

REPORT

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FROM THE EDITOR

It is the cadet editorial staff's pleasure to present the fall issue of *Report*. This semester, the editors decided to focus on topics concerning social change and transformative issues that have recently penetrated political discourse, moving away from more military-centric topics. This led to the largest number of essays from outside institutions to date. In mirroring social changes that have been occurring within the Army, the editorial staff attempted to carefully choose papers that offered different opinions and reached alternative conclusions than the conventional norms. These articles embody the Mission of United States Military Academy's History Department, "to impart to cadets the historical knowledge, appreciation of history, and critical thinking and communication skills necessary to be successful leaders, able to understand human behavior, ideas, and actions in the global context." Moreover, the journal is in line with our Superintendent's goal to increase dialogue between the Academy and civilian institutions.

I would like to thank all of our authors for their exemplary historical scholarship, the unique insight they provide on their various topics, and their quick responses to our editorial staff. West Point's Erin Mauldin analyzes the impact of and use of Christianity in colonialism in the Congo. As the sole representation of scholarship from the United States Military Academy, Erin, both a Truman and Rhodes Scholar, shows that some of the same mechanisms used to incite oppression also formed the basis of inciting positive change. Continuing with the theme of oppression and calls for social change by minority groups demoted to second class statuses, Charles Kopel analyzes the Black Panthers' organizational and ideological development. He argues that Panther support of communist regimes resulted more from the international Cold War environment, which idealistically aligned with anti-colonial struggles, than a full fledged communist movement. Carly Leary and Michaela Giunichigliani examine the portrayal of the human condition. While Carly discusses the role of eugenics in early 20th century America, Michaela examines the changing representation of homosexuals in American film production through the creation of a counterpublic. Clara Lopez Prunosa analyzes the role the British played in newly independent Zanzibar in 1964, shedding light on Britain's diminished ability to impact its former colonies during the 1960s and 70s. Nicholas Borkowski's article focuses on the changing depiction of the use of chemical weapons in newspapers, shedding insight on how the media has shaped our political discourse on the use of chemical warfare. In "Freedom at Midnight," Malik Neal challenges traditional explanations of the divergent political outcomes of India and Pakistan after independence in 1947, offering an alternative explanation grounded in an understanding of the different experiences of the provinces and political parties under British rule.

It has been a rewarding experience watching *Report* expand for the past three years. I would like to extend a special thanks to the students from outside institutions that have so willingly participated in the production of this journal, and I would encourage an even greater expansion to institutions across the Atlantic. The editorial staff also thanks the History Department for its continued mentorship of our editorial staff and financial support for our publication, as well as the History Departments of the other colleges and universities who extended our calls-for-papers to their students. Finally, none of this would have been possible without the work of Major Andrew Forney, who took over as advisor for *Report* this semester and continues to lend his guidance, support, and occasional sanity checks to our editors.

Austen Boroff
Editor-in-Chief
West Point, NY

“A MOUTHFUL OF BIBLE AND A PELT OOZING PIETY:” CHRISTIANITY AND COLONIALISM

BY
ERIN MAULDIN

Erin A.T. Mauldin is a senior studying International History at the United States Military Academy. She wrote this paper for a course about the history of world religions. Erin was interested in exploring the conflicting ways in which Christianity was used to motivate and legitimize European actions in Africa.

“With my mouth full of Bible and my pelt oozing piety at every pore,” King Leopold II of Mark Twain’s “King Leopold’s Soliloquy” explains how he manipulated “the light of our blessed Redeemer” to fool the world about his intentions in colonizing the “vast and rich and populous Congo Free State.”¹ Though a fictional parody published twenty years after King Leopold II of Belgium was granted sovereign control of the Congo Free State under the Berlin West Conference Act, Twain captured the contradiction between the stated philanthropic, Christian purpose of the king’s personal colony and the dark reality of colonial exploitation that resulted in the death of ten million Congolese from 1885 to 1904.² The symbol of the Congo Free State, which had been built on the promise of free trade and the enlightenment of the savage natives through Christian civilization, became “a basket of severed hands,”³ deriving from the practice of collecting the hands of native Congolese for failing to meet rubber quotas. Christianity was influential as a tool in the colonization of the Congo, manipulated to lend legitimacy to the power struggle and the atrocities committed in its name.

Understanding the evolution of the use of Christianity in the context of the establishment of the Congo Free State is key to explaining the distortion of the religion. Christianity first served as an impetus for colonization by motivating missionaries to explore Central Africa, and

¹ Mark Twain, “King Leopold’s Soliloquy,” 1905, in *Archives of Empire Volume II: The Scramble for Africa*, eds. Barbara Harlow and Mia Carter (Chapel Hill: Duke University Press, 2003), 781.

² Robert Edgerton, *The Troubled Heart of Africa* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 2002), xiii.

³ Peter Forbath, *The River Congo: The Discovery, Exploration and Exploitation of the World’s Most Dramatic Rivers* (New York: Harper & Row, 1977), 374.

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then was co-opted by Leopold to justify and legitimize the existence of the Congo Free State, while simultaneously obscuring the abuses and exploitation that occurred. Paradoxically, Christian activists and missionaries helped to illuminate the harshness of the Belgian colonial adventure in the Congo, ultimately spurring the Congo Reform Society to break up Leopold's private rule of the Congo in 1908.

Despite the presence of settlements in Africa since the 15th century by first the Portuguese, and then other European powers during the Age of Discovery, the interior of the African continent remained largely unexplored and unknown to European powers until the late 19th century, when missionaries like David Livingstone revealed the great potential of Central Africa's resources.⁴ Exploration of Africa had been mainly limited to the coast due to the dangers and difficulties of venturing further inland posed by disease and geography. It was also unnecessary to search much further than the exterior for the primary export, slaves, while other resources from the interior could be traded for on the coast.⁵ The advent of the steamboat, the discovery of quinine, and the abolition of slavery in the 19th century, however, changed the ability of Europeans to colonize Africa.⁶ Europe then had both the means and a new motivation to explore Africa further. Infused with evangelical zeal, Christian missionaries were among the first Europeans to take advantage of these technological developments to explore Africa. Viewing "the end of the geographical feat as the beginning of the missionary enterprise," David Livingstone, a British missionary and doctor, put Lake Nyasa, the Congo River, and the idea of inner African resources on the map for Europe.⁷ Missionary-explorers were driven by a desire to spread Christianity to the natives and the realization, as noted by Livingstone, that "civilization and Christianity must go together."⁸ Not only did these missionaries open up Central Africa to the awareness of Europe, they also advocated the use of commerce as a vehicle to achieve their ultimate goal of Christian

⁴ Thomas Pakenham, *Scramble for Africa* (New York: Avon Books, 1991), xxi.

⁵ Adam Hochschild, *King Leopold's Ghost* (New York: First Mariner Books, 1998), 34.

⁶ Pakenham, *Scramble for Africa*, 18-19.

⁷ David Livingstone, quoted in James Macauley, *Livingstone Anecdotes: A Sketch of the Career and Illustrations of the Character of David Livingstone* (Piccadilly: The Religious Tract Society, 1889), 151.

⁸ "Dr. Livingstone's Cambridge Lectures," 1857, in *Archives of Empire Volume II: The Scramble for Africa*, eds. Harlow and Carter, 256.

civilization.⁹ Christianity was thus one of the more significant motivators of the exploration of the interior of Africa during the 19th century, while the missionaries themselves supported the commerce and civilization brought by colonialism.

The Congo was the primary state to emerge out of the exploration of the lengthy Congo River, first by Livingstone, and then by H.M. Stanley, in his quest to complete the work of the missionary-doctor. Meanwhile, as the scramble to divide up the pieces of Africa became cutthroat in Europe, King Leopold II, ruler of the recently independent Belgium, yearned for a colony of his own and for Belgium: “*il faut à la Belgique une colonie.*”¹⁰ Rebuffed in his attempts to buy an existing colony from a European power and derided by his own government at home for his seemingly foolish colony fetish, Leopold’s attention was grabbed by publications in *The Times* in 1876 about Lieutenant Verney Cameron’s travels in the Congo basin that revealed a land of “unspeakable richness” awaiting an “enterprising capitalist.”¹¹ Within six months, he had convened a conference of geographers where he expressed his philanthropic interest in the colony (while feigning commercial disinterest) speaking broadly of the desire to “open to civilization the only part of our globe where it has yet to penetrate,” with Belgium, as a “central and neutral state. . . , happy and satisfied with her lot” as the perfect organizer of this venture.¹² Cloaked in philanthropic goals and seemingly guided by a religious zeal to bring light to the dark continent, Leopold succeeded in deceiving the rest of Europe and the United States that the intentions of his International Association of the Congo (established originally in 1876 as the *Association internationale africaine*) were also motivated by a desire to establish free trade in the region.¹³ This appealed to the French, Portuguese, British, and Germans, who all had various competing claims to the area and wanted to see each other’s power limited.¹⁴ Further, the moral high ground claimed by Leopold was in line with the desire of the general public in Europe to approach this era of new imperialism with

⁹ M.B. Sygne, “Preparing the Empire: Livingstone and Stanley in Central Africa,” 1859, in *Archives of Empire Volume II: The Scramble for Africa*, eds. Harlow and Carter, 300.

¹⁰ “It is necessary that Belgium have a colony.” Quoted in Pakenham, *Scramble for Africa*, 12.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 15.

¹² *Ibid.*, 21.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 245.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 244-245.

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pur motives (especially in Britain, where the slave trade had recently been abolished).¹⁵

King Leopold's desire for a colony for Belgium fit within the context of Europe's 'Scramble for Africa' of the late 1800s. The carving up of Africa was seen as an outlet for growing internal pressures as a result of economic turbulence and inequality within European countries, while it provided heathen populations for proselytizing Christian missionaries to save, a chance to access hitherto inaccessible resources, and an opportunity to assert dominance in Europe without directly fighting on the European continent.¹⁶ This competition led Otto von Bismarck of the recently emerged German Empire to call together a conference in 1884 to resolve the issues of free trade and ownership spawning from this struggle.¹⁷ Leopold, in the meantime, had taken advantage of the lack of claim to the Congo (considered not worth the effort of colonizing) to use the International Association of the Congo to establish control in the region for eventual resource exploitation.¹⁸ Though Leopold was not an official delegate at the conference, his aforementioned manipulations allowed him to benefit from the Berlin Act, which followed the Conference in 1885. In it, he was named ruler of the newly designated Congo Free State, among other trade agreements.¹⁹ The primary European powers had determined that granting the "king of weak little Belgium" sovereignty over the new state of the Congo was the best guarantee for free trade in the region.²⁰ Meanwhile, Leopold's "noble aspirations" and philanthropic, Christian motives, according to Bismarck, assuaged the lofty ideals of commerce, Christianity, and civilization – the "3 C's" espoused by Livingstone and embraced by a European public keen to "take up the White Man's Burden."²¹

Under the guise of Christianity and the promise of free trade, Leopold had guaranteed for himself a state to exploit for economic purposes. The Free State of the Congo was under his sovereignty, not Belgium's. To explore, cultivate, and colonize the Congo, Leopold relied upon the effort of missionaries, both foreign and Belgian, Protestant and

¹⁵ Hoshchild, *King Leopold's Ghost*, 34.

¹⁶ Geoffrey Wawro, *War and Society in Europe, 1792-1914* (New York: Routledge, 2000), 150.

¹⁷ Hoshchild, *King Leopold's Ghost*, 97.

¹⁸ Pakenham, *Scramble for Africa*, 22.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 254.

²⁰ Hoshchild, *King Leopold's Ghost*, 97.

²¹ Though published in response to American imperialism in the Philippines, Kipling identified this prevailing feeling of responsibility vis-à-vis colonization within the age of new imperialism. Quoted in Pakenham, *Scramble for Africa*, 254; Rudyard Kipling, "The White Man's Burden," *McClure's Magazine* 12 (1899).

Catholic.²² Protestant missionaries, who were primarily from foreign countries, had been extremely important in establishing structure in the Congo with their early missions, but as Belgian presence became more assured, Leopold turned to Belgian Catholic missionary orders, “whose loyalty and control would be more assured.”²³ This pitting of Protestants against Catholics further served to relieve internal tensions in Belgium, where warring peoples (the Flemish and Walloons) and sects (the Liberals and Catholics) threatened stability.²⁴ Leopold flagrantly manipulated the goodwill inspired by the use of Christianity: using first the Protestant missions “to validate his claim against other bidders [to the Congo],” and then the Catholic missions “in solidifying and ‘nationalizing’ his winnings.”²⁵ Christianity was thus for Leopold little more than a tool to demonstrate his pure intentions to Europe, and to consolidate his regime within the Congo.

Though the International Association of the Congo extracted ivory and mineral resources, the cost of colonizing the Congo – the roads, the excavation, the buildings, the steamboats, and the cost of manpower – at first threatened to bankrupt the king from 1885-1890.²⁶ The worldwide rubber boom of the 1890s, in response to the development of pneumatic tires for automobiles, however, transformed the Free Congo State from a pet project of Leopold into a vastly profitable economic venture that irrevocably changed the nature of the treatment of native Africans in the colony.²⁷ The wild rubber vines, covering half of Leopold’s Congo, were now the source of profit in the colony – and capitalizing upon the rubber harvests consumed Leopold.²⁸ In order to beat the price drop in rubber that would follow once Latin American and Asian plantations entered the market in several years, Leopold rewarded companies based on the amount of rubber they turned in.²⁹ Consequently, private companies resorted to crueler and crueler methods to ensure their rubber quotas were met. In an investigation initiated by the revelations from accounts of E.D. Morel and individual missionaries of the colonial practices of the Congo, conducted by the British pro-consul stationed there in 1903, Roger Casement detailed the “widespread proofs of the great energy displayed by Belgian officials

²² Marvin D. Markowitz, “The Missions and Political Development in the Congo,” *Africa: Journal of the International African Institute* 40 (1970), 234.

²³ Markowitz, “The Missions and Political Development in the Congo,” 234.

²⁴ Pakenham, *Scramble for Africa*, 12.

²⁵ Markowitz, “The Missions and Political Development in the Congo,” 235.

²⁶ Hoshchild, *King Leopold’s Ghost*, 105.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 178.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 179.

²⁹ *Ibid.*

in introducing their methods of rule over one of the most savage regions of Africa.”³⁰ Interviewing an Old Congolese Chief, he discovered that when the Africans failed to bring enough rubber, “the white men would put some of us in lines, one behind the other and would shoot through all our bodies.”³¹ Soldiers would take the women from villages that failed to meet quotas, and eventually resorted to killing Africans for sub-par rubber collection.³² The Force Publique (the armed forces of the Congo Free State) were required to chop off the hands of the people they killed to confirm their numbers.³³ As noted by Congo commissioner Charles Lemaire, “As soon as it was a question of rubber, I wrote to the government, ‘To gather rubber in the district... one must cut off hands, noses and ears,’ to send the appropriate message.”³⁴ As these atrocities escalated, missionaries in the areas “could only blush with shame and say they were unjust,” in the words of Reverend Whitehead of the Baptist Missionary Society.³⁵ Individually, the accounts of these missionaries were easily dismissed, leading to Reverend Whitehead’s sense of frustration.

Though Leopold continued to use Christianity as a façade for the practices to exploit rubber, Christianity played one more significant role in Leopold’s Free State of the Congo. It was ultimately the *cumulative* accounts of Christian missionaries, brought to international attention by reformers such as Roger Casement and E. D. Morel, that exposed the true nature of Leopold’s colony and resulted in its annexation to Belgium in 1908. In 1896, Leopold had used the missionaries to defend his colonial practices. He established “the Native Protection Commission” of three Belgian Catholic priests, two British Baptist missionaries, and one American Baptist to investigate the alleged acts of violence committed against the natives.³⁶ The members were intentionally scattered and distanced from any of the atrocities, and thus reported positively about the administration of the Congo. Yet missionary opposition mounted as the true nature of the cruel colonization became clear to those within the system. William H. Sheppard, a black missionary from America, was the

³⁰ Roger Casement, “The Congo Report,” 1903, in *The Eyes of Another Race*, eds. Séamas Ó Síocháin and Michael O’Sullivan (Clith: Universtiy College Dublin Press, 2003), 49.

³¹ Roger Casement, “The Congo Report,” 70.

³² Hoschchild, *King Leopold’s Ghost*, 185.

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ Quoted in Ibid.

³⁵ The Reverend J. Whitehead to Governor-General of Congo State, September 7, 1903, “The Congo Report Inclosure 2,” in *The Eyes of Another Race*, eds. Ó Síocháin and O’Sullivan, 137.

³⁶ Pakenham, *Scramble for Africa*, 586.

first to prominently write about the mutilations and murders in the 1890s, however, he and other critics failed to capture the public's attention in the face of Leopold's skillful diplomacy.³⁷ It was not until investigations from the outside were commissioned that the truth of the Congo Free State became prominently known. The aforementioned investigation by Roger Casement, and the reports by E. D. Morel successfully integrated, validated, and found an audience for the missionaries' accounts of the atrocities. Morel and the rest of the Congo Reform movement revealed the extent to which Leopold had manipulated his philanthropic and Christian pretense to personally benefit from the Congo Free State, and finally gave an international voice to the Christian missionaries appalled by the carnage and the distortion of their religion.³⁸

During the age of new imperialism in the latter half of the 19th century, a clever, calculating king was able to carve out a piece of over two million square kilometers filled with valuable resources and people for his own personal benefit – and justify his actions with claims of philanthropy, the promotion of free trade, and Christianity. King Leopold II of Belgium brutally exploited the Congo Free State from 1885 to 1904, and caused the deaths of over ten million Congolese. Christianity played a significant and dynamic role initially in the colonization of the Congo, and then as a cover for imperialism due to the importance of public perception concerning the legitimacy of the imperial effort. Originally the motivation for much of the early interest in exploring the interior of Africa, Christianity became inextricably linked with commerce and civilization as a part of the work of missionaries as they sought to illuminate the 'Dark Continent.' It was then twisted by Leopold first as a means of justifying his claim to the Congo, and then as a cover for the murderous actions carried out for his profit. Ultimately, though, Christianity served to unravel Leopold's private reign when the missionaries found a collective voice for their individual testimonies in the work of Morel and the Congo Reform Society.

³⁷ Hoshchild, *King Leopold's Ghost*, 194.

³⁸ Edmund Dene Morel, *Red Rubber* (Bradford: Riley Brothers, Ltd., 1907),

“ARE THESE CATS RED?”
THE BLACK PANTHER PARTY AS A CHAPTER OF THE
INTERNATIONAL COMMUNIST REVOLUTION

BY
CHARLES KOPEL

Charles Kopel is a senior studying History at Yeshiva University. He wrote this paper for a Fall 2012 American History course, under the guidance of Dr. Ellen Schrecker, the course instructor and a renowned historian of the Cold War era. For his senior honors thesis, Charles continues to examine twentieth-century racial tensions in the history of American social attitudes toward the Native tribes.

In the turbulent latter half of the 1960s, the banner of the Black Power movement did not belong to any one figure or organization. The emerging militant ethos of the civil rights movement became a point of intense struggle between different groups with wildly different ideas and strategies. While the Nation of Islam (NOI) and the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) contended in the free market of ideas for black activist identity, Bobby Seale and Huey P. Newton, two socially conscious black students in Merritt College of Oakland, California, launched the extraordinary group that eclipsed all the rest.¹ Their “Black Panther Party for Self-Defense” achieved national and international prominence in its lifespan of less than two decades, capturing the hearts and minds of countless friends while provoking countless more foes.

The circumstances of the time period and the erratic personalities of Seale and Newton—though both are undoubtedly essential pieces of this history—do not suffice on their own to account for the importance of the Panthers. Rather, the highly developed Panther ideology authored in Oakland during the late 1960s and early 1970s more fully explains the Panthers’ remarkable success. In forming this doctrine, Seale, Newton, and the others were motivated not only by the perceived needs of the black community and the injustices of American society, but also by a very particular interpretation of global history and geopolitical affairs.

This interpretation propelled the Black Panther Party into the orbits of the Third World, Pan-Africanism, the Black Power movement,

¹ See Jeffrey O.G. Ogbar, “A Party for the People: The Black Freedom Movement and the Rise of the Black Panther Party” in his *Black Power: Radical Politics and African American Identity* (Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2004), 81.

the White New Left, and global communism, all at once. Panther ideology presented a coherent fusion of all the major grievances of the day couched in a terrifying “politics of rage.”² The following study will first consider the development of the Panthers’ ideological doctrine, with special attention to its internationalist and communist elements, and then proceed to consider the application of this doctrine in the Black Panther Party’s worldwide revolutionary program.

To broach the subject of black activist organizations in the 1960s, the following traditional dichotomy proves useful: the pro-integrationist civil rights movement, based in the rural south, was symbolically headed by Martin Luther King, Jr. and his Southern Christian Leadership Council (SCLC). This movement also famously involved SNCC, the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE), and, in a more limited capacity, the half-century-old National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP). Important differences separated these groups from one another—the NAACP focused on legal action rather than protests or disobedience, and SNCC and CORE were generally considered more radical than SCLC—but they all shared an affinity for civil, nonviolent activism. Their collective goal was full acceptance for people of color in all sectors of American society.³

On the other side of the dichotomy stood the Black Nationalist movement. Based in the urban centers of the North, where black people were generally concentrated in impoverished ghettos, the Black Nationalists aligned themselves with their racial brethren in Africa and advocated separatism rather than integration. Nationalist leaders like Malcolm X, the electrifying, charismatic NOI advocate, saw black people as naturally superior to whites, struck a tone of militant defiance and self-defense, and disparaged civil disobedience.

In the view of NOI’s early SNCC detractors, however, “tone” was, in fact, all the Black Nationalist movement had to offer, and not much by way of concrete action. Paradigms shifted in the mid-1960s, when SNCC members began to grow disillusioned with the ineffectiveness of nonviolent action, and, turning to the separatism and militarism of the Black Nationalists, sought to add action to the NOI’s rhetoric. This radical

² This term was borrowed by David Barber from the title of Dan T. Carter’s 1996 work on George Wallace and New Conservatism (Baton Rouge, LA: Louisiana State University Press) to describe the Panthers’ image among historians of the New Left, in his “Leading the Vanguard: White New Leftists School the Panthers on Black Revolution” in *In Search of the Black Panther Party*, ed. by Jama Lazerow and Yohuru Williams (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2006), 223-251.

³ Ogbar, “Party for the People,” 70-71.

impulse precipitated the rise of “Black Power.”⁴ More particularly, SNCC frustration arose from the realization that no number of marches, sit-ins, and rallies would achieve genuine acceptance and economic parity for black people within the wider American populace. With such victories as the Civil Rights Act and Voting Rights Act in the past, activists felt that the challenge that lay ahead – achieving true racial equality in society, not just in the law – could not be met by civil protests alone. Their change of heart set the stage for the bloody riots that tore apart Los Angeles, Chicago, New York, Cleveland, Jacksonville, and South Bend in the summer of 1965.⁵ As civil disobedience lost its appeal, SNCC went the way of militant separatism in 1966, shattering the traditional dichotomy and dramatically changing the civil rights movement.

Under its new chairman, the fiery Stokely Carmichael (later an admirer and honorary high-ranking member of the Panthers),⁶ SNCC formulated the new Black Power doctrine: a militant form of Black Nationalism, more violent than that of the NOI.⁷ The commonplace term “negro” was banned in SNCC circles in favor of “black,” based on the contention that “negro” was the white oppressors’ term and that it was time to declare that to be “black” meant to be independent of white people.⁸ The notion of interracial democracy – the prize of the mainstream civil rights movement – was rapidly losing its most ardent advocates.

Independent Black Power activist cells soon arose in cities throughout the North, many adopting the “Black Panther” symbol first popularized by the Lowndes County, Alabama Freedom Organization (LCFO) in 1966.⁹ Most of these cells struggled with factionalism and

⁴ Ogbar, “Party for the People,” 73.

⁵ John Lewis, *Walking with the Wind: A Memoir of the Movement* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1998), 363.

⁶ Ogbar, “Party for the People,” 87-89.

⁷ Lewis, *Walking with The Wind*, 384-387. Martin Luther King, Jr., still an iconic figure for much of the civil rights community at that point, became an early and vehement critic of the Black Power idea. He wrote in 1967: “Black Power is a nihilistic philosophy born out of the conviction that the Negro can’t win. It is, at bottom, the view that American society is so hopelessly corrupt and enmeshed in evil that there is no possibility of salvation from within. Although this thinking is understandable as a response to a white power structure that never completely committed itself to true equality for the Negro, and a die-hard mentality that sought to shut all windows and doors against the winds of change, it nonetheless carries the seeds of its own doom.” (Martin Luther King, Jr., *Where Do We Go from Here?: Chaos or Community* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1968), 23.)

⁸ Ogbar, “Party for the People,” 74.

⁹ “Panther” is a generic term used to refer to many large feline species. The LCFO’s name selection process has developed a mythology of its own; See Ogbar, “Party for the People,” 76 for a detailed description. (Several different explanations for

failed to rise out of obscurity, but one Oakland-based group, toting a particularly extreme and developed ideology, proved exceptional. In October 1966, Bobby Seale and Huey Newton launched their Black Panther group with the publication of a ten-point manifesto: “What We Want, What We Believe”¹⁰ (a title explicitly borrowed from the Nation of Islam’s “What the Muslims Want” and “What the Muslims Believe,” and likely intended to highlight this manifesto’s differences from that of the NOI).¹¹

“What We Want, What We Believe” curiously refers to the United States government as a foreign entity, demonstrating forthrightly the Panthers’ penchant for militant separatism and disdain for civil disobedience. But unlike other Black Power groups who shared these traits, Newton and Seale’s manifesto advances an even more radical idea: the identification of the black people of America as just one of the many groups of “Black and oppressed”¹² peoples around the world suffering from white Western imperialism. For these Panthers, separation from White America meant full identification with the colored peoples of the Third World. At that point in world history, Third World movements around the world expressed themselves prominently and powerfully through communist revolution.

Thus, with one college-student-sized step back from the narrow reality of the American 1960s, Newton and Seale recognized that their position in the developing struggle for black Americans was about something larger than that which SNCC, SCLC, the NOI, or the NAACP had ever conceived, though it incorporated elements from the philosophies of all the above. Rather, they staked their claims against the centuries-old enterprise of white domination of the colored Third World. With such deep-rooted indignation as a basis, it is no wonder that Seale and Newton’s demands in the Party program were so bold. They included:

WE WANT FREEDOM. WE WANT POWER TO
DETERMINE THE DESTINY OF OUR BLACK AND
OPPRESSED COMMUNITIES ... WE WANT FULL
EMPLOYMENT FOR OUR PEOPLE ... WE WANT DECENT
HOUSING ... WE WANT COMPLETELY FREE HEALTH

the choice of the panther are raised, variously emphasizing the animal’s power, its violence, and its indigeneity to the American South. The color choice was obvious.)

¹⁰ Also known as “The Ten Point Plan” (The Black Panther Party, 1966).

¹¹ See “Muslim Program” on the Nation of Islam webpage, available at:

http://www.noj.org/muslim_program.htm.

¹² “The Ten Point Plan.”

CARE ... WE WANT AN IMMEDIATE END TO POLICE
BRUTALITY.

In support of this doctrine, the Panthers initiated an armed uprising. Seale and Newton were well-versed in the philosophy of Algerian revolutionary Frantz Fanon, and concluded that violence alone could free their black brethren from the white colonizers who still had authority over them.¹³ They sought, at least on paper, a full-blown revolutionary confrontation with the enemy forces of the United States, and they were prepared to meet death in the advancement of this end.¹⁴

Throughout the Party's existence, Panther leaders sought to communicate their ideology to a wide audience, and their momentum was fed by press attention.¹⁵ Generally speaking, the Panther leaders emphasized rigorous argumentation and the intellectual foundations of their worldview. In just the first three pages of Huey Newton's aforementioned autobiography, the Party co-founder references Emile Durkheim, Fyodor Dostoevsky, and Che Guevara.¹⁶ This emphasis on ideas lent the Panthers their special power of appeal among black activist groups.

"What We Want, What We Believe" confronts the entire gamut of left-wing grievances – racism, aggressive wars in the Third World, capitalist greed, police brutality, and poverty – and makes sense of all of these problems by casting them in the mold of White Capitalist America's great crime against black history.¹⁷

A Marxist criticism of American society is crucial to this conclusion. The demands of the ten-point plan therefore also include "AN END TO THE ROBBERY BY THE CAPITALISTS OF OUR BLACK AND OPPRESSED COMMUNITIES," as well as fundamentally socialist views on the functions of government, such as guaranteed personal income, universal healthcare, and government-sponsored housing. The manifesto's most explicit invocation of Marxism, however, comes in Seale and Newton's description of their second demand (universal employment):

¹³ Ogbar, "Party for the People," 85.

¹⁴ In Newton's own words: "Although I risk the likelihood of death, there is at least the possibility, if not the probability, of changing intolerable conditions."

¹⁵ For more on the Black Panther Party's relationship with the press, see Jane Rhodes, "Fanning the Flames of Racial Discord: The National Press and the Black Panther Party," *The Harvard International Journal of Press/Politics* 4, 95 (1999), available online at: <http://hij.sagepub.com>.

¹⁶ Newton and Blake, *Revolutionary Suicide*, *ibid*.

¹⁷ Jennifer B. Smith, "The Black Panther Party: An International History" in her *An International History of the Black Panther Party* (New York: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1999), 66.

We believe that if the American businessmen will not give full employment, then the technology and means of production should be taken from the businessmen and placed in the community so that the people of the community can organize and employ all of its people and give a high standard of living.

This strain of communist thought, though perhaps not the primary focus of the manifesto – race is referred to much more than class – fits well into the Panthers’ self-professed alignment with the Third World. Just as national revolutionary movements over the world were forced to choose sides in the Cold War divide between the communist East and the capitalist West,¹⁸ the Black Panther Party did so as well. However, their choice was made easier by their circumstances: struggling to achieve freedom from the oppression of the world’s flagship capitalist superpower.

Marxist ideology also stood at the core of the Panthers’ rejection of the Nation of Islam. Aside from their general aversion to the Nation’s “defiant talk but conciliatory behavior,”¹⁹ Panthers exhibited a traditional Marxist rejection of religion in their understanding of society. Both Seale and Newton admired the charisma and ideas of Nation spokesman Malcolm X, but could not tolerate his Muslim theology. Seale once quipped, “I had had enough of religion and could not bring myself to adopt another one.”²⁰ Newton more thoughtfully explained that, despite the “mesmerized enthusiasm” he experienced in his encounters with Malcolm X and with *Muhammad Speaks*, the Nation’s periodical, he found their religious doctrine “not scientific” and altogether not compelling.²¹ Perhaps even more fundamental, though the Panthers proudly identified as “lumpenproletariat” (the Marxist term for the rogue underclass), they considered the untamed lumpen lifestyle to be a revolutionary ideal. The Nation’s advocacy of strict Islamic conduct was thus too stark a violation of the Panthers’ revolutionary sensibilities.²²

But it was the internationalism of the communist ethos of the day that proved most crucially important to the Panthers’ politics and activism. Like its contemporaries around the world, the Black Panther Party saw its communism as part of a global revolutionary movement, not only mirroring the uprisings of the Third World, but also acting in concert with them. With this principle in mind, the Panthers initiated an international

¹⁸ See Robert J. McMahon, “A global Cold War” in his *The Cold War: A Very Short Introduction* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003), 56-77.

¹⁹ Ogbar, “Party for the People,” 73.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 82.

²¹ *Ibid.*

²² *Ibid.*

program, inspired and directed by Black Panther Party Minister of Information and Head of International Section (note the connotations of sovereignty), Eldridge Cleaver.²³ Cleaver's foreign affairs efforts generally took a back seat to the more prominent domestic goals of patrolling the police in American cities and feeding poor black communities, but they were just as essential to Panther ideology.²⁴ Ironically, this strong emphasis on global revolution eventually led the Panthers to soft-pedal their initial racial separatism and cooperate, at least nominally, with white revolutionaries, their ideological allies.

With Cleaver's urging, the Panthers sent a formal delegation to the United Nations in July 1969, advocating five goals:²⁵ 1) international attention for the plight of Huey Newton, then jailed as a "political prisoner" – his charge was manslaughter for his alleged killing of an Oakland police officer²⁶ – 2) to apply for non-governmental observer status (akin to that of the Palestine Liberation Organization); 3) to request a United Nations investigation into claims of genocide committed by the United States against its black population; 4) to request UN observers to prevent future American genocide; and 5) to request a UN-supervised plebiscite in which "black colonial subjects"²⁷ would vote to determine whether they wished to remain American citizens or peacefully form their own independent nation. The Panthers' delegation was not accepted to speak before any UN body.²⁸

Still, as in the case of any nation's (or non-nation entity's) foreign policy, bilateral engagement with independent governments proved far more fruitful and relevant to the Panthers' international operations than did UN diplomacy. And for the Party's particular objectives, no foreign partner was more essential to the Panthers' diplomatic efforts, domestic propaganda, and overall imagination than the "Democratic Republic of Vietnam" (North Vietnam).

The long, bloody war that US President Lyndon B. Johnson was then waging against Ho Chi Minh's government in Hanoi and its communist "Vietcong" allies in South Vietnam had long been a sore point

²³ Smith, *International History*, 68.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 66-67.

²⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁶ Newton allegedly killed Officer John Frey in a shootout. His subsequent imprisonment quickly became the cause of a massive propaganda campaign, and he was released in 1970 following a reversed conviction and two mistrials; see Ogbar, 88-89.

²⁷ This term is used in an addendum to the tenth point of some editions of "What We Want, What We Believe" which affirmed the plebiscite objective; see Smith, *International History*, *ibid.*

²⁸ Smith, *International History*, *ibid.*

for the American black activist movements. Even integrationist civil rights groups like the SCLC and the earlier incarnation of SNCC, which wholeheartedly embraced membership in the American polity, considered the Vietnam issue a tension they simply could not avoid. Black people, throughout the war years constituted 11 percent of the American population, accounted for 12.6 percent of the military force in Vietnam, mostly as infantry troops, and suffered a devastating 14.9 percent fatality rate in combat.²⁹ And yet, these same black Americans whose sons and brothers and fathers were dying for their country in Vietnam often did not enjoy basic rights or the societal acceptance of their fellow Americans at home. Many civil rights activists noted this painful irony of Selective Service and questioned publicly the American motives for waging war in Vietnam altogether. A popular poster in black activist circles captured this sense concisely and powerfully: “NO VIETNAMESE EVER CALLED ME NIGGER.”³⁰

Martin Luther King, Jr. echoed this popular frustration in a historic sermon to New York’s Riverside Church on April 30, 1967. Calling the war “unjust, evil, and futile,”³¹ King probed the circumstances under which the United States, for all its promise and its lofty values, had become “the greatest purveyor of violence in the world today.”³² He revealed that he had no choice but to denounce the war, and made himself eminently clear in doing so:

We were taking the black young men who had been crippled by society and sending them eight thousand miles away to guarantee liberties in Southeast Asia which they had not found in Southwest Georgia and East Harlem. So we have been repeatedly faced with a cruel irony of watching Negro and white boys on TV screens as they kill and die together for a nation that has been unable to seat them together in the same school room. So we watch them in brutal solidarity, burning the huts of a poor village. But we realize that they would hardly live on the same block in Chicago or Atlanta. We are presently moving down a

²⁹ John Sibley Butler, “African Americans in the Military” in *The Oxford Companion to American Military History*, ed. by John Whiteclay Chambers II (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 9.

³⁰ Lewis, *Walking with the Wind*, 372.

³¹ Martin Luther King, Jr., “Why I Am Opposed to the War in Vietnam,” available through the Pacifica Radio/UC Berkeley Social Activism Sound Recording Project at: <http://www.lib.berkeley.edu/MRC/pacificaviet/riversidetranscript.html>.

³² *Ibid.*

dead-end road that can lead to national disaster. America has strayed to the far country of racism and militarism.³³

The Panthers took great offense to the Vietnam War as well, but not, of course, in the same sense as did Dr. King. Most importantly, the Panthers did not characterize American government policy in Vietnam using the pronoun “We,” instead professing separation from the federal regime in Washington.³⁴ The eighth point of “What We Want, What We Believe” demands “AN IMMEDIATE END TO ALL WARS OF AGGRESSION,” and elaborates that “the various conflicts which exist around the world stem directly from the aggressive desire of the United States ruling circle and government to force its domination upon the oppressed people of the world.” The similarity of the term “oppressed people” with their characterization of black Americans as “Black and oppressed people,” is deliberate. The Panthers chose to view and portray their plight in the same light as that of the foreign nations suffering from US militarism, Vietnam among these nations.

More explicitly, Bobby Seale explained that Panthers’ armed resistance of police action in American cities, the Party’s primary domestic fight, was intimately related to the North Vietnamese cause. In his words, “The Black Panther Party was formed to resist police brutality and the murder of black people in the same manner that the Vietnamese people were resisting U.S. imperialist aggression – by violence if necessary.”³⁵

The impressive resilience of the Hanoi regime and its allies thousands of miles away influenced the Panthers’ ideology and inspired their own militant efforts at home. The Black Panther Party’s official publication expressed this poetically in 1969, following the death of North Vietnamese leader Ho Chi Minh. The parenthetical comment is from the original text:

[T]o die for the people; to die for the correct socialistic development of mankind; to die in the midst of socialistic revolutionary change for human survival; to die for your nation

³³ King, “Why I am opposed to War in Vietnam.”

³⁴ Significantly, some available editions of “What We Want, What We Believe” include an explicit clause exempting black men from serving in the US military and even implicitly vowing violence against attempts to take blacks for Selective Service, expressing: “We believe that black people should not be forced to fight in the military service to defend a racist government that does not protect us. We will not fight and kill other people of color ... who, like black people, are victimized by the white racist government of America. We will protect ourselves from the force and violence of the racist police and the racist military, by whatever means necessary.” (Smith, *International History*, 72).

³⁵ Ogbar, “Party for the People,” 85.

and people’s right to self-determination in their land, home and community; to die for the freedom of all from oppression that the Black Panther Party has witnessed in the proletarian internationalism practiced by the Vietnamese people’s revolutionary representatives that we have met; to die after all the great heroic and dedicated years of sacrifice to bring to the world and its people an end to the murderous, stormy winds of capitalism’s fascist, aggressive imperialism; to die because he loved the people of his nation and humans of the world (and Brother Ho Chi Minh had practiced this all the days of his life); to die for all of this is a death heavier than the highest mountain in the world of which no, not any destructive fascist imperialistic storm can blow away at will.³⁶

In this passage of unwavering admiration for Ho Chi Minh and his cause, too ideologically and rhetorically loaded for this author to justifiably abridge, the Panthers make clear the extent to which their ideology influenced not only their interpretation of history, but also of current world events as well. In return, the reference to the Vietnamese “revolutionary representatives that we have met” highlights the impact of ongoing interpretation of current events on the development of Panther ideology.

Indeed, there are records of these meetings between Party leaders and North Vietnamese representatives, though they come primarily from Panther sources. First, on Thanksgiving weekend, 1968, Bobby Seale reportedly travelled to Montreal, Quebec, to attend and address the Hemispheric Conference to End the War in Vietnam, a conference that included Hanoi government officials.³⁷ In early 1969, Bobby Seale and Masi Hewitt interacted with North Vietnamese representatives, during their speaking tour of the Scandinavian countries.³⁸ Eldridge Cleaver, his wife Kathleen Cleaver, and Elaine Brown visited North Vietnam in August 1970 at the invitation of the Hanoi government, while representing the Panthers on an Asia tour. Eldridge encouraged black American troops to refuse to engage in combat, and Kathleen reported upon her return that the communist government had honored the Panther delegation with a

³⁶ The Black Panther Party, “To the Courageous Vietnamese People, Commemorating the Death of Ho Chi Minh (*The Black Panther*, 13 Sept. 1969),” published in *The Black Panthers Speak*, ed. by Philip S. Foner (Cambridge, MA: Da Capo Press, 1995), 32.

³⁷ All of the information in this and the following paragraph is drawn from Smith, *International History*, 71-80.

³⁸ “Chairman Bobby Seale and ‘Masi’ Hewitt Tour Scandinavian Countries,” *The Black Panther*, 31 March 1969, 12-14.

celebration of August 18 as “the International Day of Solidarity with the Afro-American People,” a date that had already been selected by the Cuban Organization for Solidarity with the People of Africa, Asia, and Latin America (OSPAAL) to commemorate the 1965 Los Angeles riots.

Through these interactions (and perhaps others), Hanoi and Oakland developed a working relationship and professed public support for one another. The North Vietnamese lobbied the Algerian government successfully to grant the Black Panther Party diplomatic status in Algiers in 1969, and historian Jennifer Smith reports vaguely that, in addition to the primary source evidence cited here from her study, Hanoi engaged in “helping exiled Panthers.” However, Smith also qualifies that “While [North Vietnam and the Black Panther Party] both supported each other, it remains unclear how much fiscal support was provided to the Panthers by the North Vietnamese.” In a token show of reciprocal support, Newton contacted the Vietcong on August 29, 1968, pledging Panther troops to their cause. Hanoi understood this to be a symbolic gesture, thanked the Panthers for supporting its allies in South Vietnam, and encouraged them to help the Vietnamese cause by continuing the fight in America.

Unlike many of their left-wing contemporaries, the Panthers’ objections to racism and to war in Vietnam formed an ideologically organic worldview. In the case of Martin Luther King, Jr., the cause of black freedom and the cause of ending the war were two separate but related points. His elaborate presentation in Riverside Church, casting the war as a great evil of America that indirectly afflicts the cause of black freedom along with the other causes and unresolved problems of society, attests to this. For the Panthers, however, their activism regarding racism and the Vietnam War reflected two sides of the very same anticolonialist coin. A national political project, the Peace and Freedom Party (PFP) emerged within months of King’s speech as a radical white leftist attempt to fuse the black movement and the antiwar movement into one united political platform, and, sure enough, the PFP’s organizers turned to the Black Panther Party to build the coalition, nominating Eldridge Cleaver as its first presidential candidate in 1968.³⁹

The international history of Black Panther engagement with the global communist revolution continued for years beyond that point,

³⁹ Barber, “Leading the Vanguard,” 226. Although this excursion into American politics may seem sacrilegious for a Panther ideologue like Cleaver, rapid changes of heart and lifestyle were not atypical in the life story of a man who had once been a convicted rapist and would later become, in succession, a born-again Christian, a French fashion designer, a baptized Mormon, a conservative Republican activist, and a crack cocaine addict. See John Kifner, “Eldridge Cleaver, Black Panther Who Became G.O.P. Conservative, Is Dead at 62,” *The New York Times*, 2 May, 1998, A1.

playing out especially in Cuba and Algeria. In the final days of 1969, the official Panther publication broadcasted its admiration for the revolution of Fidel Castro and Che Guevara:

We see the Cuban revolution as a great achievement in the world revolution by establishing an island of socialism in an ocean, the western hemisphere, of capitalist exploitation, imperialist aggression, and fascist suppression. We wish the Cuban people victory in their struggle against the blockade and may the Cuban people achieve their goal of 10,000,000 tons in the 1970 sugar cane harvest.⁴⁰

Flowery admiration and ideological alignment aside, the Panthers’ formidable efforts at genuine diplomatic relations with Cuba, their supposed regional ally, were beset by a host of political concerns that the Panthers neither prepared for nor understood.

The Panthers first mission to successfully reach Cuba, traveled from Mexico, included Panther Minister of Education, George Murray, and New York chapter leader, Joudon Ford, and arrived on the island in the summer of 1968. The two reported a friendly reception and much mutual praise, but a more complicated relationship followed. Cuba wanted to cement its role in propagating international communist revolution and made that clear to its black American allies.⁴¹ But politics became trickier when, two months later, Eldridge Cleaver was charged with the attempted murder of two Oakland police officers, and, out of fear of being assassinated in prison, fled to Cuba through Canada.⁴²

Cleaver arrived on the island and immediately began to advocate for the creation of an international Panther base on the island, in which guerilla fighters would be trained and dispatched back to the American mainland for revolution. Cleaver’s requests were definitively rebuffed and he was forcibly marginalized by a Havana government that feared antagonistic actions which could serve as a pretext for Washington to worsen the already unbearable American blockade. After living in Cuba quietly, Cleaver began to grow disillusioned with the state of affairs in Havana and started openly criticizing Cuban racism and other ills. Needless to say, Havana no longer tolerated Cleaver’s presence and asked him to leave in the summer of 1969.⁴³ In a way, the Panthers’

38. ⁴⁰ “On Criticism of Cuba” (*The Black Panther*, 27 Dec. 1969) in Foner, 37-

⁴¹ Smith, *International History*, 70-71.

⁴² Ibid. 73.

⁴³ Smith, *International History*, 70-71.

disappointment with their Cuba experience is very analogous to Ho Chi Minh's shock at being rebuffed by the United States upon his 1945 request for American support for Vietnamese self-determination;⁴⁴ in each case, the idealistic revolutionaries were let down by the great power whose (Cold War) politics obscured the fruition of its ideological rhetoric.

Cleaver then set off for Algeria, seeking support from the black socialist revolutionary regime that had successfully won its independence from French colonial domination seven years earlier.⁴⁵ Within months, Cleaver was joined by his wife Kathleen and several other Panther exiles, creating a veritable community abroad and a de-facto international base of operations. By the spring of 1970, the Panthers reported that North Vietnamese intercession prevailed upon the Algiers regime to grant the Party quasi-diplomatic status. It appears, however, that the Algerians did not understand the Panther claims of supposed ideological kinship any more than the exiled Panthers, who were not conversant in French or Arabic, understood Algerian culture and politics. The relationship was fraught and contrived from the beginning, and soured when Algiers grew impatient with the rowdy black Americans and put them under house arrest in their villa in late 1972, allowing them to leave the country one at a time. Cleaver fled to France but was not granted asylum.

The Black Panthers' international program also included, at various points, sporadic contact with the communist entities in China, North Korea, and the European Left, in addition to other Third World revolutionaries in the Congo, Mozambique, Rhodesia, South Africa, Angola, and the PLO. Black Panther support groups emerged throughout Europe, in Japan, and in Israel. Still, the international program never managed to provide much support to the Party's domestic agenda, largely because of a certain ineptitude in realpolitik. In the words of Jennifer Smith, "The Panther leaders and members had a tendency not to examine situations before they commented on and interacted with these circumstances. Their strategic judgment was somewhat lacking."⁴⁶ Ultimately, as Cleaver and his team grew further and further removed from the reality on the ground in Oakland and other American cities, the FBI began to actively sow discord between the various Party leaders. Newton and his people in Oakland became unwilling to tolerate Cleaver's (often especially radical) input and banished the entire international section from the Party in 1972.

⁴⁴ See Mark Atwood Lawrence, *The Vietnam War: A Concise International History* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 27-28.

⁴⁵ All of the information in this and the following paragraph is drawn from Smith, *International History*, 67-81.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.* 71.

A corollary to the international program is the Black Panther’s working relationship with the contemporary activists of the white New Left. This relationship was, by all appearances, an impressive statement of ideological consistency: Panther opposition to White America was not about racial purity but about fighting the oppressive “pigs” of colonialism.⁴⁷ Despite this, historian David Barber has recently demonstrated that the relationship between the Panthers and the various radical factions of Students for a Democratic Society (SDS), the flagship New Left group, was generally discordant at best, and consisted mostly of the SDS’s militant “Weathermen” mimicking Panther rhetoric and tactics (just as SDS founders had been mimicking SNCC since the early 1960s).⁴⁸

On the ground in the United States, the Panthers were regarded and feared generally as a violent hate group, but they attracted some attention for their communism as well in a Cold War-shaken populace. In 1969, Kent Courtney of the Conservative Society of America published an exhaustive and sensationalist pamphlet about the Panthers, titled “Are These Cats Red?: An exposé of a Communist front which is engaged in Guerilla Warfare against high schools and universities.”⁴⁹ Courtney illustrates, with palpable fear, the demonstrable belligerence and criminal records of Newton, Seale, Cleaver, and the others, as well as their avowed Marxist leanings, foreign ties, revolutionary aims, and “fifth column tactics.” His intention, it seems, was to raise awareness among the populace of the true association of these uncommon criminals with America’s greatest enemies. In his worst doomsday scenario, Courtney conceives of the Panthers successfully using their urban staging grounds to engage militarily with National Guard troops, kill massive numbers of policemen, and capture schools. Ultimately, Courtney calls for public support for police suppression and demands that the Panthers be charged with “SEDITION AND TREASON,” adding:

Their goal is not reform, but revolution. The widespread distribution of this pamphlet into the hands of civic officials and education leaders is necessary in order to make them more fully aware of the real nature of the Black Panthers thus helping stop the destruction of American education.

The extent of Courtney’s impact appears relatively unknown, though historians have also demonstrated that the Panthers’ communist

⁴⁷ See Barber, “Leading the Vanguard,” 222-251.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ Kent Courtney, “Are These Cats Red?: The Black Panthers” (pamphlet), *Conservative Society of America* 23 (1969).

leanings and foreign diplomatic relations were a perfect basis for the vehemently anticommunist FBI to justify persistent interference in Black Panther communication and operations.⁵⁰

All considered, it is difficult to define just how important communism was to the Black Panthers leaders. The strong nationalist undertones of Panther literature suggest that, as in the case of many contemporary revolutionary movements, national self-determination was the Party's primary goal. Seale and Newton found themselves in the right place at the right time to see communism as the most suitable mode for such a revolutionary aim, de-emphasizing communism's post-nationalist strains all the while. Perhaps most instructive for this question is the Panthers' initial statement of purpose, its storied Ten-Point Program. Not only does "What We Want, What We Believe" address national freedom more than economic systems; the declaration concludes with an ironic overture to none other than the United States of America:

When in the Course of human events, it becomes necessary for one people to dissolve the political bands which have connected them with another, and to assume among the powers of the earth, the separate and equal station to which the Laws of Nature and of Nature's God entitle them, a decent respect to the opinions of mankind requires that they should declare the causes which impel them to the separation.

We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness.—That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed, ---That whenever any Form of Government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the Right of the People to alter or to abolish it, and to institute new Government, laying its foundation on such principles and organizing its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their Safety and Happiness...

Quoting from the U.S. Declaration of Independence in an effort to appeal to the sensibilities of their "colonizing regime" (and perhaps to allude to Ho Chi Minh's similar overture of twenty-one years before),⁵¹ Bobby Seale and Huey Newton unwittingly reveal that an endgame of pure global communism is quite far from their minds.

⁵⁰ See Smith, *International History*, 73.

⁵¹ See note 46 above.

MAKING BETTER BABIES: THE EARLY 20TH CENTURY EUGENICS MOVEMENT IN AMERICA

BY
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Carly Leary is a junior studying History and Spanish at the United States Naval Academy. This paper was written for a history seminar class on Theodore Roosevelt and his times taught by Dr. Lori Bogle. Carly took a particular interest in the eugenics movement and better babies contests when her professor mentioned the topic in class.

By 1900, traditional American ideas about the inferiority of non-whites had developed into the eugenics movement, which mirrored John J. Biddison's belief that the human race could be improved through selective breeding. Often called scientific racism, the primary investigative phase of the movement began in the late 1890s when Americans began to desire restrictions on race and origin of immigrants. The movement's heyday occurred during its second stage, between 1905 and 1930, which was marked by suggestions for selective breeding and sterilization as a means of purifying the national breeding stock. Eugenecists developed the notion that crime, illness, and other undesirable traits were hereditary, and that the only way to rid the nation of these misfit beings and achieve a perfect race was to selectively breed the American people while simultaneously sterilize the unfit portion of the population. The simplicity of the idea made it uncommon for anyone to oppose the principles behind eugenics when the idea was first introduced—"if these genetically inferior people were permitted to reproduce unchecked, they would soon swamp the (smart) upper classes and lead the country straight to ruin."¹ To sell these methods to the American public, eugenecists held a series of national publicity events called "Better Baby Contests" and "Fitter Family Contests." The popularity of these contests continued to grow for almost thirty years before they were eventually undermined as the eugenics movement became associated with Nazi Germany and Adolf Hitler's idea of a "master race." The final stage, marked by rapid decline, began around

¹ Johnathan Marks, "Historiography of Eugenics.." *National Center for Biotechnology Information*. Web.
<http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC1682158/?page=1>, 1.

1930, as people came to be more critical of the movement's interpretation of facts.²

The term "eugenics," first coined by British statistician Francis Galton in 1883, literally means "the science of being well-born" and "the study of those hereditarily endowed with noble qualities."³ The notions behind the eugenics movement began developing as early as 1880 at a time when millions of immigrants arrived in America. The ideas, however, were initially inspired by Gregor Mendel's genetic discoveries and claims along with other leading biologists of the time. After its introduction to the American public, eugenics became an obsession. During this time, opposition to eugenics became an opposition to both progress and innovation.⁴ "...Eugenics was a common concern that infiltrated the lives of ordinary citizens...The ideology of improving national or racial stock by intentional intervention was useful for both conservation and progressive purposes."⁵ Within a matter of time, eugenics became a part of the American school curriculum and popular culture as evidenced by its prevalence in television dramas and books. By the turn of the century, eugenics played an integral role in the progressive movement, which ultimately aimed to 'reform' America. Progressives were middle and upper class reformers who sought to rationalize and protect the economic and political system beginning with ridding the country of the problems associated with rapid industrialization and massive immigration. Progressives believed that America's traditional racial stock was increasingly undermined by dark-skinned people who resided in overcrowded and chaotic cities. One area of particular concern included the rise in crime and illness among 'unfit' Americans.

One of the leading eugenicists in the country, Henry H. Goddard, conducted a series of pedigrees, which were indicative of the initial investigative stage of the movement. His study of the Kallikak family where he "traced 480 descendants of an immigrant mentally retarded girl," revealed that about half of her descendants exhibited some form of criminal behavior or illness while the other half were 'normal' or

² Ted L. DeCorte, Jr., University of Nevada, Las Vegas, and 1978. "Eclectic Buzz: Menace of Undesirables: The Eugenics Movement During the Progressive Era - DeCorte Digital Media (DDM)," posted at *DeCorte and Associates -Smart Women Invest - Christine DeCorte - Nevada Life and Health Insurance - DeCorte & Associates*. Web. <<http://www.smartwomeninvest.com/eugenics.htm>>. 4.

³ Paul A. Lombardo, *A Century of Eugenics in America: from the Indiana Experiment to the Human Genome Era*, (Bloomington, Ind.: Indiana Univ. Press, 2010.), 1.

⁴ Marks, "Historiography of Eugenics," 2.

⁵ Tamsen Wolff, *Mendel's Theatre: Heredity, Eugenics, and Early Twentieth-Century American Drama*, (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009.). 5.

‘uncontroversial.’ Goddard concluded that “feeble-mindedness is hereditary and transmitted as surely as any character,” and wrote a book about this study which supported the rise in eugenics in America.⁶ Richard Dugdale, another eugenicist, investigated the Juke family to support the idea that criminal behavior and other unfit traits were biological traits passed onto the next generation. The Jukes were “an unusually large family with a high incidence of criminal behavior, alcoholism, sexual promiscuity, mental retardation, and insanity.”⁷ Dugdale eventually concluded that “the social ills of the family members were *somehow* transmitted from generation to generation.”⁸ His research did not prove causation; however, his findings did fit the premise of the eugenics movement. By limiting the production of unfit Americans with negative traits, and producing more fit citizens with better genes, the country would be well on its way to reform.

The eugenics movement reached its height during the second and most influential phase from around 1905 until 1930, during which “more and more progressive reformers became convinced that a good proportion of the social ills in the United States lay in hereditary factors.”⁹ Conservative progressives had little concern for the rights of people, rather their main interest was the prevention of “breeding” by those with criminal, insane, epileptic, retarded, and other impoverished tendencies unfit for society. Soon after the rise in the movement, eugenics further divided into positive and negative realms. Galton described positive eugenics as encouraging the fit members of society to reproduce and negative eugenics as preventing the reproduction of the unfit in society.¹⁰ He claimed, “Negative eugenics aims at checking the deterioration to which the human stock is exposed, owing to the rapid proliferation of what may be called human weeds.” While he believed that negative eugenics would help to reform the breeding stock, he also said that “negative eugenics is not enough... If we want improvement, progress, the creation of superior types of humanity..., we must look to positive eugenics.”¹¹ The dual idea of procreation and selective breeding among fit people and

⁶ DeCorte, “Eclectic Buzz,” 8.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 4.

⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹ *Ibid.*, 8.

¹⁰ Wolff, *Mendel's Theatre*, 3.

¹¹ Donald J. Childs. *Modernism and Eugenics Woolf, Eliot, Yeats, and The Culture of Degeneration*. (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 3.

sterilization and elimination of inferiors was formed.¹² While social Darwinists were more in favor of letting nature take its course with the unfit in society and supported positive eugenics, progressives and eugenicists, on the other hand, wanted to rid the nation of misfits as soon as possible through forced sterilization.¹³ President Franklin Delano Roosevelt reaffirmed sentiments of progressives when he stated, "A race must be strong and vigorous; it must be a race of good fighters and good breeders... The prime duty of a good citizen of the right type is to leave his or her blood behind in the world; and we have no business to permit the perpetuation of citizens of the wrong type."¹⁴



Better Baby contests thrived among positive eugenics supporters, and were highly anticipated events throughout the country. These events promoted selective breeding by judging young children and eventually entire families. They were "one of the most popular expressions of public health and race betterment in rural America."¹⁵ Citizens believed the contests were a positive influence, because the incentives to win the contests—including money, trophies, medals, and more—encouraged healthy habits among families. Pictured above, is a baby being examined at one of these contests.¹⁶ Coherent with popular sentiments of the time, rationale for these contests exploited desires to improve one's country:

¹² "Eugenics - Positive And Negative Eugenics - Social, People, and Procreation - JRank Articles ." *Medicine Encyclopedia - JRank Articles Web*. <<http://medicine.jrank.org/pages/2210/Eugenics-Positive-Negative-Eugenics.html>>.

¹³ DeCorte, "Eclectic Buzz," 4.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 6.

¹⁵ Alexandra Minna Stern, "Making Better Babies: Public Health and Race Betterment in Indiana 1920-1935." *Public Health Then and Now* 92.5 (2002): 742.

¹⁶ "EugenicsArchive.Org: Image Archive on American Eugenics Movement." Image Archive on the American Eugenics Movement. <http://www.eugenicsarchive.org/eugenics/list3.pl>, Image #2244.

“better Babies mean better mothers and fathers, better homes, better cities, a better nation, a better world.”¹⁷

Federal agencies such as the Better Babies Bureau led the way spreading the contests throughout the nation as government sanctioned events. “The work of the Bureau was “to encourage the holding of Better Babies contests as an aid to preventive medicine and a method of helping parents to start children, physically and mentally, toward individual health and efficient citizenship.”¹⁸ The Bureau did its best to make the contests sound appealing in newspapers and magazine articles. Some articles, using emotional appeals, even attempted to display these contests as a civic duty.¹⁹ The Bureau would receive letters from secretaries of state, state fair committees, and others inquiring what they must do to plan such events. After receiving a surplus of these letters, the Bureau compiled paperwork and pamphlets to help officials plan a Better Baby contest in their state or county. Anxious mothers soon bombarded the Bureau with questions asking what they could do to bring their babies “up to the standard.”²⁰ The Bureau printed “Hints to Mothers Who Want Better Babies” to satisfy hopeful parents. These folders contained eight pages of information and charts to help parents groom their babies to the ideal.²¹ The folders went in depth about the steps a mother must take in order to maximize the chances of her son or daughter being a “Better Baby.” Those working for the Bureau believed that what they were doing was truly making the world a better place. From a bright and sunny workplace with posters of the contests hung everywhere, to the hundreds of letters received daily by hopeful mothers, “. . .nobody can work in this Bureau without feeling that the world grows better every day.”²²

The literature of eugenics emphasized that mothers should nurse their children. After a year, the child could transfer to natural foods, while completely avoiding ‘indigestible’ food. Sleep emerged as the next most important consideration. The list of considered factors was extensive, including the number of people who slept in the same room as the child, the degree to which the windows were open, and the thickness of the pajamas worn by the child. If these directions were followed exactly, the

¹⁷ Richardson. "\$17,000,000 For Better Farms- 30,000 For Better Babies!," 95.

¹⁸ Roger H. Dennett, "How To Make Babies Better." *Women's Home Companion* 50 (1913): 24.

¹⁹ Richardson. "\$17,000,000 For Better Farms- 30,000 For Better Babies!," 122.

²⁰ Dennett, "How To Make Babies Better," 24.

²¹ *Ibid.*

²² Richardson, "The Better Babies Bureau," 29.

child was guaranteed to have no more sleepless nights. The folders even encouraged exercise, particularly with companions as often as possible because additional children encouraged more exercise. The folder's last emphasis was simply common sense, "as nothing can ever be written, and no new discoveries in the field of medical science can ever be made, which will take the place of common sense in bringing up a baby."²³

However, during the eugenics movement, scientists and doctors were very successful in convincing the American public that "the Better Babies idea [was] really an important scientific discovery—more important than many discoveries of cures for disease, for it [would] greatly lessen disease."²⁴ It led the people to believe that these contests were an integral part of health reform in America. Dr. Ada E. Schweitzer's work as the head of the Better Baby program flourished because of the outstanding concern for public health and eugenics at the time.²⁵ She responding in kind about the complaints of the contests' by making arrangements with the Better Baby Bureau and the American Medical Association to work together in order to create a standard score card.²⁶ Schweitzer was responsible for launching the Better Baby movement in Indiana, making it one of the best case studies about how these contests worked.²⁷

Her main goal, however, was to lower the infant mortality rate throughout the United States. In her 1920 annual report, Schweitzer publicized that she had completed conferences in 27 different Indiana counties and examined over 8,000 children. Schweitzer expanded the movement by hiring more nurses in addition to holding special classes for mothers and mothers-to-be and "achieved significant successes, particularly declines in the number of underweight babies and in the infant mortality rate."²⁸ By 1926, the infant mortality rate in Indiana had dropped to number four in the country.²⁹ "While Schweitzer certainly viewed the contests as a facet of a more extensive betterment project, she alleged that the 'gates of heredity' were closed after the baby left the womb. It was essential to first restrict birth to only the most fit, through marriage and

²³ Dennett, "How To Make Babies Better," 65.

²⁴ Richardson, "How Healthy Are The Babies in Your Town?" 122.

²⁵ Alexandra Minna Stern, "Making Better Babies: Public Health and Race Betterment in Indiana 1920-1935." *Public Health Then and Now* 92.5 (2002): 742.

²⁶ Stern, "Making Better Babies," 748.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 747.

²⁸ David J. Bodenhamer, and Randall T. Shepard, *The History of Indiana Law*, (Athens, Ohio: Ohio University Press, 2006.) 75.

²⁹ Stern, "Making Better Babies," 747.

sterilization laws, and then to create only the most desirable children through scientific child rearing and motherhood.”³⁰

Schweitzer wholeheartedly advocated the contests, yet realized that the contests themselves were not capable of transforming below-average babies into perfect ones. While her main work was parental and societal education about Better Baby contests as well as in planning and executing these events, Dr. Schweitzer admitted that some forms of negative eugenics, such as sterilization and planned marriage, were also necessary for the betterment of American racial development.

Indiana was not the state of origin of Better Baby contests, yet this state provides critical information necessary to understand the events surrounding and encapsulating the contests. Before the contests even began in Indiana, the state passed the country’s first eugenic sterilization law in 1907.³¹ The state also developed additional classes, films, and radio shows after the Towner Act passed in 1921.³² “Administered by the US Children’s Bureau, this act provided matching funds to states that approved ‘enabling legislation’ and established agencies devoted to infant and maternal welfare.”³³ Public health was a top priority for Indiana, making Better Baby contests even more ideal. Beginning around 1913, the contests were popular, and included demonstrations for the mothers regarding feeding techniques and other tools. The contests became not only a way to win money and prizes but also a way for women to gain education, a social benefit which the public appreciated. Raising ‘Better Babies’ adopted the same language as raising cattle or corn.³⁴ By 1915, Indiana had climbed to sixth in a nationwide ranking of the State Board of Health based off the effectiveness of their social programs.³⁵ The Indiana Child Creed, “an awkward patchwork of eugenic, public health, Protestant, and Progressive ideas,” became a part of the Indiana cultural language in 1915. The creed reads:

Every child has the inalienable right to be born free from disease, free from deformity and with pure blood in its veins and arteries. Every child has the inalienable right to be loved; to have its individuality respected; to be trained wisely in mind, body, and soul; to be protected from disease, from evil influences and evil

³⁰ Ibid., 749.

³¹ Stern, "Making Better Babies," 743.

³² Bodenhamer *The History of Indiana Law*, 75.

³³ Stern, "Making Better Babies," 743.

³⁴ Alexandra Minna Stern, "Making Better Babies: Public Health and Race Betterment in Indiana 1920-1935." *Public Health Then and Now* 92.5 (2002): 747.

³⁵ Ibid., 743.

persons; and to have a fair chance. In a word, to be brought up in the fear and admonition of the Lord.

That state is delinquent which does not ceaselessly strive to secure these inalienable rights to its children.³⁶

The appearance of this creed at the local, state and federal level marked the beginning of better baby work in Indiana.³⁷ It was the “epigraph the *Indiana Mothers’ Baby Book*,” and a copy was sent to every Indiana mother after she had given birth.³⁸



*The photograph above was taken at one of the Indiana Better Baby Contests, and the three babies pictured were likely winners. It is interesting that the babies appear in classical Greek or Roman clothing, suggesting an ideal or paradigm of nobility.*³⁹

But cracks soon appeared in the underlying logic of these contests. Charles B. Davenport, a well-known biologist and eugenicist, said that “a prize winner at two may be epileptic at ten.”⁴⁰ This doubt began to increase in participants. Even though a “perfect” baby may be winning prizes at a young age, there was no telling what their health would be like in ten, fifteen, or twenty years. This issue led to the concept of Fitter Family contests. A report by the Eugenics Department suggested that the

³⁶ Bodenhamer, *The History of Indiana Law*, 74-75.

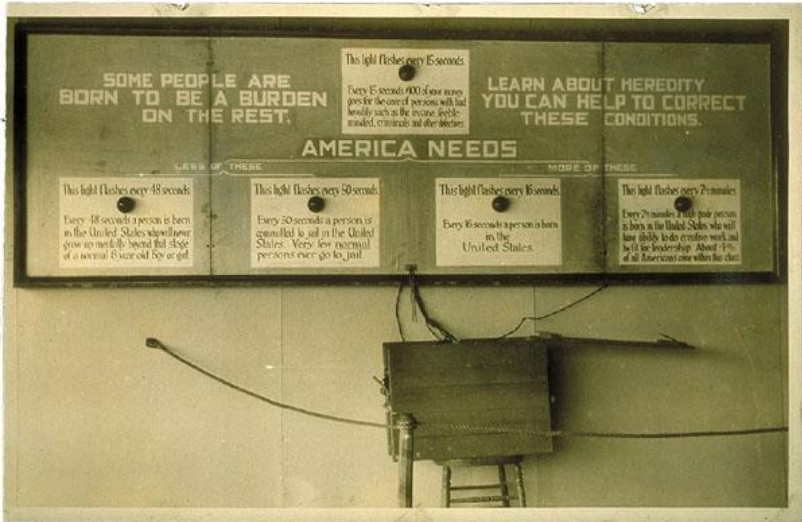
³⁷ Stern, "Making Better Babies," 744.

³⁸ Bodenhamer, *The History of Indiana Law*, 74.

³⁹ Alexandra Minna Stern, "Making Better Babies: Public Health and Race Betterment in Indiana 1920-1935." *Public Health Then and Now* 92.5 (2002): 743.

⁴⁰ "Eugenics Archive." *Fitter Families for Future Firesides: A report of the Eugenics Department of the Kansas Free Fair, 1920-1924*, June 1928.

strength of every living thing depends on heredity and environment; therefore, Fitter Family contests would be more useful to the eugenics movement. The contests not only judged the “Better Baby” but also the respective family. The sign below, a ‘flashing light sign,’ could be seen at fitter family contests as a call to action.



American Philosophical Society. Noncommercial, educational use only.

The sign reads “Some people are born to be a burden on the rest... Learn about heredity. You can help correct these conditions.” The top box says, “This light flashes every 15 seconds. Every 15 seconds \$100 of your money goes for the care of persons with bad heredity such as the insane, feeble minded, criminals and other defectives.” The sign then had four boxes below, two of which were labeled “America needs less of these” and the other two read “America needs more of these.” The two boxes that read ‘America needs less of’ state: “This light flashes every 48 seconds...Every 48 seconds a person is born in the United States who will never grow up mentally beyond that state of a normal 8 year old boy or girl,” and “This light flashes every 50 seconds...Every 50 seconds a person is committed to jail in the United States. Very few normal persons ever go to jail.” One of the boxes describing what America needs more of said “This light flashes every 7 ½ minutes. Every 7 ½ minutes a high grade person is born in the United States who will have the ability to do creative work and be fit for leadership. About 4% of all Americans come within this class.”⁴¹ Appropriately, the electrical wires are attached to

⁴¹ "EugenicsArchive.Org: Image Archive on American Eugenics Movement." <http://www.eugenicsarchive.org/eugenics/list3.pl>, Image #5.

these boards in order to signify progress of the time period. The boards served as an educational tool, translating old ideas about the superiority of races into scientific form. By displaying signs like this, the Fitter Family contests educated and convinced people about fit and unfit citizens. The statistics were important because they made the ideas behind the eugenics movement more believable to the reader.

In 1930, the third and final stage of decline of the eugenics movement began, and the beginning of a rapid collapse in all the ideas and ‘facts’ about eugenics became evident. Many people began to believe that nothing they were taught about heredity was factual as almost all claims lacked evidence. As mentioned earlier, Dugdale’s conclusion in his research about the Jukes family was the social ills of the family were *somehow* transmitted from generation to generation. Although Dugdale was a recognized eugenicist, anyone could have made the conclusion that these ills were *somehow* being transmitted.

According to the article titled “Menace of Undesirables: The Eugenics Movement During the Progressive Era” by Ted DeCorte, there are three major events which rushed the decline of the eugenics movement. The Depression of the 1930s triggered the first marks of decline, during which both fit and unfit Americans were suffering from the effects of rampant inflation and unemployment. The unfit appeared no worse off than the fit in nearly every aspect of well-being. Second, different scientists published research demonstrating that there were metabolic causes for many of the illnesses found in the Juke and Kallikak families. This meant that the research completed earlier by Goddard and Dugdale which claimed all of these illnesses to be hereditary, was not accurate. Hitler-style eugenics ultimately contributed to the final decline of the eugenics movement.⁴² Americans were appalled by the events in Nazi Germany, and did not want to be associated with the horrific regime or its methods.

Ultimately, “realization of the full implications of eugenics abruptly halted racial reforms in the United States.”⁴³ Unbelievably quick in origin, the movement seemingly vanished, practically forgotten by all Americans and is left out of the common history narrative. It is nearly impossible to find signs of opposition to eugenics during its height, and although most would agree that the entire eugenics movement was immoral and unjust, scientists today often pretend the movement never even existed. Those who do not deny the movement completely often justify it by “rewriting it as a fringe movement populated by a few zealots

⁴² DeCorte, "Eclectic Buzz," 11.

⁴³ Ibid.

and pseudoscientists.”⁴⁴ Ironically, many people holding this opinion have not been scientifically-trained themselves. Reading about Better Baby and Fitter Family contests now makes these ideas seem ridiculous, but during the Progressive movement, Americans were looking for essentially any reason for the country’s “decline.” Placing the blame on immigration and racial inferiority became the scapegoat of the time.



*The photograph above was taken during the Holocaust, and shows a misplaced child being examined in order to determine whether or not he is racially ‘pure.’ This picture is similar to the one on page six from a Better Baby contest, showing the similarities between the events of the American eugenics movement and the Holocaust in Nazi Germany.*⁴⁵

⁴⁴ Johnathan Marks, "Historiography of Eugenics.." *National Center for Biotechnology Information*. Web. 1 Oct. 2012.
<<http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC1682158/?page=1>>. 2.

⁴⁵ Category. "Holocaust: A Photograph of a Child Receiving Medical Examinations in the Bad Schallerbach Home for Displaced Children." *20th Century History*. N.p., n.d. Web. 19 Nov. 2012.
<<http://history1900s.about.com/library/holocaust/blchildren8.htm>>.

SHOW ME A HAPPY HOMOSEXUAL

BY
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Despite queer cinema's relevance and popularity in post-AIDS crisis America, homosexual men have been written into history as contagious, promiscuous, effeminate characters through the use of film. What began as an effort to shun homosexuality and incite homophobia has developed into a method of rebuilding a broken identity. This homophobia, however, was altered by forming a counterpublic,¹ by which homosexuals gained positive representation in film, and therefore achieved the power of organization. Film has been a form of discourse used by homosexual males to redevelop their historical identity in post-AIDS crisis America through a series of heterosexually identifiable changes.

Michael Warner's *Publics and Counterpublics* asserts that a public is created by texts. These texts can range from public speeches to pamphlets distributed at rallies. Film is a form of text and acts as a discourse that can circulate through many publics and counterpublics, forming both collective and individual identities. To be a part of a public is to inhabit a certain social world or space. Film can navigate these various social spaces due to its nature of distribution and popularity. Warner also asserts that transforming identity is central to sexuality movements. This includes unconscious manifestations, the vision of good life embedded in them, and the habits by which people continue to

¹ Michael Warner, *Publics and Counterpublics* (New York: Zone Books, 2002), 56-57. Warner defines a counterpublic as a public "defined by their tension with a larger public. Their participants are marked off from persons or citizens in general. Discussion within such a public is understood to contravene the rules obtaining in the world at large...this kind of public is, in effect, a counterpublic: it maintains at some level, conscious or not, an awareness of its subordinate status...this status does not simply reflect identities formed elsewhere; participation in such a public is one of the ways by which its members' identities are formed and transformed."

understand themselves and embodiments as public or private.² A movement around homosexual representation in film attempts to alter the public's perception of their various embodiments and identities.

Films produced before the AIDS crisis were able to shun homosexuality and incite homophobia due to the nature of productions. Studios were run by conservative, rich, white men who could control the representation of characters in their films. From the 1950s through the 1970s, homosexual characters frequently committed suicide or faced savage beatings upon recognizing their sexuality. "The consequence of this realization of [his homosexuality] is that he promptly commits suicide, only one of many...gay characters of the period who take their lives when faced with the 'awful truth' about their sexuality."³ Most gay, male characters either suffered from "remaining in the closet," or suffered the pain of being shunned from society. Either way, 'coming out' was evidentially "bad for one's health." Acknowledging or not acknowledging homosexuality would lead to the ultimate demise of a character, no matter what the situation entailed. "People feel that the price they must pay for social membership...is identification with the heterosexual life narrative; that they are individually responsible for the rages...and failures they experience in their intimate lives, while the fractures of the contemporary US shame and sabotage them everywhere."⁴ Films that portrayed gay men (during the period of pre-AIDS crisis, post-WWII America) as having nowhere to turn and nothing to safely identify with created a huge obstacle in the way of forming a counterpublic. The films were produced by members of a homophobic public, and therefore imposed identities. Although gay men had not yet formed a viable counterpublic, their entrance to the public was quite difficult. "...being in a public is a privilege that requires filtering or repressing something that is seen as private."⁵ In order to reflect the turbulent identity struggle of the time, gay male characters had to live on the fringes of society in a perpetual state of doom by repressing their private lives.

The 1955 film, *Rebel Without a Cause*, by Nicholas Ray featured a homoerotic relationship between Plato and Jim, the two main characters. Plato is characterized as an effeminate, emotionally unstable boy. He is extremely dependent on his friendship with Jim and idealizes his masculinity. Throughout the film, the two men are always framed

² Warner, *Publics and Counterpublics*, 51.

³ Larry P. Gross, *Up From Invisibility: Lesbians, Gay Men, and the Media in America* (New York: Columbia UP, 2001) 60.

⁴ Warner, *Publics and Counterpublics*, 198.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 23.

together, staring into each other's eyes. In the shots that the two men share, they hold each other's gaze even if Judy (the female protagonist) or another woman enters the frame. In several shots, Judy is hanging off of Jim, almost begging for his attention, yet Jim is focused only on Plato. Although the film shows no romantic physical interaction between the men, it is clear that Plato is in love with Jim. In fact, the original edit included a kissing scene between them, but it was cut due to Motion Picture Association of America (MPAA) restrictions. Their homoerotic interactions create sexual tension throughout the film, and Plato's obsession with Jim is often uncomfortable to watch. However, Plato suffers the ultimate demise common to many homosexual characters of the time, when he is shot and killed in the end. He dies in Jim's arms, and Jim places his jacket around Plato's dead body in a final expression of devotion. This image of Plato's untimely death reinforces the idea that coming out is 'bad for one's health.' When the film was made in 1955, gay men suffered untold amounts of hate crimes and unjustified violence. Although Nicholas Ray tried to include a more obvious romance between the two men, their painful interactions created discourse on where gay men stand in society. Therefore, to identify as gay meant identifying as a victim.

In 1970, William Friedkin directed and released *The Boys in the Band*, a film detrimental to the formation of the gay identity. The film featured several friends at a dinner party, going through the "thralls of being gay."⁶ At one point, the main character says, "Show me a happy homosexual and I'll show you a gay corpse,"⁷ essentially arguing that there are no happy homosexuals. Throughout the film, various subplots of romantic desires would unfold to reveal a plethora of negative stereotypes. They were closeted men who were afraid to come out, and out men who were full of self-hatred. In every case, the men were completely miserable with their own identities. Again, this film reinforced the notion that coming out was 'bad for one's health.'

Each film containing gay male characters acted as a form of discourse among the emerging gay community. The discourse of the time belonged to the public and was handed down to the emerging counterpublic of gay men. Essentially, the homophobic public used film as a form of identity-constructing oppression. By portraying homosexuality as dangerous, people feared those who identified as gay.

⁶ *The Boys in the Band*, DVD, directed by William Friedkin (1970; Hollywood, CA: Cinema Center Films).

⁷ Ibid.

The images set forth by gay male characters were extremely negative stereotypes. They were portrayed as promiscuous, often prowling the streets and clubs in search of a “dangerous” one-night stand. Homosexuals were often portrayed as miserable and self-loathing, like *The Boys in the Band*. Finally, they were seen as emotionally unstable, characterized by wild mood swings and violent rages. Some stereotypes were positive, but still confining to a developing gay identity. The characters were effeminate, charming, physically attractive, had good taste and were frequently successful. Although these are good attributes to possess, they created a narrow identity that many gay men couldn’t identify with, therefore rendering the positive discourse useless. These stereotypes labeled gay men as different and therefore allowed for their stigmatization. “Through a discussion on stereotyping, the process of othering, the idea of identity archetypes, and the labeling of deviancy, it is suggested that homosexuals have been subject to these processes in a manner that has subjugated gay identity.”⁸ Offering the public a very limited view of gay men fostered a narrow, fearful, and not entirely understanding public perception.

The 1997 film *My Best Friend’s Wedding* by PJ Hogan is a more contemporary example that reinforces the stereotypes that are seemingly ‘positive.’ The film features a gay character named George. He is physically attractive, flamboyant, successful, effeminate and has great taste. We are meant to see these stereotypes as humorous, mood-lightening enhancements to the hetero-normative romance between the main characters, but George’s portrayal is still a confining one. His portrayal furthers the notion that gay men must identify with this specific stereotype in order to achieve an identity.

The 1996 film, *The Birdcage*, by Mike Nichols is a similarly comedic text in which the gay couple acts as the punch line for the entire film. The two men, played by Robin Williams and Nathan Lane, are an older gay couple living in Miami Beach. They are extremely flamboyant and effeminate. The two men fathered a ‘perfect hetero-normative son’ who brings home his fiancée and her parents to meet his own parents. This catalyzes a whirlwind of events in which the two gay men go to extreme lengths to hide their identities. Their flamboyancy becomes a danger to their son’s relationship; their relationship becomes an unacceptable spectacle. The two men create a gay male identity of almost-female gay men, unable to address their actual family dynamic for fear of rejection from a heterosexual couple. This film adheres to the stereotypes set forth

⁸ Christopher Pullen, *Documenting Gay Men*, 51.

by previous films, but also argues that those stereotypes can be detrimental to those around you. What the two men actually possess is an extremely stable home, a committed relationship and a fantastic son, but these are passed over by the comedic relief of gay men squealing at the color of furniture.

However, film portrayals of gay men began to shift at the advent of the AIDS crisis and the growing prominence of the homosexual film market. While homosexuality has always existed in society, post-WWII America shunned it in all social and political situations. In the second half of the century, gay men came together as a conscious group by taking on minority status. Doing this allowed for familiar rhetorical frames—decrying discrimination and demanding equal rights.⁹ This adoption of a percentage and an identity as a minority and counterpublic led to the emergence of queer cinema—cinema by queers, for queers. For the first time in film history, gay men were producing films about gay men for gay men, with an overarching goal of forming an identity that was in their control. Representation in the media gives power to counterpublics, and this adoption of minority status finally amounted to power.

The second half of the century saw a gay male identity slowly patched up through the use of film. It began with the AIDS crisis, which began to affect the population in 1981. It spread among gay communities, largely due to some sexual practices such as "barebacking," where two men engage in anal intercourse without a condom. The nature of how quickly it spread through the gay community led to a trigger-happy media label of "the gay plague." Cinema began to portray homosexual males as more than miserable, self-loathing, closeted individuals. This was due largely to the success of the gay activism that emerged from unfair treatment of AIDS victims and the media's trigger-happy labeling. However, this labeling created activism against perceived norms—the counterpublic demanded visibility, but visibility as humans, not as hopeless victims of a 'gay plague.' "Being publicly known as a homosexual is never the same as being publicly known as heterosexual; the latter always goes without saying and troubles nothing, whereas the former carries echoes of pathologized visibility."¹⁰ . The discourse of the organizations that fought for this formation of a counterpublic was empowering and led to the film industry's race to produce films about AIDS victims in a different light.

⁹ Larry P. Gross, *Up From Invisibility*, 261.

¹⁰ Michael Warner, *Publics and Counterpublics*, 52.

Touching portrayals of AIDS victims began to flood the media. These texts, especially the films, were sympathy-evoking stories intended to address the heterosexual public. The AIDS crisis and activism demanded visibility, gaining power for the gay, male counterpublic. These touching portrayals of victims allowed the characters to break many stereotypes. However, the public perception of AIDS towards the mid to late 1990s changed to sentiments that AIDS ‘could happen to anyone’; it essentially lost its label as a ‘gay plague.’ AIDS as a form of gay male identification was no longer as prevalent; heterosexuals and even children were affected and were also covered in the media.¹¹ These new characters were also more comfortable with their sexuality, were not shunned by their families, and were slowly breaking the stigmatization of having AIDS.

The 1993 film *Philadelphia* by Jonathan Demme was one of the most revolutionary films for gay male identity during the crisis. It portrayed a victim of AIDS who was successful, loved by his family, in a committed relationship and not at all flamboyant. It is widely considered the first film to truly shatter many gay stereotypes of the time. The most effective representation, however, is the relationship between Andy, the AIDS victim and protagonist played by Tom Hanks, and Joe, his homophobic lawyer played by Denzel Washington. The two men start off on a bad foot because Joe makes his fear of homosexuals and AIDS extremely obvious to Andy. However, Joe overcomes this fear to form a mutually beneficial relationship with Andy, one that could even be considered a friendship. His transformation begins in the scene in which Andy is studying in the library, trying to find material for his case against AIDS discrimination. The librarian approaches him and asks him to move to a private study room, but Andy refuses. Joe is also in the library, trying to avoid Andy, but witnesses the discrimination set forth by the librarian. In this moment, Joe decides to take the case and approaches Andy. This transformation is especially poignant for several reasons. Casting Denzel Washington, a black actor, as Joe draws a parallel between African American discrimination and homosexual discrimination, and offers the audience a simple association and a blatant message that any discrimination is wrong, no matter what your beliefs entail. Second, Joe is in essence the hardest public to access through a discourse that calls for acceptance of homosexuals: the powerful, homophobic man. By using a

¹¹ Randy Shilts, *And the Band Played On: Politics, People, and the AIDS Epidemic* (London: St. Martin's Press, 1987). Shilts explains the story of Ryan White, a boy with hemophilia who contracted the AIDS virus through a blood transfusion. The media's coverage of the boy helped alter the stigmatization of the AIDS epidemic as a 'gay plague.'

character that has to overcome the most opposing beliefs in order to achieve justice, Demme is providing a discourse that could access the most oppressive public to the gay male identity.

In the same scene, the librarian is shown through a low angle, making him look tall as he towers above Andy. Andy is shown through a high angle, making him look weak in comparison. This framing puts the two at opposition: Andy is the weak, oppressed homosexual, and the librarian is the oppressive homophobe. When Joe arrives at the table, the three men are framed in the same angle, essentially leveling their positions. The film's casting played a huge role in how it altered public perception. Casting a black man allowed access to the public of African Americans. Casting Tom Hanks as Andy allowed the audience to draw connections between him as Andy and his previous roles as a heroic, all American man. "After spending two hours with Tom Hanks in the role of Andy Beckett, an untold number of moviegoers became much more comfortable the next time they saw someone who looked like he might be gay or might have AIDS."¹² Hanks' performance gained public perception of an AIDS victim that was 'normal' and not dangerous. Movie viewers fell in love with Andy Beckett, and felt the pain of his loving family when he died.

This film sparked a change in how film portrayed gay men and therefore how the public perceived them. In present, post-AIDS crisis America, the films are more heterosexually identifiable. They feature characters that exemplify masculinity, underplaying flamboyancy or not incorporating it at all. Although Queer Cinema produces films that are not hetero-normative or heterosexually identifiable, mainstream cinema adheres to a stricter audience made up of hetero-normative members. These contemporary mainstream films featuring gay men are focusing on the individual, rather than the individual's sexuality. This creates discourse for the gay male counterpublic that allows for more identifying characteristics than just sexuality. It broadens the view of public perception by offering more characteristics to associate with homosexuality. "The Joe Miller character is critical to *Philadelphia*'s success, as millions of straight Americans can identify with him."¹³ As gay men formed a more solidified counterpublic, their representations in mainstream films were more applicable to both the public and the counterpublic, essentially fusing the two. The new gay characters could be

¹² Rodger Streitmatter, *From "perverts" to "fab Five": The Media's Changing Depiction of Gay Men and Lesbians* (New York: Routledge, 2009) 90.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 89.

men that hold high-level positions in corporate America or blue-collar jobs in the heartland.

Perhaps the most poignant contemporary film to transcend gay stereotypes is the 2003 film *Brokeback Mountain* by Ang Lee. The film features two men working blue-collar jobs in the heartland. The setting of the film is the first feature to stand out. Gay men are typically associated with the urban lifestyle. However, this film takes place in rural America, where homophobia is believed to exist most prevalently. The film is revolutionary in its assessment of a homosexual romance. The two men fall in love, but the film centers on a simple love story rather than an exploitation of homosexual themes. The sexual content of the film was unique in itself. While most films featuring homosexual romances used to exploit the sexuality of it, playing up the 'naughty sex,' and playing down the exchange of intimacy, this film allowed heterosexual people to feel the love between the men as something different. The men, Ennis and Jack, are frequently framed from behind with the sweeping frontier landscape in the background. This framing exaggerates the fact that the first half of the movie shows only them in the middle of nowhere. The vastness of the landscape contrasts their closeness, both mentally and physically, and the audience finds comfort in it.

Jack is murdered in a hate crime at the end of the film. Ennis goes to see him and finds out that he is dead. The final scene shows Ennis in Jack's room, looking at his things where he finds in Jack's closet a shirt that he had given him years before. It hangs in the very back next to a postcard that Ennis sent, tucked away neatly. "Many reviewers found the final scene of *Brokeback Mountain* to be the most poignant as it provides a dramatic plea for American society to put an end to hatred of gay people."¹⁴ The emotion of the final scene resonates with the public as it shows the pain felt when love is lost, rather than the pain brought on by identifying as homosexual. This film addresses no new theme, however, as it centers on two men who fall in love and the pain felt by that love. However, it communicates a message that hidden sexuality hurts yourself and others and argues that homophobia is the danger, not homosexuality. The film accesses a masculine, homophobic public as well as a homosexual counterpublic. It is this kind of discourse, a fusion of public and counterpublic, which achieves success in redeveloping broken identities.

The public's perception of gay men in post-WWII, pre-AIDS crisis America was turbulent. Many people feared homosexuality and viewed coming out as 'bad for one's health.' When the AIDS epidemic

¹⁴ Rodger Streitmatter, *From "Perverts" to "fab Five"*, 174.

struck the nation, activism emerged and addressed the public through touching portrayals of victims. In the 1990s, gay men adopted a percentage giving the group minority status and establishing a counterpublic that could circulate discourse effectively. This acts as a marker for when films began to positively portray gay men. It also marks the shift from gay men as ‘outside the mechanism’ to becoming ‘a component of the machine.’ Films were no longer used to impose an identity and oppress an emerging counterpublic. They were instead used by a counterpublic as a form of discourse to effectively form a collective identity and alter the public’s perception. Finally, contemporary film has successfully fused the fluidity of discourse between the heterosexual public and the homosexual counterpublic. This supports the ability of film to address a wide audience and alter the public’s perception, adhering it to the identity chosen by the counterpublic. The journey of the gay man through film is a turbulent one, but promises an achievement of a fusion of public to counterpublic, gay to heterosexual, and finally to simply human.

Visual media is no longer solely an imposition on the gay male counterpublic by a predominately homophobic public. “The gay male is no longer a lone subject of derision or entertainment (identified in binary opposition to the contented heterosexual couple); instead he plays a central role, involving themselves in the performance of ‘self-representation.’”¹⁵ Before the AIDS crisis, gay men were the punch line to the heterosexual couple’s joke. In contemporary films, however, gay men are representing themselves and forming an identity that can alter the public perception in a mutually beneficial way. The movement from ‘outside’ the mechanism to a ‘component’ of the engine reveals a new engagement of gay social identity.¹⁶ The gay character no longer lives on the fringes of society, no longer represents a danger to society and no longer adheres to a narrow stereotype. This transformation of public perception and identity-forming discourse is unique to the form of media used. “Where printed public discourse formerly relied on rhetoric of abstract disembodiment, visual media...now display bodies for a range of purposes: admiration, identification...and so on.”¹⁷ The alteration of public perception was achieved due to the nature of visual media as accessible and entertaining forms of discourse.

¹⁵ Christopher Pullen, *Documenting Gay Men*, 71.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 214.

¹⁷ Michael Warner, *Publics and Counterpublics*, 169.

REVOLUTION AND UNION: BRITISH FOREIGN POLICY IN NEWLY INDEPENDENT ZANZIBAR, 1964

BY
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Clara Lopez Prunonosa is a recent International Relations & History graduate from the London School of Economics. She has always been passionate about East Africa and decided to focus her undergraduate dissertation on what really happened behind the scenes in the aftermath of decolonisation. Zanzibar provides an interesting and surprising answer to that question, and Clara hopes this paper will make other students rethink the way we study African politics.

INTRODUCTION

The events that took place in Zanzibar during its brief existence as an independent state, between December 1963 and April 1964 prove crucial to understanding the challenges facing newly independent African states. The resulting union between Zanzibar and Tanganyika became a symbol of Pan-Africanism as a voluntary union between two republics. However, there is little research on the role played by the former colonial power, Britain, and to what extent it shaped the course of events. The few works available, like Anthony Clayton's *The Zanzibar Revolution and its Aftermath*, were written before key War Office documents were released. The lack of research is surprising, given that at the time Zanzibar was seen as having a unique political landscape within the Commonwealth, and Britain was still debating how to manage imperial decline.¹

Zanzibar became independent from Britain on the 10th of December 1963. The political party that was to govern under the auspices of the Sultan, the Zanzibar Nationalist Party (ZNP), drew its main support from the Arab minority, winning 19 out of 31 seats in the legislature in the 1963 July elections.² Despite the ZNP having a majority of seats, it was the opposing Afro-Shirazi Party (ASP), backed by African mainlanders and the Shirazi population, which won the

¹ Anthony Clayton, *The Zanzibar, Revolution and Its Aftermath*, (Hamden, 1981), 104.

² Colin Legum & G. R. V. Mmari, "The Union with Zanzibar." *Mwalimu: The Influence of Nyerere* (London, 1995), 35-6.

majority of votes with 54.3%.³ This was resented by a large section of the Zanzibari population, who felt that the British upon leaving had established a 'multiracial' system, instead of 'majority rule,' which perpetuated Arab rule over the African majority.⁴ On 12 January of the following year, the resentment escalated into a coup that overthrew the Sultan and placed Abeid Karume, the leader of the ASP, as the head of the Revolutionary Council that was to rule Zanzibar. This event came to be called the Zanzibar Revolution and while it is still unclear who carried it out, evidence points to a small group composed of ASP Youth League members and peasants, led by John Okello, a Ugandan worker.⁵ Karume, whose leadership took communist overtones at times, enjoyed popular support while presiding over a tumultuous political period. Karume's reign culminated in the merger of Zanzibar and Tanganyika to form the country Tanzania, which Britain greatly welcomed after months of instability.

Britain became involved in the complex Zanzibari scene of 1964 after the rapid rule changes in the political system. The Cabinet of then Prime Minister Sir Alec Douglas-Home had to formulate policy in order to react to the quick succession of events in East Africa. This policy was greatly influenced by internal, East African and international contexts. Domestically, Home inherited Harold Macmillan's Cabinet and his policy objectives, which included an attempt to preserve a British sphere of influence in East Africa with stable, pro-Western governments.⁶ The African Committee of the Cabinet had formulated these aims in a report in 1959 called "Africa: The Next Ten Years." It emphasized the danger of Soviet involvement in the region and the importance of maintaining strong ties with the former colonies.⁷ The desire to preserve the British sphere of influence and to prevent the growth of communism became two of the long-term goals guiding policy towards Zanzibar.

The changing political landscape in East Africa also shaped policy. New nationalist parties in power, like President Nyerere's Tanganyika African Nationalist Union (TANU) and President Jomo Kenyatta's Kenya African National Union (KANU), wanted a visible

³ Ibid.

⁴ L. J. Butler. "Winds of Change." *Britain and Empire: Adjusting to a Post-imperial World* (London 2002), 154-156.

⁵ John Okello, *Revolution in Zanzibar* (Nairobi 1967), 27-35.

⁶ Butler, *Britain and Empire*, 153.

⁷ Ibid., 148.

break from the old regime.⁸ They sought a policy of non-alignment and promoted Pan-Africanism, the idea that African peoples are fundamentally united by a shared history and culture and should thus strive for a broader political union.⁹ Because of this, British policymakers viewed parties like TANU, KANU, and Milton Obote's Uganda People's Congress (UPC) as part of a general East African trend, compelling policymakers to view East Africa as a block whole.¹⁰ This perspective helps to explain why British policy makers thought political events in one country could potentially spillover to the rest, so they therefore attached greater strategic importance to Zanzibar. When it became apparent that members of the new Revolutionary Cabinet in Zanzibar, such as External Affairs Minister Mohammad Babu, exhibited communist tendencies, policymakers feared that communism would spread to the other young and weak governments in East Africa.

The international context of the Cold War also impacted the development of Britain's policy. In the polarized world of the Cold War era, Britain felt compelled to preserve their influence in East Africa. Macmillan, and Douglas-Home thereafter, sought to create a Commonwealth that would be equipped to play a major role in the Cold War¹¹ if necessary and wanted to prevent Lord Casey's prediction of a Commonwealth "fad[ing] out through inaction."¹² At the same time, he sought to ensure that Britain was seen as a modern, liberal state and not as one stubbornly holding on to its empire. This would in turn positively feed its 'special relationship' with the US, something the Conservatives were especially keen to do. Furthermore, the expansion of the UN to include newly independent African states meant that support in the Security Council depended on how Britain acted towards its former colonies.¹³ Zanzibari political leaders eventually challenged these principles, seeing the tension between Britain's desires to both reverse the political trends in Zanzibar while seeming to respect Zanzibar's newly acquired sovereignty.

British foreign policymakers had three main motivations or aims when directing policy towards Zanzibar. Their first, immediate

⁸ K. Mathews, *Foreign Policy of Tanzania: 1961-1981 : A Reader* (Dar Es Salaam, 1982), 36-37.

⁹ Joseph S. Nye, *Pan-Africanism and East African Integration* (Cambridge, 1965), 10-11.

¹⁰ Butler, *Britain and Empire*, 154.

¹¹ Butler, *Britain and Empire*, 150.

¹² Robin W. Winks, "The Commonwealth." *The Oxford History of the British Empire*. Vol. V. (Oxford, 1999) 563-64.

¹³ Butler, *Britain and Empire*, 152.

aim was to protect the lives and property of British subjects on the islands while violence and instability lasted. The second aim was long-termed, and it was to prevent the strengthening of communism in Zanzibar and its spread to the mainland. As the situation deteriorated, correspondence between the British High Commissioner (BHC) and the Commonwealth for Relations Office (CRO) acquired a more urgent tone, and both real and imagined communism were a constant source of unease. The third aim was concerned with the maintenance of good relations with former East African colonies – seen as critical to strengthen the Commonwealth in the context of the Cold War. These three aims all influenced Britain’s approach to foreign policy with Zanzibar, though the protection of lives took priority in the immediate aftermath of the Zanzibar Revolution.

This essay will demonstrate that Britain tried to influence the course of events in Zanzibar in various ways but failed to do so meaningfully, making Britain’s role in the build-up of the union merely secondary. The British role will be analyzed chronologically, and within the context of the historiographical debate concerning the creation of Tanzania.

BRITISH CONFUSION AND HESITATION — JANUARY

The first stage in the British reaction to the Zanzibar Revolution was characterized by confusion and hesitation. The immediate goal was to protect the lives and property of the British on the islands, who numbered no more than 500, but held key posts in the administration and hospitals.¹⁴

The revolution started in the morning of 12 January, 1964. Okello’s ‘Revolutionary Army’ quickly disarmed the Sultan’s loyal troops in key posts and within hours, the Sultan had fled and his former Cabinet was arrested.¹⁵ Violence ensued and the inhabitants of Zanzibar woke up in confusion to a deposed regime and to the killing, arresting and looting of Arabs and their property.¹⁶ That same day, Okello made his first provocative radio broadcast, triumphantly claiming that a revolution had just succeeded in seizing power and asking Karume, who knew nothing of the revolt, to return from his

¹⁴ Donald Petterson, *Revolution in Zanzibar: An American's Cold War Tale*, (Boulder, 2002), 88.

¹⁵ Okello, *Revolution in Zanzibar*, 27-35.

¹⁶ Petterson, *Cold War Tale*, 47-71.

brief exile to lead the new government.¹⁷ The British mission to Zanzibar was no more informed of events occurring than Karume himself. Timothy Crosthwait, the British High Commissioner in Zanzibar, was unable to share much information with the Commonwealth for Relations Office (CRO) immediately. The first telegram to the CRO in London was sent at 0600 Zanzibar time (0900 London time). It did not mention Okello, who had not yet revealed his identity, and described his army as a ‘mob’ that had seized control of the police headquarters and had taken all the arms.¹⁸ The telegram stated that while the Zanzibari Prime Minister had attempted to organize a counter force and had asked Nyerere and Kenyatta for police reinforcements, there was little chance of success. Despite this, Crosthwait asked the CRO to “reinforce these appeals urgently,” indicative of an early attempt by the British to leverage third parties to influence events in Zanzibar.¹⁹

Just a couple of hours after receiving Crosthwait’s telegram, the CRO requested that the Middle East Command, stationed in Egypt, send frigate *HMSS Owen* to Zanzibar. The purpose of the mission was to facilitate a quick removal of British citizens from the islands, should their lives be in grave danger. It was made clear, however, that British troops should only land as a last resort and would wait for Tanganyika and Kenya’s response to Zanzibar’s request for reinforcements – suggesting that the British saw value in being seen as working with other East African governments to legitimize their intervention.²⁰ The British High Commissioner in Kenya, Sir Geoffrey de Freitas, actively tried to convince Murumbi, the Kenyan Minister of State in the Prime Minister’s Office, to support an intervention in Zanzibar in the emergency cabinet meeting of that same day. However, by 1300 UK time, the Ministry of Defense (MoD) had drafted a situation report warning that “if British units are used it must be demonstratively clear that they are not intervening in the internal situation in Zanzibar” – shunning military intervention.²¹

In the Kenyan Emergency Cabinet meeting, the Ministers decided it was an internal matter, and that there should be no interference in the

¹⁷ Ibid., 69; Amrit Wilson, *US Foreign Policy and Revolution: The Creation of Tanzania* (London 1989), 12.

¹⁸ Crosthwait to CRO, ‘Cypher’, 12/01/64, NA DO 161/485, 2.

¹⁹ Crosthwait, 12/01/64, 3.

²⁰ CRO to Crosthwait; MidEast, ‘Cypher’, 12/01/64, NA DO 161/485, 7.

²¹ MoD to Crosthwait, ‘Zanzibar Situation Report No.7’, 12/01/64, NA DO 161/485, 7.

affairs of Zanzibar.²² By night, the rebels had completely taken over, the Prime Minister had resigned, and the Sultan and his entourage had left Zanzibar aboard his yacht *Seyyid Khalifa*.²³ There appear to be two main reasons for Britain's unwillingness to act unilaterally at this point. First of all, it was not until 14 January that policymakers knew of what had just occurred in Zanzibar, and it was seen as unwise to counteract a coup carried out by unknown people with unknown intentions. Perhaps more importantly, as shown by the aforementioned correspondence, it seemed politically unviable for Britain to take action without the approval of East African governments. Political concerns together with lack of information meant that Britain was hesitant to act unilaterally at first, contributing to the success of the revolution.

On 14 January the CRO had received from Crosthwait a complete report on Zanzibari politics and the profiles of some of the politicians. This provides the earliest reference to the framework the British then used to analyze events on the islands until the union. In it, the British saw that the new politicians were divided between communists such as External Affairs Minister Babu, "fellow-travelers" such as Prime Minister Kassim Hanga, and moderates such as President Karume and Othman Shariff, the Education Minister.²⁴ Already, the British were constructing an 'other' as a means of legitimizing action in the future - and this 'moderates' versus 'communists' framework would guide and obscure British policy formulation.

That week, the British government received two letters demanding recognition of the Z a n z i b a r government, casting doubts on who was really in power. The first one, signed by "Field Marshal John Okello," was sent on 12 January and asked for recognition of the new "Revolutionary Republican Government."²⁵ The second one was signed by Karume, stating that since order and stability had been secured after a brief period of violence, Britain should at once recognize his new government.²⁶ This led to confusion in London concerning the role of Okello, who was at first believed to be a communist.²⁷ In an attempt to clarify who was in charge of the

²² De Freitas to CRO; Zanzibar; Washington, 'Cypher', 12/01/64, NA DO 161/485, 8.

²³ William Edgett Smith, *Nyerere of Tanzania*, (Harare, 1981), 98.

²⁴ Crosthwait to CRO, 'Cypher', 14/01/64, NA DO 213/182, 13.

²⁵ Crosthwait to CRO, 'Cypher', 13/01/64, NA PREM 11/5207, 22.

²⁶ Karume to British Prime Minister, 'Recognition', 13/01/64 NA CAB 21/5524, 2.

²⁷ Helen-Louise Hunter, *Zanzibar: The Hundred Days Revolution*, (Santa Barbara, 2010), 58.

new government, Sandys wrote a personal letter to Kenyatta, asking him to ‘assess the situation regarding communism and Okello for me.’²⁸ This was probably intended as a tactical move to assess Kenyatta’s views on Zanzibar, but it also evidences Britain’s lack of understanding of the situation and partly explains the consequent confusion.

To untangle these questions, Crosthwait met on 15 January with the Revolutionary Council for the first time. He was assured at the meeting that British lives were in no danger, and that Okello’s army had strict instructions not to harm Westerners.²⁹ He later wrote that Karume wanted British officials to stay, including H. Hawker, the Permanent Secretary for Finance, and that he hoped for recognition from the British soon.³⁰ The tone of Crosthwait’s report is optimistic and he seemed to believe the new government was one Britain could work with, stating that ‘they seemed a rather more intelligent crowd than the previous government.’³¹

Despite Crosthwait’s report, some British citizens were evacuated in January, although those deemed vital for the well-functioning of the public services remained.³² Twenty-eight people had already left Zanzibar on the Sultan’s boat and a further 160 people boarded *HMSS Owen* on the 17th of January.³³ This reduced British presence on the islands almost by half, making the need to safeguard British lives less pressing. Furthermore, Tanganyika, at Zanzibar’s request, had sent over 300 policemen to help reestablish order.³⁴ The presence of the police force along with Karume’s assurances convinced Crosthwait that British lives were not at risk and that normality would soon return to the islands.

While the situation seemed to stabilize in Zanzibar, a series of mutinies suddenly turned attention back towards the mainland of East Africa. The first mutiny began with the Tanganyika Rifles on 20 January,

²⁸ Personal Message from Sandys to Kenyatta, ‘Cypher’, 16/01/64, NA DO 185/59, 5.

²⁹ Crosthwait to CRO, ‘Cypher’, 15/01/64, NA PREM 11/5207, 34.

³⁰ Personal Letter from Hawker to the Secretary for Technical Cooperation London, ‘Cypher’, 24/01/64, NA DO 185/59, 21.

³¹ Crosthwait to CRO, ‘Cypher’, 15/01/64, NA PREM 11/5207, 34.

³² Crosthwait to CRO, ‘Cypher’, 13/01/64, NA PREM 11/5207, 6.

³³ De Freitas to CRO, Reception of evacuees from Zanzibar’, no date, NA DO 185/59, 14.

³⁴ Smith, Nyerere of Tanzania, 109.

and sent Tanganyika into chaos.³⁵ Violence ensued, and the mutineers managed to take control of numerous key posts. Sadleir, a British colonial officer present during the events, describes the country as one in chaos, where no one seemed to know what was happening or who was in charge.³⁶ Mutinies in Uganda and Kenya followed Tanganyika, on the 22nd and 23rd of January respectively, effectively creating the first serious challenge to internal security and stability since independence.

To quell the revolt, Uganda, Kenya and eventually Tanganyika requested British military assistance. Military aid proved very successful, and while some believed the mutinies were in fact coup d'états, order was quickly restored.³⁷ The British were at first alarmed at what appeared to be a concerted campaign of 'external subversion against East Africa,' as it seemed too coincidental that the revolution had occurred just a few days before the mutinies.³⁸ The British therefore saw these events as confirmation that in East Africa, events in one country had a direct impact on its neighbors, making fears of possible communism more pressing. While London eventually realized that there was no connection between the events in Zanzibar and the mainland, which appeared to be a manifestation of disaffection within the army, the mutinies added further to the general confusion.³⁹

Britain was initially glad that East African countries had requested British help, hoping Zanzibar would be compelled to follow their neighbors' example. However, this attitude changed when Nyerere requested consultation with members of the Organisation for African Unity (OAU), created in 1963, on the matter of British troops in Tanganyika. While the OAU endorsed Tanganyika's decision, some publicly criticized Nyerere, claiming he was being used by British imperialists.⁴⁰ This reportedly made Nyerere extremely wary of relying on Britain again for, as newly independent states like Tanganyika wanted to break from their colonial past.⁴¹ Tanganyika became even

³⁵ Tony Laurence and Christopher MacRae, "Mutiny at Colito Barracks." Introduction. *The Dar Mutiny of 1964: And the Armed Intervention That Ended It*. (Bloomington, 2010), 5.

³⁶ Randal Sadleir, "Revolution in Zanzibar and Army Mutiny, 1963-64." Tanzania, *Journey to Republic* (London, 1999), 268.

³⁷ BHC in Dar to CRO, 'Cypher', 17/01/64, NA DO 185/59, 11.

³⁸ De Freitas to Sandys, 'Summary of Nairobi, doc 17, 26/02/64, NA DO 185/59, 52.

³⁹ Okwudiba Nnoli, "Crisis of Early Diplomacy." *Self Reliance and Foreign Policy in Tanzania: The Dynamics of the Diplomacy of a New State, 1961 to 1971*. (New York, 1978), 108.

⁴⁰ Smith, Nyerere of Tanzania, 129.

⁴¹ *Ibid*.

less receptive to British demands to act in Zanzibar.

The Zanzibar revolution violently and suddenly replaced one regime with another, and Britain's response to the chaos was initially marked by confusion and hesitation. The mutinies of armies in Tanganyika, Kenya, and Uganda and the overall chaos in East Africa further fueled the uncertainty of the British. Britain answered these countries' requests for military help and decided, for the time being, to allow the revolution in Zanzibar to run its course. Once the lives and property of British citizens had been secured, the CRO moved to analyze the new contestants for power in Zanzibar.

BEHIND-THE-SCENES DIPLOMACY, FEBRUARY - EARLY APRIL

Two weeks after the revolution, the signs of communism were growing, and so was concern in London. Karume seemed to be losing control of the situation, as evidenced by the unchecked excesses of Okello and his army and the increasing influence of 'communist' Babu in the Cabinet. Karume felt the need to strengthen his position.⁴² This situation called for a more nuanced strategy from the British, one that could reconcile the tension between overtly opposing the regime and letting events unfold. The former could lead to a severing of relations with East Africa, while letting events unfold could lead to the creation of a communist state. To this end, the CRO and the MoD designed sophisticated plans to restore law and order, which included military intervention and a coordinated effort with all embassies in East Africa to persuade Karume, both directly and indirectly, of the need to ask for outside help.

The first military plan, 'Operation Parthenon', was drafted by the Middle East Command and its first records appear on 3 February, 1964. It called for an airborne assault on the airfield at Zanzibar, and it identified Okello and his army as the "enemy," and the aim: "to restore law and order."⁴³ This shows that Britain was prepared to take drastic measures to reverse the course of events in Zanzibar, which was consistent with both their short-term aim to protect British citizens, and their long-term one to prevent the spread of communism.

While the MoD saw Okello as the enemy, Crosthwait completely disagreed and argued that it was not Karume that was subservient to Okello but, on the contrary, it was Karume using him as a

⁴² Sir Saville Garner, 'Report on Zanzibar', 28/01/64, DO 185/59, 45.

⁴³ Air Forces Middle East, 'Operation Parthenon', 03/02/64, NA WO 276/372, REF 105/16/Air, 19.

shield from Babu.⁴⁴ Interestingly, these two different views are not contradictory but complementary. Crosthwait had made it clear to the revolutionary government that until law and order had been restored, there could be no question of recognition.⁴⁵ By extension, Okello, the ‘destabilizing’ element, had to go before it could be granted. Consequently, it is not unthinkable that Okello was just an excuse to buy time in the hope that the government would be overthrown before the British had to decide whether to recognize the country. Further, since plans were being drafted to intervene militarily in Zanzibar, it is plausible that the British working in Zanzibar hoped that an excuse would arise to justify a military intervention. Unfortunately, no documents explicitly make reference to this and certain files from the CRO and the MoD have been destroyed, making it difficult to prove this claim.

There are other factors that help to explain Britain’s hesitation to recognize the new government. Historian Anthony Clayton argues that there existed no precedent in the Commonwealth’s history of a violent revolutionary movement that overthrew an elected government overnight and enjoyed the support of the majority of the population. It was feared that immediate recognition of the regime would create a dangerous precedent, and Britain would then seem to be compelled to recognize numerous revolutionary governments.⁴⁶ This fear was not unfounded, for that same month the Prime Minister of Southern Rhodesia visited London to demand independence.⁴⁷ Britain was reluctant to grant independence to a white minority and it was politically unviable to recognize Zanzibar straight away while not responding to the white minorities’ appeal in Southern Rhodesia’s request over the summer. Fear of creating a precedent with unknown ramifications also prevented early recognition of Karume’s government.

The Foreign Office realized the impossibility of intervening in Zanzibar on behalf of the Zanzibari government given that it had not been recognized by Britain, and therefore while Parthenon was being drafted, the CRO attempted to induce Karume into asking for help.⁴⁸ The first instances of this came right after the mutinies in East Africa. In an undated telegram, Sandys requested that the acting BHC in Tanganyika convince Nyerere to make the Tanganyikan police forces

⁴⁴ Crosthwait to CRO, ‘Cypher’, 03/02/64, NA DO 213/130, 23.

⁴⁵ Crosthwait to CRO, ‘Cypher No.45’, 19/01/64, NA PREM 11/5207, 36.

⁴⁶ Clayton, *The Zanzibar Revolution*, 104.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 104.

⁴⁸ Foreign Office to Washington Embassy, ‘Cypher No.16000’, 31/01/64, NA DO 213/130, 9.

return. Sandys explains that, if the Tanganyikan police are removed, a power vacuum will be left and, fearing further unrest, Karume might be persuaded to request British troops.⁴⁹ However, to the embarrassment of Sandys, Nyerere sent him a letter deploring hypothetical outside intervention in the affairs of Zanzibar and urged Britain to recognize Zanzibar's government.⁵⁰ Britain's first attempt to indirectly convince Karume to ask for help failed – and widened the gap between Britain and Tanganyika.

The same tactic was tried with Kenyatta and Obote. On 16 January 1964, de Freitas asked Kenyatta to discuss with Obote the possibility of Kenya and Uganda offering to send policemen to Zanzibar.⁵¹ Kenyatta refused, arguing that this would infringe upon Zanzibar's sovereignty and only agreed to talk to the Ugandan government. Obote was even less receptive to the idea and made sarcastic comments about the real intentions of the British and Americans off the coast of Zanzibar.⁵² Both Kenya and Uganda clearly did not regard Zanzibar as a threat, as shown by the fact that they were the first to recognize the government the day after the revolution.⁵³ Initially, British attempts to influence Karume through Kenya and Uganda failed.

In the meantime, Crosthwait tried to improve relations with Karume. On 25 January, 1964, when the names of members of the Revolutionary Council had been made public,⁵⁴ Crosthwait met with Karume and asked him whether he expected additional aid from either Tanganyika or Kenya, carefully avoiding mentioning British assistance.⁵⁵ Karume refused it in such a convincing way that Crosthwait was left with the conclusion that "appeal to British help will not happen until it is crystal clear that his [Karume's] own efforts will not succeed."⁵⁶

The deteriorating situation in Zanzibar also worried the United States. Dean Rusk, President Johnson's Secretary of State, wrote that same day in a memorandum that "Zanzibar despite its small size is

⁴⁹ Personal telegram from Sandys to Miles, 'Cypher', no date, NA DO 213/130, 7.

⁵⁰ Nyerere to Sandys, 'Cypher', 06/02/64, NA DO 213/130, 21.

⁵¹ De Freitas to CRO, 'Revolution and Mutiny in East Africa narrative Account', no date, NA DO 185/59, 14.

⁵² De Freitas, 'Revolution and Mutiny', *ibid*, no date, 14.

⁵³ Kenyan government press handout, no title, 13/01/64, NA DO 185/59, 5.

⁵⁴ Zanzibar Official Gazette, '25th January', 25/01/64, NA CO 68963, 30.

⁵⁵ Crosthwait to CRO, 'Cypher', 25/01/64, NA DO 213/130, 4.

⁵⁶ *Ibid*.

important to us politically because of its proximity to Tanganyika and Kenya and because of the presence in the island of ‘Mercury’, a NASA-manned flight installation.”⁵⁷ Rusk considered the station ‘essential’ for the American space program and believed that, were the islands to ‘fall’ into communist hands, there was potential for future spill-over.⁵⁸ Therefore, it was imperative that the US try to stop communism from developing in Zanzibar with the British, who were in a better position to influence events in East Africa, due to the country’s historical ties. Rusk expressed these sentiments in a telegram sent to the US Embassy in London, to be repeated in the CRO, hoping that ‘the British will be willing to take the lead.’⁵⁹

Britain also felt compelled to reply to an anxious US. In early February, Sandys met with the American Ambassador to London to discuss Zanzibar. Sandys explained that intervention was only possible under the pretext of protection of British lives or if Karume directly asked for help, both of which were unlikely, but which Britain was still contemplating.⁶⁰ Crosthwait sent a memo to the CRO on 3 February advising that ‘we must be careful not to let US obsession with Okello... cloud our judgment’ – suggesting that the US was more worried about the situation in Zanzibar than the British. Nonetheless, British diplomats and policy makers seemed to care about how they appeared to be taking matters into their own hands, so as to please the US, and Crosthwait had to therefore increase its diplomatic efforts with the Revolutionary Council.

Unfortunately for Britain, members of the Revolutionary Council were actively avoiding Crosthwait. Karume would not meet the British High Commissioner if Babu was not present and Salim Rashid, former Secretary of Babu’s UMMA Party and convinced communist, would always attend Karume’s meetings.⁶¹ This put in jeopardy efforts to influence decision-making in the Council and was also a reflection of the Council’s deep distrust of the British. There were rumors about Britain’s imminent invasion and some, like Okello, feared they were planning to bring the Sultan back,⁶² something that in fact Britain never

⁵⁷ Wilson, US Foreign Policy and Revolution, 11.

⁵⁸ Wilson, US Foreign Policy and Revolution, 11.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 21.

⁶⁰ Note on a meeting on Zanzibar held at Mr. Sandy’s Residence with the American Ambassador, ‘Cypher’, 01/02/64, NA DO 213/130, p 20.

⁶¹ Crosthwait to CRO, ‘Cypher No.186’, 26/01/64, NA DO 213/130, 5.

⁶² Okello, Revolution in Zanzibar, 165.

contemplated.⁶³

This distrust finally materialized when, after days of expecting a recognition that was not forthcoming, Karume notified Crosthwait that he would be expelled from the islands. A concerted diplomatic effort by both the British and Americans attempted to stop the expulsion, by appealing first to Karume and then to Nyerere.⁶⁴ Despite this, on 20 February, Karume made it clear that his decision would not be reversed and he was under pressure from his 'people' to ask for the departure of the Foreign Office.⁶⁵ The Foreign Office disagreed that pressure came from his 'people,' but rather from communist elements, like Assistant Minister Moyo or Babu.⁶⁶ This further reinforced the idea amongst the British of a communist 'infiltration' in the Cabinet, intentionally acting against British interests. Crosthwait was expelled on 20 February, effectively leaving Britain without diplomatic representation in Zanzibar.⁶⁷

One of the long-term aims of British leaders was to maintain close ties with governments in what they considered to be their sphere of influence, and they saw Crosthwait's expulsion as an indication that they would need to change their tactics if they wanted to maintain their influence. Britain thus decided to recognize Zanzibar's independence two days after the expulsion, for recognition provided more opportunities to pursue open-door diplomacy to try to influence the Revolutionary Council. The British sought mainly to warn Karume of the growing communist presence on the islands. Crosthwait's return on 5 March and Sandys' goodwill trip to East Africa provided an opportunity for this. The Minister of the CRO visited Zanzibar on 11 March, and met with Karume, Babu, Twala and Hanga. This meeting was described as 'polite but restricted...to courtesies' and in the private talk with Karume, neither Sandys nor Crosthwait were able to deliver their warning message about the perceived communist threat.⁶⁸ Britain, despite having granted recognition, failed to establish closer ties with the government. As British influence waned, that of the Eastern Bloc and other communist states' grew.

The Soviet Russia, the People's Republic of China, Cuba, North

⁶³ J.K. Watkins (Secretary of Chiefs of Staff Committee) to CRO and Chief of Defense Staff, 'Report', 19/02/64, NA DO 213/130, 26.

⁶⁴ Petterson, *Cold War Tale*, 144.

⁶⁵ Embassy to FO, 'Cypher No.735', 20/02/64, NA PREM 11/5208, 165.

⁶⁶ Millard (FO) to Killick (Washington Embassy), 'Cypher', 02/04/64, NA FO 371/176601, 64.

⁶⁷ Petterson, *Cold War Tale*, 144.

⁶⁸ Notes on G.E.Millard, 'Zanzibar', 11/03/64, NA FO 371/176601, 26.

Korea, Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia all recognized the government of Zanzibar by 19 January.⁶⁹ They sent financial aid, advisers, and technicians to the islands. Fifty Soviet advisers and technicians, together with 20 Chinese, and some East Germans helped the government with telecommunications.⁷⁰ They also were involved with the army, as Soviets trained security forces at Mijimbani.⁷¹ The Chinese gave £185,000 in aid just days after the revolution, and would announce in June a £16m loan agreement.⁷² The USSR agreed to buy 500 tons of cloves, Zanzibar's main export.⁷³ Communist states were extending their support in concrete deeds, courting Karume's support to the detriment of the British.

The British Cabinet was worried about the situation in Zanzibar, which they nonetheless did not regard as crucial. On the 17th, a meeting of the Overseas Policy Committee, which included Douglas-Home, discussed the risk that Zanzibar would become a communist-dominated state, from which subversion of the mainland countries of East Africa would be organised. The Cabinet members also stressed that 'Zanzibar was receiving considerable help in money, arms and men from Communist countries, particularly the USSR and East Germany.' However, the meeting also emphasized that since "there were no substantial British interests in Zanzibar itself, we should have no standing to intervene unless we were invited to do so by Karume."⁷⁴ This argument was in line with the CRO's, and it was therefore imperative to continue to approach Karume and others to obtain a request for intervention. Despite this, the Cabinet had other foreign policy priorities, as emphasized by the fact that in the 19 meetings that took place between the revolution and the union, Zanzibar was mentioned 7 times, while other countries, like Cyprus, were mentioned 11 times.⁷⁵ While the Cabinet took Zanzibar seriously, there were other more

⁶⁹ Crosthwait to CRO, 'Cypher No.45', 19/01/64, NA PREM 11/5207, 36.

⁷⁰ BHC Dar es Salaam to CRO, 'Tanganyika/Zanzibar union', 24/04/64, NA WO 276/370, 66.

⁷¹ BHC Dar es Salaam, 'ibid', 24/04/64, Np 66.

⁷² CRO Report, 'Tanzania' The Tanzanian Imbroglgio: Some thoughts on British Policy', 19/03/65, NA LAB 13/1968, 77.

⁷³ Memorandum from Hawker to CRO, 'Cypher', 26/02/64, NA DO 185/59, 61.

⁷⁴ Meeting minutes of the Overseas Policy Committee, '17th Meeting', 08/04/64, NA CAB 148/1, 45.

⁷⁵ Cabinet papers and Overseas Policy Committee, analysis from January 12th to April 29th, NA CAB 148/1.

pressing foreign policy challenges.

The Cabinet's reluctance somewhat changed when the Americans demanded more assertive measures by the British. On March 30th, President Johnson of the USA wrote a private telegram to Douglas-Home, warning him that "...if we do not take strong action, we are going to be faced with a center of communist infection off the East Coast of Africa which will give us endless trouble, expense and danger."⁷⁶ Exactly what 'strong action' meant was not specified, but from mid March to May, military plans proliferated. These were extremely detailed and included the exact forces and bases that would be used and at least two operations, BORIS and Finnelly, were drafted before the union.⁷⁷ The Middle East Command was not concerned with executing the plan: "intervention in Zanzibar presents no problems, providing the operation can be mounted from Kenya."⁷⁸ These suggest that contrary to what historian Ian Speller argues, the British were willing to intervene militarily in Zanzibar.⁷⁹ Britain considered very carefully intervention in operation BORIS, especially as US pressure mounted in March and April because they required Kenyan bases. Nevertheless, the British decided against intervention due to the lack of East African political backing.

Kenyan support was notably lacking. After the mutinies, Kenyatta was wary and distrustful of British troops in East Africa. In a note written by Kenyatta himself to de Freitas, he expressed that authorization to move troops in and out of the country would never be granted to the movement of troops to be used in Zanzibar.⁸⁰ Hereby, it was clear to Britain that Kenya would never agree to the use of bases on its soil to mount an operation in Zanzibar, and only then was the operation aborted and replaced by Finnelly, as it did not require Kenyan bases.

While military plans were drafted, Britain also prepared a 'soft power' approach in the form of financial aid. The amount of aid worked out in the CRO amounted to £1.395m, which the Sultan had agreed to just days before being overthrown. Britain hoped this sum would strengthen the late recognition announcement, would prevent the government from seeking money from communist countries and would

⁷⁶ President Johnson to Douglas-Home, 'Cypher No.4488', 30/03/64, NA CAB 21/5524, 65.

⁷⁷ MoD papers, 'Plans for Zanzibar', 20/05/64, NA DO 213/130, 120.

⁷⁸ CINC MidEast to MoD, 'MIDCOS 93', 18/03/64, NA DO 213/130, 68.

⁷⁹ Ian Speller, 'An African Cuba? Britain and the Zanzibar Revolution, 1964', *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, Vol 35, No. 2, (2007), 3.

⁸⁰ De Freitas to CRO, 'Revolution and Mutiny in East Africa narrative Account', no date, NA DO 185/59, 14.

bolster the position of moderates.⁸¹ In a document from the East African Economic Department, the British author argued that the provision of financial aid would show Americans that they were doing what “they could” to bolster Karume.⁸²

However, Zanzibar was much less interested in this aid than expected, to Britain’s dismay. The Revolutionary Council had not inquired about the aid promised to the previous government, and in Crosthwait and Sandy’s meetings, neither Babu, Karume or the finance minister mentioned this issue.⁸³ To completely disregard such a substantial amount of money was noteworthy, suggesting the Zanzibari government had in fact no desire for British money. It preferred to accept Eastern Bloc aid, in an attempt to cut ties with the former colonial master, as Babu would claim in later years, or to please its new communist benefactors, who had promised further aid.⁸⁴ Even financial aid failed to put the British in a position to influence the new government of Zanzibar.

Britain attempted to influence Karume’s government through diplomatic means while secretly devising military plans for an invasion. These however did not yield results and Zanzibar increasingly turned to the East for assistance and guidance. The Americans demanded more assertive measures and by April 1964, the CRO’s only strategy was to increase its diplomatic efforts.

THE UNION AND BRITISH FAILURE

At the end of April, Zanzibar and Tanganyika agreed to unite and create the Republic of Tanzania. A popular understanding in the historiography of the Republic of Tanzania and British decolonization is that Britain played a primary role in the formation of the union. This perspective does not take into account that it was primarily the actions of the East African countries and internal political concerns that drove Nyerere and Karume to agree to the union.

Tanganyika announced the surprise merger on 23 April, at a time when Britain had run out of ideas and military intervention seemed increasingly attractive. That it was sudden is not to say that it was completely unexpected, however, as Nyerere had expressed his

⁸¹ Brief from the Secretary of State, ‘Zanzibar: Financial Settlement’, 27/02/64, NA DO 185/56, 22.

⁸² Secretary of State, *Ibid.*, 27/02/64, 22.

⁸³ Crosthwait to East Africa Economic Dpt, ‘Cypher’, 18/03/64, NA Do 185/56, 31.

⁸⁴ Wilson, *US Foreign Policy and Revolution*, 4.

willingness to create an East African Federation a month before in a summit with Kenya and Uganda.⁸⁵ Despite this, the leaders could not agree on the terms of a merger and the possibility of an East African Federation was dropped then. It seems that the idea began six weeks before the announcement,⁸⁶ and on 22 April, Nyerere flew to Zanzibar for the first time since the revolution, presumably to have the final articles of the union signed by Karume.⁸⁷ The next day, the union was announced and within four days both the Tanganyikan Parliament and the Revolutionary Council had ratified the articles.

The union between Tanganyika and Zanzibar caught the British by surprise, although they quickly recognized its advantages. In a telegram from the East Africa Department to the MoD just nine days before the announcement, the author declares that “there is no real prospect of a Federal solution,” demonstrating Britain’s lack of awareness of the situation.⁸⁸ Despite this, the move delighted the British, who saw the union as a way to neutralize communist elements in Zanzibar. The British Cabinet had in fact identified a merger between the two countries as a possible solution to the growing communist influence in Zanzibar as early as 10 February.⁸⁹ The idea had been taken to Nyerere, who had rejected it. For this reason, London wanted further information on how the unexpected union had come about. A telegram from the BHC in Dar es Salaam to the CRO portrays the union as the result of a hardening in Tanganyika’s attitude to the regime in Zanzibar and the threat to withdraw the police, in an attempt to show Karume “the precariousness of his position.”⁹⁰

The BHC’s analysis portrays what would become the orthodox view within the historiographical debate, describing the union as the product of Bloc interference in a Cold War theatre. There are two different arguments within this dominant strand: one contends that Western countries directly lobbied Tanganyika to bring about the union;⁹¹ the other contends that Bloc interference caused the union by making Nyerere fearful that Zanzibar would become the site of an East-West confrontation. Historian Helen-Louise Hunter argues that

⁸⁵ Ibid., 48.

⁸⁶ Brief from the Secretary of State, ‘Zanzibar: Financial Settlement’, 27/02/64, NA DO 185/56, 22.

⁸⁷ Smith, Nyerere of Tanzania, 126.

⁸⁸ Report by J.K.Hickman, ‘Political Action Following Intervention in Zanzibar’, 14/04/64, NA DO 213/130, 143.

⁸⁹ De Freitas to CRO, ‘Cypher No.327’, NA CAB 21/5524, 27.

⁹⁰ Crosthwait to CRO, ‘Cypher’, 24/04/64, NA LAB 13/1968, p 16.

⁹¹ Legum and Mmari. Mwalimu, 173.

Nyerere genuinely worried that Karume would be easily manipulated by communist countries and would eventually lose control, threatening Zanzibar's non-alignment.⁹² Nyerere said in private to Leonhart, the American *Charge d'affaires* in Tanganyika, that 'the Chinese' threat is not only of subversion but they could make a success for Zanzibar. Then what happens to what I stand for in Tanganyika?'⁹³ This suggests that Nyerere worried that communist countries could either manipulate Zanzibar or make the Zanzibari experiment work, thus threatening Tanganyika's economic and political model. On the other hand, Nyerere also had political reasons for supporting the union: it enhanced his prestige as a materialization of pan-Africanism.⁹⁴ The Union would serve as a way to ensure Zanzibar did not become 'a second Vietnam,'⁹⁵ and also provide a great popularity boost at a time when Nyerere's leadership was being questioned.⁹⁶

Others present at the events, such as Al Noor Kassum, emphasize historical, cultural and ideological ties between the two republics as the overarching driver behind the union. While it cannot be denied that such links between Zanzibar and the mainland existed, their role as the main drivers is seriously contestable. As Hunter has shown, the union was not popular in Zanzibar and both the ASP Youth League and the leaders of the newly created Trade Union opposed the move.⁹⁷ Furthermore, the majority of the members of the Revolutionary Council were opposed to the idea; it was only ratified because the union was never discussed with the full council.⁹⁸ Babu himself was in Asia, making it even more probable that the decision was made when Karume's political rivals were unavailable.⁹⁹ While cultural and historical ties certainly existed between the two republics, they were not the main driving factors behind the union, but rather a justification.

A more post-revisionist view, put forward by Shivji, describes the union as a political deal between the two leaders. Shivji argues that the union was the means for Karume to achieve political survival in the face of strong domestic opposition.¹⁰⁰ Before the revolution, the ASP

⁹² Hunter, *The Hundred Days Revolution*, 96.

⁹³ Petterson, *Cold War Tale*, 155.

⁹⁴ Hunter, *The Hundred Days Revolution*, 96.

⁹⁵ Smith, *Nyerere of Tanzania*, 128.

⁹⁶ Hunter, *The Hundred Days Revolution*, p. 96; Smith, *Nyerere of Tanzania*,

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, 99-100.

⁹⁸ Shivji, *Pan-Africanism or Pragmatism?*, 90.

⁹⁹ Hunter, *The Hundred Days Revolution*, 67.

¹⁰⁰ Shivji, *Pan-Africanism or Pragmatism*, 98.

had split in two factions, one supporting Karume and the other supporting Othman Sharif, and tension remained between the two, making Karume's position less secure.¹⁰¹ Babu was perhaps an even bigger threat. First of all, he was the main point of contact for some of Zanzibar's major donors and it was known that the PRC was especially keen on upholding Babu's position, as the regular cash extensions to him showed.¹⁰² Furthermore, Babu was a close associate of Ali Mafudh, who controlled the security force and, after Okello's departure, the People's Liberation Army.¹⁰³ The only loyal force able to counterbalance Babu was Tanganyika's 300 policemen; however, it seems that in early April, Nyerere, in private, pressured Karume to choose T a n g a n y i k a n policemen.¹⁰⁴ The merger was likely agreed to by Karume to secure his own political position – which is supported by the fact that both Babu and Hanga were transferred to the mainland to the new Tanzanian Cabinet between having a union or having him remove the with much less influential positions.¹⁰⁵

It has been established that the main reasons for the union were political: a mix of Karume securing his political power and Nyerere trying to avoid Zanzibar drifting farther into the hands of the East. The role of Britain, then, was very minor in bringing about the union, which was actually mainly African in origin.¹⁰⁶ The superpowers and the PRC played a bigger, yet indirect role, through their greater involvement in Zanzibari politics, which drove Nyerere to see the union as important for reducing their influence. Britain's biggest contribution to the union is perhaps harming Nyerere's prestige when quelling the army mutiny, thus making the president more inclined to make a drastic decision to bring the situation in Zanzibar under control.

Britain therefore failed for the most part to advance their aims when trying to influence Zanzibar policy between the revolution and the union. Britain's biggest threats, including Hanga and Babu, were removed from the political scene by Karume and Nyerere and not by Crosthwait and Sandy's diplomacy or the MoD's military plans. The current historiography barely deals with Britain's efforts to influence events in Zanzibar, much less why these failed. One of the more specific studies, from Ian Speller, argues that Britain failed because

¹⁰¹ Petterson, *Cold War Tale*, 154.

¹⁰² Wilson, *US Foreign Policy and Revolution*, 54.

¹⁰³ By Stockwell (Commander Air Force East Africa), 'Minutes Commander's Committee East Africa', 25/04/64, NA DO 185/51.

¹⁰⁴ Smith, *Nyerere of Tanzania*, 129.

¹⁰⁵ Shivji, *Pan-Africanism or Pragmatism*, 83.

¹⁰⁶ Hunter, *The Hundred Days Revolution*, 100.

their actions were constrained by Cold War thinking.¹⁰⁷ This is a one-sided and simplistic view of events in early 1964 because while Britain acted, East Africa also did so to greater effect. Rather than Britain failing because it was constrained, they failed because East African politicians chose to ignore British diplomatic pressures. According to Speller, Britain did not proceed with its military plans because serious disorder was simply absent and it was difficult to gain international approval for unilateral action.¹⁰⁸ But only one of the operations devised by the Middle East Command had as its main aim the rescue of British citizens. Most of them were designed to remove either Okello or the Liberation Army and take over key targets like the airport while Karume purged the Revolutionary Council of communist elements.¹⁰⁹ These operations were not aimed at situations of ‘serious disorder’ but rather at the situation as it was then, and therefore this cannot be the reason why Britain did not intervene.

Rather than lack of international approval inhibiting military action, it was lack of East African cooperation that prevented it. All of the military plans developed prior to the union required bases in Kenya, and Kenyatta had explicitly forbidden Britain from moving troops to Zanzibar.¹¹⁰ Speller is right to suggest that Britain had concerns about the international reaction to an invasion, as evidenced by CRO documents that discuss the possibility of African governments taking the matter to the UN.¹¹¹ However, if Britain’s concerns for the UN had been so great, the War Office would not have drafted four different plans for invasion, including, after the union, one which excluded Kenyan bases. Kenyan permission was crucial because Eastern Bloc countries, and especially the PRC, were gaining strength and Britain regarded as their national interest, namely to preserve British presence in East Africa. Consequently, it was East African opposition rather than international constraints that prevented Britain from pursuing its military plans.

Diplomatic efforts also failed to yield results. Two related factors inhibited Britain’s diplomatic influence in Zanzibar: East Africa’s mistrust of Britain and Britain’s inability to understand the politics of their former colonies. Having been excluded from political power under the British, many of the first wave of black African leaders

¹⁰⁷ Speller, ‘An African Cuba?’, 27.

¹⁰⁸ Speller, ‘An African Cuba?’, 27.

¹⁰⁹ NA WO 276/370 and NA WO 276/372.

¹¹⁰ MoD papers, ‘Plans for Zanzibar’, 20/05/64, NA DO 213/130, 120.

¹¹¹ Report by J.K.Hickman, ‘Political Action Following Intervention in Zanzibar’, 14/04/64, NA DO 213/130, 143.

wanted to demonstrate to the world that they were capable of governing their own states. Zanzibar's diplomatic recognition of East Germany, the first country outside the Eastern Bloc to do so, was an example of such a desire to exercise sovereignty on the international stage.¹¹²

Mistrust also stemmed from the way Britain had handled decolonization. The ASP believed they had lost the elections because of the electoral laws arranged by Britain upon leaving. Furthermore, Britain had at first opposed several political parties that eventually came to power, including KANU and TANU, which by 1964, had not been completely forgotten.¹¹³ Kenya reacted negatively to the arrival of a British ship in Zanzibari waters, a move, the leaders felt, that was 'entirely an internal matter in a sovereign state.'¹¹⁴ It is unsurprising therefore that attempts to warn East African leaders of the dangers of a communist subversion were met with hostility. When Sandys wrote to Nyerere about moving Tanganyikan police troops back to the mainland after the mutiny, he replied that 'outside intervention in the affairs of Zanzibar would be unfortunate' and 'embarrassing as this may be for Britain, there is more hope of Zanzibar fitting into the total African development now than there was when it had a minority government.'¹¹⁵

Further, Britain's lack of understanding of the new political realities in East Africa meant that their ploy to convince Karume into requesting outside help, and convincing neighboring countries to pressure Karume on this matter, meant failure from the start. In his memoirs, Petterson calls Sandys arrogant, and claims that 'continuing to believe it possible to get Karume to ask for British military intervention indicates he was badly misreading the Zanzibari leader.'¹¹⁶ Nevertheless, the British on the ground were not completely oblivious to this mistrust. In a personal letter to Sandys, Crosthwait explains that there would be no chance whatsoever of Karume requesting British intervention, as he has violent resentment of any act which can constitute interference by the 'White Man.'¹¹⁷ This letter dates back to January 24th, making it surprising that the CRO formally adopted that very tactic. Such a discrepancy suggests that the differences between the British High Commissioner and the CRO hindered Britain's diplomatic effectiveness.

In late April, a somewhat unexpected union created Tanzania,

¹¹² Mathews, *Foreign Policy of Tanzania*, 27.

¹¹³ Butler, *Britain and Empire*, 158-159.

¹¹⁴ Kenyan government press handout, no title, 13/01/64, NA DO 185/59, 5.

¹¹⁵ Nyerere to Sandys, 'Cypher', 06/02/64, NA DO 213.130, 21.

¹¹⁶ Petterson, *Cold War Tale*, 185.

¹¹⁷ Crosthwait to Sandys, 'Cypher No. 65', 24/01/64, NA DO 213/130, p 5.

bringing hope to the British that communism would at last be contained. This moment also highlighted Britain's failure to change the course of events in a region that was to become even more hostile to them.

CONCLUSION

This essay has sought to contribute to the still young historiographical debate on British policy in Zanzibar. Britain, as the former imperial power, was involved in the islands from the revolution until the union with Tanganyika. They sought first of all to protect British lives and property in the wave of violence that followed the revolution, in a moment of total confusion, and their inaction led to the consolidation of the revolution.

After this initial period, the British realized the dangers of a buildup of communism and sought to reverse it. The tactics used included planning a military intervention, with operations like Parthenon, BORIS and Finnelly, and overt and covert diplomacy to try to convince Karume to request British intervention. Since Karume seemed unresponsive to these diplomatic efforts, and as pressure from the US to act mounted, the CRO sought to persuade East African governments to impress the danger of his situation on the Zanzibari president. This was done in the hope that Karume would be compelled to request British help, like Tanganyika, Uganda and Kenya had done during the army mutinies of January.

These plans failed and by the time the union was announced, British influence on the islands had waned dramatically. While their short-term aim, namely the protection of British lives and property, had been achieved, most British citizens were either evacuated or expelled by July 1964, reducing British presence on the islands and its diplomatic weight.¹¹⁸

Britain's long-term aims were achieved in an even smaller measure, for the influence of communism grew and British presence on Zanzibar hit its lowest point.¹¹⁹ While communism did not spread to the mainland, these states became even more hostile to Britain; Tanzania in fact officially broke diplomatic relations in 1965.¹²⁰ The

¹¹⁸ Speller, 'An African Cuba?', 7-28.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 27-28.

¹²⁰ Ministry of Info and Tourism, 'Tanzania Today', pamphlet, (Dar es Salaam, 1968), 87.

influence of the Eastern Bloc and the PRC became prevalent and even the USA was forced to dismantle Mercury station and decrease the size of its diplomatic mission.¹²¹

Very little historiography exists on the aims behind British policy and the reasons for the failure of the policy to achieve their goals. Four interlinked factors explain this end result. First, there was unwillingness to intervene unilaterally in Zanzibar because it was seen as politically costly. While Britain certainly had the military capacity to do so, the ramifications could have been multiple and could have touched the Commonwealth itself – it was concluded that ‘it would give a splendid weapon to those who dispute our motives in the ex-imperial world at large.’¹²²

Since unilateral military intervention was not a possibility, Britain sought endorsement from East African states and Karume himself, leading to the second factor: East African political elites’ mistrust of the British. These were deeply rooted in the recent past and as these states became independent, they sought to fundamentally redefine their foreign policies away from the former imperial power. Because of this, East African states were not likely to endorse intervention in the affairs of Zanzibar, and never did.

Unfortunately, Britain did not fully appreciate this, which leads to the third factor: British lack of understanding of the complexities of the new political landscape in East Africa. Had they been aware of the political situation, there perhaps they would have devised a more realistic policy that was not based on the mistaken assumption that Karume would ever request British assistance.

While it is a secondary factor, it must be remarked that Zanzibar was not the biggest foreign policy concern of the Douglas-Home administration, who viewed other issues like Cyprus as more pressing. Furthermore, perceptions were different among those officials back in London and those on the ground. While the CRO was concerned with Okello and wanted an intervention request by Karume, the High Commission in Zanzibar regarded Babu as the biggest threat and was more aware of Karume’s anti-imperialism.

The Zanzibar revolution marked a situation without precedent for the British in the aftermath of African decolonization. The study of it is important to understanding the possibilities and limitations Britain faced when dealing with states in a region traditionally considered within

¹²¹ Wilson, *US Foreign Policy and Revolution*, 59.

¹²² J.T. Manfield in the MoD, ‘Report on pros and cons of British Military Intervention’, 03/02/64, NA CAB 21/5524, 14.

its sphere of influence. The 1960s and 70s would present similar dilemmas when formulating policy towards Africa, and Zanzibar's study sheds light on the difficult interaction between Britain and the new political elites in their former colonies.

EVEN THE FLOWERS ARE KILLED:
IMAGINING POISON GAS IN ALLY NEWSPAPERS, 1915-1919

BY
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Nicholas Borkowski is a senior History Major at Swarthmore College. He wrote this paper for the class, "Living with Total War: Europe, 1912-1923," taught by professor Pieter M. Judson. The paper investigates the popular press coverage of poison gas in World War I.

In mid-August of 2013, news media and nongovernmental organizations working in Syria reported a devastating attack with the use of chemical weapons that resulted in the deaths of hundreds, including children. Tests of victims and the area in which the attack was carried out confirmed the use of sarin, a fast acting, deadly nerve agent, and other chemical weapons. Syria's use of chemical weapons, banned by international treaty, shows the continued relevance of discourse about chemical warfare.

The first use of poison gas occurred nearly a hundred years ago during World War I, at the Second Battle of Ypres in April 1915. The Germans attacked and dispersed chlorine gas to maim and kill the French and Canadian troops fighting there. According to an article in the London newspaper, *The Times*, printed on May 15, 1915, when the wind carried the vapor cloud of poisonous gas across the terrain "even the flowers are killed, while grass and vegetation of all kinds become withered."¹ This article continues to explain how, due to the German use of poison gas and the "torpedoing of the Lusitania," the previously "chivalrous attitude always displayed by British soldiers all over the world" towards the Germans changed into an "intense bitterness against an enemy who has fallen so low as to make use of such devices."²

This essay investigates how the British, Australian, and American newspapers imagined poison gas in World War I, from 1915-1919. Because using gas as a weapon was a new concept, authors had significant leeway for how to portray poison gas in print. Initially, poison gas was depicted to strike alarm in soldiers and citizens alike as a feared and

¹ *The Times*, "British Troops and Poison Gas. Reprisals Demanded" 15 May 1915.

² *Ibid.*

immoral weapon of total war, but as the war progressed and more information about chemical weapons was understood, journalists were able to use media to recreate the image of poison gas as just another new reality of the war and the times that they lived in.

Several newspaper articles recounted the experiences of soldiers with poison gas attacks and the effects this new weapon had on their units. An article in *The Times* printed on May 19, 1915 included the experience of an officer had only just “sufficiently recovered to write about it.”³ The officer’s description of the attack highlights how soldiers were mentally unprepared to react to the horrifying experience. “I fear it will be impossible for me to give you an idea of the terror, of the awful horror, that this loathsome, noiseless wall of filthiness spread among us all.”⁴ The emotional reaction of the soldier to the actual experience of the vapor cloud exceeded the “fear” and “horror of gas” that had only been in the officer’s “imagination,” since the Germans had first used gas on the French about a month earlier. Significantly, this early article highlights the unique impact of this new weapon on the soldiers through the officer’s viewpoint of having “never before seen brave men become suddenly panic-stricken, look round like frightened animals and, forget their manhood and their duty, and run away.”⁵

Another British newspaper article that dealt with poison gas is a report on the “After Effects of the Fumes” on the “Victims in Hospital,” by a medical correspondent for *The Times* stationed in Northern France around April 29, 1915 (the article is dated 1 May 1915).⁶ The medical correspondent observed the less immediate effects of poison gas on six victims, and-described one of the long-term effects as “very difficult breathing, the kind one associates with acute bronchitis” as well as a “subtle type of poisoning of the blood.” He compared this to “the later stages of severe diseases like diabetes.” The medical correspondent used his expertise to help civilian readers completely unfamiliar with this new weapon more easily comprehend the health effects of poison gas.⁷ Once the nature of poison gas had become more familiar, English language newspapers began to emphasize the moral implications of the use of poison gas on the battlefield as a barbaric outrage. The 1 May 1915 article

³ *The Times*. “Poison in the Air,” Wednesday, May 19, 1915; pg. 5; Issue 40858.

⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶ “The Poison Gas. After Effects of the Fumes. Victims in Hospital.” *The Times*, (1 May 1915).

⁷ *Ibid.*

in *The Times* used the report on the after effects of poison gas to vilify the German enemies, who had “carefully” tested and deployed “chlorine, bromine, [or one of their] derivative” gasses as a new “barbarous form of attack.” The use of poison gas was portrayed as an “outrage.”⁸ One medical correspondent declared that “the extent of the new German “frightfulness” was not, even yet, realized by the public.”⁹ He took it upon himself to enlighten the public for whom poison gas was a new and alien method of warfare.

Throughout the course of World War I, technological advances allowed for the introduction of multiple weapons. The use of poison gas in war had been prohibited in international agreements such as the Hague Declaration of 1899 and the Hague Convention of 1907.¹⁰ The treaties acted more as a justification used to explain why the use of poison gas was an outrage, however, and do not explain the actual inspiration of the moral outrage. In *The New York Times* on May 7, 1915, an officer refers to poison gas as “the most awful form of scientific torture” and elaborates on the agony endured by those exposed this new weapon:

Not one of the men I saw in the hospital had a scratch or wound. The Germans have given out that it is a rapid, painless death—the liars! No torture could be worse than to give them a dose of their own gas.

The officer’s quote speaks both to how the effects of poison gas were experienced, as well as to how poison gas became a moral issue. This article raised the question of whether or not the British should retaliate and use poison gas against the Germans, inviting the beginnings of a moral debate.

The use of gas by the allies in World War I is conspicuously absent from most of the allied newspapers. There is one exception in an Australian newspaper article printed on September 11, 1915 in the *Border*

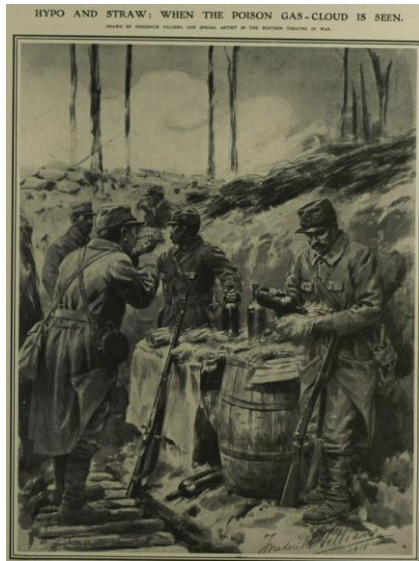
⁸ In *No Place to Run: The Canadian Corps and Gas Warfare in the First World War* (Vancouver: UCB Press, 1999), page 5. Tim Cook reaches a similar conclusion that: “The initial shock of poison gas had soldiers, civilians, and politicians immediately labeling it as a barbarous method of waging war.” The newspaper article would have contributed to the civilians’ and politicians’ initial understanding of the use of poison gas as barbaric.

⁹ “The Poison Gas. After Effects of the Fumes. Victims in Hospital.” *The Times*, (1 May 1915).

¹⁰ Modris Eksteins, *Rites of Spring: The Great War and the Birth of the Modern Age*, (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1989), 161.

Watch.¹¹ The article titled “Gas Poison for Soldiers: Who Invented It,” commented on the British army’s decision to use asphyxiating gas at the front against the “Huns.”¹² The article discredited the German chemical industry’s scientific prowess by claiming, “there is no difficulty about producing chlorine gas.” And then “any of our [read British] manufacturing chemists could produce enough chlorine in a day or two to suffocate the whole German army from the Yser to the Vistula.” This represents an important shift in allied thinking from gas as a morally reprehensible tool of the enemy, to a simple and effective weapon of war that should be used.

An important factor in the transformation of poison gas to a legitimate weapon was the invention of a means to defend against it. In the image “Hypo and Straw: When the Poison Gas-Cloud Is Seen” two soldiers have hypo-saturated straw held up to their faces, two men do not yet have the primitive hypo and straw respirators and the fifth soldier is pouring hypo on a bundle of straw to make another respirator. The soldiers seem rather nonchalant considering the vapor cloud that is looming in the background. The image



contradicts previous descriptions of poison gas attacks. Where is the panic and fear that crippled the bravest men? This image tells a contradictory story to the accounts of soldiers. It tells a story of a weapon that while effective on those who are unprepared can be handily defeated by the intelligence and quick thinking of brave Allied soldiers.

The evolution of gas mask technology in the years that followed was widely publicized. It permeated the home front’s imagination so

¹¹ *Border Watch* is based out of Mount Gambier and was founded in 1861; according to the website, it is “South Australia’s largest regional newspaper.”

¹² *Border Watch*, “Gas Poison for Soldiers: who invented it.” (Mount Gambier, South Australia), 11 September 1915.

much that it even appeared in advertising for Beecham's Pills.¹³ Even in a cartoonish advertisement, in an artistic drawing on exhibition, or in a wartime photograph, a man wearing a gas mask is a strange sight. Yet, gas masks were prevalent in images of chemical warfare in World War I.¹⁴ Masks were "less gruesome to depict than suffocating soldiers and easier to capture than battle scenes." Gas masks "became an accepted, if disliked part of war; photographers took group pictures of men wearing masks, and jokes were made about them in cartoons, but there was almost always a negative understanding to the visual images published."¹⁵

By 1917 the gas mask could even be seen on the snout of man's best friend. Rolfe, the canine soldier, wore his mask at the French front. The war dog symbolized the all-encompassing mobilization called for by total war. In 1915 the newspapers used images of hypo-saturated hay and narratives about bits of flannel soaked with water to cover gas. By 1917 the stories of gas warfare had changed. There are photos of more advanced gas masks on dogs, horses, and even on the Orientalized Russian soldiers: "a photographic subject new to this country."¹⁶



By turning dogs wearing gas masks into a typical sight in newspaper photographs, journalists effectively normalized the mask, and by doing so, normalized the poison gas itself. Chemical warfare, although still feared,



¹³ *Illustrated London News*, "Don't GAS Take BEECHAM'S PILLS" advertisement, 13 January 1917.

¹⁴ Marion Girard, *A Strange and Formidable Weapon: British Responses to World War I Poison Gas*, (Lincoln: Nebraska UP, 2008), 146. In *A Strange and Formidable Weapon* Marion Girard argues that "overall, as Churchill said in Parliament, chemical warfare emerged in 'strange and formidable forms,'" 7.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁶ *Illustrated London News*, "Russian Soldiers in Gas Masks: A Photographic Subject New to This Country," May 26, 1917.

penetrated everyday life and its use became a regular, quotidian idea. Once the Allies could defend against poison gas effectively, it became less horrifying. Newspapers portrayed gas in a light that focused less on the horror of the experience of gas warfare, and instead, presented the banality of poison gas and of the gas mask. This is exemplified by the appearance of poison gas in humorous cartoons such as the image below where women soldiers are coming to the realization that, "Poison Gas will probably be the least troublesome way of killing a chicken."¹⁷ This is the complete reversal from the first introduction of poison gas a mere three years prior-

The presence of gas warfare as a topic in advertisements is another example of the new commonplace appearance of poison gas in a more



lighthearted everyday context. On April 18, 1916 *The Times* contained an advertisement for the Burberry Trench-Warm. The ad stated that, "the greatest danger that the soldier has to face on active service is not the poison gas and liquid fire of the enemy, but bad weather—the insidious foe that undermines health and efficiency."¹⁸ This advertisement further normalizes poison gas into a commonplace

topic and a familiar practice.

Newspapers occasionally presented the more scientific aspects of gas. The image in the *Daily News* from Perth, Australia, titled "Experimenting with Poison Gas" was published on March 9, 1916. The image shows "heavy" Bromine vapor falling as it is poured from a bottle.

¹⁷ "Scenes from Fort Square: A military training camp for Ladies Only. — 'Cartoons Magazine,'" *Leader* (Melbourne), 16 February 1918.

¹⁸ "Burberrys: The Greatest Danger," *The Times* (London), 18 April 1916. The underscore for poison gas is my emphasis.

The gas falls just like it would from “a trench-crest before being blown toward the enemy by the wind.”¹⁹ The visual article and text argues that there is scientific understanding that is needed to use gas effectively. The idea that gas was just a scientific development makes British retaliation with poison gas against the Germans more digestible. Chemical warfare was no longer barbaric; it was then simply scientific.

Throughout World War One the media dealt with the use of poison gas in two distinct ways. Initially, poison gas was new, frightening and terrifying. The vision of the monstrous “green wall” rapidly approaching to suffocate the troops and kill even the flowers was horrifying. The newspapers used personal accounts to describe how the soldiers went mad with fear from the gas.²⁰ In the morality that was part of this first interpretation, poison gas should be feared as it represented a threat to civilization. In the second interpretation, gas, though new, became accepted, familiar, and normal through its appearances in advertisements, cartoons, and photographs of horses and dogs.

At times both of these notions overlapped in British, American, and Australian newspaper images and articles throughout the World War I period. The newspaper coverage at the beginning of World War I sends a clear message that poison gas was a taboo subject and that the German Army was violating international treaties by using it. However, once both sides had used gas, the newspaper coverage presented poison gas with a new degree of familiarity. This shift was largely the result of increased defense technology that allowed soldiers and citizens to feel confident in their ability to protect themselves in case of a gas attack. Additionally, scientific research turned poison gas from an unknown weapon of terror into an understood weapon of war, no different than advancements in machine gun or artillery technology. Thus, by the end of the war, gas was still feared, but also tolerated, and perhaps even condoned as a fact of everyday life – a reality of living with total war.

¹⁹ “Experimenting with Poison Gas.” *The Daily News* (Perth), 9 March 1916.

²⁰ *The Times*. “Poison in the Air,” Wednesday, May 19, 1915; pg. 5; Issue

FREEDOM AT MIDNIGHT? THE ORIGINS OF THE DIVERGENT POLITICO-MILITARY TRAJECTORIES IN INDIA AND PAKISTAN

BY
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INTRODUCTION

At the stroke of midnight on August 14-15, 1947, India and Pakistan emerged as two independent states from the wreckage of the British Indian Empire.¹ In spite of their shared colonial past as part of one unified British India, and the aspirations on the part of both their respective early leaders for democracy,² both countries have taken markedly different political-military trajectories in the aftermath of independence. While India, albeit with brief bout of authoritarian rule,³ has managed to uphold parliamentary democracy and its military has remained on the periphery of power, Pakistan has suffered four military coups and has had a persistent inability to successfully transition to democracy and consolidate civilian democratic institutions.

The purpose of this essay is to find *an alternative* answer—and not necessarily *the comprehensive* answer—to the following query: Despite deriving from the same political entity, why has Pakistan been

1 Pakistan celebrated independence on August 14, 1947, while India celebrated it the following day.

2 While Jawaharlal Nehru's democratic aspirations are widely acknowledged, Muhammad Ali Jinnah's are not. One early example of the democratic aspirations of Pakistan is the Jinnah's own words following independence: "I do not know what the ultimate shape of this constitution is going to be, but I am sure that it will be of a democratic type..." *Speeches and Writings of Mr. Jinnah*, vol. 2, ed. Jamil-ud-Din Ahmad (Lahore: Shaikh Muhammad Ashraf), 463.

3 From 1975-1977, Prime Minister Indira Gandhi declared a state of emergency, wherein she ruled by decree and forcefully silenced political dissent. For a more detailed examination of the state of emergency in India, see Norman D. Palmer, "India in 1975: Democracy in Eclipse," *Asian Survey* 16, no. 2 (1976): 95-110.

unable to sustain a successful transition toward democracy while India has by and large been able to consolidate democracy? Many historians and political scientists alike have provided insightful answers to this vexing question, but their answers are partial and do not account for the lasting effect of factors prior to partition in 1947. By examining two often overlooked factors— (1) the different colonial experiences of the regions of British India which were to become India and Pakistan and (2) the contrasting interests and mobilization strategies used by the Muslim League and the Indian National Congress to foster support for the creation of the two countries—this essay contends that the origins of the different politico-military trajectories of India and Pakistan must be sought in factors prior to partition. These factors have, in effect, caused India and Pakistan to be “historically locked-in” along two divergent paths from their inception as independent states.⁴

The essay is divided into four parts. The first situates the essay in the broader scholarly debate by detailing explanations offered by various scholars on the divergent political trajectories of India and Pakistan. The second part analyzes the explanations offered in an effort to highlight their limitations. The third part examines the hypothesis that factors prior to partition help explain the different paths India and Pakistan took, underscoring the importance of their different colonial experiences and the contrasting interests and mobilization strategies of their respective independence movements. The final part draws some broader conclusions.

EXISTING THEORETICAL EXPLANATIONS

There is a small, yet significant body of scholarship on the origins of the different politico-military trajectories of India and Pakistan. Several scholars have attempted to explain the contrasting political developments in India and Pakistan by emphasizing the most glaring difference between the two countries: religion. Hinduism, some Indian scholars have interpreted, is more suitable for democratic development. Hinduism, they point out, is unlike Islam: it has no single deity whom all must worship, no conception of theological orthodoxy, and no single universally accepted ethical code of conduct and thus is less prone to entrenched divisions. Such qualities are more attuned to democratic development, they argue, since democracy, by its very nature, requires compromise and tolerance by

⁴ On the theory of “historical lock-ins” and its correlation to path dependency, see James Mahoney and Daniel Schensul, “Historical Context and Path Dependence,” in *Oxford Handbook of Contextual Political Analysis*, eds. Robert E. Goodin and Charles Tilly, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 454-71.

the polity.⁵ Conversely, while some scholars have underscored the affinities between Hinduism and democracy, others have stressed the basic incompatibility of Islam with democracy. John Anderson, in his article “Does God Matter, and If So Whose God: Religion and Democratization,” articulates such a viewpoint. As he writes, [Islam’s] reliance on a fixed religious text and quasi-legal ordinances, the emphasis on divine sovereignty, and the supposed lack of distinction between the religious and the political realm, all worked against democratic development.⁶

Simply put, these scholars contend that the chief explanation for the different political paths of India and Pakistan is the respective religions of each country—India’s democracy is attributed to Hinduism and Pakistan’s autocracy to Islam.

While several scholars have placed emphasis on abstract concepts of religion as an explanation for the divergent paths of India and Pakistan, others have concentrated on the more concrete, that is, the disparities in resources and different levels of economic development between the two countries. Historian Ayesha Jalal offers a compelling example of such a viewpoint. Jalal’s argument is three-pronged: Pakistan’s authoritarianism can be credited to the disproportionate allocation of military and civilian resources from India; the looming threat of a larger and more powerful neighboring India; and the use of that threat by the Pakistani military to assure its place as the ultimate protector of Pakistan’s survival.⁷ In addition to Jalal, numerous scholars have argued that higher levels of economic development are casually related to democratization and regime stability because of the establishment of a viable middle class.⁸ According to this view, India was more prone to democratic rule than Pakistan. A myriad of scholars have also linked the outcome of democracy in India and Pakistan to the mass appeal and leadership of the respective independence movements. Manjeet Pardesi and Sumit Ganguly have noted the striking differences between the Indian National Congress and the Muslim League. Unlike the Muslim League, which according to

5 See Rajni Kothari, *The State Against Democracy: In Search of Humane Governance*, (Delhi: Ajanta Publications, 1988), 155-56.

6 John Anderson, “Does God Matter, and If So Whose God? Religion and Democratization,” *Democratization* 11, no. 4 (2004): 197.

7 See Ayesha Jalal, *The State of Martial Rule: The Origins of Pakistan’s Political Economy of Defence* (Lahore: Vanguard, 1991), 25- 55.

8 See Adam Przeworski and Fernando Limongi, “Modernization: Theories and Facts,” *World Politics* 49, no. 2 (1997): 155-183 and Carles Boix and Susan C. Stokes, “Endogenous Democratization,” *World Politics* 55, no. 4 (2003): 517-549.

Pardesi and Ganguly, was a “party of the Muslim elites, with most its support drawn from the erstwhile Muslim aristocracy,” the Indian National Congress was transformed into a mass movement thanks partially to the activism of Mahatma Gandhi.⁹ This mass appeal and legitimacy the Indian National Congress enjoyed, Pardesi and Ganguly point out, is responsible for India’s successful transition to democracy. The Muslim League, an elite-based organization, did not have such legitimacy or mass appeal in the areas that were to become Pakistan. A similar argument centers on the role of leadership as the key differentiating factor between India and Pakistan. The argument claims the early deaths of Muhammad Ali Jinnah and Liaquat Ali Khan resulted in the obstruction of democracy in Pakistan, thus leaving a vacuum for the military to fill.¹⁰

While most scholars have primarily focused on internal factors in India and Pakistan to explain the divergent outcomes in each country, a small number of scholars and commentators have cast blame on external influences. International support for specific regimes, such scholars contend, can be a determining factor in whether a state democratizes or not.¹¹ In the specific context of India and Pakistan, such scholars emphasize the strategic alliances each country formed with international partners. While India opted for non-alignment, rejecting the alliance system of the early Cold War, Pakistan formed an opportune military alliance with the United States. Accordingly, such uneven support for the military in an already new state greatly weakened the civilian sector and consequentially perpetuated authoritarian tendencies in Pakistan.

Limitations of Explanations

Though the bulk of the existing explanations provide important insights, each is ultimately incomplete in its own respective way because it neglects other highly influential factors. The argument that religion is the root cause of the different outcomes in India and Pakistan is a reductionist approach—it fails to treat the issue with the complexity it deserves. First, this explanation assumes religions are monolithic, which they seldom are. Each religion has core doctrines, which are subjected to various schools of interpretation, and its teaching and practices are in no way immutable. In Islam in particular, not only are there different sects in Islam—*Shiites*, *Sunnis*, *Sufis*, *Ismaelis*, *Ahmadiyah*, etc.—but the religion is also practiced

9 Manjeet S. Pardesi and Sumit Ganguly, “India and Pakistan: The Origins of Their Different Politico-Military Trajectories” *India Review* 9, no. 1 (2010): 44-45.

10 See Zoltan Barany, “Why India, Why Not Pakistan? Reflections on South Asian Military Politics” Manekshaw Paper, No 11 (2009): 10.

11 On the link between external influences and democracy, see Steven Levitsky and Lucan A. Way, “Linkage versus Leverage: Rethinking the International Dimension of Regime Change,” *Comparative Politics* 38, no 4 (2006): 379-400.

differently depending on the geographical area. Ultimately, political, historical, and ideological factors within the respective countries are of much greater importance in forecasting the likelihood of democracy. Second, democratic governments do exist in Muslim majority countries such as in Turkey and Indonesia. Third, Islamic concepts such as *shura* (consultation), *ijma* (consensus), and *ijtihad* (independent reasoning) provided some intellectual basis for development of democracy in Muslim countries.¹² Fourth, there are particular elements of Hinduism that are antithetical to democratic values. The classical Hindu belief in kingship as an ideal system and Hinduism's toleration of the caste system are two examples contrary to democratic values.¹³

Though it certainly cannot be denied that divisions of assets between India and Pakistan from the British Indian Empire were considerably less than equitable, this factor alone is insufficient in explaining the different political outcomes in both countries. First, the limited comparative data available presents a more nuanced picture. Despite inheriting significantly less than India, Pakistan's post-independence growth rates nearly paralleled India.¹⁴ Second, a reliance on economic disparities alone to explain the divergent paths of both countries fails to fully explain the structural problems that led to Pakistan's current militarized state. Why, for example, were civilian institutions in Pakistan unable to adequately control or provide oversight over the military establishment? Also, why were certain powerful groups and entities so opposed to democratic practices? Questions such as these are crucial to explaining the different politico-military trajectories in India and Pakistan, but are ultimately left unanswered by those relying on the economic/resource disparities argument.

Many scholars identify the dissimilar organizational structures and appeals of the Indian National Congress and the Muslim League, but none explain how certain social classes came to dominate the movements. Instead, scholars tend to accept the historical reality of both independence movements without delving deeper to explain the motives of these

12 See John Eposito and John Voll, *Islam and Democracy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), 17.

13 See Prataph Mehta, "Hinduism and Self-Rule" *Journal of Democracy* 15, no. 3 (2004): 114.

14 For an in-depth comparative study of the economic growth of both countries and a detailed examination of Pakistan's development, see Angus Maddison, *Class Structure and Economic Growth: India and Pakistan Since the Moghuls* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1971) and Parvez Hasan, "Learning from the past: A Fifty-Year Perspective on Pakistan's Development" *Pakistan Development Review* 36, no.4 (1997): 355-402.

movements and the adverse effects. Furthermore, the argument that the early deaths of the leaders of the Pakistan's independence movement, particularly Muhammad Ali Jinnah and Liaquat Ali Khan, obstructed democracy in Pakistan is faulty in many respects. For one, it fails to account for the authoritarian trend Jinnah set in the early stages of the Pakistani state—appointing himself Governor-General, expanding his powers particularly in the Punjab area, and dismissing the government in the North West Frontier Province. Such “centralizing authoritarianism” began under Jinnah and continued after his death.¹⁵

Finally, while one cannot deny the influence of external influence, it is easy to overstate such influences. The argument that Pakistan's authoritarian outcome is a result of United States military support is such an example. The U.S.- Pakistani military alliance began in 1953, but by then, the civilian institutions had already proven inadequate and the military had to be called to quell civil unrest.¹⁶ Moreover, the fact the Pakistani military was able to successfully persuade the United States to provide substantial funds and was subsequently able to enjoy free rein to such funds shows the power and influence of the Pakistani military before the military alliance. Ultimately, the United States did not cause the authoritarian trends in Pakistan—it merely exacerbated them. Thus, the explanation for the different politico-military trajectories of India and Pakistan must be sought in factors pre-partition, particularly in the different colonial experiences of the areas that were to become India and Pakistan and the interests and mobilizations strategies of the respective independence movements.

TOWARD AN ALTERNATIVE EXPLANATION

Different Colonial Experiences

From a purely macro level, comparing India and Pakistan would appear to be a seemingly easy task—both countries, after all, derived from the same political entity. Indeed, one reputable scholar notes that both “shared a political past under the British Raj and were subjected to similar

15 Christophe Jaffreolt, ed., *A History of Pakistan and its Origins* (London: Anthem Press, 2004), 62, quoted in Pradesi and Ganguly, “India and Pakistan,” 51.

16 Interestingly, in 1951, the Pakistani Army attempted a coup d'état against the government of Liaquat Ali Khan, the first Prime Minister of Pakistan. Known as the Rawalpindi Conspiracy, the coup d'état was planned because of the military's frustration about Pakistan's failure to occupy Jammu and Kashmir. The conspiracy was foiled after confidantes informed the government.

political and military institutions during the colonial period.”¹⁷ A closer examination of the administrative structure of the British Raj reveals that such an historical assumption is obsolete and ultimately misleading. The respective regions which were to become India and Pakistan were administered in markedly different ways.

In the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries, the British began what Indian Secretary of State of Edwin Montagu described as “the gradual development of governing institutions with a view to the progressive realisation of responsible government in India as an integral part of the British Empire.”¹⁸ The real starting point, however, can be traced to Lord Rippon’s famous resolution in 1882. The resolution called for local, elected boards and granted the boards some degree of power. Such a system was soon replicated on the provincial level in 1909. Subsequently, in response to growing pressure from the now well established Indian National Congress and external factors from the First World War, the British passed the Government of India Act, 1919. Under this Act, the provinces were accorded responsibility for local government, education, public works, public health and greater legislative autonomy. Finally, the Government of India Act of 1935, the most meaningful reform, provided for provincial elections and fuller governing responsibilities for the provinces. Importantly, the British, for reasons that stem from political realities and geography, did not aggressively pursue such reforms in the North-West Frontier Province and Punjab, two provinces that would make up the bulk of the Pakistani state.¹⁹

Punjab and the North-West Frontier Province, from their very inception into British India, were already an exception since they were among the last areas to be conquered in the subcontinent. Conquered after a resistance and lying on the edge of Central Asia during the Great Game,²⁰ these provinces were set apart from other Indian provinces. For one, they were Non-Regulation Provinces, meaning they were exempted from Indian Government regulations and governed under the central authority of a Commissioner. Such an administrative system

17 Pradesi and Ganguly, “India and Pakistan,” 38.

18 Edwin Montagu, “The Secretary of State’s Announcement, 20 August 1917” in *Select Documents of the History of India and Pakistan*, ed, C.H. Phillips, (London: Oxford University Press, 1962), 264.

19 Until 1901, the North-West Frontier Province was a part of the Punjab Province. The province was divided as a result of a “divide and rule” tactic on the part of the British to avoid potential unrest.

20 The ‘Great Game’ is a common expression used to describe the intense imperial competition between the Russians and the British in Central Asia during the nineteenth century.

differed greatly from other Indian provinces and had enormous consequences. As Bin Sayeed writes,

The people in the countryside depended almost entirely upon the goodwill and leadership of the Deputy Commissioner. This seriously undermined the role of the politician for he could neither put forward vigorously the interests of his constituents, nor was much patronage available to him at the district level.²¹

Conversely, the Regulation Provinces had carefully delineated rules relegating the rights of subjects and the powers of the administrative officials. Such a system promoted political participation and awareness, which was unavailable in Punjab and the North- West Frontier Province. Both provinces were also more militarized than others as a result of heavy military requirement in those regions and its geographical location. The 1857 Mutiny in Bengal had the adverse effect of shifting military requirement in the British military from Bengal to Punjab and the North-West Frontier Province of British India. During this time, the colonial theory of ‘martial races’—the idea that certain races were better and braver than others—was commonly accepted, and the Punjab, not surprisingly, was claimed to be “home of the most martial races of India” and the ‘nursery’ of the best soldier.²² In 1857, Punjabis made up 44% of the Bengal Army, but just one year later, comprised over 93%.²³ In addition, as a result of new army requirement policies, Punjabis made up 62% of the entire British Army in 1929.²⁴

The tilt toward a Punjabi army and the strict oversight of the Punjab and the North-West Frontier Province was also directly related to the perceived threat from Russian expansion into Central Asia, particularly Afghanistan, which bordered modern day Pakistan. The Simon Commission of 1930 ominously observed that the area of Punjab and the North West Frontier were “not only the frontier of India,” but “an international frontier of the first importance from the military point of view for the whole empire.”²⁵ Consequently, the British adopted a “frontier policy,” which included blocking reforms, political parties, and

21 Khalid bin Sayeed, *Pakistan, the Formative Phase, 1857-1948*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), 281-82.

22 Shriz Maher, “Ties that Bind: How the Story of Britain’s Muslim Soldiers Can Forge a National Identity,” *Policy Exchange* (2011): 14.

23 Tan Tai Yong, *The Garrison State: Military, Government and Society in Colonial Punjab* (New York: Sage Publications, 2005) 54-55.

24 Kaushik Roy, ed., *The Indian Army in the Two World Wars* (Leiden: Brill Publishing, 2011), 448, fn. 8.

25 “The Simon Commission Report, 1930” in C.H. Philips, ed., *Select Documents*, 289.

newspapers, and banning movement to the rest of India.²⁶ In addition, in order to defend the area against external threats, over half of the Indian Army was stationed in the region.²⁷

In the final analysis, both the Punjab and the North West Frontier Province were highly autocratic and militarized provinces, where the devolution of political power was considered a threat. While many of provinces that would eventually become India had some experience with democratic practices, Pakistan had no such experience. This reality laid the groundwork for the country's autocratic tendencies.

Interest and Mobilization Strategies of Nationalist Movements

In order to adequately understand the different interest and mobilization strategies of the respective nationalist movements, it is instructive to first provide a historical overview of the Indian National Congress and the Muslim League. In the early half of the nineteenth century, the British adopted a strategy to form a Westernized Indian social class that would act as "interpreters" between the British and the Indians.²⁸ This newly educated middle class of high-caste individuals were essentially educated as Englishmen, which prepared them well to serve in the British colonial administration. As the number of educated middle class grew steadily, the British soon discovered a problem: many of those in this new educated middle class could not find the employment for which they had prepared for. The problem was even more ominous because these individuals had already defied traditional customs to pursue colonial education and employment and were unfit for menial jobs because of their high-caste position. These individuals began to aggressively lobby for more Indian participation in British colonial administration, which bolstered their own upward mobility. The founding members of the Indian National Congress were from this new educated middle class. Though the Indian National Congress eventually became more populist and mass

26 See P.N. Chopra et al, "British Policy Towards India's Neighbours: Frontier Policy," in *A Comprehensive History of India*, Volume 3 (Delhi: Sterling Publishers, 2003), 127-133.

27 Importantly, local police normally dealt with internal disputes. The Army's primary responsibility was to intervene in tribal warfare and defend against foreign invasion.

28 Thomas Macaulay, "Minutes on Education (1835)" quoted in *History of British Rule in India*, Volume 1, Edward Thompson and G.T. Garrett, (Delhi: Atlantic Publishers, 1999), 315.

based, the principal motives for their interests in democratic reform should not be overlooked.

Unlike the new Hindu middle class, the relative minority Muslim population in the United Provinces (UP), where the Pakistan independence movement was created, already held a powerful position in society. Descendants of the Mughal rulers, they were more English literate than their upper-caste Hindu counterparts and tended to reside in urban areas.²⁹ Moreover, they held disproportionate power in three influential sectors: landownership, trading, and government administration. Muslims, for instance, held many powerful positions in government civil service: 56 percent were government servants in the High Court and 42 percent worked with either the deputy commissioner and commissioners of the province.³⁰ Thus, despite being a minority, they held disproportionate power and influence.

The passage of democratic reforms and the inclusion of more in the government sector eroded their prized position in public sector.³¹ Thus, while the Indian National Congress stood to gain from the adoption of reform based on democracy and meritocracy, the Muslims in the United Provinces did not. Consequently, in 1906, a collection of Muslim aristocrats founded the Muslim League to protect their position in government. The members of League were limited to the landed aristocracy in the United Provinces and their primary goals were to prevent democratic reform by being loyal to the British and to bargain for Muslim representation. At the Decca Session in 1906, the Muslim League aims revealed such sentiments. Their goals were:

To promote, among the Musalmans of India, feelings of loyalty to the British Government... and to protect and advance the political rights and interest of the Musalmans of India, and to respectfully represent their needs and aspirations to the Government.³²

Thus, from the beginning, both movements began with contrasting interests: while the promotion of democratic, egalitarian reforms aided the new Hindu middle class, it was ultimately detrimental to the influence of Muslims in the United Provinces. While both independence movements evolved slightly over time, their respective interests did not completely vanish and had effects in the lead up to independence.

29 Francis Robinson, *Separatism Among Indian Muslims: The Politics of the United Provinces' Muslims, 1860-1923* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1993), 13.

30 *Ibid.*, 20-23.

31 Whereas Muslims held 64% of the judicial and executive jobs in the United Province in 1857, they only held 35% in 1913. Conversely, Hindu participation in these jobs rose 36% during the same time period, see *Ibid.*, 63.

32 *Ibid.*, 228.

One of the unanticipated consequences of the contrasting interests of the Indian National Congress and the Muslim League was the divergent democratic and egalitarian nature of their respective independence movements. While the Indian Congress was mass based, the Muslim League remained an elitist organization.³³ Such a lack of popularity was shown in the 1937 election, in which the League only managed to win a small number of seats. The primary cause of such a result was that the League did not have support in Muslim majority areas because, unlike the Muslims in the United Provinces, Muslims in these areas were in the majority in their provinces and thus did not fear Hindu domination in an independent India. Jinnah and League thus had to craft a strategy that would be able to win over the elites in those predominantly Muslim areas. As Jalal notes, “A socioeconomic programme aimed at mobilizing the rank and file could hardly enthrall the landed oligarchs who dominated Muslim politics,” so Jinnah had to entice them with a number of inducements.³⁴ Consequently, the League managed to win decisively in the 1945-1946 elections. Importantly, while Jinnah’s skillful use of religious nationalism did help bring about success, his inducements to elites in the Muslim majority areas had a tremendous effect as well. Thus, instead of building a stable, democratic party structure, Jinnah developed anti-democratic practices within the party in the years immediately before independence.

CONCLUSION

As noted at the outset of this paper, the purpose of this essay was not to offer the comprehensive explanation of the democratic divergence between India and Pakistan. Rather, this essay sought to serve as a corrective to existing claims and, in the process, offer a compelling alternative explanation. The existing theoretical explanations for the different political outcomes in India and Pakistan are at best incomplete, and at worst, conspicuously simplistic. For instance, the argument that disparate allocation of resources is the root cause of the problem fails to explain why the military had the strength to fill the civilian void and why such a void existed in the first place. Moreover, casting the blame on the United States, though tempting, is ultimately exaggerated.

This essay rests on two alternative and interrelated explanations. The first challenges a common historical assumption, namely—that both

33 For a more detailed examination, see Zahid H. Zaidi, “Aspects of Development of Muslim League Policy, 1937-47” in *The Partition of India: Policies and Perspectives, 1935-1947*, eds., C.H. Phillips and M.D. Wainwright (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1970), 246.

34 Jalal, *The State of Martial Rule*, 17.

Indian and Pakistan derived from the same political entity, British India, and therefore were governed the same. Whereas India inherited provinces that had experience with democratic practices, the provinces that would eventually formed the bulk of Pakistan—Punjab and the North West Frontier Provinces—were heavily militarized and were governed with autocratic power. In the aftermath of independence, such authoritarian rule only continued with the already powerful and influential military.

The second explanation explores why the Indian nationalist movement pursued democratic reforms and the Pakistani nationalist movement did not pursue such reforms as aggressively. Ultimately, members of the Indian National Congress and the Muslim League were motivated by their own economic interest, which was either conducive or contrary to democratic reform. Whereas greater democratic reform would have aided members of the Indian National Congress, it would have been detrimental to members of the Muslim League. In addition, due to the fact that the Pakistan nationalist movement was not mass-based and the very idea of Pakistan was exceptionally vague, the Muslim League and Jinnah had to induce elites in Muslim majority provinces to support the party instead of garnering support through the democratic process.

In short, while many scholars attribute the divergent politico-military outcomes in India and Pakistan to factors after independence, this essay concludes that such factors were already in place before the clock struck at midnight on those solemn days of August 14-15 1947.