again, the Freikorps used brutal methods to suppress extremists and consolidate the Weimar Republic. The brutality must have been known by Ebert and Noske, and the actions of the Freikorps seem to be at loggerheads with the humanist social democracy that the Weimar Republic was supposed to espouse.

b. The Freikorps as *Vehmgericht*

The *Vehmgericht* first emerged in medieval Germany in the form of a vigilante society which dispensed quick, violent, and arbitrary “justice” in a time without an efficient judicial system. In the period after Versailles, many Freikorps were officially disbanded and re-emerged in one form or another, invoking the idea of a *Vehmgericht* in the Weimar Republic. One historian succinctly explains the similarity between the former and latter: “The chief resemblance between the medieval *Vehmgericht* and its twentieth century namesake was this: the only sentence handed down by the “court” was death.”⁴⁷ As the Republic continued, some Freikorps became increasingly reactionary and attempted to overthrow and destabilize the regime. Notable examples are the Kapp Putsch of March 1920 and the assassinations of Matthias Erzberger on 26 August 1921 and of Walther Rathenau on 24 June 1922. These examples show the reactionary political character of many Freikorps—namely, they now worked towards chaos, not stability.⁴⁸

45 Quoted in Waite, 89.

46 Waite, 90.

47 Waite, 213.

48 There is no specific turning point to be found, when the Freikorps turned against the government they had previously protected. The Treaty of Versailles is the closest thing to a turning point to be found. It brought many Freikorps leaders to the brink of open revolt. It also stipulated that the republic

The Kapp Putsch was an attempt to completely overthrow the Weimar Republic. It was undertaken by certain *Freikorpsführer* in response to the so-called “*Diktat*” of Versailles. The treaty dictated that, by 31 March 1920, Germany would have to reduce its “German effectives” to one hundred thousand (Art. 160-3). The government signed the treaty, and this infuriated some of the *Freikorpsführer*. It is not hard to imagine why. The Freikorps movement included many thousands of seasoned soldiers who were loyal to their officers more than to the government. The disarmament provisions would dissolve their entire movement. Many volunteers and officers thought this to be a betrayal by the government. A group of officers calling themselves the *Nationale Vereinigung* (National Union) devised to institute a military dictatorship. Members of the group were the *Freikorpsführer* Captain Pabst, Major Stephani, Wolfgang Kapp, Colonel Bauer, and the generals Ludendorff and von Lüttwitz.⁴⁹ Pabst tried to convince Noske to join them, and threatened him by saying, “It would be unfortunate, Herr Minister, if you do not find yourself on the side of the officers when the national uprising occurs.”⁵⁰ Noske refused his overtures. Others did not, though. Ehrhardt’s brigade was to be the first Freikorps to be dissolved according to the mandate of Versailles. So it was to Ehrhardt that von Lüttwitz went for support in his putsch.⁵¹ On 12 March 1920, the Ehrhardt Brigade marched on Berlin. They occupied the city without a fight. Kapp’s government was completely unprepared, and it lasted only five days.

What is interesting for the purpose of this study is not so much the narrative of Kapp’s ill-fated government, but the fact that the Ehrhardt brigade was more than willing to march upon the government it had previously fought to consolidate. When Ehrhardt

had no more use for the Freikorps system, and thus threatened the niche they had found in the new republic. See Gordon, 94-5.

49 Waite, 142-3.

50 Noske, 200. My translation.

51 Waite, 149.

was asked why his soldiers marched on Berlin, the surprised captain answered, “Why? Because I told them to! Wasn’t that enough?”⁵² This event illustrates the extent to which the Freikorps were primarily loyal to themselves rather than Ebert’s government.

Further, The Freikorps tried to create chaos through political assassinations. In a conversation between Heinz and von Salomon, the two Freikorps members concluded that chaos would ensue if they killed enough Weimar leaders, and that the Freikorps could then seize power. Salomon concluded: “Yes[...]we have got to kill Scheidemann, Rathenau, Zeigner, Lipinski, Cohn, Ebert, and all the rest of the men of November one after another.”⁵³ Salomon commented further in his memoir: “Each one of our deeds[...] however little practical result it might show[...]shook the structure [of the Republic], and provoked reactions[...]We realized fully[...] that violence breeds violence[...][It] gave our actions an added excitement.”⁵⁴ Thus, what the Freikorps sought was chaos and instability through political murder.

Erzberger was simply the first to die. He was Germany’s Minister of Finance, had long been on their list of “traitors.” As early as 1919, the Ehrhardt Brigade used his name in their passwords: “Erzberger—Gravedigger”⁵⁵ They hated him because of his acceptance of the “*Diktat*” of Versailles. On 26 August 1921, Erzberger was strolling in the Black Forest near Grisewald and was confronted with the question, “Are you Erzberger?” by the Freikorps members Heinrich Schultz and Heinrich Tillesen.⁵⁶ When he replied in the affirmative, he was shot. As he crumbled

52 Quoted in Waite, 163.

53 Quoted in Waite, 216.

54 Von Salomon, 261. Erzberger and Rathenau were perhaps the most famous political murder victims, but in no way the only ones. Dozens of murders were committed by the extreme right and left during the middle and late years of Weimar.

55 Quoted in Waite, 217.

56 The murderers were members of the Organization Consul, but had belonged to the Ehrhardt Brigade, The Oberland Freikorps, and the *Schutz-und-Trutzbund* before.

to the ground, Schultz and Tillessen re-loaded their weapons and emptied another twelve shots into his head. The event certainly did polarize the political environment, but it did not prompt civil war as the Freikorps had intended.⁵⁷

The assassination of foreign minister Walther Rathenau is another example of *Freikorpskämpfer* acting in their own interest rather than in the Republic's. Rathenau along with others had also been a target for some time. So much so, that the men of Ehrhardt's Organization Consul included his name in their songs about the men they would kill:

“You brave hero, who shot Gareis down
And thus wiped off our mournful frown
have brought us close to liberation
From socialist dogs who hound our nation.

Then let us gladden, never dull,
Smash to pulp Herr Wirth's thick skull
Revenge will come to us some day
Hurrah! Hurrah! Hurrah!

Grab Herr Wirth by his scalp
Crack his skull till you hear him yelp
Knock off Wather Rathenau
The Goddamned dirty Jew!”⁵⁸

Ernst Werner Techow, Erwin Kern (a friend and accomplice of von Salomon), and Herrmann Fischer overtook Rathenau's car in Berlin around 11:00 on 24 June 1922. Kern fired an automatic pistol at point blank range. Fischer hurled a grenade into the car. Techow

57 Dirk Schumann, *Political Violence in the Weimar Republic, 1918-1933: Fight for the Streets and Fear of Civil War* trans. Thomas Dunlap, (New York) Bergham Books, 2009, 95-99.

58 Quoted in Waite, 218-9.

sped away.⁵⁹

The assassination shocked the population perhaps more than any other event during the Weimar Republic. Demonstrations in many city centres followed, and many people feared civil war. The *Volksstimme* commented that Republic was in “grave danger” and with it “the survival of Germany” and “the unity of German tribes.”⁶⁰ The *Magdeburgische Zeitung* spoke of the potential “dissolution of the German Reich.”⁶¹ Thus, the political murders of Ezberger and Rathenau (among many others), and the reactionary political violence of the Freikorps served interests of their own: chaos and destabilization.

Underground Paramilitary: The “End” of the Freikorps System

While General Hans von Seeckt attempted to disband much of the Freikorps under mandate of the Versailles treaty, they wanted to remain soldiers, and assumed other forms while retaining their reactionary character.

Von Seeckt wanted his *Führerheer* of one hundred thousand to be unquestionably loyal to the Republic, beautifully trained, and disciplined. Most Freikorps were none of those things. He comments on the problem of the Freikorps in his memoir:

“The Freikorps assembled in themselves the willingness for struggle and sacrifice that the old army had[...]but [the Freikorps’] form and worth vary, and are controlled mostly by their *Führer*. Their emergence and collection gave the Freikorps a Freebooter character (*Landsknechtscharakter*) which is not suitable for the foundation of a new army[...][A] new building must be built on sure foundations, and must be constructed according to a definite plan. The Freikorps had neither the plan nor the construction [...]they were simply not

59 Waite, 219.

60 Schumann, 106.

61 Ibid.

suited for the work of peace.”⁶²

He argued that “The army serves the state and only the state.”⁶³ As is apparent in their penchant for putsches and political murder, the Freikorps were not what von Seeckt was looking for.⁶⁴ On 18 April 1920, he issued a proclamation:

Whoever does not denounce the *Märzsturm* [by which he means the Kapp Putsch]—whoever really believes that the repetition of such a calamity could bring about something new in the *Reichswehr* or in the people—should find in himself the feeling that there is no longer a place for him in the army.⁶⁵

Thus, von Seeckt proclaimed that Germany would obey the mandate of Versailles and that the reactionary Freikorps were not to continue in the new army. Naturally, this was not well-received by the Freikorps.

They responded by going underground. Wanting to keep their Freikorps intact, the *Freikorpsführer* covered up their activities with seemingly legitimate fronts. They opened businesses which required large numbers of strong, young men. Examples of these are trucking companies, bicycle renting agencies, road construction gangs, private detective bureaus, travelling circuses, and labour camps.⁶⁶ Ernst von Salomon gives an adept description of this phenomenon:

62 General Hans von Seeckt, *Die Reichswehr*, (Leipzig) R. Kittler Verlag, 1933, 14-15. My translation.

63 Quoted in Waite, 184.

64 It should be noted that some of the less reactionary, better disciplined Freikorps (those of Maercker, von Epp, and Reinhard, for example) were absorbed into the *Reichswehr* almost without change. See Waite, 186-7.

65 General Hans von Seeckt, „Erlaß des Generals von Seeckt vom 18 April 1920 über die Stellung des zukünftigen Offizierkorps,“ Pp. 446-7 in Prof. Dr. Herbert Michaelis, Prof. Dr. Ernst Schraepfer, eds. *Ursachen und Folgen vom deutschen Zusammenbruch 1918 und 1945 bis zur staatlichen Neuordnung Deutschlands in der Gegenwart: Eine Urkunden- und Dokumentensammlung zur Zeitgeschichte*, vol. 7, (Berlin) Dokumenten Verlag Dr. Herbert Wendler & Co., 1962, 446. My translation.

66 Waite, 189.

In the moment when it became inevitable, the Freikorps gave up their previous militaristic formations quite easily[...]but not their nature and their existence. Their readiness for action (*Einsatzbereitschaft*) remained as before, only in different forms and in the shadows of illegality. These other forms were multifarious in character[...]work organizations (*Arbeitsgemeinschaften*)[...]tradition or arms associations, sport associations, youth groups, [etc.][...]Naturally, in this grotesque situation, only a part of the Freikorps remained, but these were the core; and even if the remaining unit was scattered to the four winds, they would assemble at the distress call of their leader, and stand once more as a Corps.⁶⁷

Thus, though the Freikorps were officially disbanded, they remained in other (technically legal) forms, ready to be called into action.

Freikorpskämpfer in *Brown Shirts*?

The extent to which the Freikorps contributed to the rise of National Socialism in Germany is a hotly contested subject. The link to National Socialism cannot be denied. The most startling proof for this link is the sheer number of former *Freikorpskämpfer* who held prominent positions in the Nazi Party after 1933 (see Appendix Two). The brutality of the Freikorps also bears a chilling similarity (in character, but not in scale) to the violence perpetrated later under Hitler.⁶⁸ Scholars have interpreted the movement this way also. Robert G.L. Waite titled his study of the movement (from which this study borrows many of its sources) *Vanguard of Nazism*. He illustrates the Freikorps movement as a training ground for the Nazis.

In his exhaustive psychoanalytical study of the movement, *Male Fantasies*, Klaus Theweleit examined the massive body of letters, literature, and diaries of the Freikorps. He found in the movement an abhorrence for “red” floods of communism (often encoded as Jewish) and femininity, a desire to steel the male body against pain

67 Ernst von Salomon, *Nahe Geschichte: Ein Überblick*, (Berlin) Rowohlt Verlag, 1936, 98-9. My translation.

68 Consider the aforementioned digging of mass graves right after the conquest of Munich.

and sensitivity, a glorification of war and combat, anti-democratic tendencies, pronounced nationalism, and nihilistic disregard for human reason and suffering.⁶⁹ Many of these traits were held in common with later Nazi ideology and aesthetic sensibilities. His findings call the Freikorps psychologically proto-fascist.

While the affinity of the Freikorps and the later National Socialists cannot be denied, it is reductive to emplot the entire Freikorps movement as a single, unified microcosm of what would later become Nazism. The relationship between the two movements is more complex than that. The fact of the matter is that the Freikorps volunteers were not Nazis, and those who became Nazis did so long after having joined the Freikorps. Denouncing the Freikorps simply as proto-Nazis obscures a unique and multifarious movement into a homogenous mass, though it was nothing of the sort.

Conclusion

The Freikorps movement emerged from the chaotic beginnings of the Weimar Republic and was used by Ebert and Noske as a force to bring about consolidation and relative political stability through brutality and violence. Attesting to this are their early actions: they neutralized the uprisings of late 1918 and early 1919 and the “March Days” in Berlin, and they re-conquered Munich. They had no interest in the stabilization of the government, though. Rather, feeling betrayed by the disarmament mandate of Versailles and the government’s complicity therewith, they acted in favour of chaos, attempting to overthrow the government during the Kapp putsch, and murdering prominent Republicans like Erzberger and Rathenau. Even after they were officially disbanded, they remained in clandestine forms, ready for the calls of their commanders, unwilling to relinquish their identity as soldiers. Civilians before the War, they were so thoroughly brutalized in the trenches that they

69 See Klaus Theweleit, *Male Fantasies vol. 1: Women, Floods, Bodies, History* trans. Stephen Conway, (Minneapolis) University of Minnesota Press, 1987.

could not and would not demobilize. They were alienated from peace. This speaks to the damaging character of modern warfare in general—that through inhuman violence, a soldier's humanity fragments and is—at least in part—lost.

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The Modern and the Romantic: 'Ethnocentric' Nature and Conservation in the Third Reich

Sarah Cline

*Es gibt ein Reich, wo alles rein ist:
Es hat auch einen Namen:
Totenreich.*

There is a land where all is pure:
And it has a name:
Land of the dead.

from "Ariadne auf
Naxos,"
by Hugo von
Hofmannsthal

In 2002, the Minister of the Environment Jürgen Trittin opened a Berlin conference dedicated to the discussion of *Naturschutz* (nature conservation) in the Third Reich, believing it was time for the German environmental movement "to recognize its own Nazi past."¹ Despite this seeming progress in the way of *Vergangenheitsbewältigung* (mastering the past), a gap remains in German collective memory to this day, as evidenced in a TIME article from 2008 titled "Lessons from Germany," which purports the roots of German environmentalism lay in the counter-cultural era of the 1960s and 1970s.² Whether or not this matter shall be reconciled in memory is not the issue at hand. Rather, the conflict of these two positions

<> Frank Uekoetter. *The Green & the Brown: A History of Conservation in Nazi Germany*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 14.

2 Laura Blue-Schwandorf. "Lessons from Germany." TIME Magazine, April 23, 2008. Article available online.

indicates the presence of a particularly fertile field of discussion on the relationship and possible compatibility between the antimodern goals of conservation and the racial-hygienic ones of German fascism. As Simon Schama writes in *Landscape and Memory*, “It is painful to acknowledge just how ecologically conscientious the most barbaric regime in modern history actually was...Exterminating millions of lives was not at all incompatible with passionate protection for millions of trees.”³ The task is, then, to seek an explanation. What explains the motives that led a number of prominent Nazi officials—including Hitler, Himmler, Göring, Schöenichen, and Daré—to express sincere interest in a broad spectrum of environmental issues, including organic farming, vegetarianism, sustainable forestry methods, and animal rights? Why did many conservationists feel the Nazis were *necessary* for the passage of laws regarding hunting, forestry, and the preservation of natural monuments? The “apparent ease with which German fascism took up the cause of nature conservation, as well as the euphoric response of many Weimar conservationists to the Nazi seizure of power,”⁴ has prompted historians of early twentieth-century German conservationism to search for ideological continuities.

The predominant thesis that has arisen over the years is that conservationism—along with all the other back-to-nature movements of the time, ranging from the organized hiking trips of the *Wandervogel* to the *Heimatkunden* youth movements—was fraught with turn-of-the-century portents of fascism. This argument stems from the broader thesis that modern historical development in Germany followed a “peculiar path” (*Sonderweg*) of antimodernism, ultimately culminating in National Socialism. At the cultural level, anti-liberal and irrational tendencies infected late nineteenth-century soci-

3 Simon Schama. *Landscape and Memory* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., 1995), 119.

4 John Alexander Williams. “‘The Chords of the German Soul are Tuned to Nature’: The Movement to Preserve the Natural *Heimat* from the Kaisereich to the Third Reich.” in *Central European History* (1996) 29.3: 339.

ety in the form of a backward-looking, neo-romantic, anti-urban, radically nationalist, and increasingly anti-Semitic ideology of “cultural despair.”⁵ As Williams notes, this *Sonderweg* association of back-to-nature movements and ideologies with dangerously irrational, proto-fascist tendencies “lingers on with surprising consistency, both in serious historical studies and in works intended for popular consumption.”⁶ Although the antimodern impulse of the late nineteenth-century is not particular to Germany, is there something unique about its manifestation within the German context? Was, in fact, the *Gleichschaltung* (synchronization) of *Naturschutz* interests with those of National Socialism reflective of deep-seated desires of romanticism?

In order to comprehend this distinctive rapprochement, and to analyze the authenticity of Nazi ‘environmentalism,’ we must contextualize the ideas that governed their thinking within broader historical, scientific, and philosophical developments of the age. We must also dissect the rhetoric employed by the two movements, and gauge whether this rhetoric was translated to reality. Through the exploration of ideas surrounding ‘nature’ and *Heimat* (homeland) amongst Wilhelmine and Weimar conservationists, followed by a deconstruction of Hitler’s biological mysticism and the National Socialist ‘Religion of Nature’, we shall illuminate fundamental disparities amongst these interpretations of ‘nature’—and subsequently, how they shaped literal interactions with the natural environment. In this holistic approach, may we observe whether genuine antimodern affinities for nature existed within the fascist Nazi regime, as proposed by the *Sonderweg* thesis, or rather, if such ‘romantic’ values were perceived as compatible within a fundamentally modern *Weltanschauung* (world view).

5 Simon Schama. *Landscape and Memory* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., 1995), 110.

6 John Alexander Williams. “‘The Chords of the German Soul are Tuned to Nature’: The Movement to Preserve the Natural *Heimat* from the Kaisereich to the Third Reich.” in *Central European History*. (1996) 29.3: 339.

Evolution of ‘Nature’ and Heimat in Wilhelmine and Weimar Conservation Movements

The evolution of ideas surrounding ‘nature’ and *Heimat* in late nineteenth and early twentieth century Germany traverses the spectrum from antimodern agrarian romanticism to technological infiltration of the landscape with *Landschaftspflege*—an intensely individualized vision of *Heimat* to a militarized, essentialized, and unified one—and from the organicity of all *Volk*-souls to the unique connection of the German soul to the soil. Given new and frequently unstable political contexts within Germany, definitions of nature and *Heimat* were constantly reoriented and revised to meet the needs of the populace.

Although our main analysis lies with the second wave of romanticism, which arose in reaction to the rapid industrialization of the Wilhelmine era (1888-1918), this later generation drew many ideological parallels with its predecessor through its aesthetic and irrational forms of mysticism, nature worship, and agrarian romanticism. Representative of the first wave of romanticism are figures like Herder and Goethe’s young Werther. In fact, it is noted that the first to make German romanticists enthusiastic for the “organic, plantlike unfolding of the *Volk*-souls”⁷ was Herder, who, speaking towards the close of the eighteenth century, referred to all *Volk*-souls, not solely those of Germans—as would be the case in the later corruption of nationalism. As such, Herder envisioned a utopia of perpetual peace in which passionate nationalisms bloomed sweetly side-by-side like different colored roses in one common garden. Goethe’s great contribution to romanticism came in the form of his autofictional character Werther, in *The Sorrows of Young Werther*. From its pages emerged scenes of natural splendor, all of which were capable of evoking intense emotional reactions from the protagonist. Nature was even presented as therapeutic, as Werther desired to be buried

7 Peter Viereck. *Metapolitics: From the Romantics to Hitler*. (New York: A. Knopf, Inc., 1941), 50.

in the heart of the garden where he and Charlotte, the object of his unrequited love, spent many precious moments.⁸

This level of emotional attachment to nature was similarly noted amongst Wilhelmine romantics, who expressed a bourgeois nostalgia for the countryside in the expansion of industrial urban centers, and an internalized suffering experienced in witnessing the destruction of nature. In this regard, it was asserted that the “roots of the German essence” lay within the German people’s “deep feeling for nature.”⁹ An example of this eco-psychological condition is found in the words of Ludwig Klages, a German philosopher, who deplored the loss of the “ancient trees,” as they were replaced with “forests of chimneys everywhere.”¹⁰ In the maelstrom following the 1871 unification of German states, rapid modernization, and palpable social and environmental change, *Heimat* became “a touchstone of identity—affixing personal memory to the mental map of the homeland.”¹¹ Thus, the protection of *Heimat*—for quite blatantly anthropocentric, therapeutic reasons—demanded prioritization. The first mention of the term ‘*Heimatschutz*,’ or protection of the homeland, is found in the title of an article published in 1897 by famed musician and writer Ernst Rudorff. Rather than “railing bitterly against modernity,” Rudorff eloquently argues that the “preservation of monuments and beautiful objects of nature” is essential for the preservation of “*deutsches Volkstum*” (German national character).¹² In this manner, linkages between patriotism, the German race, and the natural landscape came to the fore within conservation discourse.

8 Johann Wolfgang von Goethe. *The Sorrows of Young Werther*. (New York: Mondial, 2006), 90.

9 Charles E. Closmann. “Legalizing a Volksgemeinschaft: Nazi Germany’s Reich Nature Protection Law of 1935,” in *How Green Were the Nazis?* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2005), 24.

10 Christof Mauch. (ed) “Introduction,” in *Nature in German History*. (New York: Berghen Books, 2004), 3.

11 Thomas Lekan. *Imagining the Nation in Nature: Landscape Preservation and German Identity, 1885-1945*. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2004), 8.

12 Charles E. Closmann. “Legalizing a Volksgemeinschaft: Nazi Germany’s Reich Nature Protection Law of 1935,” in *How Green Were the Nazis?* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2005), 24.

This tendency would accelerate and intensify as the outbreak of the Great War made room for the corruptive influences of nationalism.

During the time of the Great War, landscape conservationists successfully constructed an emotional arsenal against Germany's foreign enemies by reinterpreting "natural monuments as guardians of spatial and ethnic identity that was differentiated geographically, culturally, and racially from French and Slavic peoples."¹³ In this way, nationalism was tinted with increasingly racial hues, as Germans were conferred with natural superiority and their defense of the *Heimat* against foreign invaders was sublimated. *Heimat* was increasingly dressed in feminine, maternal language, whereas the warfront represented a site of masculine strength where young, virile German soldiers asserted their physical and cultural dominance over other nations. This sharp contrast deployed within conservation discourse effectively convinced patriotic Germans of their need to maintain vigilance "against the enemies, external and internal, that threatened the timeless splendor of the *Heimat*."¹⁴ The loss of the war wrought great devastation on all fronts in Germany, most notably in the imposition of the Treaty of Versailles. Some scholars have noted, however, that had the social and political situation been stabilized in Germany after its defeat in 1918, the essentialist rhetoric regarding *Heimat* and nature so recently entrenched in conservation discourse "might have faded in favor of traditional bourgeois aestheticism and quiet civic reconstruction."¹⁵ As this was not the case, Weimar conservationists carved a new discursive edge—attributing the loss of the war to a diminishing connection with nature. To rectify this situation, a program of (quasi-paternalistic) mass pedagogy was felt to be in order. Through the greater promotion of the hiking trips of the *Wandervogel* and the organization of the *Heimatkunden* youth

13 Thomas Lekan. *Imagining the Nation in Nature*. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2004), 75.

14 Ibid.

15 Thomas Lekan. *Imagining the Nation in Nature*. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2004), 75.

movement, conservationists hoped to re-root the German people in their natural environment. According to Konrad Guenther, a prominent conservationist, Germans had always returned to their “natural” roots when faced with the pressure of hard times—but now the stakes were higher, for “if the German people failed to unite into a strong, ‘natural’ community, they would become ‘cultural fertilizer’ for other nations.”¹⁶ In this way, *Heimat* was once more viewed in a thoroughly anthropocentric light, as the source of national healing and the key to the creation of a new, harmonious *Volksgemeinschaft*.¹⁷

In pursuit of stability and social cohesion, conservationists sensed the need for rhetorical standardization—now associating the ‘natural’ with *Heimat*, lending it a temporal, physical space. The individualized, regional, multivalent associations that existed before were now subsumed under national ideals. *Heimat* could no longer be defined as “the woods where we played cops and robbers, and the pond where we swam in the summertime and ice-skated in the winter.”¹⁸ From this rhetorical reconfiguration, however, emerged a new dichotomous relationship between the ‘endangered’ natural *Heimat*, and the ‘protected’ natural *Heimat*. As Weimar conservationists slowly came to terms with the limited success of their campaign to make nature protection the ‘people’s task,’ many “registered their frustration through an increasingly vitriolic critique of the ‘masses,’” believing them to have been “seduced by popular fashions and modernist standardization.”¹⁹ This social paternalism and lingering fear that the homeland remained under siege by foreigners or uncultured masses that invaded and destroyed the pristine countryside entrenched itself in the mentalities of conservationists. However,

16 John Alexander Williams. “‘The Chords of the German Soul are Tuned to Nature’: The Movement to Preserve the Natural *Heimat* from the Kaisereich to the Third Reich,” in *Central European History*, (1996) 29.3: 339.

17 A racially unified and hierarchically organized body in which the interests of individuals would be strictly subordinate to those of the nation, or *Volk*. *Encyclopaedia Britannica*

18 Ibid, 351.

19 Thomas Lekan. *Imagining the Nation in Nature*. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2004), 142.

by the late 1920s and early 30s, conservation rhetoric found means to reconceptualize ‘the masses’ as ‘true’ Germans “who had fallen under the influence of pernicious foreign elements”²⁰ of materialism and industry could now be re-rooted in both their natural and national home. In the blaming of ‘Western’ ideas for the Germans’ alienation from nature, we begin to sense a growing desire to ferret out or eliminate ‘weak’ or ‘foreign’ *racial* elements from German society for the biological improvement of the national organism. This increasing racist tendency to speak in terms of foreign and native blood must be viewed in direct correlation with the emergence of National Socialism and the *Blut und Boden* (Blood and Soil) motif of Richard Walther Darré, as shall be elaborated further on.

Simultaneous to this transformation was an evolution in the conservation stance regarding the allowance of modern penetrations in the natural environment—reflected in the growing popularity of *Landschaftspflege*. Literally translated, *Landschaftspflege* means ‘care for the landscape,’ but in practice, it translated as a new, holistic, and functionally driven form of land-use planning that sought new ways to reconcile *Naturschutz* with Weimar modernization. In 1926, for example, new *Deutscher Bund Heimatschutz* president Werner Lindner argued that *Heimatschutz* advocates needed to rethink the movement’s earlier anti-industrialism in light of modern building technologies that enabled architects to “embed factories, bridges, and dams into the landscape without damage to landscape beauty or for the native countryfolk.”²¹ In this way, the *Naturschutz* movement appears to have undergone metamorphosis; although some members clung to earlier romantic ideals, the majority came to accept more modern, utilitarian uses of the environment. According to one more progressive member,

20 John Alexander Williams. “‘The Chords of the German Soul are Tuned to Nature’: The Movement to Preserve the Natural *Heimat* from the Kaisereich to the Third Reich.” in *Central European History*: (1996) 29.3: 365.

21 Thomas Lekan. “Regionalism and the Politics of Land Preservation in the Third Reich.” in *Environmental History*: (July 1999) vol. 4, no. 3: 80.

Protection of the *Heimat* is not a form of romantic longing for the ‘good old days,’ but the vigorous pursuit of good new days. We desire not things that are similar in form to the past, but things that are equivalent in value. The *Heimatschutz* movement stands in the middle of contemporary life; it takes the view that a merely material civilization must be reshaped into a culture based on the soul and on morality.²²

Thus, by the time of the Nazi co-optation of *Naturschutz*, the movement had already begun to differentiate itself from its nostalgic, anti-modern roots—presenting instead a distinctly modern, neo-romantic façade.

The Political Gleichschaltung with National Socialism

Continuing with the topic of *Landschaftspflege*, we can begin to grasp the new synergy that developed between the Nazis and *Naturschutz* advocates in their shared belief in the therapeutic power of nature and centralized landscape planning to effect far-reaching social change. ‘Nature’ increasingly became the source of anthropocentric aestheticism. Adhering less to the wilderness ethic, landscape conservationists of the Third Reich produced a “less dichotomous view of nature and culture...valuing ‘second nature’ just as highly as the remnants of ‘first nature.’”²³ Rather than protecting the *Heimat* landscape, the Nazi regime favored a form of environmental mitigation through pioneering projects such as the *Reichsautobahn*, which commenced in 1937. The construction of this extensive road system sought to seamlessly wed modern technology with the natural environment, as the landscape architects mapped the roads so that they ebbed and flowed with the innate curves of the landscape—conforming to aesthetic rather than rationalizing tendencies. In this, the overarching desire was that as Germans drove along these scenic routes, the chords of their souls would once more be tuned to na-

22 Thomas Lekan, *Imagining the Nation in Nature*. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2004), 144.

23 Ibid, 15.

ture²⁴—fortified by its beauty and life-giving qualities. Thus, the Nazi and *Naturschutz* movements were seemingly able to negotiate a common solution to a common concern in the use of *Landschaftspflege*. As Schöenichen succinctly explained, the goal was “homeland protection in the sense of Rudorff, and a shaping of the landscape in the spirit of the new times—both physical landscape transformed and cultural—to reflect a newly emerging dominant race of Germans.”²⁵

As aforementioned, the reasons underlying perceived German racial superiority were posited in Darré’s popular *volkisch* metaphor of *Blut und Boden*. This constituted yet another contributing force in the nascent *Gleichschaltung* between the Nazis and the conservationists, as *Blut und Boden* proved a seductive force in its evocation of favored conservation themes surrounding purity (now not only natural, but racial), and its support of the ‘endangerment’ thesis—witnessed in the Nazi claim: “no healthy *Volk* will grow in a sick landscape.”²⁶ Thus, an ideological affinity was forged in the mutual desire for the creation of a new *Volksgemeinschaft* with timeless organic virtues—that would unfold in a pristine natural environment. However, as alluded to previously, this vision now contained an inherently racial edge. According to Walther Schöenichen, a prominent conservationist and supporter of *Blut und Boden*, in order to cultivate this new *Volksgemeinschaft*, “the nature-loving soul of our race must break through.”²⁷ This gets at the heart of Nazi *Blut und Boden* rhetoric, which invoked a racial legacy of *organicity* through myths of the Teutonic tribes. In *Germania*, Tacitus depicts the “tall blond Teutonic

24 John Alexander Williams. “‘The Chords of the German Soul are Tuned to Nature’: The Movement to Preserve the Natural *Heimat* from the Kaisereich to the Third Reich.” in *Central European History*: (1996) 29.3: 391.

25 Charles E. Closmann. “Legalizing a *Volksgemeinschaft*: Nazi Germany’s Reich Nature Protection Law of 1935,” in *How Green Were the Nazis?* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2005), 27.

26 William H. Rollins. “Whose Landscape? Technology, Fascism, and Environmentalism on the National Socialist Autobahn.” in *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*. (September 1995) 85.3: 510.

27 Charles E. Closmann. “Legalizing a *Volksgemeinschaft*: Nazi Germany’s Reich Nature Protection Law of 1935,” in *How Green Were the Nazis?* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2005), 26.

warriors of the North as *indigenae*, or as a people that had maintained its ancestral purity of both blood and culture in the lands it had always inhabited.”²⁸ This perpetual ‘rootedness’ of the Germanic race (blood) to its primeval land (soil) was regarded as “the historical basis for Germany’s survival and the reason for its cultural dominance.”²⁹ This stood in stark contrast to the traditionally ‘un-rooted’ or stateless peoples such as the Jews or the gypsies, who came to be portrayed as parasites upon the natural environment. Although the two movements would come to emphasize different aspects of the *mythos* of *Blut und Boden*, it initially provided conservationists with further conviction of the benefits a political *Gleichschaltung* with the Nazis would yield.

The alliance with the Nazis also appealed to the conservationists’ tactical motives and socially paternalistic attitudes, as they saw “an opportunity to overcome the political gridlock of Weimar liberalism in favor of the ideal goals of the *Heimat*”³⁰ in the authoritative, centralized power of National Socialism. Given the Nazis’ expressed interest in environmental matters—as ostensibly demonstrated in *Blut und Boden* and *Landschaftspflege*—many conservationists felt the establishment of the National Socialist regime was *necessary* for the work of conservation to receive proper prioritization in the political agenda. The conservationists’ expectations were met, for within the first few years of the Nazis claiming power, three monumental pieces of environmental legislation were passed—in accordance with the Nazi slogan: “The common good takes precedence over the individual good.”³¹ The *Reichstierschutzgesetz* (Reich Animal

28 Brian Vick. “The Origins of the German Volk: Cultural Purity and National Identity in Nineteenth-Century Germany,” in *German Studies Review*, vol. 26, no. 2 (2003): pp. 242.

29 Gesine Gerhard. “Breeding Pigs and People for the Third Reich: Richard Walther Darré’s Agrarian Ideology,” in *How Green Were the Nazis?* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2005), 131.

30 Thomas Lekan. “Regionalism and the Politics of Land Preservation in the Third Reich,” in *Environmental History*: (July 1999) vol. 4, no. 3: 393.

31 Charles E. Closmann. “Legalizing a Volksgemeinschaft: Nazi Germany’s Reich Nature Protection Law of 1935,” in *How Green Were the Nazis?* (Athens:

Protection Act) was the first to be slated in 1933, and it served as an official ban on animal cruelty, ritual slaughter and vivisection. Following this, in 1934, was *Das Reichsjagdgesetz* (The Reich Hunting Law), which limited hunting in favor of practicing more sustainable conservation of wildlife. The final act, and by far the one that won the most favor among conservationists, was the *Reichnatureschutzgesetz* (Reich Nature Conservation Act). Passed in 1935, it effectively unified the *Naturschutz* administration into one central command, created stringent new land-use planning regulations, and expanded the number of regions under protection.

In light of these three realms of relative ideological cohesion, we can begin to comprehend the conservation movement's impetus for *Gleichschaltung* with National Socialism. As Lekan notes, "There appeared to be a fundamental affinity between their nature protection agenda and Nazism's appeal to Blood and Soil. Yet few regional environmentalists fully appreciated the *separate* intellectual trajectory that had drawn Nazi leaders toward back-to-the-land sentiments."[□]

Contextualizing Nazi Attitudes towards the Environment: The Influence of Darwin, Nietzsche and Heidegger

Having discussed the evolution of ideas regarding 'nature' and *Heimat* in Wilhelmine and Weimar conservation movements, and their eventual co-optation by the Nazis through the racist metaphor of *Blut und Boden*, we must now lay the groundwork for the emergence of this 'separate intellectual trajectory' of the National Socialist conception of 'nature' by shedding light on the scientific and philosophical developments of the age.

In 1859, the publication of Darwin's *Origin of the Species* received particular attention in Germany, where it was triumphantly proclaimed:

Today we have a natural science that is based on the history of development. It teaches us, as far as interre-

Ohio University Press, 2005), 29.

lations between creatures and their homeland and their fellow creatures are concerned, to understand the laws of life.³²

Evolutionary theory fundamentally ruptured the divide between human and animal worlds, rendering facile the application of natural law in the human realm—as witnessed in the growing ideological prominence of social Darwinism. Biology was seen as superseding all previous knowledge, as the “principles of the survival of the fittest and of natural selection became fundamental tenets of *volkisch*-nationalistic ideology and transferred to all spheres of social life.”³³ As such, Darwin’s scientific theories may be seen to have left an indelible mark on German thought and society.

From natural selection, Nietzsche aptly carved dialectical oppositions in predator and prey, master and slave, *Übermensch* and *Untermensch*. In *Genealogy of Morals* (1887), he claims that deep within the noble races “lurks the beast of prey, intent on spoil and conquest. This hidden urge has to be satisfied from time to time, the beast let loose in the wilderness.”³⁴ Framed in this imagery, predators were at once esteemed for their vitality and their primacy. These predatory impulses would be innate to the *Übermensch*, who, Nietzsche predicted, would be the final frontier in the evolutionary process. As he asserts in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* (1883),

All beings so far have created something beyond themselves; and do you want to be the ebb of this great flood, and even go back to the beasts rather than overcome man? What is ape to man? A laughing stock or painful embarrassment. And man shall be that to Overman: a laughingstock or painful embarrassment.³⁵

32 Joachim Wolschke-Bulmahn. “All of Germany a Garden? Changing Ideas of Wilderness in German Garden Design and Landscape Architecture,” in *Nature in German History* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2004), 84

33 Ibid.

34 Friedrich Nietzsche. *The Genealogy of Morals*. (New York: Courier Dover Publications, 2003), 26.

35 Friedrich Nietzsche. *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*. (New York: Penguin Classics, 1961), 41.

Just as man had transcended his ape-like existence, so too would this ‘Overman’ transcend the nihilistic modern age by virtue of his *will to power*. With regards to nature, this *will to power* would likely be registered in the phenomenological terms of Heidegger, where man could only *know* nature through his ‘use’ or domination of it.³⁶

This *will to power*, however, was a response to the nihilistic crisis of modernity, as both Nietzsche and Heidegger diagnosed it. The destruction of invisible realities—witnessed in Zarathustra’s declaration “God is dead!”³⁷—led Heidegger to argue for the need of a new collective religion to counteract the potential for pessimistic life-negation and the disintegration of modern society. As such, he supported the *Führer Prinzip*—his idealized belief in the emergence of a ‘father’ figure who would initiate a “positive historical turn”³⁸ within the German nation. Ultimately, all of these ideas coalesced within the Nazi mind—fostering a new conception of nature and justifying racial-hygienic goals.

National Socialist Conceptions of ‘Nature’

To fill the existential void of the modern age, National Socialism constructed a life-affirming Religion of Nature, which was simultaneously a Religion of Beauty, and of the *Volk*. From the pages of *Mein Kampf*, a personified image of ‘nature’ springs forth—as a virile, implacable force whose will is imposed ruthlessly—effectively assuming the place of an omnipotent deity. This awe for nature and its association with the divine was not new, as Late Romantics from Darwin to Wagner, too, saw nature as inexorable, and it is noted that Goethe used to “hyphenate God-Nature (*Gott-Natur*) as one unified organism.”³⁹ In the construction of this new religion, whose tenets

36 Thomas Rohkrämer. “Martin Heidegger,” in *How Green?* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2005), 182.

37 Friedrich Nietzsche. *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*. (New York: Penguin Classics, 1961), 114.

38 Thomas Rohkrämer. “Martin Heidegger,” in *How Green?* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2005), 174.

39 Peter Viereck. *Metapolitics: From the Romantics to Hitler*. (New York: A.

were founded in eternal natural laws, the goal was the cultivation of a true and pure *Volksgemeinschaft*—as “Nature has little love for bastards.”⁴⁰ This utopian desire constituted the core of what may be called Hitler’s *biological mysticism*.

The National Socialist *Weltanschauung* (world view), “through its deification of nature itself, seemed to allow for a bridging of the gap between spirit and matter.”⁴¹ In its transcendence of the Cartesian nature-culture dualism, it would appear that National Socialists were seeing to construct what Escobar would classify as an organic regime of nature, which is characterized by a non-separation between living, non-living, and supernatural domains.⁴² As a counterpoint to humanist thought, the Religion of Nature also served to depreciate the role of humanity in the cosmic order. As Hitler pronounced in *Mein Kampf*,

At this point, someone or other may laugh, but this planet once moved through the ether for millions of years without human beings, and it can do so again someday if men forget they owe their higher existence, not the ideas of a few crazy ideologists, but to the knowledge and ruthless application of Nature’s stern and rigid laws.⁴³

Man was a part of nature, but for Hitler and many of the Nazi ideologues, there was nothing to suggest there was an essence elevating him above it. “Man is a link in the chain of living nature just as any other organism.”⁴⁴ This philosophy was reiterated in the monism of Ernst Haeckel, which drew comparisons between what was seen as continuous realms of human society and the natural world. These

Knopf, Inc., 1941), 30.

40 Robert A. Pois. *National Socialism and the Religion of Nature*. (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1986), 40.

41 Ibid, 42.

42 Arturo Escobar. “After Nature: Steps to an Antiessentialist Political Ecology.” *Current Anthropology*. (vol. 40, 1999), 8.

43 Robert A. Pois. *National Socialism and the Religion of Nature*. (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1986), 38.

44 Ibid, 42.

analogies are said to have “laid the foundation for the complete medicalization of all moral and ethical concerns in the Nazi state,”⁴⁵ as the anti-humanist thought intrinsic to the Religion of Nature became increasingly *dehumanizing* in the context of Nazi racial-hygienic and eugenic goals.

In the context of Darwin’s evolutionary theory, the Nazis intentionally blurred the roles of humans and animals in their rhetoric and policies—allowing for sinister applications as they “herded humans, branded them with numbers, neutered them, and slaughtered them industrially.”⁴⁶ The policies are known most prominently in Himmler’s *Generalplan Ost*, which shall be discussed further on, and in Hitler’s Final Solution. The rhetoric, however, is of interest here, as it was used to defend the cold, rational imposition of the natural order onto the social realm. Perhaps the most marked rhetorical device of the Nazis was the exploitation of metaphors involving animals and the natural world. Reich Peasant Leader and Minister of Agriculture, Richard Walther Darré, provided a natural metaphor in explaining why the “unwholesome Jewish race” was able to flourish in Germany, asserting, “Even the best soil can support weeds (*Unkraut*), and the conscientious farmer has to weed his fields in order to take care of this problem.”⁴⁷ Likewise, animal metaphors abound, as the Nazis constantly invoked dogs and wolves as models for the qualities they wanted to cultivate: loyalty, hierarchy, fierceness, courage, obedience, and even cruelty. As such, Hitler’s code name was “the wolf,” and he referred to the SS as a “pack of wolves.”⁴⁸ In the appropriation of this language, it becomes evident that the important distinction was no longer between humans and animals, but rather

45 Boria Sax. *Animals in the Third Reich: Pets, Scapegoats and the Holocaust*. (New York: Continuum International Publishing Group, 2000), 50.

46 Boria Sax. *Animals in the Third Reich: Pets, Scapegoats and the Holocaust*. (New York: Continuum International Publishing Group, 2000), 22

47 Robert A. Pois. *National Socialism and the Religion of Nature*. (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1986), 123.

48 Boria Sax. *Animals in the Third Reich*. (New York: Continuum International Publishing Group, 2000), 74.

between victor and vanquished—with the underlying paradigm of predator and prey, in accordance with Nietzschean philosophy. As Hitler claimed in 1934:

I desire a violent, domineering, fearless, and ferocious upcoming generation. It must be able to bear pain. It must show no signs of weakness. The free and magnificent predator must once again glint from their eyes.⁴⁹

Despite such natural allusions, the evolutionary theories that paved the way for these rhetorical devices ultimately needed revision. To the Nazis, evolution from a common ancestor was a completely false conception—“life was a struggle between the several major races, the most ‘natural’ of which would win.”⁵⁰ Thus, the emphasis was placed on natural selection, competition, and the inevitable triumph of the German *Übermenschen*.

Whereas Nietzsche referred to the *Übermensch* as an individual, Hitler “collectivizes the Overman into a whole organic ‘master nation’ (Germany) and the ordinary man into the ‘slave nation.’”⁵¹ In this way, Hitler sought to subvert the postulate that man could not master nature by the cultivation of a new ‘type’ of man—“one who, in conforming to the laws of nature represented a sort of apotheosis of natural development.”⁵² The *Übermensch* would represent not only the nature-bound Aryan humanity, but also the internal synthesis of several crucial elements of the Religion of Nature: “This creature was immortal, because his participation in the life of a race that not only lived in perfect harmony with natural laws, but *embodied* them.”⁵³ Given these superior qualities, the *Übermensch* was rectified in the transformation of nature through his *will to power*, in keeping

49 Ibid, 33.

50 Robert A. Pois. *National Socialism and the Religion of Nature*. (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1986), 44.

51 Peter Viereck. *Metapolitics: From the Romantics to Hitler*. (New York: A. Knopf, Inc., 1941), 197.

52 Robert A. Pois. *National Socialism and the Religion of Nature*. (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1986), 41.

53 Ibid, 118.

with Heidegger's phenomenology. Thus, the domination of nature by the *Übermensch* became a means for restoring the image of German strength. Nowhere was this seen more clearly, or disturbingly, than in the Nazi plans to conquer and colonize eastern lands in Himmler's *Generalplan Ost*. In the minds of Nazi powers, territorial expansion formed a prerequisite to the creation of a new *Volksge-meinschaft*. This quest for German *Lebensraum* (living space), however, would come at the expense of the 'slave nations.' In the planned colonization of the east, landscape planners were commissioned for the task of making "the new natural *Heimat* just like Germany with its 'integrated' agriculture and industry"; and to make room for German colonists, the Nazis would assure that any "excess population would be deported and destroyed."⁵⁴ As such, the creation of a new, 'clean' nature would take place alongside the genocide of 'unclean' and 'inferior' eastern inhabitants.

Taking all of these perspectives into account, it becomes clear that the Nazis neither adopted a fully biocentric nor anthropocentric lens in their views of nature. Rather, in their new *Volksische* community, the Nazis constructed imagined boundaries that could "include certain animals and exclude many citizens."⁵⁵ In this new German nation, or *ethnos*, loyalty to race superseded loyalty to species—yielding an *ethnocentric* outlook that extended to the natural realm. The *ethnos* molded by National Socialism would represent "the development of a perfect community of plant life, animals and man in the German *Lebensraum*."⁵⁶

54 John Alexander Williams. "'The Chords of the German Soul are Tuned to Nature': The Movement to Preserve the Natural *Heimat* from the Kaisereich to the Third Reich," in *Central European History*, (1996) 29.3: 364.

55 Boria Sax. *Animals in the Third Reich*. (New York: Continuum International Publishing Group, 2000), 42.

56 Joachim Wolschke-Bulmahn. "All of Germany a Garden? Changing Ideas of Wilderness in German Garden Design and Landscape Architecture," in *Nature in German History*. (New York: Berghan Books, 2004), 89.

The Environmental Impact of an Ethnocentric View

Inextricable to the National Socialist Religion of Nature was the messianic figure of the *Übermensch*, whose *will to power* dictated the actions of the Nazi state. Although the rhetoric of the Nazis promised greater representation to *Naturschutz* and the disintegration of nature-culture divides in a new *Weltanschauung*, the Third Reich “systematically subordinated environmental concern to economic recovery (in public works projects) and war mobilization—threatening decades of preservation efforts through *Autobahn* construction, rearmament, land reclamation, and dam building.”⁵⁷ This was all done with the aim of asserting German national strength and providing homage to the superior German *ethnos*, with its representative “blond beast.”⁵⁸ In the period of wartime build-up, most notably, all previous sustainable endeavors were abandoned, including the pilot project of Darré that sought the establishment of organic farming as the new mode of agricultural production, and Göring’s *Dauerwald* (Eternal Forest) principles, which advocated conservation forestry. Many of the original *Naturschutz* advocates left the Nazi Party after 1939, having realized the gap between the rhetoric and reality of Nazi ‘environmentalism.’

If we are to accept the assertion that “nature is essentially culture projected onto the landscape,”⁵⁹ then it is facilely comprehended how the natural environment became degraded by the *ethnocentric* constructions of National Socialism. As Lekan asserts, the Nazis “touted the ‘Aryan’ race’s *will to reshape* the landscape and to conquer *Lebensraum*—a claim that offered little protection for the natural landscape.”⁶⁰

57 Thomas Lekan. *Imagining the Nation in Nature*. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2004), 9.

58 Boria Sax. *Animals in the Third Reich*. (New York: Continuum International Publishing Group, 2000), 34.

59 Simon Schama. *Landscape and Memory*. (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., 1995), 14.

60 Thomas Lekan. *Imagining the Nation in Nature*. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2004), 9.

Heidegger's Critique of National Socialist 'Environmentalism'

In Heidegger, we find a unique source on the subject of National Socialist 'environmentalism,' for although he was a Nazi; he later became a proponent of 'green' thinking in his growing disillusionment with the regime. Interestingly, this disillusionment was rooted in his reflections on the environment and his critique of a nihilistic modern existence, which he saw as being characterized by the human desire to "achieve power and force their will upon the human and non-human world"⁶¹ through technology.

To cite a locus where technology and nature meet—and where *ethnocentric* views of nature reign supreme we look to the construction of the *Reichsautobahn*. Although landscape advocates (*Landschaftsämwalte*) were praised for their 'efforts' in maintaining the natural integrity of the landscape, the *Reichsautobahn* was ultimately constructed as a symbol of an emboldened and fiercely modern Nazi Germany—and as such, the interests of nature would necessarily be undermined in the achievement of this goal. Hitler made this plain in an internal memorandum:

While the beech forests should obviously be preserved as far as possible during the construction of the autobahn, they would have to yield to the demands of such a great technological project in case of conflict.⁶²

Through this example of the *Reichsautobahn*, where nature was dominated by technology in the Nazi *will to power*, we can now begin to comprehend Heidegger's conversion from earlier phenomenological views in fear of impending dystopia.

Heidegger identified modern nihilism as symptomatic of *humanism*, with the Cartesian "autonomous subject as the very center

61 Thomas Rohkrämer. "Martin Heidegger," in *How Green?* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2005), 183.

62 Frank Uekoetter. *The Green & the Brown: A History of Conservation in Nazi Germany*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 32.

of all existence.”⁶³ He came to view this scenario as highly problematic, if not positively dangerous—naming the human capacity to view nature in such a manner, ‘enframing.’⁶⁴ Within this ‘enframing’ mindset, nature is “regarded as *Bestand*, that is, as a standing reserve or raw material,” which consequently makes the “unscrupulous use of the environment appear legitimate and appropriate—to the point, even, that we kill humans who do not fit into our design.”⁶⁵ Rather than conforming to its design for an organic regime of nature, Heidegger claims National Socialism entered the mode of a *capitalist* regime, as defined by Escobar, wherein nature is treated as a “universal means of production”⁶⁶ and traded as a commodity. Heidegger therefore depicted National Socialism as a fundamental project of humanism and nihilism, as was true for all other modern European societies.

Conclusion

Ultimately, the *Sonderweg* thesis must be dispelled. Not only had the conservation movement begun to tear up its antimodern roots by the time of its co-optation by National Socialism, but moreover, the Nazi regime was fiercely *modern*, and went to painstaking lengths to present itself as such—as it responded to historical, scientific and philosophical developments of the age and utilized the latest technologies in reshaping the German landscape. This, however, does not preclude the fact that Nazism was indelibly marked by romanticism in its evocation of beauty and its desire to construct an organic regime of nature that would house a pure German *ethnos*, a mystical *Volksgemeinschaft*. The Nazis indeed expressed genuine interest in ecology and conservation, but it was only as a means to serve this end. However, the Religion of Nature that the Nazis hoped

63 Thomas Rohkrämer. “Martin Heidegger,” in *How Green?* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2005), 184.

64 Ibid.

65 Ibid, 188.

66 Arturo Escobar. “After Nature: Steps to an Antiessentialist Political Ecology.” *Current Anthropology*. (vol. 40, 1999), 6.

would facilitate the creation of this organic utopia was short-lived, for “when the adherents to the ‘laws of life’ began to be *overwhelmed* by life—this extraordinarily powerful natural religion had to devour itself and, in the end, there could only be nihilistic destruction.”⁶⁷ In its suicide, National Socialism fell prey to its own *will to power*—as Heidegger foretold—prostrating itself before the image of the *Übermensch*, for whom “all things are permissible.”⁶⁸ In the recent work of Frederic Spotts, *Hitler and the Power of Aesthetics* (2003), we are reminded of the fact that a great number of the Nazi Party leaders, most prominently Hitler, hailed from artistic backgrounds, and it was, in fact, their penchant for aestheticism that inspired the Nazi *will to power* and subsequent actions of the state. Thus, we must newly conceive of the National Socialist regime as a project of romanticism—whose goal was the creation of a thoroughly modern utopia, which, in accordance with natural law, would boast racial and natural purity in a dominant German *ethnos*. As Viereck asserts in *Metapolitics*, “When an organic approach is applied to a state or nation or race instead of to universe or science or poem, the result is *political romanticism*. Without it, Hitler’s Third Reich is inconceivable.”⁶⁹

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67 Robert A. Pois. *National Socialism and the Religion of Nature*. (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1986), 110.

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