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“POLITICS DRIVES MEN CRAZY”: HOW THE NATIONALLY UNIFYING ASSASSINATIONS OF ABRAHAM LINCOLN AND JAMES GARFIELD FACILITATED THE PUBLIC SUPPORT OF GROVER CLEVELAND’S INCREASED PRESIDENTIAL SECURITY

BY NICHOLAS ARATA

Salem, Oregon’s *Capital Journal* asked a hard and daunting question in its evening edition on the first day of 1894: “Lincoln and Garfield were assassinated by men crazed with political excitement, and filled with the insane idea of redressing the wrongs of suffering masses. Will Cleveland meet that fate?”¹ Within thirty years, politically motivated gunmen had assassinated two sitting U.S. presidents, and nobody wanted President-elect Grover Cleveland to become the third. Even though no Americans wanted such a disaster to occur again, the government made no changes to the personal protection of the president. Until Cleveland’s second presidency, few security protocols existed to protect the president from would-be threats and assassins, but then-President Grover Cleveland set about correcting that potentially dangerous mistake in order to protect himself and his family.

The United States government and its people initially refused to provide protection for the president because of idealistic and ideological reasons. On the first page of his comprehensive book on the history of presidential assassination attempts, historian Mel Ayton writes, “Americans were proud that their chief executive was not surrounded by an armed guard or the presence of regal trappings. They saw Europe as a place where monarchs and dictators feared their subjects and required armed protection when exiting their palaces.”² This sentiment remained deep into the nineteenth century. In fact, after both Abraham Lincoln’s and James Garfield’s assassinations, the government did not institute personal protection for the president because many considered both killings as anomalies that failed to impact America’s stability.³ If a president needed to be replaced, the public would just vote the man out of office.

During Grover Cleveland’s second term as president, due to the economic downturn within the country, the president faced increased threats to his safety. In his first term, Cleveland received relatively few

¹ *Capital Journal*, January 01, 1894, 2.

² Ayton, Mel, *Plotting to Kill the President: Assassination Attempts from Washington to Hoover*, (Omaha: University of Nebraska Press, 2017), 1.

³ *New-York Tribune*, July 03, 1881, 6.

threats from unstable citizens. Grover Cleveland's second, nonconsecutive term, in contrast, faced more threats due to the economic Panic of 1893. The threats mainly came in the form of "cranks." The vast majority of cranks were mentally unstable men who had lost everything because of the economic depression and sought a meeting with their president. Presidents traditionally accepted visitors into the White House, and many of these cranks visited for a variety of reasons. Some wanted economic assistance; some felt entitled to paying positions and appointments and even the Executive Mansion itself; some desired to evangelize the president; some visitors' actions seemed to lack any reasoning at all. While many acted without violence, many also visited with dangerous intentions because these men felt Cleveland had ruined the country and their lives. Regardless of intention or action, the president faced daily potential threats, so Grover Cleveland sought better protection for first his family and then himself.

This paper argues that Grover Cleveland successfully obtained personal presidential protections because of public support. The public did not support such protections after the assassinations of Abraham Lincoln and James Garfield, even though the public met both calamities with universal sadness and outcry. After the multitude of widely publicized instances of threats against President Cleveland's well-being and safety, however, sympathy and the recent memory of both assassinations changed public opinion towards presidential protections in order to prevent a third national tragedy. People sympathized with President Cleveland and his family thanks to widespread press coverage during his second term, so Americans refused to lose a third president to another crazed gunman and supported new executive protections. Thus, President Grover Cleveland successfully augmented his safety through instituting more armed guards and White House protections.

Abraham Lincoln enjoys almost universal approval today, but the thirteenth president enjoyed anything but during his presidency. Obviously, President Lincoln faced angry opposition from southern Confederates because of his efforts to reunite the Union and free the enslaved African-Americans in southern states. Less obvious than the southern opposition, however, Abraham Lincoln also faced resistance from Northerners due to his questionable legal actions during the Civil War. Some Northern Democrats and Republicans opposed the president because of his suspension of Habeas Corpus and other laws. Other Northerners opposed Abraham Lincoln's actions of freeing those in southern bondage through his Emancipation Proclamation. Many Northerners fought and supported the war effort to reunite the country, not to free enslaved African Americans. The president, unfortunately, received flimsy security at best. Even before the war began, Lincoln received little security and even

attended an early battle of the war without protection.⁴ The memoir of his bodyguard William H. Crook reveals that, by 1864, four Washington D.C. police officers rotated in protecting the president and only one man guarded Lincoln on the night of Lincoln's death.⁵ An ardent southern secessionist, and not a dismayed northern opponent, however led to Lincoln's shooting in 1865.

After the assassination of Abraham Lincoln, approval and sympathy for the country's first killed president skyrocketed. Labeled as a "morbid, revengeful, melodramatic, ambitious, and irregular young man" by a contemporary, John Wilkes Booth shot the sixteenth president in a desperate last move to punish the Union in the name of an independent Confederacy.⁶ Booth thought the assassination would save the Confederacy, but only popular backlash against the shooting occurred. Articles released after the reporting of Lincoln's murder directly reflected the shock and horror of the nation. Frantic news reports from across Northern states and territories described the horrific shooting to their concerned readers. Vermont's *Burlington Free Press* declared "frightful news" as it described the "dreadful events" in passionate detail.⁷ In the territories, *The Montana Post* warned its readers: "Intelligence the most painful [*sic*] has flashed along the telegraphic wires to us this morning – news that is so fraught with horror that we can scarcely persuade ourselves but that we are the victims of some hideous dream."⁸ Perhaps more importantly, border state and Democratic newspapers reflected the shock and horror. Both the *Nashville Daily Union* and *St. Cloud Democrat* decried the assassin's evil action as passionately as the Northern Republican newspapers.⁹ This collective public grief demonstrated how the assassination unified huge swaths of the American public, even among Democratic and border state citizens. The populace, unfortunately, still refused to support any presidential protections because many regarded the shooting as a one-time aberration. None of these articles or reactions called

⁴ Crook, William Henry, *Through Five Administrations; Reminiscences of Colonel William H. Crook, Body-Guard to President Lincoln*, (Whitefish, MT: Kessinger Publishing, 2004), 3.

⁵ Crook, William Henry, *Through Five Administrations; Reminiscences of Colonel William H. Crook, Body-Guard to President Lincoln*, (Whitefish, MT: Kessinger Publishing, 2004), 2-4, 72.

⁶ Alford, Terry, *Fortune's Fool: The Life of John Wilkes Booth*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2015), 340.

⁷ *Burlington Free Press*, April 21, 1865, 4.

⁸ *The Montana Post*, April 29, 1865, 1.

⁹ *The Nashville Daily Union*, April 15, 1865, 1. *St. Cloud Democrat*, April 20, 1865, 2.

for new increased security. Citizens still naively believed that Americans voted out hated officials, and that this assassination proved random, unique, and tragic. Democratic idealism, therefore, prevented action in 1865.

Citizens also expressed grief after the assassination of Abraham Lincoln through religious sermons and poems, many of which newspapers printed for their readers. Religious publications publicized sermons and proceedings from memorial services. *The National Preacher and Village Pulpit*, for example, published a series of sermons by Northern abolitionist preachers,¹⁰ and Boston's *Liberator* and *The Monthly Religious Magazine* similarly printed religious expressions of grief.¹¹ Poems also became a popular way for writers to express their distraught feelings towards the death of the president. Many modern Americans luckily remain familiar with Walt Whitman's "O Captain! My Captain!" and "When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloom'd," both of which mourn the loss of Abraham Lincoln.¹² The *Daily National Republican* dedicated its entire second page to a poem mourning the president's death: "So sweetly, sadly, sternly goes/The Fallen to his last repose:/Beneath no mighty dome,/but in his modest Home..."¹³ Similar to the widespread news reports and reactions, many of these expressions of grief and hyper-patriotic lamentations found publication in newspapers across the Union, which allowed countless other Americans to access these eulogies and poems and share in the grief of losing President Lincoln.

Like Abraham Lincoln, James Garfield also faced opposition to his presidency from within his own political party. Originally chosen as a compromise candidate between two warring factions within the Republican Party, Garfield's commitment to limiting corruption and patronage resulted in opposition from Stalwart Republicans led by Senator

¹⁰ Spear, Samuel, "Sermon XVI: Our National Sorrow," *The National Preacher and Village Pulpit* (1858-1866), May 1865. Beecher, Henry Ward, "Sermon XIV: The National Bereavement," *The National Preacher and Village Pulpit* (1858-1866), May 1865. Gurley, Rev., "Sermon XIII: In Memoriam of President Lincoln," *The National Preacher and Village Pulpit* (1858-1866), May 1865.

¹¹ "Address of Rev. George Putnam, D. D.," *Liberator* (1831-1865), May 12, 1865. Dall, Caroline, "Private Expressions of Grief," *Liberator* (1831-1865), May 19, 1865. "Random Readings: Our Great Sorrow," *The Monthly Religious Magazine* (1861-1869), May 1865.

¹² Whitman, Walt, "When Lilacs Last in the Door-Yard Bloom'd," *Academy of American Poets*. Whitman, Walt, "O Captain! My Captain!" *Academy of American Poets*.

¹³ *Daily National Republican*, May 04, 1865, 3.

Roscoe Conkling of New York. After his nomination at the Republican National Convention in Cleveland, many party opponents labeled the Ohio congressman as a "Coward, Bribe-taker, Charlatan, Lobbyist, and Renegade Preacher."¹⁴ In his biography of Garfield, Baptist minister and eventual founder of Temple University Russell Conwell wrote that, even after the convention, "Stories were conceived in the purest malice, and enlarged upon by the campaign orators and writers, would not die with repeated killings [*sic*]...General Garfield was compelled to stand silently and immovably before all detractors, enemies, and scandal-mongers, and receive without retaliation all the poisonous darts they incessantly hurled at him."¹⁵ Clearly, President Garfield did not receive total support from the entirety of the Republican Party until after his martyrdom.

Democrats, who supported General Winfield Scott Hancock for the presidency, frequently demonized Garfield's past apparent connections to congressional corruption. James Garfield, unfortunately, found himself involved in several of the famous political corruption scandals of post-Civil War America. Democratic opponents used these scandals to paint Garfield as a corrupt politician to the electorate, especially in the press.¹⁶ Concerning the DeGloyer Scandal, Garfield found himself exonerated by the chairman of the congressional committee of investigation, Rep. Jeremiah M. Wilson of Indiana decided "There was not in my opinion any evidence that would have warranted any unfavorable criticism upon his conduct."¹⁷ Concerning the Credit Mobilier Scandal, James Garfield quickly denied any wrongdoing and any knowledge of any wrongdoing. The "connection" formed from the fact that the young congressman only briefly argued on behalf of the Credit Mobilier Company in a contract dispute as a favor to a friend because the original lawyer missed the case.

¹⁴ Conwell, Russell, *The Life, Speeches, and Public Services of James A. Garfield, Twentieth President of the United States: Including an Account of His Assassination, Lingering Pain, Death and Burial*, (Portland, Me.: George Stinson, 1881), 331.

¹⁵ Conwell, Russell, *The Life, Speeches, and Public Services of James A. Garfield, Twentieth President of the United States: Including an Account of His Assassination, Lingering Pain, Death and Burial*, (Portland, Me.: George Stinson, 1881), 331-332.

¹⁶ *The Daily Constitution*, May 12, 1880, 2. *The Daily Constitution*, June 9, 1880, 1. *The Daily Constitution*, June 11, 1880, 3. *The Daily Constitution*, June 18, 1880, 1.

¹⁷ Conwell, Russell, *The Life, Speeches, and Public Services of James A. Garfield, Twentieth President of the United States: Including an Account of His Assassination, Lingering Pain, Death and Burial*, (Portland, Me.: George Stinson, 1881), 247.

Conwell again wrote, "So completely was the scandal silenced, and so straightforward and open was General Garfield's course that the reaction soon came in his favor, and...fell harmless at his feet. His life of truthfulness and unstained reputation for integrity and honor were of great value to him..."¹⁸ After the deeply slandering and polarizing election of 1880, James Garfield won the presidency but did not gain sweeping popularity until after his killing.

James Garfield's assassination, similarly to Abraham Lincoln, resulted in mass public grief and outcry concerning the national tragedy. Gunman Charles Guiteau shot an unprotected Garfield in a train station. In his memoir, William Crook, who still served as a presidential bodyguard but was not with Garfield when Guiteau shot the president, described Guiteau as an "angry man."¹⁹ Through newspapers, one can experience the panicked sorrow of the American people. The *Chicago Daily Tribune's* headline from one article perfectly encapsulate the chaotic and panicked state of the Union: "The People: How the News of Black Saturday Fell upon Them. A Cry of Horror Went Up from Maine to California. Meetings of Grief-Stricken People Throughout the United States. Fourth of July Celebrations Turned to Pageants of Grief and Gloom...Chicago Stricken with Sorrow and Horror to the Heart's Core. The News Received with Every Manifestation of Deep Grief. Thronging Crowds Besieging 'The Tribune' Office Eager for News."²⁰ The presses glorified Garfield as a perfect martyr for his country, even equalling Lincoln: "President Garfield was a true patriot, a man of commanding ability, and a devout Christian. A nation is in tears. No President save the immortal Lincoln, ever died so deeply, so universally lamented."²¹ Papers even published multiple anguished reactions from across the country, from both Republican and Democratic states.²² Through newspapers, one also notices the lack of advocacy for change. Even with all of this public outrage, none of these articles discussed increasing personal security for the president. The

¹⁸ Conwell, Russell, *The Life, Speeches, and Public Services of James A. Garfield, Twentieth President of the United States: Including an Account of His Assassination, Lingering Pain, Death and Burial*, (Portland, Me.: George Stinson, 1881), 272.

¹⁹ Crook, William Henry, *Through Five Administrations; Reminiscences of Colonel William H. Crook, Body-Guard to President Lincoln*, (Whitefish, MT: Kessinger Publishing, 2004), 267.

²⁰ *Chicago Daily Tribune*, July 3, 1881, 6.

²¹ *Western Christian Advocate*, September 21, 1881, 300.

²² *Chicago Daily Tribune*, July 3, 1881, 7. *New York Times*, July 03 1881, 5. *The Daily Constitution*, July 3, 1881, 1. *New York Times*, July 05 1881, 5. *New York Times*, July 05 1881, 6. *The Evening Critic*, July 04, 1881, 1.

newspapers reflected the nation's opinion that elected leaders do not need to fear assassination. All of these articles and others from across the nation mourned and remembered the President in the same exact way they depicted Lincoln: as a national hero who died for his adoring nation.

The public also expressed its collective pain through memorial services and poems. Many of the eulogies and poems found publication in newspapers for consumers. Such widespread publications of grief only intensified the national sorrow, but the national sorrow failed to translate into a call for increased protection for the president. Americans instead expressed their grief and failed to acknowledge the need for real change to prevent future executive tragedies. Periodicals printed countless poems that grieved and glorified the recently slain president.²³ Across the country, churches and civic groups held memorial services in commemoration of President Garfield.²⁴ Many of the sermons and eulogies reflected the sadness, shock, horror, and grief of the American public and the initial articles printed after Garfield's shooting: "In thousands of families hearts are bleeding and tears are falling, and from thousands of hearthstones prayers are going up for this stricken and affected country."²⁵ One newspaper even printed images with Garfield and Lincoln together. One by M.J. Scanlon, for example, shows the two men captioned: Our

²³ *Littell's Living Age*, October 29, 1881, 194. *The Phrenological Journal and Science of Health* November 01 1881, 226. *The Independent ... Devoted to the Consideration of Politics, Social and Economic Tendencies, History, Literature, and the Arts*, September 1, 1881, 3. *Massachusetts Ploughman and New England Journal of Agriculture*, September 17, 1881, 4. *Advocate of Peace*, October 1881, 3. *The Independent ... Devoted to the Consideration of Politics, Social and Economic Tendencies, History, Literature, and the Arts*, October 6, 1881, 26. *The Independent ... Devoted to the Consideration of Politics, Social and Economic Tendencies, History, Literature, and the Arts*, October 6, 1881, 4.

²⁴ *James Abram Garfield, Twentieth President of the United States, Died September 19th, A. D. 1881. Memorial Services at Evans Hall, Evansville, Indiana, Monday Afternoon September Twenty-Sixth, A. D. 1881*, <https://www.loc.gov/resource/rbpe.0190120a/?sp=3>. *In Memory of the Late President of the United States, James A. Garfield, Saenger Hall, Grand Rapids. Monday Evening, September 26, 1881*, <https://www.loc.gov/resource/rbpe.0840270l/?st=text>. *The New England Farmer, and Horticultural Register*, September 24 1881, 2. *New York Evangelist*, December 22, 1881, 8. *Memorial Services. James Abraham Garfield, Born November 19th, 1831. Died September 19th, 1881 President of the United States*, <https://www.loc.gov/resource/rbpe.1360120a/>.

²⁵ *New York Times*, July 04 1881, 8.

Martyred Presidents.”²⁶ These poems, sermons, and images chose to honor the dead men instead of calling on a way to prevent future killings. The City of Boston performed an especially touching memorial service led by some of the city’s most important civil servants, such as Nathaniel P. Banks who eulogized, “Few men in the history of the House of Representatives have acquired a higher reputation, and none will be more kindly and permanently remembered... He fought a good fight; he finished his course; he kept the faith; he paid the penalty; he receives his reward according to the sacred presage and promise of God.”²⁷ The assassinations of both presidents caused an important unifying backlash from the vast majority of the American populace, but the resulting reactions only mourned the deaths and did not include any calls to prevent future assassinations.

Regardless of political or geographical affiliation, the virtual entirety of the country lamented the deaths of both men as basic attacks against the country. These newspaper articles that glorified these presidents as perfect martyred American citizens came from every state and territory from both Republican and Democratic newspapers. *The Daily Constitution*, for example, deeply mourned the shooting of President Garfield, even though months earlier, the Atlanta Democratic newspaper labeled him “DeGloyer Garfield” and criticized the candidate as “A creature of pity who begs for mercy from his judges.”²⁸ The assassination of a president, clearly, causes the country to unify around the tragedy, even between passionate supporters and opponents. Neither assassination, however, brought any changes to presidential security because Americans still considered assassinations as unrealistic in a democracy. After both assassinations, citizens held onto the deluded idea that all voters would always choose a new president in the next election to replace an ineffectual one. This idealism lacked a real understanding that Booth and Guiteau failed to conform to this idealism and utilized violent means. The “universal” love of democratic processes that “all” Americans shared did not prove true with the psychopathic and violent fringes of society, which mainstream citizens failed to recognize. Future presidents, consequently, remained exposed to potential unstable assassins.

²⁶ Scanlan, M.J., “Our Martyred Presidents,”
<https://www.loc.gov/resource/pga.08247/>.

²⁷ Boston City Council, *A Memorial of James Abram Garfield: From the City of Boston*, (Boston: Printed by order of the City Council, 1881), 75, accessed from the John. J. Burns Library at Boston College.

²⁸ *The Daily Constitution*, July 3 1881, 1. *The Daily Constitution*, June 9, 1880, 1. *The Daily Constitution*, June 13 1880, 1.

Throughout Grover Cleveland's two separate terms, the New York president repeatedly faced threats against his life. Even during his tenure as governor of New York, while walking to the state house alone and without any guards, a crazed man tried to bash Cleveland's skull in with a rock.²⁹ As president, Cleveland experienced fewer attacks and threats against his life during his first term than during his second term. During the first term, many threats came from men who came to the White House looking for President Cleveland. Some men who tried to forcefully enter the White House did so out of religious fervor. One man, for instance, claimed to be the "red-man" from the Book of Revelations who "makes and un-makes the presidents!"³⁰ In situations that should have reminded Americans of Garfield's assassination, many threats to Cleveland in his first term came in the form of White House visitors who demanded civil service positions.³¹ One could argue that these first term interlopers entailed no real danger, but some men truly wanted to harm the president, which contradicted Mel Ayton's earlier assessment that only Europeans killed their leaders. The *New York Times* ran an article about a violent man arrested in Washington D.C. who explicitly "declared his intention of killing Grover Cleveland."³² All cranks posed potential threats to the safety and well-being of the president and his family within the White House.

During Grover Cleveland second term, however, because of the economic downturn, the amount of threatening cranks increased dramatically. The majority of these mentally unstable men arrived at the White House because of hardship caused by the economic downturn. While many men believed that the president could help fix their economic troubles, many men blamed Grover Cleveland for their hardship and exacted revenge through attempted assault or even murder. Obviously dissatisfied with Cleveland's presidency, one man who demanded the job of president itself told apprehending officers, "...I intend to get it [the presidency] by fair means or foul. Give me a pistol and you'll see how I'll get it quick."³³ The economic downturn especially harmed Westerners who in turn opposed Grover Cleveland and instead supported Populists. While Westerners and Populists supported the implementation of silver coinage to increase inflation, Cleveland and other conservative "Bourbon

²⁹ *The Sun*, October 21 1884, 1.

³⁰ *The New North-West*, June 10, 1887, 1.

³¹ *Boston Daily Globe*, May 2, 1889, 7. *Chicago Daily Tribune*, July 24, 1886, 12.

³² *New York Times*. November 14 1889, 1.

³³ *St. Paul Daily Globe*, September 29, 1893, 1.

Democrats” wanted the United States to remain on the deflationary gold standard. Washington police arrested one former miner from Idaho, for example, because of his plan to kill Grover Cleveland for the president’s role in harming mining interests,³⁴ and an excellent article from Montana’s *Anaconda Standard* criticized the flippant threats uttered against President Cleveland by Westerners because of the threats’ potentially disastrous consequences.³⁵ The economic downturn, ultimately affected everyone in the nation, and some of those who could not handle the stresses of poverty and its implications turned to Cleveland for either help or vengeance.

In order to solve their economic hardships, many cranks arrived at the Executive Mansion looking for financial assistance or a paying appointment in the government. According to New York’s *The Evening World*, two men forced themselves into the White House demanding the payment of a \$150,000,000,000 debt that the Federal Government apparently owed the men.³⁶ Although a far more polite and reasonable request, when Sam’l H. Smith asked for \$1.50 from the White House “to get something to eat and go home,” White House staff promptly handed Smith off to the Third Precinct Station-House.³⁷ Some unstable cranks, many of who probably lacked a home, demanded ownership of the Executive Mansion itself.³⁸ The *Evening Star* and other papers published articles that included instances of men who forced themselves into the White House with the intention of receiving a government appointment from Cleveland.³⁹ Thanks to widespread publication by national and local newspapers, citizens frequently learned of the run-ins between cranks and Cleveland. Many of these instances, for example, tended to reflect the assassination of James Garfield by Charles Guiteau; considering that Guiteau’s shooting only occurred about fifteen years earlier, the majority of informed Americans, presumably, understood this parallel. These parallels reminded many of the sorrow the nation endured after the last killed president, which aided in turning public opinion towards supporting more security for the president. One, consequently, can understand why the amount of cranks seeking financial assistance skyrocketed in Cleveland’s economically disastrous second term.

³⁴ *The Indianapolis Journal*, November 05, 1893, 1.

³⁵ *The Anaconda Standard*, October 30, 1893, 4.

³⁶ *The Evening World*, October 02, 1893, 2.

³⁷ *The Washington Times*, March 18, 1894, 4.

³⁸ *Grand Rapids Herald*, September 30, 1893, 1. *The Washington Post*, January 2, 1894, 1.

³⁹ *Evening Star*, October 14, 1893, 12. *Kansas City Journal*, September 28, 1897, 2.

Finally, and probably the most upsetting, some mentally unstable cranks even came looking for Cleveland's family. Regardless of her innocent role as the First Lady, cranks and threats did come to Mrs. Cleveland. One article from *The Chicago Daily* listed a manhunt by New York police for a "delusional" and "dangerous" Philadelphia crank who believed "...that Mrs. Grover Cleveland has been delegated to care for him for the remainder of his days."⁴⁰ Grover Cleveland's wife and children sometimes retreated to a home in Buzzard's Bay in Massachusetts for vacation or to get away from the hustle and bustle of the nation's capital. In *The Plots to Kill Grover Cleveland*, historian Mel Ayton lists a plot in which kidnappers planned to abduct and ransom the president's young children from the Massachusetts's home.⁴¹ Any American parent reading of the event in newspapers, regardless of their political affiliation or economic status, would have sympathized with president and father Grover Cleveland. Therefore, when news surfaced of the increased protections authorized by the president for himself and his family, many American citizens remembered all of these threats against the first family and generally accepted the need for increased security. Americans finally understood that even elected officials need security.

The American press widely exposed these reports of cranks and plots against the president and his family all across the United States. As evidenced by the sources in the last several paragraphs, large and small newspapers in every area of the nation reported on cranks that threatened the safety of the president. Every citizen in the country, therefore, knew of the threats against President Cleveland. Large newspapers in New York and Washington even did large stories on how the White House handled these interlopers security-wise. As one could expect from sensationalist journalism designed to sell more papers, articles dramatized non-dangerous cranks. The harsh reality that Grover Cleveland frequently faced dangerous men who threatened himself him and his family became all too apparent to almost every citizen, and none of these Americans wished for Grover Cleveland to become the country's third killed president.

As evidenced by frequent references to recent presidential assassinations in the articles about President Grover Cleveland, many Americans remembered the devastating expressions of post-assassination national sorrow. One must remember when reading these articles that President Lincoln's death only occurred about thirty years before Cleveland's second term, and President Garfield's assassination only

⁴⁰ *Chicago Daily Tribune*, October 1, 1896, 5.

⁴¹ Ayton, Mel, *Plotting to Kill the President: Assassination Attempts from Washington to Hoover*, (Omaha: University of Nebraska Press, 2017), 150.

occurred about fifteen years earlier. The memories of national sorrow remained fresh in the memories of millions of United States citizens who experienced at least one if not both assassinations. In an article about a man who stalked President Cleveland, the *Chicago Daily Tribune* wrote that Albany police arrested Nathan Schuler "...for fear that he might be a possible Guiteau..."⁴² The *Washington Post* even titled an article about a crank who demanded a political office "Just Like Guiteau."⁴³ Therefore, articles easily reminded readers of the universal emotional backlash that occurred after Lincoln and Garfield's deaths. Readers remembered the panicked newspaper reports, published poems and eulogies, memorials, and church services for the seemingly perfect morality of both presidential martyrs. This national sorrow caused many American citizens to sympathize with Grover Cleveland and allow the increase in his personal security.

Massive national sympathy facilitated the acceptance of Grover Cleveland's increased personal security. As the second term dragged on and the threats and cranks continued to affect the White House, Grover Cleveland requested and received more personal protections for the presidency. The *Hartford Herald* pointed out that "No other President has ever been so closely guarded from dangerous cranks as is Mr. Cleveland now. The precautions taken for his protection are unprecedented." The article also described the several men, some of them armed, a visitor must first encounter before meeting the president.⁴⁴ The *Indianapolis Journal* published an article on both the influx of cranks and the new security to combat the problem. The journalist noted how, when leaving the Executive Mansion, the president no longer ventured about Washington D.C. alone, and how armed guards in a separate carriage followed the president's now-closed carriage: "There never were half so many detectives and policemen and safeguards thrown about the President as now, and that he is shadowed wherever he goes."⁴⁵ According to Ayton, many undercover special detectives and policeman protected the president as Secret Service officers.⁴⁶ Even the Executive Mansion dramatically increased its security in order to protect the president and his family.⁴⁷ Thankfully for the Cleveland family, the people accepted these radical, new security improvements. Some complained of their extremeness, but the majority of

⁴² *Chicago Daily Tribune*, July 24, 1886, 12.

⁴³ *The Washington Post*, November 24, 1886, 1.

⁴⁴ *The Hartford Herald*, November 01, 1893, 1.

⁴⁵ *The Indianapolis Journal*, November 10, 1893, 5.

⁴⁶ Ayton, Mel, *Plotting to Kill the President: Assassination Attempts from Washington to Hoover*, (Omaha: University of Nebraska Press, 2017), 1.

⁴⁷ *The San Francisco Call*, November 23, 1895, 2.

voters recognized their growing necessity as Americans became more and more cognizant of the security issues that Grover Cleveland faced everyday. One could even speculate how Cleveland's presidency may have transpired, or even ended, without these crucial additions to his security.

Unfortunately for President Cleveland, not all of the presidential protections remained in place. Some Republican opponents criticized Cleveland in newspapers for acting cowardly. These articles, however, failed to sway the nervous conscious of the American public. The pain of losing two earlier great presidents in Abraham Lincoln and James Garfield still freshly lingered in the hearts and minds of millions of Americans. Many articles that criticized Cleveland's actions even ironically invoked the memories of Lincoln or Garfield, which would no doubt remind readers of their beloved presidents' killings: "No chief executive in our history, not even Lincoln at the wildest period of the war, was ever so surrounded by security guards as is Mr. Cleveland."⁴⁸ Ultimately, American citizens understood the petty nature of the political attacks by some Republican operatives and congressmen; American citizens also realized the importance of protecting the president. After the assassination of President William McKinley in 1901 by Leon Czolgosz, Congress failed to pass seventeen bills that aimed to protect the president even further, so the Secretary to the President and the Treasury Department expanded the duties of the Secret Service to protecting the president.⁴⁹ Finally, the government, although not Congress, successfully acted to reflect popular opinion, and the United States president enjoyed permanent, comprehensive, and competent personal protection. At the City of Boston's memorial service for James Garfield, the City Council decreed that, "The government of the country is never seriously disturbed by the death of any of it officials."⁵⁰ After any presidential assassination, the United States will continue to survive, but, the government must nonetheless protect its president in order to facilitate the country's success, and modern presidents have President Grover Cleveland to thank for their effective protection.

⁴⁸ Ayton, Mel, *Plotting to Kill the President: Assassination Attempts from Washington to Hoover*, (Omaha: University of Nebraska Press, 2017), 1.

⁴⁹ *Excerpts from the History of the United States Secret Service, 1865-1975*, (Washington: Dept. of the Treasury, 1978) 16.

⁵⁰ Boston City Council, *A Memorial of James Abram Garfield: From the City of Boston*, (Boston: Printed by order of the City Council, 1881), 12, accessed from the John. J. Burns Library at Boston College.

THE VIRGINIA SLAVE CODE OF 1705: BASED IN CLASSISM, NOT RACISM

BY PATRICK REED

The English colony of Virginia was founded upon the shoulders of those in bondage. Most whites came to Virginia as indentured servants by way of the headright system, and nearly all blacks came as slaves. However, Virginia in the early to mid-1600s lacked clear racial standards as people of all races enjoyed some degree of upward social mobility. Today colonial Virginia is usually remembered for its heavy reliance on institutionalized racial slavery, but its social dynamic did not always reflect this viewpoint. While blacks were subject to a few discriminatory practices as early as the 1640s, they were not victims of the systematic racism that came to define the colony as early as 1705.¹ Interracial marriage was common and interracial couples who had offspring, though officially viewed as illegitimate children, were not subject to legal punishment.² It makes sense, then, to question how Virginia came to be one of the most efficiently racist slave societies in the Americas. The answer lies in the conflict between the different classes of white people in early Virginia. After these class conflicts came to a head in 1676 with Bacon's Rebellion, the ruling planter class had to devise a way to draw attention away from the inequalities present within the white population of the colony. Its answer was to cement racism in Virginia's laws so that poor whites would no longer want to topple the ruling class but instead focus on maintaining their racially privileged position over blacks. Accordingly, the Virginia Slave Code of 1705 created a race-based social hierarchy as a means of resolving class conflict within the white community.*

Race was not a restrictive force in colonial Virginia for most of the seventeenth century. The story of Anthony Johnson is the most well documented account of a black man who enjoyed equality with whites in Virginia. Johnson, a former slave who earned his freedom, became a respected landowner and slaveholder in Virginia.³ Although Johnson's story is an exceptional one, his success proves that one's race did not

¹ David Brion Davis, *Slavery in the Colonial Chesapeake* (The Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, 1986), 9.

² *Ibid.*, 11.

* Unless otherwise explicitly stated, the term "black" will henceforth refer to black slaves.

³ T.H. Breen and Stephen Innes, *Myne Owne Ground: Race and freedom on Virginia's Eastern Shore, 1640-1676* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1980), 13.

relegate him to a particular social class. In Virginia's Northampton County: "Although all the original blacks apparently arrived as slaves, by 1668 approximately 29 percent of the county's blacks were free...Former slaves like [Francis Payne] became independent planters, sometimes even slaveholders, who drew up wills to insure their hard-earned property."⁴ The fact that a black slave could first earn his freedom and then own land and slaves of his own demonstrates the lack of strict race-based restrictions of liberty at this time. Blacks also enjoyed fair treatment in the colony's legal system, a practice that became incomprehensible post-1705. Just before 1650 Anthony Johnson petitioned his county court for tax relief, and colonial legislators not only granted him relief but also ruled his wife and daughters exempt from public levies.⁵ The fact that a court granted tax-exemption to black women, a luxury otherwise exclusive to white women, proves racism was not yet present in legal proceedings during this era in Virginia's history. In short, the racial boundaries that existed after 1705, such as bans on black land ownership and legal due process, were not definitive of Virginia just decades prior.

In fact, the greatest source of social conflict during this period in Virginia's history was the adversarial relationship between white indentured servants and rich white planters. Rich planters attempted to prolong indentured terms of service to alleviate the pressure from a growing number of freed servants who demanded land of their own. The planters believed keeping these people in a relative state of servitude for as long as possible would reduce competition for land ownership. With extended terms of service, "...[servants] would create profits rather than competition for their masters, who would also be without an indenture in which the terms specified were vulnerable to such a move."⁶ The ruling class also enacted laws that attached serious penalties to runaway indentured servants. On top of the existing law that punished a runaway servant by extending his term of service by twice the length of absence, "In 1669 and 1670 new laws provided rewards to anyone apprehending a runaway, with the provision that the servant not only reimburse the public by serving further time at the rate of four months for every 200 pounds of tobacco expended on the reward for apprehending."⁷ As though these penalties were not enough, the courts also had the power to add time to the

⁴ David Brion Davis, *Slavery in the Colonial Chesapeake*...10.

⁵ Breen and Innes, *Myne Owne Ground*...12.

⁶ Edmund Morgan, *American Slavery, American Freedom: The Ordeal of Colonial Virginia* (New York: Norton, 1975), 176.

⁷ Ibid

servant's term to compensate for the losses the master incurred from the servant's absence.⁸

In a time when land ownership was paramount, rich planters also made it very difficult for freed white servants to obtain workable land of their own. Rich planters did not want freedmen to get land and consequently push tobacco prices even lower with increased production. Facing the dilemma of an ever-growing restless white freedman population, Virginia's ruling class took action to limit the independence of the freedman such that, "During the last thirty or forty years of the seventeenth century, while tobacco was enriching the king and so many others, most of the men who worked in the fields were losers, and they did not much like it."⁹ Ruling planters knew they could not prevent freedmen from wanting to work land of their own, so they also became land speculators. The planters knew that demand for land would only increase as more servants were freed, so they bought land while it was still cheap and plentiful such that a wealthy few owned most of Virginia's fertile land by 1660.¹⁰ Servants who became free after 1660 found it quite difficult to claim their own workable land, especially after speculators' land grab during 1650-1675 in which more than two million acres of land were patented by rich planters.¹¹ This is more than half the total land patented for all of 1635-1699, and most of this land went to planters like Colonel Edmund Scarborough of Accomack County and John Savage of Rappahannock County who held patents to nearly ten thousand acres each.¹²

By mid-century, newly freed servants were in a state of perpetual dependence on their former masters. Many former servants had to rent land from this newfound planter/speculator class. Servants, "...found it increasingly difficult to locate workable land that was not already claimed. In order to set up their own households in this vast and unpeopled country, they frequently had to rent or else move to the frontiers, where they came into conflict with the Indians. Many preferred safety in the settled area even though it meant renting land from the big men who owned it."¹³ Planters certainly enjoyed collecting rent money from their new tenants, but more importantly was the creation of this artificial land scarcity in Virginia. In fact, those who could not afford to rent another man's land

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Ibid, 178.

¹¹ Ibid, 179.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Ibid.

often had no other choice than to re-enter servitude.¹⁴ Records in Lancaster County indicate that of, "...247 servants who either are known to have become free or were legally entitled to freedom between 1662 and 1678, only 24 show up as householders by 1679,"¹⁵ and in the even poorer Northampton County, "Only 80 of the 329 white non-householders present in the years 1664-67 were still in the county in 1677... Those who lost status, with a few known exceptions, were presumably freemen who had set up on their own and then had to give up and go back to work for someone else."¹⁶ Obviously the wealthy whites of Virginia intended to create a hostile environment for poor white people, the vast majority of whom came to Virginia as an indentured servant.

The tension between poor and wealthy whites greatly influenced Bacon's Rebellion and eventually led to Virginia's implementation of the Slave Code of 1705. In 1676 a settler named Nathaniel Bacon led a militia of poor Virginians in rebellion against Governor William Berkeley. The rebels condemned Berkeley for his toothless policy towards Indians on the frontier and for his unjust land policies within the colony. Berkeley was also known to place disproportionately high taxes on poor planters and to grant all of the best eastern lands to his friends.¹⁷ Poor Virginians also felt Berkeley's decisions had cheated them of the right to self-governance: "The right of all free men to vote was ended in 1670 unless they met definite property qualifications. This was in contrast to the years 1649-1660... At that time there were regular general elections for burgesses and the county courts were popularly elected."¹⁸ In short, Berkeley ensured that poor planters were cheated out of land, overtaxed, and lacked governmental efficacy. These factors, combined with record-low tobacco prices and tension with Indians on the frontier, led to rebellion.¹⁹ But despite popular resentment for Berkeley and the ruling elite, the rebels' own racist sentiments made them first focus their attention on addressing the encroaching Indians. This allowed Berkeley to quell the revolt and retain power for a short time thereafter. Curiously, the last standing rebel fighting force of the rebellion was composed entirely of twenty white servants and eighty black slaves.²⁰ Frightened at the prospect of prolonged

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Ibid, 184.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Thomas Jefferson Wertenbaker, *Bacon's Rebellion, 1676* (Williamsburg, VA: Virginia 350th Anniversary Celebration, 1957), 4 & 16.

¹⁸ Charles Willard Hoskins Warner, *Road to Revolution; Virginia's Rebels from Bacon to Jefferson, 1676-1776* (Richmond: Garrett and Massie, 1961), 9.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Edmund Morgan, *American Slavery, American Freedom...* 218.

unity among poor Virginians, the ruling elite noted that it must take action to prevent this from ever happening again, prompting the creation of the Slave Code of 1705. If the rebel forces had not been distracted from their crusade against the ruling class by their racist attitudes toward the Indians, they may have been more successful in reforming their colonial government.

Bacon's Rebellion revealed the distracting power of racism, and the leadership of the colony took this cue to pass the Slave Code of 1705. Virginia's ruling class realized that, "Resentment of an alien race might be more powerful than resentment of an upper class."²¹ With the Slave Code of 1705, legislators simply refocused these racist sentiments away from Indians and towards blacks. Although the code presents itself as an attack on the black slave population, it merely uses the guise of racism to protect ruling planters' interests by making concessions to the disgruntled poor white population. Article VII of the Code explicitly forbade the whipping of white servants and granted white servants the right to make complaints in court.²² By protecting whites servants but granting no similar privileges to black slaves, who were also in a state of servitude, this Article conferred superiority to white servants over their black peers. Moreover, the Article improved the lot of white servants because the ruling class knew many white freedmen ended up returning to servitude shortly after earning their freedom. There were also several provisions in the Code that addressed the issue of interracial relationships between lower class whites and black slaves. Specifically, Article XI granted freedom to all Christian white servants of white people who married blacks: "...every Christian white servant of every such person so intermarrying, shall, ipso facto, become free and acquit from any service then due to such master or mistress so intermarrying, as aforesaid."²³ This Article created a greater divide between blacks and whites because it suggested that any white person who chose to marry a black person was unfit to hold a position of power over another white person, even an indentured servant. Finally, Article XVIII ensured that racism would help define the future of Virginia by stating: "And if a free Christian white woman shall have such a bastard child, by a negro, or mulatto, for every such offence, she shall...pay to the church-wardens for the time being...for the use of the said parish fifteen pounds current money of Virginia, or be by them sold for five years to the use

²¹ Ibid.

²² *An Act Concerning Servants and Slaves (1705)*, Transcription from the Original (Virginia Library), Article VII.

²³ Ibid, Article XI.

aforsaid.”²⁴ This Article further drove a wedge between otherwise similar groups of poor/indentured whites and blacks by outlawing interracial relationships.

The Slave Code also racialized punishments for breaking the law. Article XXIII gave rewards of hundreds of pounds of tobacco to white people who captured and returned runaway black slaves.²⁵ This specific provision allowed even the lowliest white man to, “...find comfort in his legal superiority to all blacks and could feel flattered when asked to ride patrol at night in search of wayward slaves.”²⁶ Furthermore, white people who captured runaway slaves enjoyed the liberty to punish them as they saw fit without fear of consequences. Specifically, Article XXXIV declared, “...if any slave resist his master, or owner, or other person, by his or her order, correcting such slave, and shall happen to be killed in such correction, it shall not be accounted felony...every such other person giving so correction, shall be free and acquit of all punishment and accusation for the same, as if such incident had never happened.”²⁷ This Article also forbade any slave from retaliating against a white person’s punishments. By failing to limit the ability to dole out punishment to a particular type of white person, this article gave *any and all* white people the right to punish slaves with impunity, suggesting that all white people regardless of social status were superior to blacks. And to further dissociate these two groups, Article XXXVII made it clear that only a black slave, and not a white servant, who ran away from his master may be dismembered as punishment for fleeing.²⁸ Proscribing different punishments for blacks and whites guilty of identical crimes cemented racism into the fabric of Virginian society. In practice, the Slave Code of 1705 stripped black slaves (and therefore the overwhelming majority of all blacks in Virginia) of liberty and granted more rights to all white people, even those in bondage.

Some may see the Slave Code of 1705 as just another example of purely racist legislation passed by a colonial American government, but the true spirit of this set of laws is more than skin-deep. While many consider Virginia to be the epicenter of slavery in the United States, the commonwealth that soon became the largest slaveholding colony in

²⁴ *An Act Concerning Servants and Slaves (1705)*, Transcription from the Original (Virginia Library), Article XVIII.

²⁵ *Ibid*, Article XXIII.

²⁶ David Brion Davis, *Slavery in the Colonial Chesapeake*, 22.

²⁷ *An Act Concerning Servants and Slaves (1705)*, Transcription from the Original (Virginia Library), Article XXXIV.

²⁸ *Ibid*, Article XXXVII.

English North America did not adopt a system of institutionalized racial slavery until class conflict amongst white colonists made it absolutely necessary for the survival of the colony. Poor white planters, many of whom came to Virginia as indentured servants, were incensed by the large planters' manipulation of land ownership in the colony. If they were fortunate enough to be relieved of their servitude, most of them ended up either renting from wealthy land speculators or being forced back into servitude under their former masters. Either way, their fate did not align with what they had been promised in England before crossing the Atlantic. This increasingly restless group of people became a serious concern for Virginia's ruling elite, especially since English servants were coming to Virginia in record numbers by 1676. In his book *White, Red, and Black: The Seventeenth-Century Virginian* Wesley Frank Craven calculates that almost 47,000 people had arrived in Virginia on headrights during 1650-1675, with 25,872 of those coming between 1663 and 1674.²⁹ Thus the great migration to Virginia started at mid-century, and more than half of the people who migrated in the seventeenth century did so during the third quarter³⁰. The confluence of poor white immigrants being swindled out of opportunities, record-low tobacco prices, and tension with Indians on the frontier created a perfect storm for Nathaniel Bacon to unite poor colonists in arms against the ruling class in 1676.

Bacon's Rebellion was not fruitful in terms of reforming the colonial government. It was, however, the single most important factor in bringing institutionalized racial slavery to Virginia. Thus is the tragic irony of a rebellion that had united blacks and whites against the status quo. The elites of Virginia noticed the strength of this group's racism towards frontier Indians and used the same notion to establish the Slave Code of 1705. They realized that the only solution to the class conflict between white Virginians, "...was racism, to separate dangerous free whites from dangerous black slaves by a screen of racial contempt."³¹ By creating a codified set of laws that extended special privileges to all whites and snatched rights from black slaves, the colonial assembly knew it could gradually transform society's contempt of rich white people into a stronger contempt of all black people. With this set of laws, "Poor whites suddenly had a direct, personal stake in the existence of a race-based system of

²⁹ Wesley Frank Craven, *White, Red, and Black: The Seventeenth-century Virginian* (Williamsburg, VA: Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, 1986), 15 & 16.

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Edmund Morgan, *American Slavery, American Freedom...*264.

slavery”³² and “...by lumping Indians, mulattoes, and Negroes in a single parish class, Virginians had paved the way for a similar lumping of small and large planters in a single master class.”³³ Knowing this, one might wonder what legacy Bacon’s Rebellion retains. Most people recognize it as the earliest instance of armed rebellion against tyranny in the American colonies. However, Bacon’s Rebellion was far more important to the long-term trajectory of American history than this reading implies. Bacon’s Rebellion and the Slave Code of 1705 it inspired were the sparks that ignited the system of institutionalized racial slavery in Virginia, a colony that would become one of the strongest Confederate states fighting in support of slavery during the American Civil War. In the end, the Virginia Slave Code of 1705 was never really about race; it was about class.

³² Michelle Alexander, *The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness* (New York: The New Press, 2010), 22-26.

³³ Edmund Morgan, *American Slavery, American Freedom*...310.

THE FORCES BEHIND KILLING

BY JOSEPH WEISBROOK

As long as there has been mankind, there has been violence. Sometimes between individuals, sometimes between large groups or nations. There is no question that humanity has a high capacity for violence towards its fellow man. However, in some cases, that violence is almost completely one sided against a group who lacks the ability to defend themselves, and the Holocaust is often viewed as the epitome of that type of violence. Why do many people passively sit back while terrible events occur, while others decide to participate as cogs in the murder machine? Using primarily the Holocaust as a case study, it is apparent that the “otherness” of the victims, propaganda, and social pressures were the main drivers for the Nazis to commit genocide.

It is impossible to enter into a discussion on genocide without first defining the term. The term “genocide” was coined by Raphael Lemkin around the end of the Second World War, and it was defined in 1948 by a United Nations convention as “acts committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial, or religious group.”¹ Some authors have dubbed the 20th century as the century of genocide, and for good reason.² One of the defining moments of the 20th century, World War II, was driven by the Nazi ideology. The Nazis rampant anti-Semitism pushed the German people to view Jews as inferior beings, sub-human cretins not worthy of sharing Germany with them. This mentality and the fact that the Jews were dubbed as “others” made it easier for Germans to justify the actions that they were taking.

The “otherness” of the victims is essential to understanding why people perpetrate genocide. Genocide is rarely an overnight decision made by a government or by individuals. Genocides are often proceeded by a process where a group of people are identified as separate (usually with preexisting labels, i.e. Jews, Hutu, etc.), with a gradual escalation to genocide. Many authors have taken different approaches to understanding the otherness that is readily apparent in many genocides. Colin Tatz and Winton Higgins suggest that a “scientific racism” set the stage for future

¹ Samantha Power, *“A Problem From Hell”: America and the Age of Genocide* (New York, NY: Harper Perennial, 2001), 57.

² Reading on the topic is not necessary to see examples of this: the title of Totten, Parsons, and Charny’s *Century of Genocide* makes the claim without opening the cover.

classifications by creating a series of categories, defined by physical characteristics, which further allowed for an idea of “biological determinism” which provided “German racists of the... Nazi periods...what they were looking for.”³ Without an identity of who “we” are, it is equally impossible to assign an identity to who “they” are. Therefore, “consciously or unconsciously, the insiders reshape their own identities in ways that justify the exclusion of the outsiders.”⁴ Establishing an identity for the outsiders and insiders is only the beginning.

There are obviously many methods in which an identity of an “other” can be created or assigned to a target group. One reason is simple: because that target group has a longstanding tradition of being outsiders to a society. One study suggested that “most people agree with the ideas of their own social group; they are conditioned by the people with whom they live.”⁵ This argument is also used by Daniel Goldhagen when he argues (as summarized by James Waller) that “virtually all Germans had come to believe...that Jews were different from Germans... [that they were] evil and powerful, had done great harm to Germany, and would continue to do so. Thus, for Germany to be secure and prosperous, there had to be an elimination of Jewish influence or of Jews themselves from German society.”⁶ He argues that over an extended period of time, the German people had relegated the Jewish people to a status of something other than German, which made it easier for them to commit the atrocities that they did. If an idea of a “them” has been established already, then when “we” meet “them”, “attention is focused... upon the ‘self’ and the ‘other and... the distinctive identity of the self is typically reaffirmed and accompanied by assertions of...superiority.”⁷

The idea of a historical tradition of excluding a specific group encouraging a genocide helps feed into another idea: propaganda. Merriam-Webster defines propaganda as “the spreading of ideas, information, or rumor for the purpose of helping or injuring an institution,

³ Colin Tatz & Winton Higgins, *The Magnitude of Genocide*, (Santa Barbara, CA: Praeger, 2016), 54.

⁴ Victoria J Barnett, *Bystanders: Conscience and Complicity During the Holocaust* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1999), 100.

⁵ E Cooper & M. Jahoda, “The Evasion of Propaganda: How Prejudiced People Respond to Anti-Prejudice Propaganda,” *Journal of Psychology*, 23, (1947): 24.

⁶ James Waller, *Becoming Evil: How Ordinary People Commit Genocide and Mass Killing* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2002), 37.

⁷ Harold D. Lasswell, “The Impact of Technology on the Mind”, in *Man and Civilization: Control of the Mind*, ed. Seymour M. Farber (New York, NY: McGraw-Hill, 1961), 261.

a cause, or a person.”⁸ During the 1900’s, the advent of mass communication such as film and radio allowed people such as Hitler to reach a much wider audience, while simultaneously capturing charisma that could never be portrayed in mere words in a newspaper. Words are extremely powerful, and viewpoints can easily be passed into younger generations. “The socialization sequence through which children...pass...is so organized that... a simple reminder, to memorize and repeat the Declaration of Independence or passages from the Bible is rewarded by affection, respect... and by a continued flow of other benefits.”⁹ Indoctrination, if it begins early, can create a mindset that a child will carry throughout their life. The Nazi party was particularly effective at this. They had a system where films and slides would be proceeded by lectures and followed by examines to apply “visual education as a shortcut to an understanding of political as well as general themes,” and that “Germany’s school-film propaganda had infected many children with Nazi ideas.”¹⁰ Mass media made it easier for the Nazi propaganda machine to reach their people, and the people of other captured nations.

There is little doubt that the Nazi party used propaganda as a tool, especially considering that a part of its government was the “Ministry of Propaganda and Public Enlightenment.” The Nazi party understood that “the carefully built lie, big or little, has been of much importance in political persuasion and control” and did everything in their power to exploit their carefully built lies of Jewish inferiority.¹¹ The carefulness upon which lies were built is no accident, as Joseph Goebbels, the Nazi minister of propaganda, recognized that “the moment propaganda becomes known, it becomes ineffective.”¹² With the coercion and terror that the Nazi party used when it gained power, “the insidious use made of propaganda in a ‘closed’ environment was enough to ensure at least

⁸ Merriam-Webster Online, “Propaganda”, accessed 31 OCT 2017.

⁹ Lasswell, “Impact of Technology,” 256.

¹⁰ John Altmann, “Movies’ Role in Hitler’s Conquest of German Youth,” *Hollywood Quarterly* 3, no. 4 (1948), 379.

¹¹ William Porter, “The Impact of Technology on the Mind,” in *Man and Civilization: Control of the Mind*, ed. Seymour M. Farber (New York, NY: McGraw-Hill, 1961), 239.

¹² Christian W Hallstein, “‘Ohm Krüger’: The Genesis of a Nazi Propaganda Film,” *Literature/Film Quarterly* 30, no. 2 (2002): 135. It is interesting that he stated this, given that he was the head of the “Ministry of Propaganda and Public Enlightenment.” How he was able to overcome this contrast could be a focus of further research.

‘passive’ support for the regime.”¹³ Without that support of the individual players within the regime, the Nazi party would have had little chance to execute the genocide against the Jews.

Propaganda has the capacity to be extremely powerful in shifting a populace’s mentality, while sometimes it simply strengthens and solidifies an existing point. If the German people were as pliable as suggested by Goldhagen, then when Hitler wrote *Mein Kampf* and “called for a solution to the Jewish problem, he was preaching to the converted.”¹⁴ Waller pushes back against Goldhagen’s argument, arguing that “it is hard to find widespread evidence that eliminationist anti-Semitism” was the norm prior to the Nazis’ rise to power. Yet other authors believe that, in order for propaganda to be effective, it “must, in a sense, preach to those who are already partially converted.”¹⁵ Only a few years after WWII concluded, psychologists were arguing that “those who are prejudiced are more apt to misunderstand a message than the unprejudiced.”¹⁶ Propaganda only serves to amplify and increased prejudices which already exist within a society.

Nazism itself can be viewed as a form of propaganda. As the party gained power, it became practically a necessity to join the party in order to achieve any position of prominence in Nazi Germany. Yet as people became members of a group, “individuals not only conform, but actually define themselves according to the attitudes and goals of the group; this, in turn, shapes their perceptions of reality and their behavior.”¹⁷ Information was being spread from within the party, encouraging the members of the bureaucracy to follow the beliefs of the party simply by membership. Although this may not have been visible to the members of the Nazi party, Americans noticed that “the effect of Goebbels eloquence at home is in a large but undeterminable measure the effect of state and party power. The very existence of this power affects action, speech and attitude.”¹⁸ The power of the party helped to shape the people’s actions to support the institution and the cause. This is, by definition, propaganda.

¹³ David Welch, "Nazi Propaganda and the Volksgemeinschaft: Constructing a People's Community," *Journal of Contemporary History* 39, no. 2 (2004): 214.

¹⁴ Waller, *Becoming Evil*, 38.

¹⁵ Welch, "Nazi Propaganda," 214.

¹⁶ Cooper & Jahoda, "Evasion of Propaganda," 15.

¹⁷ Victoria J Barnett, *Bystanders: Conscience and Complicity During the Holocaust* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1999), 35.

¹⁸ Hans Speier, "Nazi Propaganda and Its Decline," *Social Research* 10, no. 3 (1943): 358.

The person who is delivering it has a strong influence on the effectiveness of propaganda. One key factor that psychologists have explored is the effect of receiving instructions from a person in a position of power. This type of social effect can also drive people to commit acts that they would not normally commit, in much the same way that propaganda can. Psychologist Stanley Milgram conducted a famous experiment that examined how people would respond when ordered to provide a physical shock to another person who answered any of a series of questions wrong. What Milgram found was that all of his participants continued to a level of 300 volts (marked as “danger”) and that 65% of people continued to the highest level of voltage allowed (450 volts). What his experiment showed was that, when instructed to conduct an action by an authority figure in a position of power, all people were willing to continue to a level that was categorized as dangerous.¹⁹ His experiment provided strong evidence that some ordinary people were able and willing to follow instructions that their superior provided, regardless of the effect that their actions had on other people. The mentality of “just following orders” is not only used in cases of genocide. United States soldiers massacred an entire village in Vietnam, and later claimed that their officers “told me to start shooting. So I started shooting.”²⁰ The fact that people use that reasoning not solely in the case of genocides helps strengthen Milgram’s argument that it is a normal human occurrence. This experiment provides, at the very least, a starting point for the investigation as to why people participate in acts of genocide.

Milgram conducted his experiment repeatedly, altering some of the conditions to see how those changes affected behaviors. When forced to put the subject’s hand onto the shocking mechanism, only 30% of people were willing to continue with the experiment.²¹ He discovered something extremely important, if intuitive: the closer the perpetrator is physically to his victim, the less likely he was to inflict pain and suffering to the subject. If pain or suffering is inflicted, it will have a much greater effect on an observer who is nearby. Historian Raul Hilberg discusses this, telling a story about a policeman who shot a young girl in a ghetto, and then “the policeman, deathly pale, took [an observer] by the arm, pointed to the dead body, and ordered the blood to be washed away, all the while

¹⁹ Saul McLeod, “The Milgram Experiment,” 2007, <https://www.simplypsychology.org/asch-conformity.html>, accessed 30 October 2017.

²⁰ M. Wallace, *New York Times* (November 25, 1969), page unknown, in David G. Myers, *Social Psychology* (New York, NY: McGraw Hill, 2013), 202.

²¹ McLeod, “Milgram Experiment.”

explaining that the shooting was not his fault and showing the woman a piece of paper that he said contained his orders.”²² The policeman executed his “duty”, but struggled with the aftermath of his actions.

One area this is applicable is in the fact that the “responsibility” of genocide can be distributed to people who are physically removed from the killing. “The lower-order functions of the state... continued to function and contributed massively to the Holocaust... Individual moral responsibility is displaced onto the higher-ups who set the institutional goals.”²³ It is easy for people to participate in the perpetration of genocide when they are uninvolved in it, and merely see themselves paper pushers. Milgram investigated this idea in his studies, finding that if the participant only had to instruct someone else to shock the subject, then 92.5% of all participants were willing to reach the 450-volt level.²⁴ When people were able to remove themselves from the execution of the task, they had a greater willingness to participate, because they no longer feel that they are perpetrating the action (in Milgram’s case, the shocking. Within genocides, the actions are obviously much more severe). The propaganda set the stage, as “the result of Nazi propaganda was that the bitterness and anger of the dispossessed middle classes... came to be expressed in terms of extreme nationalism and anti-Semitism.”²⁵ Once armed with the anti-Semitism that the propaganda provided, the middlemen could then go on to do their daily jobs, removed as they were from the actual execution of the genocide their paperwork helped create. “Their location at some distance from the sights, sounds, and smells of mass murder underpinned their detachment from the human consequences of their work.”²⁶ The combination of the propaganda, which provided the disregard for the welfare of the Jews, and the distance from the actual killings, as explored by Milgram, helps explain why the middlemen could easily conduct their jobs.

This concept is essential to the study of genocide, because as Scott Straus states in *Fundamentals of Genocide and Mass Atrocity Prevention*: “without such mid-level actors, the local organization of violence would not occur.”²⁷ The bureaucracy is necessary to perpetrate a genocide, yet

²² Raul Hilberg, *Perpetrators Victims Bystanders: The Jewish Catastrophe 1933-1945* (New York, NY: Harper Perennial, 1992), 57.

²³ Tatz and Higgins, *Magnitude*, 74-75.

²⁴ McLeod, “Milgram Experiment.”

²⁵ Sabby Sagall, “The Nazi Holocaust,” In *Final Solutions: Human Nature, Capitalism and Genocide*, 183-221 (London: Pluto Press, 2013.), 188.

²⁶ Tatz and Higgins, *Magnitude*, 75

²⁷ Scott Straus, *Fundamentals of Genocide and Mass Atrocity Prevention* (Washington DC: United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, 2016), 93.

participation in that bureaucracy helps people believe that they are not to blame for the genocide. The bureaucracy's distance from the killing helps support the mid-level actors who have that sentiment. This helps people to not believe that they are perpetrators of a genocide, but rather the middle man: going about the same jobs that they held before the genocide began. "These people were so ordinary that, with few exceptions, they were readily absorbed into civil society after the killings."²⁸ These bureaucrats, although driven to anti-Semitism by the Nazi propaganda, were able to reacclimatize once the propaganda was removed.

What then drives people to commit genocides? There are many reoccurring key elements that are apparent within the Holocaust. First, the "othering" of the Jews played a key role in allowing the Germans to stop caring about the Jews and what happened to them throughout the Second World War. This also helped fuel the propaganda machine that the Germans were driving. Without preexisting prejudices (or at the very least indifference) that the German people already had, the German propaganda against the Jews would not have been nearly as effective. Finally, social pressures and psychology played a part. Pressure is more effective when coming from a position of power, which helped strengthen the Nazi propaganda within Germany. The systematization of mass killing and deportation further allowed individual Nazis to displace their moral culpability, at least in their own eyes, due to their distance from the actual events of the genocide. Individually, none of these items can explain why the Nazis were able to perpetrate the Holocaust; together, they help fill in the picture a little more.

²⁸ James Waller, "The Ordinariness of Extraordinary Evil: The Making of Perpetrators of Genocide and Mass Killing," in *Ordinary People as Mass Murderers*, eds. Olaf Jensen and Claus-Christian Szejnmann (Houndsmill, England: Palgrave, 2008), 147.

CONDUCTATOR: NICOLAE CEAUSESCU AND THE APPROPRIATION OF ROMANIAN NATIONAL IDENTITY UNDER SOCIALISM

BY DANIEL BERARDINO

In 1968, the Warsaw Pact invaded Czechoslovakia to counter the liberal reforms of Alexander Dubcek.¹ Of the Warsaw Pact Leaders, only Nicolae Ceausescu of Romania publicly condemned the invasion, winning praise from the West and China. Even though he was, in this one instance, willing to oppose Soviet domination of the Eastern bloc, he was no reformer. Ceausescu truly believed in the Stalinist cause. His harsh domestic policies reflected the simple, ideological thinking of his revolutionary peasant heritage. Born impoverished, Ceausescu joined the communists upon moving to Bucharest and because of this political activity, spent much of his youth in Romanian prison. After WWII Soviet troops elevated the Romanian Communist Party (RCP) to power in the country. As a result, Romanians widely viewed the RCP as illegitimate and foreign dominated due to its external imposition. The RCP struggled to change this view. Starting in 1964, after Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej's death, Ceausescu energetically pursued Stalinist policies at home while attempting to appeal to Romanian nationalism abroad. Rejecting internal reform, the RCP under Ceausescu attempted to assert its political legitimacy by acting independently in foreign policy for the Romanian national interest.

The origins of Ceausescu's independent foreign policy lay in the policy of his predecessor, Gheorghiu-Dej. Gheorghiu-Dej became General Secretary of the RCP in the wake of the 4th Party Congress of 1928 held in Kharkov, USSR. Soviet Comintern officials ran the congress and forced Stalinist modes of control upon the Romanian communists, purging many of the party's social democrats.¹ Given his foreign political origins, many

¹ Alexander Dubcek was the reformist leader of Czechoslovakia 1968-1969. His policy of "socialism with a human face" drew the ire of the Soviet Union when he threatened to withdraw from the Warsaw Pact, precipitating Soviet intervention.

¹ Tismaneanu, Vladimir. *Stalinism For All Seasons: A Political History of Romanian Communism*. (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2003), 64-69. A Stalinist party ran on a principal of party discipline and unity. Most party decisions were made behind closed doors in the central committee and deviation was not tolerated. Additionally, party leaders could destroy rivals and remove opposition members from office without recourse for the snubbed.

Romanians suspected that Gheorghiu-Dej represented Moscow's interest. Under Soviet General Secretary Iosef Stalin, that assessment appeared correct. After Soviet troops arrived in Bucharest in 1944, the NKVD under Lavrentiy Beria prepared the communist takeover of Romania. By 1945 the political situation remained fractured and the communists struggled to gather the necessary support to assume control by democratic means.¹ When popular support failed to materialize by 1947, Gheorghiu-Dej along with Soviet Deputy Foreign Minister Andrei Vyshinsky forced the Romanian King Michael from the throne and proclaimed RCP rule.² Given the assistance Gheorghiu-Dej received from the USSR, naturally, the RCP thanked Stalin for its ascendancy. Once in power, the RCP initiated a campaign of political terror to solidify its political control while pursuing collectivization with the help of Soviet advisors, transforming Romania into a Stalinist industrialized socialist state. Since Moscow and Bucharest's national security interests aligned in the late 40s and early 50s, Gheorghiu-Dej strongly supported the USSR's foreign policy.

The special relationship between the USSR and the Socialist Republic of Romania broke down after Stalin's death. Khrushchev's de-Stalinization of the USSR greatly worried Gheorghiu-Dej and the RCP as it threatened to weaken their domestic grip on power. In order to prevent the liberalization of Romanian communism, the RCP appealed to the people's traditional nationalism by publicly asserting its independence from Moscow.³ Gheorghiu-Dej's first demonstration of autonomy came in 1958 when, after the RCP demonstrated competence in containing the Hungarian crisis of 1956, he negotiated for the removal of Soviet troops

¹ "Report to L. P. Beria about the Political Situation in Romania," March 05, 1945, History and Public Policy Program Digital Archive, GARF, fond 9401, op 2, d 93, ll. 264-267. Document No. 51 in *Vostochnaia Evropa*, edited by G.P. Murashko, et al, vol. 1. Translated for CWHIP by Svetlana Savranskaya. Reporting to NKVD chief L. P. Beria of the worsening problem of worker unrest in Bucharest, the NKVD hinted at the possible need to use force to maintain control. If the coalition is formed the Zemlyaki (meaning communists) would get majority. The Soviets clearly would prefer a democratic coalition to a hostile takeover due to the problems of legitimacy. National-Democratic Front was the most powerful party. The question was how to defeat them and make it look good?

² Tismaneanu, *Stalinism For All Seasons: A Political History of Romanian Communism*, 86-90.

³ *Ibid.*, 187-189. Gheorghiu-Dej claimed to have a cult of personality but it proved to be a mere fantasy and his real power came from the Stalinist machinery of the state.

from Romania.⁴ In the eyes of Romanians, Gheorghiu-Dej had liberated Romania from Russian occupation. To defeat the pro-Russian wing of the party, the RCP vociferously condemned any resistance to Gheorghiu-Dej's new policy of public independence from Soviet influence.⁵ Another challenge to RCP authority was Khrushchev's proposed new role for COMECON. Under his proposal, the RCP's economic program would be subordinate to the USSR's global security objectives. In response to the proposed agricultural role for Romania in a united COMECON economy, the RCP cited "historical circumstances" as guaranteeing its right to independent economic planning for Romania.⁶ Gheorghiu-Dej appealed to Romania's historical independence to maintain Romania's right to pursue heavy industry along Stalinist lines in Romania and used it as a tool to limit the impact of Khrushchev's ideological changes in Romania.

Romanian nationalist resistance to Russia enabled the RCP to bolster popular support while resisting "imperialist" Moscow's reform communism.⁷ Romania used nationalism to prevent domestic change. This policy contrasted with other communist nations in Eastern Europe, which used nationalism to justify domestic reforms. Understanding this trend, the West mistakenly viewed Gheorghiu-Dej as a reformer resisting Stalinist Russia. Radio Free Europe targeted Romania to promote not just further independence from the Soviet Union, but sweeping reforms at home.⁸

⁴ Fischer, Mary Ellen. *Nicolae Ceausescu: A Study in Political Leadership*. (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publishers, Inc., 1989), 258.

⁵ Verdery, Katherine. *National Ideology Under Socialism: Identity and Cultural Politics in Ceausescu's Romania*. (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1991), 120. "Dogmatism" was used by Gheorghiu-Dej and Ceausescu to purge those who deviated by accusing them of Stalinism or the willingness to subordinate Romania's national interests to Moscow.

⁶ Rumanian Party Statement (26 April 1964), translated in the BBC Monitoring Service's Summary of World Broadcasts, EE/1539/C/I; reprinted by permission of the BBC; Steele, Jonathan. *Eastern Europe Since Stalin*. David & Charles (Holdings) Limited: South Devon house Newton Abbot Devon, 1974. Romania must maintain its sovereignty from COMECON by possessing planning capabilities. The letter asserts that Romania has the right to develop socialism in whatever way it sees fit. The historical circumstances of each country must be taken into consideration when deciding economic direction.

⁷ Kotkin, Stephen. *Uncivil Society: 1989 and the Implosion of the Communist Establishment*. (New York, NY: Random House, Inc., 2009), 78.

⁸ "Romanian Securitate Report on Radio Free Europe's Encouragement of Romanian Independence from the USSR," January 30, 1964, History and Public Policy Program Digital Archive, ACNSAS, fond SIE, file 16, p. 110.

American intervention in Romanian politics unsettled the RCP. RFE's intrusion into Romanian political discourse threatened the party's messaging monopoly. Outside support for independence diluted the RCP's identity as the sole defender of Romanian independence. Because of RFE's initiatives and RCP propaganda, public opinion turned sharply away from Soviet cooperation and towards foreign policy independence. Romania-USSR relations went cold in the decade preceding the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia, presenting an opportunity for Romania's new leader, Nicolae Ceausescu, to expand upon the work of his predecessor and solidify the RCP's nationalist mandate.

When Ceausescu became General Secretary of the RCP in 1964, his political vulnerability compelled him to assert his nationalist credentials just as Gheorghiu-Dej had in the previous decade. Like Gheorghiu-Dej, Ceausescu combined nationalist populism, social demagoguery, and the basic tenets of Stalinism into an ad hoc political ideology.⁹ Ceausescu's dogmatic adherence to domestic repression pigeonholed RCP policy in this sphere. Stalin's interpretation of power stressed the unity of ideology and politics insofar as they cannot be reformed separately. Without room to compromise on ideology, Romanian national communism tended toward extremes of both national chauvinism and Marxist-Leninist orthodoxy.¹⁰ This transformation of traditional ideology had pragmatic roots. Based on experience, the RCP understood that the public could never be energized by international communism and that nationalism had a pre-eminent position within Romanian political life.¹¹ Thus, to preserve the consistency between ideology and political realities, Ceausescu focused public attention outwards onto Romania's international posture. Ceausescu appealed to Romanians' centuries-old desire to resist Russian domination in order to legitimize his regime.¹²

Translated by Mircea Munteanu. RFE used precise language in its broadcasts to target specific weaknesses within communist regimes. "The Central office in New York directs [the Paris RFE office] to refer to our country as Romania rather than PRR in its future broadcasts." The use of the term "Romania" instead of the "People's Republic of Romania" attempts to de-communize the state and hints at total separation from the Warsaw Pact.

⁹ Tismaneanu, *Stalinism For All Seasons: A Political History of Romanian Communism*, 215-217.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 217-218. Romanian chauvinism emphasized anti-Hungarian and anti-Russian sentiments, antagonizing Romania's allies.

¹¹ Verdery, Katherine. *National Ideology Under Socialism: Identity and Cultural Politics in Ceausescu's Romania*, 124-125.

¹² King, Robert R. *History of the Romanian Communist Party*. (Hoover Institution Press: Stanford, California, 1980), 125-128.

Opposition to the 1968 invasion of Czechoslovakia presented Ceausescu with a readymade opportunity to nominally oppose Russia and justify his power.

The Soviet Brezhnev Doctrine, justifying the use of military force to prevent communist regimes from failing, compelled the Warsaw Pact to arrest Dubcek's reforms in Czechoslovakia. The Soviets, along with the militaries of the Eastern bloc, invaded Czechoslovakia and deposed Dubcek, replacing him with the Slovakian hardliner, Gustav Husak. Of the Warsaw Pact nation's only one publicly condemned the operation. On August 21, 1968, Ceausescu delivered a combative speech in which he argued that Romania and the other socialist countries should be free to pursue their own national interests, without the threat of military intervention. In so doing, he cast himself as the defender of Romanian sovereignty.¹³ Was this move a sign of a thaw in Romania? Moscow certainly thought so and anxiously viewed Romania's declaration of opposition as consistent with its recent relaxation of censorship. Mass printing of "ideologically harmful" material in the SRR entered the USSR and threatened to de-stabilize ethnically Romanian Moldova.¹⁴ If Romania's contamination destabilized the USSR, an invasion of Romania to reassert socialist discipline could have been justified by the Brezhnev Doctrine. To assuage Moscow's fears of Romanian separatism, Ceausescu assured Soviet Ambassador Alexander Vasilievich Basov that he only wanted peace among socialist nations.¹⁵ On the other hand, Ceausescu

¹³ Tismaneanu, *Stalinism For All Seasons: A Political History of Romanian Communism*, 200-203.

¹⁴ "KGB Border Report to P. Shelest," May 22, 1968, History and Public Policy Program Digital Archive, TsDAHOU, F. 1, Op. 25, Spr. 65, Ll. 41-46. To combat ideological contamination, the KGB proposed increased border security measures. "29 April 1964 by Directive No. 0122 of the KGB under the USSR Council of Ministers, the registration and reporting of citizens of socialist countries passing through border-control checkpoints into the USSR on official business, and the registration and reporting of tourists on single-entry visas who arrive on the basis of invitations and telegrams or in transit, are not being carried out with the necessary oversight by the border guards, state security organs, and police."

¹⁵ "Cryptogram No 10456 from Polish Embassy in Bucharest, Ambassador Ochęduszek's Meeting with the Soviet Ambassador," August 28, 1968, History and Public Policy Program Digital Archive, Archive of Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Republic of Poland, D-I-R-0-2420-19/68, 24. Obtained and Translated by Adam Burakowski. Speaking to the Soviet ambassador, "Ceausescu insisted that military intervention was a mistake, referring to Marx and Lenin and thought that a different solution to the problem of

created the perception in the West that he was a maverick. They believed this, even though Ceausescu showed no sign of wavering from his neo-Stalinist line.¹⁶ He deftly succeeded in charting an independent course in foreign relations without provoking a military response from an increasingly assertive Moscow.

Ceausescu's maneuvering was possible because of the Warsaw Pact's military structure. The Warsaw Pact Treaty united the Eastern Bloc in a collective defense agreement that emphasized unity in the face of outside aggression. Codified within the treaty was a nominal respect for the sovereignty of all members and the establishment of principles of non-interference in their internal affairs by other member states.¹⁷ Moscow maintained the implicit right to intervene. While originally intended to formalize Soviet domination of Eastern Europe, the WARPACT eventually grew to reflect a more diverse set of interests.¹⁸ The degree to which the various allied countries could enact individual foreign policy depended on the relative importance of that nation to WARPACT's overarching security infrastructure. The WARPACT's military organization reflected the Soviet Union's premier position as founder of the European communist movement. The United Armed Forces under Soviet command was the most important defense organization. The UAF combined forces from allied countries and placed them under Soviet command to fight as unified formations. Because of the importance of the UAF, the number of troops the different WARPACT countries contributed to it indicated their importance. Romania did not contribute any troops to the UAF whereas the GDR and Czechoslovakia both contribute significant troops. Therefore, if Romania pursued independent foreign policy, it was less concerning for the Soviets.¹⁹ WARPACT nations with less troops, like Romania, were less vital to Soviet defense interests and could pursue a more independent foreign policy. It was simply not worth the Soviet Union's time to enforce compliance of minor allies.

Czechoslovakia could have been found. He stressed that his goal was sovereignty, unity and friendship with the Soviet Union and other socialist countries."

¹⁶ Tismaneanu, *Stalinism For All Seasons: A Political History of Romanian Communism*, 200-203.

¹⁷ Robin Remington, "The Warsaw Pact: Institutional Dynamics Within the Socialist Commonwealth." *The American Journal of International Law* 67, no. 5 (1973): 61-64, 3.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 3-5.

¹⁹ Stephan Tiedtke and Michel Vale. "Military Détente and Differences on Military Policy within the Warsaw Pact." *International Journal of Politics* 13, no. 1/2 (1983): 44-61, 9.

Romania's perceived independence from Moscow provided Ceausescu with economic benefits. In the aftermath of Czechoslovakia, the United States approached Romania for bilateral negotiations. Equal dealings with America validated Ceausescu's policy of independence. President Richard Nixon visited Romania in 1973 as part of his initiative to improve relations with communist nations. The Romanian leader congratulated Nixon on his rapprochement with the Soviets and promptly signed a bilateral agreement supporting the rights of small nations to pursue their own goals.²⁰ Freedom from Soviet domination enabled Ceausescu to develop rich, bilateral relationships like the Romania-USA understanding. Relations with America fit well into Ceausescu's domestic program. At the 10th Party Congress, Ceausescu emphasized Romania's need to assert itself and reach parity with the industrialized West.²¹ Ceausescu's independence from Russia bought him access to an eager West, from which he received loans and other economic aid. The Romanian economy improved in the 1970s as Ceausescu tightened cultural control at home. In Romania, it appeared as if Ceausescu not only was a committed nationalist, but a gifted economic manager as well. His foreign adventurism allowed him to increase political repression in the short run without significant backlash, bolstered by American economic aid.

Ceausescu centralized control of culture, education and mass media. He used his power to promote his own synthesis of nationalist Marxism-Leninism.²² In a communist nation, the past is never certain and history is manipulated to meet the policy goals of the state.²³ The RCP's official nationalist myth traces the origins of the party back to the Dacians in their struggle to achieve social justice and resist Roman domination in the first century. Characters like Prince Michael the Brave who united Romanian principalities at the end of the 16th century were re-

²⁰ "Memorandum of Conversation between Nicolae Ceausescu and President Nixon," December 04, 1973, History and Public Policy Program Digital Archive, National Archives and Records Administration, Record Group 59, Subject Numeric Files (SNF) 1970-1973, POL ROM-US. Obtained by Iulian Toader and Laura Deal. Ceausescu argued for equal treatment as an independent power by the United States. "Recognizing this I still think that there is justification for the thought that one must not lose sight of the fact that there are a number of other states in various stages of development. These other states must not be ignored, and Romania is one of them."

²¹ Fischer-Galati, Stephen. "The Socialist Republic of Romania" in *The Changing Face of Communism in Eastern Europe*. (Tucson, AZ: University of Arizona Press, 1970), 36.

²² Fischer, *Nicolae Ceausescu: A Study in Political Leadership*, 180.

²³ King, *History of the Romanian Communist Party*, 1.

mythologized. Even Vlad the Impaler was reappraised as a progressive prince like the great Nicolae Ceausescu.²⁴ Official communist literature emphasized the historic greatness of the Romanian nation and presented the events of 1944, the communist seizure of power and the subsequent SRR as the inheritance of past Romanian glory.²⁵ Memories of the true circumstances of the 1947 communist takeover threatened the regimes totalizing narrative and were systematically targeted for deletion. Using the 1968 incident as a running justification for his policies, Ceausescu radically expanded his historical propaganda efforts to solidify the political legitimacy of the RCP.

Ceausescu's interpretations of history certainly were imaginative, but his Stalinist worldview greatly limited his options for practical domestic reform. Consistent with Stalinist principles, Ceausescu tried to connect to his people by building "socialist democracy." It being the implementation of state-organized, popular participation in communist projects. Through visits to factories and other sites, he "scientifically" solved the people's problems and made sure the television cameras saw him do it. The RCP routinely staged massive festivals in support of regime policies.²⁶ Like the festivals, much of Ceausescu's popularity was farcical. To train communist party cadres in the art of campaigning, multi-party public elections for communist party officials took place in 1975. Instead of the resounding validation sought by Ceausescu, the party lost many of the elections.²⁷ The election fiasco showed the volatility of popular opinion and Ceausescu's waning support after the euphoria of 1968. After electoral failure, the Ceausescu cult of personality intensified and the party expanded, deepening the illusion of popular involvement. By 1980, the RCP had 3.7 Million members, earning Romania the distinction

²⁴ Ibid., 120-124.

²⁵ Lieutenant-General Dr Ilie Ceausescu, Colonel Dr Florian Tuca, Major Dr Mihail E. Ionescu, and Captain Alesandru Dutu. *Romania and the Great Victory: A Remarkable Contribution to the Defeat of Fascism August 23, 1944-May 12, 1945*. Translated into English by Georgeta Blaj and Margareta Boaca. (The Military Publishing House: Bucharest, SRR, 1985), VII-IX. The preface outlines the long struggle of the Romanian people against oppression by Rome, Byzantium, Russia and The Ottomans. Ceausescu asserts that the Romanian revolution of August, 1944 was not "something imposed on the Romanian people by outside factors." Instead "The great rise-in-arms in 1944 of the entire nation against foreign occupation naturally was the climax of a multimillenary effort to defend independence and unity, the most sacred assets of the Romanian people."

²⁶ King, *History of the Romanian Communist Party*, 109-112.

²⁷ Fischer, *Nicolae Ceausescu: A Study in Political Leadership*, 237.

of having the most communists per capita in Europe.²⁸ However, without contemporary foreign policy victories and any further attempts at reform, the RCP remained stagnant and centralized while Ceausescu deluded himself.

Ceausescu believed nationalism could override the need for serious domestic reform indefinitely. By the end of the 1980s, Ceausescu's wellspring of patriotism finally dried up. On December 21, 1989, in response to civil unrest, Ceausescu gathered the citizens in a grand demonstration in Bucharest. Looking out over the sea of "adoring" people carrying banners and chanting slogans, he implored the citizens of Bucharest to rally behind Romania, not the communist party. Like a one-hit wonder, he unsuccessfully appealed directly to the memory of 1968, the legitimizing narrative for his entire regime.²⁹ This time, empty words and propaganda would not be enough to save him. Someone in the crowd caused a disturbance and the crowd turned on Ceausescu, calling for his ouster as he waved his arms, shouting at them "What? Shut up!"³⁰ The capital no longer safe, he fled by helicopter but was waylaid and brutally executed by military officers after a kangaroo court. Throughout his rule, Ceausescu tried desperately to be popular but his appeals to nationalism failed to generate lasting support in the absence of essential domestic reform.

The central question faced by Gheorghiu-Dej and Ceausescu, concerning the RCP's claim to legitimacy, was the dubious rise of Soviet power in Romania. Gheorghiu-Dej recognized the conspiratorial nature of the RCP's 1947 coup and took steps to use extreme repression to build a Stalinist state capable of ruling in spite of its origins. However, after Stalin's death, the RCP retained its harsh domestic policies and pushed for independence to preserve the status quo. Ceausescu charted a similar course and worked to increase popular mobilization in the name of Romanian nationalism. Nevertheless, after the debacle of the 1975 elections, Romania never again tried substantive domestic reform. Instead, Romanian policy was focused outwards, attempting to garner nationalist support for failing domestic policies. This strategy proved to be successful in the immediate post-1968 period when Romanian fortunes diplomatically and economically improved but, after the euphoria of 1968 wore off, the

²⁸ Kotkin, *Uncivil Society: 1989 and the Implosion of the Communist Establishment*, 77.

²⁹ Ceausescu, Nicolae. Final Speech. Bucharest, Romania, December 21, 1989. Lybio.net.

³⁰ Kotkin, *Uncivil Society: 1989 and the Implosion of the Communist Establishment*, 87.

RCP's claim to popular support weakened and became superficial. In Ceausescu's drive to pursue his Stalinist agenda, he squandered the initial goodwill of 1968 and failed to convert nationalist rhetoric into genuine popular support. He paid for this oversight with his life.

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