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# Historical Discourses

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## Foreword

History is inherently human. The historian spends much of his or her time studying people from the past. As such, one of the most valuable aspects of the study of history is that it impels us to learn about the interaction between men, women, and children. Through the study of history, we can begin to understand where we come from.

*Historical Discourses* reveals the excellence of McGill's History Department. Both the strength of the faculty and students shine through these essays.

We received and reviewed nearly 130 papers covering a range of historical subjects. The ten essays selected in this, the XXIII publication of *Historical Discourses*, are examples of excellent analyses, in-depth research, and eloquent writing.

We would like to thank the members of the editorial board for their time and help in the editing process. They worked closely with the authors to fine-tune and perfect their papers. Their thoughts and insight were vital in the final decision of which essays to include. We also thank the Arts Undergraduate Society, the Department of History, and the History Students' Association for their generous financial contributions.

Please enjoy.

Charles Bartlett  
Erika Harding  
Editors-in-Chief





## Randolph's Movement: A. Philip Randolph's March on Washington and its Lasting Legacy on the Civil Rights Movement

By Melissa Gismondi

*The African-American community hoped that the Second World War would bring about substantial social change. This paper documents A. Philip Randolph's efforts to reach an accord with President Franklin D. Roosevelt, and the profound impact this had on future leaders such as Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. The author concludes that WWII was indeed a crucial step in the journey towards equal rights.*

Noted sociologist Stanislas Andreski's theory as published in *Military Organization and Society* states that because total war requires the participation of underprivileged or minority groups, their actions during the war could lead to great possibilities for social gains.<sup>1</sup> For an example, one might look to the Emancipation Proclamation as a reward for African-American participation in the Civil War. Many twentieth-century black leaders, most significantly W.E.B. DuBois, believed similar gains could result from black participation in The Great War. Instead, the 1920s brought a rise in the Ku Klux Klan and race riots throughout the nation, which, due to the Great Migration, were no longer solely situated in the South. If the First World War brought little reward for African-Americans, it was believed that World War II was to have a much more groundbreaking impact.<sup>2</sup> Most importantly, President Franklin Roosevelt's Executive Order 8802, which sought to banish racial discrimination from the defense industry, was a significant victory in the modern civil rights movement and a most welcome reward for the African American community. Yet, while the actual success of Order 8802 itself was questionable, the tactics employed by the

March on Washington Movement, innovated by A. Philip Randolph, revolutionized black protest and would later be used by the likes of Martin Luther King in later civil rights activities. Order 8802 may have been a more symbolic victory for the African American community, but was a victory that nonetheless provided hope and inspiration for the next phase of the civil rights movement.

### *Discrimination in the Economy and Army*

Before looking at the events leading up to the Executive Order 8802, it is crucial for one to understand the plight of African Americans at the time of, and leading up to, World War II. While white Americans were benefiting from an economic boom due to the rapid growth in the defence industry, African Americans remained in the background. In many cases, African Americans were the first ones to be fired in the wake of the Depression and the last ones to be hired in the wartime boom. Racist policies were dominant in the defence industries and are reflected in statistics from 1940: from April to October of that year, the rate of unemployment among whites fell from 17.7 percent to 13 percent. Yet, while white Americans experienced an almost 6 percent drop in their unemployment rates, unemployment for African Americans was static at 22 percent of the population, as it had been the previous year.<sup>3</sup>

The racist policies of defense industries were no secret. In particular, aircraft companies made it explicitly known they would not hire African Americans. The aircraft industry entailed clean, skilled work; the common conception was that this was not the type of work for a black man. In 1940, an almost invisible 0.1 percent of aircraft workers were African American. The Head of Relations for Vultee Aircraft Company stated it was not the policy of his company to employ workers not of the Caucasian race,<sup>4</sup> and other sectors of the defence industry were run in a similar fashion. A

federal government survey conducted at the time found 82 percent of defence industry jobs in Michigan were reserved for whites only.<sup>5</sup> The Standard Steel Corporation went so far as to inform the Kansas chapter of the Urban League that: "We have not had a Negro worker in twenty-five years, and do not plan to start now."<sup>6</sup> Racist policies seemed to be the norm, a routine procedure most companies expected the public to respect. Furthermore, the government was more than aware of the situation. The Census Bureau published a study at the time explaining the unemployment of African-Americans, attesting that unemployment was a result of "their comparative lack of training and experience," but, more importantly, because "many employers were unwilling to hire non-whites..."<sup>7</sup>

While African American oppression in the economy affected every black citizen regardless of age or gender, a more specific, yet equally important, issue for African Americans was segregation in the armed forces. The Army was essentially a Jim Crow army: by 1940, the 4700 African American men in the army were restricted to segregated units, and black army officers were a rarity. Only five black officials existed: one colonel, one captain, and three chaplains. Black men were only welcomed in the Navy as mess men and were completely excluded from the Marines and Air Corps. Segregation spread as far as army hospitals. A surgeon general in the army remarked, "For reasons not biologically convincing but which are commonly recognized as psychologically important in America, it is not deemed advisable to collect and mix Caucasian and Negro blood."<sup>8</sup> The hypocrisy of segregated units for a nation dedicated to the protection of democracy was overwhelming.

The rise of Nazism began to change the way Americans viewed their own race relations and a feeling grew amongst many African-American leaders that now was the perfect time to act. The inconsistency of preaching democracy abroad, with no consideration of practices at home, was something African American leaders were ready to jump on. Action was slowly building throughout the nation. The most popular story told at the time involved a Negro soldier on

a bus in the South. After refusing to comply with the driver's request to move to the coloured section the soldier remained seated and said, "Well, I'm fixing to go off and fight for democracy. I might as well start right now."<sup>9</sup> The term "American Nazism" gained popularity, and recognizing the severity of the situation, the black newspaper *The Crisis* wrote, "The Crisis leaves to its readers the question of whether there is a great deal of difference between the code for Negroes under Hitler and the code for Negroes under the United States of America- the leading democratic nation of the world."<sup>10</sup>

### *Creating the March on Washington Movement*

March on Washington historian Herbert Garfinkel states that traditionally, black protest had revolved around "the talented tenths methods of lobbying and litigation."<sup>11</sup> These were methods extremely un-militant in nature; they dismissed the use of pressure or the influence of the masses and concentrated on discussions and conferences. Historically, militancy had been used as a tactic in slave revolts, but early twentieth century black leaders believed more conservative methods were the best course of action. Recognizing, and perhaps exploiting, the complexities of a nation on the brink of war, A. Philip Randolph, founder of the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters, thus began to take steps that would enduringly alter the course of modern African American protest.

The constant calls for a rise in black militancy were hard to silence. In an attempt to ease segregation policies in the army and equalize opportunities in the economy, three African American leaders rallied together in an attempt to persuade President Roosevelt to create non-discrimination clauses. The group consisted of Randolph, Walter White, executive secretary of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) and T. Arnold Hill of the Urban League. Together these three men, representing three of the most prominent civil rights organizations,

met with Roosevelt on 27 September 1940 to discuss the discrimination African Americans encountered in the economy and army. The leaders made their mission clear in a point-form program: plainly stated, they wanted black officers and men to be assigned duties according to their skills, full training for black officers, full participation for blacks in all branches of the Army Air Corps, ability to take part in the administration of the Selective Service system, black women accepted as nurses, and, most importantly, for existing and future units to accept any officers regardless of race.<sup>12</sup>

The leaders left the meeting optimistic that they would finally begin to see some form of change. Yet, what transpired in reality angered and outraged them. On 9 October 1940, President Roosevelt signed off on a statement regarding military policy. The text was vague and offered only a few of the proposals that White, Randolph and Hill had asked for. The statement read: "The policy of the War Department is not to intermingle coloured and white enlisted personnel...This policy has proven satisfactory over a long period of years, and to make changes would produce situations destructive to morale and detrimental to the preparation for national defence."<sup>13</sup> To appease the leaders, Roosevelt promised "further developments of policy will be forthcoming to insure that Negroes are given equal treatment," one of which included asking defence industries to voluntarily employ African Americans.<sup>14</sup> What aggravated matters was the implication that the statement had been approved by Randolph, White and Hill. Consequently, newspapers began to publish this assumption as fact. The implication was detrimental to the image of the leaders, as the African American community began to label them as "sell-outs".<sup>15</sup>

However, the tarnished image of the three respected leaders merely increased their passions. Something had to be done to prove to the African American community that Randolph, White, and Hill were truly dedicated to their cause. No doubt, their anger grew as the White House continued to refuse the release of a public denial regarding the accusation. The leaders issued their own public

statement reading: “We are inexpressibly shocked that a President of the United States at a time of national peril should surrender so completely to enemies of democracy who would destroy national unity by advocating segregation.”<sup>16</sup> As African American historian Neil A. Wynn writes, the frustration of their September meeting with the President “showed that the usual tactics of personal entreaties and quiet pressure were not enough to achieve significant changes in government policies...This frustration soon led to militancy.”<sup>17</sup>

Disillusioned and angry, Randolph began to ponder how African Americans could make their demands heard in Washington D.C., and thus, the March on Washington Movement was born. Randolph first presented the idea to his associate, Milton Webster, and, remarking upon how conferences were going nowhere, after a brief moment of silence added, “I think we ought to get 10 000 Negroes to march on Washington in protest, march down Pennsylvania Avenue. What do you think of that?” Webster agreed, but was sceptical as to the feasibility of the idea. Randolph remained positive and noted the need for change: “Only power can affect the enforcement...Power and pressure are at the foundation of the march...power and pressure do not reside in the few...they lie in and flow from the masses.”<sup>18</sup> An enlightened A. Phillip Randolph was now dedicated to his idea of protest and began a campaign to inspire other African-Americans to join him.

The proposal thus became official on 15 January 1941. In his article “Defence Rotten”, Randolph advanced his idea to the African American community. He called for Negroes to insist upon their fair share of work within the industry of national defence, and to ensure African American soldiers were rightly integrated into the armed forces. He proposed 10,000 Negroes, and Negroes alone, march on Washington to “demand the right to work and fight for our country...We must fight for it and fight for it with gloves off.”<sup>19</sup> The obvious militant tone and fresh stance of the declaration ignited interest in Randolph’s campaign as it implied passion, power and most importantly, pressure. However, this was not the only

tactic Randolph introduced to black protest. What was singularly characteristic of Randolph's proposal was the explicit request for the march to be composed of Negroes only. There were two main reasons for this. First of all, by ensuring no whites would be present in the march, Randolph would be able to keep out the suspected influx of Communists who might attend, and by doing so, alter the message at hand. Furthermore, Randolph recognized the need to establish a new, passionate form of protest, explaining that: "The essential value of an all-Negro movement...is that it helps to create faith by Negroes in Negroes...It helps to break down the slave psychology...in Negroes which comes and is nourished with Negroes relying on white people for direction and support."<sup>20</sup>

The response of the African American leaders to Randolph's idea mirrored Webster's initial reaction. At first there was little faith in the practicality of Randolph's idea. The African-American newspaper the Chicago Defender wrote, "We would like to share Mr. Randolph's optimism that such a mobilization is possible. It is not possible to get Negroes to march in impressive numbers ...To get 10,000 Negroes assembled in one spot, under one banner with justice, democracy and work as their slogan would be the miracle of the century."<sup>21</sup> Randolph's idea was inherently novel; even the concept of organizing 10,000 Negroes to march at the same time, in the same city, was something few could fathom. Regardless, Walter White remarked on how even the idea of the march ignited the passions of the average African American citizen. Slowly, the idea seemed more realistic as passions flared and Randolph showed his commitment to the march through the establishment of a national March on Washington Movement. Several months later, Randolph issued the official call for the March to take place on 1 July 1941,<sup>22</sup> by which time there was word almost 50,000 Negroes intended to march.

*The Executive Order 8802*

Roosevelt began to fear the worst, particularly as memories of Herbert Hoover's Bonus Army situation loomed. A month later, in June of 1941, he organized a meeting for the leaders of the March, his wife Eleanor, and New York City Mayor Fiorello La Guardia in New York City. Eleanor, an advocate of civil rights herself, attempted to persuade Randolph to call off the march. La Guardia pleaded, "Phil, I'll tell you, calling off the march will be one of the greatest services you've ever given your country, and given Negroes too for that matter.... You are going to get Negroes slaughtered!"<sup>23</sup> Nevertheless, Randolph did not budge. Once again, he remained faithful to the idea that pressure could produce results. After the meeting, Eleanor began to sympathize with Randolph's cause, and played a key role in the organization of the groundbreaking meeting between Roosevelt, White, Randolph and Hill which occurred just five days later.

A day after the meeting in New York City, 12 June 1941, a letter was sent from the leaders to William Knudsen and Sidney Hillman, co-directors of the Office of Production Management, the department White's complaints about Roosevelt's earlier proposal of October 1940 had been referred to. The letter addressed the hypocrisy of the American protection of democracy overseas, reading that no country committed to fighting totalitarianism internationally could "afford arbitrarily to exclude large segments of its population from its defense industries". Furthermore, it was necessary to "strengthen our unity and morale by refuting at home the very theories which are fighting abroad."<sup>24</sup> The letter was yet another signal to Washington, D.C. that the leaders were committed to their cause.

The meeting with Roosevelt occurred on 18 June. At first, Roosevelt thought he could utilize his legendary charm to facilitate the exchange. Hoping to make friendly conversation, he began by asking Randolph what year he graduated from Harvard, only to have



Randolph sternly state that he had not attended Harvard.y Realizing he could not sweet talk his way out of the dilemma, Roosevelt proposed that he would personally call upon several companies working in the defence industry to “see to it that Negroes are given the same opportunity to work in defence plants as any other citizen in the country.” Randolph knew Roosevelt’s suggestion would have little impact, and blatantly responded, “We want you to do more than that...we want you to issue an executive order making it mandatory that Negroes be permitted to work in these plants.” Roosevelt informed Randolph that there was no possible way he could do that without inciting various other groups to demand the same. “I’m sorry Mr. President, the march cannot be called off,” was all Randolph had to reply.<sup>25</sup>

However, Roosevelt briefly weighed his options and realized it would be preferable to have other communities asking for executive orders themselves than to have 50,000 African- Americans marching on Washington. He agreed to the executive order, and within the next several days had several drafts drawn up before Randolph finally approved one on 25 June 1941. The Executive Order 8802 stated it was “the duty of employers and of labour organizations...to provide for the full and equitable participation of all workers in defence industries.”<sup>26</sup> To ensure such equality, the Fair Employment Practices Committee (FEPC) was established, although it ultimately lacked enforcement power.<sup>27</sup> Not all of Randolph’s goals were achieved, as the order completely failed to address the problem of segregation in the armed forces. Regardless, Randolph himself had approved the draft, and his prime concern in 1941 had been to ensure equal opportunity for Negroes in the defence industry. ac With that issue, Randolph’s perseverance had paid off.

The Executive Order 8802 faced large opposition outside the African American community. Many saw Executive Order 8802 as a continuation of Roosevelt’s reckless expansion of the federal government’s power to interfere in the economy. Although Americans had seen New Deal policies impact their economy for

almost ten years, criticisms of such never ceased. With regards to the Executive Order 8802 and creation of the FEPC, it is hard to determine whether opposition was singularly directed at Roosevelt's philosophy of involvement in the economy or equal opportunities for African Americans. Nevertheless, many felt the government had "no right to tell an employer whom he shall employ or how to run his business."<sup>28</sup>

The African American community, however, saw the Order as a monumental victory, as it was the first time since the Civil Rights Act of 1875 that the federal government had taken any substantial action in favour of African American rights.<sup>29</sup> Across the board, black publications hailed the success of the Order, and many commented on its achievement in breaking an almost fifty year dry spell with regards to a lack of legislation protecting African Americans. The Chicago Defender went as far as to say that the executive order was "one of the most significant pronouncements that had been made in the interests of the Negro for more than a century."<sup>30</sup> Ira Lewis, president of the African American newspaper the Pittsburgh Courier, further wrote that if the Order worked, it could be viewed as an economic Emancipation Proclamation.<sup>31</sup> However, Lewis' inkling to question the Order's workability shows a hint of scepticism which foreshadowed something many others failed to foresee amidst the celebratory atmosphere.

### *The Legacy of the March on Washington Movement*

In one regard, the Order was an initial success, but its durability remained an issue. Firstly, the concern over FEPC's enforcement power persisted into the 1950s. Essentially, no real acting power had been allotted to the Committee, and thus, its survival was questionable. One of the first real battles the FEPC undertook concerned discrimination in railroad employment. When Paul McNutt, head of the War Manpower Commission postponed the

hearings on the FEPC case on 11 January 1943, Randolph ultimately viewed this as the death of the first FEPC.<sup>32</sup> As a result of the FEPC's limited power and influence, discrimination in industries did not disappear. The Bureau of Employment Security conducted a study on employment opportunities for African Americans after the Order was signed. It found that in the period from September 1941 to February 1942, more than 50 percent of available jobs were still closed off to Negroes.<sup>33</sup> Further evidence of the plight of the FEPC was the Senate directly opposing a federal bill recognizing the FEPC as a permanent agency in 1946.<sup>34</sup> The realization slowly grew amongst many in the African American community that the FEPC would only function as a temporary committee. Historian John Morton Blum attests to the plight of the FEPC by observing, correctly, that, "The effectiveness of FEPC...was proving limited."<sup>35</sup> Furthermore, "the FEPC during 1942 and 1943 continued to meet resistance, which it lacked the authority to regularly overcome...composed of six part-time members and a small Washington staff, [it] could do little more than expose the problem by holding hearings to examine specific complaints."<sup>36</sup>

Nevertheless, the Executive Order 8802 was, and should be, seen as a victory for several reasons. Primarily, with the March on Washington Movement, Randolph introduced a new set of tactics to the black community to achieve results, for the movement produced a direct departure from the methods of civil rights organizations at the time. The militant tone rejected the traditional tactics of a movement too concentrated with politeness and respectability.<sup>37</sup> Up until 1941, direct and relentless pressure was not forced upon the federal government, but it was realized in time "that blacks would never desegregate the defence program so long as they stuck with old tactics."<sup>38</sup> Secondly, never before had the threat of mass protest been exerted so heavily, and its success would come to influence what would be a major component of the civil rights movement in the 1950s and 1960s. A newspaper in 1941 understood the impact this would later have, writing that Randolph had, "demonstrated to the Doubting Thomases among us that only mass action can pry

open the iron doors that have been erected against America's black minority."<sup>39</sup> It had been proved that the threat of rallying together thousands in protest could bring result, a lesson to every American, regardless of race.

At the time, Randolph recognized the revolution of black protest that had taken place. When describing his campaign, Randolph stated: "it appears that an important part of the future strategy and technique of the Negro must be in the field of demonstration, both non-violent mass activity and disciplined non-violent demonstrations of small Negro and white groups for civil and economic justice."<sup>40</sup> The NAACP acknowledged this and from 1941 onwards adopted a more militant policy by stating, "We shall not abate one iota our struggle for full citizenship rights here in the United States." The general African American population also recognized the possible impact of mass action and began to join the movement in record numbers. In just five years, the membership of the NAACP increased tenfold: from 54,000 to more than 500,000 members.<sup>41</sup> The Association now had the mass membership it needed to exert force on the government, and the NAACP made good use of this asset. Realizing its development potential, in the 1950s the NAACP actively used its new strength to conduct a sharpened attack on discrimination, a lesson valuably learned from Randolph's innovative militant tone and style.<sup>42</sup>

One need not look far for examples of the tactic of mass protest pioneered by Randolph. In May of 1957, 25,000 African Americans rallied together in Washington on the steps of the Lincoln Memorial to press for government action for civil rights, with Randolph himself in attendance at the meeting.<sup>43</sup> In his biography, African American leader John Hope Franklin honours Randolph's ideas, noting he again resurrected the March on Washington Movement tactics for another demonstration in 1963.<sup>44</sup> Herbert Garfinkel's book entitled, *When Negroes March: The March on Washington Movement in the Organization Politics for the FEPC*, published in 1959, outlines the influence Randolph's 1941 movement

had on the civil rights movement of the 1950s and 1960s. Garfinkel observes the impact Randolph's "Gandhian-inspired" passive-resistance strategy had on Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and his civil rights crusade, which was occurring at the time of the publication.<sup>45</sup> It is hard to imagine Dr. King's movement being as successful had the age-old tactics of polite conferences and white philanthropy not been revolutionized by Randolph's influence, for, as Garfinkel successfully argues, "...modern Negro protests owe a great deal to Randolph and his tactical conception of the struggle."<sup>46</sup> Dr. King was wise to adopt Randolph's tactic of civil disobedience rather than fall into the flawed pattern of relying on discussions instead of action, as conservative African American groups had done before him. Yet, while both Randolph and Dr. King recognized the need for self-reliance, Garfinkel notes Randolph's tactic of a Negro-only march was unacceptable for Dr. King's movement.<sup>47</sup> While there is much truth to this statement, Garfinkel does not pay enough attention to the barriers that this unique characteristic of Randolph's movement was able to break down. Although the proposed March on Washington never actually occurred, the black-only movement accomplished two crucial things that were necessary for the civil rights movement of the 1950s and 1960s. Randolph's success gave African Americans the hope that they as a community could work to achieve steps towards full equality on their own, separate from any attempts at white philanthropy, and, in relation, Randolph acknowledged the need to banish the slave psychology complex. The Executive Order 8802 was something the Negro community had achieved on their own, and this was a first in African American history.<sup>48</sup>

As has been explored, the struggle leading up to Roosevelt's Executive Order 8802 was long and required scrupulous dedication and perseverance from those involved. Historians of the mid to late twentieth century tend to agree that the Executive Order and FEPC ultimately did not work, and looking at the issue from a twenty-first century perspective, it is safe to say this assessment is correct. The FEPC's problem rested primarily in its lack of enforcement

power and its expiration date that was introduced when Roosevelt placed the Committee under the jurisdiction of the War Manpower Commission in July of 1942.<sup>49</sup> Thus, while the FEPC existed in theory, it had little impact in practice, as African Americans continued to face discrimination in the economy, and, admissibly, the fight continues to this day. What did work, however, and to great effect, were the tactics Randolph introduced. The fact that Randolph introduced something inherently new to African American protest is integral to the reason why his movement gained such immense support. A change was needed, and the departure Randolph implemented with his tactics of power and pressure through an all-Negro movement was an offering to the entire African American civil rights movement. The legacy of the March on Washington movement can be seen through almost every mass civil rights protest on racial discrimination that has occurred since 1941, and for that reason, it is understandable how Randolph's name can now be linked in prominence to the likes of Frederick Douglass, the prominent black abolitionist.<sup>50</sup> The Executive Order 8802 was a definitive signal to the African American community that, unlike during the Great War, their cause would be furthered in the changing climate of the war years. With the Order's victory occurring before the United States had even entered the war, an unprecedented amount of hope emerged for what was to come. It was undoubtedly apparent that the African American soldiers of the Second World War would not "tamely and meekly submit to a program of lynching, burning and social ostracism," such had the *Chicago Defender* criticized veterans of the Great War in 1919.<sup>51</sup> Randolph's March on Washington Movement was the first real victory among many for African Americans in the years surrounding the Second World War, and the inspiration the movement instilled in future civil rights leaders would be integral in improving the situation for all African Americans in the United States.

## Notes

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2. *Ibid*, 12.
3. Anderson, Jervis. A. *Philip Randolph: A Biographical Portrait* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1973), 40.
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5. Klinker, Philip A. *The Unsteady March: The Rise and Decline of Racial Equality in America* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999), 149.
6. Anderson, 241.
7. Garfinkel, Herbert. *When Negroes March: The March on Washington Movement in the Organizational Politics for FEPC*. (Illinois: The Free Press, 1959), 19.
8. Klinker, 149.
9. Garfinkel, 23.
10. *Ibid*, 21.
11. *Ibid*, 180.
12. Wynn, 23.
13. *Ibid*, 153.
14. *Ibid*, 24.
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16. *Ibid*, 153.
17. *Ibid*, 154.
18. *Ibid*.
19. *Ibid*, 155.
20. *Ibid*, 156.
21. Garfinkel, 38.
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23. Klinkner, 158.
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26. Klinkner, 158.
27. *Ibid*, 159.
28. *Ibid*, 160.
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30. Fleming, G. James. "Historical Roots of Fair Employment Practice." *Phylon* 7(1946): 32-40, 32.
31. Klinkner, 160.
32. Wynn, 46.
33. *Ibid*.
34. Garfinkel, 148.
35. *Ibid*, 190.
36. *Ibid*, 192.
37. Blum, 188.
38. *Ibid*, 196.
39. Garfinkel, 180.

40. Janken, Kenneth Robert. *White: The Biography of Walter White, Mr. NAACP* (New York: New Press, 2003), 254.
41. Anderson, 260
42. Wynn, 47.
43. Klinkner, 165.
44. Garfinkel, 8.
45. *Ibid.*, 9.
46. Franklin, John Hope. *Mirror to America: The Autobiography of John Hope Franklin* (New York: Douglas & McIntyre Ltd., 2005), 209.
47. Garfinkel, 9.
48. *Ibid.*
49. *Ibid.*, 182.
51. *Ibid.*, 16.
52. *Ibid.*, 190.
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54. Wynn, 12.

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# Knitting Women Into the Fabric of the Nation: The Importance of Knitting as a Signifier of Female Citizenship During Wartime

By Sarah Pinnington

*More traditional and narrow definitions of citizenship do not allow a space to acknowledge the contributions of women at critical moments of nation building such as the French Revolution and both World Wars. Knitting has often been ignored and dismissed as an unimportant craft and pastime for women but the author's innovative essay challenges that assumption by proving that knitting has served as an important vehicle for women to participate as national citizens in times of crisis.*

Knitting and other fiber arts are often used as a metaphor for writing a narrative. The process of creating a complete, wearable garment from string implies patience, devotion to the task, and an ability to bring diverse sources together into a functional and cohesive whole. Because of the associative images of production and creation, knitting during wartime was a highly visible and symbolic way for women to participate and assert their citizenship.

The period from 1700-2000 was marred by periods of civil strife, conflict, and warfare. Specifically, the French Revolution and the First and Second World Wars cast a shadow over the European landscape and demanded overt displays of patriotism and support for a cause. During these periods, hand knitting by women played an important symbolic role in their "participation" in the conflict. From the tricoteuses of the French Revolution to World War Two-era magazine advertisements exhorting women to buy yarn and knit for "the boys at the front," women's participation in wartime and conflict followed very strict, gender-based norms of acceptability. The role

that knitting has played in this participation, as well as representations of knitters in contemporary media, emphasizes this gendered view of warfare and conflict. While hand knitting provided women with an acceptable way in which to display patriotism and support for their country during wartime, it nonetheless exacerbated the divide between “women’s work” and “men’s work.” Although knitting maintained the image of the passive woman, away from the fighting and “keeping the home fires burning,” the opportunities for participation with which it provided women during wartime were important to the growth of the idea of woman as “citizen.”

While the focus of this paper is on the role of knitting during wartime, hand knitting has been an important element of domestic life for some time. The earliest known examples of knitting were found in what is now Egypt, Syria, and Jordan and were created with a technique involving one needle instead of two.<sup>1</sup> By the sixteenth century, knitting (with two or more needles) was entrenched as an element of European society. European fashion – including stockings instead of trousers for the elite – came to depend on knitters to supply these key articles of clothing, which were knit entirely by hand.<sup>2</sup> The process of knitting has not always been as explicitly gendered as it is today, as both men and women learned how to knit before the advent of knitting machines, but even within production different tasks were assigned based on gender. As Deborah Simonton reports, women tended to take part in “domestic” aspects of knitting and finishing garments, while men did the bulk of the more difficult or complicated work.<sup>3</sup> With the mechanization of the textile industry, hand knitting was moved from its status as one of the “‘accepted armoury of skills’ by which women provided for their families” and was relegated to a domestic, feminine chore.<sup>4</sup> In nineteenth century Russia, girls were taught “traditional skills such as a [sic] weaving and knitting,” but not, as Engel notes, rudimentary literacy skills.<sup>5</sup> Because it is small, portable, and can be done in stages, knitting was seen as something that could be done while carrying out other tasks.<sup>6</sup> With the invention of the first knitting

machines in the sixteenth century, the smaller-scale, cottage industry of hand knitting became less important to overall output.<sup>7</sup> It was at this point that hand knitting became “a leisure activity” rather than a form of productive labour.<sup>8</sup> In essence, by the end of the eighteenth century hand knitting, whether as a way of earning supplementary income, clothing a family, or occupying a well-born lady’s hands,<sup>9</sup> was an integral aspect of European domestic and family life. Darning and mending knit items of clothing, as well as creating new garments, was a way for women to occupy themselves by the evening fire well into the twentieth century.

With this depth of penetration into the continental psyche, it was natural that knitting be an important aspect of women’s wartime participation, as well. In his *History of Hand Knitting*, Richard Rutt suggests that the Crimean war was the first instance of women knitting for soldiers overseas.<sup>10</sup> However, he also cautions that reports of this activity may have been exaggerated to stir up patriotic sentiment. This in and of itself is important, because it illustrates the way in which hand knitting was coded as a patriotic activity in which women could acceptably take part. The role that hand knitting played during periods of war or conflict varied, depending on the context. The French Revolution, the First World War, and the Second World War are three illustrative examples of times when needles and yarn in the hands of women had different kinds of symbolism. During the French Revolution, the tricoteuses beside the guillotine (made famous by Charles Dickens in a *Tale of Two Cities*) brought a very domestic activity into an overtly political or “public” sphere and forced the Revolutionaries to confront the idea of *citoyennes*. During the First World War, there was what one author referred to as a “spontaneous” “passion to participate in the war effort” as women began to knit socks, sweaters, scarves and other clothing for soldiers, anticipating cooler temperatures as the fighting spread through Europe.<sup>11</sup> Because so much of the energy behind an explicitly feminine task was concentrated on comforting and supporting men fighting a war, it emphasized the extent of the barriers to other forms of female participation within

the war effort. During this war, women, despite the growing levels of female employment in domestic wartime industry, were largely spectators. The role that knitting played during the Second World War was a stark contrast to this. In addition to knitting for soldiers, women were forced to take up needles to comfort and support themselves and their families. For women, especially in Britain, “total war” implied more active involvement in home front of the war effort than ever before, and hand knitting took on new symbolic dimensions in the face of a much more visible and present enemy. However, in each of these three cases, knitting allowed women to bring a private and domestic activity into a very public sphere: a society at war. Doing so not only permitted women to showcase their patriotism in “acceptable” ways, but pushed the boundaries of women’s participation as citizens in the defining activity of the nation-state.

*A Tale of Two Cities* immortalized the tricoteuse, who sat beside the guillotine and knit as heads rolled. As a substitute for food or drink, she obsessively chronicled beheadings with each stitch, serving both as an image of a fury of war and as the scribe of a bloody history.<sup>12</sup> The French Revolution set out the idea of a citizen, yet initially excluded by omission the possibility of citizenesses. While the Revolution promised equality – a promise that resonated especially strongly with the ranks of poor working women – the misogyny of its leaders and women’s exclusion from an active role in political discussion belied this lofty goal.<sup>13</sup> Thus, while Paris was in a state of upheaval and an idealistic new order was slowly being built, the women of France took remarkable steps to insert themselves into the goings-on. Olympe de Gouges wrote a Declaration of the Rights of Woman in 1791, and women participated in ad hoc political ways.<sup>14</sup> Denied official citizenship, however, women were forced to use subversive means and exploit conflict and turmoil for their benefit. By asserting their patriotism and respect for the Republic during a time of civil strife, women gained recognition for their dedication to the cause. The women who sat and knit beside the guillotine served

as the “voice of the people,” determining who would live and who would die. Remembered as fierce and bloodthirsty, it is likely that few survived these women’s judgement at the “ultimate site” of justice in the Revolution.<sup>15</sup> The contrast between the domestic activity of knitting and the association of the tricoteuse with blood and violence was stark, and made the women’s presence in a very public and political space “abnormal.”<sup>16</sup>

However, while Goudineau claims that women, representing private life, were unable to be political individuals,<sup>17</sup> the way in which the tricoteuses challenged the dominant view of the public sphere was in itself a way of political rebellion. Olwen Hufton characterizes them as “knitting stockings for the war effort as the internal conspiracy is annihilated before [their] eyes.”<sup>18</sup> Without granting them agency as actors in the Revolution and the events that followed, Hufton at least sees the tricoteuses as observers. Billie Melman describes their activity as

“[v]oteless, revolutionary women [carving] for themselves spaces and forms of activity that drew on traditional, ancien regime female protest but also expanded to new areas, thus redefining women’s citizenship.”<sup>19</sup>

Within the tumult, women worked through old forms of feminine activity in order to insert themselves into a sphere that tried its hardest to remain masculine. Melman cites Charles Dickens and describes how the tricoteuses knit to stave off hunger and distract themselves from their harsh conditions.<sup>20</sup> This is a kind of public participation and assertion of citizenship through associations with preserving the integrity of the nation and watching over the birth of a new Republic, bathed in blood. As the tricoteuses sat and knit, creating stockings for soldiers fighting throughout France in the name of the Revolution, they were also knitting together the initial fragments of citizenship for French women, through their unorthodox displays of patriotism. Their refusal to leave the side of the Revolution speaks to a

desire for participation and inclusion and a willingness to gain de facto citizenship in the Republic.

Between the French Revolution and the First World War, women's situation in some countries changed drastically, while in some it was barely, if at all, altered. Few of the European nations had granted women the vote by 1914, and while women in the working classes often worked to contribute financially to the household, numbers were small compared to the percentage who were working by the Treaty of Versailles. After the outbreak of war in 1914, a "knitting mania" gripped countries involved in the conflict. Popularized by music, books, magazines and films, women across the continent and in Britain took to the needles in order to furnish soldiers with homey comforts in the trenches. Children knit in schools as part of their contribution to the war effort, and fashionable ladies of society organized knitting circles as a way of providing social interaction while at the same time performing charitable activities.<sup>21</sup> One of the most striking aspects of this mobilization was the extent to which it permeated European society, both on the side of the Axis powers and the Allies. In France, Françoise Thébaud describes how

"Le « thé-tango », que condamnait avant guerre l'archevêque de Paris, est remplacé par le « thé-tricot » ou l'on apporte son ouvrage et discute de la façon des chaussettes en dégustant « le démocratique petit-beurre. »"<sup>22</sup>

A rough translation would be that, instead of engaging in activities of questionable morality, Parisian women instead gathered to discuss sock-knitting strategies. A group of female volunteers began a campaign to send packages of knit items to soldiers at the front, creating in the process what the author describes as a movement for "une France plus unie et plus fraternelle."<sup>23</sup> Not only were the French women knitting to support the war effort and their countrymen at the front, they were doing so with a stronger, post-war nation in mind. This kind of contribution was a way of displaying patriotism and a



willingness to become involved in a war of such grand scale in a way that was still feminine.

It was not only for purely patriotic reasons that women began to knit during the First World War. Knitting groups and circles provided a welcome distraction and gave some women the opportunity to earn financial compensation. Women of the Russian elite knit scarves for the front instead of attending parties,<sup>24</sup> and in what was the Austro-Hungarian empire, the “League of Austrian Women’s Associations” organized knitting and sewing circles to provide items for soldiers.<sup>25</sup> While many of these women were upper-class volunteers, it also provided a way for less well-off women to earn a small income during the war. In this case, as in others, the use of knitting to display patriotism and support for the war effort transcended class boundaries and was overwhelming in its quantitative success. In 1917, French women sent between 1000 and 2000 packages, most of which contained hand-knitted goods, to soldiers fighting in the trenches.<sup>26</sup> The universal effort has become a part of the wartime mythology and an illustration of how completely the First World War changed the nature of warfare and the participation of civilians. Women – even those not living within a war zone – were confronted on a daily basis with the realities of a nation at war, and as such were expected to contribute in every way possible. Knitting articles of clothing for soldiers at the front was a form of consolation and an expression of love, and one of the most visible and measurable ways in which European women participated.

During the Second World War, the extent to which war touched the lives of civilians was even more complete. Nearly full economic production, occupation, bombing raids, and rationing affected almost all of the belligerent nations and necessitated drastic measures in order to survive. A collection of articles and advertisements published in women’s magazines in Britain during the war notes that:

“The first wartime winter was freezing. [...] If you were clever with the needles, had some wool, a few black-out evenings and a knitting-pattern from the magazines, you could knit a warm practical lumber-jacket or warm

undies for the winter.”<sup>27</sup>

With strict clothing rations, the ability to knit was crucial. In a war in which the lines between the fighting and the home front became increasingly blurred, there was very little in the way of material that could not be put toward the war effort. The theme of “Make Do and Mend” was a popular refrain throughout the war, as those still at home were encourage to reuse and repurpose items that earlier would have been thrown away. By making clothing from scratch, women who knit could “do their bit.” Sometimes the measures taken were even more extreme, such as unraveling a garment to re-knit it in a larger size, using extra scraps of yarn to lengthen the sleeves and torso.<sup>28</sup> Knitting was not limited to women. A 1943 report recommended that evacuee boys also “be taught tailoring, mending, and knitting.”<sup>29</sup> However, note is that there is no mention of girls being taught how to knit, the assumption being that, having learned to knit as part of their domestic training, there was no need for instruction in the craft.

Knitting also provided a way to earn an income. For those women whose spouse was away at the front or killed in action, survival, especially in the post-war period, was often difficult. Knitting then not only was a way of reducing consumption, but provided a source of income as women sold or bartered what they produced, as in the case of the widow in post-war Stuttgart who supported two children on what she could barter for her knitting.<sup>30</sup> Knitting was also associated with the more formal opportunities for women to earn an income during the war: munitions or other war work. A pamphlet produced by the British Ministry of Labour in 1943 drew similarities between the “small, fairly complex manipulative movement” common to both knitting and the more finicky aspects of welding.<sup>31</sup> Drawing comparisons between knitting and the munitions work was one way in which propaganda feminized heavy industry to downplay the gender barriers that women were breaking down by working in munitions factories, driving ambulances, or taking over other traditionally male jobs.

During the Second World War, the preoccupation with procuring everyday commodities and following strict rationing so as to contribute to the war effort seems does not mean that women did not also knit for the troops at the front. They continued to do so, though without the “hysteria” of the First World War,<sup>32</sup> while knitting for themselves and their families. Rations included yarn and advertisements for yarn companies in women’s magazines emphasized knitting for “the boys at the front” rather than for the men, women, and children on the home front. The focus on knitting as a way to participate rather than for personal gain was in many ways beneficial, because it gave many women a chance to claim citizenship and contribution during wartime. Slogans such as “If you can KNIT – you can “do your bit” and “Make this your WARMTH EFFORT” for Sirdar and Secil yarns, respectively, were accompanied by renditions of attractive young men in uniform, creating the image of the soldier comforted by the familiar while defending his country in the trenches.<sup>33</sup> A new addition to these advertisements was the presence of women in uniform, part of the legions of Land Army and Auxiliary forces, alongside men. Rather than emphasizing the importance of knitting for both genders, the advertisements are directed at women, lauding the stylish and practical patterns that young workers could knit during their down time. The idea of knitting as something that could be done on top of women’s other responsibilities thus persisted.

While the practical aspects of knitting are crucial to its position during the Second World War, it also played a part in the mythology of standing up to aggressors. Knitting represented normalcy and familiarity in a very unfamiliar situation, and provided a distraction from the turmoil, fear, and hunger of war. The use of knitting as a measurable or practical manifestation of national pride and patriotism has been discussed above. While this was an important reason for continuing to knit, and while the First World War also benefited from assurances of normalcy, it was during the Second World War that the use of knitting as a way to maintain and demonstrate high morale was truly important. In German-occupied Norway, Norwegian citizens

forbidden from wearing red caps as a symbol of their patriotism knit red bands in to the sleeves of their traditional sweaters, subtly rebelling through the use of a domestic art.<sup>34</sup> By including national symbols in an everyday article such as a sweater, knitting allowed people to maintain ethnic and national autonomy under foreign occupation.

The best example of the symbolic power of knitting for maintaining morale comes from Great Britain. Suffering from incessant air raids, Britons stiffened their already firm upper lip to new levels of immobility. The importance of knitting as a symbol of British resolve ranged from reports of the two Princesses knitting for the soldiers<sup>35</sup>—which created a bond of familiarity between the Royal Family and their subjects – to the following astonished officer’s account of an air raid in a railroad station:

“On December 3, Major L.M. Hastings visited a restaurant in a railroad station; he described his experience two days later: ‘I found a window seat next to an old lady who had reached the coffee stage and had taken out her knitting. A minute or two after, just as I sat down, up came the howl of the banshee air-raid warning. What a beast of a noise! This particular siren was close to the window and sounded like the scream of a cow elephant...What happened? Nothing. Nobody bothered. Nobody moved... Waitresses went on their quiet rounds. The old lady, spectacles on nose, was she interrupted? Not she. Did she drop a stitch? Not on your life.’”<sup>36</sup>

Women knitting were an important symbol of normalcy and comfort. A Mass Observation report on levels of morale among women took note of activities in which women engaged while waiting in bomb shelters for air raids to end. The report notes that because of dim lighting and overall levels of fatigue, very few women knit during air raids.<sup>37</sup> The diary kept by a nurse also mentions the exhaustion associated with constantly being on call and disrupted by air raids, and talks about finishing a sweater for her daughter, who is ill and in the hospital, as a source of distraction.<sup>38</sup> However, representations in popular culture (such as the account described above) tended to

present women knitting in shelters and during air raids as a common occurrence. The artist Henry Moore produced a series of drawings of Londoners taking shelter from the bombs in which “domestic life [including knitting] persists” despite the challenges.<sup>39</sup> In a war that relied so heavily on civilian participation and sacrifice, knitting was reborn as a visible act of patriotism that was nonetheless acceptable for women to engage in. With its positive associations with domestic life in a more peaceful time, however, knitting also served as a way to constrain women’s wartime activities as caregivers and homemakers, despite the widespread mobilization of women to work in war industries.

In many ways, the lot of women during wartime has not been a happy one. While unlikely to fight in the trenches, women comprised many of the civilian casualties that skyrocketed with twentieth-century warfare. Representations of women during wartime were often relatively simplistic and emphasized femininity and passivity, rather than agency, strength, or activity. Yet during the French Revolution and the two world wars, women did play important roles both at and behind fighting lines. The tricoteuses inserting themselves into the political sphere by bringing their domestic activities out of hiding forced Revolutionary and post-Revolutionary France to confront the idea of active female citizenship, even if this idea was not effectively realized for years. The First World War saw the importance of knitting as a signifier of female participation in the war effort, and, while not necessarily breaking gender barriers, strengthened the claim that women had the right to benefits accruing from their contributions to society. During the Second World War, knitting was important on both practical and symbolic levels and was firmly entrenched in popular perceptions of female contribution to the war effort. The association of women knitting with familiarity and domestic life may not have linked women’s knitting with thwarting norms of participation and acting on a level equal to men in the public and political realm, but, as in the First World War, the work that was done by women on the home front was integral to maintaining military might and morale. Knitting

allowed women to participate during wartime without attracting negative attention or triggering a backlash, and while it may not be the most revolutionary way to participate, knitting combines reverence for a domestic art and women's social contributions with creation and independent production – both highly empowering concepts.

## Notes

1. A note on methodology: Research on women during wartime abounds, as does work related to women in the domestic sphere. However, while conducting research for the topic, the lack of work combining the two – while not surprising – presented difficulties in acquiring sufficient information to develop a thesis. Whether this is due to a disinclination to perpetuate the stereotype of women as oppressed creatures trapped in the home, or whether it is due to a heretofore lack of interest on the part of historians, the underrepresentation of the importance of domestic arts in studying gender and family history – especially during wartime – creates a gap in studying developing notions of female citizenship. Without knowledge of daily life for women throughout history, it is nearly impossible to ground in a historical context the successes and achievements of studied historical figures and heroines. Equally important is to understand the heroism and achievements of “everywoman,” who, behind the scenes, was responsible for the success of the home front during the World Wars, and who initially, in bringing their knitting to the guillotine and the National Assembly, forced the Revolutionaries of late 18th century France to confront the idea of the citizenne as existing alongside the citizen. Therefore, this paper uses what information is available, which results in cases in a perspective that is skewed towards France and Britain.
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3. *Ibid.*
4. Deborah Simonton, *History of European Women's Work: 1700 to the Present* (London, New York: Routledge, 1999). 42
5. *Ibid.* 42
6. Barbara Alpern Engel, *Women in Russia, 1700-200* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004). 92
7. Simonton, *History of European Women's Work: 1700 to the Present*, 44
8. Harriet Bradley, “Frames of Reference: Skill, Gender, and New Technology in the Hosiery Industry,” in *Women Workers and Technological Change in Europe in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries*, ed. Marlou Schrover Gertjan de Groot (London; Bristol,

- PA: Taylor and Francis, 1995). 19
9. Gertjan de Groot and Marlou Schrover, "Introduction," in *Women Workers and Technological Change in Europe in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries*, ed. Marlou Schrover Gertjan de Groot (London; Bristol, PA: Taylor and Francis, 1995). 8
  10. Jonas B. Aiken, "Treatise on the Art of Knitting: With a History of the Knitting Loom: Comprising an Interesting Account of its Origin, and of Its Recent Wonderful Improvements," (*The Inventor*, 1861). 5-6
  11. Rutt, *A History of Hand Knitting*. 134
  12. Gerard J. Degroot, "Review: [Untitled]," *English Historical Review* 114, no. 456 (1999). 490
  13. Rutt, *A History of Hand Knitting*. 95
  14. Karen Hunt, "Women as Citizens: Changing the Polity," in *The Routledge History of Women in Europe Since 1700*, ed. Deborah Simonon (London and New York: Routledge Taylor and Francis Group, 2006).
  15. Darline Gay Levy and Harriet B. Applewhite, "A Political Revolution for Women? The Case of Paris," in *Becoming Visible: Women in European History*, ed. Renate Bridenthal, Susan Mosher Stuard, and Merry E. Wiesner (Boston, New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1998), 286.
  16. Billie Melman, *The Culture of History: English Uses of the Past, 1800-1953* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006). 111
  17. Dominique Godineau, *Citoyennes Tricoteuses: les femmes du peuple à Paris pendant la Révolution française* (Aix-en-Provence: Alinea, 1988). 14
  18. *Ibid.* 15
  19. Olwen Hufton, "Women in Revolution 1789-1796," *Past and Present* 53 (1971). 101
  20. Melman, *The Culture of History: English Uses of the Past, 1800-1953*. 110
  21. *Ibid.* 112
  22. Maureen Healy, "Becoming Austrian: Women, the State, and Citizenship in World War I," *Central European History* 35, no. 1 (2002), Rutt, *A History of Hand Knitting*, Françoise Thébaud, *La femme au temps de la guerre* 14 (Paris: Editions Stock, 1986).
  23. Thébaud, *La femme au temps de la guerre* 14. 108
  24. *Ibid.* 113
  25. Engel, *Women in Russia, 1700-200*. 130
  26. Healy, "Becoming Austrian: Women, the State, and Citizenship in World War I." 7
  27. Thébaud, *La femme au temps de la guerre* 14. 105-106
  28. Jane Waller and Michael Vaughan-Rees, *Women in Wartime: The Role of Women's Magazines 1939-1945* (London: Macdonald-Optima, 1987). 84
  29. Rutt, *A History of Hand Knitting*. 145
  30. John Welshman, "Evacuation, Hygiene, and Social Policy: The Our

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  34. Waller and Vaughan-Rees, *Women in Wartime The Role of Women’s Magazines 1939-1945*. 98
  35. Priscilla A. Gibson-Roberts and Deborah Robson, *Knitting in the Old Way: Design Techniques from Ethnic Sweaters* (Fort Collins, CO: Nomad Press, 2004).
  36. Waller and Vaughan-Rees, *Women in Wartime The Role of Women’s Magazines 1939-1945*. 88
  37. Harold N. Graves Jr, “Propaganda by Short Wave: London Calling America,” *The Public Opinion Quarterly* 5, no. 1 (1941). 43-44
  38. Dorothy Sheridan, ed., *Wartime Women: Mass-Observation Anthology 1937-45*. (London: Phoenix Press, 2000). 119
  39. *Ibid.* 139
  40. Lyndsey Stonebridge, “Bombs, Birth and Trauma: Henry Moore’s and D.W. Winnicott’s Prehistory Figments. ,” *Cultural Critique* 46 (2000). 83

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## Purge Imperfect: The Contentious Trial of Robert Brasillach

By Daniel Gurin

*This paper analyzes the trial and execution of journalist Robert Brasillach during the restoration of the French Republic. The author considers the context of post-war France and the moral implications of the trial. He argues that Brasillach's trial was as much a case of treason as it was an example of an embarrassed people avoiding a deeper examination of their own complicity in the crimes of the Occupation.*

In January 1945, Paris was undergoing a tumultuous transition. The city was free, but the war still raged, and the recent German offensive in the Ardennes had aroused fears that the Nazis might yet return.<sup>1</sup> People were still recovering from the bloodbath of the months before and after the Liberation, which included numerous German atrocities and the summary executions of about 9,000 alleged collaborators across France.<sup>2</sup> General de Gaulle and his provisional government were trying to mollify the impatient public, while the Resistance press stoked their desire for vengeance, but no one could be satisfied because the most prominent figureheads of the Vichy regime – whom everyone agreed needed to be brought to justice – had escaped to Germany.<sup>3</sup> In this anxious climate, the purge courts turned to a collaborationist whose files would be easy to compile, whose name was universally associated with the enemy: the germanophile journalist Robert Brasillach, editor-in-chief of *Je Suis Partout*, the most successful political weekly in France during the Occupation. On January 16, after a six-hour trial, Brasillach was sentenced to death for treason under Article 75 of the Third Republic Penal Code. De Gaulle received a request for pardon, along with a petition for clemency signed by fifty-nine writers, but he declined

to commute the sentence. Brasillach went before a firing squad on February 6. His last words hinted at the questionable nature of the treason charge: “Vive la France quand même!”<sup>5</sup>

Was Brasillach a traitor? Based on his biography, it is hard to say. He began his journalistic career in the early thirties as a literary columnist for the ultranationalist, anti-German *Action française*. With the rise of the Popular Front, he began writing political columns for the pro-fascist *Je Suis Partout*,<sup>6</sup> but his initial reaction to Nazism was ambivalent: returning from a trip to Germany in 1937, he dismissed Hitler as a “sad vegetarian functionary,” even as he admired the “vigorous bodies” of young Nazi men.<sup>7</sup> After France’s defeat, he overcame his hesitations, and began to see Germany as a model fascist nation. He reported after a trip to Germany in 1941: “It is not only Germany, in fact, that we went to find over there but also our entire age, the unity of our age.” He hoped a fascist France would rise from the ashes of defeat and take its place alongside Germany in the European New Order.<sup>8</sup> Throughout the Occupation, he tried to make that implausible dream a reality through his columns and editorials, lavishing praise on the occupiers and pouring scorn on the groups he saw as the enemies of fascism: republicans, communists, and Jews. Shortly after the liberation of Paris, however, he accepted defeat. He turned himself in to the provisional authorities on September 14.<sup>9</sup>

The argument of this paper is that Brasillach’s trial was legally and morally flawed. My main source is Alice Kaplan’s 2000 *The Collaborator*, which offers the most detailed account of the trial in English, but reaches an unconvincing conclusion about its fairness: “What Brasillach wrote was treasonous according to article 75 of the penal code. He had used his talent as a journalist to support the presence of an enemy on French soil.”<sup>10</sup> Kaplan was understandably eager to discredit the many apologist biographies of Brasillach published in France in the eighties and nineties,<sup>11</sup> but she tends to gloss over the irregularities, prejudice and hypocrisies that marred the court proceedings. A smarter way to rebut Brasillach’s

posthumous defenders would be to begin by admitting the trial was unjust. With that in mind, my aim is to expose some of its critical shortcomings.

The most basic problem with the trial was its reliance on retroactive legislation. Brasillach's collaborationist writing did not defy any law of the Vichy regime, which almost everyone in France recognized as the true French government during the Occupation.<sup>12</sup> Indeed, Vichy's official policy of collaboration legitimized the collaborationist writing of ideologues like Brasillach.<sup>13</sup> It was not until November 1944 that de Gaulle gained widespread support for his view that "the Republic has never ceased to exist," that Vichy had always been illegal, and all acts of collaboration were also by extension illegal.<sup>14</sup> It was not until then that the 1939 Penal Code – the basis of the trial – was officially reinstated in France. Perhaps retroactive legislation was the most pragmatic way to try collaborators, but it was a shaky foundation for a government with democratic aspirations. As Peter Novick points out in his history of the purge, the inherent injustice of retroactive punishment is a principle "common to all systems of jurisprudence" – including, ironically, the Code used to try Brasillach.<sup>15</sup>

A further problem with the trial was the collaboration record of the court officials. The judge Maurice Vidal and the prosecutor Marcel Reboul worked in the Vichy court of economic violations, while the defence attorney Jacques Isorni worked in the Paris Special Section, which prosecuted Communists at the behest of the Nazis.<sup>16</sup> Each of them swore an oath to Pétain in 1940, and each did his part to ensure that the magistrate functioned smoothly throughout the Occupation.<sup>17</sup> While this background did not automatically disqualify them from trying Brasillach, it did give the trial an air of hypocrisy. Furthermore, Vidal in particular often sounded rather defensive during his interrogation of Brasillach. Recounting Brasillach's wartime activities, he repeatedly asked the defendant, "Do you think that's normal?"<sup>18</sup> It was as if he was trying to distinguish his "normal" administrative collaboration from Brasillach's purported

treason. It was hardly the language of judicial impartiality.

The four-man jury was *parti pris* in the opposite sense: all were members of the Resistance, handpicked by the Liberation Committee in Paris. In general, the method of jury selection was one of the most controversial aspects of the purge trials: one contemporary critic described it as an “infallible instrument of partisan vengeance.”<sup>19</sup> In Brasillach’s case, there is no way to know for certain whether the jury’s background influenced their decision, but two facts about their behaviour cast doubt on their judgement. First, they only deliberated for twenty minutes before pronouncing Brasillach guilty, despite the complexity of his case.<sup>20</sup> Second, their verdicts in the two cases they judged the day before Brasillach’s trial – which were also treason trials – suggest a rather prejudiced outlook. One involved a prostitute who denounced a client to the Gestapo after he robbed her at gunpoint. The other involved an industrial draftsman, said to be a member of a French fascist party, who denounced two escaped prisoners of war in his apartment building. The prostitute was sentenced to “national degradation,” depriving her of basic political rights, while the draftsman was acquitted of all charges.<sup>21</sup> Although we do not know exactly what led this disproportionate outcome, it seems likely that sexism was a factor. The case against Brasillach, as we will see, depended on a similar kind of prejudice.

Brasillach’s trial was also tainted by the general inconsistency of the purge trials. To begin with, he was one of only three journalists to be executed solely on the basis of his writing. Céline, Lucien Combelle, and Lucien Rebatet all expressed views comparable to those of Brasillach, but they only served short prison terms.<sup>22</sup> *Au Pilon* was the most anti-Semitic paper of the Occupation, but three of its four editors were not even indicted.<sup>23</sup> In addition, the purge never addressed the fact that virtually all writers during the Occupation “collaborated” in the sense that they published with the approval of the German censors. The censors maintained a blacklist of Jewish and allegedly anti-German writers: any publication meant



tacit support for Nazi bigotry.<sup>24</sup> Of course, publishing with Nazi approval was not the same as approving of the Nazis, but what made Brasillach more treasonous than those writers who merely cooperated? Was it his fascist opinions? Most of the 300,000 people who read *Je Suis Partout* also had fascist sympathies, as did the 220,000 who formed the rank-and-file of the various collaborationist movements.<sup>25</sup> Moreover, as even Kaplan admits, “there were a hundred, a thousand political collaborators whose actions were far, far worse than [Brasillach’s].”<sup>26</sup> Why was Brasillach chosen as one of the relatively few to be tried and executed?<sup>27</sup>

There are a few practical explanations for why he was one of the first to find himself in the dock: as a journalist, Brasillach left a paper trail that could be quickly turned into evidence; as a prominent cultural figure, he symbolized collaboration to a public eager to see the collaboration stand trial; and unlike many collaborationists, he did not flee France during the Liberation, but instead turned himself in. As for his execution, it was a partly a matter of being in the wrong place, at the wrong time: sentences in the trials were harshest before 1946, and acquittals were least common in the Paris courts.<sup>28</sup> But there were also two important factors in Brasillach’s conviction that had nothing to do with practicality or luck. Novick has written, of the purge in general, “juries were, in effect, asked to judge the man, not the specific acts alleged,”<sup>29</sup> and this observation proves to be especially apropos of Brasillach’s case. More than anything else, the prosecution’s case centred on two aspects of Brasillach’s identity: his status as an “intellectual” and his reputed homosexuality.

From the beginning of his speech, Reboul drew the jury’s attention to Brasillach’s influence as a public intellectual. He stressed Brasillach’s “seductive powers of persuasive eloquence,”<sup>30</sup> implying the journalist was accountable for the actions of his readers: “for how many crimes do you bear the intellectual responsibility?”<sup>31</sup> At first glance, this argument seems to have some merit: it is true that words can have real consequences, especially in the context of an oppressive dictatorship. The problem was that Reboul never

proved that Brasillach caused any physical harm. He never even tried to show that Brasillach's written attacks led to murders or arrests by the Gestapo or the Milice. Indeed, as the Resistance writer François Mauriac wrote before the trial, "there exists no known case of a Frenchman arrested on the strength of a *Je Suis Partout* denunciation."<sup>32</sup> No one proved Mauriac wrong. In this light, the argument for Brasillach's "intellectual responsibility" amounted to little more than a vague allegation that his writing corrupted impressionable young men, or somehow contributed to the violent tone of the Occupation. It was a rhetorical tactic for incriminating Brasillach simply on the grounds that he was a popular writer with suddenly unpopular political opinions.

The emphasis on "intellectual responsibility" was also suspect because of the self-serving support it received from other intellectuals. The Communist writer Claude Morgan, for example, wrote of collaborationist writers, "the more talented they are, the more they are guilty."<sup>33</sup> Simone de Beauvoir declared, "there are words as murderous as gas chambers."<sup>34</sup> The *Comité national des écrivains*, an organization of writers formed during the Resistance, backed up these claims with a "blacklist" of collaborative writers, first published in the fall of 1944, which effectively established writers like Brasillach as guilty until proven innocent.<sup>35</sup> In part, the writers may have been genuinely concerned about the integrity of their profession, but Tony Judt raises the possibility of less noble motives: "If collaborating intellectuals were important persons who deserved to be judged for their words, then intellectuals resisters could make the same claim, both for their role in the war years and for their place in postwar society."<sup>36</sup> In this sense, Brasillach was a casualty of literary self-promotion. The jurors probably saw the blacklists, which made them that much more liable to send him to his death.

The second crucial prejudice involved in the prosecution's case was homophobia. Although it is unknown whether Brasillach was actually gay, Reboul shrewdly highlighted the homoerotic

strains in his writing. For example, he read this excerpt from a column Brasillach published in 1944: “It seems to me that I’ve contracted a liaison with German genius, one that I will never forget...Frenchmen given to reflection, during these years, will have more or less slept with Germany...and the memory of it will remain sweet for them.”<sup>37</sup> Reboul made it clear how he thought the jury ought to interpret the passage, alluding to a recognizable line from the Oscar Wilde trial: “that feeling that dare not say its name, and which is love.” He continued the homophobic insinuations for several minutes, describing Brasillach’s wartime writing as “fornication,” “penetration,” and “quasi-carnal love.” Kaplan calls this the “high point” of Reboul’s speech, perhaps the main reason for Brasillach’s guilty verdict, but she does not address the hypocrisy of such blatant homophobia. She simply writes that Reboul’s innuendo “touched on a crisis of masculinity,” as if that justifies invoking a prejudice as deplorable as Brasillach’s own anti-Semitism.<sup>38</sup> She also ignores the internal contradiction in Reboul’s speech: it is unlikely that collaboration depicted as sexual submission would inspire many young men to become collaborators. Finally, she fails to discuss the broader implications of attributing collaboration to homosexuality. Like Jean-Paul Sartre, who later explained collaboration as a “state of mind” arising from “a curious mixture of masochism and homosexuality,” an Reboul was reducing the diverse ways of accommodating the occupiers to a binary division based on sexual orientation. In effect, he was giving heterosexual Frenchmen an excuse not to examine their own Occupation behaviour: if they were straight, they must have been patriots.

The same sort of historical simplification was on display in the last part of Reboul’s speech. He quoted several of Brasillach’s most incriminating comments – without dates or context – relating to the Third Republic, communists, and Jews. He portrayed him as an isolated voice, even though the journalist’s writing tended to reflect common attitudes.<sup>39</sup> For example, Reboul quoted a comment from a 1942 column in which Brasillach referred to the Third Republic

as “an old syphilitic whore.”<sup>40</sup> In fact, Brasillach was hardly the only one with misgivings about the Republic: many people at the time blamed it for the 1940 defeat. After all, everyone heard Pétain say in radio addresses, “the old regime led the country to ruin.”<sup>41</sup> Similarly, many agreed with André Geraud’s 1943 account of the debacle, which famously labelled Third Republic politicians like Edouard Daladier and Paul Reynaud the “gravediggers of France.”<sup>42</sup> In this context, Brasillach was merely offering a cruder version of conventional wisdom. He was also expressing sentiments that many intellectuals of his generation held long before the war. Jean-Pierre Maxence, a colleague of Brasillach at *Action française*, called the Republic a “whore” as early as 1930, as while Emmanuel Mounier, a future Resistance writer, described it in 1932 as “so utterly mouldy that for new shoots to emerge the whole rotten edifice will have to crumble.”<sup>43</sup> Brasillach’s comment was admittedly more insensitive after the Republic had already crumbled, at a time when several Republican ministers were on trial at Riom for their supposed responsibility in the 1940 defeat, but it was misleading to call his comment treasonous. Hatred of the Third Republic had widespread support and a long tradition in France.

Reboul also cited Brasillach’s attacks on communists, most damagingly his remark from a March 1939 column: “Why wait to execute the Communist deputies?”<sup>44</sup> Such savage attacks might give poetic justice to Brasillach’s own execution, but once again it is important to examine the context. The comment was actually typical of the anti-Communist hysteria in the run-up to the war. Moreover, it was the Daladier government that arrested the Communist deputies in the first place, using them as distractions at a time when the public was growing anxious about foreign infiltration.<sup>45</sup> Conversely, it should be noted that many communist resisters during the Occupation had far more blood on their hands than Brasillach. The Communists were the only resistance group to carry out assassinations of German officials, even though the killings had negligible military impact, and the Germans always

responded with massive reprisals against innocent French hostages.<sup>46</sup> The Communists maintained their counterproductive policy even when de Gaulle and other Resistance groups pleaded with them to stop.<sup>47</sup> Brasillach alluded to this controversy in his trial: “it was those who, rightly or wrongly, ordered attacks against German soldiers, who should have been pursued, and not the poor fellows who were arrested as hostages.”<sup>48</sup> Although the comment cannot be taken at face value – since Brasillach clearly hated the communists before the war began – he made a point that was largely overlooked during the purge trials. The Nazis killed about 29,660 French hostages during the war. This appalling figure might have been much lower had the Communist assassins shown more restraint.<sup>49</sup>

Finally, there remains the question of Brasillach’s anti-Semitism. Reboul only quoted two of the journalist’s comments about Jews, which is telling in itself: many people were probably unwilling to think about their own complicity in the anti-Semitic legislation and deportations under Vichy. Moreover, putting Brasillach’s comments in context shows that they reflected common prejudices of the time. His first comment was from an April 1938 editorial in *Je Suis Partout*: “we must treat the Jewish problem without sentimentality.”<sup>50</sup> At the time, the Jewish “problem” referred to the influx of Jewish refugees from Germany. Concern about these refugees was widespread, due to Depression-era anxiety over competition for jobs, combined with the fear that Jews would instigate a war with Germany.<sup>51</sup> An editorial in the mainstream *Le Temps* shows the prevalence of such prejudice: “public opinion does not want to hear any more about political refugees who are, by definition...competitors of the French worker or intellectual in the labour market...whose contradictory ideologies can only create disorder, stimulate violence, and make blood flow.”<sup>52</sup> The editorial ran on November 14, a few days after Kristallnacht. “Political refugees” was a euphemism for Jewish refugees.

The other anti-Semitic comment cited at the trial dated back to the massive Jewish round-ups organized by Vichy in the

summer of 1942. It was Brasillach's only written reference to the deportations, but it became the most infamous sentence he ever wrote: "we must separate the Jews en bloc and not keep any little ones."<sup>53</sup> What did this sinister-sounding comment mean? Brasillach was referring to the first deportations of Jews from the Unoccupied Zone, when the Nazis were only taking Jewish adults in the trains to Auschwitz. He wanted them to take whole families. It was an utterly inhumane position, certainly deserving condemnation; unfortunately, Brasillach was far from the only Frenchman to display such insensitivity. Pierre Laval himself insisted that the Nazis take the children because he did not want to take care of the Jewish orphans, and over 9,000 French police helped the Gestapo with the round-ups of that summer.<sup>54</sup> Meanwhile, the general public briefly professed outrage at the visible brutality of the initial round-ups, but largely lost interest in the Jews by the end of the year, when the police learned to go about their dirty work with more discretion.<sup>55</sup> A Vichy report on the deportations in September stated, "in response to the outcry produced everywhere by the barbarous measure, President Laval requested and fixed things so that the children will not be separated...in the arrests in the Unoccupied Zone the children have followed their parents."<sup>56</sup>

It may not have been realistic for France to delve into this sordid history so soon after the Liberation, but it was self-defeating to dole out definitive punishments so hastily. In August 1945, Albert Camus – who despised Brasillach, but opposed his execution – articulated the widespread feeling that the purge "had not only failed, but fallen into disrepute."<sup>57</sup> The unprincipled application of justice had merely added to the scandals of the war. In the case of Brasillach, then, what might have been done differently? To start with, the prosecution should have provided clear evidence that his words led to specific crimes. If that was impossible, the most effective way to discredit Brasillach would have been to ridicule his views in print: to expose the irrationality of his anti-Semitism, the incoherent political principles that lay behind his attacks on

republicanism and communism, and the madness of his belief that Nazi Germany would accept France as an autonomous ally.<sup>58</sup> It could have all been done without resorting to retroactive legislation, biased courts, arbitrary verdicts, and primitive stereotypes. Furthermore, had the purge trials avoided such embarrassing faux pas, the public at large might have been more willing to confront their own complicity in the crimes of the Occupation.

## Notes

1. Alice Kaplan, *The Collaborator* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2000), 143.
2. Julian Jackson, *France: The Dark Years 1940-1944* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 579.
3. Marshal Pétain, Pierre Laval, Joseph Darnand, Marcel Déat and Jacques Doriot had fled to Sigmaringen, Germany. Peter Novick, *The Resistance Versus Vichy* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1968), 157-61.
4. The circulation of *Je Suis Partout* was about 300,000 copies in 1942-4. Jackson 201.
5. Kaplan 78, 188, 209-10
6. Paul Mazgaj, "Ce Mal du Siècle: The 'Romantic' Fascism of Robert Brasillach," *Historical Reflections* (23 no. 1, 1997), 49-50.
7. Robert Tucker, *The Fascist Ego: A Political Biography of Robert Brasillach* (Berkeley: University of California Press), 109, 112.
8. David Carroll, "Literary Fascism or the Aestheticizing of Politics: The Case of Robert Brasillach" *New Literary History* (23 no. 3, 1995), 711.
9. Brasillach refused several opportunities to escape to Germany with other collaborationists. He hid in Paris for about a month, and then turned himself in upon discovering that his mother had been arrested by the Forces françaises de l'intérieur. Kaplan 70-2.
10. Kaplan also says that it would have been better not to execute Brasillach, as it turned him into a martyr for the extreme right. She has a point, but still ignores the larger issue of the trial's injustice, which probably fuels the apologists as much as the execution itself. Kaplan 227.
11. Mazgaj 56.
12. Novick 141.
13. Henry Rousso, "The Purge in France: An Incomplete Story" in *Retribution and Reparation in the Transition to Democracy*, ed. Jon Elster (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 90.
14. Kaplan 149.
15. Novick 141.

16. In their respective speeches, Reboul and Isorni both raised the issue of their own collaboration records, only to deem them insignificant. Kaplan 100, 119, 168, 181.
17. Jackson 262-3.
18. Kaplan 153.
19. Novick 152-3.
20. Kaplan 186.
21. According to his concierge, the draftsman was a member of the Rassemblement national populaire, and a subscriber to their magazine. Kaplan 142.
22. Paul Chack and Georges Suarez were first two executed. They were comparatively minor figures and their trials did not attract as much attention as Brasillach's. Tony Judt, *Past Imperfect: French Intellectuals, 1944-1956* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992), 66-7.
23. Diane Rubenstein, *What's Left? The Ecole Normale Supérieure and the Right*. (Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1990), 141.
24. The German ban covered over 1,060 works. Jackson lists a total of only six writers who protested the ban by refraining from publication. Jackson 313.
25. The figure of 220,000 includes members of the Rassemblement national populaire, the Parti populaire française, the Milice, and Collaboration. *ibid.*, 194, 201.
26. Kaplan 184.
27. During the purge, 132,828 people were tried in the Courts of Justice, and 6,762 were sentenced to death, but only 767 were actually executed. Rousso 108.
28. Rubenstein 144.
29. Novick 171.
30. *Ibid.*, 160.
31. Judt 65. This argument apparently impressed de Gaulle, who explained his decision not to commute Brasillach's sentence in his memoirs: "in literature as in everything else, talent confers responsibility." Kaplan 212.
32. Kaplan initially attributes Mauriac's position to "Christian charity," but she later admits that "there was no way that the government could prove a strict cause-effect relationship between Brasillach's violent sentences and the murders and deportations that did take place in France." She does not say whether they actually tried to prove such a relationship, nor does she explain why it would have been so difficult. *ibid.*, 172, 227.
33. Judt 63.
34. Rubenstein 141.
35. Not all members of CNE approved of the blacklist. For Jean Paulhan, "that the first public act of the CNE is to demand the arrests of other writers seems to me to be nothing less than horrible." Jackson 591.
36. Judt 61.
37. Kaplan 162.



38. *Ibid.*, 162-4.

39. In fact, resistance literature also tended to depict collaboration as a sexual temptation, with the aim of dissuading potential collaborators. Michael Kelly, "The View of Collaboration during the 'Après-Guerre'" in *Collaboration in France: Politics and Culture during the Nazi Occupation, 1940-1944*, eds. Gerhard Hirschfeld and Patrick Marsh (Oxford: Berg Publishers, 1989), 244-5.

40. Carroll 726.

41. Brasillach complained about the Rebolu's tactics the day after the trial. He wrote in a letter, "All he does is read from articles that he had cleverly cut!" Kaplan 165.

42. Kaplan 161.

43. Julian Jackson, "Post-War Politics and the Historiography of French Strategy and Diplomacy Before the Second World War," *History Compass* (10 no. 5, 2006), 874.

44. *Ibid.*, 873.

45. Tucker 85.

46. Judt 16.

47. Kaplan 165.

48. According to Jackson, Daladier's Communist crackdown was a means of deflecting criticism from pacifists in Parliament. The pretext was the Nazi-Soviet Pact, but the arrests began before the French Communists had a chance to decide their position on the treaty, which surprised them as much as anyone else. Jackson 114-5.

49. The official Nazi policy was to kill ten French hostages for every assassination, but in practice they often murdered fifty or a hundred. Rab Bennett, *Under the Shadow of the Swastika: The Moral Dilemmas of Resistance and Collaboration in Hitler's Europe* (New York: New York University Press, 1999), 102, 106, 135.

50. In a radio address on October 23, 1941, de Gaulle said: "my orders to those in occupied territory are NOT to kill Germans there openly. This is for one reason only: at present, it is too easy for the enemy to retaliate by massacring our fighters, who are, for the time being disarmed." The non-Communist resistor Henri Michel took a similar stance: "It seems questionable whether acts of resistance liable to be punished with such violent reprisals are necessary or even useful." Bennett 135-6.

51. With complete disregard for the French casualties of communist assassinations, Kaplan dismisses the whole hostage controversy as "Vichy propaganda." Kaplan 158, 179.

52. The figure was cited from German records, so it may not be completely reliable. Bennett 132.

53. Kaplan 166. Brasillach's "unsentimental solution" to the "Jewish problem" was to "to consider all Jews who are citizens of foreign countries as foreigners and oppose the most stringent obstacles to their naturalization – to consider all the Jews established in France as a

minority with a special legal status that protects them at the same time that it protects us.” Brasillach was proposing the kind of anti-Semitic laws that Vichy would soon implement. Michael Marrus and Robert Paxton, *Vichy France and the Jews*, (New York: Basic Books Publishers, 1981), 43-4.

54. *Ibid.* 36.

55. *Ibid.*, 40-1.

56. Kaplan 166.

57. Jackson 218.

58. *Ibid.*, 376.

59. Paxton 268-9.

60. Judt 70.

61. In a recent essay on Brasillach, Clive James shows how effective such ridicule might have been. After condemning Brasillach’s anti-Semitism, he writes: “He could have argued back, and said that Voltaire loathed Jews too. But what about Proust? What did he think that a pipsqueak like himself amounted to beside a man like that? Proust might have been only half a Jew, but Brasillach was barely a quarter of a literary figure, and in normal times would probably have measured even less: the *Zeitgeist* lent him a dark lustre.” Clive James, “Robert Brasillach” in *Cultural Amnesia: Necessary Memories from History and the Arts* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2007), 74-5.

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# Incredible Survival: The Welsh Language in the Nineteenth Century

By Margherita Devine

*The use of Welsh declined significantly over the course of the nineteenth century: in 1801, 71.8% of the Welsh population in Wales spoke Welsh, while a century later it had fallen to 49.9%.<sup>1</sup> This essay, however, examines the factors which enabled Wales to maintain a distinctive to a remarkable extent, especially in comparison to the other minority languages of the United Kingdom. Demographic data from the period, government legislation, and commentary on Welsh education, religion, and social mores demonstrate that cultural, socio-economic and political factors were all critical to the preservation of Welsh in the nineteenth century, and its extraordinary survival throughout the twentieth, and into the twenty-first centuries.*

What happened to Welsh during the nineteenth century? The endurance of Welsh was threatened from multiple angles and the use of Welsh declined significantly over the course of the nineteenth century: in 1801, 71.8% of the Welsh population in Wales spoke Welsh, while a century later it had fallen to 49.9%.<sup>2</sup> This decline in the use of Welsh has prompted some scholars to mark the nineteenth century as the advent of a linguistic apocalypse; though the subsequent efforts of the Welsh government to revitalize the use of the language has led others to proclaim proof that Welsh will be viable until the end of days. Many scholars are prone to viewing 19<sup>th</sup> century Welsh language politics through the lens of the twentieth century, causing them to interpret this decrease as a sign of the language's impending demise, and focus their analysis exclusively on the decline in Welsh language usage and the factors that contributed to the establishment of the English language in Wales. However,

these extreme positions obscure the true nature of nineteenth century Welsh language decline.

Wales went from containing solely monoglot speakers of Welsh (with the notable exceptions of the Anglicized gentry and those living along the border with England) to having sizable minorities of monoglot Welsh speakers, monoglot English speakers, and a large population of bilingual speakers. By assuming that Welsh/English bilingualism was a step towards the conquering of Welsh by the English language, some scholars have ignored the incredible, and extraordinary, achievement of maintaining Welsh alongside the language of education, law, science, and economic opportunity. There are three factors that contributed to the preservation of Welsh in the nineteenth century: the long-standing tension between the English and Welsh, which created a diglossia in Wales and limited the potential social mobility of the Welsh; industrialization, which saved Wales from Ireland's fate of famine and created a core of workers who continued to embrace Welsh; and, Westminster's failure to initiate successful anti-Welsh policies.

The linguistic divide between the Welsh and the English is hardly a new phenomenon. Contact, and tension, between the English and Welsh languages dates from the Anglo-Norman conquest of Wales, between the eleventh and the thirteenth centuries, and which introduced a linguistic divide between Welsh-speaking North Wales and the English-speaking South.<sup>3</sup> Though this border later shifted, leaving English speakers only at the borders of Offa's Dyke, English and Welsh were in close, yet violent, contact. Few people, however, were bilingual. Wales came increasingly under British control, culminating in the Act of Union of 1536, which incorporated Wales into England under Henry VIII. The Act of Union codified the pre-existing distinctions between the functions of English and Welsh in daily life: Welsh was for the home, casual conversation and worship, while English was used in law and government office. The Act generally outlines the legal and administrative framework of English control over Wales, though Section XX of the Act dictated a

more controversial requirement. It states that,

...all other Courts [shall be conducted] in the English Tongue... and also that from henceforth no Person or Persons that use the Welsh Speech or Language, shall have or enjoy any manner Office or Fees within this Realm of England, Wales, or other the King's Dominion, upon Pain of forfeiting the same Offices or Fees, unless he or they use and exercise the English Speech or Language.<sup>4</sup> (emphasis in original)

English was codified as the government language, and Welsh was not. The Language Clause has been interpreted as disenfranchising the Welsh and encouraging the destruction of the language,<sup>5</sup> or as an attempt to encourage bilingualism.<sup>6</sup> Either way, the Language Clause had limited practical effect. It is clear that the English intended for the ruling gentry to be fluent in English, but as Wales' aristocracy was very small and anglicized, it suggests little about the overall vitality of Welsh. In practice, the Language Clause could not be completely enforced in territories that were principally Welsh speaking; courts became somewhat bilingual and electioneering was done in Welsh.<sup>7</sup> Welsh and English continued to exist post-1536 in a diglossic relationship that did not threaten the existence of Welsh. Geraint H. Jenkins writes, "to use the terminology of sociolinguists, English was a High language, a language of prestige and dominance. It was the language of public life and the professions, of commerce and progress, of prosperity and advancement."<sup>8</sup> Diglossia is a sociolinguistic term that describes a place where two languages are used in separate spheres: the High language carries the prestige of government, power, religion and business, while the Low language is the speaker's vernacular, used at home and with friends.<sup>9</sup> Wales was a nearly-textbook case of diglossia,<sup>10</sup> although religious services were often conducted in Welsh, the Low language. The Act of Union, therefore, merely emphasized and codified a previously existing diglossic situation.

The diglossia was beneficial to Welsh because it furthered

demographic trends that were conducive to maintaining a Low language. Kathryn Steinhaus writes, “with the exception of a period between 1400 and 1415... English or Anglicized barons ruled Wales.”<sup>11</sup> The demography of Wales was already such that many “true” Welsh were not in power and had limited social mobility, and the Act of Union only furthered the divide between Welsh-speaking peasants and English-speaking gentry. The core of peasants was largely composed of agricultural workers with limited education, who possessed neither the desire nor the means to acquire English.

Why, then, is this diglossic situation, as exemplified by the Act of Union, so important to discussion of the nineteenth century? First, because the demography of Wales did not change much until industrialization, and it is valuable to examine the forces at work up to the beginning of the century; and second because Welsh retained this diglossic role throughout the nineteenth century.

Wales’ industrial revolution created a core of workers for whom Welsh was a badge of class honour. Although slate and limestone quarrying predated large-scale industrialization, at the beginning of the nineteenth century Wales’ main industry was agriculture. People were concentrated in rural areas and towns were fairly small: Cardiff, for example, now a major urban hub in Wales, contained 1,870 people in 1801.<sup>12</sup> More profitably, Wales has a rich supply of iron-ore, and of coal in its south and northeast. The coal in the northeast had already been mined for several centuries, but in the early-mid nineteenth century the South Wales Coal Field began to be mined, and with this industrialization came urbanization. It is important to recognize that there were no uniform demographic trends in every part of Wales: agriculture was still a viable living for many, and urbanization was a trend only in places where many industrial jobs were created.<sup>13</sup> Industrialization transformed the Welsh landscape in many places and changed daily life, especially for those who left rural areas and took jobs in industrial centers. Although this transition could be traumatic, it was a boon for Welsh language preservation: Ieuan Gwynedd Jones writes, “the Welsh



language was a precious and singular possession of the masses of workers at a time when the inhuman, dehumanizing and brutalizing forces of industrialism were alienating them from nature and from society.”<sup>14</sup>

Although English business contacts and the increased mobility provided by the railway system both ushered in English speakers and made learning English more practical for Welsh speakers, the core of industrial workers in the coalfields was Welsh-speaking. This concentration of men with lower socioeconomic status and limited social mobility reinforced Welsh as the Low language, a language with covert prestige,<sup>15</sup> the language of “real” Welshmen. English was the language of government, but in the mines Welsh was the favoured tongue; furthermore any non-Welsh-speaking migrants to the coalfields had to become at least proficient in Welsh to communicate with their fellow workers.<sup>16</sup> Although rural areas had proportionately more Welsh speakers, by 1891 72% of Welsh speakers were living in the five counties most affected by industrialization.<sup>17</sup> A strong sense of class identity developed among Welsh workers, a development attested by the rise of Chartism. Jenkins writes, “...there was a powerful sense of solidarity within the ranks of working people, and some of the strongly Anglophobic sentiments expressed by some of them betokened a deep-rooted antipathy towards wealthy and oppressive strangers.”<sup>18</sup> Workers took pride in their language, and continued speaking Welsh, even while some became bilingual.

Industrialization also fuelled a population boom in Wales. Over the course of the nineteenth century, the Welsh population nearly quadrupled, from 600,000 people in 1801 to over two million in 1911.<sup>19</sup> Paradoxically, although the percentage of Welsh speakers in the population decreased, due to the class dynamics created in the coalfields, there was an increase in the number of Welsh speakers and the sum total of those speakers reached an all-time high in 1911.<sup>20</sup> Industrialization also allowed Wales to accommodate the increasing population in ways that an agricultural state could not.

Industrialization created jobs that were dependent, not on nature's good fortune, but the market economy, and there was a direct correlation to population growth in industrializing areas.<sup>21</sup> Moreover, industrialization spared Wales from the disasters that affected other parts of the Celtic Fringe: had Wales remained only agricultural, it is highly likely it would have been devastated by the potato blight and subsequent famine that hurt Ireland, as well as by the agricultural depression of the 1880's.<sup>22</sup> In Ireland, famine ravaged the poorest classes of society. In Wales, this class was composed of people with limited social mobility and limited desire to acquire English, the regional High language. Furthermore, in Ireland famine provoked mass emigration to North America and England, where the pressures of assimilation accelerated language loss. Finally, industrialization, and the prosperity and urban loci which it produced, gave Wales the resources to build its National Library (1907), Museum (1907) and University (1893).<sup>23</sup> Thus the wealth of industrialization contributed significantly to the preservation of Welsh throughout the entire nineteenth century.

Industrialization provides a clear positive reason for why Welsh was able to be sustained, but it is also essential to look at the negative reasons for why this was so: what policies the English did not enact, or tried and failed to enact, which ultimately left Welsh intact. England never aimed to destroy Welsh in the early modern era: England was lenient regarding Welsh religion, and its failed educational policies, though rife with disdain for the Welsh, nevertheless were mostly consistent with a diglossic model of language use.

English policy towards the Welsh language was broadly permissive and tolerant from the Act of Union onwards. Jenkins writes,

...it should not be inferred that the [English] state actively sought to eradicate the Welsh language. In Ireland, political conquest and the suppression of the Irish language were inextricably connected, but there is no evidence of an overt and concerted effort by Tudor, Stuart or Hanoverian governments to dig a grave for

the Welsh language.<sup>24</sup>

There is a critical distinction between the kind of legislation the English directed at the Welsh, and active suppression of the language. The Language Clause of the Act of Union outlined the government apparatus as English-speaking, but there were no government attempts to decrease use of Welsh in informal situation. Unlike in Ireland, where the government targeted Irish Gaelic in as many capacities as possible in order to subdue the region, Welsh people had the freedom to use the language of their choice within their communities. Wales was seen as a loyal province and only in the twentieth century was the Language Clause re-examined as an affront to Welsh.<sup>25</sup>

Similarly, although the government encouraged the use of English in religious observances, there was no real enforcement of this preference. The Welsh were extremely observant; the 1851 Religious census found that 57% of the populace attended a place of worship.<sup>26</sup> The Anglican Church had a presence in Wales, however its policies were not conducive to a large Welsh following. The Church did not make knowledge of the language a necessity for Episcopal appointments; as a result, no Welsh-speaking bishops were appointed.<sup>27</sup> Most Welsh could not understand Anglican services and many turned to Protestant denominations, a movement called Nonconformity. The official church conducted itself in English, but did not actively seek to shut down dissenting chapels.

Religious censuses and church documents are also useful because they are often descriptive, rather than prescriptive documents. The Act of Union indicates the official government policy, but church records show what kinds of services fit the needs of the people. The extent of Nonconformist, Welsh-language services became glaringly evident in the 1851 census, which showed that 20% of the church-going population attended Anglican services, with the other 80% split among Nonconformist churches and small congregations of Roman Catholics and Jews. Welsh language

services outnumbered English language services 744 to 623.<sup>28</sup> The Nonconformist Movement is too complex to be given proper treatment here, but the movement was based on the insistence on Welsh-language services, a demand stemming partly from a practical desire for services to be understood and partly from a long-held folk Biblical tradition that Welsh was passed down to the people through Gomer, Noah's grandson.<sup>29</sup> Welsh language religious traditions were therefore not deemed threatening by the English government. Moreover, the proliferation of Welsh-language services indicates the continuing strength of Welsh, even in an era of increasing contact with England and English speakers.

One role the church fulfilled outside of religious services was education—a subject that became extremely controversial in the mid-nineteenth century. The Welsh education system originally had its roots in the Church, though day schools were founded over the late Early Modern period. In the 1730's Welsh Sunday schools, set up by charities and funded by wealthy individuals, undertook a great literacy campaign. The campaign focused on literacy in Welsh in order to aid the teaching of the tenets of Christianity to the population.<sup>30</sup> Outside of this campaign, however, English was the traditional medium of schooling. English-language teaching was established not by the English government but by the Welsh Trust, and was carried on by the Society for the Promotion of Christian Knowledge, which believed that students would have more opportunities in later life if they knew English.<sup>31</sup> The problem, however, was that students did not actually learn English. While the wealthy individuals funding the schools may have had excellent access to English-language materials, many schools did not. Furthermore, few adults in rural counties were adequately proficient in English to teach it.

This was the state of affairs when, in 1846, Westminster dispatched three monoglot English-speaking Oxford graduates to investigate the Welsh educational system. The report they produced, which became known as *Brad y Llyfrau Gleision*, or the Treachery

of the Blue Books, stated that Welsh schools were in a poor state. Jenkins summarizes the report, which found that, “there were too few schools, their resources were pitiful and teachers were poorly trained.”<sup>32</sup> The technical analysis of day schools, Sunday schools and their pupils was accurate, and unprejudiced. The commissioners noted that Sunday schools, while in poor condition, garnered pupils who were eager to learn, writing, “whatever Sunday schools may be as places of instruction, they are the real fields of mental activity.”<sup>33</sup> The explanations offered by the commissioners, however, were prejudiced and inflammatory: they claimed that the Welsh were of dubious moral character, and were mired in a comparatively uneducated and impoverished state because of their barbarous tongue. The Welsh felt that the report was a strong, explicit condemnation of their language, and it was a harsh blow to the psyche of the people.

The report, however, did not contain precisely the harsh condemnation that popular memory claims; even if it did, the policies it advocated had no impact on Welsh language use. The Blue Books condemned the most inflammatory symbol of the yoke of English linguistic oppression, Welsh Not, a stick or sign that hung around the necks of children who spoke Welsh in school. Children passed the marker around to whomever committed such an offense, and at the end of the week the child found with it was beaten.<sup>34</sup> Henry Vaughan Johnson, one of the authors of the report, thought the best approach to Welsh education was a bilingual one, and also advocated for infant education.<sup>35</sup> This is not to say that the report did not contain prejudice about Welsh; however, the criticisms levied at the language had more to do with the limited social mobility speaking the Low language produced. Clearly the report was not couched in sociolinguistic terms, but criticism of the language came to the same point. What made the criticism offensive was the “commissioners’ blind acceptance that intelligence, culture and morality also equated with mastery of English.”<sup>36</sup>

Leaving psychological damage aside, however, the Blue

Books had very little effect on actual Welsh language usage. The Welsh were assuredly upset, but were still discussing their anger in their mother tongue. In fact, the percentage of the population that was Welsh speaking went up between 1851 and 1871, from 69% to 71.2%. Although 1881 census shows only 36.8% of the Welsh population speaking Welsh this number was back up to 49.9% in 1901.<sup>37</sup> The statistics simply do not conform to the notion that the Blue Books were damaging to Welsh. Their lack of impact can be traced to the persistence of the problems that plagued the educational system before 1847. There still were not enough Welsh to English teaching materials, not enough teachers, and not enough funding. Furthermore, English was already the language of instruction: the 1847 Report showed that of the 1657 day schools in Wales, 3 were solely Welsh-language, 318 used both English and Welsh, and 1,336 were English-language.<sup>37</sup> Simply condemning the way the educational status quo was not enough to effect any change. Educational reforms are an example of the way in which failed English policy allowed Welsh to maintain its foothold in the general population.

English policy was both unable and unwilling to challenge the diglossic situation in nineteenth century Wales. As a result of economic and social forces unleashed by industrialization, the century saw a strengthening of Welsh's covert prestige within the diglossia and a significant increase in the absolute number of Welsh speakers. Although at the turn of the twentieth century just over half the population of Wales did not speak Welsh, the language nevertheless remained viable and vital in most regions of the nation and many different areas of daily life.

## Notes

1. Dot Jones, *Statistical Evidence Relating to the Welsh Language 1801-1911*, (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1998) 221.
2. Geraint H. Jenkins, *A Concise History of Wales*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007) 68-9.

3. Laws in Wales Act 1535 (Full Text). (Linked from Ministry of Justice: UK State Law Database, 2007) <http://owain.vaughan.com/1535c26/> (Accessed November 12, 2007), Section XX.
4. Geraint H. Jenkins, ed., *The Welsh Language Before the Industrial Revolution*, (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1997) 3.
5. John Davies, *A History of Wales*, (London: The Penguin Press, 1993) 235.
6. Geraint H. Jenkins, ed., *The Welsh Language Before the Industrial Revolution*, (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1997) 3.
7. Geraint H. Jenkins, Richard Suggett and Eryn M. White, "The Welsh Language in Early Modern Wales," in *The Welsh Language Before the Industrial Revolution*, Geraint H. Jenkins, ed., (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1997) 62.
8. Ronald Wardhaugh, *An Introduction to Sociolinguistics*, 5th ed., (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2006), 90.
9. 10. Other examples of diglossia include Norman French/English and Standard German/Swiss German in Switzerland as High/Low paradigms.
10. Kathryn Steinhaus, "Y Ddraig Goch: Plaid Cymru under Saunders Lewis and Gwynfor Evans," M.A. thes., (McGill University: Dept. of History, July 2006) 6.
11. Dot Jones, 86.
12. Jenkins, 183.
13. John Davies, *A History of Wales*, (London: The Penguin Press, 1993) 392.
14. Ronald Wardhaugh, *An Introduction to Sociolinguistics*, 5th ed., (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2006), 93-94.
15. 16. Geraint H. Jenkins, "Wales, the Welsh and the Welsh Language: Introduction," in *The Welsh Language and Its Social Domains, 1801-1911*, ed. Geraint H. Jenkins, (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2000) 13.
16. Brinley Thomas, "A Cauldron of Rebirth: Population and the Welsh Language in the Nineteenth Century," in *The Welsh Language and Its Social Domains, 1801-1911*, ed. Geraint H. Jenkins, (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2000) 81.
17. Geraint H. Jenkins, *A Concise History of Wales*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007) 202.
18. Dot Jones, *Statistical Evidence Relating to the Welsh Language 1801-1911*, (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1998) 9.
19. Ibid.
20. W.T.R. Pryce, "Language Zones, Demographic Changes, and the Welsh Culture Area 1800-1911," in *The Welsh Language and Its Social Domains, 1801-1911*, ed. Geraint H. Jenkins, (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2000) 47-51.
21. Brinley Thomas, "A Cauldron of Rebirth: Population and the Welsh Language in the Nineteenth Century," in *The Welsh Language and Its Social Domains, 1801-1911*, ed. Geraint H. Jenkins, (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2000) 97.

22. Ibid.
23. Geraint H. Jenkins, Richard Suggett and Eryn M. White, "The Welsh Language in Early Modern Wales," in *The Welsh Language Before the Industrial Revolution*, Geraint H. Jenkins, ed., (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1997) 63.
24. Ibid.
25. Geraint H. Jenkins, *A Concise History of Wales*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007) 205.
26. Eryn M. White, "The Established Church, Dissent and the Welsh Language c. 1660-1811," in *The Welsh Language Before the Industrial Revolution*, Geraint H. Jenkins, ed., (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1997) 238.
27. Dot Jones, *Statistical Evidence Relating to the Welsh Language 1801-1911*, (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1998) 425.
28. Eryn M. White, "The Established Church, Dissent and the Welsh Language c. 1660-1811," in *The Welsh Language Before the Industrial Revolution*, Geraint H. Jenkins, ed., (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1997) 235.
29. Eryn M. White, "Popular Schooling and the Welsh Language 1650-1800," in *The Welsh Language before the Industrial Revolution*, ed. Geraint H. Jenkins, (Cardiff: University of Wales, 1997) 317.
30. Ibid., 319.
31. Geraint H. Jenkins, *A Concise History of Wales*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007) 213.
32. R.R.W. Lingen, Jellynger C. Symons and H. R. Vaughan Johnson. *The Blue Books of 1847, or The Reports of Commissioners of Enquiry into the State of Education in Wales*. (Aberystwyth: Llyfrgell Genedlaethol Cymru (The National Library of Wales), 2007), <http://www.llgc.org.uk/index.php?id=295> (accessed November 6 2007), Part I, 4.
33. Ibid., p. 19.
34. Gareth Elwyn Jones, "The Welsh Language in the Blue Books of 1847," in *The Welsh Language and Its Social Domains, 1801-1911*, ed. Geraint H. Jenkins, (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2000) 439-41.
35. Ibid., 443.
36. Dot Jones, *Statistical Evidence Relating to the Welsh Language 1801-1911*, (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1998), 221.
37. Ibid., 356.



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## From Saloon Crusades to Suffrage Campaigns: Inebriation, Temperance, and Suffrage in America, 1870-1897

By Maeve Jones

*Late nineteenth-century America witnessed a forceful push for the woman's right to vote. In this paper, the author explores how leaders like Frances Willard and Mary Hanchett Hunt connected alcoholism and suffrage. They argued that the broad social ills rendered by alcohol seriously threatened the home, and for this reason inebriety required women's entrance into the public sphere.*

In Massachusetts in 1879, Mary Hanchett Hunt cast aside her feminine decorum and raised her voice in the political arena to advocate for Scientific Temperance Instruction.<sup>1</sup> This woman daringly stepped out of her domestic role and entered a foreign masculine field in order to campaign for a cause about which she felt deeply. Her crusade shattered previous norms that had restricted female involvement in American politics – but curiously, her campaign was not so radical that legislators could ignore it. In fact, mavericks like Hunt successfully convinced a majority of politicians to endorse Scientific Temperance Instruction, first in Massachusetts, then in thirteen additional states by 1886.<sup>2</sup> How is it that typically-conservative male legislators would seriously consider this woman's political proposals at a time when many politicians believed women were unfit to engage in business outside of the family domain?

The answer to this question, I argue, lies fundamentally in the content of Mary Hunt's protest. Temperance rhetoric, informed by medical diagnoses of inebriation and scientific perceptions of alcohol consumption, provided the impetus for otherwise-conservative women to mobilize in the public sphere. Hunt formulated an

argument that was palatable to both her and to male politicians by building upon scientific notions of inebriety that presented habitual drunkenness as a broad social ill. Her rhetoric fused medical science with common impressions of alcohol use and gender norms to implicate a feminine solution to inebriety that required the involvement of women in the public sphere. Further evidence will show that Mary Hunt's strategy closely parallels that of larger feminist movements represented by the American Women's Christian Temperance Union between the 1870s and the late 1890s.

As president of the Women's Christian Temperance Union from 1879 to 1897, Frances Willard was arguably one of the most successful leaders in the American suffrage movement. Like Hunt, Willard used temperance rhetoric to justify female involvement in politics, and from that standpoint she launched a crusade against inebriety that compelled a campaign for female suffrage. Willard's approach weaved together scientific notions of inebriety, gendered perceptions of alcohol use, and gendered norms on acceptable social involvement. Assembled, the woven mass of temperance rhetoric urged women to achieve a political role because adequate household duties demanded participation in public affairs.

To date, several historians have explored the links between women's temperance movements and female suffrage lobbies. For example, Susan M. Marilley has examined the Home Protection rhetoric that Frances Willard promulgated in order to garner support for her temperance movement.<sup>3</sup> Additionally, Aileen S. Kraditor has asserted that many feminists paradoxically advocated for suffrage on the grounds of conservative values that were frequently deployed against female franchise.<sup>4</sup> However, no historians have previously examined how the medical definition of inebriety formalised by the American Medical Association in 1876 directly informed Willard's argument and provided the foundation for what would become an enormously successful campaign.

Indeed, Frances Willard owes the success of her temperance movement largely to the medical tenets that informed the discourse

around inebriety and provided the tools necessary to render female suffrage rational to moderate men and women. I do not attempt to address the direction of causation between medical rhetoric and temperance rhetoric, or the extent to which medical definitions of habitual drunkenness were informed by social dialogues on the subject. Rather, I aim to expose the one-way interaction between scientific intemperance and Willard's temperance campaigns. Ultimately and essentially, leaders borrowed pre-existing scientific credibility from medical inebriety to lend credibility to feminist temperance dialogues that responded to this inebriety.

Medical classifications of excess alcohol consumption that crystallized during the 1870s lent feminist leaders like Mary Hunt and Frances Willard the scientific tools necessary to construct a popular woman's temperance movement. Because physicians defined inebriety as a social ill, Willard was able to redefine its resolution as necessarily involving all of society beyond individual drinkers. Moreover, the medical fact that alcohol poisoned the free will of the individual absolved drinkers of blame and refocused a solution on broader public reforms. Willard built upon these scientific corroborations and coupled them with assertions that excessive alcohol consumption was a masculine affliction absent in proper women. Therefore, not only were women the obvious agents of a temperance crusade, but more importantly their effective engagement had to permeate all of society beyond the individual and beyond the private household.

Additionally, the medical diagnosis of alcohol as a poison that rendered drunken men insane facilitated the description of intemperance as a threat to the family, the home, and the children – essentially, to a woman's natural domain. Willard compelled others to believe that female housework now extended beyond the four walls of the home. This portrayal of habitual drunkenness communicated that being a good wife, daughter, mother, or sister actually required political involvement. In order to fulfill the duty of adequate home protection women allegedly had to engage with the

public sphere.

Willard's Home Protection argument was significant because it emerged at a time when arguments that invoked women to participate in politics on the grounds of gender equality and equal rights were too radical to receive widespread support. At its core the WCTU also advocated for female suffrage; therefore it was in essence at least as radical as other movements. However, leaders like Willard softened this by message through appeals to existing conservative female values, and they succeeded because they offered rational reasons for women to organize in political groups like the WCTU. Perhaps it is ironic that home protection invoked women to best perform their domestic duties by stepping out of the household. Nonetheless, the rhetoric that achieved this end is significant because it mobilized thousands of women to participate in politics for the first time.

The stage was set for temperance rhetoric to bloom during the 1870s when the American medical community ushered in a shift in the understanding of habitual drunkenness. Prior to that time, American values generally recognized alcohol abuse as a vice moderated at the level of the individual.<sup>5</sup> Temperance unions and crusades had existed, though they tended to target individual inebriates, and relied on saloon crusades that used prayer to convert the afflicted.<sup>6</sup> Rarely did moderate crusaders venture into the public realm to agitate for large-scale reform in the form of prohibition or educational programs.

Before the 1870s, physicians and clergy widely regarded habitual drunkards as bothersome individuals that caused social problems, but whose dangers were self-contained. However, by the 1870s physicians had begun to re - conceptualize alcohol abuse as a medical prerogative, and they consequently started to redefine the problems of drunkenness. Scientific diagnoses of inebriety increasingly viewed alcohol as a transformative disease causing nervous disorder and social disarray, and therefore urgently threatening national civilization.<sup>7</sup> Critically, this new medical concern with inebriety implicated new prescriptions for treatment,



outlined below, which were amplified by the newly realised scale of the intemperance problem.

In New York City in 1870, sixteen professionals, medical experts, and clergy men formed the American Association for the Cure of Inebriates and enshrined an authoritative understanding of scientific intemperance.<sup>8</sup> The organization identified inebriation as a public health problem on a scale more damaging than previously believed. Far worse than a troublesome vice, this was a disease that would spread rapidly and wreak havoc on society if not contained. Alcohol, the AACI alleged, was a poison to the body when ingested in excess, and the threat it posed to humans was one that warranted the institution of broad societal regulations to assist individuals in overcoming its grips on their bodies.<sup>9</sup> On these grounds, AACI members called on the government to recognize intemperance as a disease that required treatments more thorough than mere fines and prison sentences.<sup>10</sup>

At this time, a formal disease concept of intemperance did not yet exist in medical literature.<sup>11</sup> When the AMA formally recognized inebriety as a standardized disease on June 6, 1876; it officially embedded social and moral symptoms associated with drunkenness into the disease concept.<sup>12</sup> By definition, inebriety was an uncontrollable desire for alcohol brought on by the poisonous effect of the alcohol itself, which rendered its victims manic, essentially insane, and otherwise dangerous.<sup>13</sup> Critical to this pathology, inebriety terminally degenerated the will of the individual exposed to excessive alcohol, so that his or her sustained consumption of alcohol was beyond personal control.

According to these scientific authorities, inebriety was distinct from its unscientific predecessor intemperance in the sense that habitual drunkenness was not merely a personal moral failing warranting individual shame, but rather it was an impulsive pathology that victimized the will of the individual through exposure to excess alcohol.<sup>14</sup> Unlike previous perceptions of drinking as a vice, the new model of inebriation could be interpreted to absolve

the individual drunk of moral accountability for his or her actions. In sum, new scientific views of habitual drunkenness freshly labeled a poison that ruined American men, created criminals, and threatened the very fabric of hard-earned American civilization.

Seen through this medical lens, it is apparent that inebriety in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century was as much a matter of public health as it was a clinical diagnosis.<sup>15</sup> The description of inebriety produced by physicians and backed by the AMA defined the disease as a medico-moral affliction that telescoped beyond the individual as it turned the body into an active agent of social destruction. Consumption of excess alcohol was squarely linked with crime and vice and further compromised such values as human efficiency honoured in the new industrial era.<sup>16</sup>

Consequently, forms of treatment for habitual drinking implicated all of society. With inebriety defined as a disease out of the control of the individual, it fell to the state to mitigate the threat of drunkenness. It is important to note, however, that medical authorities on their own proposed to simply contain and treat the problem in asylums. They did not arrive at the same solution of prohibition and educational reform, as temperance leaders later proposed.<sup>17</sup>

At the same time that medical authorities began treating inebriety as a social ill, they accordingly disseminated information to the public as a necessary component to mitigating the problem. Therefore literate people, especially of the middle class, were made aware of the recent redefinition of alcoholism through publications and social dialogue.<sup>18</sup> Additionally, state politicians were willing to honour the scientific classification of inebriety as a public health concern, and they responded positively to calls for institutional reform.<sup>19</sup> Members from all ranks of society recognized and accepted the new medical definition of inebriety and were aware of the urgent action that it implicated.

Feminist leaders like Frances Willard similarly recognized the grave social ills exposed in the new medical understandings of

intemperance. In fact, Willard capitalized on several elements of the diagnosis and borrowed heavily from their scientific authority to construct her Home Protection rhetoric on the subject of temperance. Despite that medical authorities as a whole did not advocate prohibition to cure inebriety, Willard manipulated scientific findings in support of that end. It seems that the social urgency inherent in the medical definition of the disease was sufficient for the diagnosis of the problem to eclipse medical prescriptions for treatment. Willard interpreted the diagnosis of inebriety to suit the needs of her crusade, and constructed a rhetoric that revolutionized temperance campaigns and women's roles in politics. Thus it was inadvertently that physicians' descriptions of inebriety corroborated the feminist work of Frances Willard. Her decision to use temperance as a vehicle for social reforms may have been opportunistic, but it was not insignificant. The leader claimed to draw directly upon medical notions of inebriety even though her conclusion was dramatically different, and she certainly garnered legitimacy by borrowing the authority of the scientific world.

In temperance campaigns, Willard adapted and slanted the science of the AMA's description of inebriety to suit the needs of her feminist rhetoric. Interestingly, she claimed that her temperance campaigns hinged on the scientific advice of medical experts, despite that in her own records she clearly marshaled evidence from religious and medical sources indiscriminately.<sup>20</sup> The most significant lesson she borrowed from the medical world, however, is that habitual drunkenness is a public health interest and a grave social ill. This lesson exposed a crux in the social fabric of America for which Willard presented housewives as the solution.

Frances Willard was elected president of the WCTU in 1879, and remained president until 1897.<sup>21</sup> The WCTU had existed as an organized women's movement since 1873. Prior to Willard's presidency, however, its political mandate was modest, and the medical pathology that would later unlock the president's feminist reforms was only just crystallizing. Unlike later missions under

the same organization that took on national political reform, the mandate of early WCTU members stopped at the saloon.<sup>22</sup> The WCTU under Willard grew from 27 000 members in 1879 to 160 000 members by 1890.<sup>23</sup> Compared to the National American Woman Suffrage Association, at 13 000 members in 1890, the WCTU was substantially more popular.<sup>24</sup> There was something significant in the approach of the WCTU after 1879 that made it a more alluring organization for moderate, proper women to join. I argue that apparent differences between this movement and the same movement after 1879 are due first to the new medical concepts of intemperance, and second to the personal leadership and crafty rhetoric of Frances Willard.

In 19<sup>th</sup> century American society, gender norms expected women to involve only in the domestic household realm and not to engage in public affairs. For that reason, inciting large numbers of American women to participate in politics was a difficult task. Willard, however, created a campaign that managed to balance radical political goals with existing moral and gender norms, and thereby attract a large membership of women to the WCTU. As a political strategy, Willard used scientific inebriety pathology to invert the logic of anti – suffragists. Anti – suffragists previously had provided compelling reasons that prevented many women from engaging in politics; namely, they pointed out that public involvement of women was wrong because it fell outside normative gender roles that they referred to as “eternal truths.”<sup>25</sup> “All women were destined from birth to be full-time wives and mothers,”<sup>26</sup> they alleged. To step outside of the home for more than a social visit or evening walk constituted blatant disregard for the natural order.

Opponents of female suffrage were not necessarily misogynistic, nor were they viewed as categorically oppressive. They argued that women were indeed equal to men, although they only enjoyed equality of status as matrons of the domestic sphere. By the same logic, women engaged in the public world displayed disregard for domestic roles in the home and threatened to dissolve the entire

family unit. Anti – suffragists were by no means uniform, though their general arguments compelled many women to refrain from involving in politics.<sup>27</sup> A good woman, essentially, did not abandon her domestic duties for the demanding and alien public sphere.

Critically, Frances Willard’s logic for female enfranchisement appealed to the very gender norms that anti – suffragists had marshaled against that end. Her speeches and campaigns drew centrally on a handful of important rhetorical decisions that carefully tailored the balance between meting gender norms and advocating for normative change. Crucially, Willard prefaced her account of her Home Protection address with the assertion that Rev. Dr. Theodore L. Flood directly informed her argument.<sup>28</sup> At the outset, therefore, Willard instantly gains the simultaneous credibility of a man, a member of the clergy, and a medical doctor.<sup>29</sup> She sets up her campaign under the auspices of one proposed originally by the church, by the medical field, and by someone with the masculine authority to raise his voice in the public world. Given that many of Willard’s addresses were delivered at churches and before mixed-gender audiences, it is not surprising that she taps into these religious and masculine veins for credibility. The reference to Rev. Dr. Theodore L. Flood therefore primed her listeners to overlook feminism as the driving ideology behind her proposal.

Next in speeches and campaigns, Willard typically moved on to gender inebriety as a masculine disease. Such an approach drew on intuitive gender norms rather than medical literature, and perhaps reflected the experience of some listeners.<sup>30</sup> Medical literature asserted that inebriety afflicted both men and women, though it conceded that it afflicted both differently. Willard slanted this concession to paint intemperance as a disease that disproportionately afflicted men and victimized women.<sup>31</sup>

For example, her address on the Home Protection begins with a commentary on the strife between vice and virtue; vice anthropomorphized in traditional masculine terms such as “active,” “aggressive,” and “keen,” whereas virtue is feminized as

“passive,” “complacent,” “ponderous.”<sup>32</sup> Willard’s rhetoric hinged fundamentally on conservative gendered understandings of male and female social roles.<sup>33</sup> Men, she alleged, acted on their primary instincts of self-preservation and self-interests, and thus lacked conscience and good will. Women, on the other hand, had primary instincts associated with their primary function of motherhood, and thus displayed good conscience and moral virtuosity.

Excerpts from her Home Protection speech reflect these normative assertions, and further illuminate other components of Home Protection rhetoric. In Willard’s records, the address reads, There is a class whose instinct of self-preservation must forever be opposed to a stimulant [i.e., alcohol] which nerves, with dangerous strength, arms already so much stronger than their own, and so maddens the brain God meant to guide those arms, that they strike down wives men love, and the little children for whom, when sober, they would die. The wife, largely dependent for the support of herself and little ones upon the brain [i.e., the man] which strong drunk paralyzes, the arm it masters, and the skill it renders futile, will, in the nature of the case, prove herself unfriendly to the actual or potential source of so much misery [ie, alcohol].<sup>34</sup>

There are two important components evident in this passage. First, it is clear that Willard gendered inebriation as a male affliction. Without even mentioning alcohol by name or labeling its effect on male heads of households, she has painted an image of the “poison” undoing the good behaviour of a husband and compelling him to “strike down” his own beloved wife and children. At the same time, she upholds the paradigm that women are physically weaker than men, and unable to defend their domestic domains against husbands besieged by alcohol.<sup>35</sup> Men who entered the home under the influence of alcohol undermined the order that good mothers, loyal sisters, faithful sisters, and dutiful wives had worked to establish in their homes. Additionally, though it is not mentioned in this passage, medical speculation that inebriety was hereditary and linked with

criminality further extended the threat of intemperance into the family and a woman's realm.<sup>36</sup> Consequently, Willard emphasized that effectively managing the domestic sphere involved controlling those social ills that permeated the walls of the home. In that respect, home protection rhetoric rallied women for political mobilization.

Second, the concept of alcohol as a transformative agent immobilizing the will of men would have been impossible to credibly deploy before a medical disease concept of alcoholism honoured such a view. Definitions of inebriety generated by science were responsible for representations of drunkenness that portrayed the substance as a poison. In this respect, Willard appeals directly to medical science to bolster her argument.

Furthermore, in order to broadcast a message of this nature to a mixed – gender audience, a speaker would have had to rhetorically neutralize typecast actions of an inebriate man so as not to cast blame on men and thereby alienate them as listeners. Although Willard portrayed alcoholism as a masculine evil, she got away with it – and even received support for her representation – because at the same time she called alcohol a poison that victimized a man's free will. With the meaning of abusive drunk husbands neutered, and with blame fixed on the alcohol as opposed to the brutes themselves, Willard was free to condemn the actions that men in her very own audience may have perpetrated. Indeed, this rhetorical strategy not only allowed her to make such a contentious claim, but further emphasized her war against the alcoholic substance that allegedly attacked families. It focused social anxieties that had been outlined by the medical field at last upon temperance, and, as will be shown, directed women toward female activism. From this point, Willard used complex rhetoric to incite women to vote. Her speech continues,

But besides this primal instinct of self-preservation, we have, in the same class of which I speak, another [instinct] far more high and sacred – I mean the instinct of a mother's love, a wife's devotion, a sister's faithfulness, a daughter's loyalty. And now I ask you to

consider earnestly the fact that none of these blessed rays of light and power from woman's heart, are as yet brought to bear upon the rum-shop at the focus of power. They [i.e., wives] are, I know, the sweet and pleasant sunshine of our homes: they are the beams which light the larger home of social life and send their gentle radiance out even into the great and busy world.<sup>37</sup>

Willard's language here reinforces her call for women to engage in home protection outside the walls of the woman's world. A second layer of gender norms reiterates the feminine virtues espoused at the outset of the speech, and conveys women as moral beings capable of dodging vices such as alcohol. The excerpt praises them as the agents of "pleasant sunshine" who clearly are predisposed to better regulate social ills and dangers. Therefore the mandate of the home protection movement did more than to justify female political mobilization; it suggested that women, being immune to vice, would do a superior job of cleaning society of these public health ills.

It is worth outlining the distinction between Willard's rhetoric and the actual experience of the women in her target audience. It is possible, and even likely, that many of her listeners actually were victims of inebriate husbands or male family members who abused female family members or otherwise damaged the household when they indulged in alcohol. Indeed, the effectiveness of Willard's rhetoric depends on the credibility of such a threat. The experience of audience members listening to the address raises valuable points that are salient in the discussion of intemperance and female mobilization. Perhaps women who were victimized by domestic abuse actively crusaded against the group of men that collectively harassed them. Seen in this light, it becomes clear that Willard drew support from a pre-existing base of women who felt threatened by the potential of drunken men to attack them. Willard's movement, it seems, gave voice to these complaints and grievances in the form of a call for suffrage. The shape of this voice, however, remains



significant, as it facilitated the socially-acceptable involvement of women in politics.

In addition, considering the actual experiences of women listening to the Home Protection address reinforces the same gender norms that convey inebriation as a masculine affliction in the first place. Despite the possibility that Willard's constituents may have dealt with drunken men frequently, inebriety was not actually a male problem to which women were immune. Therefore, using this argument to implicate women in the public sphere as superior arbiters of virtue necessarily relied on the specific understanding of conservative feminine norms. In the sense that Willard framed resistance against domestic violence in terms that scientifically blamed the poison itself and adhered to gender norms that were palatable to both men and women, her rhetoric was responsible for the mobilization of women in temperance unions. Therefore the actual experiences of women listening to the Home Protection address mattered only tangentially to the more pressing matter of how women perceived themselves as vulnerable to abuse by inebriates.

Finally, Willard rounded out her Home Protection address by hammering home the point that it was imperative for women to involve in politics within their existing gender roles. In our argument it has been claimed that by the changeless instincts of her nature and through the most sacred relationships of which that nature has been rendered capable, God has indicated woman, who is the born conservator of home, to be the Nemesis of home's arch enemy, King Alcohol. And further, the in a republic, this power of hers may be most effectively exercised by giving her a voice in the decision by which the rum-shop door shall be opened or closed beside her home.<sup>38</sup>

These closing remarks repeated the word 'home' twice: once in the context of a woman's natural role, and once in the context of alcohol being a proximate threat. Willard thereby brings home the idea that

saloons may not have been within the physical domain of women, but they certainly were socially relevant and had a bearing on the domestic domain. Logically, it was squarely a woman's household duty to publicly advocate for temperance.

In addition to using gendered and medical expertise in this appeal, Willard brought in religious testimony to defend her argument. An analysis of the religious dynamics of home protection rhetoric lies largely outside of the scope of this study. However, suffice it to say that Willard quelled debate that public involvement of women would upset the natural order by appealing to the role for them that God himself had ordained. Righteous women, she argued, naturally responded to his call for their public intrusion to support the household. Furthermore, they possessed virtuous qualities that rendered them superior mediators of social ills in the public sphere. The above assertion further confirms that if women controlled the public sphere through politics and the vote, they would cure society of its ills and evils.<sup>39</sup>

Note the fine balance evident between gender norms and progressive goals, and the keen use of scientific inebriety. New medical concepts of inebriety made it abundantly clear that social threats did and would permeate the home. Additionally, the formulation of these social ills as gendered male problems made women the arguable agents of a solution. It was as though the gendered roles that had been set up in opposition directly balanced each other in Willard's new temperance rhetoric. Certainly, the key here is the accessibility of inebriety as a trope that could function as a masculine social threat. In absence of medical notions of inebriety as a disease that damaged all of society, Willard's rhetoric would not have had such a credible and strong impact on listeners.

By understanding alcohol use as a supra-personal ill that afflicted all of society that stemmed from one poison, Willard was able to deploy temperance as a concrete impetus behind which women could mobilize. Her rhetoric expanded on medical definitions of inebriety as a public health concern to define it as one

that attacked the physical vulnerabilities of women. On that basis, she interlocked gendered norms with medical science to render intemperance a dangerous social quality that directly implicated women. As a solution, Willard proposed female action to protect women in their own domain and furthermore to uphold their duty of home protection.<sup>40</sup> Indeed, her campaign for women to participate in temperance reform directly bridged into female suffrage.<sup>41</sup>

Truly, Willard turned 19<sup>th</sup> century American gender norms on their heads. She upheld tenets that women naturally belonged in the domestic sphere, but rhetorically reconfigured understandings of the domestic sphere to involve public politics. Whereas anti-suffragists tended to argue that the public sphere belonged to men and was reserved for their complicated, masculine matters, Willard argued that the plight of the nation implicated women in cleaning it up. Men had mismanaged social threats in the public sphere, and these problems, just like immigration and prostitution, were naturally spilling into their domain in the physical home. Women, on the other hand, possessed natural virtues that would be better suited to eradicate damaging vice at a social level, if only women would fulfill their duties to protect the home by engaging in politics.

It is paradoxical that Willard framed her feminist values in terms compatible with traditional gender roles and norms that were fundamentally at odds with female suffrage. And yet her approach was critical because it facilitated the respectable involvement of women in politics. It allured members by reminding them that temperance campaigns for suffrage merely extended their existing conservative social roles. The irony of telling women to better perform their roles by stepping directly out of those roles is formidable. Nonetheless, Willard's argument was rather effective in mobilizing women in terms that were rational to moderate Americans.

Ultimately, the success of the WCTU as a rallying point for women's temperance and a launching point for a strong female suffrage movement is significant. Frances Willard, enabled by

medical diagnoses of inebriety formalized by the AMA in 1876, transformed the rhetoric of feminine political mobilization. The new inebriety diagnosis provided a necessary crutch to a previously radical argument for woman suffrage by presenting inebriety as a social ill out of the control of individuals. Willard presented intemperance as a danger to the very homes that women protected. Consequently, she recycled medical principles and gender norms to market WCTU membership as a necessary duty of good women. Her approach was not one employed universally by American woman suffragists, though it certainly was successful. By 1897, the WCTU was an enormous and unprecedented political lobby group whose mandate involved temperance and suffrage. Willard's clever mix of rhetorical devices shifted acceptable female involvement in the public sphere from saloon crusades to the suffrage campaigns.

#### Notes

1. Jonathan Zimmerman, *Distilling Democracy: Alcohol Education in America's Public Schools, 1880-1925* (Lawrence, Kansas, 1999), 15.
2. *Ibid.*, 15-19.
3. Susan M. Marilley, *Woman Suffrage and the Origins of Liberal Feminism in the United States, 1820-1920*, (Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1996), 100-123.
4. Aileen S. Kraditor, *The Ideas of the Woman Suffrage Movement 1890-1920* (New York, 1981).
5. Albert Ernest Wilkerson Junior, *A History of the Concept of Alcoholism as a Disease*, (Ann Arbor, Michigan, 1967), 27.
6. Kraditor, *The Ideas of Woman Suffrage*, 65-66.
7. Wilkerson, *A History of the Concept of Alcoholism as a Disease*, 27-30.
8. Sarah W. Tracy, *Alcoholism in America: From Reconstruction to Prohibition* (Baltimore, 2005), 1.
9. Wilkerson, *A History of the Concept of Alcoholism as a Disease*, 148.
10. Tracy, *Alcoholism in America*, 2.
11. *Ibid.*, 26.
12. *Ibid.*
13. Wilkerson, *A History of the Concept of Alcoholism as a Disease*, 152-154.
14. Tracy, *Alcoholism in America*, 27-39.

15. *Ibid.*, 55.
16. *Ibid.*, 8-13.
17. *Ibid.*, 3-4.
18. See, for example, the AACI's publication of an information journal beginning in 1876. Wilkerson, *A History of the Concept of Alcoholism as a Disease*, 140.
19. Tracy, *Alcoholism in America*, 8, 14, 19.
20. Tracy, *Alcoholism in America*, 79-81.
21. Suzanne M. Marilley, "Frances Willard and the Feminism of Fear," *Feminist Studies*, 19 (Spring, 1993), 123.
22. Wilkerson, *A History of the Concept of Alcoholism as a Disease*, 165-167.
23. Marilley, "Frances Willard and the Feminism of Fear," 123.
24. Marilley, *Woman Suffrage*, 101.
25. Kraditor, *The Ideas of Woman Suffrage*, 15.
26. *Ibid.*, 15.
27. *Ibid.*, 15-25.
28. Frances E. Willard, *Woman and Temperance, or, The Work and Workers of the Woman's Christian Temperance Union*, (Hartford, Connecticut, 1883), 450.
29. I could only corroborate this evidence based on weaker sources. It seems that Theodore L. Flood was a retired minister and very active editor of a Chautauqua publication. I believe that Willard's use of the titles "Dr." and "Rev." are very powerful symbols deployed strategically to signal the man's status as both a physician and as a member of the clergy. Unless Theodore Flood was a renowned public figure at the time, I would argue that Willard's vague use of these two titles indicates an effort to display conflated clerical and medical support for her Home Protection ideas.
30. Tracy, 79-80
31. Claims extrapolated from those of Tracy, *Alcoholism in America*, 79-80.
32. Willard, *Woman and Temperance*, 452.
33. Marilley, "Frances Willard and the Feminism of Fear," 134.
34. Willard, *Woman and Temperance*, 453.
35. Marilley, "Frances Willard and the Feminism of Fear," 133.
36. Wilkerson, *A History of the Concept of Alcoholism as a Disease*, 184.
37. Willard, *Woman and Temperance*, 453.
38. *Ibid.*, 454.
39. Kraditor, *The Ideas of Woman Suffrage*, 62-63.
40. Marilley, "Frances Willard and the Feminism of Fear," 141.
41. Marilley, "Frances Willard and the Feminism of Fear," 131.

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## Between East and West: A Comparative History of Finland and Czechoslovakia, 1945-1948

By Mikko Patokallio

*In 1945, Finland and Czechoslovakia found themselves in similar positions as democracies located on the fault line of the Cold War. Torn between East and West, both countries pursued a course between the two poles – only Finland succeeded. Why? Numerous idiosyncratic factors have been used to explain this divergence, but none of them are satisfying. This essay contends that the key factors in this divergence were the success in creating Soviet trust in a non-communist government and attitude towards domestic communists.*

In 1945, Finland and Czechoslovakia found themselves in a similar position. Both were interwar democracies of repute, located on the fault line of the nascent Cold War. While both countries at heart wished to be a part of the democratic West, geopolitical reality pushed them towards the communist East. Both countries consequently pursued a course between East and West. However, only a short three years later, Czechoslovakia was firmly on its way in becoming a Stalinist people's democracy, while genuine Finnish democracy survived. The different fates of Finland and Czechoslovakia have been explained in several ways, varying from geographical to pseudo-psychological, none of which are very convincing. A more credible explanation simply states that Finnish communists were unable to overthrow the democratic system in 1948 because they were too weak, whereas the Czech communists could do so because they were strong enough. While true enough, this is ex post facto reasoning, it does not explain why Finnish communists

were weak in 1948 and Czech communists strong. This paper seeks to examine why these two democracies parted ways, and argues that despite their numerous similarities the key divergences that explain such different outcomes were success, or lack thereof, in creating Soviet trust in a non-communist government and attitude towards domestic communists.

Juho Kusti Paasikivi, Prime Minister (1944-1946) and later President (1946-1956) of Finland, and Edvard Beneš, long-term President of Czechoslovakia, both understood the realities their countries faced. As Beneš and Paasikivi were dominant figures in determining the path of their respective countries, it is worth paying attention to their personal beliefs and perceptions.

Above all, the two statesmen were committed democrats who desired the preservation of their countries' independent democratic systems. Both identified the Soviet Union as the main, if not only, threat. Neither saw the West as a credible source of protection. Beneš bitterly remembered the legacy of Munich, while Paasikivi was disillusioned by the failure of the West to assist Finland during the Finnish-Soviet Winter War (1939-40). Thus out of necessity and for reasons of realpolitik, both statesmen decided to deal directly with the Soviet Union. Both hoped that dealing directly with the Soviet Union would allow for the preservation of the domestic democratic order and, ultimately, for the curtailment of Soviet influence. Neither statesman was an ideological friend of Soviet communism. Although Beneš was a socialist, he was not a Marxist. Paasikivi was a conservative banker who viewed the Soviet Union as another Russian empire. Both men sought to commit their countries to a course between East and West; however, the way they put in practice their similar beliefs was drastically different.<sup>1</sup>

Although both understood the critical importance of reaching a modus vivendi with the Soviet Union, it was a much harder task for Paasikivi as the Soviet Union had more leverage on Finland than on Czechoslovakia. The Finnish-Soviet armistice (September 1944) ended the Finnish-Soviet Continuation War (1941-44) but



also required Finland to pay heavy reparations to the Soviet Union and provided it with a military base at Porkkala, close to Helsinki. An Allied Control Commission (ACC) was established to oversee Finnish implementation of the armistice terms until the conclusion of the peace treaty.<sup>2</sup> The ACC provided the Soviet Union with a veto over Finnish politics.<sup>3</sup> Despite this kind of leverage, Paasikivi believed that Soviet security concerns would trump ideological ones. The Soviet Union would no doubt install a communist government if it were handed the opportunity to do so, but Paasikivi believed that Finland could remain both independent and democratic if it accepted and adapted to what he called legitimate Soviet security concerns.<sup>4</sup> To achieve his objective, Paasikivi focused on building Soviet confidence in Finland through scrupulous implementation of the armistice terms, upgrading of bilateral Finnish-Soviet relations, and adoption of a cautious non-aligned stance between East and West.<sup>5</sup> Paasikivi personally played a central role in pushing through his policy through turbulent parliamentary waters and much domestic opposition. Furthermore, he cultivated personal ties with Stalin and his local representatives, emphasizing to them that he, Paasikivi, and not the Finnish communist party could be relied on to meet Soviet security concerns.<sup>6</sup>

In the case of Czechoslovakia, the Soviet Union did not possess comparable leverage. During World War II when Finland was at war with the Soviet Union, Soviet-Czechoslovak relations were at a high point.<sup>7</sup> Beneš was thus much better positioned politically than Paasikivi to start with. Beneš' policies mirrored Paasikivi's to a certain extent: he too wanted to reduce Soviet influence through close relations with the Soviet Union. However, Beneš adopted a much more accommodating policy than Paasikivi did. Beneš believed that by "reassuring the Kremlin of his loyalty and gratitude while meticulously refraining from any public criticism" the Soviet Union would refrain from interfering with Czechoslovak democracy.<sup>8</sup> With this kind of mentality, as one historian puts it, there was "no other option but the Soviet one. The

only subject for discussion was not whether to adopt pro-Soviet policies but which pro-Soviet policies to adopt.”<sup>9</sup> This policy of accommodation at all costs underlay the Soviet-Czechoslovak Friendship and Mutual Assistance and Postwar Cooperation Treaty of December 1943 and was equally evident in Beneš’ offer to cede Sub-Carpathian Ruthenia to the Soviet Union. Czechoslovak representatives were ordered to follow the Soviet line in voting at international conferences – earning the ire of the United States.<sup>10</sup> The pro-Soviet policy also influenced Czechoslovak domestic politics; anything that might possibly offend the Soviet Union was self-censored, and the press developed a highly anti-American tone.<sup>11</sup>

Both Beneš and Paasikivi saw the need to accommodate Soviet interests and build Soviet confidence. Paasikivi’s firm emphasis on security concerns however, encouraged him to stand firm and bargain on other points. Beneš’ emphasis on the more amorphous notion of loyalty made his policy less clear – making him more willing to yield to Soviet pressure. In substantive terms, there was relatively little difference between Czechoslovak and Finnish foreign policies in the period 1945-1948. For example, both countries rejected participation in the Marshall Plan. However, Czechoslovakia first accepted the invitation, then reversed its position following a strong Soviet nyet – damaging its position both in the eyes of the West (by being seen as Soviet-controlled)<sup>12</sup> and the East (by being seen as unreliable).<sup>13</sup> Although it was in an identical position, Finland waited until the definite Soviet attitude towards the Plan became clear before sending its own reply to the invitation – a reluctant rejection.<sup>14</sup> On the whole, both countries kept a relatively low international profile and acquiesced to Soviet pressure when faced with it. However, the outcomes of the two similar foreign policies could not have been more different.

Paasikivi’s policy paid dividends. Andrei Zhdanov, Stalin’s hard-line protégé and head of the ACC, noted with satisfaction that Finland was not “internationalized.”<sup>15</sup> Although the Soviet Union used its dominant position within the ACC to support Finnish

communists through a judicious use of the threat of intervention,<sup>16</sup> in the course of the critical year of 1948 the Soviets threw their lot in with Paasikivi. In the tense negotiations on a Treaty of Friendship, Cooperation and Mutual Assistance (FCMA) in early 1948, Paasikivi demanded and the Finnish negotiators managed to effect radical changes in the draft treaty. Furthermore, the Soviet Union did nothing to prevent the ousting of Finnish communists from government in the summer of 1948.

Despite short-term successes, Beneš failed to garner Soviet confidence. As one of his confidants noted, Beneš failure to elicit Soviet concessions in exchange for his gestures of loyalty simply encouraged the Soviets to demand more.<sup>17</sup> Beneš, in his attempt to remain above the fray of daily politics, did not play an active role in trying to build Soviet confidence in him instead of the Czechoslovak communists.<sup>18</sup> As Cold War tensions worsened, Soviet uncertainty over Czechoslovak intentions rose in step. Crucially in 1948, when tensions within Czechoslovakia reached boiling point, Beneš was paralyzed by the fear of Soviet military intervention – prompted by a threatening visit from a Soviet envoy.<sup>19</sup> Not only did Beneš' policy fail to win Soviet confidence, it lost Western support as well. Both Finland and Czechoslovakia saw Western financial assistance as important for its symbolic as well as material value. In 1946, Finland received \$65 million in credit from the United States – the same amount as Czechoslovakia.<sup>20</sup> However, by mid-1946 the US had cut all aid to Czechoslovakia; Finland continued to receive financial assistance despite American reservations.<sup>21</sup> Czechoslovakia's policy of 'leaning' on the Soviet Union for support had alienated it from the West and increased dependence on the East, whereas Finland managed to strike a balance between the two.<sup>22</sup>

In the end, the biggest threat of a communist takeover did not come from Soviet guns but domestic communist parties – the Czech Communist Party (KSČ) and the Finnish Communist Party (SKP). Although both parties were weak in 1945, the KSČ managed to steadily gain power within Czechoslovakia while the SKP never

managed to truly infiltrate government structures. Czechoslovakia's and Finland's attitudes towards their respective communist parties differed fundamentally. Beneš, along with the leaders of the other major parties, believed that the KSČ could be tamed and persuaded to play by the rules of parliamentary politics. Finland adopted a different policy. All the other major parties were in agreement about limiting the SKP's power as much as possible. While Beneš and Paasikivi were important players in determining the chances for the success of local communists, it was the non-communist Left, the Social Democratic Party which held the pivotal position in both countries.

In 1945, both the KSČ and SKP were quite weak. The SKP was only legalized after the armistice (in October 1944) and lacked both members and finances, having only had a few thousand members in early 1945.<sup>23</sup> In addition, the party was internally divided between hard-line émigrés (led by Hertta Kuusinen) and the more cautious local communists fresh from underground (led by Yrjö Leino).<sup>24</sup> The KSČ was not much better off. Although the party had remained legal throughout and had a distinguished record in the Czechoslovak resistance it remained small. In May 1945, the KSČ had only 27,000 members.<sup>25</sup> However, the KSČ was internally far more cohesive under the undisputed leadership of Klement Gottwald.

Both parties made generous use of Soviet assistance. Czech and Slovak communists returned with the advancing Soviet Army and were the first to establish control in occupied Czechoslovakia, requisitioning supplies such as printing material and infiltrating local administrations.<sup>26</sup> The SKP was in a much worse position from the point of view of gaining Soviet assistance. As Finland was not occupied, the Soviets could only provide the SKP with the possessions requisitioned from the departed Germans (not much). The ACC was the SKP's prized, albeit only, source of external aid.<sup>27</sup> Until its dissolution in late 1947, the ACC did intervene on the SKP's behalf in the political battles in Finland, and Zhdanov himself provided Finnish communists with advice on how to bring about a

communist revolution.<sup>28</sup> In both cases however, the degree of Soviet assistance was limited and both communist parties were told early on to calm their revolutionary fervor. When Finnish communists in early 1945 told the Soviets that bringing tanks to Helsinki would facilitate a revolution, Zhdanov angrily rebuked them – noting that the Soviet Union did not install anyone in power just for the sake of it.<sup>29</sup> Similarly, Stalin admonished Gottwald that the time was not right in Czechoslovakia for a revolution.<sup>30</sup> Both parties subsequently adopted a parliamentary strategy to gain power.

This was a realistic strategy for the KSČ and SKP since they both, despite their thin membership rolls in the beginning, were genuinely popular parties that vied for the status of the main left-wing party. In Czechoslovakia the KSČ easily eclipsed the Czech Social Democrats (ČSD) in popularity, gaining both more votes and the control of trade unions.<sup>31</sup> Soviet financial and material assistance helped the KSČ to attract one million new members within a year. In Finland, the Social Democratic Party (SDP) was much stronger than its Czech counterpart but still experienced an exodus of members to the SKP. The SKP-controlled front organization, the Finnish People's Democratic Union (SKDL), received several high-profile SDP defectors in its ranks, including future Prime Minister Mauno Pekkala and other prominent SDP members of the anti-war opposition.<sup>32</sup> The SKP also gained control of a traditional SDP stronghold, the Finnish trade union congress (SAK).<sup>31</sup> The popularity of communists in Czechoslovakia and Finland translated into large shares of votes (38% and 24.5% respectively) in the first post-war elections, as shown in the table below:

Parliamentary Election Results	May 1946, Czechoslovakia 33	
Communist Party	114 (93 KSC, 21 KSS, 2 Labor Party)	
Social Democrats	37	

Total Left	151 of 300	
Conservatives	46 (Catholic People's Party)	
Other Right	55 (Czech National Socialist Party), 43 (Democratic Party), 3 (Freedom Party)	
Total Right	149 of 300	

Governments in neither country reflected the election results. The Czechoslovak Left had a razor-thin majority, while the Finnish Right held an equally fragile majority. However, it was necessary to give the communists some role in government to placate the Soviet Union. In Czechoslovakia, the government was formed around a National Front consisting of the five largest parties. The establishment of the National Front was announced before the elections, indeed even before there was again a Czechoslovak government in Czechoslovakia.<sup>34</sup> Of a cabinet of 26 ministers, the communists held nine portfolios (six for the KSČ, three for the KSS) including the Interior Minister and the office of the Prime Minister. The ČSD was awarded four portfolios, and the remaining parties eight portfolios.<sup>35</sup> In Finland, on the other hand, the conservative National Coalition Party was politically unacceptable to the Soviets. This alone made the formation of any right-leaning government impossible. In the end, the three largest parties (SDP, SKDL and the Agrarian Alliance) formed what would be subsequently known as the Big Three government. The SKDL received six portfolios, including the Interior Ministry, the Defense Ministry and later the seat of the Prime Minister as well.<sup>36</sup>

Although the communists achieved positions of influence,

the democratic parties in both countries adopted opposing views towards the communist presence in government. Beneš, along with the leaders of the other non-communist Czech and Slovak parties, persisted in their belief that the KSČ could be convinced to adhere to democratic rules. Originally, the National Front was conceived as a tool to keep the KSČ wedded to democratic principles.<sup>35</sup> With that in mind, the communists were rewarded with a disproportionate amount of influence in the National Front and they were allowed to shape the government's so-called Kosiče program to their liking.<sup>37</sup> Beneš himself believed that strict adherence to parliamentary norms, including presidential non-interference in daily politics, would tame the communists. And even if it failed to do so, he believed, the communists' hypocrisy would be exposed and their popular support would collapse consequently.<sup>38</sup> The non-communists were not naïve about the threat of a communist coup, but they downplayed its possibility.<sup>39</sup> Beneš, as President, controlled appointments to the military and considered its head, General Ludvik Svoboda to be "reliable."<sup>40</sup> As late as 1947 Beneš was confident that the communists had "abandoned the idea [of a putsch] and will not try it anymore."<sup>41</sup>

Though Czechoslovak leaders decided to accommodate the KSČ, Finnish leaders were committed to excluding SKP influence. Before the elections, the SKP was only offered one minor ministry.<sup>42</sup> The SKDL was included in the Big Three government to deflect Soviet pressure, but the government was weak and racked by infighting.<sup>43</sup> Most SKP efforts to infiltrate the civil service, the army and the police in order to effect changes in education, land redistribution and to push for nationalization were blocked by parliament.<sup>44</sup> Even though the SKP won tactical victories, often with the help of Soviet pressure, it persistently lost strategic ground. The communists were "rank beginners in the game of parliamentary politics, playing against a team of experienced professionals."<sup>45</sup> The use of strikes for political ends and the ham-handed behavior of the SKP-controlled security police in particular alienated both voters and

the other parties. The other two government parties made sure that it was the SKDL that was seen as responsible for painful economic decisions. Complete exclusion remained impossible as long as the Soviet-controlled ACC existed. In April 1947, only months after the conclusion of the Finnish peace treaty, the Agrarians brought down the government and attempted to remove Prime Minister Pekkala. However the ACC intervened and Zhdanov vetoed any non-SKDL candidate for Prime Minister, while the non-communist parties refused to accept any other, and more capable SKDL candidate to replace Pekkala. In the end, the Pekkala government was reinstated after six weeks and the unhappy marriage continued for another year.<sup>46</sup>

Although the attitudes of the other major non-communist parties towards communist inclusion were important in determining the degree of power given to the communists, they were not decisive. In striking this delicate balance the roles of the Social Democratic parties were pivotal; both in parliament and government the Social Democrats were the swing vote in both countries. Although other non-communist parties could be counted on to oppose any communist bid for power, they lacked the majority to do so without help from the Social Democrats.

This was especially true in Finland. The Big Three government was much more left-leaning than the parliament but it was only with SDP support that the SKP could hope to advance its agenda.<sup>47</sup> At first the SDP had worked with the SKP-controlled SKDL, even forming local electoral alliances, but relations between the two leftist parties soon soured. By 1946 the SDP actively joined the right-wing parties in tacitly opposing SKP plans. The SKDL had received support from many fellow travelers within the SDP during the first post-war years, but many of these later returned to the fold. The SDP also moved to regain control of the trade unions, wresting back control of the SAK in a hard-won fight in 1947.<sup>48</sup> Without the SDP, the communists were left without an ally in Finnish politics and were forced to rely increasingly on the ACC to make their voices



heard. With the dissolution of the ACC in late 1947 their position deteriorated further.

The ČSD, on the other hand were led by Zdenek Fierlinger, a former Czechoslovak ambassador to the Soviet Union and an archetypal fellow traveler.<sup>49</sup> Although Beneš was sure that “he can control Fierlinger” when he appointed Fierlinger Prime Minister, he soon came to regret his decision.<sup>47</sup> The ČSD backed the communists consistently and obsequiously, assuring them a de facto majority in both government and parliament allowing the KSČ to advance its grip over power.<sup>50</sup> Even though the other Czech parties grew disenchanted with the KSČ, like in Finland, common captivity in the non-confrontational National Front kept the opposition fragmented, and without ČSD support the opposition could not muster a majority to exclude the KSČ.<sup>51</sup> Beneš himself noted in early 1947 that, “the Social Democrats are holding the key to the situation [...] the whole fate of the republic depends on their behavior in the coming months.”<sup>52</sup> He was right: the ČSD’s role was instrumental in engineering all the parliamentary and governmental setbacks suffered by the KSČ in late 1947.<sup>53</sup> However by late 1947, the KSČ had already managed to set deep roots within the Czechoslovak state.

The year 1948 brought both Paasikivi’s and Beneš’ strategies to a head. Their policies were tested both on the domestic scene and internationally. Worsening international tensions prompted the Soviet Union to order Finnish and Czechoslovak communists to cement their hold on power.<sup>54</sup> By then both Finnish and Czechoslovak non-communist parties had moved to exclude communist influence from government. Militant elements in both the SKP and the KSČ agitated for a more aggressive policy – fearing a likely defeat in the upcoming elections.<sup>55</sup> Beneš was sure that “the communists could seize power only over my dead body,”<sup>56</sup> something that he obviously would not let happen. Thus when the non-communists in government resigned their positions, they had reason to believe that Beneš would not fold.<sup>57</sup> But Beneš did fold. After a few tense days of communist mobilization and implicit

violence, he gave in to the communists, allowing them to form a new government – followed shortly after by a wholesale political purge, guaranteeing KSCĚ control of the country.<sup>58</sup> The key to Beneš' decision seems to have been the threat of Soviet military intervention voiced by a Soviet envoy during the crisis.<sup>59</sup> Even if Beneš had authorized the army to use force that might have led to civil war as the KSCĚ had gained a strong foothold in the Czechoslovak state security organs between 1945 and 1948. And he would have had to order the arrest of Gottwald, "and this the Russians would not tolerate."<sup>60</sup> Beneš' abject capitulation underlined the utter failure of his policy which had been specifically designed to prevent this eventuality.

The Czechoslovak events in February 1948 weighed heavily on Finland. The day after Beneš' capitulation, Paasikivi received a personal invitation from Stalin to come to Moscow to negotiate an FCMA treaty with the Soviet Union – unleashing a political crisis in Finland. Paasikivi was acutely aware of the ominous parallels and told the SKP leader, Minister of the Interior Leino that "we are not Czechs."<sup>61</sup> Meanwhile, the SKP sought to capitalize on the crisis by mobilizing its forces. Strikes were organized, and Hertta Kuusinen, the other SKP leader, declared triumphantly "the road of Czechoslovakia is the road for us."<sup>62</sup> Rumors of a coup d'état spread. A press campaign equating the SKDL with the KSCĚ was instituted. In retrospect, it seems unlikely that there were any serious SKP plans for a coup. Even if there were, it is clear than the SKP lacked the capacity to launch anything comparable to what the KSCĚ had done.<sup>63</sup> After a period of deliberate delay, Paasikivi sent a delegation to Moscow to negotiate the FCMA treaty and tailor it to Finnish needs.<sup>64</sup> After two months of intense negotiations the Finns succeeded in modifying the draft in important respects. The treaty, signed on 6 April 1948, did not allow for positioning of Soviet troops in Finland or commit Finland in any other way militarily to the Soviet bloc.<sup>65</sup> The treaty was a victory for Paasikivi and a disaster for the SKP, which had argued for ready acceptance

of Stalin's original draft. At the same time, in response to the coup rumors and on Paasikivi's orders, the Finnish Army took up positions around the capital and quietly seized control of the SKP-controlled security police's arsenals – squashing any possibility of a coup, however remote.<sup>66</sup> Soon thereafter Interior Minister Leino, who was responsible for the security police, was ousted on what amounted to a technicality. Parliament censured him for some legally dubious decisions taken in 1945, and when he refused to resign Paasikivi dismissed him.<sup>67</sup> Defeat turned into a rout when the SKDL lost heavily in the June 1948 elections and was consequently excluded from government.

The similarities and comparable trajectories of Finland and Czechoslovakia suggest that the two countries share much more in common than is often assumed. Although the two statesmen, Paasikivi and Beneš, shared almost identical goals and basic assumptions, the policies they pursued were very different. Paasikivi's policy of accommodating Soviet security concerns but standing firm on the critical issues of domestic governance succeeded in building Soviet trust in the Finnish polity. This contrasts with Beneš' policy of accommodating Soviet wishes across the board, which failed as it simply led to more demands and more accommodation. In domestic politics, the attitudes of the major non-communist parties towards the communists were important in determining the limits of communist influence. The role of the Social Democrats was especially important in this regard. Communist influence in Finland was firmly curtailed by 1948, in Czechoslovakia it spread steadily. Accounts of the "years of danger" (1944-1948) in Finland often emphasize the "cool and clear-headed leadership" of Paasikivi.<sup>68</sup> This raises an interesting hypothetical question. Could Czechoslovakia have avoided communism if they had had a Czech Paasikivi at the helm during this critical juncture?

## Notes

1. See Curt Beck, "Can Communism and Democracy Coexist? Beneš's Answer." *American Slavic and East European Review* 11 No. 3, 190 and John Hodgson "The Paasikivi Line," *American Slavic and East European Review* 18 No. 2: 145-173 for a good summary of the Beneš' and Paasikivi's respective personal beliefs and policies.
2. For a good summary, see Hampden Jackson, "Finland Since the Armistice," *International Affairs* 24 No. 4: 505-514.
3. Britain was also represented on the ACC, but played a wholly passive role. Alfred Rieber, *Zhdanov in Finland*, (Pittsburgh, PA: Center for Russian and East European Studies, University of Pittsburgh, 1995) 15.
4. Hodgson, "The Paasikivi Line" (*American Slavic and East European Review* 18 No. 21), 52.
5. Rieber, *Zhdanov in Finland* (Pittsburgh, PA: Center for Russian and East European Studies, University of Pittsburgh, 1995), 55.
6. John Vloyantes, *Silk Glove Hegemony: Finnish-Soviet Relations, 1944-1974: A Case Study of the Theory of the Soft Sphere of Influence* (Kent, OH: Kent State University Press, 1975) 44.
7. Edward Taborsky, *President Edvard Beneš: Between East and West, 1938-1948* (Stanford, CA: Hoover Institution Press, 1981), 5.
8. *Ibid.*, 211.
9. Cited by Pavel Tigríd, "The Prague Coup of 1948: The Elegant Takeover" in *The Anatomy of Communist Takeovers*, ed. Thomas Hammond (New Haven, CN: Yale University Press, 1975), 405.
10. Geir Lundestad, *The American non-policy towards Eastern Europe, 1943-1947* (New York, NY: Humanities Press, 1975), 310.
11. Ironically, this would later be termed Finlandization. Josef Korbel, *Twentieth Century Czechoslovakia: the Meanings of its History* (New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 1977), 224.
12. Lundestad, *The American Non-Policy Towards Eastern Europe*, 310.
13. Tigríd, "The Prague Coup of 1948," 404.
14. Finland had even consulted Czechoslovak representatives for their opinion. Mikko Majander, "The Limits of Sovereignty: Finland and the Question of the Marshall Plan in 1947," *Scandinavian Journal of History* 19 No. 4: 314.
15. Rieber, 16.
16. *Ibid.*, 33.
17. Taborsky, 3.
18. *Ibid.*, 6.
19. Korbel, *The Communist Subversion of Czechoslovakia, 1938-1948: The Failure of Coexistence* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1959), 213.
20. Note that Finland is much smaller than Czechoslovakia.

- Raimo Väyrynen, "Finland's role in Western Policy since the Second World War" (Cooperation and Conflict, 12 No. 2), 90.
21. Lundestad, 310.
  22. Josef Kalvoda, *Czechoslovakia's Role in Soviet Strategy* (Washington D.C.: University Press of America, 1978), 175.
  23. It had been made illegal in the 1930s, but had operated underground. Anthony Upton, *The Communist Parties of Finland and Scandinavia* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1973), 240.
  24. For an added twist, Hertta Kuusinen and Yrjö Leino were married at the time. They later divorced. *Ibid.*, 241-242.
  25. Kalvoda, *Czechoslovakia's Role in Soviet Strategy*, 206.
  26. Frantisek August and David Rees, *Red Star Over Prague*, (London: The Sherwood Press, 1984) 12, 22-23.
  27. This did, to a great extent annoy Zhdanov, who thought that "every step of an independent Communist movement is more valuable than a hundred tanks!" Jukka Nevakivi, "A decisive armistice 1944-1947: Why was Finland not Sovietized?" *Scandinavian Journal of History* 19:2, 106.
  28. Rieber, 29.
  29. *Ibid.*, 23-24; Nevakivi, "A decisive armistice 1944-1947: Why was Finland not Sovietized?" 96.
  30. Korbelt, *Twentieth Century Czechoslovakia*, 222.
  31. Myant, 70-71.
  32. Upton, 240, 247.
  33. *Ibid.*, 246.
  34. The Czech National Socialists were only nominally socialist, thus their inclusion in the "rightist" row. M.R. Myant, *Socialism and Democracy in Czechoslovakia, 1945-1948* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), 116, 125.
  35. Eric Bellquist, "Democracy in Travail" (The Western Political Quarterly 2 No. 2), 220.
  36. Kalvoda, 199.
  37. Jan Masaryk, a non-party figure, was given keys to the Foreign Ministry. Myant, 49-50.
  38. James Billington, "Finland" in *Communism and Revolution: The Strategic Uses of Political Violence*, ed. Cyril E. Black and Thomas P. Thornton, (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1964) 128.
  39. Karel Kaplan, "Czechoslovakia's February 1948" in *Czechoslovakia: Crossroads and Crises 1918-1988*, ed. Norman Stone and Eduard Strouhal, (New York, NY: St. Martin's Press, 1989) 149.
  40. Kalvoda, 199; Myant, 47.
  41. Taborsky, *President Edvard Beneš*, 210.
  42. Embittered émigrés would later call this wishful thinking. Kalvoda, 215.
  43. *Ibid.*, 215; Tigris, "The Prague Coup of 1948: The Elegant Takeover," 419.
  44. Kalvoda, 215; Korbelt, *The Communist Subversion of*

- Czechoslovakia, 246.
45. Upton, *The Communist Parties of Finland and Scandinavia*, 245.
  46. *Ibid.*, 251-252; 274.
  47. Bellquist, "Democracy in Travail," 226.
  48. Upton, *The Communist Parties of Finland and Scandinavia*, 264
  49. Bellquist, "Democracy in Travail," 221.
  50. Hans Peter Krosby, "The Communist Power Bid in Finland in 1948," *Political Science Quarterly* 75 No. 2, 231.
  51. Upton, 273.
  52. Beneš considered him to be at time "more Soviet than the Soviets." Myant, 49.
  53. Kalvoda, 198.
  54. Zinner, *Communist Strategy and Tactics in Czechoslovakia, 1918-1948*, 150.
  55. *Ibid.*, 149; Myant, **Socialism and Democracy in Czechoslovakia**, 89.
  56. Taborsky, 217.
  57. Korbel, 205.
  58. Upton, 276; Tigrid, "The Prague Coup of 1948," 407.
  59. *Ibid.*, 410; Kaplan, "Czechoslovakia's February 1948," 155.
  60. Taborsky, President Edvard Beneš, 225.
  61. Tigrid, "The Prague Coup of 1948," 430.
  62. John and Sylvia Crane (New York, NY: Praeger, 1991), 315-316.
  63. *Ibid.*, 316; Taborsky, 225.
  64. *Ibid.*, 226; Korbel, 248-250.
  65. Jussi Hanhimäki, *Containing Coexistence: America, Russia, and the "Finnish Solution"* (Kent, OH: Kent State University Press, 1997), 43.
  66. Bellquist, "Democracy in Travail," 217.
  67. *Ibid.* 290-291.
  68. Krosby, "The Communist Power Bid in Finland in 1948," 234-235.
  69. For a full discussion of the FCMA, see Vloyantes, *Silk Glove Hegemony*, 50-64.
  70. Krosby, "The Communist Power Bid in Finland in 1948," 236-238.
  71. Upton, 295.
  72. Billington, "Finland," 129.

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## The Fisherman's Wife and Museum: Women and Heritage Museums on Nova Scotia's Eastern Shore, 1970-1985

By Rachel Abs

*This paper documents rural Nova Scotian identity in the 1970s and 1980s, and how this identity interacted with heritage tourism. The author contends that, by the 1980s, stereotypes of rural life as lazy and simple were promoted by government tourism organizations and local heritage museums alike. Images of women as 'unliberated' were used to propagate this myth to tourists, and to establish nostalgia amongst locals for better economic times.*

Since the 1930s, tourism in rural Nova Scotia has been an integral part of the province's economy and culture, and history has always played a key role in this industry.<sup>1</sup> In this heritage tourism, historical stories, artifacts, exhibits, and reenactments become tourist attractions. There is, however, a difference between the use of cultural symbols in the marketing of a region and the conflation of culture and industry. Ideas of rural innocence and old-fashioned backwardness may, as historian Ian McKay has argued, be creations of tourism promoters and elite preservationists decades earlier, but in this period they were equally promoted and maintained by locals - McKay's "Folk" themselves.<sup>2</sup> In the 1970s, rural museums began to see themselves as tourist attractions, and consequently, repackaged themselves as marketable tourist destinations. This involved not only a change in museum marketing strategy, but also a redefinition of the meaning and importance of heritage, a meaning that necessarily appealed to urban and modern conceptions of what rural Nova Scotia should be. Certain symbols then became very important, and many of these symbols

were women, particularly those women easily placed in contrast with images of the modern-day woman of the 1970s and '80s. If, as tourism marketing claimed, rural Nova Scotia was "lazy . . . simple . . . (and) . . . old-fashioned", images of women in the home were more easily presented than were those of their male, working-class counterparts, whose lives were not easily painted as calm or lazy. This was particularly true in the 1980s, when the economic realities of rural Nova Scotian life were not easily ignored and work became an important but not apolitical, lazy or simple topic.

*Nova Scotia: A Land of Contrasts*

*Heritage Preservation and Commemoration in Rural Nova Scotia*

Prior to the 1970s, the goal of local heritage societies in rural Nova Scotia was primarily cultural. Collection and preservation was undertaken as part of a project of protection, commemoration, and celebration. The product of this work was not designed to impress large audiences, and was targeted primarily at locals. Publicity for rural museums was minimal and distributed locally, and admission was almost never charged. Local heritage societies (or historical societies) existed throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century, some as early as the 1880s, and some of them operated small museums out of restored houses or other heritage buildings. These houses, mostly opening in the 1950s and '60s, were meant as educational rather than tourist destinations. They tended to advertise to their local public or to nearby urban populations in an effort to educate the Nova Scotian population about their own history.<sup>3</sup>

For the Eastern Shore as in other regions, these goals continued to be the primary focus of heritage societies in the 1970s. The Heritage Trust of Nova Scotia's attention to the region was largely manifested in a series of "Fall Tours to the Eastern Shore", co-presented by the Eastern Shore Heritage

Society. Schoolchildren, Haligonians, and others within driving distance of the region, were encouraged to participate in a bus tour of museums and heritage sites along the coast, as well as participating in 'living heritage' activities such as baking, crafting and fishing.<sup>4</sup> The goals of this project were clearly more cultural than economic, with the pamphlet given to participants closing with an invitation and request for help.

We hope you will return on your own to enjoy this scenic route and become more aware of the need for citizen participation and legislation at all levels of government to protect the best of our natural surroundings and heritage buildings and views for future generations.<sup>5</sup>

The credits in the Fall Tour pamphlet and educational package are almost all women, mostly directors of museums, caretakers of heritage sites, and Heritage Society volunteers. It is evident that none of the work involved in the bus tour was paid work, and the call for legislation and citizen participation was probably in some way also a call for funding. For the women involved at this point, the museums were most likely a hobby, a volunteer diversion. In fact, the tour manual and nearly every document produced by the Heritage Society include a call for volunteers, clearly aimed at stay-at-home women. Volunteering with the Society was "a rewarding social and charity experience", and ideally required daytime availability to keep museum sites open. One ad on the back page of a pamphlet features a woman in nineteenth-century costume alongside a modern-day elderly woman, both smiling and knitting on the balcony of a wooden house against a backdrop of a rocky harbourfront, with the slogan "get involved and learn your history."<sup>6</sup> Images of women are pervasive in publicity and in actual exhibits of the 1970s. This is perhaps due to the fact that heritage houses were more easily converted to museums than were centers of work and industry.

Through the 1970s, the cultural goals of museums and heritage societies became more and more closely intertwined with those of tourism associations and even the provincial Department of Tourism. Heritage tourism already existed prior to 1970, but especially outside of Halifax, it relied largely on an authenticity of the people and land as themselves quaint antiques,<sup>7</sup> rather than on commemorative symbols or exhibits. In the 1970s and early 80s, a number of local heritage societies shifted their efforts away from genealogy and preservation, and opened museums to the public. The Nova Scotia Museum, which had only recently changed its name from “The Nova Scotia Museum of Science”, opened several new locations focused on history and culture, and in 1970 began an advertising campaign emphasizing that the museum was “not just about rocks anymore.”<sup>8</sup> Although tourism had already shown an interest in heritage prior to this period, heritage preservationists showed a hesitant but markedly increased interest in attracting tourist traffic after 1970. This new tourist heritage was markedly different from previous preservation efforts in a number of ways.

The meaning of authenticity for heritage changed in this new period of heritage tourism. While the historic tourist destinations of the 1960s and before could be assumed to be genuine because of their clear and linear relationship to the present-day local inhabitants, the tourist of the 1970s was assumed to cast a more critical eye on claims to historical accuracy. The Fisheries Museum of the Atlantic, established as a centennial project in 1967, and designed to commemorate and preserve the workings of the offshore fishery, was by 1970 marketed to vacationers as “an adventure in realism.”<sup>9</sup> To prove this “realism” (more real-ness or authenticity), the museum’s publicity emphasized the items in the museum collection, rather than the stories that they conveyed. Visitors were expected to marvel at the age and quality of preservation of boats, traps, tackle, rather than at the quaintness of the stories of fishermen’s

lives. This new reliance on symbols over stories is also unique to this period of heritage and heritage tourism.

The alleged old-fashionedness of rural Nova Scotia meant that a number of “modern” developments be denied in fashioning local culture, in order to suit a tourist audience. Among these was women’s liberation, an important theme, at least in urban culture, of the 1970s and ‘80s. While earlier heritage depictions had portrayed women as unliberated, the tourist museums of the 1970s and 80s used images of women in more creative ways. The new “liberated” woman became a symbol of modernity, while the pre-1970s (or Victorian, depending on the period the museum represented) woman was a part of heritage, and thus celebrated, romanticized, and idealized. The real women of the region were, of course, meant to embody this ideal as much as possible, portraying their community as free from the trappings of urban, modern life. Whereas older publicity used black and white photos, women in period costume, and other attempts at authenticity, Nova Scotia in 1980 was “a land of contrasts”, a slogan used by the department of tourism from 1979-81. It was accompanied by a colour photograph of a modern-day young girl dressed in Nova Scotia tartan and carrying bagpipes.<sup>10</sup> Heritage then, was an absence of the presence of modern liberation – and the girl represented what Nova Scotia’s heritage was not. It was not the confusing new world of the post-1960s era, but a simpler time of conservatism and rigid gender roles, in which a girl would have never really been a piper or worn men’s clothing. The implication is not only one of contrast between past and present. Nova Scotia is (not was) a land of contrasts, and this contrast can only be between urban and rural. The “Attractions ‘80” brochure that the girl appears on claims that, while Halifax is a fun place to start your vacation, “the South and Eastern Shores are what Nova Scotia is all about.”<sup>11</sup> The majority of attractions listed for these locations are museums, especially living history

museums like the recently opened Sherbrooke Village. The remaining attractions are a sort of living heritage, where the visitor learns about the friendly rural people of Nova Scotia through “authentic deep-sea fishing with real fisherman”, a visit to a smokehouse, and dining at church suppers.<sup>12</sup> A slightly earlier brochure, produced in 1978, calls Halifax “a little like home, only not so frantic, and the people have time to be friendly”, while the Eastern Shore is “all about fishing, historic buildings and home cooking... untouched... [and] lazy.”<sup>13</sup>

Descriptions of museums, heritage sites, and tourist publicity produced by the Nova Scotia Museum and the provincial Department of Tourism appear almost identical to those produced by local tourism associations, and even, by the 1980s, by rural heritage societies. This illustrates the pervasiveness of tourist heritage, and that assumptions about rural Nova Scotian culture were produced and perpetuated by the tourist industry in a way that was not simply top-down. Department of Tourism publicity and exhibits designed by rural Nova Scotian women agreed that the Eastern Shore was simple, old-fashioned, and lazy. Both used images of women, urban and rural, past and present, unliberated and liberated, to symbolize this understanding. In fact, without looking at the logo or production credits, it is almost impossible to tell the difference between provincial and local publicity, museum guides, and other public documents of the period (except perhaps by production quality). One exception is the treatment of industry and economics. While the province and local organizations certainly agreed on what women ‘meant’ as symbols in past and present, the status of the fishery and of industry within heritage, and of the roles and meaning of men and women within these, was disputed territory.

### *The Fisherman’s Wife*

#### *Gender and Culture at the Fisherman’s Life Museum*

The Fisherman’s Life Museum is a small museum,



located in the former Eastern Shore inshore fishing community of Jeddore. Founded in 1979 by Ms. Ruth Jennings,<sup>14</sup> the museum is a part of the Nova Scotia Museum network, but has been maintained mostly by local efforts. The majority of its collection was acquired in the 1970s and early 80s by Jennings herself from her friends and neighbours. According to its own advertising, the museum “illustrat(ed) the way of life of the inshore fishermen at the turn of the century on the Eastern Shore of Nova Scotia.”<sup>15</sup> The tone of this attempted a more realistic portrayal of the area than had earlier efforts to market rural life to tourists. Created by community members acutely aware of economic hard times and of loss with the decline of the inshore fishery in the region, the museum’s tone was at times quite somber:

By 1960 the Myers property lay abandoned. The changing patterns of settlement and lifestyle along the eastern shore of Nova Scotia, typical of many small fishing communities in Halifax County, are seen in the history of this property. From a self-supporting, economically independent lifestyle through to abandonment we can trace a period of change in the inshore fisheries and in these communities.<sup>16</sup>

This more serious approach is quite different from typical tourist advertising, and yet is also different from most heritage language prior to the 1970s. It represents another sort of contrast between past and present, and an even more effective way of glorifying the past. Although Jennings was mainly interested in preserving the stories of her own community, the museum was clearly both a preservation effort and a tourist attraction. The Fisherman’s Life Museum was included in Nova Scotia Museum pamphlets and in tourist maps and brochures. That this language was used in publicity, and not only in the exhibit, is particularly interesting, and indicates a twist on the educational focus of earlier heritage museums. The Fisherman’s Life Museum, it seems, was attempting to attract tourist traffic for both economic and cultural

reasons, to sensitize urban tourists to the plight of inshore fishing communities while simultaneously attracting their dollars to the region. The fact that the museum itself did not receive any of these dollars is hardly relevant, as the volunteers and paid local employees running the museum would have had an interest in the economic well-being of their community. It would also have been important for the museum to attract traffic in order to maintain their relationship with funders and with the Nova Scotia Museum. This allowed Fisherman's Life greater autonomy than nearby Sherbrooke Village or the majority of its other rural locations, many of which were under the direct management of the Nova Scotia Museum curator.<sup>17</sup> By this time, the Department of Tourism and local organizations were making a concerted effort to market the Eastern Shore as a tourist destination, although it was still the least heavily trafficked of the province's official tourist routes. A number of maps and brochures produced by the Department, by the Tourism Industry Association of Nova Scotia (TIANS) and by the Eastern Shore Tourism Association, show the Fisherman's Life Museum as a major tourist attraction, and describe it as a "must-see" when visiting the "historic" Eastern Shore.<sup>18</sup> It, along with the slightly earlier Sherbrooke Village restoration project, represent a move towards museums as a way of attracting tourists interested in history. In fact, this move can be clearly traced in publicity for the region through the 1970s. Whereas in 1972 the Eastern Shore Tourist Association encouraged tourists to "take time to turn off the main highway and experience our rich culture and history . . . stop and chat with the people. Their stories, old and new, are worth listening to",<sup>19</sup> a 1980 brochure, co-produced by the Department of Tourism and the local tourist association asked them to "pay attention to unspoilt scenery, beaches, highland games, and impressively accurate restoration projects (emphasis added)."<sup>20</sup> Accuracy, by 1980, apparently meant something more than the lazy innocence of ten years before. Both the

Fisherman's Life Museum and Sherbrooke Village existed in intentional contrast with the harsh reality of modern life in their respective communities, and this in some way added to their nostalgic charm.<sup>21</sup>

Nostalgia, for the Fisherman's Life Museum, apparently meant femininity. Despite its claim to "illustrate the life of the inshore fishermen", the museum's guidebook included two pages on fishing, dories, and lobster traps and five on the fisherman's wives and daughters, their home, their crafts, and their lives without men. In fact, the museum itself was the homestead, "maintained by Ethelda (the fisherman's wife) and her thirteen daughters."<sup>22</sup> Despite the obvious hardship that Ethelda must have faced maintaining the house and grounds while raising thirteen children, the sad tone of the museum guide relates only to the present, to what is lost. In the past, it implies, families worked hard but they succeeded. Ethelda may have been a woman left alone, but at least she was a homemaker, a respectable woman, and at least her husband had work. Implicitly and explicitly, the museum guide is a comment on coastal life in 1980, more than in 1900. Explicitly it laments the decline of the inshore fishery and the economic hard times of the regions present and foreseeable future. Implicitly, this cry for pity is also about men not working, stripped of the undeniable masculinity assigned to men who fish, work the land, and support their families without dependency on the state or urban employers. It is also about the loss of the figure of Ethelda Myers – the homemaker, content to tend her children, knit, crochet or hook rugs, and wait for her husband to come home. The guidebook does not even mention why Mr. Myers was away so often. Presumably he worked at some other non-local profession during the winter months, but to name it would detract from the image of rugged self-sufficiency that the museum conveys.<sup>23</sup>

The gender dynamics of the museum's content may have

been complicated, but the direction of the 1980 Fisherman's Life Museum was 100% female. The museum's founder and paid curator, Ruth Jennings, was a popular community organizer, and was also involved in a book project, *Reminiscences*, which compiled for the first time stories, folk tales, songs and anecdotes of older residents of Jeddore.<sup>24</sup> Along with a handful of other local women, she spearheaded the museum in the mid-1970s and maintained it throughout the 1980s, before and after its inclusion in the Nova Scotia Museum network. That she was a respected community organizer whose work at the museum was locally valued is evidenced by the controversy over the Nova Scotia Museum's 1979 attempt to fire her and instate a professional curator, shortly after the Fisherman's Life Museum joined the Nova Scotia Museum network. The Nova Scotia Museum abandoned this plan when local residents began pulling their family artifacts from the museum in protest.<sup>25</sup> Even today, the museum is directed and maintained by local residents, mostly women.<sup>26</sup> This is a modern and Nova Scotian example of a global trend in which women are at the centre of heritage preservation and other amateur history efforts, as well as more general trends in the gender of tourism and hospitality workers. That heritage and tourism were both 'women's work' further complicates the relationship between heritage museums and other tourism efforts, which were still largely operated by different people despite their increasing closeness in this period.

### *Heritage and Tourism Speak*

#### *The Goals of Heritage Tourism and the Production of Rural Culture*

In 1982, after years of informal and formal collaboration between heritage preservationists and the tourism industry, the Federation of Nova Scotia Heritage<sup>27</sup> organized a formal conference to address the relationship between heritage and tourism in Nova Scotia. While not an actual turning point in

terms of policy, the conference was the first time that heritage organizations as a group addressed the question of their own goals and connection with tourism. Essentially, museums needed money, and tourist organizations already considered them tourist draws. One speaker on behalf of the Federation of Nova Scotia Heritage stated that, while the goals of heritage prior to the 1970s had been entirely cultural, there were “economic concerns” in many areas of the province that prompted heritage to seek greater cooperation with tourist enterprises. These “economic concerns” were mostly concerns of the museums themselves – few of them were willing to charge admission and many could not afford to advertise in many tourist publications, a major concern of many of the ‘heritage’ speakers. However, underlying the speech is another economic concern – it is clear from the text of all of the ‘heritage’ speakers, particularly those from outside of Halifax and most notably those from Coastal regions and Cape Breton, that they too wanted tourism to successfully bring money to their regions.<sup>28</sup>

The ‘tourism’ speakers claimed to be receptive to the concerns of the heritage organizations, giving frequent mention to the so-called “Disneyland Fear” – that heritage sites would become inauthentic and tacky if marketed as tourist destinations. The director of industry development for the Department of Tourism explained the goals of his department:

The Department of Tourism, as well as the Tourism Industry Association of Nova Scotia and Check Inns Organization have long recognized Heritage and History as a Tourism Nova Scotia product flavouring.<sup>29</sup>

Although it was clear that this and other ‘tourism’ speakers were attempting to appear diplomatic, the conference was in reality a heated affair. Heritage representatives were largely unaware of governmental process and existing tourism policy, and were only concerned with gaining a portion of the money that their visitors

were spending, which was mostly on fuel and accommodation. They wanted either better government funding, subsidies by nearby tourist ventures, or free advertising and support from local tourism organizations. Tourism representatives were well aware that their industry was already benefiting from the tourist attractions provided by museums and heritage destinations. They suggested that museums either charge admission or cut their already minimal operation costs. In the end, nothing of economic substance was decided, but it was “unanimously declared” that “communication and cooperation were key”. Tourism organizations did not want museums to go bankrupt and cease to exist, and heritage organizations, with varying degrees of hesitancy, admitted a need to be more open to tourism concerns.<sup>30</sup>

The proceedings of this conference show a lingering faith, even in 1982, in the inherent value of heritage preservation, with or without a tourist element. Heritage by this point was clearly caught between its dual goals – it was an important cultural pillar for residents of Nova Scotian communities, as well as a tourist draw.<sup>31</sup> Whether these two goals were in fact reconcilable is the real subject of *Heritage and Tourism Speak*. What the heritage delegates were really doing was questioning the authenticity of a culture that becomes a commodity. Ultimately, though, none of the conference delegates had any say in the matter. Even if the preservationists could have guarded their museums and heritage sites from commodification, they would have ceased to exist without tourist money. Even if this were not true, the similarity between the message of ‘heritage’ and that of ‘tourism’ became so close that it is unlikely that such a ‘guarding’ would have had any effect. Sherbrooke Village, always intended as a tourist draw and supported by the Department of Tourism as well as the Nova Scotia Museum, was essentially identical in message to the Fisherman’s Life Museum, which resisted such a relationship with tourism well into the 1980s.<sup>32</sup> The

Fisherman's Life Museum, despite the efforts of its curator, was a tourist attraction, included in tourist brochures and maps. Although every 'heritage' delegate at the culture expressed that their goals were primarily cultural and educational, 1981 saw an unprecedented 1, 417, 103 museum visitors from out of province.<sup>33</sup>

Whether or not Ruth Jennings and other rural museum curators intended it, the categories of heritage preservation and tourism (the industry) were blurred by 1981. 'Disneyland fears' aside, museum publicity and tourism publicity already shared several common messages. Without a marketing strategy, rural museums were already marketing the Eastern Shore and other rural Nova Scotian regions in very specific ways, regardless of attention or inattention to accuracy. In fact, the message propagated by the Fisherman's Life Museum and Sherbrooke Village was largely the same one that the Eastern Shore Tourism Association wanted – one that emphasized "friendly atmosphere", laziness, serenity, and old-fashioned conservatism,<sup>34</sup> complete with romantically glossed-over accounts of work, community self-sufficiency and unliberated women. In short, the Department of Tourism and TIANS did not need to convince heritage societies of anything. Whether they liked it or not, they provided the perfect "product flavouring" for rural tourism.

### *Which Fisherman's Wives?*

#### *White-washing and Heritage Tourism*

The 1970s were a socially confusing period, remembered for war and social movements. Tourism marketing throughout history has played on the idea of escape – tourist destinations should be different enough from the tourists' place of origin that they can feel a sense of calm detachment from the stresses of their own lives. It is not surprising then that rural Nova Scotia, marketed as

conservative, old-fashioned, and calm, would seem particularly appealing in this period. A 1970s brochure, aimed at American tourists, quoted Shakespeare in its description of the “Eastern Shore Vacation... And this is our life, exempt from public haunt, Finds tongues in trees, books in running brooks, Sermons in stones and good in everything.”<sup>35</sup> Women’s liberation, along with civil rights, Communism, war, and other politically relevant theme of the period, needed to exist in stark contrast to the tourist image of Nova Scotia.

It is important to note that the ‘Eastern Shore region’ is primarily a creation of the Department of Tourism. The ‘Marine Highway’ in this period begins in Porter’s Lake, and in 1980 was approximately 25 minutes by car from Dartmouth. In the 1990s, a highway was built, bypassing the communities between urban Dartmouth and the Marine Drive. In the 1970s and early 1980s, many tourists would have had to drive through the communities of Cherry Brook and Preston to get to the tourist route.<sup>36</sup> Despite this, and despite the fact that these communities were making concerted efforts to preserve and display their local heritage, tourism did not choose to market their heritage as a point of interest.

The Black Cultural Centre, located between Dartmouth and the Department of Tourism-defined Eastern Shore region, opened in 1983 and represented the first serious attempt in Nova Scotia to preserve the heritage of non-White communities. It was the product of the Society for the Protection and Preservation of Black Culture in Nova Scotia, a group whose goals on paper were not dissimilar to those of The Eastern Shore Heritage Society and other small heritage preservationist groups.<sup>37</sup> Its focus was largely urban and largely educational, and unlike most other museum and preservation efforts, it was not mentioned in tourist publicity in the 1980s. Its message would not have fit into the romantic view of the past that was so prevalent in rural Nova Scotian tourism, despite the fact that much of Preston, the area in which many of its collections originated, was certainly rural Nova



Scotia. Some of the museum's early exhibits were quite similar to white Nova Scotian heritage exhibits, dealing with famous inventors or whimsical anecdotes about early rural life, but many painted a much darker picture of the past, dealing with slavery, migration, and racism.<sup>38</sup> Although many Blacks did operate stores and certainly lived in houses, none of these were opened as museums during the period. Interestingly, over half of the 'heroes' commemorated in the museum since its 1983 opening have been women.<sup>39</sup>

This silence regarding Black Nova Scotian heritage represents one way in which tourism picked which heritage to appropriate and market as a destination for over-stressed urban travelers. There are other examples of this phenomenon, including, of course, the silence regarding local First Nations, who according to tourist publicity and even local folklore, entered rural Nova Scotia for just long enough to name nearly all of the communities on the Eastern Shore and then disappear. Other voices, those of working-class men who did not fish (but must have built the rails associated with the region's lost golden age), single women, immigrant communities and others, were also conspicuously absent from tourism's portrayal of the region and of the province as a whole.

### *Conclusion: Heritage as Ideal*

The Fisherman's Life Museum represents an example, in 1980, of the complex relationship between heritage preservation and the tourism industry. By the 1990s, tourists on the Eastern Shore would be encouraged to buy "genuine old-fashioned" candy from Sherbrooke Village, marked with a "Made in China" sticker, and museums and restaurants alike would sell plastic "Lobby the Lobster" squeaky toys at the door.<sup>39</sup> In 1980, though, tourists were still expected to crave a degree of authenticity that was not present in earlier tourist representations of the region, or in later heritage tourism. Images of women were one tool used

to enhance the real-ness of these representations of the past. By drawing a stark contrast between the socially confusing world of women's liberation, war, and social movements and the allegedly calmer, peaceful history of the region, heritage tourism was able to authenticate the past and enhance its appeal, especially to urban tourists craving a glimpse of a simpler world. At the same time, much of the "living heritage" of the period prior to 1975 lingered, and the real women of the region, especially those working or volunteering in tourism, were assumed to embody this simple, unliberated image. Masculinity and femininity played an important role in drawing contrast between modern economic reality and the "golden age" of mining and inshore fishing that the museums were meant to portray. These images, by the 1980s, were not imposed by urban promoters on unsuspecting rural people who would otherwise tell another story, but are in fact deeply engrained in locals' senses of history and culture. Women in the home and working men, rugged and somehow simultaneously lazy, became not only interesting relics of the past, but a nostalgic ideal of a better time that was lost.

## Notes

1. Ian McKay, *The Quest of the Folk: Antimodernism and Cultural Selection in Twentieth Century Nova Scotia*. Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queens University Press, 1994. For a similar exploration of British Columbia, see Michael Dawson, *Selling British Columbia: Tourism and Consumer Culture, 1890-1970*. Vancouver: UBC Press, 2004.
2. Ibid.
3. Ex., "Heritage buildings on the Marine Highway", published by the Eastern Shore Heritage Society, 1964. Thanks to local archivist Thea Wilson-Hammond for her useful insight into my subject in general.
4. "Fall Tour to the Eastern Shore". Public Archives of Nova Scotia (PANS) Vertical Files (V/F) V. 28 #1.
5. Ibid.
6. "The Eastern Shore", PANS V/F V. 102 #11.
7. See McKay, "History and the Tourist Gaze" and *The Quest of the Folk: Antimodernism and Cultural Selection in Twentieth Century Nova Scotia*. Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queens University Press, 1994.
8. "Nova Scotia: The Museum", pamphlet produced by the Nova Scotia Museum, 1970. PANS V/F V. 197 #23.
9. Ibid.
10. "Nova Scotia: Attractions '80". PANS V/F V. 440 #6.
11. Ibid.
12. Ibid.
13. "Nova Scotia: Seven Vacations in Place of One". PANS V/F V. 440 #5.
14. Name has been changed. See "The Fisherman's Life Museum" PANS V/F V. 84 #112, or the below-cited newspaper articles for more information.
15. "The Fisherman's Life Museum". PANS V/F V. 84 #112.
16. Ibid.
17. "Museums in Nova Scotia, 1975-76", public release of the Nova Scotia Museum, PANS F3216 N935.
18. "Marine Drive", pamphlet produced by the NS Department of Tourism, 1980. PANS V/F V. 102 #11.
19. "Marine Highway Nova Scotia", pamphlet produced by the Eastern Shore Tourism Association, 1972. PANS V/F V. 102 #11.
20. "Discover Nova Scotia's Marine Drive", pamphlet produced by the NS Dep't of Tourism and Eastern Shore Tourism Association. PANS V/F V. 102 #11.
21. Sherbrooke Village's publicity is almost identical in tone to that of the Fisherman's Life Museum. Nostalgia for Sherbrooke's literal "golden age" of gold mining is pervasive in publicity, museum guides, and other public documents. "Sherbrooke Village"

- (museum guide, 1979). PANS V/F V. 498 #59.
22. "The Fisherman's Life Museum". PANS V/F V. 84 #112.
  23. Mr. Ervin Myers, a present-day museum website reveals, worked in the winter as a logger and probably lived in a camp somewhere in Central Nova Scotia while he was away. That his reliance on a non-coastal industry is not mentioned anywhere in the museum's public documents throughout the 1970s and 80s is indicative of the importance of the sea in defining the culture and lives of historic Nova Scotians. By simply saying that he was "away" frequently, the viewer can at least imagine him offshore, or building ships, or in some other sea-related profession, if not completely forget his absence and maintain a belief in the community's self-sufficiency. See "The Fisherman's Life Museum", online: <http://www.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~nsjeddor/museum.html>. Accessed April 1, 2008.
  24. Helen Jennex, *Reminiscences*, originally self-published, 1976.
  25. "Heated Row Over Curator's Dismissal", *The Mail Star* May 16, 1979, p.1.; "Museum Controversy Continues", *The Chronicle Herald* June 14, 1979. p. 25.; "Curator Reinstated Amid Community Protest", *The Chronicle Herald* June 20, 1979. p. 8.
  26. "The Fisherman's Life Museum", online.
  27. The Federation of Nova Scotia Heritage had formed six years prior, in 1976, and by 1982 represented the collaboration of the majority of the small or rural heritage societies and independent museums in the province.
  28. Federation of Nova Scotia Heritage, "Heritage and Tourism Speak" conference proceedings. Baddeck, NS, Nov. 5/6 1982. PANS V/F V. 471 #1., p.7.
  29. *Ibid.*, 13.
  30. *Ibid.*
  31. Museums were tourism-related investments although they themselves never turned a profit, even when charging admission. All of them functioned as non-profit organizations (as did the Nova Scotia Museum) and in fact at times lost large sums of money. See "Museums in Nova Scotia", PANS AM22 F293 for summaries of earnings and revenues as of 1976.
  32. See "Heritage and Tourism Speak", 3-4 and 11-12.
  33. "Heritage and Tourism Speak", 10. 1 172 116 out-of-province tourists were reported in 1981. That the number of out-of-province museum visits is larger simply expresses that some visitors attended more than one museum.
  34. See Ian McKay, *The Quest of the Folk*.
  35. "Nova Scotia: Seven Vacations in Place of One". PANS V/F V. 440 #5.
  36. An alternate route along the coast exists, passing through former Acadian villages and now home to an 'Acadian House' museum. This area seems not to have been considered an official part of the 'Marine Highway' in this period.
  37. "History of the Black Cultural Centre for Nova Scotia". Online:

- <http://www.bccns.com/>. Accessed April 30, 2008.
38. Ibid.
  39. Ibid.
  40. Ian McKay uses the Halifax Busker's Festival to convey this idea of postmodern inattention to authenticity on the part of visitors to Nova Scotia. See his chapter, "The Folk under conditions of postmodernity", in McKay, *Quest of the Folk*.

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## The Subjugation of Turkey: German-Ottoman Relations and the 1913 Military Mission

By Clancy Zeifman

*Germany's increasing influence over the Ottoman Empire in the lead-up to World War I, culminating in the 1913 Liman von Sanders military mission and Turkey's entrance into the war itself, is an under-studied but important subject in Ottoman history. Based on the writings and correspondences of the contemporary actors, this paper challenges the common assertion that the Ottoman-German relationship was egalitarian. Instead, the author argues that the relationship was unbalanced, with Germany exerting undue influence over Ottoman affairs, especially in the military sphere.*

“Rumania is overrun by the Turkish armies, which the Germans trained into serving Germany, and the guns of the German warships lying in the harbor at Constantinople remind the Turkish statesmen every day that they have no choice but to take their orders from Berlin.”

-Woodrow Wilson, June 14, 1917<sup>1</sup>

Throughout the nineteenth century, many Ottoman leaders tried to reform their country's military. From Selim III's failed attempt to create a new Ottoman army (the *nizam-i cedid*) at the end of the eighteenth century, to the destruction of the Janissaries, into the Tanzimat Era, and towards World War I (WWI), reformers sought to create armies that were more like their European counterparts, in terms of tactics, equipment, aesthetics, and effectiveness. The Ottoman Empire's encounters with European technological superiority had proven that modern training, organisation, and equipment were

necessary to compete in the newly modernised military world. The Ottoman Army, once one of the most powerful in the region, had failed to stop the European powers from encroaching on Turkey's territorial sovereignty.<sup>2</sup>

Following Turkey's poor showing in the Russo-Turkish war (1877-78), Sultan Abdul Hamid II requested the help of Germany. He asked for a military mission to be sent to Istanbul to modernise, train, and reorganise the Ottoman Army. The mission that arrived two years later marked the beginning of a new type of German-Ottoman relationship which saw German military officers maintain a presence within the Ottoman Empire until the end of WWI. A second military mission, beginning in 1913, resulted in German officers serving in many capacities within the Ottoman Army, including training troops, commanding units, and shaping military policy. By the end of the war, approximately twenty thousand Germans were living within the Ottoman Empire.<sup>3</sup> Similarly, in the early twentieth century, select Ottoman officers found themselves in Germany where they trained with German troops. Though Germany never formally colonised the Ottoman Empire, by the beginning of WWI, the Ottoman Army, and in many ways Turkey itself, had in large part been subjugated as a result of decades of German economic encroachment and the influence exerted by the military mission.

This paper will begin by briefly examining the history of nineteenth century German-Ottoman relations. Next, it will explore to what extent Germany had colonial ambitions in the Middle East. Third, this paper will examine the writings of Ottoman and German leaders to understand how they perceived both themselves and each other, and how these perceptions laid the foundation for the relationship that ultimately developed. Finally, Germany's influence in the Ottoman Empire during the pre-war and WWI periods will be discussed drawing on the first-hand accounts of a number of contemporary actors, including the leader of the military mission, General Liman von Sanders, Ottoman leaders Talaat Pasha and Djemal Pasha, and American Ambassador Henry Morgenthau, as well as others. These

accounts will be used to tell the story of the German military mission and its influence over Turkish affairs.<sup>4</sup> Though the observations of these actors often conflict, the theme of German control, whether explicit or implicit, runs throughout their works.

#### German-Ottoman Relations during the Long Nineteenth Century

As James Madison McGarity points out in his comprehensive dissertation on the history of foreign influence on the Ottoman/Turkish Army, the origins of German-Ottoman relations can be traced back as far as 1835, when Prussian Captain Helmuth von Moltke (who later went on to become Field Marshall of the German Army) visited the Ottoman Empire for the first time. His visit marked the beginning of German-Ottoman military relations which would continue throughout the nineteenth century and into the twentieth. Securing the Sultan's favour, von Moltke was made an advisor to the Ottoman Army which led to the importation of more Prussian officers.<sup>5</sup> The Ottoman commander, Mehmet Hafiz Pasha, wrote of von Moltke:

Baron Bey, a Prussian officer of talent, who was attached to me, and who is proceeding to-day to the capital, has been with me, first, during the war with the Kurds of Jesireh and Gharsen, and later in the camp near Nisib. He has served the Ottoman Government faithfully, and shown zeal and activity in all matters relating to his profession.<sup>6</sup>

During his stay he was able to effect some minor changes to the organisation of the army, but the Ottoman forces were still ultimately based on the French model in this period.<sup>7</sup>

It was not until 1882 that we begin to witness more explicit signs of penetration into Turkey.<sup>8</sup> The mission sent by Germany (primarily headed by Colonel Colmar Freiherr von der Goltz) following the Ottoman defeat in the Russo-Turkish War, remained until 1895, during which time much was achieved. Von der Goltz managed to reform the Ottoman inspection system, create a reserve program, a number of military schools, a more cohesive staff, and institute a comprehensive recruiting scheme.<sup>9</sup> Despite these achievements, however, there is

little evidence to suggest that control over the Ottoman Army in this time ever left the hands of the Ottoman leaders. Von der Goltz was an effective reformer with a strong reputation amongst the rank-and-file, but when the mission ended, most German officers left, though their reforms remained.

At the same time, German economic influence was spreading throughout the Ottoman Empire. Though an extensive outline of German economic penetration into the Ottoman Empire is beyond the scope of this paper, a brief examination of the economic situation is important for understanding the foundations upon which eventual German military control was built. By the outbreak of WWI, German capital was heavily invested in railroads, raw material processing, financing, engineering, aviation, and automobiles in the Middle East.<sup>10</sup> In 1888, the Deutsche Bank arranged a loan for the Sultan after a French bank had rejected a request by the virtually bankrupt Turkey. Soon thereafter, it was able to secure major interests in the Balkan railways and played a leading role in the establishment of the Anatolian Railway Company in 1889.<sup>11</sup> In 1899, the Germans won a concession to extend the Anatolian railway to Baghdad and the Persian Gulf,<sup>12</sup> and in 1903, the Deutsche Bank obtained a ninety-nine year concession to finance the construction of the Berlin-Baghdad railway – a project slated to include some 2,400 miles of railroad.<sup>13</sup> German financiers also created financial institutions such as the Deutsche Palästina Bank, which quickly established branches throughout the Levant, in Beirut, Damascus, Gaza, Haifa, Jaffa, Jerusalem, Nablus, Nazareth, and Tripoli. Moreover, German exports to Turkey from 1888 to 1900 increased thirteen-fold, from 2,300,000 M to 30,400,000 M, and imports from Turkey tripled, from 11,700,000 M to 34,400,000 M.<sup>14</sup> The German imperial post-office also opened branches in Istanbul, Smyrna, Beirut, Jaffa, and Jerusalem, illustrating the scope to which Germany had penetrated the Ottoman Empire.<sup>15</sup> Over the course of only a few decades, Germany had become involved in the Turkey's railways, financial sector, irrigation, public works, farming, trade, cotton, oil, and even established some settlements.<sup>16</sup>

The significance of this economic penetration is evident by the attention and worry it provoked in the other European powers. In an annual report on Turkey, a British official writes,

German commercial influence in Turkey is undoubtedly growing. It is impossible for a new-comer in Constantinople not to be struck by the importance of German commercial enterprise. The imposing railway terminus at Haidar Pasha, German shops, German electric lighting companies, tramways and power stations, all of recent growth, show the readiness with which German capital seeks an outlet in this country.<sup>17</sup>

German influence also infiltrated the Turkish media. As Ambassador Henry Morgenthau notes, by the start of WWI,

The whole Turkish press rapidly passed under the control of Germany. [German Ambassador] Wangenheim purchased the *Ikdam*, one of the largest Turkish newspapers, which immediately began to sing the praises of Germany and to abuse the Entente. The *Osmanischer Lloyd* published in French and German, became an organ of the German Embassy [...] All Turkish editors were ordered to write in Germany's favour and they obeyed instructions.<sup>18</sup>

Furthermore, by WWI, Germany had begun to dominate the Ottoman Empire's communications sector. In his memoir, Morgenthau discusses a wireless station that the Germans were building for Turkey, but notes that,

Wangenheim, the German Ambassador, spoke of it freely and constantly as a German enterprise. 'Have you seen our wireless yet?' he would ask me. 'Come on, let's ride up there and look it over' [...] so little did he attempt to conceal its German ownership that several times, when ordinary telegraphic communication was suspended, he offered to let me use it to send my telegrams.<sup>19</sup>

General Liman von Sanders, the leader of the 1913 military mission,

writes in his memoirs that “the personnel of almost all wireless stations in the country and on the frontiers, was predominantly, and sometimes exclusively, German.”<sup>20</sup> German penetration into the communications sector also caused worry amongst the Entente powers, at least according to officials in British India, who wrote of a proposed German communications cable through the Persian Gulf: “The object of the scheme is clearly political, and in our opinion further evidence is afforded by it that Germany entertains persistent design of establishing a footing in the Gulf.”<sup>21</sup> Any control of communications by the Germans would have furthered their ability to exert their influence over Turkey, and thus would detract from the influence of the other European powers.

### *German Colonial Designs in the Middle East*

Many authors contend that the accession of Kaiser Wilhelm II marked a clear change in German imperialist policy. To be sure, the notion of a German Empire in the Middle East had been salient in some segments of German society since the 1840s. Von Moltke, on his trip to Turkey during the first half of the century, was calling for the establishment of German settlements in the Levant for strategic and economic gain.<sup>22</sup> But as journalist and British diplomat Valentine Chirol notes in 1915,

Bismarck never forgot that the part he wished to play at Constantinople could only be played safely and successfully if it were generally recognized that Germany had no territorial ambitions in the Near East [...] It was upon these lines that German policy in Constantinople continued to move so long as Bismarck was in power. But they were lines too modest to satisfy William [Wilhelm] II.”<sup>23</sup>

Wolfgang Schwantz contends that Wilhelm II’s policy was more expansionist than that of his predecessor, as he tried to expand German influence and turn his country into a Great Power.<sup>24</sup> Mary Townsend

argues that Willhelm's policy in the Middle East was the clearest example of his break with Bismarck's colonial tradition.<sup>25</sup>

The notion of *Weltpolitik* that emerged at the end of the nineteenth century – the idea that Germany should secure a colonial empire and achieve its 'place in the sun' – was in many ways embodied by the Berlin-Baghdad railway project. After 1898, the plan called for the establishment of a unified system of railways connecting Germany with the Middle East.<sup>26</sup> Not only was the railway important economically, but as W.O. Henderson argues, it symbolised Germany's far-reaching political and territorial ambitions in Asiatic Turkey.<sup>27</sup> When completed, the Berlin-Baghdad railway would have given German nationals a tight economic hold over the Ottoman Empire.<sup>28</sup> Expansion into the Middle East made sense for Germany at that time since as an industrialising nation, its needs were vast. Its colonial projects had resulted in very little, and as Edward Earle contends, this created an 'imperialist urgency.'<sup>29</sup> Bismarck's colonies were economically limited, and so the Middle East was seen as a natural area for expansion.<sup>30</sup>

There is evidence that by 1913-14, Germany, Austria, and Italy were in discussions about the best way to partition Asiatic Turkey, with Germany basing the share it claimed to be owed on the economic capital it had invested in the Turkey's railroads, mines, irrigation, ports, and other infrastructure projects.<sup>31</sup> A private letter written by a British statesman to British Foreign Affairs Undersecretary Arthur Nicolson reads:

If it comes to anything like a partition of a portion of Turkey's Asiatic possessions, Germany intends to have her share. And as [German Foreign Minister Jagow] also hinted that that is the only direction in which Germany can get her place in the sun, it is to be surmised not only that she would act quickly 'if anything like a partition or encroachment' showed signs of being on the tapis, but that she would welcome any signs of a partition rather than not. I have even heard that the question has already been discussed between Germany and Austria, and that they have settled what, *le cas échéant*, each would

take.<sup>32</sup>

The Baghdad railway project gave Germany a stake in both the Ottoman Empire's preservation and in its (possible) partition.<sup>33</sup> The von Sanders military mission that arrived in 1913 would entrench Germany as the 'glue' that was necessary to hold together what was perceived to be the crumbling 'sick man of Europe.' As Wangenheim noted before the mission, "Asiatic Turkey cannot maintain itself any longer by its own strength."<sup>34</sup> As the 'glue,' Germany could politically and economically dominate Turkey, and when the dissolution of the Ottoman Empire finally came, it would be able to claim its share along with the other major powers.<sup>35</sup>

On the eve of WWI then, Germany had created a situation whereby if Turkey fell apart, Germany would get its share, and if it did not, then Germany would dominate Turkey militarily and economically through its military missions.<sup>36</sup> Evelyn Barring, 1<sup>st</sup> Earl of Cromer and former consul-general in Egypt, made similar observations soon after war broke out, stating that

The fate of Turkey is sealed. If the Turks are vanquished, they will be swept back into Asia. If with the help of their allies they are the victors, they will become the vassals of the most egotistical Power in Europe, of which they have allowed themselves to be the subservient tools.<sup>37</sup>

McGarity argues that Germany's friendship for Turkey was grounded in a self-interest based on the potential for German strategic, political, and economic gain.<sup>38</sup> Morgenthau notes, "I see clearly enough now that Germany had made all her plans for world dominion and that the country to which I had been sent as American Ambassador was one of the foundation stones of the Kaiser's whole political and military structure."<sup>39</sup> After seeing German Ambassador von Wangenheim's discomfort at Turkey's ambitions in Egypt during the war, Morgenthau later declares that "Germany desired above all to obtain Mesopotamia as an indispensable part of her Hamburg-Bagdad [sic] scheme."<sup>40</sup>



In his 1927 article on the German military mission, Robert Kerner postulates that von Wangenheim had “a conception of [the mission’s] objectives which would have [...] the effect of transforming Turkey into a German protectorate somewhat after the manner of Egypt.”<sup>41</sup>

*The Ottoman Inferiority Complex and German Perceptions of Superiority*

Part of the explanation for why the Ottoman Empire was made compliant to Germany lies in a notion predominant amongst many top Ottoman rulers and officers of the time that Germany and the West were somehow superior – a superiority that was embodied by the military mission. Looking at the writings of some of the Ottoman leaders and officers of the time, there is a unique self-deprecation that emerges from their texts. Talaat Pasha, Ottoman Interior Minister at the start of the war and later Grand Vizier, is the most explicit. In his memoirs, he classifies Turkey as ‘uncivilised.’ Writing about Turkey’s attempt to avoid entering WWI, he discusses the fear that not being faithful to Germany might “[end] the confidence of the civilized world in our world.” He then proceeds to call Turkey a “small and weak nation” and again speaks of “[losing] the confidence of all the civilized world.”<sup>42</sup> Djemal Pasha, Minister of the Navy at the beginning of WWI, similarly derides Turkey in his memoirs, writing, “To compel Germany to enter into an alliance with us, based upon equality of rights [...] she must have been alarmed at the preparations being made by her opponents [...] Otherwise it was inconceivable that a rationally-minded state should take upon its shoulders such a burden as Turkey.”<sup>43</sup> The same theme emerges with more subtlety in the memoir of Jafar Pasha Al-Askari, an Ottoman officer who trained in Germany for a few years before WWI. He describes Berlin thus: “Coming from the East we were most impressed by the orderliness and scrupulous cleanliness of this large and multifarious metropolis,” implying that his homeland is comparably aesthetically inferior.<sup>44</sup>

Working in tandem with the Ottoman officials’ perceived

inferiority is a self-perception of German superiority held by many German leaders and officers at the time. Wangenheim spoke of Turkey in the lead-up to the military mission that “The mere calling in of reformers in advisory capacity would not suffice at all. It is a matter of the introduction of a real control of governmental functions by foreign officials and foreign military, whose orders will be more binding for subordinate positions and persons.”<sup>45</sup> From this statement, one can infer that Wangenheim believed the Ottomans to be inferior to the Germans, and their position should be entrenched as such. Talking about his arrival in Turkey at the start of the military mission, von Sanders says, “In those days the Turk disliked to be called on by the German officer to exert himself and used excuses in the attempt to prolong his musing existence.”<sup>46</sup> Despite his prior assertions that he thinks highly of many Ottoman officers and leaders, von Sanders, in this instance, is in effect calling the Turkish officers lazy and useless. To this end, it can be assumed that it was not until “vigorous action” on the part of the German missions that von Sanders was able to gain a respect for “the Turk.”<sup>47</sup> On some level then, he saw his mission as a civilising one.

The interplay of these two perceptions laid the foundation for German-Ottoman relations during WWI. The perceptions alone implied a vertical relationship, whereby Germany was clearly superior to Turkey. As German military and economic penetration grew stronger, the relationship became more tangible. The remainder of the paper is concerned with this more tangible aspect of German control over the Ottoman Empire, on the eve of, and throughout, WWI.

### *The Military Mission and the Subjugation of Turkey*

According to Kerner, the Liman von Sanders mission was considered by many in Europe to be the largest international crisis in the period between the Balkan Wars (1912-13) and the start of WWI.<sup>48</sup> British (who at that time had their Admiral Limpus commanding the Turkish Navy) and French (who had their General Bauman leading

the Turkish Gendarmie) concerns were evident but more muted.<sup>49</sup> Russia was especially worried by the prospect of Germany gaining influence in the Ottoman Empire. Russia's only southern access to the Mediterranean Sea was via the Ottoman-controlled Dardanelles (a narrow strait connecting the Aegean Sea to the Sea of Marmara) and it was justly concerned over the prospect of a German advisor increasing the defences of this strait, which would give Turkey the ability to effectively close it in the event of war. As was discussed in a British communiqué early in 1914,

If the German Government in their anxiety to guard against any possible loss of prestige, allow the question of General Sanders' retention of the command at Constantinople to remain in suspense much longer, the situation will become very critical. Rightly or wrongly the Russian Government believe that the German Government are endeavouring to acquire a veiled protectorate over Constantinople and that, though the Straits and the Bosphorus are outside General von Sanders' jurisdiction, he will be in a position to exercise an indirect control over them.<sup>50</sup>

As mentioned previously, German-Ottoman military relations had a long history. Shevket Pasha, Grand Vizier of the Ottoman Empire prior to his murder in 1913, told Marine Minister Djemal Pasha while considering the 1913 mission,

I don't think we must hesitate any longer to adopt the methods of the Germans. For more than thirty years we have had German instructors in our army, our Corps of Officers is trained entirely on German lines, and our army is absolutely familiar with the spirit of German training and military education. It is quite impossible to change all that now.<sup>51</sup>

Djemal adds, "A large number of our officers had completed their training in Germany, and the rest of them had been trained and educated according to German military methods."<sup>52</sup>

Of these officers, the most significant was Enver Pasha, who

became War Minister in 1914, soon after the mission arrived. Enver had served as military attaché in Berlin between 1909 and 1911, during which time he helped Ottoman officers training in Germany get accustomed to German manners and customs.<sup>53</sup> He was largely considered an admirer of the Germans and their military prowess.<sup>54</sup> Morgenthau describes him thusly:

For years his sympathies had been with the Kaiser. Germany, the German army and navy, the German language, and the German autocratic system exercised a fatal charm upon this youthful preacher of Turkish democracy [...] In his private conversation Enver made no secret of his admiration for Germany.<sup>55</sup>

Enver's fondness for Germany helped facilitate the German military's penetration of Turkey, and he was crucial in integrating the German officers into the Turkish General Staff and in the signing of the secret alliance between the Ottoman Empire and Germany prior to Turkey's entry into WWI.<sup>56</sup>

Indeed, as Djemal Pasha openly states in his memoirs, upon becoming War Minister, Enver "undertook a thorough reform of the different sections of the Ministry of War, and put German officers in charge of most of them."<sup>57</sup> In November 1914, as the Ottoman Empire entered the war, Al-Askari speaks of "arms, munitions, stores and money, as well as German soldiers and seamen, [beginning] to pour in to Constantinople from Germany."<sup>58</sup> Morgenthau, on a visit to the Dardanelles, writes that on one side of the strait, his "first impression was that I was in Germany. The officers were practically all Germans [...] Here German, not Turkish, was the language heard on every side."<sup>59</sup> Von der Goltz, who returned to Turkey after the arrival of the von Sanders mission, was able to "[arrange] an office for himself in the War Ministry and took part in the conferences of the Turkish General Staff."<sup>60</sup>

German officers were frequently given top posts in the Ottoman military establishment, and this was a trend which continued throughout the war.<sup>61</sup> Perhaps the greatest indication of this tendency

was von Sanders himself, who upon starting the mission, was given control of the First Officer Corps in Germany. After Russia protested over the fact that a German would have control of a division based in Constantinople, von Sanders was appointed Inspector General of the Turkish Army.<sup>62</sup> This appointment was, in fact, a promotion from his previous role, as it gave him “greater power than the one which he had held before.”<sup>63</sup> In von Sander’s own words,

After the beginning of the war the number of German officers originally provided had to be exceeded in some cases because of the necessity of promptly placing completely trained officers in the most important positions at the headquarters and in the special arms. But these extended limits were later still further exceeded through the use of too many German officers in the Turkish general staff, in the Turkish Army and in the zone of communications.<sup>64</sup>

The Entente powers understandably believed that there was some significance to Germany having such high appointments in the Turkish Army. In learning that von Sanders was going to become a member of the Superior Military Council, the British Ambassador in Constantinople, Sir Louis Mallet, wrote to Foreign Affairs Secretary Sir Edward Grey that the “French Ambassador thinks it of some importance, as it might enable him to suggest or initiate movements of troops and appointments of officers to suit German purposes, or, at least, to facilitate his doing so.”<sup>65</sup> In another communiqué, Lt.-Col Tyrrell wrote that “As a member he might suggest or initiate dispositions of Army Corps, movements of troops and appointments of officers in furtherance of German political ideas, whereas if he were not officially a member he would not have the *locus standi* to do so.”<sup>66</sup>

Ulrich Trumpener, in his 1968 study of Ottoman-German relations during WWI, posits that Germany never managed to convert the alliance between the two states into a ‘rider-horse’ relationship.<sup>67</sup> The evidence, however, casts doubt on this assessment. Several

events highlight the extent to which German control extended over the Ottoman Empire, including four in particular: 1) the transfer of the Goeben and Breslau, 2) the mobilisation of the Turkish Army, 3) Turkey's entry into WWI, and 4) the declaration of jihad against the allies. Each event will be discussed to highlight the extent to which Ottoman military activity during the war was under German, rather than Ottoman control.

The incident of the Goeben and the Breslau caused an international crisis in 1914. Occurring before the war, German officials managed to bring two of their most powerful warships, the Goeben and the Breslau, past the patrolling British Mediterranean fleet, through the Dardanelles, and into Ottoman waters. Because of Turkey's neutrality, it could not harbour German ships in its waters, so a 'sale' of the ships from Germany to Turkey was concocted. This was, as Morgenthau describes, largely a farce, for "a handful of Turkish sailors were placed on board at one time for appearance sake, but their German officers and German crews still retained active charge."<sup>68</sup>

Talaat Pasha discusses how "the German military mission was a source of real anxiety for [the Allies]. We had changed the names of the German warships and put them under Turkish rule and the Turkish flag: the Allies, however, naturally protested against the keeping of the German officers and the German crews on board."<sup>69</sup> Morgenthau describes the German officers and crews as "greatly [enjoying] this farcical pretence that the Goeben and the Breslau were Turkish ships."<sup>70</sup> These two ships became the de facto flagships of the Turkish fleet once the Ottoman Empire entered the war, but never actually ceased to be under German control. During the war, Lewis Einstein, a special agent in the American Embassy in Constantinople, observed in his diary that, "The Goeben is reported to have left for the Dardanelles. Various reasons are given, but the favourite one is that the Germans had been criticized for exposing Turkish ships and not their own," which implies that the ships were never actually under Turkish control.<sup>71</sup>

The German admiral that commanded these two ships, Admiral

Souchon, was also appointed Commander-in-Chief of the Ottoman Imperial Fleet, replacing the British advisor, Admiral Limpus.<sup>72</sup> Shortly after, “Wangenheim boasted to [Morgenthau] that, ‘We now control both the Turkish Army and the Navy.’”<sup>73</sup> Talaat supports this claim, writing that “The addition of the German naval mission to the German military organization, the increasing number of German officers and crews, and their ever-growing influence in Constantinople rendered the situation very critical.”<sup>74</sup>

The mobilisation of the Turkish Military prior to the country entering the war was another instance where the Turkish officers and leaders were clearly not in control. Turkey began to mobilise its army well before it officially entered the war, but as Morgenthau discusses,

German officers were almost as active as the Turks themselves in this mobilization. They enjoyed it all immensely [...] indeed they gave every sign that they were having the time of their lives. Bronssart, Humann, and Lafferts were constantly at Enver’s elbow, advising and directing the operations [...] The Germans made no attempt to conceal their conviction that they owned this town. Just as Wangenheim had established a little Wilhelmstrasse in his Embassy, so had the German military men established a sub-station of the Berlin General Staff.<sup>75</sup>

He also writes that “We learned afterward that the signal for this mobilization had not come originally from Enver or Talaat or the Turkish Cabinet, but from the German Staff in Berlin and its representatives in Constantinople.”<sup>76</sup> Morgenthau supports this assertion:

That the Germans directed this mobilization is not a matter of opinion but of proof. I need only mention that the Germans were requisitioning materials in their own name for their own uses. I have a photographic copy of such a requisition made by Humann, the German naval attaché, for a shipload of oil cake. This document is dated September 29, 1914. ‘The lot by the steamship Derindje which you mentioned in your letter of the 26<sup>th</sup>,’ this paper reads, ‘has been requisitioned by me for the German Government.’ This clearly shows

that, a month before Turkey had entered the war, Germany was really exercising the powers of sovereignty at Constantinople.<sup>77</sup>

Perhaps nothing is more revealing about the lack of Ottoman control over their own military affairs than the story of how they were finally pushed into war. The Turkish fleet, along with the Goeben and the Breslau who were flying the Turkish flag and under their new pseudonyms as the Yavuz and the Midilli, sailed out into the Black Sea. Commanded by German Admiral Souchon, the fleet engaged the Russians and ended up shelling Russian coastal installations, causing destruction and loss of life. Done without the knowledge of the Ottoman Cabinet, the actions resulted in Russia declaring war on the Ottoman Empire on 4 November 1914, and France and England following suit the next day.<sup>78</sup> It is well-documented that this action was undertaken without the consent of the Ottoman military or political leaders.

Morgenthau writes that when Djemal, the Minister of Marine who should have been the only one able to order such an attack was informed, he was “much excited. ‘I knew nothing about it,’ he replied.”<sup>79</sup> Talking later to Talaat, Morgenthau writes that he “told me that he had known nothing of this attack and that the whole responsibility rested with the German, Admiral Souchon.”<sup>80</sup> Talaat, in his own memoirs writes that “this incident had not taken place with the knowledge of the Porte [...] I learned, as everybody did, of this regretful incident just after it happened, and that no one of the Cabinet members gave his consent to this sudden attack on the Russian fleet.”<sup>81</sup> Furthermore, Djemal writes in his memoirs that, “We never dreamed of a general European war, and less still that Germany would declare war on Russia on our behalf.”<sup>78</sup> That the Ottoman Empire was dragged into WWI by the Germans is obvious; what is less well-known is that by the end of 1914, no one among the Ottoman leadership had definitive control over their own military or role in the war.

While this lack of control is a development that is clearly evident, Trumpener and other historians assert that Enver had central control over all the Ottoman armed forces.<sup>82</sup> Similarly, historian



Edward Erickson claims that von Sanders did not have much high-level decision-making power.<sup>83</sup> Yet von Sanders repeatedly writes in his memoir that when Enver would give orders that von Sanders did not like, he would simply ignore the order, write a complaint back to the War Ministry or to the High Command in Germany, or ask to be relieved of duty, and Enver would rescind the order. For example, when Enver issued a directive in January 1915 that Ottoman troops were to obey his orders and his orders only, after much complaining von Sanders saw to it that “Enver’s order was not carried out.”<sup>84</sup> When Enver, in January 1916, wanted to change the marching orders of certain divisions, von Sanders “requested [his own] discharge from the Turkish Army,” after which Enver “withdrew his order by telegraph.”<sup>85</sup> In March 1916, Enver issued an order that he would have sole command over which German officers were allowed to serve in the Turkish Army; von Sanders again complained to the Chief of the Military Cabinet. When Enver refused to back down, von Sanders put in a request for his recall to Germany, and was soon brought “a letter from Enver in which he formally apologized and requested an interview. [...] The result of the long conversation was that in any change of position of a German officer the military mission would be consulted as heretofore.”<sup>86</sup> This process of Enver’s orders being rescinded or overruled by von Sanders or other German officers continued throughout the war.<sup>87</sup>

This lack of Turkish control was also seen from the British perspective. Ambassador Mallet wrote to Secretary Grey several times in 1914 that Ottoman military affairs were largely out of Turkish hands. In one letter, he notes that “ninety German soldiers passed through Sophia yesterday on their way to Constantinople. I have protested strongly, but the Grand Vizier is unable to control the situation, which is dominated by the German Ambassador and generals.”<sup>88</sup> In another communiqué, he writes that the “Grand Vizier stated that neither he nor the Minister of Marine knew anything about the reported arrival of German sailors. They had not been asked for by the Turkish government.”<sup>89</sup> This is a pattern that continues to emerge

in other communiqués as well.

A final episode worth discussing took place once Turkey entered the war. The Sultan, in his declaration of war, framed the war in religious terms, painting the Entente as “the enemies who have undermined our religion and our holy fatherland.”<sup>90</sup> This was followed up by a fatwa issued by Essad Effendi, the Sheikh ul-Islam, calling on all Muslims to fulfill their religious duty and engage in the “Holy War.”<sup>91</sup> The great irony in this declaration is that, in von Sanders own words, “Turkey was allied with Christian states and German and Austrian officers and men were serving in the Turkish army.”<sup>92</sup> Nonetheless, many believe that after the start of the war, Chief of the General Staff Helmuth von Moltke, nephew of the same von Moltke who had visited the Ottoman Empire in the 1830s and 1840s, wanted Enver to push forward this jihad in order to weaken the enemy, by mobilising their Muslim populations against them.<sup>93</sup>

Morgenthau discusses how one day Wangenheim explained to him “Germany’s scheme to arouse the whole fanatical Moslem world against the Christians.”<sup>94</sup> He also discusses another, secret document issued with a distinctly German flavour, which detailed a plan “for the assassination and extermination of all Christians – except those of German nationality.”<sup>95</sup> Furthermore, he notes that Wangenheim’s chief idea in discussing the matter with Morgenthau “seemed to be that a ‘holy war’ of this sort would be the quickest means of forcing England to make peace.” In much the same way that, one-hundred years prior, Napoleon tried to portray the French Army in Egypt as liberators and allies, proclaiming to the Egyptians in Arabic that “the French are also faithful Muslims [...] the French at all times have declared themselves to be the most sincere friends of the Ottoman Sultan and the enemy of his enemies,”<sup>96</sup> the Germans spoke to the Ottoman population in Arabic through the Office of the Sultan, painting themselves as friends of the Ottomans and the defenders of Islam. Because German and Austrian troops were serving alongside Muslims, rendering the jihad illogical, and despite the support of the Porte and Sheikh ul-Islam, the “jihad made in Germany” naturally had little effect, according to

Schwanitz, as most Muslims ignored it.<sup>97</sup>

### *Conclusion*

In September 1914, Ambassador Mallet wrote to Secretary Grey that in Constantinople, “there is growing discontent among influential people, who are now beginning to realize that they are in German hands.”<sup>98</sup> By 1917, Turkish Commander Mustafa Kemal, later known as Atatürk – the founder and first President of modern Turkey – wrote in a letter to Enver,

Though it is necessary to escape from the predicament in which we find ourselves in company with Germany, I am opposed to their policy of taking advantage of our misfortune and the prolongation of the war to turn us into a German colony and exploit all our resources [...] If a German commander is in a position to order Turks to die by thousands, it is obvious that the interests of the State are not being watched.<sup>99</sup>

This lament clearly illustrates that it was apparent to many prominent Ottomans that the subjugation of Turkey had reached an unbearable stage.

Germany’s encroachment into the domestic and foreign policies of the Ottoman Empire did not begin with the 1913 military mission. Rather, the military mission was a culmination of decades of German interference in Ottoman affairs. It was during this period on the eve of, and during WWI, that Germany was finally able to exert far-reaching control over the Ottoman Empire, and Turkey found itself subordinated to Germany. This is not to say that Ottoman leaders and officers had no control over the country’s affairs. However, Germany seemed to have definitive control over what Turkey could and could not do militarily, and in other respects as well. A close reading of the available sources written by those present at the time, be they German, Turkish, or third-party observers, illustrates that in many respects, Germany had effectively subjugated Turkey by the middle of WWI.

As German colonial designs and their notion of superiority melded with the Ottomans' self-perceived inferiority, the foundation was laid for broad-based German influence over the Ottoman Empire. With close economic integration, an Officer Corps largely trained in Germany, and a Minister of War who firmly believed in German military superiority, the German officials who arrived to reform Turkey's military in 1913 were able to exert increasing control as time passed, until the country's military affairs were eventually out of Ottoman hands entirely. As evident by the Goeben and the Breslau, the mobilisation of the Turkish Army, the actions that plunged the country into war, the 'jihad made in Germany,' and the role of German officers more generally, it is clear that Germany's relationship with the Ottoman Empire through the nineteenth and into the twentieth century was inherently imperialistic. In many ways, Turkey had been subjugated.

## Notes

1. Woodrow Wilson, "The German Plot," The American Presidency Project (June 1917).
2. The contemporaries of the Ottoman Empire often called it the Turkish Empire, or simply Turkey. Because those names appear time and time again in the writings cited in this paper, Turkey and the Turkish Empire, when used, should be taken to mean the same thing as what we call the Ottoman Empire. When this paper refers to the Republic of Turkey, or Modern Turkey, it will be made explicit.
3. Edward J. Erickson, *Ordered to Die: A History of the Ottoman Army in the First World War* (Westport, 2001), 233.
4. Although the family of Talaat Pasha only released a small portion of his memoirs following his death, there are at least two English translations of the same excerpt (see Talaat Pasha, "From his Memoirs in 1921," in *Source Records of the Great War*, ed. C.F. Horne and W.F. Austin, vol. 2 (USA, 1923), 395-398; Talaat Pasha, "Posthumous Memoirs of Talaat Pasha," trans. M. Zekeria, *Current History* 15 (1922): 287-295). Both differ remarkably in their translation and are both worth reading. The "Posthumous Memoirs," however, seems to have had fewer liberties taken with paraphrasing, and covers a slightly larger portion of Talaat Pasha's memoirs.
5. James Madison McGarity, "Foreign Influence," (PhD. diss, The

- American University, 1968), 18.
6. Mehmet Hafiz Pasha, "Mehmet Hafiz Pasha to the Seraskier, 30 July 1839," in Moltke's Life, trans. Mary Herms (London, 1982), 130. Von Moltke was known as Baron Bey by some in Turkey. A Seraskier was a general or commander in the Turkish Empire.
  7. McGarity, "Foreign Influence," 18.
  8. Ibid., 35.
  9. Ibid., 35-37.
  10. Wolfgang G. Schwanitz, "German Middle-Eastern Policy, 1880-1918," in *Germany and the Middle East 1987-1945*, ed. W.G. Schwanitz (Princeton, 2004), 3.
  11. W.O. Henderson, *Studies in German Colonial History* (Chicago, 1962), 77.
  12. McGarity, "Foreign Influence," 41.
  13. Harry N. Howard, *The Partition of Turkey: A Diplomatic History, 1913-1923* (Norman, 1931), 48.
  14. Mary Evelyn Townsend, *The Rise and Fall of Germany's Colonial Empire, 1884-1918* (New York, 1966), 210-211.
  15. Henderson, *German Colonial History*, 81.
  16. Ibid., 74.
  17. H.D. Beaumont, "H.D. Beaumont to Sir Edward Grey, 4 December 1914," in *British Documents on Foreign Affairs: Reports and Papers from the Foreign Office Confidential Print*, ed. D. Gillard, part 1, series B, vol. 20 (Bethesda, 1985), 424.
  18. Henry Morgenthau, *Ambassador Morgenthau's Story* (New York, 1919), 101.
  19. Ibid., 63.
  20. Liman von Sanders, *Five Years in Turkey*, trans. Carl Reichmann (1920; repr. Annapolis: The United States Naval Institute, 1927), 233.
  21. Government of India, "Government of India India to the Marquess of Crewe, 18 September 1913," in *British Documents on Foreign Affairs: Reports and Papers from the Foreign Office Confidential Print*, ed. D. Gillard, Part 1, series B, vol. 18 (Bethesda, 1985), 476.
  22. Henderson, *German Colonial History*, 75; McGarity, "Foreign Influence," 18.
  23. Valentine Chirol, "Turkey in the Grip of Germany," *The Quarterly Review* 223, no. 442 (1915), 233.
  24. "German Middle-Eastern Policy," 6.
  25. *Germany's Colonial Empire*, 209.
  26. Ibid., 213-216.
  27. *German Colonial History*, 74.
  28. Howard, 39.
  29. Edward Meade Earle, *Turkey, the Great Powers, and the Bagdad Railway* (1923; repr. New York: Russell&Russell, 1966), 49.
  30. Henderson, *German Colonial History*, 74.
  31. Howard, 52.
  32. Sir E. Goschen, "Sir E. Goschen to Sir A. Nicolson, 17 April 1913,"

- in *British Documents on the Origins of the War, 1898-1914*, ed. G.P. Gooch and H. Temperley, vol. 10, part 1 (London, 1936), 425 (italics added).
33. Howard, 48.
  34. Baron von Wangenheim, "Baron von Wangenheim to Chancellor von Bethmann-Hollweg, 26 April 1913," in *Die Grosse der Europäischen Kabinette, 1871-1914*, vol. 38, (Berlin, 1926), quoted in Kerner, 15.
  35. Howard, 47.
  36. *Ibid.*, 60.
  37. Earl of Cromer, "The Suicide of the Turk," in *Political and Literary Essays* (London, 1916), 68. Article originally published in *Spectator*, Oct. 23, 1915.
  38. "Foreign Influence," 35.
  39. Ambassador Morgenthau's Story, 4.
  40. *Ibid.*, 178.
  41. Robert J. Kerner, "The Mission of Liman von Sanders I: Its Origin," *Slavonic Review* 6, no. 16 (1927), 26.
  42. "Posthumous Memoirs," 289, 291, 293.
  43. Djemal Pasha, *Memories of a Turkish Statesman—1913 to 1919* (New York, 1922), 114.
  44. Jafar Pasha Al-Askari, *A Soldier's Story: From Ottoman Rule to Independent Iraq*, ed. W. Facey and N.F. Safwat, trans. M. T. Al-Askari (London, 2003), 29.
  45. "Wangenheim to Bethmann-Hollweg," 16 (Italics added).
  46. *Five Years in Turkey*, 11.
  47. *Ibid.*
  48. "Liman von Sanders I," 12.
  49. McGarity, "Foreign Influence," 76.
  50. Sir G. Buchanan, "Sir G. Buchanan to Sir Edward Grey, 7 January 1914," in *British Documents on the Origins of the War, 1898-1914*, ed. G.P. Gooch and H. Temperley, vol. 10, part 1 (London, 1936), 412.
  51. Djemal, *Memories*, 67.
  52. *Ibid.*, 102.
  53. Al-Askari, *A Soldier's Story*, 28-29.
  54. McGarity, "Foreign Influence," 72.
  55. Ambassador Morgenthau's Story, 32.
  56. McGarity, "Foreign Influence," 80.
  57. *Memories*, 83.
  58. *A Soldier's Story*, 51.
  59. Ambassador Morgenthau's Story, 210.
  60. Sanders, *Five Years in Turkey*, 49.
  61. See for example, *Ibid.* 174.
  62. *Ibid.* 7.
  63. Morgenthau, *Ambassador Morgenthau's Story*, 42.
  64. *Five Years in Turkey*, 20.
  65. Sir Louis Mallet, "Sir Louis Mallet to Sir Edward Grey, 3 December

- 1913,” in *British Documents on the Origins of the War, 1898-1914*, ed. G.P. Gooch and H. Temperley, vol. 10, part 1 (London, 1936), 354.
66. Lieutenant-Colonel Tyrrell, “Lieutenant-Colonel Tyrrell to Sir Louis Mallet, 4 December 1913,” in *British Documents on the Origins of the War, 1898-1914*, ed. G.P. Gooch and H. Temperley, vol. 10, part 1 (London, 1936), 357.
67. Ulrich Trumpener, *Germany and the Ottoman Empire 1914-1918* (Princeton, 1968), 21.
68. *Ambassador Morgenthau’s Story*, 78.
69. “Posthumous Memoirs,” 291.
70. *Ibid.*, 79.
71. Lewis Einstein, *Inside Constantinople: A Diplomats Diary During the Dardanelles Expedition* (London, 1917), 240.
72. Djemal, *Memories*, 121-122.
73. Morgenthau, *Ambassador Morgenthau’s Story*, 102.
74. “Posthumous Memoirs,” 242.
75. *Ambassador Morgenthau’s Story*, 63-64.
76. *Ibid.*, 62.
77. *Ibid.*, 67.
78. See, for example: McGarity, “Foreign Influence,” 96; Trumpener, *Germany and the Ottoman Empire*, 55; Erickson, *Ordered to Die*, 35.
79. *Ambassador Morgenthau’s Story*, 125.
80. *Ibid.*
81. “Posthumous Memoirs,” 292
82. *Memories*, 99.
83. *Germany and the Ottoman Empire*, 69.
84. *Ordered to Die*, 29.
85. *Five Years in Turkey*, 43.
86. *Ibid.*, 102.
87. *Ibid.*, 115.
88. See *Ibid.*, 149, 171, 209.
89. Sir Louis Mallet, “Sir Louis Mallet to Sir Edward Grey, 26 August 1914,” in *Diplomatic Documents Relating to the Outbreak of the European War*, ed. J.B. Scott, part 2 (New York, 1916), 1076.
90. Sir Louis Mallet, “Sir Louis Mallet to Sir Edward Grey, 27 August 1914,” in *Diplomatic Documents Relating to the Outbreak of the European War*, ed. J.B. Scott, part 2 (New York, 1916), 1079.
91. Sultan Mehmed, “Proclamation,” in *Source Records of the Great War*, ed. C.F. Horne and W.F. Austin, vol. 2 (USA, 1923), 398.
92. Essad Effendi, “Fetva,” in *Source Records of the Great War*, ed. C.F. Horne and W.F. Austin, vol. 2 (USA, 1923), 401.
93. *Five Years in Turkey*, 35.
94. Schwanitz, “German Middle-Eastern Policy,” 7.
95. *Ambassador Morgenthau’s Story*, 161.
96. *Ibid.*, 163.
97. ‘Abd al-Rahman al-Jabarti al-Misri, *Napoleon in Egypt*, trans.

- Shmuel Moreh (Princeton, 1993), 26.
98. "German Middle-Eastern Policy," 9.
99. Sir Louis Mallet, "Sir Louis Mallet to Sir Edward Grey, 6 September 1914," in *Diplomatic Documents Relating to the Outbreak of the European War*, ed. J.B. Scott, part 2 (New York, 1916), 1086.
100. Mustapha Kemal, "Mustapha Kemal to Enver Pasha, 30 September 1917," in *History of the Great War: The Campaign in Mesopotamia, 1914-1918*, compiled by F.J. Moberly, vol. 4 (London, 1927), 350.

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## Ce N'est Que Début: The Québec Student Movement

By Frederick Burrill

*Examining the history of the Quebec student movement between 1968 and 1978, it is clear that present-day student activists are inheritors of a legacy rife with inconsistency. At the crux of transnational and local radicalisms, students struggled to bridge the gap between anglophones and francophones, CEGEPs and universities, and revolution and reform. This paper shows how, when united around the principles of student syndicalism, students were able to both fundamentally transform Quebec's post-secondary education system and to make linkages with other social movements. At other times, political and ideological divisions rendered them ineffective, sowing seeds of discord still being felt today.*

Students around the world have generally been “unruly subjects” of oppressive social structures and the states that enforce them,<sup>1</sup> and their uprisings occupy a prominent place in the collective memory of the Left. In Canada, nowhere has this been more the case than in Quebec, where the student milieu has proved to be fertile ground for international political currents and local socio-political transformations of the post-World War II period. This paper has grown out of my own implication in Quebec student organizations, with all of the historical and contemporary contradictions that come with being a McGill-based radical activist.<sup>2</sup> As a simultaneous “insider” and “outsider,” it is hard to avoid being impressed by the militancy and effectiveness of the movement—as recently as 2005, a general student strike shut down schools across the province, preventing \$103 million worth of bursaries from being converted into loans. It is also easy to see, however, the cracks in this façade: internal disagreements have paralyzed students in the face of the

recent defreeze of tuition fees, and questions about the ability of organizations to survive in the current neoliberal moment.

The present endeavour is to try to contextualize the current impasse within a historical understanding of the roots and influences of student organization in Quebec, framed within the heady years between 1968 and 1978. Focusing on several main events—the first wide-spread student strike and the McGill Français demonstration during the 1968-69 school year, the Common Front labour mobilizations of 1972, and to a lesser extent the student strikes of 1974 and 1978—some key questions and themes will emerge. Where should the Quebec student movement be located in relation to international currents of the 1960s and 1970s? How did these international influences link up with nationalist concerns?<sup>3</sup> What were the internal divisions of the movement? What role was played by linguistic questions? What were the successes and failures of students in linking their struggles to broader issues within Quebec society? In essence, the aim of this paper is to come to some concrete understanding of the attempts of an important sector of the Quebec body politic to “reason otherwise” about the social role of education and its place within hierarchical structures of power and privilege.<sup>4</sup>

The nature of the period in question is full of contradictions, as it was a time of great success and deeply disappointing failure, of turbulent change but also paradoxical stagnation. There is no easy way into these ten years, jam-packed as they are with activism and agitation, and so perhaps it is best to begin with a very brief and simplified outline of the events chosen for analysis. In the autumn of 1968, students in fifteen of the twenty-three newly minted CEGEPs (Collège d’enseignement général et professionnel)—along with several university faculties—embarked on a militant strike, focused on the creation of a second francophone university in Montreal, financial accessibility, and issues of pedagogical and institutional democratization.<sup>5</sup> In the winter semester of that year, students, labour groups, and nationalists banded together for the largest demonstration in Quebec history at that time: to the consternation

of the city's elite (anglophone and francophone), around 15 000 marchers converged on McGill University on the night of 28 March 1969, demanding the popularization and francisation of the elitist anglophone institution.<sup>6</sup>

The 1970s in Quebec were also years of turbulence and contestation, shaped heavily by massive labour mobilization. Workers from the Conseil des Syndicats Nationaux (CSN), the Fédération des travailleurs et travailleuses du Québec (FTQ), and the Corporation des enseignants du Québec (CEQ) banded together in January 1972 to form a Common Front, engaging in a powerful general strike in the spring of that year against Robert Bourassa's Liberal government.<sup>7</sup> Despite growing links between the labour and student movements in the years leading up to the Common Front, students were in disarray in the early 1970s and were unable to organize themselves in solidarity with the workers. It was not until 1974—when students across Quebec struck against unjust university entrance exams and in support of better loans and bursaries system—that organizational efforts began to pick up again, laying the groundwork for the 1975 creation of the Association nationale des étudiants du Québec (ANEQ). In 1978, students again went on strike over loans and bursaries, an action eventually leading to a rift between the radical and moderate streams within the movement.<sup>8</sup>

Care must be taken, however, to avoid conflating the rise of Quebec student mobilization with the rebellion of the Baby Boom generation, as a closer look places 1960s and 1970s students within a long-developing trend of youth radicalism in the province. Paul Axelrod, in his study of the nascent English Canadian student movement in the 1930s, points to McGill students organizing in small socialist groupings around issues like free-speech and conscription, influenced by left-leaning professors and the ideas of Communism, the Canadian Commonwealth Federation, and the Student Christian Movement. While Axelrod largely dismisses Catholic francophone youth as conservative and fascistic in orientation,<sup>9</sup> some recent and important works looking at 20<sup>th</sup> century

shifts within the Quebec Church suggest otherwise. Neo-revisionist<sup>10</sup> scholars such as E.-Martin Meunier and Jean-Philippe Warren—and Michael Gauvreau in the anglophone historiography—have argued for a reconsideration of the role of the church in the modernization of Quebec society, highlighting the importance of Catholic philosophies of personalism and underlining the centrality of socially-oriented Catholic Action movements imported from Europe.<sup>11</sup> In her important book, Louise Bienvenue focuses this analysis by looking at the construction of “youth identity” within the Catholic Action movement between 1930 and 1950, finding within left-leaning organizations like Jeunesse Étudiante Catholique and Jeunesse Ouvrière Catholique the roots of a militant youth voice interested in both international and local questions.<sup>12</sup>

Similarly, Nicole Neatby has challenged the dominant conception of students in the 1950s as conservative, inward-looking “carabins,” examining the thought of leaders in the Association générale des étudiants à l’Université de Montréal (AGEUM) and in the Université de Montréal’s student newspaper Quartier Latin to reveal a much more complex picture of a period of ideological development and radicalization revolving around questions of international affairs, social issues within Quebec society, and university reform.<sup>13</sup> Karine Hébert, in a comparative study of the McGill and Université de Montréal milieux during the reconstruction years following World War II, found that students were looking to articulate some sense of their distinct nature and their role in the changes taking place throughout the world. At McGill, anglophone students by American discourses adopted a “generational” rhetoric, emphasizing their importance as a cohort of future citizens. By contrast, in the francophone, Catholic environment of Montreal’s other major postsecondary institution, developments in ideological and rhetorical orientation were conducted within the cultural aura of France: activists began to take up the ideas of “student syndicalism” emerging out the Union Nationale des Étudiants Français (UNEF) in the late 1940s, centred around the conception of the student as



a “young intellectual worker.” Despite these divergences, a new consciousness was sufficiently developed across linguistic divides by the end of the 1950s for students from Quebec City, Sherbrooke, and Montreal (including McGill, Sir George Williams University and Bishop’s University) to take part in a one-day strike against Premier Maurice Duplessis’ refusal to accept federal transfer payments for education.<sup>14</sup>

“Syndicalism” became the driving ideological force behind Quebec student politics in the 1960s, and merits a brief explanation: in France, following the devastation of World War II, students who had participated in the resistance to the Nazis pushed the UNEF away from the corporatist policies that had left it largely complicit in the face of occupation. The 1946 annual Congress, held in Grenoble, put forth a new charter defining the “rights and duties” of the young intellectual worker, “In which the world of labor and youth is establishing the bases of an economic and social revolution for the benefit of mankind”.<sup>15</sup> These ideas, which transcended earlier moderate orientations to link student struggles in a militant fashion to the ongoing social battles surrounding them, began gaining currency in Quebec toward the end of the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. At the Université de Montréal, Quartier Latin republished—and commented favourably on—the Grenoble charter,<sup>16</sup> and started to become what right-wing opponents would come to see as a “vulgar pamphlet of propaganda”<sup>17</sup> for progressive ideas. Mainly bourgeois student leaders<sup>18</sup> within the AGEUM also took up the cause, adopting in 1961 the Grenoble-based “charte de l’ étudiant universitaire.”<sup>19</sup> March 1963 saw the AGEUM host representatives from the Associations générales des étudiants of the Université de Laval and the Université de Sherbrooke (AGEL and AGEUS) for an information session on student syndicalism, laying the foundations for the launch of the Union générale des étudiants du Québec (UGEQ) in November of 1964.<sup>20</sup> This Union would come to be an important voice for free tuition and the democratization of education, among other issues.<sup>21</sup>

UGEQ, however, was as much a product of Quebec-based turbulence as it was of ideologies born elsewhere. The role of students in the early years of the “Quiet Revolution” (commonly demarcated as the spate of modernizing reforms following the 1960 victory of Jean Lesage’s neo-nationalist Liberals over the old Union Nationale party) was clearly intertwined with the trajectory of the society as a whole. Initially, there was much congruence between student interests and the neo-nationalist government’s commitment to opening and modernizing the education system (the Liberals, in fact, had promised to institute free education at all levels), as the movement expanded under increased state investment and a new social emphasis on youth: in the early months of 1964, the government created the first Ministry of Education,<sup>22</sup> and student associations organized a thousands-strong demonstration in support of the Liberals in their negotiations with the federal government.<sup>23</sup> In addition, between 1964 and 1966 every Quebec francophone association withdrew from the Canada-wide, corporatist “Canadian Union of Students.”<sup>24</sup> Throughout the 1960s, the UGEQ walked a fine line between the universal and the particular as they were also mobilizing heavily in solidarity with Vietnamese and African-American resistance movements while simultaneously taking an active part in transnational-national student bodies like the International Student Conference (ISC) and the International Union of Students (IUS).<sup>25</sup> As Jean Lamarre has written, “À la fois indépendantiste, socialiste, utopiste et missionnaire, l’UGEQ a voulu internationaliser la question nationale afin de sensibiliser et orienter l’action étudiante vers l’objectif ultime, soit l’unité des étudiants et l’indépendance du Québec.”<sup>26</sup>

All this to say that in the fall of 1968, the student world in Quebec was seething with the combined force of international and national agitation. It is difficult to paint an accurate picture of the time, because, as Mark Boren as somewhat cynically pointed out, “no year is more mythologized or brings more sighs of melancholic yearning to aging activists”.<sup>27</sup> Despite this, 1968 represents an

extraordinary outpouring of anger from a “New Left” with different concerns and critiques than the old, labour-oriented progressives, a generation (in the West, at least) both rejecting and fuelled by the privilege of post-war economic prosperity.<sup>28</sup> In Northern Ireland, Germany, Italy, and Eastern Europe, throughout Africa and the Middle East, in Pakistan, Japan, the United States, and in the blood-red streets of Mexico,<sup>29</sup> students collectively—and often violently—demanded a different society.<sup>30</sup> Perhaps most importantly for Quebec, though, were the mass uprisings in May and June 1968 in France, where students and workers together shut down the country in a series of strikes, demonstrations, and occupations.<sup>31</sup> Quebec youth were certainly paying attention, organizing a demonstration outside the French consulate in Montreal,<sup>32</sup> and, in August of 1968, hosting a speaker from the French *Jeunes Communistes révolutionnaires* and a “*semaine syndicale*” centred on the new ideas of “student power” coming from France and the U.S.<sup>33</sup> The events of “May ‘68” have taken on many important “afterlives” in the memory of Left movements the world over,<sup>34</sup> but even only one year after the uprising the effects were clear enough for contemporary observers to note that “On peut même affirmer que le climat du Québec depuis plusieurs mois, et particulièrement depuis les événements de mai en France [emphasis added], attendait cet éclatement et le craignait [referring to the strike of 1968]”<sup>35</sup>

Local issues were also making themselves felt. As the new Union Nationale government<sup>36</sup> drifted away from the original openness of the neo-national project, the cooperation between students and the state broke down:<sup>37</sup> over 1500 students demonstrated for accessible education in January 1968, and at their annual Congress in February the UGEQ elected a radical new executive—by September of that year, they had declared an end to any form of “collaborationism” in their tactics.<sup>38</sup> In CEGEPs—the new professional colleges hastily created beginning in 1967—students chafed under the out-dated, haphazard pedagogical approach of administrators, and worried about the lack of space available for

graduates in both the job market and in post-secondary institutions. Many students were involved in the violent clash with police at that summer's Saint Jean-Baptiste celebrations. Entering the fall semester, as Montreal's chief of police voiced his fears that "the blood will run in the streets" if students were to rebel, it seemed as if conflict was imminent.<sup>39</sup>

It was. At 5 PM, 8 October 1968, 848 students at CEGEP Lionel-Groulx (located in the Montreal suburb of Sainte-Thérèse) held a General Assembly and voted by a large majority to occupy the school and expel the administrators, "pour forcer le gouvernement du Québec à leur donner une information claire et précise" on the creation of a second francophone university<sup>40</sup> and to reconsider its position on the inadequate loans and bursaries system, with the additional goal of reorganizing the internal hierarchy of the CEGEP.<sup>41</sup> The strike<sup>42</sup> quickly spread: within a week, fifteen of the twenty-three CEGEPs in the province were shut down. Accompanied at various points throughout by the École des Beaux Arts, the Montreal Institut de Technologie, the faculties of Philosophy, Political Science, Geography and Anthropology at the Université de Montréal, and Social Sciences and Education at Laval, the CEGEP conflict lasted into early December. On October 21, two weeks after Lionel-Groulx's General Assembly took the initiative, the UGEQ organized a 10 000-plus demonstration in the streets of Montreal in support of the strikers' demands, by and large seen as the apex of the conflict (as most students subsequently returned to classes). In a few cases, however, notably at Beaux Arts and in CEGEPs Lionel-Groulx, Maisonneuve, Edouard Mont-Petit (all four being in the Montreal area), Chicoutimi, and Jonquière, activists held out until the bitter end: forced by an administrative strategy of lock-outs to return to classes in early November, actions and occupations flared up again in the face of expulsions, limitations on student activity, police repression, and forced school closures which did not wind down until the end of term.<sup>43</sup>

This first general strike of the Quebec student movement is

important for several reasons. Firstly, it is an excellent indicator of the degree to which student organization at that historical moment was a mixture of the international and the local. Even a supportive observer like Adèle Lauzon, writing in the radical journal *Our Generation*, noted (without necessarily condemning) the divergence between the majority of students—who saw the strike as a temporary pressure tactic to deal with immediate and concrete issues facing Quebec society—and the minority—who conceived of occupations as permanent and part of a global revolutionary process.<sup>44</sup> At schools like Lionel Groulx, which held out the longest, CEGEP official Léon Debien noted that those most involved in the conflict were mainly classically-educated students of Philosophy and Rhetoric already in their 20s, who had garnered experience and know-how through long and active participation in journalism, syndicalism, and Catholic Action.<sup>45</sup> There is no doubt, though, that for students of any stripe who participated in the collective organization of the occupation, “...pour les uns une naissance et pour les autres (ceux qui contestent depuis longtemps) une renaissance.”—in the words of the school newspaper *Le Thérésien*—it was certainly a revolutionary experience.<sup>46</sup> International influence could be seen in the presence of the “anarcho-gauchistes, inspirés par Che Guevara, Trotsky et Cohn-Bendit [a popular student anarchist from the French uprising],”<sup>47</sup> but its marriage with less global concerns created for the first time in Quebec, according to *Our Generation*’s francophone counterpart *Noir et Rouge*, “La synthèse de ces deux tendances jusqu’ici exclusives: l’action collective et la revendication révolutionnaire.”<sup>48</sup>

Secondly, the 1968 strike is informative as to the emerging fault lines within the movement. The participation of university associations—up to that point the main driving force behind student agitation—was on a much smaller scale than their CEGEP counterparts, and support given was often more vocal than tangible. Law “Journées d’études” on CEGEP demands were held at McGill and Sir George Williams (as well as Loyola College),<sup>49</sup> and in the Universités de Montréal, Sherbrooke, Laval, and Ottawa:<sup>50</sup> in the

first two anglophone settings, a demonstration and “sleep-in” were organized, respectively; at the Université de Montréal, associations were divided both in terms of ideology and action plans;<sup>51</sup> at Laval, administrative offices were briefly disturbed, notably without the sanction of the AGEL.<sup>52</sup> Rumblings could be heard about CEGEP associations forming an independent body apart from UGEQ,<sup>52</sup> as questions of representivity and ideology began to arise that would eventually spell the doom of the Union.

Another interesting aspect of the issues in the fall of 1968 was their ability to garner support across cultural divisions. The Students’ Council at McGill, helmed by a progressive executive and coaxed by campus radicals the previous year into joining UGEQ,<sup>53</sup> on October 18 led approximately 1000 McGill and CEGEP students (although it should be noted that the latter far outweighed the former) eastward on a solidarity march from the downtown campus to the CEGEP du Vieux-Montréal. McGill Daily editors told the student body on the day of the larger, UGEQ-organized march on 21 October 1968, which began from McGill’s Roddick Gates, that “Today could be a turning point in the history of education in Quebec: today all segments of the student body have united behind one issue.”<sup>54</sup> They were quite right—while students did not present a perfectly united front during these weeks, Pierre Bélanger has argued that it was a showing of force that could not be ignored by the powers-that-be (and an exciting new orientation toward direct democracy and action within the movement). In December 1968 the Union Nationale government adopted Bill 88, leading to the creation of the new Université du Québec. A freeze on tuition fees was instituted, and improvements made to the loans and bursaries system.<sup>55</sup>

The Montreal campus of the new university (Université du Québec à Montréal—UQAM), however, did not open until September 1969, and in the winter semester following the general strike the crisis in the education system was still quite pressing. Labour, nationalist and student interests joined forces, organizing a much-maligned<sup>56</sup> yet nonetheless massive demonstration labeled

“Operation McGill Français” on the evening of 29 March 1969, putting forth a seven-point program for the popularization—linguistic and economic—of the prestigious university.<sup>57</sup> For the 10 000 CEGEP graduates who feared the possibility of having no place to go in the fall, McGill was an attractive target: a symbol of Montreal’s anglophone elite, McGill monopolized provincial education funding, required higher academic standards for CEGEP students than their anglophone counterparts, and had the highest tuition in Quebec. The new McLennan library was a particularly odious example of the institution’s attitude—although \$3 million of taxpayers’ money had gone into its construction, it was closed to the public.<sup>58</sup> The political climate of Quebec at that time was affected by what Jean-Philippe Warren has designated as the “idéologie parti-priste”, after the radical journal that wrote about Quebec as a politically and economically subservient colony.<sup>59</sup> Across the province, but especially in Montreal, activists of all orientations were touched and connected by decolonization theories emanating from the Global South, and the student movement was no exception: only the month before, when black students (and allies) at Sir George Williams University staged a costly occupation of the University’s computer centre to protest against institutional racism, UGEQ supported them against reactionary popular opinion (unfortunately losing the SGWU student association in the process).<sup>60</sup>

As a consequence, the tendency has been to lump the student movement in with the nationalist tide when thinking about the 1960s.<sup>61</sup> While participation in Operation McGill Français did indeed represent one of the first major signs of the rise of radical nationalism within student organizations,<sup>62</sup> attention needs to be given to what the demonstration also has to tell us about developing rifts within the movement itself. At the Congress of UGEQ earlier in the month, activists from the socialist-indépendantiste organization Mouvement Syndical Politique (MSP) challenged the vision and structure of the organization, calling for a move away from reliance on the AGE (associations générales des étudiants) and a shift toward militant

political action carried out by smaller groups of radicalized students. The Congress ended in a political stalemate,<sup>63</sup> but, as *Noir et Rouge* editor Pierre Bédard would write soon after, "...la manifestation McGill devint-elle très vite, dans l'esprit de nombreux étudiants, la manifestation M.S.P." MSP activists, in tandem with a group of hardline and experienced vanguardist student leaders, moved into an apartment near McGill and set about organizing as the "état-major d'un hypothétique mouvement révolutionnaire de masse."<sup>64</sup>

Although UGEQ supported the demonstration both symbolically and financially, McGill Français was a marker of the changes brewing. Since the CEGEP strike, UGEQ had been in crisis: the syndicalism of the Union was a product of the Quiet Revolution era, wrote two former executives after the agitation of autumn 1968, and had fallen into the role of "guard-dog" over the educational reforms of the State.<sup>65</sup> UGEQ had become too bureaucratic, many felt, and CEGEP students talked about forming a more flexible group under the name of "Le Mouvement."<sup>66</sup> Student participation in the organization of McGill Français, indicatively, was facilitated more through the decentralized framework of the "Comités d'Action" at respective CEGEPs and universities than through an overarching body. Under the weight of these contradictions, ideological differences, and financial woes (especially because of the death of AGEUM and AGEL, dismantled by their own leaders over these same questions of representation and the "spontaneity of the masses"), the UGEQ would be dead within the year.<sup>67</sup>

On the question of linkages with other social movements and across linguistic divides, the McGill Français march was a bundle of contradictions. On the one hand, it is difficult to see how the degree of cooperation between students, workers and sovereigntists could be labelled as anything other than revolutionary. Respectable nationalist organizations like the Société Saint Jean Baptiste and René Levesque's Parti Québécois quickly condemned the action,<sup>68</sup> and the lines were quite clearly drawn: "As it turned out," wrote Daily reporter Mark Wilson in the aftermath of the demonstration,



“the true division of forces was not on lines of language or race; there were English and French on both sides. It was a division between oppressors and oppressed. One side has people, the other has money and guns.”<sup>69</sup> In addition to a plethora of socialist-indépendantiste groups including the Comité Indépendance-Socialisme (CIS) and the Front de libération populaire (FLP),<sup>70</sup> the three public faces of the movement were Raymond Lemieux, head of the Mouvement pour l’intégration scolaire (MIS), Michel Chartrand, from the Montreal Council of the CSN, and Stanley Gray, an anglophone Political Science instructor from within McGill itself.<sup>71</sup> The dominant presence of this latter figure, a leader within the McGill-based Radical Students Alliance, was seen in some quarters as an encouraging show of solidarity from the anglophone student population—as one organizer put it some decades later, “le fait qu’à l’intérieur [of McGill]...un mouvement de révolte était en train de s’amplifier constituait une garantie de succès de l’opération.”<sup>72</sup>

Anglophone participation this time around, however, did not come close to the unity showed in the fall of that school year. While there is no doubt that Gray and the group of students organizing around him were using the language of radical decolonization theory—in an editorial entitled “McGill and the Rape of Quebec,”<sup>73</sup> Gray wrote about Quebec as “a society in revolt against more than 200 years of economic exploitation and national oppression”<sup>74</sup>—there is certainly room to question their general support on campus. McGill throughout the 1960s was a hotbed of activism around “student power”-themed issues like university governance, freedom of the press, and accessibility of education,<sup>75</sup> but most students were not ready to follow these ideas through to more radical conclusions which would require them to challenge their own privilege: “Radicals who applauded the revolution in Vietnam and Cuba,” wrote Gray decades later, “would not support the mushrooming revolution in their own backyard.”<sup>76</sup> Gray was fired by McGill for his role in disruptions of the University Senate and Board of Governors, heralding a new age in which administrative repression grew and

generalized activism on campus decreased.<sup>77</sup>

Despite significant organizational continuity in the mass demonstrations against Bill 63, (the Union Nationale's insufficient attempt at legislative protection for the French language),<sup>78</sup> currents were shifting as social movements entered the 1970s. Around the world, the activists of the 1960s were regrouping and reorienting themselves following the violent clashes of 1968 and 1969.<sup>79</sup> In Quebec, the grip of a mass-based, anticolonialist discourse was loosening its hold on militants, and being replaced by a multitude of smaller groups influenced by Lenin, Trotsky, and Mao. Others turned toward the social democratic Parti Québécois, while still others began gaining a new consciousness of the contradictions in Quebec sovereigntists' shoddy treatment of aboriginal populations.<sup>80</sup> A flourishing of feminist activism coming out of organizations like the Front de Libération des Femmes began to break down the often macho and male-dominated culture of 1960s radicalism.<sup>81</sup> The Trudeau government's imposition of the War Measures Act during the October Crisis of 1970, and the consequent mass imprisonment and repression of political dissidents, marked the end of an era.<sup>82</sup>

The student milieu once again was not immune from these changes. Frustrated by their perceived defeat in the CEGEP strike and the massive nationalist demonstrations in the dying minutes of the 1960s, students turned away from the New Left or the Marxist humanism of Parti Pris and toward the growing influence of "scientific" Marxist and Maoist thought, organizing in small "groupuscules."<sup>83</sup> In his recent work on Marxist-Leninism in 1970s Quebec, Jean-Philippe Warren points to a young woman named Sylvie whose experience, he says, mirrors that of thousands of her comrades:

...Sylvie a participé aux activités de la Jeunesse étudiante catholique (JEC), aux luttes tiers-mondistes contre la guerre du Vietnam, à l'occupation étudiante de 1968, aux grèves syndicales, puis aux manifestations nationalistes monstres

contre le “bill 63”  
en octobre 1969, avant d’abandonner ses  
études et de se tourner, à l’été 1970, vers  
le FRAP.<sup>84</sup>

The “FRAP” (Front d’action politique) was a radical municipal political organization in Montreal that grew out of local community action groups of the 1960s, coordinated through smaller comités d’action politique (CAP). While the FRAP would wither under government repression during the October crisis, its constituent parts grew in militancy and importance, with many taking on a Marxist-Leninist analysis. “CAP étudiants” formed throughout CEGEPs and universities, reflecting a myriad of approaches and ideological standpoints, ranging from an emphasis on the importance of mass political action, to the anarchist-inspired movement at the Université de Montréal, to the hardline Marxist-Leninism of the Mouvement révolutionnaire des étudiants du Québec (MREQ), which focused exclusively on mobilizing students to support workers’ struggles. Student syndicalism also still held some weight: January 1972 saw the foundation of the Front des étudiants du Québec (FEQ), which attempted to recreate the province-wide organizational basis of the UGEQ.<sup>85</sup>

The most dynamic social force in the early years of the 1970s was not students, fractured as they were, but workers. The provincial economy was in a state of crisis, caught in a downward spiral of massive inflation and unemployment.<sup>86</sup> Quebec’s labour organizations, riding the vestiges of decolonization discourses and deep discontent over local exploitations, became increasingly radicalized. The explosion of working class political action was certainly rooted in the struggles and ideological shifts of the 1960s, but reached a new level at the turn of the decade: in October 1971, Montreal newspaper *La Presse* locked out its employees, sparking unprecedented labour mobilization and police repression (including the death of Michèle Gauthier, a student from CEGEP du Vieux Montréal). Class consciousness and unity grew quickly—

negotiations for a Common Front between the CSN, the FTQ, and the CEQ had already begun, but October 1971 was the last straw. In a time when these labour bodies were publishing radical analyses with titles like, “The State is Our Exploiter,”<sup>87</sup> the banding together of workers across the province created one of the most revolutionary labour movements in North America. The Common Front declared a general strike in April 1972, but union executives were forced by the Liberal government’s back-to-work legislation to call it off. In May, however, when the three main union leaders—Marcel Pepin (CSN), Louis Laberge (FTQ), and Yvon Charbonneau (CEQ)—were sentenced to a year in prison for encouraging strikers to disobey court injunctions, the anger of the workers was unstoppable. For over a week, whole towns and cities were shut down, as working class women and men walked off the job in plant after plant. Media outlets and a myriad of other institutions (both public and private) were reappropriated by the workers.<sup>88</sup>

This moment in Quebec’s history was at once exhilarating and disappointing. Though the May strike held all the potential for the solidarity that characterized its French antecedent—students were also heavily affected by the inflation and rampant unemployment of the period, coming to be known as “sacrificed youth”<sup>89</sup>—a united effort between “young intellectual workers” and actual workers was never produced. In his book on university reactions to the October crisis, Eric Bédard has suggested that in an atmosphere dominated by the idea of “spontaneity” and without a national association, it was difficult for francophone students to organize themselves into the insurrectionary threat authorities felt them to be.<sup>90</sup> We can see a similar narrative, in terms of an inability to organize on a general level, being played out in the spring of 1972.

Student-worker solidarity was a central tenant of UGEQ activities throughout much of the 1960s: co-organizing (along with the local labour union) a 1966 demonstration to support striking labourers at “le Grenade” shoe factory, boycotting Coca-Cola in support of its employees, participating in another 1967 rally

in solidarity with striking “Seven Up” workers, and involving themselves in the struggles of the radical *Mouvement de Libération des Travailleurs de Taxi* (MLT) in 1968 and 1969, there was a strong sense of common cause between student unions and workers’ unions during these years.<sup>91</sup> This continued, albeit in a less coordinated fashion, into the 1970s: at CEGEP Edouard Montpetit, for instance, mass mobilization grew around the defense of a unfairly-dismissed professor in March 1971, and over the course of the 1971-1972 school year at UQAM and the *Université de Montréal*, students organized around professorial and support staff strikes (in the latter institution, anthropology students also struck around local educational issues in the Spring of ’72). Students also took part in the mobilization centred on *La Presse* in the fall of 1971, sparking the desire for a united front that led to the creation of the FEQ.<sup>92</sup> This sentiment, unfortunately, went more or less unfulfilled: following the first Common Front strike in April 1972, the Bourassa government sought to divide students and their militant teachers by stipulating that eighty-two days of classes must be held in order for the semester to be valid, forcing instructional hours missed during the walkout to be made up and endangering the ability of students to find summer employment.<sup>93</sup> In the furor around this issue, and in the following year’s fight against the authoritarian *Nouveau régime pédagogique* (NRP) designed for CEGEPs, the FEQ proved unable to bridge the ideological and organizational gaps between different trends in the movement, and died.<sup>94</sup>

Despite the charged atmosphere following the *La Presses* strike, when 10 000 workers and students came together in the Montreal Forum to hear Laberge talk about the “sacred union” between their constituent groups,<sup>95</sup> or isolated incidents such as the uprising in Sept-Îles, where CEGEP students walked out of classes to take over the town alongside striking workers,<sup>96</sup> no strong national student organization existed in May 1972 to elevate the Common Front general strike to the next level. “[L]e mouvement étudiant a été incapable de s’organiser afin d’intervenir massivement dans l’arène

politique du côté de la class ouvrière,” read a contemporary study, “et ce fait là est extrêmement significatif parce qu’il démontre le ridicule des thèses de ceux qui justifient l’absence de l’organisation des étudiants et prônent plutôt l’entrisme dans les organisations petites-bourgeoises et ouvrières.”<sup>97</sup> By the time students began picking up the pieces again in the winter semester of 1973, with a five-week strike affecting UQAM, U. de M., and the Université de Sherbrooke, the radical publication *Mobilisation* would note that this represented hope for a noticeably lacking force in recent years, “celui de force d’appui significative aux luttes ouvrières et populaires.”<sup>98</sup>

Here I want to move, finally, to a brief discussion of the student strikes of 1974 and 1978, as a useful way to tie off some of the major loose ends raised in the previous discussion, and as a somewhat more direct link to the problems faced by the movement today. As mentioned, momentum had started to pick up again during the 1973-1974 school year, particularly with the formation of organizations politiques de masse (a new effort to group progressive students together in common struggle) during local strikes at UQAM and U. de M., and the general trend across the province toward the reformation of associations générales des étudiants. In the fall semester of 1974, students at five different CEGEPS (Rosemont, Joliette, St-Hyacinthe, St-Jean-sur-Richelieu and Rouyn-Noranda) began boycotting classes in protest against the “test d’aptitude aux études universitaires” (TAEU), a mandatory university entrance exam phased in during the early 1970s that was seen as both discriminatory (anglophone students were exempt, reflecting the continuing lack of space in francophone universities) and ideologically driven. The TAEU was withdrawn, but the real significance of this movement was its role in galvanizing cooperation and coordination across the province. Soon after, conflict broke out over government changes to the loans and bursaries system, which made it more difficult to access financial aid and extended wait times for those who qualified (causing many students to abandon their studies for lack of finances). By November 29, over 100 000

students from all levels were on strike, forcing the government to negotiate. In the organizational process that followed, and in the light of the concessions the Ministry of Education was forced to make, it was clear that students were stronger together. Despite all the contradictions and challenges of UGEQ in the 1960s, on 22 March 1975, twenty-four CEGEP associations and five university associations came together to form the Association Nationale des étudiants du Québec (ANEQ), with over 75 000 people (anglophone and francophone) united around the ideals of student syndicalism.<sup>99</sup>

Fragmentation was still a persistent threat. In 1976 university associations formed the Rassemblement des Associations Etudiantes Universitaires (RAEU), a working group within ANEQ designed to allow them to organize separately from the “*élan cégépien*.” The Association was also torn by conflict between members of the Communist Party of Canada (Marxist-leninist), their Trotskyist adversaries, and those who struggled to keep ANEQ from the grasping hands of both. René Lévesque’s Parti Québécois (PQ) became the provincial government in 1976, but for all their social democratic rhetoric followed the growing emphasis among Western states on budget cuts and restricted social spending: on 7 November 1978, students at CEGEP de Rimouski began a general unlimited strike, demanding—among other things—the elimination of all financial barriers to education, and a serious reform of the loans and bursaries system.<sup>100</sup> ANEQ, conscious of the deep crisis in the education system and in the economic system as a whole, called for all associations to participate—by the end of the month, counting twenty-nine CEGEPs and several faculties from UQAM and U. de M., over 100 000 students had been involved in the strike. In early December, 8000 students demonstrated in front of the National Assembly. In all, in over a month of general strike, the PQ was forced to make some substantial reinvestments in the financial aid system, notably reducing student debt through a reduction of loans and an increase in bursaries.<sup>101</sup>

Unfortunately, however, this last strike was to have deep

ramifications for the unity of the movement. The RAEU, which had already begun to show distinct reformist tendencies before the mobilizations of November and December 1978 (especially in producing leaders with ties to the PQ), began to threaten disassociation from ANEQ in the winter of 1979.<sup>102</sup> In 1981, faced with an increasing connection between the RAEU and the PQ, the Association générale étudiante de l'UQAM (AGEUQAM) left the group of university associations. It was replaced by the new Fédération des associations étudiantes du campus de l'Université de Montréal (FAECUM)—built around an ideology best summed up as “syndicalo-réformisme”<sup>103</sup>—and the RAEU declared itself an independent association.<sup>104</sup> This was the beginning of a resurgence of the corporatist ideals from which student syndicalism had broken in the first place: writing in 1983, RAEU general secretary Jean Baillargeon rejected the importance of militant mobilization, calling for a greater cooperation with the state and referring to all that had come before as “la maladie infantile du mouvement étudiant.”<sup>105</sup> A similar effort soon followed in CEGEPs, with the 1982 creation of the Fédération des associations étudiantes collégiales du Québec (FAECQ).<sup>106</sup> From this point onward, the student movement would be divided between the more radical syndicalist tradition and the moderate “federations.” RAEU, FAECQ, and their successors in the Fédérations étudiantes universitaire et collégiale (FEUQ and FECQ) would come to favour lobbying strategies and a more bureaucratic structure, and as such were accepted as “legitimate” representatives by the government. By contrast, ANEEQ (reflecting the growing place of feminism within the movement, in May 1980 ANEQ voted to feminize its name—adding “étudiantes” to the acronym)<sup>107</sup> and its offspring in the Mouvement pour le droit à l'éducation (MDE, born in 1995 after the death of ANEEQ) and the Association pour une solidarité syndicale étudiante (ASSE, started in 2001), persisted in relying on direct action and democratic internal organization.<sup>108</sup>

One should be careful to avoid painting too dark a picture. Driven by the syndicalist tradition, students in Quebec went on



strike in 1986, 1988, 1990, 1996, and 2005. In an age dominated by free trade agreements and neoliberal cut-backs, “young intellectual workers” in Quebec—especially when they worked together—have done remarkably well in fighting the disintegration of the post-war consensus, including the aforementioned fight over bursaries in 2005 and, up until 2007, the maintenance of a freeze on tuition fees.<sup>109</sup> In English Canada, by contrast, where student syndicalism had only brief purchase during the radical years of the 1960s, efforts at mass organizing have been much less successful at weathering the storm.<sup>110</sup> Today, the most radical body grouping English Canadian students is the Canadian Federation of Students (CFS), an organization lately much criticized for its bureaucratic culture and its failure to actively mobilize its members.<sup>111</sup> These differences are felt deeply in places like Nova Scotia, which has the highest tuition in the country.<sup>112</sup>

In focusing on Quebec students between 1968 and 1978, a bigger picture starts to emerge of the ebb and flow of a movement born from struggles both international and local. Bedeviled by differences in age, language, and ideology, students fought to maintain a balance between their organic roots in Quebec social upheavals, their desire to articulate a more universal critique of unequal power relations, and the intensely dialectical mission of maintaining a system and transforming it at the same time. At the heart of their battles were the principles of student syndicalism, which insisted on seeing education as a common good and the collective effort to achieve it as part of a broader project of liberation; the revolutionary potential of the movement—particularly with regard to banding together with other social actors—corresponded to the degree of unity in this vision. There are rich lessons for contemporary activists here. Wracked as we currently are by divisions between anglophones and francophones, radicals and moderates, universities and CEGEPs, we would be well served in recalling that, although this moment might seem an especially discouraging one, our problems are not new. In penetrating the

mythology of the 1960s and 1970s, we see instead that we are the inheritors of a legacy rife with inconsistencies: the story of the movement is not one of progressive gains, betrayed by our failure to adequately deal with the machinations of administrators and the repression of the state, but rather one of victories and setbacks, of a struggle constantly renewed, of an ongoing conflict to resolve our own contradictions, and through them the broader contradictions of our society.<sup>113</sup> We would do well to remember a popular chant of the period, and one that can still be heard today — “Ce n’est que dé-but. Con-tin-uons le com-bat!”<sup>114</sup>

### Notes

1. Mark Edelman Boren, *Student Resistance: a history of the unruly subject* (NY: Routledge, 2001), 1-7.
2. Participation in the student movement from this particular subject-position means a constant struggle to bridge class, cultural, and linguistic divides, while combating the political apathy of an academically and financially elitist institution.
3. These types of questions are being asked with increasing frequency in recent years. See Ivan Carel, “Les années 1960: émergence d’une perspective internationaliste,” *Bulletin d’histoire politique* 16, no. 2 (hiver 2008): 133-135.
4. On “reasoning otherwise,” see Ian McKay, *Rebels, Reds, Radicals: Rethinking Canada’s Left History* (Toronto: Between the Lines, 2005), 3-4. I should take this opportunity to admit to ulterior motives: another — perhaps more personally driving — goal stems from my basic feeling of the lack of knowledge among anglophone activists of the roots of the movement in which they are trying to participate. Without a sense of the long legacy of student struggle in Quebec, and thus the vital necessity of being part of it, it is too easy to forgo the hard work of building connections across the many divisions which separate us from our counterparts in francophone settings. As such, as this work is designed in large part simply to inform people about the basic events, it is more heavily narrative than I would like.
5. Benoît Lacoursière, *Le Mouvement Étudiant au Québec, de 1983 à 2006* (Montréal: Sabotart Édition, 2007), 19.
6. For a good overview see *Cahiers du PEQ* no. 20, McGill Français (janvier 2001). The number of demonstrators varies with the account. Here, I rely on the number (on the higher end) given by a recent and important intervention into Quebec radicalism in the 1960s. See Sean Mills, “The Empire Within: Montreal, the Sixties,

- and the Forging of a Radical Imagination” (PhD diss., Queen’s University, 2007), 276.
7. Jacques Rouillard, *Histoire du Syndicalisme au Québec: Des origines à nos jours* (Montréal: Les Éditions du Boréal, 1989), 379-383; Nick Auf der Maur, Malcolm Reid, and Ralph Surette, “Spring 1972: The Strike as Political Weapon,” in *Quebec : A Chronicle, 1968-1972*, eds. Nick Auf der Maur and Robert Chodos, 109-142 (Toronto : James Lewis and Samuel, Publishers, 1972).
  8. Lacoursière, *Le Mouvement Étudiant au Québec*, 20-23.
  9. Paul Axelrod, “The Student Movement of the 1930s,” in *Youth, University and Canadian Society: Essays in the Social History of Higher Education*, eds. Paul Axelrod and John G. Reid, 21-46 (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1989). For an undergraduate work on the McGill context in the 1930s see Tara Newell, “Discipline, Censorship and Dominant Ideology: The Case for McGill University Students in the 1930s” (paper written for History 101-364A, McGill University, December 6, 1996).
  10. This is a bit of an awkward moniker, but I use it to distinguish these authors from those scholars who, despite their insistence that Quebec’s modernity dates back to the 19th-century, still see the church as “the repository of an unchanging ‘tradition’”. See Michael Gauvreau, *The Catholic Origins of Quebec’s Quiet Revolution, 1931-1970* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2005), 5-6, 363n7.
  11. See E.-Martin Meunier and Jean-Philippe Warren, *Sortir de la « Grande noirceur »: L’horizon « personnaliste » de la Révolution tranquille* (Sillery, QC: Les Éditions du Septentrion, 2002); Gauvreau, *Catholic Origins*.
  12. Louise Bienvenue, *Quand la jeunesse entre en scène: L’action catholique avant la Révolution tranquille* (Montréal: Les Éditions du Boréal, 2003). On the local scene, for example, the JEC were at the forefront of the campaign to lower the voting age to 18 at the beginning of the 1960s, a move which significantly empowered student organizing. See Lysiane Gagnon, “Bref historique du mouvement étudiant au Québec (1958-1971),” *Bulletin d’histoire politique* 16, no. 2 (hiver 2008): 19. For an example of the growing scholarship on the Church’s role in fostering international connections with Quebec society, especially as related to students, see Maurice Demers, “Student Exchanges Between Mexico and Quebec at the Twilight of the Second World War” (paper presented at the 27th International Congress of the Latin American Studies Association, Montreal, September 6, 2007); Quebecers, through the auspices of Catholic Action, contributed heavily to the eventual growth of Liberation Theology in Latin America. See Ana Maria Bidegain de Urán, “La organización de movimientos de juventud de Acción Católica en América Latina: Los casos de los obreros y universitarios en Brazil y en Colombia entre 1930-1955” (PhD diss., Université Catholique de Louvain, Faculté de Philosophie

- et Lettres, 1979), cited in Catherine LeGrand, "L'axe missionnaire catholique entre le Québec et l'Amérique Latine. Une exploration préliminaire," *Globe* (forthcoming).
13. See Nicole Neatby, *Carabins ou activistes ? L'idéalisme et la radicalisation de la pensée étudiante à l'Université de Montréal au temps du duplessisme* (Montréal et Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1999).
  14. Karine Hébert, "Between the Future and the Present: Montreal University Student Youth and the Post-War Years, 1945-1960," in *Cultures of Citizenship in Post-war Canada, 1940-1955*, eds. Michael Gauvreau and Nancy Christie, 163-200 (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2003. A fuller articulation of this argument exists elsewhere. See Karine Hébert, "La construction d'une identité étudiante montréalaise (1895-1960)" (PhD diss., Université du Québec à Montréal, 2002); see also her brand new book: Karine Hébert, *Impatient d'être soi-même. Les étudiants montréalais, 1895-1960* (Québec: Presses de l'Université du Québec, 2008).
  15. A. Belden Fields, *Student Politics in France: A Study of the Union Nationale des Etudiants de France* (NY: Basic Books, Inc., 1970), 24-27.
  16. Gagnon, "Bref historique," 15. This is only one example of the importance of the student press in this early period of radicalization. See Pierre Bélanger, *Le mouvement étudiant québécois: son passé, ses revendications et ses luttes (1960-1983)* (Montréal: L'Association nationale des étudiants et étudiantes du Québec, 1984), 8-9.
  17. *Le Quartier Latin*, November 2, 1965, 3, cited in George Z.F. Bereday, "Comparative Perspectives on Students and Politics. Student Unrest on Four Continents: Montreal, Ibadan, Warsaw and Rangoon," *Comparative Education Review* 10, no.2 (June 1966): 189.
  18. The President of the AGEUM in this period was Bernard Landry, who, in addition to his later fame as Quebec Premier, would upon graduation go on to work for the Union Nationale government as a professional strike breaker during the student uprising of 1968. Gilles Duceppe, current leader of the federal Bloc Québécois party, was also a student union executive toward the end of the 1960s.
  19. Bélanger, *Le mouvement étudiant québécois*, 7-8. For an exposition of the radicalization of student discourse and the gradual divergence between administrative doctrines and student positions at Québec City's Université de Laval, see Richard Simoneau, "Les étudiants, les dirigeants et l'université : Doctrines étudiantes et doctrines universitaires," *Recherches Sociographiques* 13, no. 3 (1972): 343-363.
  20. Bélanger, *Le mouvement étudiant québécois*, 8-10. Gagnon, "Bref historique," 20-21. Also created during the spring of 1963 was the Fédération des associations générales des étudiants des collèges

classiques du Québec (FAGECCQ), a big player in these early years before CEGEPs which also joined UGEQ in 1964.

21. Bernard Dionne, François Lalonde and Alain Quirion, *Le mouvement étudiant, l'appareil scolaire et les luttes de classes au Québec, Tome II* (Montréal : Presses Solidaires, 1974), 6.6. Contemporary activists will be interested to note that free education was never an entirely un-contentious demand, and caused much debate within UGEQ.
22. This was done on the recommendation of the "Royal Commission of Inquiry on Education in the Province of Québec" (better known as the "Parent Commission," after its chair Alphonse Marie-Parent, who also called for the creation of the CEGEP system).
23. Gagnon, "Bref historique," 16-17; their support for the government earned students a seat on several state committees in the early part of the 1960s. Paul R. Bélanger and Louis Maheu, "Pratique politique étudiante au Québec," *Recherches Sociographiques* 13, no. 3 (1972) : 310-312, 328; Bélanger, *Le mouvement étudiant québécois*, 6, 10-11 ; Simoneau, "Les étudiants, les dirigeants et l'université," 343.
24. Doug Owram, *Born at the Right Time: A History of the Baby Boom in Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1996), 234.
25. See Bélanger, *Le mouvement étudiant québécois*, 28-29; a delegation of students came from Vietnam in the fall of 1967, hosted by the UGEQ in the build-up to their solidarity march in November of that year. Gilles Bourque, "UGEQ," *Parti Pris* 5, nos. 2-3 (octobre-novembre 1967): 51-52. See also Jean Lamarre, "'Au service des étudiants et de la nation': L'internationalisation de l'Union générale des étudiants du Québec (1964-1969)", *Bulletin d'histoire politique* 16, no. 2 (hiver 2008): 53-73. UGEQ's dual participation in the ISC and the IUS is surprising, as the former was funded by the CIA and the latter was associated with the Soviet bloc. For more on these organizations see Philip G. Altbach, "The International Student Movement," *Journal of Contemporary History* 5, no. 1, *Generations in Conflict* (1970): 156-174. For an account of the Cold War's effects on the Canadian student movement, see Nigel Roy Moses, "Canadian Student Movements on the Cold War Battlefield, 1944-1954," *Social History/Histoire Sociale* 39, no. 78 (November 2006): 363-403.
26. Lamarre, "'Au service des étudiants et de la nation'," 67.
27. Boren, *Student Resistance*, 149.
28. *Ibid.*, 142. Cyril Levitt, *Children of Privilege. Student Revolt in the Sixties: A Study of Student Movements in Canada, the United States, and West Germany* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1984), 4-9; Owram, *Born at the Right Time*, 216-247. For a contemporary analysis of New Left ideas in the Quebec context, see Adèle Lauzon, "The New Left in Québec," *Our Generation* 7, no.1 (1970): 14-31.
29. Paco Ignacio Taibo has written a beautiful literary remembrance

- of the 1968 uprisings in Mexico, particularly with regard to the international atmosphere of the time: “The madness that stalked us at life’s every turn was a global madness. It had to do with our reading matter, with our heroes, myths, and refusals, with cinema, with theater, with love... We lived in thrall to the magic of the Cuban revolution and the Vietnamese resistance.” See Paco Ignacio Taibo II, ’68 (Toronto: Seven Stories Press, 2004), 16.
30. Boren, *Student Resistance*, 149-183.
  31. *Ibid.*, 149-154. It should be noted that other international events also captured the imagination of Québec students during that period: in response to the invasion of Czechoslovakia, UGEQ organized a 2000-strong march to the Soviet Embassy in Montreal. Bélanger, *Le mouvement étudiant québécois*, 28. This can be balanced against the comments of Gilles Dostaler, a student at McGill at the time but also involved in the labour and sovereigntist movements, thus a well-placed commentator on the social mood of the period: “Le mai 1968 français, qui nous avait d’ailleurs inspirés et stimulés, est sans doute l’événement le plus emblématique [of those years].” Gilles Dostaler, “Souvenirs de l’opération McGill,” *Cahier PÉQ* no. 20, McGill Français (janvier 2001): 12.
  32. Gagnon, “Bref historique,” 30.
  33. Bélanger, *Le mouvement étudiant québécois*, 35-37.
  34. See Kristin Ross, *May’68 and Its Afterlives* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002).
  35. Pierre Bédard et Claude Charron, “Les étudiants québécois — la contestation permanente,” *Noir et Rouge* 1, no. 2, édition spéciale (octobre 1969): 35, cited in Bélanger, *Le mouvement étudiant québécois*, 36.
  36. Under leader Daniel Johnson, Sr., they had defeated Lesage’s Liberals in the 1966 provincial election.
  37. Simoneau, “Les étudiants, les dirigeants et l’université,” 343-4.
  38. This third Congress also saw a new orientation toward pedagogical issues and a critique of the social role of the “bourgeois university,” originating with students in Social Sciences and Philosophy at the Université de Montréal who staged a short strike and occupations around these issues in February and March 1968.
  39. Bélanger, *Le mouvement étudiant québécois*, 30-39.
  40. This was a demand first voiced by UGEQ in 1967. *Ibid.*, 14.
  41. “De la Consternation à la Contestation,” *Le Thérésien*, October 16, 1968, 3.
  42. Although the label “strike” is applied in all the secondary literature, this is in some senses a bit of a reification. In 1968 students at Lionel-Groulx were still operating under the assumption that “la grève, c’est pour les travailleurs... L’occupation du college correspond alors dans l’esprit des gens à une sorte [emphasis added] de grève.” Michel Métayer and Gilles (?) Saraxin, “L’Occupation,” *Le Thérésien*, December 16, 1968, 2.
  43. Alvin Croll, “11 CEGEPs Occupied, Strike Spreads to U de M,”

- McGill Daily*, October 17, 1968, 3. Bélanger, *Le mouvement étudiant québécois*, 40-46; Gagnon, "Bref historique," 37-42
44. Adèle Lauzon, "The C.E.G.E.P. General Strike in Québec," *Our Generation* 6, no. 4 (1969): 156-157.
  45. Léon Debien, "Esquisse d'une genèse de la contestation étudiante d'octobre 1968," *Bulletin d'histoire politique* 16, no. 2 (hiver 2008): 75-95.
  46. Métayer and Saraxin, "L'Occupation," *Le Thérésien*, December 16, 2.
  47. Michel Métayer and Gilles (?) Saraxin, "Qu'est-ce que l'occupation? Qui sont les contestataires?" *Le Thérésien*, December 16, page 1.
  48. Editoriaux, "La révolte des étudiants," *Noir et Rouge* 1, no. 3 (hiver 1969): 4.
  49. Gagnon, "Bref historique," 38-39.
  50. Loyola students had voted to strike, but faced with the refusal of the Administration to recognize their democratic decision instead held "study sessions." Pego Brennan, "March to CEGEP Vieux-Montreal leaves roddick gates at 1 PM: McGill Backs CEGEPs," *McGill Daily*, October 18, 1968, 1.
  51. Francophone students from the University of Ottawa split from the larger student association and joined UGEQ in 1965. "Ottawa French Form Own Group," *The Ubyssy*, October 26, 1965, 2.
  52. Francine Benoit, "Mouvement Universitaire: On Occupe! On N'Occupe Pas! On Occupe! On N'Occupe Pas!" *Le Thérésien*, October 25, 2.
  53. Bélanger, *Le mouvement étudiant québécois*, 41; Érik Breton, "Service ou mouvement? Le dilemme de la confederation des étudiants et étudiantes de l'Université de Laval (CADEUL)," *Recherches Sociographiques* 38, no. 1 (1997): 122.
  54. Gagnon, "Bref historique," 39.
  55. Stanley Frost, *McGill University: For the Advancement of Learning, Vol. II 1895-1971* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1984): 443-459; see also Stanley Gray, "The Troubles at McGill," in *Student Power and the Canadian Campus*, eds. Tim Reid and Julyan Reid, 48-56 (Toronto: Peter Martin Associates Limited, 1969).
  56. Brennan, "March to CEGEP Vieux-Montreal," 1; "Something in Common," *McGill Daily*, October 21, 1968, 4.
  57. Bélanger, *Le mouvement étudiant québécois*, 45-46; Lacoursière, *Le Mouvement Étudiant au Québec*, 20.
  58. One future CBC personality and then-Daily editor referred to corporate media coverage as nothing short of "press terrorism." Mark Starowicz, "Terrorism in the Press, an analysis of the press coverage of Operation McGill," *McGill Daily*, April 2, 1969, 6-7.
  59. For a comprehensive list of demands see Jean-Philippe Warren, "L'Opération McGill français: Une page méconnue de l'histoire de la gauche nationaliste," *Bulletin d'histoire politique* 16, no. 2 (hiver

- 2008): 106-107.
60. Stanley Gray, "McGill Français, 30 years later, a perspective," *Cahier PÉQ* no. 20, McGill Français (janvier 2001): 7.
  61. Warren, "L'Opération McGill Français," 97.
  62. See Mills, "The Empire Within," 191-198. Losing the SGWU student union was a grave financial blow to the UGEQ. Bélanger, *Le mouvement étudiant québécois*, 46-47. See also Dennis Forsythe, ed., *Let the Niggers Burn : The Sir George Williams University Affair and its Caribbean Aftermath* (Montreal: Black Rose Books, 1971).
  63. Charles Gagnon, "McGill Français et le mouvement étudiant," *Cahier PÉQ* no. 20, McGill Français (janvier 2001): 13.
  64. Bélanger, *Le mouvement étudiant québécois*, 49.
  65. Ibid., 48-49.
  66. Pierre Bédard, "La Manifestation McGill ou l'Affrontement de Deux 'Establishment'," *Noir et Rouge* 1, no. 3 (hiver 1969): 78-79.
  67. Louise Harel and Richard Brunelle, "L'UGEQ Après l'Occupation des C.E.G.E.P.," *Noir et Rouge* 1, no. 3 (hiver 1969): 48-51.
  68. Gagnon, "Bref historique," 42.
  69. Warren, "L'Opération McGill Français," 99-100; *Le mouvement étudiant québécois*, 46-49; for a closer look at the reasons for the death of UGEQ, see Bélanger and Maheu, "Pratique politique étudiante," 336-341.
  70. John Provart, "Opération McGill Français: Yesterday and Today. A Forgotten but Telling Story of McGill and Québec's Turbulent 60's," *Cahier PÉQ* no. 20, McGill Français (janvier 2001): 6.
  71. Mark Wilson, "Twilight of the Gods," *McGill Daily*, April 2, 1969, 2.
  72. Warren, "L'Opération McGill Français," 99-100.
  73. Gray, "McGill Français," 8.
  74. Dostaler, "Souvenirs de l'opération McGill," 11.
  75. This type of language is a good indication of the highly patriarchal nature of activism in this period.
  76. Stan Gray, "McGill and the rape of Quebec," *McGill Daily*, February 10, 1969, 4.
  77. See Peggy Sheppard, "The Relationship Between Student Activism and Change in the University: With Particular Reference to McGill University in the 1960s" (master's thesis, McGill University, 1989).
  78. Stan Gray, "The Greatest Canadian Shit Disturber," *Canadian Dimension* 38, no. 6 (December 2004): 12-21. <http://canadiandimension.com/articles/2004/11/01/109/> (accessed March 20, 2008).
  79. Marlene Dixon, *Things Which Are Done in Secret* (Montreal: Black Rose Books, 1976), 53-54. Frost, *McGill University*, 464-467.
  80. One interesting thing to note about the resistance to Bill 63 was the mass uprising of high school students. Bélanger, *Le mouvement étudiant québécois*, 52. It should be noted here that no significant work has been done on radical organizing in the high school



- context, and there is much room for such a contribution.
81. Boren, *Student Resistance*, 184-200.
  82. Mills, "The Empire Within," 395-412.
  83. See Christabelle Sethna, "The Evolution of the Birth Control Handbook: From Student Peer-Education Manual to Feminist Self-Empowerment Text, 1968-1975," *Canadian Bulletin of Medical History* 23, no. 1 (2006): 89-118; Diane Lamoureux, *Fragments et Collages: essai sur le féminisme québécois des années 70* (Montréal: Les éditions du remue-ménage, 1986), 37-67; Stan Gray said of his experience in the 1960s, "I was in many ways a traditional male. The feminists I met were speaking a lot of fundamental truths that served to open my eyes — about male domination, about sexism and chauvinism, about the abuse of women, about egotism and competitiveness and many other things." Gray, "The Greatest Canadian Shit Disturber," 12-21.
  84. Jean-Philippe Warren, *Ils Voulaienr Changer le Monde: Le Militantisme Marxiste-Léniniste au Québec* (Montréal: VLB Éditeur, 2007), 41-42.
  85. *Ibid.*, 39-42.
  86. *Ibid.*, 40-41.
  87. Bélanger, *Le mouvement étudiant québécois*, 54-66.
  88. *Ibid.*, 55-56.
  89. See Daniel Drache, ed., *Quebec—Only the Beginning: The Manifestoes of the Common Front* (Toronto: New Press, 1972), 149-270.
  90. For an in-depth discussion of these developments, see Mills, "The Empire Within," 320-393. For an exciting account of the strike itself, see Auf der Maur, Reid, and Surette, "Spring 1972: The Strike as Political Weapon," 109-142.
  91. Bélanger, *Le mouvement étudiant québécois*, 56.
  92. Éric Bédard, *Chronique d'une insurrection appréhendée. La crise d'Octobre et le milieu universitaire* (Sillery, QC: les Éditions de Septentrion, 1998), 184.
  93. Bélanger, *Le mouvement étudiant québécois*, 24-25.
  94. "Le mouvement des CAPs," *Mobilisation* 4 no. 2 (octobre 1974): 21-25; Bélanger, *Le mouvement étudiant québécois*, 64-65. Dionne, Lalonde and Quirion, *Le mouvement étudiant, l'appareil scolaire et les luttes de classes au Québec*, 6.28.
  95. élangér, *Le mouvement étudiant québécois*, 67.
  96. Dionne, Lalonde and Quirion, *Le mouvement étudiant, l'appareil scolaire et les luttes de classes au Québec*, 6.27-6.29.
  97. Anna Dowdall, "Rally calls for students and workers to fight together," *McGill Daily*, November 3, 1971, 1.
  98. Mills, "The Empire Within," 386.
  99. Dionne, Lalonde and Quirion, *Le mouvement étudiant, l'appareil scolaire et les luttes de classes au Québec*, 6.25-6.26.
  100. Comité d'Organisation Provisoire des Etudiants, "La lutte sur les frais de scolarité à l'UQAM," *Mobilisation* 2, no. 4 (avril-mai

- 1973): 9. It is true that universities were no longer in session by May 1972, but given the historical vigour of CÉGEPs, the argument holds.
101. The Minister of Education agreed to abolish the consideration of parental contributions when giving student loans, decrease gradually the same consideration in allocating bursaries, and to decrease gradually the minimum student contribution—considering the high rate of unemployment. Bélanger, *Le mouvement étudiant québécois*, 75.
102. *Ibid.*, 69-84. Notably, considering our previous discussion of student-worker solidarity, ANEQ was given much support in these early hours by Yvon Charbonneau and the CEQ. Anglophones included the student association from Loyola-Concordia University, and some delegates from McGill, which would in fact affiliate to ANEQ some years later.
103. The full list of demands included the abolition of the minimum student contribution in financial aid for those who had been unemployed, the abolition of the parental contribution for bursaries, the abolition of loans altogether in favour of bursaries, the abolition of tuition, the recognition of the financial independence of students, and the adjustment of financial aid to the real needs of the student population. It should be noted that the economic crisis of the 1970s hit Rimouski harder than many places in Quebec. *Ibid.*, 127.
104. *Ibid.*, 93-137. Lacoursière, *Le Mouvement Étudiant au Québec*, 22.
105. Bélanger, *Le mouvement étudiant québécois*, 141-142.
106. Éric Bédard, *Histoire de la FAECUM: 1976-1994* (Montréal : Fédération des associations étudiantes du campus de l'Université de Montréal, 1994), 24. A similar formation emerged around this time at Laval, in the form of the Confédération des étudiants et des étudiantes de l'Université Laval (CADEUL). See Breton, "Service ou Mouvement?"
107. Lacoursière, *Le Mouvement Étudiant au Québec*, 23.
108. Jean Baillargeon, "Le mouvement étudiant et le temp de remises en question," *L'Action Nationale* 72, no. 9 (1983): 813-821.
109. ANEQ was also challenged within from the left during this year, with the creation of the Regroupement pour une véritable syndicat national étudiant (RVSNEQ), a trotskyist group. Lacoursière, *Le Mouvement Étudiant au Québec*, 23.
110. Bélanger, *Le mouvement étudiant québécois*, 180-181.
111. See Lacoursière, *Le Mouvement Étudiant au Québec, de 1983 à 2006*.
112. *Ibid.*, 169-179.
113. See Roberta Lexier, "Transformer les universités ou la société? Les mouvements étudiants dans les années 1960 au Canada anglais," *Bulletin d'histoire politique* 16, no. 2 (hiver 2008): 117-131 ; Cyril Levitt, "Canada," in *Student Political Activism: An International Reference Handbook*, ed. Philip G. Altbach, 419-426 (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1989); Owrarn, "Born at the Right Time," 216-

- 247.
114. See Kwantlen Student Association, “cfstruth.ca,” <http://www.cfstruth.ca/>.
115. “University Tuition Fees,” *The Daily* (Statistics Canada), <http://www.statcan.ca/Daily/English/071018/d071018b.htm> (accessed April 2, 2008). Part of the legacy of the reformism of the Federations, however, is that in the fight to preserve the Quebec tuition freeze in 1996, out-of-province and international students were left behind, and actually saw their fees increase! It is now not much cheaper here for non-Quebec Canadians than it is anywhere else in the country. Lacoursière, *Le Mouvement Étudiant au Québec*, 124-126.
116. It should be stressed here that, unlike certain elements within the contemporary anglophone student movement still influenced by Trotskyist thought, I am not suggesting that an alliance with a kind of romantic, unproblematic concept of the “worker” will solve all of the problems of student organizing. Rather, I would argue that the student movement is at its most powerful when connected to the struggle against imperialism, against sexism, against homophobia, racism, ableism, capitalism, etc.
117. I have borrowed the usage of this popular chant as a conclusion from Jean-Philippe Warren, “Présentation du dossier: Des carabinades aux carabines,” *Bulletin d’histoire politique* 16, no. 2 (hiver 2008): 11.

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## 1688-89: A “Bloodless” Revolution?

By Sierra Robart

*This paper examines the characterization of Great Britain’s Glorious Revolution as the “Bloodless Revolution.” Drawing on a variety of primary sources and extensive secondary literature, it analyzes the latter term in three ways: its origins from the memory of the bloody English Civil, its role within the ideology of the Glorious Revolution, and its accuracy in characterizing contemporary sentiment. Overall, the paper concludes that, in the eyes of the English population, 1688-9 was indeed a “revolution,” regardless of the lack of violence.*

“I question if in all the histories of empire there is one instance of so  
bloodless  
a Revolution as that in England in 1688, wherein Whigs, Tories,  
princes, prelates,  
nobles, clergy, common people, and a standing army, were  
unanimous.

To have seen all England of one mind is to have lived at a very  
particular juncture.<sup>1</sup>

-Colley Cibber, 1740.

As Gilbert Burnet said on December 23, 1688, “things do sometimes speak, and times call aloud.” The Glorious Revolution was certainly one of these times.<sup>2</sup> In 1688, William III, the Prince of Orange, overthrew James II of England. Perhaps the defining feature of the Glorious Revolution was its lack of violence, culminating in the events of 1688-89 coming to be referred to as the “Bloodless

Revolution.”

This paper sets out to explore the meaning and significance of the term “Bloodless Revolution.” It argues that the term “Bloodless Revolution” originated from a gripping fear of returning to the bloodshed of the Civil War and the ensuing unrest of 1641-60, became a key phrase that was both used within the greater concept of a sensible revolution in contemporaneous discussion and conveniently employed afterwards to justify the legitimacy of William III, and is reasonable based on the conceptualization of the Glorious Revolution by the English populace in the 1680’s and 90’s. Ultimately, by examining the term in the latter three ways it becomes clear that contemporaries saw the events that came to pass – regardless of their bloodless nature – as a real and permanent revolution, a conclusion that both illustrates the legitimacy of the seemingly contradictory term “Bloodless Revolution” and provides an entirely unique perspective from which to examine 1688-89.

The term “Glorious Revolution” is most often used to describe the events in England in 1688-9 and was perhaps first mentioned by John Hampden on November 18, 1689.<sup>3</sup> Yet, people such as Gilbert Burnet noted the “glory” of the changes as early as January 1688.<sup>4</sup> Most historians generally agree that the term “Glorious Revolution” became “fixed in the consciousness of literate Englishmen” by the middle of the 18<sup>th</sup> century at the latest.<sup>5</sup> The term “Bloodless Revolution,” however, has a different origin. This phrase was not specifically invoked by the writers of the time, although there was talk of “Revolution the most bloodless” and other such descriptions of the events in 1688.<sup>6</sup> It appears, as Cibber employs the term in this paper’s introductory quote, that “bloodless” was used more as a literal description than a rhetorical device. Yet, as Ilan Rachum points out in reference to the mid 1700s: “finally, with the world witnessing at that stage new examples of revolutions, the gloriousness of 1688 would be appreciated also from a conservative point of view, because it had been accomplished with a minimum of violence and without changing much the foundation of

government.”<sup>7</sup> It seems that the term “Bloodless Revolution,” which first emerged as a literal description, quickly became inextricably connected with the concept of the “gloriousness” of 1688. The events were “glorious” because of the unusual and wonderful lack of bloodshed. As Francis Barrington and Benjamin Steele revealed to their trading partners, the revolution proceeded “all without the loss of 50 men on all sides [that] makes it the most astonishing alteration that ever yet befell any one part of the universe.”<sup>8</sup> The rhetorical weight of the term, “Bloodless Revolution,” implicitly reveals some important aspects of the revolution of 1688. Thus, a more in-depth study of the concept “bloodless” is warranted.

The events of the late 17<sup>th</sup> century cannot be examined in isolation from those of the mid-century. Between 1641 and 1653 England went through a bloody civil war. The effect of this conflict cannot be underestimated as a factor that was present in the mindset of those who witnessed and took part in the 1688 revolution. Thomas Hobbes, who serves as one example, was deeply affected by the English Civil War. This fact is apparent in his writings, and particularly in the *Leviathan*.<sup>9</sup> In this work, Hobbes argues that a country needs a strong central government in order to maintain stability and to avoid descent into civil war.<sup>10</sup> In his writings, Hobbes’ “cause was increasingly the cause of peace” and not a particular political view.<sup>11</sup> Hobbes’ view of the necessity of a strong central government reflects his visceral and intellectual reaction to the political unrest and subsequent violence of the mid 1600’s.

Hobbes’ perspective on contract theory was applied to the events of 1688.<sup>12</sup> His development of a social contract theory was based on the idea that the uncertainties of the *populus* in what has come to be known as a “state of nature” – states such as that observed in a civil war – can only be avoided by a strong central government. This state of nature is “such a warre, as is of every man, against every man” in which “nothing can be unjust.”<sup>13</sup> The social contract between the people is one such that each person agrees to give up some liberties in order to get out of the state of nature. The

sovereign then acts as a “common Power to keep them all in awe.”<sup>14</sup> As shown on the famed frontispiece of *Leviathan*, there is no sense of a safe community of people until they have all consented to a sovereign, and, since the sovereign has taken them out of the state of nature, there is no right to rebel against the established power; anything more organized and benign than the state of nature leaves one better off. Yet if this protection from the state of nature can no longer be enforced by that sovereign, the people are no longer kept in awe, and the obligation of the people to each other is lost. In other words, the social contract is broken. Many saw Hobbes as a proponent of a “might-makes-right” view, in which a revolution was legitimized as long as conquest took place and, thus, an awe-striking power was established.<sup>15</sup> However, as Hobbes points out in *Leviathan*, it is not only conquest that legitimizes a new sovereign, but also the consent of the people, which can only be obtained once the previous allegiance is ended. In the events of 1688, it was essentially William of Orange who came to be seen as the representation of a strong central government, and with James II’s “abdication” of the crown, Hobbesian ideas were invoked to argue in support of the legitimacy of the switch in allegiance to a new regime.

The impact of the bloody English Civil War is not only reflected in social contract theory. In the time before the revolution in 1688, when it became clear that the king’s position was becoming increasingly unstable, the term “bloody” became almost synonymous with a swear word. Those supporting the king protested against the “cursed attempts” of “bloody men.”<sup>16</sup>

The Duke of Monmouth’s abortive attempt at rebellion in 1685 is perhaps the best example of the general sentiment of abhorrence to any event perceived to be violent. In the early summer of 1685, the Duke of Monmouth attempted to take the crown from James II. Monmouth’s attempted rebellion failed after his decisive defeat at the battle of Sedgemoor. With a difference of only three years, it seems pertinent to ask why exactly this “rebellion” failed while William’s “invasion” succeeded. The Monmouth rebellion was



seen as “desperate and damnable attempts of those incorrigible sons of rebellion . . . presum[ing] to fight against God and lift up their sacrilegious and bloody hands against his anointed.”<sup>17</sup> Steven Pincus argues that Monmouth failed because he misrepresented his cause as one of religion. No one wanted another religious war.<sup>18</sup> Yet, as Tony Claydon argues, the religious aspect of William’s “invasion” can hardly be ignored either.<sup>19</sup> In addition, recent historiography has tended towards the conclusion that the Monmouth rebellion was not as ill-fated as originally assumed. It appears that he was actually better prepared both in finances and in actual number of supporters than previously thought.<sup>20</sup> However, King James II was able to rally troops around him and defeat Monmouth. The case would not be the same three years later, when William of Orange attempted the same move for the English throne.

One of the most marked discontinuities between the two events is the reaction of the troops in England to each “invading” force. When Monmouth landed on 11 June 1685, the local militias fled, forcing the King to gather regular troops. This demonstrated the “reluctance of most Englishmen to become involved in actual combat.”<sup>21</sup> As the king himself argued, “if I could have relied upon all my troops I might have not been put to this extremity I am in, and would at least have had one blow for it; but . . . it was no ways advisable to venture myself at their head.”<sup>22</sup> After the rebellion’s failure, the King had an excuse to raise troops and indeed did, moving to have a standing Christian army, which increased unease in his subjects. Other developments, such as Judge Jeffrey’s “bloody assizes,” also proved to spread fear of a tyrannical state.<sup>23</sup> Thus, throughout the next three years, support for James fell and apathy towards defending the king increased. As W.A. Speck argues, the final events in 1688 were of “reluctant revolutionaries.”<sup>24</sup> Similarly, William Sherlock wrote in 1691 that 1688 was “no Rebellion, no Resistance, but only Non-Assistance, which may be very innocent.”<sup>25</sup> It seems that when William took over there was “more apathy than applause, and what applause there was, was more out of relief that

England had passed through the night peacefully than that there had been a revolution.”<sup>26</sup>

Constant with Thomas Hobbes’ argument that a country needs a strong central government as a means to maintain stability, more than anything, Englishmen seemed to adopt an attitude of apathy when they were faced with a “foreign invasion” in 1688. There was an intense fear of a collapse into a bloody revolution reminiscent of the Civil War. This provides one explanation for why the actual events of 1688 were so notably bloodless. The English were much enamored of the idea of a sensible revolution, and the concept of a “bloodless revolution” fit into this conceptualization of the world incredibly well. At the time of William’s landing, it seemed that although there was not an overwhelming rush of support, no one showed the disposition to take up arms against him.<sup>27</sup> One contemporary articulated the difficulty as one “not about Passive Obedience but to whom it is due.”<sup>28</sup> Thus, the reluctance of the English people towards falling back into the violent pattern that was established in the 1640’s provides one powerful explanation for what allowed the “Bloodless Revolution” of 1688-9. This is the view that the term “Bloodless Revolution” came about directly because it was bloodless, which is consistent with the values of Englishmen of the time.

Even before the success of the “invasion” by Prince William of Orange, his supporters were looking for the most convincing ways to justify his claim to the throne. John Locke’s work is one element of this campaign of rationalization.<sup>29</sup> Although his *Two Treatises of Government* was written before 1688-8930 this work was adopted as a means to substantiate William III’s rule. Locke’s philosophy marks an important departure from that of Hobbes, though many elements are quite similar. Both begin in the state of nature, and for Hobbes life in this state is worse than even a tyrannical dictatorship. This argument works to explain the apathy that the Englishmen showed in the early 1680’s. Importantly, Locke diverges from Hobbes on this point and argues that in living under a tyrant, one loses one’s liberty,

which makes one worse off than in the state of nature. Hence, once the social contract with the sovereign becomes perverted, the society must go back and create a new contract. For Locke, a revolution is simply the reestablishment of society after its dissolution.

In examining the Declaration of Rights of 1689, the complaints of the English citizens<sup>31</sup> against James II become clear. James' increased centralization and roughshod wielding of royal power were seen as unacceptable. His "raising and keeping a standing army within this kingdom in time of peace without consent of Parliament, and quartering soldiers contrary to law" was to be disallowed.<sup>32</sup> In addition, his excessive fines and punishments were to be stopped. All of these concerns point to the view that James II was unable to rule in a proper and lawful manner. For his subjects, he was clearly acting "utterly and directly contrary to the known laws and statutes and freedom of this realm."<sup>33</sup> Under Locke's view, this inability to rule as well as the failure to provide protection leads to the dissolution of the social contract between society and this sovereign. After the bloodless nature of William III's ascension, it is clear how Locke's view can be used to justify his case for the throne. The "invasion" of the "foreign usurper" was so notably bloodless because James II was not ruling properly and hence there was no social contract between him and society by which society was obliged to protect him. If James II had been ruling properly under the Lockean view, the social contract would have been upheld and William would have been easily vanquished.

In addition, Locke's rhetoric served an extremely important role in justifying William's ascension. As stated above, Locke raises the idea that a revolution is the reestablishment of society after it is dissolved. James' rule was dissolved when he showed his inability to govern properly, and William simply re-established a social contract when he took over. There is a very important difference to be seen here between the term rebellion and that of revolution. Events of rebellion or revolt were perceived as evil, indeed "rebellion is like the sin of witchcraft."<sup>34</sup> Even as Monmouth stood preparing

to be hanged, he apologized for his invasion of England, and was pointedly told by one attending clergyman “Give it the true Name Sir, and call it Rebellion.”<sup>35</sup> Thus, “revolution,” and a bloodless one at that, created a new framework for William that was acceptable, unlike “rebellion.”

Another reason for the conspicuously bloodless nature of the revolution is the concept of divine sanction. Prince William of Orange and his Protestant supporters certainly were aware of the religious current in their actions. Indeed, many in England were fearful of a revival of Catholicism after the birth of James Francis Edward Stuart, the controversial Catholic male heir to the throne. Instead of “patiently waiting for relief till the death of James,” the prospects seemed rather dismal now that King James had a Catholic heir.<sup>36</sup> Hence, the crucial place religion took in the debate over English inheritance. English tradition supported this heir’s claim, yet his religion (as well as his contested legitimacy)<sup>37</sup> led to much reluctance to support the prince’s hereditary right to the throne.

William III was another matter. The people of England “passionately seemme to long for & desire the landing of that Prince [William], whom they looked on as their deliverer from popish Tyrannie” wrote John Evelyn in his diary on October 6.<sup>a</sup> On December 23, 1688 Gilbert Burnet, one of the chief propagandists of the invasion,<sup>38</sup> made a case for the divine sanctioning of William: “In a word, as this is the Lord’s doings and marvellous in it self, so it ought to be so in our eyes, for it is certainly in the eyes of all the World besides. We ought to make such pauses in thinking on it, as may lead us up to adore and admire the great Author of it, in this his doing.”<sup>39</sup> Most significant in this passage is the fact that Burnet is referring not to William as the author of the events that followed, but instead says “we ought only to mention the name of the Lord our God.”<sup>40</sup> Burnet also draws on ideas of providence aiding in William’s channel crossing, much the same way the Protestant winds had stopped the Spanish Armada a century earlier.<sup>41</sup> As one contemporary most elegantly put the question:

the matter in dispute is not whether Rightful, Lawful Kings are to be obeyed, but who in our present Circumstances is our Rightful, Lawful Sovereign; not whether Kings be not God's Vicegerents, but whether God doth not sometimes confer the Right of Sovereignty by a Law superior to the Laws of Particular Countries, that is, by the Law of Nations, which establish such a Right upon the success of a just War; not whether Sovereign Princes are not accountable only to God, but whether Allegiance be not due where the Rights of Sovereignty are placed, by the extraordinary Act of Providence and the concurrent Consent of the Nation.<sup>42</sup>

Indeed, William's propaganda focused on this divine sanction.<sup>43</sup> In justifying the invasion, the conspicuous lack of bloodshed fits seamlessly into the latter concept.

One currently popular view of 1688 presents the events as simply an elaborate coup d'état. As Conrad Russell points out, it is easy enough to imagine 1688 turning out differently, with James' success against William.<sup>44</sup> If William's victory was not inevitable or even necessarily easily gained, as Russell would seem to indicate, then the question must be raised: why was it indeed to bloodless? Hence, arguments against the application of the term "revolution" seem to be based on the concept that the bloodless character of the events points to the un-revolutionary nature of William taking the English crown. Here, it is imperative to examine not only the English conceptualization of the term, but also to briefly discuss revolutionary theory.

The concept of a revolution as an event marked by violence does not betray the origins of the word. The English idea of the word came from the concept of the "revolutions of the heavens" and only gradually moved into the political sphere, until it abounded there in the mid 1600's. Yet even in 1688 the term still maintained some of the roots of its meaning, as "revolution" was treated almost synonymously with change, and represented a principle of circularity as opposed to a linear process. Despite the seemingly unremarkable replacement of one monarch with another, it is in this cyclical

conceptualization of the term's meaning that it becomes clear why the events of 1688 were not a coup d'état for the British, but quite rightfully a revolution.

In examining the rhetoric of the time, it is clear that contemporaries of 1688 saw that year decisively as a revolution. Diarist John Evelyn succinctly wrote on December 2, 1688: "it looks like a Revolution."<sup>45</sup> Another contemporary wrote of "this great Revolution"<sup>46</sup> and of living in a "time of great Revolutions."<sup>47</sup> Burnet preached in his Sermon on January 31, 1689 to the House of Commons that "you who saw the state of things three Months ago, could never have thought that so total a revolution could have been brought about so easily, as if it had been only the shifting of Scenes."<sup>48</sup> This last passage not only illustrates the common acceptance of the phrase, but also reinforces the contemporary definition of it as a cyclical concept. Hence, it is clear that the English were not looking for a violent or bloody overthrow of the monarchy on which to bestow the term "revolution," but instead saw the events of 1688, regardless of their bloodless nature, as a decisive revolution in their history.

If one rejects 1688 as a revolution, it would seem that one is inadvertently (or perhaps deliberately) accepting the theory that revolutions must be violent by definition. If one accepts the term "Bloodless Revolution" to describe these years, this would imply that revolutions do not have to involve bloodshed. Angus McInnes persuasively argues that 1688-89 decisively sits in the category of revolution due to the success of a shift from "English absolutism" to a more parliamentary-based governmental system.<sup>49</sup> McInnes' conclusion that 1688-9 marked a revolution originates from a constitutional point of view – based on the actual changes the government underwent in the second half of the 17<sup>th</sup> century. This view of a constitutional revolution makes any sort of violent overthrow superfluous: bloodshed is not a necessary element of revolutions of this kind. Thus, by accepting the English conceptualization of the term "revolution" as a shift or change, even

if it is cyclical, and appreciating arguments such as McInnes's, which demonstrate the real changes that occurred, 1688 was a revolution.

The emergence of a "Bloodless Revolution" presents a useful starting point from which to examine the effect of the Civil War on the events of 1688. Through investigating the mindset of the day it becomes clear that perhaps one of the central elements that can explain the conspicuous lack of bloodshed following Prince William of Orange's landing at Torbay on the 5<sup>th</sup> of November 1688, was the apathy, possibly even the antipathy, of the people of England towards violent conflict. This was marked by the fleeing militias and the reluctance to take stances that could have led to another bloody civil war. Thomas Hobbes' work *Leviathan* shows how deeply the civil war affected the consciousness of England. In this view, one can see how the term "Bloodless Revolution" came to embody some of the concepts of the glory of this new turn of events, the unexpected bloodless nature of the revolution, and the sensible approach of the Englishmen to the new proposed king. The term "Bloodless Revolution" was also employed as a justification for the events, and how they unfolded. Its related terms 'glorious,' 'sensible,' 'necessary,' 'respectable,' and 'Godly,' all indicate how the events were seen by the English. Finally, when looking at the rhetoric of the time, it is clear as in the above cases that the English really did see the events of 1688-89 as a revolution. As Lynn Hunt argues, perhaps it is the rhetorical context that historians should be mindful of when examining the adequacy of terms, and in this case, revolution most definitely sticks.<sup>50</sup>

The title "Bloodless Revolution" seems to signify that there is something odd about a revolution without bloodshed. Many, who believe in the necessity of violence in revolutionary theory, see the term as an indicator that the events were un-revolutionary, simply a coup d'état. As Conrad Russell poetically puts it, this is the "distorting medium of hindsight."<sup>51</sup> It is in looking back through nearly 400 years of bloody revolutions that this concept of a "Bloodless Revolution" appears so suspect. Yet this term should

not be thrown onto the pile of rejected historical terminology as it provides, in two short words, an entirely unique perspective from which to investigate England in 1688-89. The term is adequate, indeed illuminating, in how it both explains the origins and justification of the events and provides a fascinating study of revolutionary theory.

## Notes

1. Colley Cibber, "Memoir of the Revolution," in Steven C.A. Pincus's *England's Glorious Revolution, 1688-1689: A Brief History with Documents*. (New York: Bedford/St. Martins, 2006), 48.
2. Gilbert Burnet, "A sermon preached in the Chappel of St. James's, before his Highness the Prince of Orange, the 23d of December, 1688" Early English Books Online, 3. [http://gateway.proquest.com/openurl?ctx\\_ver=Z39.88-2003&res\\_id=xri:eebo&rft\\_id=xri:eebo:citation:53981470](http://gateway.proquest.com/openurl?ctx_ver=Z39.88-2003&res_id=xri:eebo&rft_id=xri:eebo:citation:53981470).
3. Eveline Cruickshanks ed., *By Force or by Default?: The Revolution of 1688-1689*. (Edinburgh: John Donald Publishers, 1989) introduction.
4. Gilbert Burnet, "A sermon preached before the House of Commons, on the 31st of January, 1688 being the thanksgiving-day for the deliverance of this kingdom from popery and arbitrary power, by His Highness the Prince of Orange's means." Early English Books Online, 31. [http://gateway.proquest.com/openurl?ctx\\_ver=Z39.88-2003&res\\_id=xri:eebo&rft\\_id=xri:eebo:image:64568:21](http://gateway.proquest.com/openurl?ctx_ver=Z39.88-2003&res_id=xri:eebo&rft_id=xri:eebo:image:64568:21).
5. James R. Hertzler, "Who Dubbed It 'The Glorious Revolution?'" *Albion: A Quarterly Journal Concerned with British Studies*, 19, no. 4. (1987): 585. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/4049475>
6. Ilan Rachum, "*Revolution*": *The Entrance of a New Word Into Western Political Discourse*. (New York: Univ. Press of America, 1999) 151.
7. Hertzler, "Who Dubbed It 'The Glorious Revolution?'" 580.
8. Rachum, "*Revolution*": *The Entrance of a New Word*, 151.
9. Francis Barrington and Benjamin Steele, "A letter describing the revolution to Thomas Goodwin and Kinnard Delabere, 1689," in Steven C.A. Pincus's *England's Glorious Revolution, 1688-1689*, 48.
10. Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan*. Edited by Marshall Missner. (New York: Pearson Longman, 2008); In fact, his first reference to civil war comes in his introduction.



11. Hobbes, *Leviathan*.
12. Jon Parkin, *Taming the Leviathan: The Reception of the Political and Religious Ideas of Thomas Hobbes in England 1640-1700*. (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 2007), 86.
13. Tim Harris, *Revolution: The Great Crisis of the British Monarchy, 1685-1720*, (London: Penguin Group, 2006), 314.
14. Hobbes, *Leviathan*. Part I Chapter 13.
15. Hobbes, *Leviathan*. Part I Chapter 13.
16. Parkin, *Taming the Leviathan*, 88.
17. As quoted in W.A. Speck, *Reluctant Revolutionaries*. (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1988), 231.
18. Speck, *Reluctant Revolutionaries*, 243-44.
19. Pincus, *England's Glorious Revolution*, 13.
20. Tony Claydon, *William III and the Godly Revolution*. (Wiltshire, Cambridge Univ. Press, 1996).
21. Speck, *Reluctant Revolutionaries*, 52.
22. Speck, *Reluctant Revolutionaries*, 7.
23. Stuart E. Prall, *The Bloodless Revolution*. (New York: Anchor Books, 1972), 238.
24. Prall, *The Bloodless Revolution*, 146.
25. Speck, *Reluctant Revolutionaries*.
26. Rachum, "Revolution": *The Entrance of a New Word*, 135.
27. Prall, *The Bloodless Revolution*, 242.
28. Prall, *The Bloodless Revolution*, 226.
29. "An Answer to the Paper Delivered by Mr Ashton at his Execution to Sir Francis Child: Sheriff of London," page 10, in Norman A. Coles, *John Ashton's Case for James II as Rightful King of England: Rebellion or Revolution*. (Queenston: The Edward Mellen Press, 1998), 131.
30. John Locke, *Two Treatises of Government*. Digitized by Dave Gowan. The Project Gutenberg. <http://www.gutenberg.org/dirs/etext05/trgov10h.htm>.
31. Richard Ashcraft, "Revolutionary Politics and Locke's Two Treatises of Government: Radicalism and Lockean Political Theory." *Political Theory* 8, no. 4 (1980): 429-486,
32. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/190657>.
33. Although by no means representing the thoughts of all of the citizens, the declaration lays out the most grievous elements of the King's unjust rule.
34. "English Bill of Rights, 1689." The Avalon Project: Documents in Law History and Diplomacy, [http://avalon.law.yale.edu/17th\\_century/england.asp](http://avalon.law.yale.edu/17th_century/england.asp).
35. "English Bill of Rights, 1689."
36. Algernon Sidney, "Section 36: The general revolt of a Nation cannot be called a Rebellion." In *Discourses Concerning Government*. Thomas G. West ed. (Indianapolis: LibertyClassics, 1990), 519.
37. Rachum, "Revolution": *The Entrance of a New Word*, 110.
38. G.M. Trevelyan, *The English Revolution, 1688-1689*. (London:

- Oxford Univ. Press, 1974), 49.
39. For a lively and long-winded explanation of the proper procedure for giving birth to an heir, see "An Answer to the Paper Delivered by Mr Ashton at his Execution to Sir Francis Child: Sheriff of London," page 12-15, in Coles, John Ashton's *Case for James II*, 133-36.
  40. John Evelyn, *The Diary of John Evelyn*. E.S. De Beer ed. Vol IV. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1955) 600.
  41. Claydon, *William III and the Godly Revolution*. 29.
  42. Burnet, "23d of December, 1688," 10.
  43. Burnet, "23d of December, 1688," 10-11.
  44. Although the utility of this term in early Stuart period England is suspect, it is central to Burnet's arguments and it should be considered as such. For an overview of its limitations, see Claydon, *William III and the Godly Revolution*. 31-32.
  45. "An Answer to the Paper Delivered by Mr Ashton" page 9-10, in Coles, John Ashton's *Case for James II as Rightful King of England: Rebellion*, 130-1.
  46. Claydon, *William III and the Godly Revolution*.
  47. Russell Conrad, *Unrevolutionary England, 1603-1642*. (London: The Hambledon Press, 1990), 305-308.
  48. John Evelyn, *The Diary of John Evelyn*. 609.
  49. "An Answer to the Paper Delivered by Mr Ashton at his Execution to Sir Francis Child: Sheriff of London," in Coles, John Ashton's *Case for James II as Rightful King of England*, 131.
  50. "An Answer to the Paper Delivered by Mr Ashton at his Execution to Sir Francis Child: Sheriff of London," in Coles, John Ashton's *Case for James II as Rightful King of England*, 149.
  51. Gilbert Burnet. "A sermon preached before the House of Commons, on the 31st of January, 1688," 31.
  52. Angus McInnes. "When Was The English Revolution?" *The Journal of the Historical Association* 67, no. 221 (2007): 392, <http://www3.interscience.wiley.com/cgi-bin/fulltext/120044289/PDFSTART>
  53. Lynn Hunt, *Politics, Culture and Class in the French Revolution*. 2nd ed. (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 2004).
  54. Conrad, *Unrevolutionary England, 1603-1642*, ix

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