

**REPORT**  
WEST POINT  
UNDERGRADUATE  
HISTORICAL REVIEW  
VOLUME 5, ISSUE 1  
FALL 2014

*Report, 2*

## **REPORT**

WEST POINT UNDERGRADUATE HISTORICAL REVIEW  
VOLUME 5, ISSUE 1; FALL 2014

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## **ACKNOWLEDGMENTS**

The Editorial Board would like to thank the faculty of the History Department for their submission recommendations, all the students who submitted papers, and Captain Mark Ehlers and Captain Jon Romaneski for their extensive guidance and technical support. Without their help, *Report* would not have been possible.

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## FROM THE EDITOR

This edition of *Report* focuses on the broad and diverse topic of empire. Empire is a recurring theme throughout history; indeed, the world's great empires have shaped the course of human affairs on every level, ranging from high politics to daily life. The rise and fall of great powers, the wars and periods of peace they cause, and the cultures and ideas they spread across their domains have left indelible stamps on the world and the people in it.

In this edition, we present a collection of pieces that examine empires and their effect on the world. Our leading piece, by Jake Meredith of Wake Forest University, examines the military reforms of the Russian Federation in the years following the collapse of the Soviet Union. Next, Meghan Wentz, a West Point cadet, discusses China's experience in the Asian Financial Crisis of 1997. McKenzie Quinn, a Vassar student of history and art, investigates the role of photography in developing ideas about the British Empire in India following the Sepoy Mutiny of 1857. Madeline Kanuka of Canada's McGill University looks at how American nationalism developed in taverns and pubs before the American War of Independence. In our final piece, Kathleen Lynch of the University of Connecticut tells the story of tropical medicine in the British Army of the First World War, which due to Britain's vast imperial holdings had to operate in such far-flung theaters as Turkey, India, and East Africa.

Working on the staff of *Report* has been a valuable component of my experience at the Academy. As a member of the Editorial Staff, and subsequently as Editor-in-Chief, I have had the opportunity to work with and lead a team of intellectual cadets who are both deeply interested in history and broad enough in their perspectives to appreciate, understand, and effectively critique papers that cover an incredibly wide range of topics. Additionally, our efforts were carried out under the guidance of our faculty advisors, Captain Mark Ehlers, Captain Jonathan Romaneski, and Major Andrew Forney, without whose assistance this publication would not be possible. Thanks must also go to West Point's History Department, which offers us this opportunity among so many others and supports our education as we develop into Army officers.

I hope you enjoy our publication. *Sapientia per historiam!*

*In History,*

**Francis John Ambrogio III**  
**Editor-in-Chief, *Report***  
**West Point, NY**

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# **IN THE SHADOW OF AN EMPIRE: MILITARY REFORMS OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION**

**BY JAKE EDWARD MEREDITH**

*Jake Edward Meredith is a senior studying Political Science, History, and Entrepreneurship at Wake Forest University. Before Wake Forest, he attended the Episcopal High School in Alexandria, VA. He wrote this paper during the spring semester of 2014 for his Politics in Russia & Eastern Europe course. Jake was inspired to research Russian military reform by the concurrent invasion of the Ukraine, and thanks Dr. Welsh for her guidance over the semester.*

## **INTRODUCTION**

In the years following the collapse of the Soviet Union, Russian society faced an identity crisis of monumental proportion. New and liberalizing ideals clashed with long established traditions, a conflict perhaps most apparent in the military. The Russian military, once arguably unmatched in the world, was reduced to mere rabble almost overnight. Only in the past few years has Russia made any serious gains in modernizing its military; the question, then, is why did it take so long? The Federation suffered embarrassment after embarrassment, yet made no progress to create a combat effective force. In the following paper, I demonstrate numerous attempts have indeed been made to increase the military's effectiveness, yet almost all have been blocked by those within the military itself. This apparent contradiction can be explained by a military leadership who is unwilling to adapt to modern warfare, admit the defeat of the Cold War, and recognize a new form of a military antagonist to the Russian state.

## **THE COLLAPSE**

Following the collapse of the Soviet Union, Russia inherited the majority of its military might. Many in Russia immediately saw the need for some degree of reform and change of doctrine. Unlike their western counterparts, doctrine in Russia was not synonymous with military theory and science, but rather the policy and organization best able to serve

national interests.<sup>1</sup> “Before speaking about military doctrine and military reform it is necessary for the Russian Federation to determine how to contrast its defense – as part of the CIS or independently – and what Russia’s national interests are.”<sup>2</sup> Defining what Russia’s national interests are would remain a point of contention for nearly the entire first two decades of the Federation. Those who opposed reforms wished to keep the Soviet system, in which the majority of the economy could be utilized for defense and security purposes. In short, those favoring modernization and liberalization of Russian life favored reform, while the old military elite sought to prevent it in an (unsuccessful) attempt to maintain the prestige of the Soviet military.

The immediate question after the collapse regarded the division of equipment and weaponry, as well as the position of the former Soviet republics. The Russian forces abroad were recalled or disbanded, and much of their equipment was left for indigenous militaries and paramilitary groups. The vast majority of missile defense installations, early warning systems, and other strategic nuclear equipment were within the USSR’s borders but now lay outside Russia’s borders. “Little more than half the combat aircraft of the Soviet air force remained within the boundaries of post-Cold War Russia. Russia also lost four of every five Soviet repair facilities for armored fighting vehicles. As a result, only twenty percent of the tanks inherited by the Russian army remained serviceable by early 1994.”<sup>3</sup> While Belarus acknowledged Russia’s ownership of the missiles present, Ukraine claimed authority and ownership of such weaponry. However, “In the Ukraine there can be no doubt that the tradition of loyalty to the Soviet Union would be quickly re-awakened in a time of international tension. The Ukraine provided for hundreds of years the core of the Soviet army, the best of its officers. The present doubt and disunity in the nation and the possibility of a two- or three-way split of the new Union Republic gives greater emphasis to the nostalgia and security of the previous national situation.”<sup>4</sup> Kazakhstan too remains firmly within Russia’s sphere of influence, and provides an observation point to look for Turkish expansion.

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<sup>1</sup> M. A. Gareev, “On Military Doctrine and Military Reform in Russia,” *The Journal of Soviet Military Studies* 5, no. 4 (1992): 539.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 541.

<sup>3</sup> Benjamin S. Lambeth, “Russia’s Wounded Military,” *Foreign Affairs* 74, no. 2 (1995): 88.

<sup>4</sup> Nicholas F. Bradshaw, “The Role and Disposition of Military Forces in the Russian Federation,” *GeoJournal* 34, no. 2 (October 1994): 161. This quote is from an article published 20 years ago.

Even as early as 1992, Gareev acknowledges there was talk of Russia joining NATO. He argues this would be a mistake as it would only drag NATO into the tumultuous economic and political situations of the former Soviet republics.<sup>5</sup> Furthermore, such an alliance, stretching from the Atlantic to the Pacific, would simply form an opposition to Chinese expansion and exacerbate international tensions. Russia's interests are better served by bolstering the defenses of the CIS. Bradshaw notes, "Meaningless concepts such as 'Partnership for Peace' ignore that if everybody is in an alliance there is no alliance at all..."<sup>6</sup> He also suggests rather bluntly that the Cold War is not over, as there are still 3,000 ICBM's pointed at each other. Russia maintains a military over a million strong, and structured to fight NATO and the US in large scale, conventional warfare. The CIS would provide the most effective way for the old military leadership to keep their dreams of the Empire alive; blinded by ignorance, they failed to see the Soviet military system built to fight the US/NATO was, and would continue to be, a cancerous growth for the new Russia.

In his article, Gareev sets high expectations for reform and change in global strategy immediately following the USSR's collapse, almost none of which were met in the next two decades.<sup>7</sup> He suggests, as many did, that the size of the military be reduced, and manpower transitioned from conscripts to volunteers (*kontrakniks*). This streamlined military will be more capable of adapting to new threats and the changing nature of warfare, while a continued focus on strategic nuclear forces would maintain deterrence against a larger enemy. Conventional forces will defend until tactical or strategic nuclear weapons can be used. This form of deterrence is a dramatic departure from the Soviet military model. "...at one time our army intended to fight only on foreign territory, while now it turns out that it should be prepared to fight only on its own territory."<sup>8</sup> The proposals essentially eliminate Russian first strike capabilities; Russia will not start a war, but they will certainly engage in one if attacked. In simple terms, Russia must immediately take measures to reduce the quantity of their armed forces and increase the quality of them. The proposed reforms, however, were both too radical and too ethereal. "In the plans for military reform developed up to now, there are no concrete measures for improving

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<sup>5</sup> Gareev, "On Military Doctrine and Military Reform in Russia," 543.

<sup>6</sup> Bradshaw, "The Role and Disposition of Military Forces in the Russian Federation," 165.

<sup>7</sup> Gareev, "On Military Doctrine and Military Reform in Russia," 545.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, 549.

the qualitative parameters of the Army and Navy...but if we do not find concrete methods of resolving them, then the program for military reform will only be a collection of abstract wishes.”<sup>9</sup>

### **GRACHEV’S INHERITED MILITARY**

With Grachev's appointment as Minister of Defense in May of 1992, the Soviet General Staff, which had become the CIS General Staff, became the Russian Federation General Staff.<sup>10</sup> While not necessarily a reflection of command capability, the military of the Grachev era was a product of the inherited Soviet structure and mentality. The Federation’s armed forces would be maintained to fight two threats: the US/NATO, and internal/near abroad rebels. While China was a potential threat down the road, NATO membership or intervention in a former Soviet state was a more immediate threat. This de facto continuation of the Soviet military leadership and mindset set the course of the nation for years to come. At the time, radical Islam was not considered to be a significant threat.

“The so-called ‘Southern Threat’ from Islam is unlikely to materialize, and is nothing more than an excuse to add credibility to oppressive military operations. It reflects similar fears in America’s defense policy, and has led to an unlikely meeting of minds between the two nations. Thus the US has been quick to ignore the evidence against the proposition that the Cold War is over, and instead collaborates on limiting Iranian influence and encouraging Turkish expansionism, thereby hopefully spreading the example of a secular Islamic state, especially among the Central Asian republics. In fact, Russia has not abandoned Iran at all and is at present energetically trading arms for Iranian oil, competing in the matter with the Chinese.”<sup>11</sup>

The immediate nature of post-Soviet Russia’s military leaders refused to acknowledge the end of the Cold War and Russia’s status as a superpower. Through the CIS, Russia could effectively maintain some portion of the old Soviet sphere of influence. Grachev nevertheless saw the need for some change, and he envisioned three command groups able to operate independently: European, Central Asian, and Far Eastern. A brigade structure would replace the existing division system, allowing

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<sup>9</sup> Gareev, “On Military Doctrine and Military Reform in Russia,” 551.

<sup>10</sup> Bradshaw, “The Role and Disposition of Military Forces in the Russian Federation,” 158.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, 159.

rapid reaction forces to deploy within days. This vision would never be realized. Such a system threatens Moscow's central control, and critics said Grachev sought to weaken Russia's military capabilities. NATO and the Warsaw Pact states had signed the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe in 1990, mutually limiting the production and possession of conventional weaponry. Not only was disarmament not in the Russian plan, it is not within the realm of possibility. "Russia makes many statements of intent. It intends to comply with the CFE treaty, but to do so it would have to cut its industrial labor force by approximately forty percent. The West would have to cut by one third of one per cent, to satisfy the demands of the CFE. The Russian promise of disarmament may well have been made in good faith, but it seems impossible to fulfill."<sup>12</sup>

By 1994, Russia sought to bring the autonomous republics firmly under control. "With the exception of the Baltic States...the Union Republics applied to rejoin the Commonwealth of Independent States."<sup>13</sup> Russia was surrounded by loyal or dependent nations. It is important to note that the Russian military at this time essentially dictated its own brand of foreign policy. Russia needed to shore up its borders and maintain influence over the near abroad, and the military saw this as their responsibility. "While the military leadership discarded the ideological precepts of communism quite readily, it also adopted a 'realist' view of geopolitics more rapidly than the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. In part, this may reflect a military predilection to see the world in Manichean terms and emphasize competition over cooperation."<sup>14</sup> The lack of civilian oversight of the military made such an autonomous system possible.

Russia's military leadership now left the responsibility of maintaining the CIS borders mostly to indigenous forces; after all, Russia was surrounded by dependent states. The troops became a unifying factor in the CIS, and many of the Russian guards were veterans of Afghanistan. This delegation of authority left gaping holes, however. The border between Azerbaijan and Iran was reportedly left completely open.<sup>15</sup> Smuggling became a common practice, and the drug trade fueled the black-market economy in Russia. Links between warlords in the Caucasus and crime-lords in greater Russia were established and solidified. The

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<sup>12</sup> Bradshaw, "The Role and Disposition of Military Forces in the Russian Federation," 165. The Federation suspended observance of the CFE treaty in mid-2007.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, 156.

<sup>14</sup> John W. R. Lepingwell, "The Russian Military and Security Policy in the 'Near Abroad,'" *Survival: Global Politics and Strategy* 36, no. 3 (1994): 72.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, 71.

military focused on the southern border, and Grachev now began to emphasize a radical Islamic threat. Turkey, too, threatened Russian interests. Turkey wanted to stop both Iranian and Russian influence, and Russia sought to prevent Azerbaijani oil from being diverted to the Turks. At this time, the chaos created by the introduction of the market economy left the oil industry mismanaged and in ruin. Russia was a net importer of oil and halved its already abysmal production. The Federation essentially traded weaponry and the arms industry was Russia's only source of foreign income.

Grachev's role as Minister of Defense gave him a large degree of autonomy, and he often decided policy, brokered deals, and engaged in diplomacy. Such activity is usually left to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. "The manner in which the Russian military has acted in the south has varied, which indicates a range of strategies and tactics and the limitations on them. These strategies and tactics include a direct military role sanctioned by the host state (Tajikistan), a 'tripwire' role (Armenia) and covert military intervention and destabilization (Georgia). In all three cases, the strategies have had limited success in furthering Russia foreign policy."<sup>16</sup> Georgia provides an example of not only the military's foreign policy scheming but also the blowback associated with it. The Georgian government faced a sizable separatist movement and found itself at the verge of collapse. At the time in 1992, Georgia had yet to join the CIS. Still dreaming of an empire, Russian military leadership made plans to arm, train, and even fight with the separatists. The civilian-military disconnect found the Ministry of Defense at odds with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and the latter brokered a cease fire. When hostilities erupted again, Grachev ensured there was no peace brokerage. On the brink of collapse, Georgia gave in to Russia and joined the CIS. Russian troops were deployed in Georgia in late 1993 to counter opposition fighters. The military played off forces in Georgia to attain their strategic aims; while not necessarily a planned strategy, it at the very least proved its flexibility.<sup>17</sup>

Grachev orchestrated his strategy in the south and east to some degree of success, but tensions still remained high between Russia and Ukraine. The bread-basket state maintained Soviet-era nuclear weapons, controlled the Black Sea Fleet, and counted a number of ethnic Russians among its citizenry. Most of the Fleet's officers leaned towards the

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<sup>16</sup> Lepingwell, "The Russian Military and Security Policy," 75.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, 76. Russian intelligence trained many Chechen guerrillas and mercenaries to fight alongside the Georgian separatists. One of these trainees was Shamil Basayev, who would draw Russian forces into costly wars later in the decade, as well as orchestrate the 2002 Moscow theater bombings among others.

Federation, and even as far back as 1994 many contemplated Crimea's return to Russia. "Scenarios involving conflict and leading to a takeover of Crimea either by Russian or, more likely, Russian-backed indigenous forces appear far more probably than those involving large-scale Russian intervention in Ukraine".<sup>18</sup> Apart from the communists and ultranationalists, the majority of Russia believed the military should not be used against the former Soviet republics. Instead, they should provide support in accordance with the Tashkent collective security agreement. While military leadership dreamt of restoring the Soviet level of prestige, they had little interest in large scale combat outside Russia. Memories of Afghanistan were still fresh, and Russians had discovered it was easy to invade a country but harder to install a puppet government. The CIS provided a different approach to restore former glory, a path chosen by military leadership independent of civilian political aspirations.

By the start of the first Chechen War (1994-96), the Russian military itself was in an abysmal state and close to implosion. In 1994 when only twenty percent of the tanks were serviceable, Grachev declared to the Duma that Russia had the worst military in the world.<sup>19</sup> While the Soviets purchased around 450 new fighter aircraft a year in the 1980s, there were only 23 new aircraft purchased in 1993 and 1994 combined; more aircraft were lost in training accidents than the Air Force were purchasing.<sup>20</sup> Pilots logged merely a fraction of the flight hours compared to their western counterparts, and against safety regulations, some aircraft had to be cannibalized to keep others flying. The Navy had no funding for fuel so they rarely put to sea, which made a service of untrained seamen and submariners. Furthermore, the Ground Forces had not conducted a division level exercise since 1992, and would not until 1999.<sup>21</sup>

The ineffectiveness of the conscription system became fully apparent during the Chechen War, yet military leaders refused to implement change. Desertion was rampant, hazing and abuse of first year conscripts by those in their second year was common, and seventy-five percent of Russian youths avoided the draft by simply not appearing when called to duty. "Russian air force analysts have reported that it now takes all of Russia's military airlift capability just to move one airborne division in two sorties. Today it is unlikely that Russia, with its decimated and

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<sup>18</sup> Lepingwell, "The Russian Military and Security Policy," 80.

<sup>19</sup> Lambeth, "Russia's Wounded Military," 88.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, 89.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*

poorly supported conventional forces, could mount a large-scale cross border operation against a well-equipped opponent. Its logistics system has been stretched to the breaking point just to sustain some 40,000 troops bogged down in Chechnya.”<sup>22</sup> Pay was low, housing was scarce, and quality of life was draconian. Moscow’s bus drivers earned more than trained fighter pilots.<sup>23</sup> Officers would farm on the weekends to make ends meet. A disproportionate amount of officers were maintained, mostly high ranking officers in menial positions. The argument was, if Russia ever needed to call upon all its reserves and potential conscripts, they would need officers to command them. This top heavy system was expensive, ineffective, and provided little career prospects. The small number of junior officers and professional NCOs mean there was little opportunity for initiative and innovation at the tactical level.

“Western forces would have to fight badly outnumbered and from a defensive and reactive posture against a massive, combined-arms military machine that retained full control over the nuclear weapons option and was prepared, as a matter of doctrinal principle, to trade high casualty rates for victory. The clash in Chechnya revealed a military of a sadly different sort: a ragtag band of hastily assembled conscripts who were not resourceful enough to evade the draft, led by underequipped, undertrained, and demoralized officers who freely admitted that they did not understand why they were there.”<sup>24</sup>

As Minister of Defense, Grachev was blamed for the military’s failures, corruption, and near destruction. He was both incompetent and corrupt, and his removal in 1996 due to the Chechen disgrace would soon see Rodionov as Minister of Defense. Rodionov, however, sought to again paint NATO as the primary adversary, undoing the minuscule amount of progress that had been made. His policy called for increase in both appropriations, funds which did not exist, and force levels, which were already too high. Yeltsin replaced the far right-wing Minister in less than a year with Sergeyev in 1997.

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<sup>22</sup> Lambeth, “Russia's Wounded Military,” 90.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid., 91.

<sup>24</sup> Lambeth, “Russia's Wounded Military,” 91.

## **SERGEYEV'S REFORM**

Reform was largely put on hold until 1997, when the Duma began its efforts to reign in the military. Yeltsin and the majority of the nation supported reform, though those on the Left and the Right (championed by Zhirinovskiy, Rokhlin, and Rodionov) opposed reform, the President, and the President's party. The goals of reform were largely the same as they had always been, quantity must be traded for quality. Russia needed a small, combat effective force manned by contracted professionals rather than temporary conscripts. Focus must switch from large scale conventional warfare against US/NATO to local asymmetric conflicts in the south, central, and eastern border regions. The nuclear forces would retain priority and exist as a means of deterrence from a large scale invasion. "Making nuclear deterrence a priority does not, however, imply a crash missile buildup or a hair-trigger employment strategy. Rather, it means developing 'inherent enhanced deterrence'."<sup>25</sup>

The military leviathan that existed and still resembled the Soviet equivalent was designed to fight a war against any combination of the world's major powers. Reformists again cited threats in the immediate future would not resemble such an adversary, and instead wanted to take a logical look at potential antagonists. "The need for a stable nuclear deterrent and the complications of NATO enlargement notwithstanding, the principle contingency for the Russian military in the next five to ten years will concern local conflicts that could break out in several places simultaneously—a doctrinal point clearly formulated by President Yeltsin when he appointed Igor Sergeyev minister of defense in May 1997 (one of the few good personnel decisions Yeltsin has made)."<sup>26</sup> While the Soviets were twice as powerful as the European NATO forces combined, the western neighbors outnumbered Russian forces by at least two or three to one. Conventional forces in the European theater would simply act as a tripwire for a nuclear strike in the unthinkable event negotiations would deteriorate to that level.

Pakistan, Afghanistan, Turkey, and perhaps Iran represented growing threats to the south, most likely through proxy actions rather than direct confrontation. With the reduction of the number of forces, the qualitative emphasis should provide superiority over such adversaries. To the east, Japan might have represented a threat if it had been expansionist,

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<sup>25</sup> Alexei G. Arbatov, "Military Reform in Russia: Dilemmas, Obstacles, and Prospects," *International Security* 22, no. 4 (1998): 87.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, 89.

but it would turn out not to be. China posed a problem to Russia at the turn of the century. Historical rifts and territorial claims could lead to rising tensions. China's strategic and nuclear capability pales in comparison to Russia however, and the continued arms sales to China provided another method of curbing eastern expansion; weapon sales could simply be slowed or stopped to hinder Chinese military modernization.

The economic decline in 1997, however, halted any reform efforts. The military was now too expensive to maintain as it was, change slightly, or change completely; there was no clear right answer. Yeltsin wanted to transform the military into an entirely volunteer force by 2000, though the Ministry of Defense refused such a schedule as conscripts were cheaper to maintain in the short term.<sup>27</sup> Some wanted a complete transition to volunteers, some wanted a mixed transition, and some wanted no change to the military structure. While politicians debated what the reform would look like or if there would even be one, the military remained extremely ineffective. There had still not been a division-level military exercise since 1992, equipment was barely operable, and officers became increasingly disillusioned with democracy. Many wanted the glory of the Soviet empire and believe just short of authoritarianism might bring some good to Russia. Rokhlin and his opposition comrades sought to politically use the military's low morale and turn the Armed Forces against Yeltsin completely. Reform efforts ground to a halt due to opposition and economic necessity.

In August 1999, Russian troops were again deployed to Chechnya to begin a second full scale war in five years. The Second Chechen War closely resembled the first, at least in terms of casualties, bombing of civilian targets, and the flood of refugees. The Russian army was more successful this time around however, at least in public relations. Mistakes were blamed on the Chechens while any successes were chalked up to the professionalism of the Russian military.<sup>28</sup> The ultimate failure in the Second Chechen War was due to Russia's attempt to solve a political problem with a military solution.<sup>29</sup> Again, a new attempt at reform would be initiated after the fact.

## 2001 & 2003 REFORMS

When he took office, Putin claimed military reform, doubling the GDP, and fighting poverty were the nation's top three priorities. When Putin replaced Sergeev with Ivanov in 2001, reform was needed to

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<sup>27</sup> Arbatov, "Military Reform in Russia," 98.

<sup>28</sup> Rajan Menon and Graham E. Fuller, "Russia's Ruinous Chechen War." *Foreign Affairs* 79, no. 2 (2000): 41.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, 44.

address the antiquated military equipment as well as the social problems inherent in an underfunded, ineffective military. Desertion was just as widespread as it was in the early 1990s, conscripts failed to report for service, hazing was still common place, and officer morale remained abysmally low. The initial push for reform in 2001 again failed, as the consolidation of the branches was reduced to simply some bureaucrat clans winning out over others.<sup>30</sup> The size of the military was reduced but it did nothing in terms of combat effectiveness and discipline.

The 2003 effort for reform sought to fix the persistent problems. Professional non-commissioned officers were to be placed in all units as early as 2004, and eighty percent of combat ready units were to be composed of contract troops. Conscript sergeants were counter-productive, as they had no more experience than their peers. Furthermore, higher pay, post-service benefits, education after service, and Russian citizenship for CIS immigrants were all planned. Once again, leadership in the Ministry of Defense fought the reforms and insisted conscripts were necessary for a modern Russian military. Lack of funding and cost effectiveness were again cited as justification for the old model military. This would keep the top-heavy officer corps necessary to handle an influx of conscripts in the event of a large scale war, as well as the redirection of industry for military purposes. The mixed conscript-volunteer model provided a temporary fix, though Ivanov intended that model to become the new norm.<sup>31</sup> However, training for volunteers was the same as for conscripts, which undercut their effectiveness and combat capability. The number of *kontraktniks* did not matter if they did not make a professional force.

Despite Russia's pledge to assist in the War on Terror, no effort was made to adjust the military's focus to anti-terrorist operations. This is largely due to skepticism of the war; many in the Ministry of Defense believe it is just an excuse for NATO and the US to further their geopolitical goals. Grachev's original reforms aimed to effectively divide the Soviet military infrastructure Russia had inherited. Rodionov's counter-reforms, for lack of a better term, sought to make the economic infrastructure subservient to military needs, as well as consolidate the use of military force under the Ministry of Defense. Sergeyev saw the need for combat-ready soldiers, though to do so he required a larger budget which

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<sup>30</sup> Alexander Golts, "Military Reform in Russia and the Global War Against Terrorism," *Journal of Slavic Military Studies* 17, no. 1 (2004): 30.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, 33.

was not feasible. Ivanov had recognized the need for modern military equipment, as the Armed Forces were still using Soviet-era weaponry.

## **2008 REFORMS & PUTIN'S NEW MILITARY**

By 2008, Russia had seemingly given up its Soviet-style global ambitions. As the nature of diplomacy and warfare changed with the turn of the century, a large foreign invasion became less of a threat. Internal threats and those in the near abroad were finally given the military's full attention. The need to modernize equipment was now more apparent than ever. In the 2008 South Ossetian conflict, sixty to seventy percent of the armored personnel carriers and tanks broke down, and fifty-five percent of the Air Force remained out of commission.<sup>32</sup> Serdyukov became the first civilian Minister of Defense, and the greatest structural changes since the Soviet era were implemented. "In contrast to the Yeltsin (and partially Putin-1) administrations who tried simply to downsize the huge Soviet-born military monster, the current Russian leadership (starting from the Medvedev and continued by the Putin-2 teams) intends to create a principally new army."<sup>33</sup> This new army would depart from the traditional conventional force to one that is permanently combat ready. In 2008, the military still numbered some 1.2 million men, though was reduced to 1 million by 2012. Reform was four years ahead of schedule thanks to Serdyukov's efforts. The officer corps was reduced by almost 200,000, and many positions were abolished or outsourced to the civilian sector. Junior officers finally outnumbered senior officers, and the General Staff departments were cut in half.

The reforms looked to the NATO model in a number of areas. The six military districts were reduced to four and resembled the US model: West, East, South, and Central. The unwieldy divisional system was replaced by the more mobile brigade structure that existed in NATO forces. The sixty-five institutions of military higher education were folded into ten, and only two of the ten Deputy Ministers of Defense had military backgrounds. Logistics and command and control systems were updated and streamlined. Pensions and pay were increased, and the everyday life of military personnel was made easier. Cell phones were allowed, the 5 day work week was established, and greater contact with civil society was permitted. Priority was given to the Strategic Nuclear forces, the Rapid Reaction Forces, Spetsnaz, and anti-terrorism units.

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<sup>32</sup> Andrei Makarychev and Alexander Serguinin, "Russian Military Reform: Institutional, Political, and Security Implications," *Defense and Security Analysis* 29, no. 4 (2013): 356.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, 358.

Serdyukov handled the military reforms with an economic, business-like approach, though faced as much opposition as, if not more than, all the previous reform attempts. His approach was disdained by the old military leadership and blamed for the lack of professionalism still present. The number of deputy ministers with military backgrounds was a point of contention, and was increased to seven of ten when his successor was appointed. The transition to the brigade system was said to weaken military capabilities and confined its purpose to limited warfare. Serdyukov's modernization efforts also drew criticisms. The Russian military industrial complex provided no viable equipment, and foreign weaponry was imported, often via the French. Despite the progress he had made in the right direction, Serdyukov was replaced in 2012. His successor Shoigu has no intentions of stopping Serdyukov's changes, but merely trimming them heavily.

In 2006, Putin had famously claimed the military had 1.4 million men yet no one able to fight. Many suggest Putin waited for Medvedev to take the presidency to initiate the needed reforms, giving him plausible deniability. Putin's second term started a sub-reform process, continuing the step taken in 2008. "Now another phase of the reform process begins, one that could last for many years—namely, the cultivation and training of new and educated officers who are able to think for themselves and take initiative when needed, as well as a corps of professional sergeants that can maintain discipline in the barracks."<sup>34</sup> The dwindling number of Russian males of military age necessitates the switch to contract soldiers. Some, including Putin, still propose a million man army, though even the current number of some 710,000 is still placing too much economic pressure on the government. Even by allocating three to four percent of the GDP to the military, Russia can still only maintain 500,000 to 600,000.

"The irony is that the order to keep 1 million troops makes no military sense. Today, control over large swaths of territory is ensured not by the size of the armed forces but by surveillance from outer space, the ability of troops to deploy and relocate quickly, the technical resources for the operational deployment of forces and, of course, by modern long-range, high-precision ('smart') weapons. To ensure such deployment and the possibility of troop movements,

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<sup>34</sup> Alexander Golts, "Reform: The End of the First Phase - Will There Be a Second?" *The Journal of Slavic Military Studies* 27, no. 1 (2014): 133.

combat-ready forces are created and heavy-weapons depots are deployed in advance in the threatened areas (first and foremost, this means the Caucasus region and the regions adjacent to the Russian-Kazakh and Russian-Chinese borders, and also along the border with North Korea). No one can explain why this magical figure—1 million—appeared. I suppose that Vladimir Putin believes that a million-strong army is a mandatory attribute of a great power.”<sup>35</sup>

One of the defining characteristics of an effective and modern military is civilian oversight; this is inherently contradictory to Putin’s superpresidential system. Putin continues to drastically restructure the military and its organization, and it seems the old guard of the Soviet era have either dispersed or fallen in line. The recent crisis in Ukraine has provided Putin with an opportunity to test the effectiveness of his new military. After pushing his reforms through, Putin has solidified the support of the military by showing Russia may yet still achieve the military prestige of the Soviet Union. This has been the primary goal of those opposing reforms since the Federation was founded. The operations in Crimea and Ukraine have effectively demonstrated Russia’s ability to rapidly deploy combat-effective troops. This move is in no small part meant to show NATO and the rest of the world Russia has achieved the status of a modern military force, or is at the very least well on its way to becoming one.

## **CONCLUSION**

The loss of prestige and pride associated with the Soviet collapse remained an open wound for military leadership during the Federation’s first two decades. As the rest of the Russian society learned to embrace democratic and free market ideals, the military remained a bastion of Soviet-thought. Reform, it was argued, would only weaken the military more and further reduce its prestige. For the officers who still dreamt of an empire, it was their responsibility to project an image of power and protect the homeland. This meant maintaining a large, conventional force capable of engaging the US and NATO. The realities of modern warfare and diplomacy have only now begun to set in, and reform efforts are finally making progress. By pushing his changes through, Putin initiated radical changes in the military structure that will continue in the coming years. The reform efforts have introduced contract soldiers, though the military

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<sup>35</sup> Golts, “Reform: The End of the First Phase,” 135.

still relies on a substantial number of enlisted personnel. The recent expedition in Ukraine has demonstrated the effectiveness of Putin's new military, and I believe the future of Russia's military is closely tied with the future of the Ukraine crisis. While reform has always been met with significant opposition in the Federation, priority has always been placed on the Strategic Nuclear Forces. As long as Russia's conventional military capability remains in question, disarmament is out of the question. I believe there will not be a serious reduction of nuclear arms in Russia until the identity crisis of the Russian military is resolved.



# A SOFT LANDING: CHINA AND THE ASIAN FINANCIAL CRISIS

BY MEGHAN WENTZ

*Meghan Wentz is a senior studying international history and economics at the United States Military Academy. She wrote this paper in fulfillment of a requirement for a course on the history of China.*

On July 2, 1997, the Thai Central Bank made a public announcement concerning the devaluation of their currency. Within a few short months, a combination of anxieties produced a full-fledged financial panic that spread to Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, and South Korea, evolving into what became known as the Asian Financial Crisis. Within the first year of the crisis, the respective currencies in each of these five countries depreciated by 35-80 percent, and the long term effects of the loss of wealth are still being felt today.<sup>1</sup> In contrast to these five major economies, China was the only major country that was relatively unaffected by the crisis.<sup>2</sup> In fact, China continued to grow throughout the crisis with an economic growth of 8.8 percent in 1997, and 7.0 percent in 1998. The value of the renminbi relative to the United States dollar remained unchanged.<sup>3</sup> China was able to avoid the brunt of the 1997 Asian Financial Crisis and maintain a high rate of growth while the economic systems of the other countries fell apart because of its overall economic resiliency to external factors. This resiliency stemmed from the fact that China was resistant to the initial shock in the market and that its economy had already achieved a “soft landing” before the crisis.

Economic crises are usually characterized by a sudden change or shock in the market that creates mass panic, soaring interest rates and inflation, and currency devaluation. What separates countries that weather financial crises well from those that fall apart is their ability to resist the initial shock. There were four major factors at work in China in 1997 that effectively insulated their economy from the initial shock that destabilized

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<sup>1</sup> Karl Jackson, “Introduction: The Roots of the Crisis,” in *Asian Contagion*, ed. Karl Jackson (Boulder: Westview Press, 1999), 1.

<sup>2</sup> Zhao Yanyun and Li Jinping. “China: A Giant with an Achilles Heel?” in *The Causes and Impact of the Asian Financial Crisis*, ed. Tran Van Hoa and Charles Harvie (New York: St. Martin’s Press, INC, 2000), 141.

<sup>3</sup> Nicholas Lardy, “China and the Asian Financial Contagion,” in *Asian Contagion*, ed. Karl Jackson (Boulder: Westview Press, 1999), 83.

a significant portion of the continent. First, China's currency was not convertible for capital account transactions. This meant that government regulations prevented people from converting their renminbi deposits into various foreign currencies, and then using them to purchase foreign assets. In order to purchase foreign exchange, buyers had to demonstrate "need related to trade, tourism, repatriation of profits derived from a prior direct investment, or repayment of a previously approved foreign currency loan."<sup>4</sup> If speculators could not rush in and out of China with "hot money," they could not profit off of devaluation of Chinese currency through methods such as short selling. This was significant to economic stabilization in the face of a market shock because it prevented a massive speculative run on the renminbi caused by lack of confidence in China's economy.<sup>5</sup> Other Southeast Asian markets did not have regulations to prevent this, and in 1997, the initial devaluation of currencies in Thailand, Indonesia, Malaysia, and South Korea caused foreign portfolio managers to rush out of the markets and trade that country's currency for dollars. This rush contributed significantly to the plummeting of currency values in those countries.<sup>6</sup>

The second major factor in China's resistance to the initial shock in the market was that China's capital inflows were mostly foreign direct investments. This was because China had limited foreign participation in their stock market in shares that were dominated by foreign currency. These limitations forced foreign investors to invest mostly in physical investments such as factories and equipment instead of simply depositing money in an account.<sup>7</sup> These types of investments are harder to liquidate, and in general are less volatile because once companies have a direct investment they have more of an incentive to actually take advantage of the resources, establish market shares, and focus on more long term goals. For example, shortly before the Asian Financial Crisis, the American automobile corporation Ford Motors started a joint venture with China's Jiangling Motors Corporation; it was China's first attempt to expand beyond Europe.<sup>8</sup> Shortly thereafter, the Asian Financial Crisis threatened

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<sup>4</sup> Lardy, "China and the Asian Financial Contagion," 91

<sup>5</sup> Jeffrey Sachs and Wing Thye Woo. "Understanding the Asian Financial Crisis," in *The Asian Financial Crisis: Lessons for a Resilient Asia*, ed. Wing Thye Woo, Jeffrey Sachs, & Klaus Schwab (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 2000), 29.

<sup>6</sup> Lardy, "China and the Asian Financial Contagion," 91.

<sup>7</sup> Sachs & Woo, "Understanding the Asian Financial Crisis," 29.

the operation, but an article published in December of 1998 declared, "Ford Undaunted by Economic Crisis in Asia," and the vice-chairman of Ford was quoted saying, "we at Ford are looking beyond the short-term challenges by taking a long-term view to growing our business."<sup>9</sup> Ford Motors had made multiple direct investments into China in order to start this venture, mainly a \$300 million factory, and were in a position where they would face huge losses if they pulled out of Asia.<sup>10</sup> So they stayed, and many other major corporations in the same situation ultimately made the same choice, giving China's economy the ability resist the initial shock.

The third factor in China's resistance to the initial shock was that over 80% of China's foreign debt had a long maturity.<sup>11</sup> This was because China borrowed mostly from international organizations and foreign governments, whose investment horizons were more long-term than the typical businessperson's. This became especially important during the summer of 1997. Long term investors viewed the market shock as temporary, and therefore did not pull out all of their funds during the crisis because they believed that the economy would recover in the long run.<sup>12</sup> Surprisingly, in spite of the crisis, foreign capital continued to pour into China during 1997, albeit at a decelerating rate. According to Ligang Song, "total foreign capital utilization reached \$US62 billion for the whole year, up 13% over 1996... US\$43 billion was foreign direct investment."<sup>13</sup> This continued willingness of investors to put their money into China

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<sup>8</sup> "Ford Celebrates Production of 7 Millionth Transit Van; Tough, Versatile Workhorse to Be Sold in 118 Global Markets." *Ford Motor Company: News Center*. June 20, 2013 <http://corporate.ford.com/news-center/press-releases-detail/pr-ford-celebrates-production-of-7-38177>, (accessed November 10, 2013).

<sup>9</sup> Tsukasa Furukawa, "Ford Undaunted by Economic Crisis in Asia" *American Metal Market* 106, no. 233 (1998): 6, <http://trove.nla.gov.au/work/98834482?q=%22Jiangling+Motors%22&sortby=dateAsc&c=article&versionId=112197300> (accessed November 10, 2013).

<sup>10</sup> "Jiangling Motors venture is planned for Nanchang." *The Wall Street Journal Western Edition*. April 12, 1996 <http://trove.nla.gov.au/work/102358503?q=%22Jiangling+Motors%22&sortby=dateAsc&c=article&versionId=115741899>, (accessed November 10, 2013).

<sup>11</sup> Ligang Song, "China," in *East Asia in Crisis: From Being a Miracle to Needing One?* ed. Ross McLeod and Ross Garnaut (New York: Routledge, 1998), 106.

<sup>12</sup> Yanyun & Jingping, "China: A Giant with an Achilles Heel?" 145.

<sup>13</sup> Song, "China," 106.

during the crisis further increased China's economic stability, and served as a testament to international opinion that China would recover.

Another problem that the Chinese were able to avoid because of long-term debt was the issue of defaulting on major loans because lenders were not willing to roll-over the debt. Countries that were hit hardest by the financial crisis, such as South Korea, where 60% of the debt was short-term, were often pushed further down the path towards recession by lenders who refused to grant extensions on debt payments, forcing the country to default.<sup>14</sup> China did have some short-term debt, but it was a significantly smaller portion of their overall debt. The Chinese government was able to cover the loans that had to be paid off without seriously damaging the economy. Thus, the time factor of the debt that China did have increased their economic stability, and bought them the time that they needed to react to the crisis.

The fourth major factor that enabled China to resist the initial shock of the Asian Financial Crisis was that they had experienced a record trade surplus in the mid-1990s. This surplus led to the development of a federal reserve of about US\$140 billion by the end of 1997.<sup>15</sup> This was significant because China was not dependent on continued capital inflows to finance its trade deficit, and was able to smooth over those imbalances and stabilize the domestic economy in the face of the initial shock.<sup>16</sup> China was then able to take advantage of the devaluation of other South East Asian currencies by importing goods at a lower price from the countries affected.<sup>17</sup> These lower prices decreased their production costs and increased their profit from exports. Thus, Chinese exports increased by 13.2% during the first quarter of 1998 because, even as Asian countries were buying less, China was able to expand its trade to other continents.<sup>18</sup> Therefore, China's large Federal Reserve enabled the Chinese to stabilize their domestic economy by allowing them to continue to spend money, and even started a cycle of continued economic success that allowed them to maintain that federal reserve throughout the financial crisis.

The nature of China's currency and foreign debt, in addition to a large federal reserve, enabled the Chinese economy to resist the initial shock in the market during the summer of 1997. This was ultimately critical to China's long-term economic resiliency and their success at avoiding the brunt of the Asian Financial Crisis because China was able to

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<sup>14</sup> Lardy, "China and the Asian Financial Contagion," 92.

<sup>15</sup> Song, "China," 105.

<sup>16</sup> Lardy, "China and the Asian Financial Contagion," 92.

<sup>17</sup> Yanyun & Jingping, "China: A Giant with an Achilles Heel?" 143.

<sup>18</sup> Song, "China," 116.

maintain foreign and domestic consumer confidence. Continuing consumer confidence allowed for the continuation of international trade throughout the crisis.

The other major reason that China was resilient enough to avoid the brunt of the crisis was because the Chinese economy had already achieved a “soft landing” before the crisis started. The term “soft landing” refers to an economy attempting to avoid a recession by shifting from rapid growth to slow growth over a period of time. China’s leadership decided to take aggressive preemptive actions to achieve this soft landing because they had learned important lessons from the collapse of the Soviet Union, and because the situation in China allowed Chinese leadership to take necessary actions.

In December of 1991, China had watched along with the rest of the world as the Soviet Union was divided into fifteen separate countries. China learned important lessons from the collapse because there were important parallels between China and the Soviet Union in terms of both political and economic policies, and because the collapse of the Soviet Union drew China’s attention to the flaws within their own political and economic systems.

Chinese leadership learned several key lessons from the Soviet Union and made unpopular financial decisions because they understood them to be necessary. The first lesson was that efficiency is critical to the success of a government. The Chinese concluded that a combination of excessive bureaucracy and ideological dogmatism caused the economic stagnation of the Soviet Union in the years leading up to its collapse. Soviet bureaucrats were more focused on theory than on being responsive to the needs of their people, and this lack of focus prevented the Soviet leadership from making the reforms necessary for their economic survival.<sup>19</sup>

In response, the Chinese government emphasized the increased need for efficiency between 1993 and 1997 by denying “loss-making state-owned enterprises their accustomed allotments of credit, in order to force them to improve their efficiency.”<sup>20</sup> In 1995, the State Council initiated a policy that focused on closing down loss-making state owned enterprises, and over the next few years the number of state owned and controlled

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<sup>19</sup>Christopher Marsh. *Unparalleled Reforms: China’s Rise, Russia’s Fall, and the Interdependence of Transition* (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2005), 112.

<sup>20</sup>Sachs & Woo, “Understanding the Asian Financial Crisis,” 28.

enterprises fell by two-thirds.<sup>21</sup> This process of letting small enterprises that were not making a profit simply fail increased the incentives of those enterprises to maximize their efficiency and profits. In turn, this increase in efficiency enabled the Chinese economy to move towards a soft landing.

The other major change in monetary policy that the Chinese made was the devaluation of their currency in 1994. In the months before the collapse of the Soviet Union a lot of emphasis was placed on the devaluation of the ruble by massive percentages that threatened to, and ultimately did, destabilize the country. Two newspaper articles from 1989 and 1990 respectively, "Kremlin Plans to Sharply Devalue Its Currency: The ruble will lose 90% of its value in some transactions" and "Gorbachev Orders Ruble Devalued by 69%," strongly emphasized the negative effects of currency devaluation.<sup>22</sup> However, what Chinese leadership realized was that the devaluation itself was not harmful, "the real damage came from the depletion of foreign exchange reserves while trying to defend an overvalued currency."<sup>23</sup> So, instead of maintaining an overvalued currency for as long as possible, China's leadership elected to allow the currency to weaken before they spent their entire federal reserve, and lost international and domestic confidence, by trying to maintain the existing exchange rate. This decision allowed China to control inflation while still maintaining a small level of growth, a soft landing.

Chinese leaders were able to make the important changes that they recognized as necessary because China's central bank was powerful enough to be insulated from social and political forces, and because the government was powerful enough to propose reforms without endangering the regime.<sup>24</sup> China's leadership recognized the importance of insulating their major financial institutions from the whims of social and political

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<sup>21</sup> Xu Yi-chong, *The Political Economy of State-owned Enterprises in China and India* (Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), 5.

<sup>22</sup> Michael Parks, "Kremlin Plans to Sharply Devalue Its Currency: Soviet Union: The Ruble Will Lose 90% of Its Value in Some Transactions. Officials Hope to Curb the Black Market in Money." *Los Angeles Times*, October 26, 1989, [http://articles.latimes.com/1989-10-26/news/mn-855\\_1\\_soviet-union](http://articles.latimes.com/1989-10-26/news/mn-855_1_soviet-union) (accessed November 7, 2013); Michael Parks, "Gorbachev Orders Ruble Devalued By 69%: Economy: He Acts to Force Soviet Industry to Become More Productive and to Squeeze State Subsidies from Prices." *Los Angeles Times*, October 27, 1990, [http://articles.latimes.com/1990-10-27/news/mn-2885\\_1\\_soviet-union](http://articles.latimes.com/1990-10-27/news/mn-2885_1_soviet-union) (accessed November, 7 2013).

<sup>23</sup> Sachs & Woo, "Understanding the Asian Financial Crisis," 18.

<sup>24</sup> Gregory Noble and John Ravenhill. "Causes and Consequences of the Asian Financial Crisis," in *The Asian Financial Crisis*, ed. Gregory Noble and John Ravenhill (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 11.

forces. This allowed the central bank to make important financial and regulatory reforms such as controlling investment on state owned enterprises and the devaluation of currency without having to answer to the people who were negatively affected. The ability to put the long term interests of the country above the immediate interests of the people was critical to China's making the necessary reforms.

In order for China's leadership to propose controversial reforms, they had to feel confident enough in their own power that they could withstand some public disapproval. China's government felt safe proposing controversial reforms because since political leadership within the Chinese state were also the leaders of the party, China had more centralized leadership than they had experienced prior to the 1990s. Other countries were unable to make these important reforms because "their content threatened the regime's very existence" so that they were politically immobilized.<sup>25</sup>

Ultimately, these important reforms specifically targeted the inflation rate through tight credit policies, and allowed the Chinese economy to achieve a soft landing before the crisis. This was critical to China's ability to avoid the brunt of the 1997 Asian Financial Crisis because it stabilized the renminbi currency and reduced the risk of asset bubbles. The burst of real estate and stock market asset bubbles was a primary trigger for the currency devaluation and recession of other Asian countries during the crisis, most notably in Thailand and South Korea.<sup>26</sup> Thus, the combination of China's monetary and fiscal circumstances, which enabled them to resist the initial shock in the market, and the preemptive actions taken by leaders who were able to learn and implement important lessons learned from the collapse of the Soviet Union, enabled China to have strong economic resiliency in the face of an external factors. And that resiliency was the key to avoiding the economic hardship of the financial crisis in Asia.

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<sup>25</sup> Jackson, "Introduction: The Roots of the Crisis," 11.

<sup>26</sup> Michael R. King, "Who Triggered the Asian Financial Crisis?" *Review of International Political Economy* 8, no. 3 (Autumn 2001): 453.



# COLONIAL PHOTOGRAPHS AS AGENTS OF IMPERIAL HISTORY: FELICE BEATO AND THE AFTERMATH OF THE SEPOY REBELLION OF 1857

BY MCKENZIE QUINN

*A History major with a correlate in Art History at Vassar College, McKenzie Quinn was intrigued by the influence that photography had on the collective memory of the British after the Sepoy Rebellion of 1857. Having written her final research paper for a British Empire history class on the topic of Felice Beato's 19th-century colonial photography in India, she decided to explore how Beato's photographs functioned as active agents in the construction of an imperial history that ultimately perpetuated colonial systems of British superiority.*

*Images are constants, the ideas they legitimate take on different forms and values.<sup>1</sup>*

- Edward Said

In the mid 19<sup>th</sup>-century, photography was largely considered to be a mechanical process for recording information. However, during the Indian Sepoy rebellion of 1857, the British used the medium to promote imperial values and power structure through British military accomplishments. In 1858, following the first state-sanctioned archival photographic practice in India, the commercial Western photographer Felice Beato traveled to the colony to document the path of the British army during the rebellion. Due to his commercial function, Beato constructed his images to appeal to specific audiences and evoke specific interpretations. His subject matter reflected the evolving nature of photography as an interpretative, rather than merely documentary, representation of knowledge. Felice Beato's photographs became key interpretative agents of imperial history that represented a broader, positive, propagandistic narrative of the events of 1857 that satisfied the British public's interest. Beato was able to manipulate the immediate atmosphere of the rebellion's aftermath for a profit. The British imperial system used the publicized images to promote a pro-British colonial

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<sup>1</sup> Edward Said, quoted in Maria Antonella Pelizzari, ed., *Traces of India: Photography, Architecture, and the Politics of Representation, 1850 – 1900* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003), 88.

collective memory that characterized the Indian “other” or “rebel” as part of a vanishing, inferior race. These constructed images supported an imperial narrative of authority and expanded the visual framework through which history was received and internalized by the British public through photographic exhibitions.

In British colonial India, the Sepoy Rebellion of 1857 marked a watershed moment for how the Empire and colonial India were presented at home and abroad. Indian sepoys in the East India Company army initiated a rebellion that resulted in acts of extreme violence by both the sepoys and the British soldiers opposing them. The rebellion – known at the time in Britain by the emotionally charged and problematic term, *mutiny* – sparked interest and curiosity in the mind of the British public. The events of 1857 occurred during a period in history when artistic, photographic, and journalistic modes of representation intersected, and more of the public had access to textual and visual information. The public cherished narratives of British bravery and perseverance of the British against the threat of the Indian “mutiny.” In response, visual interpretations of the conflict were constructed following an imperial agenda that promoted a favorable view of the history of 1857.

Due to the challenges of transmitting information across the geographical divide between colonial India and Britain, initial reports of the May 10<sup>th</sup> insurrection did not reach the English press until July of 1857.<sup>2</sup> Within months of the outbreak of the rebellion, illustrated memoirs and historical narratives were published and disseminated to the public. Their purpose was to both inform and to influence the formation of a collective knowledge of the key military events and causes of the rebellion. Texts, such as the *Narrative of the Indian Revolt from its Outbreak to the Capture of Lucknow by Sir Colin Campbell*, were both journalistic and visually descriptive in function. In order to dramatize the geographical and cultural divide between Britain and India, the text paired a basic retelling of key events with nearly two hundred engravings from “authentic sketches.”<sup>3</sup> However, the engravings were created based on other drawings, thus becoming a sort of visual hearsay because there was a high degree of separation between the engravings and the actual events. Moreover, the images were not objective, but rather embellished with standardized stereotypes of Indian during the rebellion of 1857.

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<sup>2</sup> Vidya Dehejia, *India Through the Lens: Photography 1840-1911*, (Washington, D.C.: Freer Gallery of Art and Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, 2000), 120.

<sup>3</sup> George Vickers, *Narrative of the Indian Revolt from its Outbreak to the Capture of Lucknow by Sir Colin Campbell* (London: Strand, 1858), 1.



Unknown artist, *The Revolt at Meerut*, 1858

Due to the challenges of transmitting information across the geographical divide between colonial India and Britain, initial reports of the May 10<sup>th</sup> insurrection did not reach the English press until July of 1857.<sup>4</sup> Within months of the outbreak of the rebellion, illustrated memoirs and historical narratives were published and disseminated to the public. Their purpose was to both inform and to influence the formation of a collective knowledge of the key military events and causes of the rebellion. Texts, such as the *Narrative of the Indian Revolt from its Outbreak to the Capture of Lucknow by Sir Colin Campbell*, were both journalistic and

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In response to the events of 1857, the British government encouraged the use of photography to reconstruct and record key military engagements as part of a larger imperial agenda. The supposed accuracy and immediacy of 19<sup>th</sup>-century photography, in contrast to sketches or engravings, appealed more directly to the interests of the Empire. The British government saw photography as the ideal medium to expose the Indian world to the scrutiny of a Western lens in the present, and preserve the interpretation for the future. After 1857, colonial photography modified the visual representation of India. The object of photography in India changed as a result of the Rebellion. After the 1858, state-sanctioned initiative to document images of India, commercial photographers adapted to new subject matter and used their images to outline a military history of

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<sup>5</sup> Vickers, *Narrative of the Indian Revolt from its Outbreak to the Capture of Lucknow* by Sir Colin Campbell, 1.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, 4.

<sup>7</sup> Vickers, *Narrative of the Indian Revolt*, 12.

the events of the Sepoy Rebellion.<sup>8</sup> Colonial photography at once recorded and reproduced the brutality of history.<sup>9</sup>

Photography had the potential to memorialize and commemorate depictions of people and places during the rebellion through a relatively small degree of separation. The photographer could only influence the contents of the photograph by selecting scenes and posing subjects. Once the photograph was taken, everything seen by the lens was unalterably recorded, unlike engravings based on earlier drawings or sketches. Due to the practical requirements of the photographic process, including its long exposure times with nonmoving subjects and bulky apparatus, commercial photographers in 1857 were confined to recording the aftermath of conflict. Despite the nature of these obvious difficulties in the process, photographers still managed to portray the violence of warfare.<sup>10</sup>

While in India, Felice Beato retraced the path of the British military during the rebellion and concentrated his attention on the relationship between topographical and architectural scenes in photographs that would appeal to his principal market, the British military itself. Initially, the interests and needs of the British who experienced the violence of the rebellion firsthand largely determined Beato's choice and treatment of his subject matter.<sup>11</sup> Therefore, he focused on the three sites where British military and public interests were the most prevalent in the aftermath of 1857: Delhi, Kanpur, and Lucknow. Beato sold his work to soldiers as unmounted prints, which allowed the buyer to select a series of images to create a personal visual record.<sup>12</sup> The immediacy of his photographs for British military memory revealed the importance of war photography in reconstructing scenes that could be applied both directly to personal experiences, and to a broader historical narrative of conquest. Beato generally paired scenes of architectural ruins with carefully positioned Indian men in military uniform. These scenes implied total victory by showing images of destruction without the inclusion of British colonial figures. The narrative of defeat stemmed from the propagandistic

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<sup>8</sup> Maria Antonella Pelizzari, ed., *Traces of India: Photography, Architecture, and the Politics of Representation, 1850-1900* (Yale: Yale University Press, 2003), 221.

<sup>9</sup> Zahid R. Chaudhary, *Afterimage of Empire: Photography in Nineteenth-Century India* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2012), 80.

<sup>10</sup> James Ryan, *Picturing Empire: Photography and the Visualization of the British Empire* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1997), 76.

<sup>11</sup> Dehejia, *India Through the Lens: Photography 1840-1911*, 122.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, 123.

pairing of a destroyed physical world with the worn down morale of the Indian rebellion.



Beato, Felice. *The Barracks which General Sir Hugh Wheeler occupied, and where he was shot and killed near the broken pillar.* Lucknow, 1858.

Beato's construction of the aftermath of 1857 military engagements, both failed and victorious, suggested that an ultimate British victory resulted in the inaction and fading image of Indian resistance. In *General Wheeler's Entrenchment at Cawnpore* (Kanpur), Beato photographed the ruins of a British barracks in Kanpur where General Wheeler was defeated and had surrendered to Indian rebels.<sup>13</sup> This image showed a place where the British were not initially victorious and yet Beato did not include British figures in his emotive reconstruction of the scene. The photograph presented an image of the Indian "other," as they were in the flesh, not a likeness from the hand of an artist, giving them a demonstrable authenticity. The constructed elements of Beato's photograph suggested his ultimate artistic control over the presentation of

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<sup>13</sup> Dehejia, *India Through the Lens: Photography 1840-1911*, 133.

the subject, which allowed him to depict an Indian victory as a British triumph. The physical placement, posture, and colors of the Indian's military dress echoed the architectural structure and shadows of the dilapidated building. The Indians appeared to blend into the architectural structure and were, consequently, directly woven into a narrative of destruction. The Indians were literally, and figuratively, vanishing into a scene that ultimately suggested British conquest. The battle-scarred building is still, showing no sign of the activity that reduced it to its depicted state. Beato placed the Indians nonchalantly in front of their own victory, but their presence in front of the dilapidated building implied that the Indian subjects actively contributed to their self-destruction. Beato reconstructed this scene of an Indian accomplishment as a memorial object to be sold to and possessed by British soldiers. A viewer of the image in 1892 described,

the intense realism of the picture [that] defies description when we look at the charred barracks occupied by Sir H. Wheeler where he was mortally wounded, every crevice and hole produced by shot and shell telling of human suffering and despairing anguish in language too eloquent for words.<sup>14</sup>

The Indians became transparent, and the viewer looked past them to the wounded building that served as a vivid metaphor for the pain experienced by a British General. Beato's emotive photography succeeded in memorializing and commemorating a scene for British consumption that used architecture to carry narratives of victory and remembrance.

In Beato's photographs, buildings were key players in the history of the rebellion and became interpretative monuments to the violence that was carried out by and against the British. The association of sites with events was a common practice in the creation of monuments as memorials, and it was manifested in colonial photography as an "instrument of myth-making."<sup>15</sup> Beato used buildings as memorial sites of military engagements in order to structure his account of success, and these buildings became landmarks for British soldiers and civilians. On a larger imperial scale, Beato's subjects reflected one of the main interests of the British public regarding the rebellion, the city of Lucknow. A large

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<sup>14</sup> "Description and Handlist 1892," in the British Library, London, Vibart Collection: The Dannenberg Album, Text, Photo, 1, 245.

<sup>15</sup> Maria Antonella Pelizzari, ed., *Traces of India: Photography, Architecture, and the Politics of Representation, 1850-1900* (Yale: Yale University Press, 2003), 43.

number of his photographs focused on the city – in fact twenty-six of his Lucknow images were exhibited in 1858 by the Photographic Society of London. Lucknow was an especially important city in the minds of the British due to the violence committed against British men, women, and children during the five-month siege of Lucknow at the British Residency.<sup>16</sup> The popularity of Beato's images was attributed to his "striking and memorable" connection between the buildings of the "great and beautiful city" and the "chivalry of Havelock [the British General who recaptured Lucknow]."<sup>17</sup> From an impassioned British perspective, the relationship between the typified valor of British military leaders and the monumental buildings in the city emphasized the epic nature of the British victory.

The most notorious example of Beato's constructed narrative was his rendering of the aftermath of the British slaughter of two thousand rebels in Lucknow at the Secundrabad under Sir Colin Campbell.<sup>18</sup> The photograph showed the interior of the Secundrabad, which was a relatively small, walled pleasure garden on the eastern outskirts of Lucknow. Beato carefully positioned Indian figures across the scene where, on November 16<sup>th</sup> 1857, the British breached the wall and entered the garden. The Indians were depicted as statuesque, implying that these stoic figures could be easily overtaken. The only sense of movement came from the blurred outline of the horse. The remnants of destruction, evident in the building, reinforced this idea.

The image reconstructed the gruesome scene in the garden pavilion where the British slaughtered two thousand Indians. Beato explicitly referenced the scale and extremity of the attack in the image's caption, as he did in his arrangement of disinterred bones scattered about in the foreground. He used the interior ruins of the palace as the "theatrical backdrop of a funeral."<sup>19</sup> The empty, skeletal architecture was echoed in the fragmented bones littered throughout the foreground. However, the Western architecture stands, while the Indian skeletons are divided and dispersed. The photograph became a *vanitas* image because of

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<sup>16</sup> Alison Blunt, "Home and Empire: Photographs of British Families in the Lucknow Album, 1856-57," in *Picturing Place: Photography and the Geographical Imagination*, Joan M. Schwartz and James R. Ryan, ed., 243-260 (London: L.B. Tauris, 2003), 244.

<sup>17</sup> Hugh W. Diamond, *The Journal of the Photographic Society of London: Volume 5*. (London: Taylor and Francis, Red Lion Court, Fleet Street, 1859), 185.

<sup>18</sup> Dehejia, *India Through the Lens*, 146.

<sup>19</sup> Pelizzari, *Traces of India: Photography, Architecture, and the Politics of Representation, 1850-1900*, 43.

its explicit reference to the Indian's mortality. The four living Indians had the potential to command the scene as survivors, but Beato posed them in a picturesque manner that made them living ornaments to the scene. The figures' faces and gazes are indiscernible: they are denied individuality. Once again, Beato neglected to show the cause of the destruction. He chillingly juxtaposed a still, tranquil background with the aftermath of extreme violence in the foreground. Beato's decision to include the bones was calculated; the human remains were chaotically unearthed from their burial place on the site of the former battle specifically for the photograph.<sup>20</sup> The strong sense of British dominance and the cost of the rebellion on the Indians were emphasized in the relationship between the Western architecture and the display of the bones.

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<sup>20</sup> Pelizzari, *Traces of India*, 43.



Felice Beato, *Interior of the Secundra Bagh after the Slaughter of 2,000 Rebels by the 93<sup>rd</sup> Highlanders and 4<sup>th</sup> Punjab Regiment. First Attack of Sir Colin Campbell in November 1857, Lucknow. March or April 1858*

As a 19<sup>th</sup>-century commercial photographer engaging in colonial “war photography,” Felice Beato exploited the experiences of the Indians for the creation of a larger narrative of imperial control. As such, the causes for the rebellion were never addressed and the active, independent, and resistant behavior of the Indians who rebelled was completely divorced from the interpretation of events. His photographs developed from an idea of 19<sup>th</sup>-century photography as accurate and impartial. Photography was seen as a mechanical reproduction of facts and evidence

that lacked uniqueness and intellectual thought from the photographer.<sup>21</sup> But Beato's photographs were far from impartial. Beato creatively designed his photographs to validate and support of identifiable ideological positions.<sup>22</sup> Beato's topographical photos engaged the British viewer's memory and imagination, in the privacy of veterans' homes and the public display of the photographs at the exhibitions. In the aftermath of what was a violent colonial rebellion, the images were understood to be a narrative of a defeated India at the hands of the British.

In 1859, the British public understood Felice Beato's exhibited photographs of Lucknow to be indispensable for a lasting image of British imperial history. The journal of the Photographic Society of London directly acknowledged that in the 1858 exhibition,

[Beato's] admirable views give us, in fact, the pictorial romance of this terrible war. They are necessary, as our contemporaries say, to an understanding of the war now, and will be indispensable to future historians.<sup>23</sup>

The combination of words such as admiration, romance, and war were particularly revealing of Western conceptions of the rebellion and the long-term significance of Beato's photographs. The geographical and cultural distance between England and India lent an air of mystery and exoticism to the British public's interest in the rebellion and its aftermath. Beato's role as the photographer made him an interlocutor, of sorts, between the reconstruction of an imperial narrative and the British public awaiting its consumption. His camera became the witness to the outcome of a successful imperial campaign. The camera also took on a more violent role in the narrative. According to Samuel Bourne, another photographer in India, the camera, "though as suspicious perhaps in appearance, attained [its] object with less noise and smoke," than the gun.<sup>24</sup> The photographer possessed as much agency in determining the fate of the Indian in the imperial narrative as the soldier who aimed his gun at the rebels. Both

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<sup>21</sup> Doug Nickel, "The Camera and Other Drawing Machines," in *British Photography in the Nineteenth Century*, Mike Weaver, ed., 1-10, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 1-2.

<sup>22</sup> Dehejia, *India Through the Lens*, 127.

<sup>23</sup> Diamond, *The Journal of the Photographic Society of London: Volume 5*, 185.

<sup>24</sup> Samuel Bourne, "Photography in the East," *British Journal of Photography* 10 (1863): 208.

instruments were used to assert ultimate control over the Indian, but the camera had a more subtle effect.

The historical power of the camera was not lost on the British public.<sup>25</sup> The existence of the relatively new photographic society and the public's response reveals the changing role of photography in imperial history. As the quotation from the journal of the Photographic Society of London described, the historical importance of Beato's photographs and the publication itself are a testament to the changing significance of photography and photographic exhibitions. Exhibitions offered the British public the opportunity to directly engage with the photographs. Photographic exhibitions were advertised publicly through the media and the public was encouraged to visit the "beautiful" and "clearly executed" photographs on their own.<sup>26</sup> Government officials contended that the spectacular nature of exhibitions as a form of propaganda would mediate imperial and colonial identities through the photographs and last for generations, according to the review of the 1858 exhibition.<sup>27</sup> The photograph in itself did not provide a narrative but rather set the terms for the visual language of historical memory.<sup>28</sup> The value of Beato's photographs extended beyond the immediate desire of the British to understand the conflict, and served a much larger purpose by depicting Indians in the shadows of imperial victory.

Beato's images functioned as active agents in the development of collective memory. His work influenced the conceptions of historical narrative for both those directly affected by the events of 1857, and those who experienced the rebellion indirectly. His images were no longer considered documentary records, but rather interpretative tools for Empire. They had the capacity to provide the viewer with a closer and self-evidently more authentic connection than engravings or drawings could, especially when presented at exhibitions. Immediately following the 1857 Sepoy Rebellion, an act of resistance to the imperial structure in India, Felice Beato's photographs were used as propaganda to show the British people that there was nothing to fear. As Edward Said stated, images are

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<sup>25</sup> Ryan, *Picturing Empire: Photography and the Visualization of the British Empire*, 76.

<sup>26</sup> William Crookes, ed., *The Photographic News: A Weekly Record of the Progress of Photography, Volume I* (London: Cassell, Petter, and Galpin, 1859), 280.

<sup>27</sup> Peter H. Hoffenberg, *An Empire on Display: English, Indian, and Australian Exhibitions from the Crystal Palace to the Great War* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001), 3.

<sup>28</sup> Zahid R. Chaudhary, *Afterimage of Empire: Photography in Nineteenth-Century India*, 65.

constant; the image that was captured cannot be altered.<sup>29</sup> However, the ideas behind interpretations of Felice Beato's photographs revealed the power of imperial images to construct a particular historical narrative of victory.

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<sup>29</sup> Edward Said, quoted in Maria Antonella Pelizzari, ed., *Traces of India*, 88.



# PRE-REVOLUTIONARY NATIONALISM IN AMERICAN TAVERNS

BY MADELINE KANUKA

*Madeline is a third year Honors History Major and Political Science Minor at McGill University in Montreal, Canada. While taking a seminar on the history of coffeehouses and substances in Europe, she became interested in the unique public sphere that sprang up around beverages. A dual American/Canadian citizen focusing on American History in Canada, Madeline decided to look abroad and was intrigued to find out just how influential tavern culture had been in shaping an American identity and encouraging military mobilization before the American Revolution.*

Between its colonization in the late seventeenth century and the American Revolution in the late eighteenth century, New England had never wholly accepted a British nationalist identity. Further, the sociopolitical climate in the colonies differed greatly from post-revolutionary Americanism; the region had not yet become a community limited in its boundaries and sovereign from the monarchy.<sup>1</sup> This colonial period instead represents the genesis of American nationalist ideas. Philosopher and social anthropologist Ernest Gellner contends that “nationalism is not the awakening of nations to self-consciousness: it invents nations where they do not exist.”<sup>2</sup> American nationalism was developing well before the region’s political and territorial independence.<sup>3</sup> And this creation process has its roots in the colonial public sphere.

Taverns, or public houses, were crucial in fostering a nationalist identity because they were the most numerous public social institutions in the New England colonies.<sup>4</sup> Throughout the eighteenth century, the

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<sup>1</sup> Benedict R. O’G. Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 1991), 6-7. Anderson describes nations, or imagined communities, as limited and sovereign communities.

<sup>2</sup> Ernest Gellner, *Thought and Change* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1965), 169.

<sup>3</sup> Van Alstyne Richard Warner, *Genesis of American Nationalism* (Waltham, MA: Blaisdell Pub., 1970), 1.

<sup>4</sup> David W. Conroy, *In Public Houses: Drink & the Revolution of Authority in Colonial Massachusetts* (Chapel Hill, NC: Published for the Institute of Early

number of taverns multiplied. In 1693, Philadelphia had just twelve public houses, but by 1769 it had one hundred seventy eight.<sup>5</sup> One reason they expanded so rapidly was because they could be owned by both men and women from various economic backgrounds, and tavern doors were typically open to all.<sup>6</sup> This concept of taverns represents Benedict Anderson's notion of nationalism as a "fraternity of equals," because these institutions were inclusive to colonial citizens and respectable men were treated equally within them.<sup>7</sup> The tavern trade was unlike any other because it began as a profitable occupation that expanded its public and national influence to a much broader population.

Taverns represented colonial American civility. They were strictly regulated and hosted a variety of cultural activities in the public sphere. But aside from their many uses, taverns were sometimes considered controversial institutions because of their association with the immoralities of alcohol that could transgress Puritan values of moderation and conservatism.<sup>8</sup> To counteract this reputation, licenses were granted on a limited basis and the British regulated their services.<sup>9</sup> Any record of public disorder could disqualify someone from running a tavern. For example, friends of John Spring, a hopeful tavern owner from Philadelphia, testified that he had for "some time had kept a public house of entertainment," and would maintain "no disorderly house."<sup>10</sup> However because he had once sold alcoholic beverages without a license, he was prohibited from ever obtaining one. These background checks served to maintain the good repute that tavern-keepers had in their community. They were to be trusted and counted on to positively influence customer behavior and civic responsibility. Likewise, those who had the opportunity to regularly visit respectable taverns came to represent the type of behavior encouraged within them. Historian David S. Shields notes that "despite

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American History and Culture, Williamsburg, Virginia by the University of North Carolina Press, 1995), 2.

<sup>5</sup> Peter Thompson, *Rum Punch & Revolution: Taverngoing & Public Life in Eighteenth-Century Philadelphia* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1999), 27.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, 51.

<sup>7</sup> Anderson. *Imagined Communities; Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, 84.

<sup>8</sup> Thompson, *Rum Punch and Revolution; Taverngoing and Public Life in Eighteenth-Century Philadelphia*, 24.

<sup>9</sup> Thompson, *Rum Punch and Revolution; Taverngoing and Public Life in Eighteenth-Century Philadelphia*, 33.

<sup>10</sup> *John William Wallace Collection of Ancient Records of Philadelphia 1702-1847*, "Presentations of the Grand Inquest," Nov. 2, 1703.

the imposition of royal licensing...taverns remained [honorable] havens so long as they kept tolerable order.”<sup>11</sup> Therefore, many taverns represented and encouraged aspects of the early American identity centered on upholding public decency.

The tavern as a public space hosted an array of “civic activities,” including “auctions, plays, exhibitions, [and] governmental meetings,” according to historian David S. Shields.<sup>12</sup> They housed most colonial social congregations and were the nucleus for east coast cultural expansion. Considering their many uses and characteristics, taverns truly represented the emerging American identity and nationalism in colonial New England. For these reasons, they are historical symbols of early Americanism. Taverns in colonial America served a much greater purpose than serving drinks—they kindled the beginnings of American nationalism because of their role in commerce, social life, and political discussions.

### **COMMERCE AT THE TAVERNS**

Public houses first became significant for the American identity because of their impact on the economy. In fact, some were created for the sole purpose of becoming trade-hubs to avoid association with drunkenness. As an example, the Old London Coffeehouse was built in 1754 Philadelphia as the first New England tavern to serve this purpose. Its first floor sold alcoholic beverages, while the second floor was for gentlemanly conversation and monetary exchange without liquor.<sup>13</sup> This tavern was inspired by coffeehouses in England that were built with the intention of encouraging world trade, and it reflects the maturing American economy where trade was becoming more institutionalized in New England. As the number of similar taverns increased across expanding cities of the east coast, they created trade networks that began to structure a system for the domestic and international economy. This led to nationalistic growth, as the monetary connections between coffeehouses in different regions helped New England gain gradual independence from the British economy. Benedict Anderson argues that it is “well known and obviously of fundamental importance” that economic development in

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<sup>11</sup> David S. Shields, *Civil Tongues & Polite Letters in British America* (Chapel Hill, NC: Published for the Institute of Early American History and Culture, Williamsburg, Virginia by University of North Carolina Press, 1997), 18.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, 18.

<sup>13</sup> Thompson, *Rum Punch and Revolution; Taverngoing and Public Life in Eighteenth-Century Philadelphia*, 106-107.

colonies relates to the creation of nationhood.<sup>14</sup> Examining multiple types of coffeehouse commerce abroad and within New England regions reinforces this idea of growing nationalism in the colonies. In particular, taverns fostered international trade by supporting overseas trade discussions, a mail system, networking with merchants, and recruiting sailors. They also encouraged domestic trade by accommodating the sale of valuables such as real estate and slaves, and more affordable items such as household furniture. All of these economic examples help to explain how coffeehouses encouraged the growth of nationalism.

To begin with, taverns were essential for trans-Atlantic trade networking outside the colonies. New England taverns were similar to those in London because they housed trade deals and facilitated discussions between traders and partners abroad.<sup>15</sup> As an example, Spain was one key supplier to the colonies outside of the British realm and Spaniards commonly discussed trade in American taverns. Dr. Alexander Hamilton references the Spanish trade in his *Itinerarium* journal. While visiting the owner of what Hamilton believed to be “the best public house in the country” in South Kingstown, Rhode Island, Hamilton was told that “a large Spanish snow” brought “some prizes” and thirty thousand pounds of silver to Newport.<sup>16</sup> This entry signifies that the tavern-owner had specific knowledge of international commerce which he would not have had access to if he was not managing a public house on the New England coast. On a visit to another tavern, Hamilton met Spanish merchants who had sailed to New England for international trade purposes.<sup>17</sup> This demonstrates again how public houses were a common meeting place for the shipping community. The Spanish presence indicates that the colonies were becoming more influential in the world economy, and were not completely reliant on Britain’s imports and economic influence. In addition to accommodating trade discussions, New England taverns were central to the international post system. Letters that came from ships abroad were often sent directly to public houses. These taverns then worked as de facto post offices that even provided mailboxes for regular receivers.<sup>18</sup> Taverns helped establish New England as an independent

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<sup>14</sup> Anderson. *Imagined Communities; Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, 64.

<sup>15</sup> Shields, *Civil Tongues & Polite Letters in British America*, 60.

<sup>16</sup> Hamilton, Dr. Alexander. “Sugar Loaf,” *Itinerarium; DIE MERCURII TRIGESSIMO MENSIS MAII INCHOATUM ANNO MDCCXLIV* (1712-1756), 337.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, 506.

<sup>18</sup> Shields, *Civil Tongues & Polite Letters in British America*, 60.

player in the world economy, separate from British control, which was essential for the development of American nationalism.

Taverns on the eastern seaboard likewise operated as business centres for American merchants and ship captains.<sup>19</sup> Public houses accommodated negotiations regarding purchasing ships and filling them with cargo.<sup>20</sup> Roberts's Coffeehouse in Philadelphia, for example, hosted discussions regarding a ship called the *Dove*. People came to Roberts's if they wished to travel aboard, and merchants also came to decide which items would be transported on the *Dove*.<sup>21</sup> Taverns such as this one encouraged overseas mercantilism through its congregations. Additionally, taverns were important for recruiting sailors to protect trade on the New England coastline. A similar advertisement to that for the *Dove*, was for "All able-bodied seamen" to visit the King's-Head Tavern in Boston if they wished to sail on the "Privateer Ship Pownell" under Captain James Semple. This ship would defend the coast against "his Majesty's Enemies" in the international trade.<sup>22</sup> The article also advertised for a surgeon to meet at the tavern so that he could join the crew. Taverns were a meeting place for the brave sailors who wished to protect the colonial American economy or participate in trade voyages. The choice to defend the coastline represents Anderson's idea of patriotism and "self-sacrificing love" for one's territory that he argues is an essential aspect of nationalism.<sup>23</sup> From such public house meetings grew the idea of America as a member of the international economic community, contributing to a sense of shared identity. Reflecting their patriotism, crews would also celebrate in New England taverns when an expedition was completed, and could sign up for another while they drank.<sup>24</sup> Taverns in colonial America were thus central to the expansion of international trade and the development of nationalism tied to economic interests.

Taverns were also central to the domestic economy; this was perhaps of greater significance than international trade in regards to developing an exclusively American identity. Both urban and rural environments participated in local commerce. Taverns were used for the

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<sup>19</sup> Shields, *Civil Tongues & Polite Letters in British America*, 60.

<sup>20</sup> Thompson, "'The Friendly Glass': Drink and Gentility in Colonial Philadelphia," 569.

<sup>21</sup> *Mercury* (June 13, 1727).

<sup>22</sup> *Boston Post-Boy*, issue 52. (August 14, 1758).

<sup>23</sup> Anderson, *Imagined Communities; Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, 141.

<sup>24</sup> Thompson, *Rum Punch and Revolution; Taverngoing and Public Life in Eighteenth-Century Philadelphia*, 80.

sale of highly valuable commodities, slaves, and household items. Colonial newspaper classifieds contained innumerable advertisements for valuable commodities available at the nearest tavern, including the sales of ships and ships' parts and real estate transactions. In 1714, for example, contents of the ship *Hanover*, including its hull and inventory, were being sold at the Crown Coffeehouse in Boston.<sup>25</sup> Ship sales at taverns encouraged the domestic market for such a pricy commodity rather than promoting foreign purchases. New England merchants could choose not to purchase one of its colonizer's most expensive exports and could instead contribute to the economic success that strengthened national cohesiveness of pre-revolutionary America. In addition to ships, land and real estate were also sold at public houses. A 1739 issue of the *American Weekly Mercury* contained advertisements for multiple properties to be sold at a Philadelphia tavern. This real estate sale included two houses, four waterfront lots, a plantation, and a few "Tracks of Lands" that varied from 300 to 1250 acres.<sup>26</sup> Like the ship, these sales were of great value in the American economy, and they exemplify how tavern culture encouraged American real estate investment. This support for domestic trade strengthened the economy, which became an essential part of American nationalism.

Another way that public houses supported the emerging economy was through the domestic slave trade. For example, a 1739 issue of the *New-England Weekly Journal* advertised the sale outside a tavern of "a likely Negro Boy about 16 year[s] of age that has been in the country some years."<sup>27</sup> Such advertisements, and others in the *New-York Mercury*, were extremely common and drew many potential slave owners to taverns.<sup>28</sup> The Old London Coffee House in Philadelphia, located in a bustling public square (see image below), provides an interesting example of the prominence of the tavern slave trade because it had a slave-trading block outside of its entrance.<sup>29</sup> Taverns were essential to slave trading in the northeastern colonies, which encouraged an active domestic economy. This exchange at public houses also foreshadowed the significance of slavery in post-colonial American everyday life.

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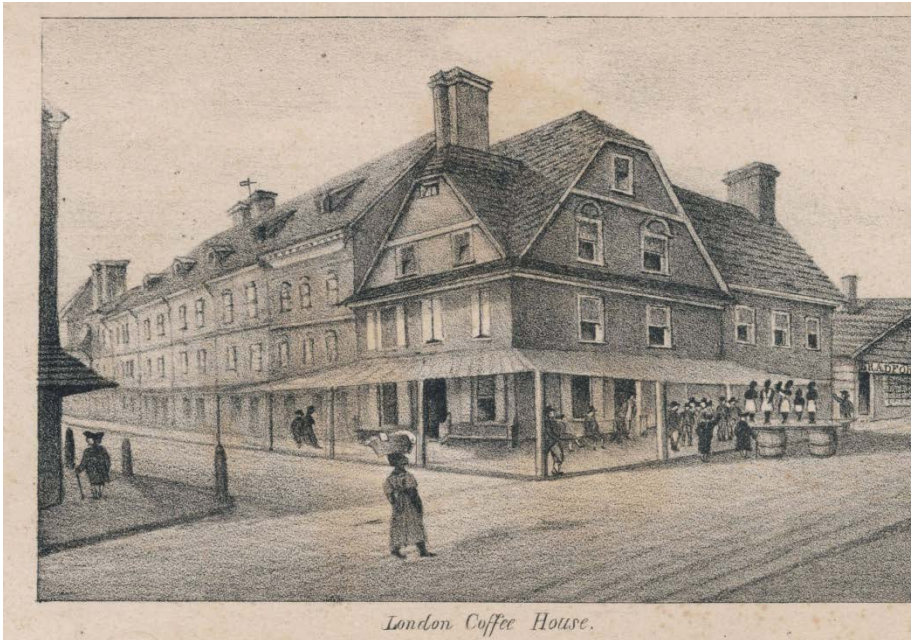
<sup>25</sup> *Boston News-Letter*, issue. 545. (September 1714).

<sup>26</sup> *American Weekly Mercury*, 3., issue. 1020 (July 19, 1739).

<sup>27</sup> *New-England Weekly Journal*, 2. Issue 644 (August 21, 1739).

<sup>28</sup> *New York Mercury*, 4. Issue 373 (New York, October 8, 1759). This is one of countless advertisements for slaves found on the archive of Early American Newspapers, Series I, 1690-1876, Readex.

<sup>29</sup> *Library Company of Philadelphia Print Dept. BW – Hotels, Inns, Taverns* [9245. Q.20], Online Digital Collections



*Old London Coffee House, Philadelphia, PA with slave-trading block*

Besides slaves, more affordable commodities such as furniture and utensils for one's household could also be purchased at colonial American taverns. The same 1739 advertisement in *New-England Weekly Journal* that listed the sale of a slave also marketed various items for the home: utensils, chairs, tables, a chest of drawers, and a copper kettle.<sup>30</sup> Given the variety of goods sold at public houses, the tavern trade was significant to the American economy. This exchange also provided a base for a national identity to develop by assembling and bonding the community, exemplified especially at tavern auctions. Auctions encouraged crowds of people to gather for the excitement of sales even if they could not afford them.<sup>31</sup> Sales at taverns therefore promoted both early American capitalism and community bonds.

In summary, taverns in New England served to promote international and domestic trade, which encouraged the colonies to mature economically. This market expansion through tavern sales lessened the need for British influence and encouraged the growth of a national identity.

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<sup>30</sup> *New-England Weekly Journal*, 2. Issue 644 (August 21, 1739).

<sup>31</sup> Thompson, *Rum Punch and Revolution; Taverngoing and Public Life in Eighteenth-Century Philadelphia*, 80.

## SOCIAL LIFE IN PUBLIC HOUSES

Taverns were at the centre of the developing colonial social sphere. Coinciding with German philosopher Jürgen Habermas's definition of the public sphere, New England taverns were nonexclusive social realms that almost always guaranteed freedom of speech, assembly, and association.<sup>32</sup> Taverns brought together citizens of varying backgrounds – housing social organizations, facilitating the transmission of knowledge and opinions, and providing a venue for entertainment. All of these human interactions helped shape societal norms distinctive to New England that would eventually make up an integral part of an American identity.

Eighteenth century New England social organizations often congregated at taverns. These groups were significant because they provided Americans the liberty to choose whom they associated with and what they spoke about. This also foreshadowed key components of American constitutional rights that were established after the Revolution. Although clubs that flourished in New England by meeting at public houses were generally inclusive, the exclusive ones were still founded on values of community that were necessary for to catalyze national sentiments. An example is the Sea Captain's Club, which was "perhaps Philadelphia's most selective organization," according to historian William Bell Clark. This club was established in the later eighteenth century to provide financial aid to American voyagers who were affected by shipwrecks or other disasters at sea. Welfare money was obtained through admission fees, dues, donations, and some outside assistance.<sup>33</sup> The organization was first discussed at Elizabeth Gray's tavern in Pennsylvania. It was there that officers were chosen and articles were agreed upon. When the organization was launched, members celebrated in the taproom.<sup>34</sup> Their subsequent congregations continued to take place in taverns until the club ended in the twentieth century. The continual use of the tavern with its relaxed atmosphere signifies its practicality for a social venue in colonial times. As the tavern public sphere expanded, it became a hub for sharing nationalist ideas.

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<sup>32</sup> Jürgen Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1989), 49-55.

<sup>33</sup> William Bell Clark, "The Sea Captains Club," (Philadelphia: Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography, 1953), 39.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, 41.

Similar to how the Sea Captain's Club celebrated its founding in Elizabeth Gray's taproom, other societies used tavern space for their festivities. The Society of Ancient Britons performed a grand celebration at Philadelphia's Indian King tavern on St. David's Day in 1732. They came with elaborate feather hats, went to St. Clement's Church, and returned to the tavern with the governor for an evening of "mirth and fellowship."<sup>35</sup> This tavern was ideal to The Ancient Britons because of its location, sufficient utensils, ample table space, and fashionable aesthetics. The tavern, like most others, was a practical and affordable meeting place for the club.<sup>36</sup> The Indian King and many other taverns accommodated club revelries, which became a part of early American culture. Philadelphia had a multitude of other clubs that met regularly at taverns; these include fishing companies, ethnic associations, a philosophical society, and the Governor's Club. Public houses were important because even the smallest of clubs could gather there and sit amongst other paying customers without needing a clubhouse.<sup>37</sup> Unlike many public houses in Britain at the time that were exclusive to intellectuals and wealthy gentlemen, the social institutions that blossomed within early American taverns allowed New Englanders to choose whom they identified with in the public sphere. This freedom of association became an important attribute of what Americans would include in their national identity.

Secondly, information and knowledge sharing was also a significant aspect of socialization in American taverns. Far from simply being places to drink, taverns encouraged education. For example, the London Coffee House sold raffle tickets in 1758 to raise funds for the College and Academy of Philadelphia.<sup>38</sup> Furthermore, education often took place within the taverns themselves. Reverend Louis Rowe, in his book *A Prospect of Chess-Play and Chess-Players, at the Coffee House New York* explores the interaction of "politicians, church musicians, ministers, lawyers, ship captains, and school masters" congregating to play "the most challenging of intellectual games."<sup>39</sup> Brought together in a tavern to stimulate their minds, the colonists were exposed to different perspectives. This intermingling of thought and knowledge in early America helped shape a nationalist identity.

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<sup>35</sup> *Mercury* (Mar. 7, 1732).

<sup>36</sup> Thompson, *Rum Punch and Revolution; Taverngoing and Public Life in Eighteenth-Century Philadelphia*, 63.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, 84-85.

<sup>38</sup> *The Pennsylvania Gazette*, 1., issue 1521 (Philadelphia, February 16, 1758).

<sup>39</sup> Shields, 61.

Education was promoted in many other forms in colonial American taverns. Like British coffeehouses, American public houses were sometimes known as “penny universities” that encouraged scholarly writings, political letters, philosophy, and news. Anderson calls these forms of art, “cultural products of nationalism.”<sup>40</sup> Some American writers even gained their readership through tavern culture. John Cotton, the author of “History of Bacon’s and Ingram’s Rebellion” in the 1680s, shared his work to tavern customers which helped him gain recognition as an early American writer.<sup>41</sup> He likely would not have been able to share his works as widely had he not visited public houses regularly. Poets also benefited from this social space. The poet Henry Brooke enjoyed writing in the company of others while in colonial public houses; of his thirty-five existing works, twelve were written in the “writ of company” in coffeehouses and taverns.<sup>42</sup> His choice of writing location among diverse people groups is reflected in his witty and spontaneous writing style that likewise represents the freedom of expression New Englanders upheld in early nationalist thought. In his poem, “A Discourse upon Je’sting attempted in the way of Horace,” he makes light of non-intellectual conversations in taverns and coffeehouses. In conclusion, Brooke wrote,

Dare to be Wise, let je’sts be Firmins Fame [a colonial punster]; Erect your Mind; persue a nobler aime;  
In short be your own Contrary: – and then,  
You’l know what’s to be Man, and how to live with Men.<sup>43</sup>

Brooke’s poem suggests that men who came to speak in public houses must be attentive to what they hear and say, not taking at face value all claims made. This concept was unlike the exclusive atmosphere of many British taverns that catered to the most respectable men. The inclusiveness of early American public houses contributed to democratic ideals that were unique to the young region. Regardless of the value of what was being transmitted, colonists were coming together in the public sphere, sharing information and ideas, and developing a shared identity.

Finally, American nationalism grew from a unique entertainment culture. Similar to the social aspects of congregating organizations and the public sharing of knowledge, taverns became places of amusement and

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<sup>40</sup> Anderson. *Imagined Communities; Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, 141.

<sup>41</sup> Shields, 60.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, 65-68.

<sup>43</sup> *MS Collection, Commonplace Book, Peters Collection, Historical Society of Pennsylvania.*

vice. Historian Peter Thompson suggests, “[T]averns housed a distinctive kind of sociability—one that, for better or worse, exerted an influence beyond its immediate setting.”<sup>44</sup> Visits to taverns were often respectable, but sometimes they were associated with sin and immorality. The entertainment culture that taverns promoted was most controversial in comparison to other social uses of public houses. Benjamin Franklin and William Penn believed that taverns encouraged a slight increase of prostitution, gambling, and excessive drinking, but they also believed these vices would exist without taverns. However, because these ills became associated with tavern culture, public houses were continuously blamed for societal problems in American history. As a generalization, tavern-goers had a tendency to disregard some orthodox values while inside public house walls.<sup>45</sup> This was largely due to heavy drinking in the midst of early American music and gambling.<sup>46</sup>

Music was one of the most popular entertaining practices in taverns. It was just as welcoming to people of different backgrounds and classes as it could be provocative in terms of the behavior it could promote.<sup>47</sup> The music played in taverns reflected the ideal of freedom of expression. An example of this concept is alluded to in a journal entry by Lutheran minister Henry Melchior Muhlenberg after listening to songs in a New Jersey tavern. He wrote,

The English people have a kind of song which is set to melodic music and describe all sorts of hero[e]s and feats of arms on land and sea. Respectable people sing them as a pastime and regard it as a serious invasion of their liberty if one protests against these songs, etc. Now if one rebukes them on account of their amorous songs, they believe that they can justify themselves by referring to these songs about heroes.<sup>48</sup>

Muhlenberg suggests that tavern songs have a tendency to be vulgar through their “amorous” nature that is encouraged through drinking. However, the songs are patriotic because they can represent “liberty,” as

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<sup>44</sup> Peter Thompson, *Rum Punch and Revolution; Taverngoing and Public Life in Eighteenth-Century Philadelphia*, 3.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, 10.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, 3.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, 97.

<sup>48</sup> Theodore G. Tappert and John Doberstein, eds., *The Journals of the Rev. Henry Melchior Muhlenberg*, 3 Vols. (Evansville, Ind: Lutheran Historical Society, 1982).

he mentions. This passage supports the idea that music in taverns had an impact on American nationalist sentiment. It brought men together, and they gained kinship through a song. However, the pairing of music and alcohol in taverns, which was intended for social interaction, could sometimes lead to discomfort for other customers. For example, the Quaker Mr. Ashbridge took his wife to a Philadelphia tavern where his peers began to play music. Mrs. Ashbridge did not want to dance, but her husband, who had been drinking, pressured her to do so and she began to cry. "He pluck[e]d me round the room til tears affected my eyes, at sight whereof the musician stop[p]ed and said, 'I'll play no more, let your wife alone.'"<sup>49</sup> This passage portrays Mr. Ashbridge as aggressive in nature while under the influence of alcohol. However, bystanders in the tavern still proved to be courteous while defending the woman's choice to not dance. Despite the rowdiness, there was still a code of respectability that was upheld in some colonial taverns.

Gambling was another significant social activity that influenced early American identity. Gambling was a much more controversial undertaking than other forms of socialization in colonial American taverns because it generally had negative impact in the public sphere. Gambling, or "gaming," in eighteenth century taverns began to be regulated and sometimes banned altogether. For example, Virginia passed a 1705 law that forbade gambling on Sundays. Then in the 1740s, Virginia laws disallowed all games at taverns that involved cards or dice. Over the century, laws went through phases of banning games, and then allowing them to be played again. This was the case with billiards and checkers, for example.<sup>50</sup> These laws against gambling in taverns were specific to the New England colonies. On the other hand, breaking these laws against gambling represented the culture of rebellion that was emerging in America before the Revolution. For example, gambling culture thrived in eighteenth century Philadelphia in the form of betting on cockfights and horseraces. The White Horse tavern had become "the unofficial headquarters of the horse-racing community," and the gambling culture became so prominent there that Sassafras Street, where the tavern was

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<sup>49</sup> Daniel B. Shea, ed., "Some account of the Fore Part of the Life of Elizabeth Ashbridge," in *Journeys in New Worlds: Early American Narratives*, ed. William L. Andrews (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1990), 162.

<sup>50</sup> Paton Yoder. "Tavern Regulation In Virginia: Rationale and Reality." *Property Rights in the Colonial Era and Early Republic*. Ed. James W. Ely. (Taylor & Francis, 1997). 403-23.

located, was renamed “Race Street.”<sup>51</sup> Some taverns promoted the gambling culture, despite laws against it. The creation and breaking of laws against gambling in colonial American taverns represents experimentation with more Puritanical attempts at regulating behavior through law and the tendency of colonists to challenge laws they disagreed with during the time period. Gambling, and music, also became central to the culture of American entertainment.

Taverns served as a physical space for social interactions, allowing Americans to discuss knowledge and opinions, participate in social organizations, as well as develop a culture of entertainment. These became important aspects of a distinctive American culture.

### **POLITICAL DISCOURSE IN PUBLIC HOUSES**

Beyond their impact on commerce and on the colonists’ social lives, taverns contributed most to the emergence of American nationalism before the Revolution by serving as sites of political discourse. For townsmen and travelers, taverns were the simplest place in the colonial public sphere to disseminate political ideas. In this regard, historian Peter Thompson compares taverns to a “public stage,” where “colonists resisted, initiated, and addressed changes in their society,” and in doing so, “redefined their relationships with figures of authority.”<sup>52</sup> Therefore, taverns allowed new political ideas to flourish and significantly helped to foster organized opposition to British authorities. Political tavern-discussions saw the emergence of various ideas about the government that differed from British rule, and taverns became the proving ground for enduring revolutionary ideas.

Taverns encouraged freedom of speech within a society where political ideas were being developed in response to the orthodox British monarchical perspectives. Historian David W. Conroy contends that tavern assemblies were essential because they encouraged criticism of the government, drawing opinions from men of varying class and rank who were more at ease, as “the consumption of drink could... relax inhibitions and open up dialogue and debate among free white males without endangering in any immediate sense their authority over women and slaves, ordinarily not present at taverns.”<sup>53</sup> It is of no surprise that

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<sup>51</sup> Thompson, *Rum Punch and Revolution; Taverngoing and Public Life in Eighteenth-Century Philadelphia*, 102.

<sup>52</sup> Thompson, *Rum Punch and Revolution*, 12.

<sup>53</sup> David W. Conroy. *In Public Houses; Drink and Revolution of Authority in Colonial Massachusetts*, 169., and Gary B. Nash, *The Urban Crucible; Social*

grassroots American political discussion began in the tolerant public house environment. Often times, tavern keepers encouraged political discourse, and more than twenty-three of the three hundred fifty-five Sons of Liberty had tavern licenses before the American Revolution began. They understood how easily radical ideas could be shared within taverns, and strategically used them as political tools. They knew ideas would travel far outside their tavern walls.<sup>54</sup> Many tavern keepers, such as the Sons of Liberty, encouraged nascent American nationalism through free political discourse. A 1765 sketch from the Library Company of Philadelphia depicts the exchange of political ideas in taverns. In this picture, three men sit at a round table drinking beer and voice their support for the “Old Ticket.” A young slave on the right-hand side of the sketch states his accord, while the devil is depicted on the left-hand side of the sketch waving goodbye the men and stating “These fellows are too honest for me.” He supports the Presbyterian New Ticket for “McMurder” instead (see image below).<sup>55</sup> This sketch would have been political propaganda to encourage the beginnings of electoral partisanship in colonial New England. This support for civic participation and political affiliation was an important part of emerging nationalism in America.

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*Change, Political Consciousness, and the Origins of the American Revolution*, (Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1979), 186.

<sup>54</sup> Conroy. *In Public Houses; Drink and Revolution of Authority in Colonial Massachusetts*, 256.

<sup>55</sup> *A New Song Suitable to the Season, to the Tune of “Good English Beer.”* Broadside Ballad. Library Company of Philadelphia (Philadelphia, 1765)., and Peter Thompson, *Rum Punch and Revolution; Taverngoing and Public Life in Eighteenth-Century Philadelphia*, 140.



1765 political cartoon

The significance of taverns in politics is evident in the journals of Alexander Hamilton and Benjamin Franklin; two of America's most politically active Founding Fathers. Public houses are mentioned on over sixty occasions in Alexander Hamilton's *Itinerarium*, a travel journal he kept between the years 1712 and 1756. On one visit to a New York tavern, Hamilton remarks how he had met "some rattling fellows playing backgammon," along with "some deeper headed politicians at the game of chess." When leaving the tavern, he intended to meet with a friend Mr. Bourdillon to "chat snuggly," perhaps about his experience at the tavern. Admitting to meeting politicians, he concludes the entry with an allusion to an intellectual conversation he had with Mr. Bourdiollon (with whom he returned home as would "two philosophers").<sup>56</sup> Hamilton's *Itinerarium* is full of references to him visiting, dining at, and even lodging in various taverns across cities and the New England countryside.<sup>57</sup> He likely spread

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<sup>56</sup> Dr. Alexander Hamilton. *Itinerarium*; *DIE MERCURII TRIGESSIMO MENSIS MAII INCHOATUM ANNO MDCCXLIV* (1712-1756), 579.

<sup>57</sup> Hamilton, Dr. Alexander. "Sugar Loaf," *Itinerarium*; *DIE MERCURII TRIGESSIMO MENSIS MAII INCHOATUM ANNO MDCCXLIV* (1712-1756), 501-506. In this entry, Hamilton mentions how he was warmly welcomed to spend multiple nights at the Whitehall "publick house" while travelling through the New England countryside.

various political ideas across the region, as others carried them to more taverns. Similar to Alexander Hamilton, the Founding Father Benjamin Franklin mentioned taverns frequently throughout his writing. On one instance in his autobiography, Franklin wrote that he had met with a group of Quakers at a tavern for political objectives. He wrote, “they were determin’d to come and vote... if there should be an occasion.” Franklin then assisted eight of these Quakers in voting outside the tavern.<sup>58</sup> This passage is a clear example of how Franklin encouraged political activism in taverns by directly leading these Quakers from a tavern to where they could vote.

Lastly, and most significant to the development of American nationalism, was the blatant revolutionary and anti-monarchical dialogue fostered in eighteenth century taverns that continued throughout the American Revolution. Anti-British activism within taverns began when citizens disregarded laws specific to that public space. What began with disobeying gambling laws extended to disregarding other laws, such as establishing public houses without licenses. This was a way to actively and successfully resist British monarchical laws and encourage American nationalism.<sup>59</sup> Elisha Cooke was perhaps the leading figure in active political movements that began in public houses. Cooke established the Boston Caucus group that regularly met at taverns and secretly spread anti-British sentiment to transform American politics. Some historians debate the influence of the Caucus, and sometimes even its existence, because little was written about it before 1740 due to its secrecy.<sup>60</sup> Regardless, the organization seems to have converted political tavern-talk into mobilized political action. Thus, the Boston Caucus served as a catalyst for American nationalist thought. Historian David W. Conroy argues that Cooke was likely the reason for some of the drastic changes that occurred in Massachusetts voting patterns in the 1690s. In 1698, more votes were submitted in the Boston town election than there were taxpayers, and Cooke was accused of vote fraud. He and the Caucus were active mobilizers in taverns and had been gaining votes through bribery. In the 1720s, for example, he spent about nine thousand pounds worth of sterling on alcohol to distribute in exchange for votes.<sup>61</sup> Cooke also gained voter partisanship by increasing tavern licenses in Boston. This meant that

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<sup>58</sup> Benjamin Franklin. *Autobiography, Part 12*. Franklinpapers.org

<sup>59</sup> Conroy. *In Public Houses; Drink and Revolution of Authority in Colonial Massachusetts*, 158.

<sup>60</sup> Conroy. *In Public Houses; Drink and Revolution of Authority in Colonial Massachusetts*, 169.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*, 169., and Nash, *The Urban Crucible*, 87.

alcohol would be less expensive, more taverns would host political discussions, and tavern-goers would boast positively of Cooke while enjoying their beverages.<sup>62</sup> Cooke's political endeavours thrived due to his strategic use of Boston taverns, and his example testifies to evolving American nationalism in tavern political culture.

Another significant anti-monarchical aspect of early American taverns was the consumption of non-alcoholic beverages, specifically coffee. Coffee was promoted in the later eighteenth century to contribute to the success of the British East India Company tea boycott. For this reason, historian William G. Clarence-Smith calls coffee a "revolutionary beverage."<sup>63</sup> Taverns promoted the boycott through the popularization of coffee as a substitute good within public houses, and coffeehouses helps to explain how the revolutionary Boston Tea Party of 1773 gained mass support before the American Revolution.<sup>64</sup> The prominence of coffee in taverns is another reason why these institutions became the headquarters of American nationalism. They outwardly promoted an American identity.

Aside from to economic and social aspects of New England public houses, American nationalism expanded most significantly through the political discourse that brewed within them. In the public social sphere, citizens could assemble with varying political ideas and begin to share radical and anti-monarchical sentiments that led to political activism and foreshadowed the American Revolution.

## CONCLUSION

Taverns, or public houses, in colonial New England contributed to the genesis of American nationalism because of their usage for distinctive economic, social, and political change. Taverns were central to America's networking in the international economy, and promoted the growth of domestic trade. They were also institutions that encouraged expanding knowledge, art, and entertainment in American social culture. In addition, taverns were the place where seeds of the American Revolution were planted. New England eventually developed a distinctive national identity from the British with the help of the taverns established there. For this reason, they remain historic monuments on the northeastern coast.

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<sup>62</sup> Conroy. *In Public Houses; Drink and Revolution of Authority in Colonial Massachusetts*, 172.

<sup>63</sup> William Clarence-Smith. 'The global consumption of hot beverages, c. 1500 to c. 1900.' In: Nützenadel, Alexander and Trentmann, Frank, (eds.), *Food and globalization: consumption, markets and politics in the modern world*. (Oxford: Berg,) 46.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*, 46.

To broaden their significance into a later period, taverns continued to operate during the American Revolution for the reasons previously discussed, but most notably for their political uses. Some taverns exclusively served Loyalists and boarded their soldiers, while some only served patriots and encouraged their mobilization. Pamphlets were distributed in taverns, and spies were sent to them for investigations. They became small, yet highly significant headquarters for a dividing America.<sup>65</sup>

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<sup>65</sup> Benjamin L Carp. *Rebels Rising: Cities and the American Revolution*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 2007

# THE CLEAN CAMPAIGNS: TROPICAL MEDICINE AND THE BRITISH ARMY DURING WORLD WAR ONE

BY KATHLEEN LYNCH

*Kathleen Lynch received her Bachelor of Arts in History (Honors) from the University of Connecticut in May 2013. She concentrated on European history during the twentieth century. She chose this particular topic for her thesis because, as a history and anthropology major with a minor in biology, she was very interested in studying the intersections between empire, medicine, and cultural ideas of health. She found that while historians have extensively studied British use of tropical medicine during the colonial period, as well as medical advancements during WWI, there has not been much research done on the role tropical medicine played on the non-western fronts of the war; in other words, how the colonial dynamic affected military medicine at this time. Her research sought to fill this gap in the existing historiography.*

## INTRODUCTION

Moving in silence, the great army of sanitation, with a general staff and leaders of all lands and languages, claims allegiance only to Humanity. In war it has often not fought winning campaigns, but the new knowledge is full of such promise that even the vanquished may be victors.

—*Sir William Osler, 1914*

On 14 September 1915, Sir Ian Hamilton, Commander of the British Mediterranean Expeditionary Force at Gallipoli, grumbled that “Armageddon is being fought *here*, at the Dardenelles, and the British outlook is focused on France. We are to sit here and rot away with cholera... while they [in the West] are healthy—while time is on their side.”<sup>1</sup> Many of the decisive battles of the Great War were fought on the fields of Europe, and produced staggering levels of casualties.<sup>2</sup> Yet deployment to the non-Western fronts of World War One presented unique and pressing challenges for the health of British troops. As combat

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<sup>1</sup> Sir Ian Hamilton, *Gallipoli Diary, volume 2* (1920), 183.

<sup>2</sup> In this thesis, World War One will also be referred to as the Great War.

expanded to colonial territories, many British soldiers were forced to adapt to environments wholly unfamiliar to them. Troops composed of colonial subjects were also sent to a variety of different fronts to supplement the British forces stationed there, and did not always serve within or near their native territories. Not only were the bodies of European and colonial troops subjected to the physical and psychological traumas of warfare—i.e. bullet and shrapnel wounds, poisonous gas, and shell shock—but they were also forced to adjust to unfamiliar climates and diseases. One cannot underestimate how devastating an effect this had on British armies. According to British physician W.J.R. Simpson writing in 1918, in seven months at Gallipoli in 1915 over 96,000 British troops had to be removed from the area due to severe illnesses.<sup>3</sup> This figure, Simpson added, did not include those who remained at Gallipoli despite being ill.<sup>4</sup> In contrast, Simpson noted that “the total number of sick in the Boer War for the 2 ½ years of conflict was 63,644. [And] It has always been held that the sickness in the Boer War was abnormal.”<sup>5</sup> While it is true that by 1914 the British Army was no stranger to engaging in conflicts abroad, the number of soldiers falling ill in the Great War’s theaters of conflict was unprecedented.

This was not the first time the British had fought large-scale conflicts in a dramatically alien environment. British military experiences in both the Crimean War and the Anglo-Boer War laid a foundation for the British Army to develop a strategy to protect the health of their troops during World War One. During the Crimean War (1853-1856) the British military had to devise ways to protect the health of their troops in the Eastern Mediterranean and Caucasus regions. In 1855, the British government established the Sanitary Commission, a body independent of the military, to inspect the conditions of the soldiers’ camps in Crimea and recommend improvements. The published report judged the sanitary conditions of the camps to be “deplorable” and found “gross incompetence” on the part of the British High Command, creating a public scandal.<sup>6</sup> However, charges were never brought against these officers; sanitary measures were important enough to be investigated, yet not so

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<sup>3</sup> W.J.R. Simpson, “Sanitary Aspects of Warfare in South-Eastern Europe” *Transactions of the Royal Society of Tropical Medicine and Hygiene* 12, no. 2 (October 1918): 4.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, 4-5.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, 5.

<sup>6</sup> John Shepherd, *the Crimean Doctors: A History of the British Medical Services in the Crimean War, Volume 1*, (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1991): 403.

important that officers would be punished for failing to maintain them. In the Anglo-Boer War (1899-1902), British troops in South Africa were dramatically affected by disease, particularly plague.<sup>7</sup> At this point the Royal Army Medical Corps was still a new division of the military, having been established in 1898. However, efforts to eradicate plague were complicated by competition between civilian and military doctors and the challenge of inventing effective preventative measures to protect both the European and native African population from infection.<sup>8</sup> While the complications that arose from these two conflicts would be important lessons for the British Army, neither could fully prepare them for the unique troop disposition during World War One.

The diversity of geographic areas in which the British Army needed to implement sanitary policy created a complex situation on a scale that was not seen in either of the previous two conflicts. A vassal to the largest empire in the world in 1914, the British Army was deployed to the most environmentally diverse theatres of war. Resisting and combating disease in tropical areas, as well as treating both colonial and European bodies, was a therefore a larger concern for the British Army than for other European forces. Due to the extent of their colonial history in tropical areas, British Army doctors drew upon the theory and institution of tropical medicine to help them create a framework that attempted to make the conditions in the non-Western fronts of the war suitable (as “suitable” as any combat conditions can be) for their soldiers.

This thesis explores two major questions concerning the military’s efforts to protect the health of British troops—both European and colonial—on the non-Western fronts of World War One. The first is the extent to which European, and especially British, perceptions of the body influenced ideas about sanitation and “cleanliness” for British troops serving in tropical areas. Although Western medicine claimed to operate under the doctrine of order, rationality, and “objectivity” during World War One, it was still produced within a European cultural framework, and was heavily influenced by colonialism. As historian of colonial medicine David Arnold argues, colonial officials regularly used particular normative views of the body to assert European authority in tropical areas.<sup>9</sup> The

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<sup>7</sup> Molly Sutphen, “Striving to be Separate? Civilian and Military Doctors in Cape Town during the Anglo-Boer War” in *War, Medicine, and Modernity*, ed. Roger Cooter, Mark Harrison, and Steve Sturdy (Gloucestershire: Sutton Publishing Limited, 1998): 48-59.

<sup>8</sup> For more detail, see Sutphen, “Striving to be Separate?” 48-59.

<sup>9</sup> David Arnold, *Colonizing the Body*, (Berkeley: University of California Press), 8.

second question addressed is how these British views of sanitation and health, developed and codified by the discipline of tropical medicine in a colonial context, were translated into both military policy and treatment of foreign and British troops on the non-Western fronts of the war.

The history of tropical medicine was rooted in Britain's extensive colonial history. Of especially great importance was the British experience in colonial India, where British officials first began to express concern about the effect of non-European climates on European bodies. By the start of World War One, intense imperial competition still existed among Britain and the other European powers, as tensions from nineteenth century expansionism brimmed over into the twentieth. During this same period, the Royal Society of Tropical Medicine and Hygiene became increasingly influential. Founded in 1907 by physician Sir James Cantile and parasitologist George Carmichael Low, the mission of the school was to conduct research that would help protect the health of English civil servants and soldiers stationed in "tropical" climates. By World War One, it was one of the foremost British authorities in dealing with sanitation and hygiene abroad. Investigating tropical medicine and its influence on the British Army administration in the early decades of the twentieth century thus might open a window into the initial intersection of tropical medicine, empire, and military.

## **FEARING THE DEVIL FROM THE EAST: THE CASE OF CHOLERA**

Before turning to specific theaters of the Great War, it is important to understand the various factors the British Army believed it had to contend with when combating deadly diseases in foreign environments. In 1914 the disease that embodied the challenges to protecting the health of British troops was cholera, "one of the few conditions feared by all."<sup>10</sup> Once in the body's system, cholera causes lethargy, diarrhea, and subsequent dehydration. Even the most physically fit soldiers would be reduced to a state of helplessness after infection. After contracting cholera himself in the spring of 1915, Sir Hamilton lamented "Oh energy, to what distant clime have you flown? I used to be energetic...but see me today...desperate longing to do nothing but rest. More than half my staff and troops are in the same state of indescribable slackness."<sup>11</sup> Cholera struck particularly hard in the Dardanelles and Damascus, where troops

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<sup>10</sup> Eran Dolev, *Allenby's Military Medicine: Life and Death in World War I Palestine* (London: I.B. Tauris & Co. Ltd, 2007), 32.

<sup>11</sup> Hamilton, *Gallipoli Diary*, volume 2, 7-8.

had to travel great distances and access to clean water during logistical movements was a chief concern.<sup>12</sup>

By the start of the war in 1914, doctors from the Society of Tropical Medicine and Hygiene knew that cholera was caused by the bacteria *comma bacilli*, and was spread by “the drinking of water polluted with cholera dejecta.”<sup>13</sup> In a March 1915 speech to the Society of Tropical Medicine and Hygiene, W.J.R. Simpson emphasized that “disinfection of the latrines, and the protection of water supplies or purification of water, are essential parts of any preventative measures.”<sup>14</sup> This emphasis on sanitation was, for Simpson, tantamount to protecting the health of British troops, especially since the institutional practices of the military required soldiers to live in close quarters, allowing a cholera infection to spread rapidly. However, as he described these sanitary practices Simpson also noted that “the conditions of warfare often render this [sanitary measures] difficult... it is important that the soldiers also be protected by inoculation against cholera.”<sup>15</sup> After 1915, vaccinations against cholera became a regular practice, especially for soldiers serving in the Middle East. This did not, however, allay fears of contracting the disease.<sup>16</sup>

Although British scientists believed that they had discovered the cause of cholera, beliefs about its geographic origin perpetuated fear of the disease amongst the British military. Cholera was viewed at the time as a “foreign” disease, one that could not originate within European bodies. As early as the mid-nineteenth century, international sanitary conferences were held to discuss the threat “Asiatic cholera” posed to Europe.<sup>17</sup> Indeed, in his 1915 speech Simpson referred to cholera spreading to the Western Front as “an invasion of Europe,” and a “foreign attack.”<sup>18</sup> Akin to Simpson’s beliefs, many British doctors thought that the cholera bacterium had originated in the East and spread to European armies through contact with Turkish, Russian, and Indian troops.<sup>19</sup> Acting on this belief, the British military took special care to inoculate troops serving in

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<sup>12</sup> Bott, *Eastern Night- and Flights; a Record of Oriental Adventure* (New York: Doubleday, Page, & Company, 1919), 68.

<sup>13</sup> W.J. Simpson, “The War and Cholera,” *Transactions of the Royal Society of Tropical Medicine and Hygiene* 8, no. 5 (March 1915): 147-148.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, 150.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>16</sup> Dolev, *Allenby’s Military Medicine*, 32.

<sup>17</sup> Arnold, *Colonizing the Body*, 205. For more on cholera in India in particular, see “Cholera: Disease as Disorder” in Arnold, *Colonizing the Body*, 159.

<sup>18</sup> Simpson, “The War and Cholera,” 141-2.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, 146.

the Indian Army as they traveled to aid the British, for fear that they would spread the disease. According to one Indian soldier, on the voyage to Marseille “inoculations for cholera, enteric, and other diseases took place daily.”<sup>20</sup> While cholera affected all troops, both British and colonial, the disease itself was viewed as “foreign” regardless of who contracted it.

The example of cholera perfectly encapsulates the complex interplay of issues facing British medical officials during World War One. The first was the large geographic area the army was deployed to and the diversity of the environments that this area included. The British Army needed to figure out how to combat situation-specific diseases as they understood them—cholera was believed to spread rapidly when people lived in close quarters—with climate-specific issues—accessing and maintaining clean drinking water was more difficult in desert environments. The second challenge was the feasibility of planning and carrying out efficient sanitary procedures in a combat zone. According to Simpson in 1918, proper sanitation was difficult to maintain in conditions of war, especially in non-Western environments.<sup>21</sup> Although procedures could be proposed and supported by doctors of the Society of Tropical Medicine in London, when placed in the context of combat and filtered through institutions of military command, they were often difficult to carry out.

The preoccupation with cholera, an old enemy, during the Great War demonstrates just how important sanitation policy was to the British military. As one British Colonel argued in 1918, “I have no hesitation saying sanitation is, or should be, the most important branch of medical work in the field.”<sup>22</sup> In the case of cholera, sanitation seems to have literally saved lives. However, ideas of what constituted as sanitary or “hygienic” environments were filtered through a distinctly British lens.

## **TROPICAL MEDICINE AND THE GREAT WAR: AN OVERVIEW**

To understand more fully the impact of tropical medicine and its imagining on British military policy during the Great War, this thesis explores the issues encountered and policy implemented in three key geographic zones. The first section considers Britain’s experience in India,

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<sup>20</sup> Heber Maitland Alexander, *On Two Fronts; Being the Adventures of an Indian Mule Corps in France and Gallipoli* (New York: E.P. Dutton & Company, 1917), 17.

<sup>21</sup> Simpson, “Sanitary Aspects of Warfare,” 2.

<sup>22</sup> Andrew Balfour, “Sanitary and Insanitary Makeshifts in the Eastern War Areas,” *Transactions of the Royal Society of Tropical Medicine and Hygiene* 12, no. 2 (November 1918): 19-20.

a country where British military officials first began to think systematically about combating disease in foreign places. Even though India was not technically a theater of war between 1914 and 1918, Indian troops played a large role in the conflict. For instance, the Indian Army served alongside, and under the authority of British command, troops on the European, African, and Middle Eastern fronts of the war. In this context, the British Army had to be concerned with the health of not just Europeans but of so-called “tropical” peoples serving in environments foreign to them. The second section examines the sub-Saharan African theater of war, particularly the conflict in German East Africa, paying close attention to tropical medicine’s role in the colonial administration and how practices developed in a colonial dynamic translated into a military context. The third section focuses on the Middle Eastern theater of the war, examining the difficulties and debates that marked the Gallipoli Campaign. Possessing a drier climate than the first two regions, but still studied under the umbrella of “tropical” medicine by British officials, the Middle Eastern theater presented unique challenges to the British military. The geographically diverse locations studied here each worked to shape British military policy, in regards to treatment of the body, in culturally specific ways.

Overall, this project will investigate how British understandings of tropical medicine and sanitary preventions were incorporated into existing structures of power and knowledge within the army, and how British views of the body helped to shape this understanding. While extensive work has been done on tropical medicine as an academic discipline, it will be beneficial to both military historians and historians of medicine, particularly of colonial medicine, to see how medical ideas were filtered through complex, hierarchical institutions such as the British Army. In terms of trauma to the body, cultural encounters and assumptions, and geographic scale, the Great War was truly a global “total war.”

## **SECTION ONE: BODIES IN FOREIGN ENVIRONMENTS— TROPICAL MEDICINE IN INDIA**

It is true that you can to an extent with money enough, *and despotical power*, rectify insanitary conditions, and banish many of the tropical diseases; but you cannot change the heat, the sunlight, the climatic conditions, by either the power of money or the power of knowledge.

—*Sir R. Havelock Charles, 1913*

In his speech at the first annual dinner of the Society of Tropical Medicine and Hygiene in 1909, Society President Ronald Ross proclaimed that “Our great subject deals not only with clinical research and sanitary practice, but with the prosperity of whole countries—indeed, of continents.”<sup>23</sup> Founded in 1907 by physician Sir James Cantile and parasitologist George Carmichael Low, the mission of this new society was to conduct research on maladies and diseases found in tropical climates. The major impetus behind this research was to protect the health of English civil servants and soldiers stationed in geographically foreign areas of the British Empire. When Ross talked of the “prosperity of continents,” he was also talking about British prosperity reaped from their colonial holdings across the globe. In particular, the discipline of tropical medicine focused on the Indian subcontinent, where the British held a colony since the early nineteenth century.<sup>24</sup>

It is a mistake, however, to assume that the Society of Tropical Medicine and Hygiene was the first group to be concerned with the health of British troops in India. According to historian David Arnold, “Unlike many colonial territories in Africa and other parts of Asia, Western medicine [in India] did not arrive abruptly as part of the ‘new imperialism’ of the 1880s and 1890s...it stretched back to the eighteenth century, and even earlier.”<sup>25</sup> Thus, for longer than in most of Britain’s imperial holdings, colonial authorities invested time in thinking about the effect of tropical climates on the European body, and how to combat disease in foreign places. This makes India the perfect case study to understand the main lines of British perceptions of the body in foreign environments, and how these ideas were translated into medical and sanitary policy. The ideas of the body’s “suitability” and “adaptability” to certain environments, developed throughout the nineteenth and early twentieth century, heavily influenced how the British Army came to regard both British and Indian troops on the non-Western fronts of the Great War.

By the early nineteenth century, British physicians were extremely interested in how the European body reacted to tropical climates. In 1815, physician James Johnson published a pamphlet which outlined major maladies that one could face in India, and preventative measures to take

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<sup>23</sup> Ronald Ross, “The Future of Tropical Medicine,” *Transactions of the Royal Society of Tropical Medicine and Hygiene* 2, no. 8 (May 1909): 272.

<sup>24</sup> For more on the British colonial experience in India, particularly in regards to the medical administration, please see Biswamoy Pati and Mark Harrison’s *Health, Medicine, and Empire: Perspectives on Colonial India* (London: Sangam Books Limited, 2001) and David Arnold’s *Colonizing the Body*.

<sup>25</sup> Arnold, *Colonizing the Body*, 290.

against them.<sup>26</sup> Rather than sickness from disease, parasites, or contaminated food, Johnson cites climate as the main reason for illness: “Of those Europeans who arrive on the banks of the Ganges, many fall early victims to climate,” he argued.<sup>27</sup> However, Johnson believed that it was possible for the European body to adapt to foreign conditions: “Till the constitution assimilates to the climate, [one must wear] light clothing, be temperate in eating and drinking, avoiding all exercise in the heat of the day... and last, not least, a determined resolution to resist with stoical apathy its first attacks.”<sup>28</sup> His last suggestion to adopt “stoical apathy” reflected a distinctly British value from the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century.<sup>29</sup> If one preserved their quintessential “British” character, one’s body might also overcome the adversity of climate.

In addition to climate, throughout the nineteenth century the British also had to contend with a number of tropical diseases in India. Major epidemics of malaria, cholera, influenza, and plague were frequent and resulted in high mortality rates among the Indian population.<sup>30</sup> To stop the spread of disease, the British colonial administration dramatically strengthened their sanitary policies in India. For example, to combat plague in Bombay, the Municipal Act of 1888 authorized a campaign of urban cleansing where sanitary workers flushed drains and sewers, sprinkled disinfectant powder in alleys, and destroyed slums.<sup>31</sup> Through focus on the slums as sites of disease, we see the British belief that disease had a spatial, as well as pathogenic, component. This influenced British doctor’s imagining of disease into the twentieth century. For instance, in his 1909 address to the Society of Tropical Medicine, Ross said: “For whatever science may discover, the practical prevention of disease will always remain impossible wherever the poor are compelled to live, like

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<sup>26</sup> James Johnson, *The Influence of Tropical Climates, More Especially the Climate of India, on European Constitutions: The Principal Effects and Diseases Thereby Induced, Their Prevention or Removal, and the Means of Preserving Health in Hot Climates, Rendered Obvious to Europeans of Every Capacity: An Essay* (London, 1815).

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, 3.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, 28.

<sup>29</sup> For more on the influence of stoicism on British thought and cultural values see: Lois Peters Agnew, *Outward, Visible Propriety: Stoic Philosophy and Eighteenth-Century British Rhetorics* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2008).

<sup>30</sup> For more on the plague and cholera epidemics in particular, see: “Cholera: Disease as Disorder” and “Plague: Assault on the Body” in Arnold, *Colonizing the Body*, 159-240.

<sup>31</sup> Arnold, *Colonizing the Body*, 204.

animals, in the midst of filth and squalor...I take this as the first great principle of sanitation."<sup>32</sup> Wherever the poor congregated, it was believed that disease would flourish. While the British thought that climate fostered susceptibility to disease, through their experiences in India they viewed slums as primary spaces of infection.

In addition to clearing the slums, the Municipal Act of 1888 also authorized enforced-segregation of suspected plague cases.<sup>33</sup> It was not only the disease that a body carried, but the context in which that body was situated that was believed to determine both risk and infection. The British policy of physical separation from bodies suspected of carrying disease—creating separate spheres for sick and healthy bodies—would later influence policies practiced during the Great War.

Through their experience with debilitating epidemic disease in India in the nineteenth century, and imaginings about geographies of illness, British doctors continued to be concerned with the effect of tropical environments on the European body in the twentieth century. In a 1913 address to the Society of Tropical Medicine and Hygiene, newly elected Society President Sir R. Havelock Charles noted that it was a “matter pregnant to many in this Imperial age—the suitability of the white man for the tropics, and his power of colonizing such lands.”<sup>34</sup> However, in contrast to Johnson’s optimistic promise of adaptation, Charles focused on the climate’s deterioration of the European body. According to Charles, “white men in the tropics universally suffer from neurasthenia,” as “the conditions of continuous life in hot countries influences directly the function of the nervous system of the European.”<sup>35</sup> Charles and his colleagues in the Society feared this would affect Britain’s capacity to sustain colonial dominance in India: “where in the world can be seen a white race, in a tropical climate, maintaining the energy of the people who founded that power?” they asked.<sup>36</sup> According to historians Biswamoy Pati and Mark Harrison, “The Indian climate was said to have made its inhabitants effeminate and fatalistic, while the bracing climate of their northern island had made the British industrious and warlike—natural leaders of men.”<sup>37</sup> While these ideas were initially advocated to explain

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<sup>32</sup> Ross, “The Future of Tropical Medicine,” 277.

<sup>33</sup> Arnold, *Colonizing the Body*, 203.

<sup>34</sup> Sir R. Havelock Charles, “Neurasthenia, and its bearing on the Decay of Northern Peoples in India,” *Transactions of the Royal Society of Tropical Medicine and Hygiene* 7, no. 1 (November 1913): 2.

<sup>35</sup> Charles, “Neurasthenia,” 3-4.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, 9.

<sup>37</sup> Pati and Harrison, *Health, Medicine, and Empire*, 21.

European dominance, it caused physicians to worry that this dominance was not sustainable in foreign climates. The British equated the weakening of the European body with the deterioration of the character; European health and energy, it was feared, were climate-specific.

Ideas of the European body “losing energy” in the tropics were connected to a discourse about bodies that emerged during the late nineteenth century. The advent of industrialism and perpetual motion machines, laboring hours on end at the same rate, coincided with the appearance of “fatigue” in the medical literature. According to historian Anson Rabinbach, the two phenomena are related: “the great discovery of nineteenth century physics led...not only to the assumption of a universal energy, but also to the inevitability of decline, dissolutions, and exhaustion...fatigue became the permanent nemesis of an industrial Europe.”<sup>38</sup> A fatigued man was an unproductive one, and he impeded the progress of industry. According to Rabinbach, fatigue came to be regarded as “the body’s stubborn subversion of modernity.”<sup>39</sup> This vision emerges clearly in the Society of Tropical Medicine’s great concern with climate’s effect on the body, as neurasthenia was defined as a condition of fatigue. As Charles noted, “progress which is really effective depends not on the bounty of nature, but upon the energy of man.”<sup>40</sup> This rhetoric was also used to justify the “natural submission” of the Indian peoples, as heard in Charles’ speech: “In this process of time the Honorable and Sovereign Aryan race was, by effects of climate and social influences, reduced to a people with energy deteriorated...to such submission becomes a custom and servitude a pleasure.”<sup>41</sup> Succumbing to fatigue, then, was not only viewed as making the British less dominant in India, but it risked making them less *white*.

In the early nineteenth century Johnson argued that climate could be “overcome.” In the early twentieth century doctors cautioned that “pursuing habits as if [one] is superior to his surroundings” only serves to make one more susceptible to illness and fatigue.<sup>42</sup> Therefore, a concern within the colonial administration was how to stay healthy and operate in a foreign environment while still “remaining white.”<sup>43</sup> One solution was to avoid living in tropical environments for a sustained period, meaning

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<sup>38</sup> Anson Rabinbach, *The Human Motor: Energy, Fatigue, and the Origins of Modernity* (United States: Basic Books Inc., 1990): 3-4.

<sup>39</sup> Rabinbach, *The Human Motor*, 6.

<sup>40</sup> Charles, “Neurasthenia,” 10.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, 8.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, 5.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, 11.

shorter periods of deployment for members of the British Army and civil servants in India. This solution was supported by Charles, who argued “fresh waves of immigration are essential to make up for the wear and tear due to climatic influence.”<sup>44</sup> For the British at this time, the most effective way for the body to remain healthy was physical separation from foreign climates.

Shortening the European body’s tenure in India created difficulties for the British medical administration. There was not as large of a supply of doctors to send from England as there were soldiers or civil servants.<sup>45</sup> To compensate, the British supplemented their own medical personnel with Indian physicians, who were trained to enter the lower ranks of the Indian Medical Service. By 1900, it was common to find native practitioners of Western medicine in most major Indian towns and cities.<sup>46</sup> While some may claim that this signified a loss of British control, other historians such as David Arnold argue that the implementation of Western medicine was another way to reinforce colonialism.<sup>47</sup> According to Arnold, the growing acceptance of Western medical norms was evidence of medicine’s power as a colonizing force—encouraging the practice of Western medicine was part of a greater British mission to “civilize” India.<sup>48</sup> Rather than lose their “whiteness” and integrate into Indian society, the British administration attempted to integrate Indians into their medical system. By World War One, many Indian doctors had been incorporated into the British medical administration serving overseas.

The focus of tropical medicine on climate and ideas about the adaptation of bodies to certain environments, developed through British experience in India, influenced military policy in both theory and practice on the non-Western fronts of World War One. The Indian Army supplemented British forces on many fronts of the war—Indian troops served in German East Africa, on the Western Front, in Gallipoli, and Egypt. Nearly 700,000 Indian troops served in the Middle East alone.<sup>49</sup> While the British military in India served to reinforce the colonial hierarchy, the situation changed on the various fronts of the war, where British soldiers served alongside Indian troops.

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<sup>44</sup> Charles, “Neurasthenia,” 9.

<sup>45</sup> Pati and Harrison, *Health, Medicine, and Empire*, 9.

<sup>46</sup> For more on the westernization of the Indian Medical Service, see: Pati and Harrison, *Health, Medicine, and Empire*, 8.

<sup>47</sup> Arnold, *Colonizing the Body*, 9.

<sup>48</sup> Arnold quoted in Pati and Harrison, *Health, Medicine, and Empire*, 19.

<sup>49</sup> Memorial Gates Trust, “Participants from the Indian Subcontinent in the First World War,” <http://www.mgtrust.org/ind1.htm> (accessed March 29, 2013).

In terms of medical services, Indian doctors would often treat the regiments of the Indian Army. Heber Maitland Alexander, a soldier serving in the Indian Mule Corps in France and Gallipoli, often mentioned the presence of “Hindu Doctors.”<sup>50</sup> These doctors, rather than being looked down upon as less capable than the British, on occasion gained distinction for their service during the war. For example, according to Alexander “many stories were told of the gallantry of Captain Singh, the Indian Doctor of the 57<sup>th</sup>, who was given one of the first Military Crosses.”<sup>51</sup> However, these doctors would mainly treat Indian patients; the separate spheres of disease and treatment built up during the nineteenth century extended into the context of war.

It is interesting, however, that in Alexander’s account inoculations were still given by members of the British Army Medical Corps.<sup>52</sup> As mentioned in the introduction, inoculating Indian service members was a priority for the British military so that they could not spread “foreign diseases” to British troops. The inoculations occurred so regularly that in 1915, Dr. Simpson of the Society of Tropical Medicine and Hygiene said that the risk of the Indian Army spreading cholera was very low, due to “sanitary precautions taken on the long voyage [to the various fronts of the war].”<sup>53</sup> Therefore, while Indian doctors were given autonomy over their own patients, health and sanitation risks to the Indian Army that possibly affected the health British soldiers was still entrusted solely to British doctors.

In the colonial imagination, the British tended to look down on the Indian body’s “adaptations” to its environment. This attitude is seen by examining more fully the excerpt Charles’ 1913 speech to the Society of Tropical Medicine and Hygiene:

In process of time the Honorable and Sovereign Aryan race was, by effects of climate and social influences, reduced to a people with energy deteriorated...Becoming inherently lazy, they eventually became possessed of the virtues which are more negative than positive. Exhaustion and anemia preyed on the people’s health, and lowered its vital resistance to disease by a general lessening of natural immunity. They lost their

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<sup>50</sup> Alexander, *On Two Fronts*, 215.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*, 60.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, 17.

<sup>53</sup> Simpson, “War and Cholera,” 146.

independence, and those who do so end by losing their energy: to such submission becomes a custom and servitude a pleasure.<sup>54</sup>

For Charles and other British physicians at the time, the perceived transformation of the Indian body served as a cautionary tale for what could happen to Europeans who stayed in the tropics too long. Through arguing that climate had a direct impact on energy levels, rhetoric such as this was used to justify colonial domination. Fatigue was viewed as the body's natural response to tropical climates; willing submission to colonial rule was, for the British, a logical extension of the symptoms of fatigue.

In the Great War, however, a fascinating reversal took place. Rather than using the Indian body as a platform to justify colonialism, the British military embraced these perceived differences in climatic response as advantageous. During the war, the meeting point between climate and individual bodies was used to explain ability and performance: Sir Ian Hamilton, commander of the Mediterranean Expeditionary Forces at Gallipoli, argued that Indian troops performed well during the Gallipoli Campaign because of their adaptation to the environment. "Those who have watched them [Indian soldiers] closely in India say that a native soldier on the Peninsula... is worth at least two Indian soldiers in France. The climate suits him better."<sup>55</sup> British military officials came to see Indian soldiers as an asset, as they did not have the disadvantage of battling fatigue in a foreign environment. In an area where it was believed that the European body could only degenerate, having a body which had already "succumbed" to the effects of climate made Indian soldiers better equipped to handle the traumas of war; climate was not an additional cause for concern.

In the Great War, the colonial rhetoric which surrounded Indian bodies receded as British military commanders recognized the advantage of using Indian troops on numerous campaigns. For instance, in his 1913 speech Charles had claimed that the Indian body had a lower "natural immunity" to disease.<sup>56</sup> However, when Sir Ian Hamilton requested to the London War Office that Sikh regiments reinforce his troops in 1915, he stated: "we want these men so badly. They don't get sick here; they are worth four European Bodies at present."<sup>57</sup> In the context of war a new value was placed on the bodies of colonial subjects, to such an extent that descriptions of the Indian body's lack of energy, such a concern in pre-war

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<sup>54</sup> Charles, "Neurasthenia," 8.

<sup>55</sup> Hamilton, *Gallipoli diary*, volume 2, 161.

<sup>56</sup> Charles, "Neurasthenia," 8.

<sup>57</sup> Hamilton, *Gallipoli Diary*, volume 2, 197.

medical transcripts, was rarely seen once the Great War was underway. Rather than a scrutiny of the colonial body to justify European authority, the focus shifted to how adaptations, in a wartime context, could be advantageous. As we will explore in later sections, this is exactly what the British themselves had to tackle on the non-Western fronts of the war: how to adapt to foreign environments in a way that was beneficial to military operations, yet not damaging to the European character.

A new perspective on the colonial body does not mean, however, that the British Army considered issues of climate and adaptability to be the main factor in assigning troop locations. For instance, Hamilton criticized the War Office for assigning too many Indian troops to France, and too many European troops to the Middle East: “After a year of war, the Indian Army and the Territorial Army are staggering on their last legs instead of being the best part of our forces.”<sup>58</sup> Although the studies of climate and environment were a focus of tropical medicine at this time, large numbers of daily casualties in the war meant that the British military could not afford to give troop assignments solely based on “suitability.”

In his book, *The Normal and the Pathological*, Georges Canguilhem writes that “Man is healthy insofar as he is normative relative to the fluctuations of his environment.”<sup>59</sup> In the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, we see that British ideas of a healthy body stemmed from ideas about how bodies adapt to, and are situated within, foreign climates. In the colonial context, tropical medicine became interested in how to adapt British bodies to tropical climates without taking away their European energy. Charles expressed the worry of many colonial officials when he stated his belief that, “white races cannot permanently colonize the tropics and remain white.”<sup>60</sup> To preserve colonial dominance, the resulting sanitary and medical provisions stemmed from the need to preserve the health of the British Army.<sup>61</sup> In addition to increased vaccinations and shortened terms of service for British officers and civil servants, this also included training Indian physicians, making Western medicine a norm.<sup>62</sup> This meant that, on the frontlines, regardless of theater, it was often Indian doctors treating Indian troops. Yet, while these troops were praised for being “more suited” to tropical climates, the War

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<sup>58</sup> Hamilton, *Gallipoli Diary*, volume 2, 199.

<sup>59</sup> Georges Canguilhem, *The Normal and the Pathological* (New York: Urzone Inc., 1989), 228.

<sup>60</sup> Charles, “Neurasthenia,” 11.

<sup>61</sup> Pati and Harrison, *Health, Medicine, and Empire*, 4.

<sup>62</sup> Arnold, *Colonizing the Body*, 289-293.

Office did not always take this into consideration when giving field assignments.

There were additional consequences to the British obsession with “suitability of the body” in the case of India. One is that, since the British praised the Indian troops for their adaptation to the climates of Gallipoli and Palestine, they often did not realize, or ignored, some additional difficulties the Indian regiments faced. For instance, historian Eran Dolev noted that when forces on the British side were under siege, “Deficiency diseases occurred mainly among the Indian troops, who were vegetarians and did not consume the flesh of horses when it came to that point [when food stores ran out during a blockade].”<sup>63</sup> Often cultural differences, and how this may have affected health and treatment, were overlooked in the British focus on what they believed to be the inherent biological difference—developed through a history of living in tropical environments—of the Indian soldiers.

The British colonial experience in India played a formative role in shaping how British doctors imagined European bodies in foreign environments. From the early nineteenth century, they struggled with the idea of how to cope with tropical climates without adapting too much; the British regarded Indian bodies as ones that had succumbed to the effects of climate and used this to justify colonial rule. In the context of war these differences were seen as advantageous, yet inoculation and separation policies still existed. The case of tropical medicine in India shows that British views of the body—under constant threat of fatigue and subject to shifts in climate—greatly influenced their medical policies abroad.

## **SECTION TWO: ESCAPING THE “DEVIL OF FEVER”— TROPICAL MEDICINE AND THE EAST AFRICAN CAMPAIGN**

In all this campaign our most deadly enemy was not the human foe who stubbornly retreated before us, but this same devil of fever who had laid waste that miserable village community in the Lumi Swamp. Already I had been prepared to meet him; but this was the first time that I had looked upon his face, and realized how terrible was the power he wielded.

—*Captain Francis Young, 1917.*

For British troops fighting in the East African campaign, every day was a struggle against disease; the great unseen enemy in an unfamiliar environment. Situated in what Francis Young, a Captain in the British Medical Corps, christened the “inhospitable heart of Africa,” the

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<sup>63</sup> Dolev, *Allenby's Military Medicine*, 33.

combat constituted the longest campaign of World War One, lasting from August 1914 to November 1918.<sup>64</sup> For the British military, this campaign presented extreme logistical challenges in terms of transportation and communication across inhospitable environments.<sup>65</sup> The largest challenge that the British Army faced, however, was protecting the health of their troops and maintaining standards of sanitation recommended by doctors from the Society of Tropical Medicine who had worked for the colonial administration in East Africa. Malaria and sleeping sickness in particular were two of the most prominent diseases to affect military operations in East Africa.<sup>66</sup> According to Dr. Young, during a given day “our single ambulance had as many as 300 sick men lying.”<sup>67</sup>

It is the primary focus of this section to understand how the British military doctors drew upon the tradition of tropical medicine to treat their troops in an unfamiliar environment, and how the colonial dynamic complicated their understandings of how the body was affected by disease. While some sanitation policies may have been effective for colonial administration, when placed in the context of war they became less practical. Ultimately, British bodies were viewed as un-adaptable to the tropical environment of East Africa; rather than learning from native populations, doctors imposed increased physical separation and a more stringent reliance on biomedicine as the norm. In a foreign land where soldiers felt that they were living like animals, clinging more tightly to “rational” medical beliefs and practices was the way British doctors attempted to cope with the environment around them.<sup>68</sup> In East Africa, the British attempted to “adapt” by re-affirming their own cultural identity.

The East African campaign stemmed from the imperialist power struggles between Great Britain and Germany in the nineteenth century. The colonies possessed by Germany in East Africa prevented Britain from having control of the width of Africa in the equatorial region, from the Western Coast to the Indian Ocean. The Germans recognized this, and hoped that by engaging British forces in Africa, they could re-direct Great

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<sup>64</sup> Francis Brett Young, *Marching on Tanga: With General Smuts in East Africa* (1917), 42.

<sup>65</sup> C.B. Quayle, “To Live Like a Pig and Die Like a Dog: Environmental Implications for World War I in East Africa,” *NTIS* 1012, (December 2009): 1-68.

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*, 18.

<sup>67</sup> Young, *Marching on Tanga*, 248.

<sup>68</sup> Quayle, quoting Byron Farwell in *The Great War in Africa, 1914-1918* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1986), 294: “‘A 25th Fusilier expressed the sentiments of many when he said, ‘Ah, I wish to hell I was in France! There one lives like a gentleman and dies like a man. Here one lives like a pig and dies like a dog.’”

Britain's forces from the Western Front in Europe.<sup>69</sup> Despite Britain's superior number of troops, the Germans were able to avoid defeat, not surrendering in Africa until the armistice in 1918. According to historians, this is due to the fact that the Germans were more familiar with the local terrain.<sup>70</sup> In fact, Young openly admits in his journal that they were fighting an enemy with "superior communications" compared to their own disorganized forces, and that they often had to rely on German maps of the area.<sup>71</sup> Compounding British hardship was the prevalence of disease: troop mortality rates from disease exceeded the casualties resulting from combat.<sup>72</sup> Although this campaign may have had similar motives to the "scramble for Africa" which occurred during the late nineteenth century, the scale and location of the East African conflict during the Great War turned it into a logistical nightmare for the British military, particularly in terms of medical administration.

Working in unfamiliar terrain, British military doctors looked to the principles of tropical medicine developed during their own colonial experience in Africa. In the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, the Colonial Office sponsored numerous medical expeditions, mainly to Western Africa, to determine ways to treat the numerous life-threatening tropical diseases that gave Africa the name, "the white man's grave."<sup>73</sup> Dr. Ronald Ross, President of the Society of Tropical Medicine and Hygiene, declared in 1909 that "the doctor ought to have—in this imperial country at least—a clearer view of the list of tropical maladies."<sup>74</sup> Tropical medicine at this time focused particularly on mosquito-borne diseases, such as malaria, yellow fever, and sleeping sickness.

In addition to finding ways to keep the European body free of disease in the tropics, Dr. Ross declared in the same speech that the purpose of tropical medicine was to investigate "why some regions breed strong races and others weak ones."<sup>75</sup> He conjectured that in Africa, the

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<sup>69</sup> Quayle, "To Live Like a Pig and Die Like a Dog," 14.

<sup>70</sup> Quayle, "To Live Like a Pig and Die Like a Dog," 2-3.

<sup>71</sup> Young, *Marching on Tanga*, 71; this was more of a hardship for the British than German military, as the British had experienced more difficulty both coordinating and executing evacuation routes in a unfamiliar terrain.

<sup>72</sup> Quayle, "To Live Like a Pig and Die Like a Dog," 8.

<sup>73</sup> For more on British medical expeditions, see: "West Africa and Tropical Medicine, 1895-1928" in Sheldon Watts, *Epidemics and History: Disease, Power, and Imperialism* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1997).

<sup>74</sup> Ross, "The Future of Tropical Medicine," 275.

<sup>75</sup> Ross, "The Future of Tropical Medicine," 273.

“weakness” of the people was due to malaria, and echoed this in the 1910 publication, *Mosquito or Man? The Conquest of the Tropical World*:

Malarial fever...strikes down not only the indigenous barbaric population, but, with still greater certainty, the pioneers of civilization...It is therefore the *principle and gigantic ally of Barbarism*...it has withheld an entire continent from humanity—the immense and fertile tracts of Africa.<sup>76</sup>

For prominent doctors of tropical medicine like Ross, the discipline had a moral as well as a scientific component. Convinced that tropical disease was the reason that populations in Africa lived in a “barbarous” state, he believed that it was the duty of the doctor to lead them to civilization; medicine was a part of the “white man’s burden” of which Kipling wrote.<sup>77</sup> In a 1909 speech to members of the Society of Tropical Medicine and Hygiene, Ross claimed that “it is for us to descend and save them [tropical peoples] from the dangers which we know threaten them.”<sup>78</sup> In the early twentieth century, many studies surfaced detailing the effects of diseases such as sleeping sickness, tuberculosis, and psychosis on native African populations in addition to Europeans.<sup>79</sup> For doctors of the Society of Tropical Medicine and Hygiene, tropical medicine became not just about curing bodies, but building civilizations.

Embedded in this focus on the “barbaric” component of tropical disease, however, was the implicit assumption that Europeans who stayed in Africa too long would regress to a similar “uncivilized” condition. Through studying native African susceptibility to certain diseases, these populations came to “represent” the diseases themselves. For example, sleeping sickness was known to cause extreme fatigue and lethargy in people who were infected. However, Dr. Hodges, the acting senior medical officer in Uganda, wrote in 1904 that a major obstacle in the fight

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<sup>76</sup> Ross, excerpt from *Conquest of the Tropical World*, quoted in Watts, *Epidemics and History*, 256.

<sup>77</sup> Kipling “The White Man’s Burden,” 1899.

<sup>78</sup> Ross, “The Future of Tropical Medicine,” 284.

<sup>79</sup> Gerald Campbell, “Notes on the comparative immunity from sleeping sickness of the Ngombe tribe, possible due to the Nkusi dye,” *Transactions of the Royal Society of Tropical Medicine and Hygiene* 3, no. 6 (April 1910): 318-319; R. Howard, “Emotional Psychoses among Dark-Skinned Races,” *Transactions of the Royal Society of Tropical Medicine and Hygiene* 3, no. 7 (June 1910): 323-339; S.L. Cummins, “Primitive Tribes and Tuberculosis,” *Transactions of the Royal Society of Tropical Medicine and Hygiene* 5, no. 7 (January 1911): 93-106.

against sleeping sickness was “the unreasoning apathy of the peoples whom it attacks.”<sup>80</sup> Rather than being described as victims expressing a symptom of the disease, they were seen as part of the problem; their apathy was presented as somehow innate, illogical, and obstinate.

In spite of their adherence to biomedical etiologies, British doctors would depart from scientific rationality when dealing with infected native populations. Despite the fact that it was known that both the mosquito and tsetse fly were major carriers of tropical disease, African populations were treated as if they were the primary vectors. In Sierra Leone, for example, doctors hypothesized in 1900 that “the anopheles which infect Europeans do not derive their infection from other Europeans, but from natives, i.e., from the native children who almost without exception suffer from continuous malaria.”<sup>81</sup> While both Europeans *and* native populations had the capacity to be malarial infective, British doctors believed that the mosquitoes concentrated preferentially near native habitations. As a result of this logic, in 1900 the British Colonial Office sponsored a policy of “residential segregation” in tropical colonies, so that European habitations would be, it was assumed, beyond the flight range of the malarial mosquito.<sup>82</sup> By 1901, these policies of segregation were accepted by the Liverpool and London School of Tropical Medicine as “the first law of hygiene.”<sup>83</sup> While the British doctors and medical researchers prided themselves on taking up the “white man’s burden,” saving the continent with the aid of biomedicine, they ignored existing scientific rationality when creating actual policy. The policy of residential segregation refracted the discoveries of tropical medicine, which were championed as being objective and scientific, through a colonial lens, ensuring that the British would not be changed through contact with the native population. Spurred by the fears embedded in disease prevention, the British desire for cultural separation mandated physical separation as well.

The British policy of residential segregation reflected fears that the European body could be changed not just by the environment, but by

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<sup>80</sup> Hodges, quoted in: Ann Beck, *A History of the British Medical Administration of East Africa, 1900-1950* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1970), 43.

<sup>81</sup> Quoted in: Stephen Frenkel and John Western, “Pretext or Prophylaxis? Racial Segregation and Malarial Mosquitoes in a British Tropical Colony: Sierra Leone,” *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 78, (1988): 216.

<sup>82</sup> For more on British colonial policies of residential segregation, see Frenkel and Western, “Pretext or Prophylaxis?”

<sup>83</sup> Sir Patrick Manson, who is credited as “the founder of tropical medicine”, quoted in Watts, *Epidemics and History*, 262.

the people native to that environment. This is clearly seen in doctors' treatment of those infected with sleeping sickness. Sleeping sickness had attracted the attention of both colonial administrators in England and doctors of tropical medicine due to its prevalence and the severity of its symptoms.<sup>84</sup> By the twentieth century British scientists understood that the disease was transmitted through the tsetse fly. However, the methods they proposed to address this situation were more administrative than medical. In 1905, Commissioner M. Hesketh Bell, an administrator in Uganda, wrote in his diary: "I am convinced that the only way to stop the spread of disease is to break one of the links in its transmission. The indispensable link is, of course, the tsetse...as we cannot break the chain by the destruction of the fly, we must withdraw from the insects the source of their infection."<sup>85</sup> What Bell proposed was the mandatory deportation of all infected African persons, without their consent, from areas where the tsetse fly was concentrated; hoping that the protozoa the flies carried would soon die out.<sup>86</sup> This scheme employed a very specific scientific logic; despite existing knowledge, it operated under the assumption that the tsetse was sustaining its abilities as a vector through proximity to infected persons, and that the *victims* were responsible for sustaining transmission.

Like the special case of India examined earlier, the example of sleeping sickness reveals the British belief that foreign environments had a degenerative effect on the European body. Instead of making adaptations to the tropics the focus of prewar sanitary policy in Africa, British administrators chose one of physical separation, both from the land and the people that inhabited it. This is exemplified by the intense efforts to combat sleeping sickness, a disease which as early as the 1780s was characterized as "a species of lethargy" by European explorers.<sup>87</sup> Again, this is an example of British fears of the tropics causing fatigue. If fatigue was the enemy of modernity, then sleeping sickness, one of fatigue's origins in the tropics, was not just a public health concern, but believed to be the reason that African populations could not become "civilized."<sup>88</sup> For the colonial administration, therefore, physical separation was necessary to prevent the contamination of barbarism.

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<sup>84</sup> For a more detailed description of sleeping sickness research and sanitary policy in East Africa, see Beck, *British Medical Administration in East Africa*, 32-48.

<sup>85</sup> Bell, quoted in Beck, *British Medical Administration in East Africa*, 39.

<sup>86</sup> Beck, *British Medical Administration in East Africa*, 40.

<sup>87</sup> *Ibid.*, 33.

<sup>88</sup> See discussion in Section One of this thesis, drawing on ideas presented in Rabinbach, *The Human Motor*.

By 1914 the policy of residential segregation became less practical due to the wartime needs of the British, yet the beliefs underlying the practice persisted. At the start of the campaign in August 1914, British administrators created the East African Carrier Corps to sustain British troops.<sup>89</sup> Acting as porters and stretcher-bearers, the African members of the carrier corps were instrumental to British military operations. Yet, although British soldiers recognized the carrier corps' importance to the campaign, they were wary about the spread of disease through interaction with native troops. As Young wrote in his journal in 1917:

Many of our porters came from the Great Lakes, where [sleeping sickness] abounds. We could not be sure that some of them had not the seeds of the malady with them, in which case many of the tsetses in the fly belts might easily become carriers of the disease...Thus, by its great movement of savage people, the African War is bound to have spread disease in lands where assuredly there is enough already.<sup>90</sup>

Perhaps it was the underlying fear that the Carrier Corps had the potential to spread disease that relegated their main tasks to transporting the injured and ailing. By being placed with those who were already sick or dying, it decreased the risk that East African troops could infect the healthy. Young also noted that "we did not, like the Germans, depend for our mobility on native portage;" the British instead preferred to use animals to transport food and supplies.<sup>91</sup> The British cultural fears of contamination through proximity to native troops therefore relegated the carrier corps to the task of transporting those who were already infected with disease.

The issues of proximity and transmission can be clearly seen in Young's writings. In his journal, he wrote of sickness being concentrated in specific spaces. For instance, in early 1917 he described the presence of fever in a village he visited, and was keen to leave before he was infected as well: "I was not eager to try conclusions with their devil."<sup>92</sup> He also described the valley of the Pangani River through which the regiment marched as possessing "a most sinister reputation for disease."<sup>93</sup> The Pangani region was so notorious for fever, in fact, that he said yellow

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<sup>89</sup> See Beck, *British Medical Administration in East Africa*, 61-72 for a detailed discussion of the Corps

<sup>90</sup> Young, *Marching on Tanga*, 244.

<sup>91</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>92</sup> *Ibid.*, 16.

<sup>93</sup> *Ibid.*, 34.

acacias were referred to as “fever trees” because “all reaches of the Pangani were bordered by these sinister beauties.”<sup>94</sup> Through constructing geographies of fever and disease, bounded by trees or a village border, there emerged a strong spatial component to both illness and infection.

Even though disease was often represented as concentrated in certain areas and that some people were more likely to carry disease, the British believed that all bodies, not just European, were ill-suited to the tropical climates of Africa. Shortly after his visit to the village in 1917, while on the march Young lamented that “I do not think that so great a military movement had ever been made...in a country which even the natives of Africa found to be incompatible with human life.”<sup>95</sup> This “incompatibility” became apparent to the British when they witnessed the high mortality rate of the members of the East African Carrier Corps. Out of a total of 350,000 men participating in the campaign between 1914 and 1918, 46,618 East Africans were killed. Of that number, 42,318 of these deaths were attributed to disease rather than combat.<sup>96</sup> In contrast to the situation in India, in East Africa the British began to realize that just because a body was native to a particular environment, this did not ensure that the body was able to survive *warfare* in that environment. The intersection between concern about the effects of climate and the impact of war caused the British to undergo systematic medical assessment of native African bodies. In the context of the Great War, British doctors began evaluating native bodies not just when disease struck, but also to understand how these bodies would respond to the stresses of war. In 1917, the British Army enacted the Compulsory Military Ordinance of 1917, which according to Ann Beck, a historian of colonial medicine in East Africa, “provided for a systematic examination for drafted carriers. For the first time in East African medical history, a complete record of every man examined for the Corps was obtained.”<sup>97</sup> In this context, conditions of war not only changed how the British viewed the “suitability” of bodies for their native environments, but also how they viewed colonial bodies as medical patients.

It was perhaps due to the perception that not even the East Africans could adapt to the environment that British doctors avoided recognizing native methods of disease prevention. For instance, when Young stumbled across a village healing ceremony, he viewed the

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<sup>94</sup> Young, *Marching on Tanga*, 74.

<sup>95</sup> Young, *Marching on Tanga*, 37.

<sup>96</sup> Beck, *British Medical Administration in East Africa*, 63.

<sup>97</sup> *Ibid.*, 65.

spectacle with fascination but also disdain, writing “the awful atmosphere of that village was born in on me in the picture of this small community living miserably in the twilight of their banana swamp, stubbornly fighting an enemy from whom they could never escape... I was glad to leave them and their horror.”<sup>98</sup> The British tended to dismiss East African practices of illness prevention, in favor of a Western scientific knowledge of disease causation. For example, when marching past a pool of water in 1917 Young wrote:

Here we were at some trouble to keep our African stretcher-bearers in hand; for they think that it is a foolish thing for any man walking in Africa not to drink wherever he may, and we, on the other hand, were not anxious to make acquaintance with dysentery...<sup>99</sup>

This is not to say, however, that native methods of prevention were not studied by doctors of tropical medicine. In 1910, for instance, Gerald Campbell, Vice-Consul of the Congo State, gave a speech to the Society of Tropical Medicine and Hygiene outlining the success of the Nkusi dye in giving the Ngombe tribe immunity against sleeping sickness.<sup>100</sup> However, Campbell could not attribute this to a conscious effort by the natives to prevent disease, saying “it is not to be supposed that the natives dye their bodies with this stuff with the express intention of keeping the flies off.”<sup>101</sup> Even when British doctors discovered successful native disease prevention measures, then, conscious and informed agency was taken away from its practitioners: native techniques were not viewed as having medical intent, but as being accidentally effective.

Faced with an environment which they believed to be uninhabitable, while simultaneously distrusting native methods of illness prevention, the British turned to biomedicine as a way to endure in the tropics. When discussing the promise of the Nkusi dye to prevent sleeping sickness, for example, Sir Patrick Manson said that the method “might not be good if properly applied on scientific principles.”<sup>102</sup> No method of treatment was valid unless it was deemed scientific by British doctors. For instance, the ingestion of the drug quinine became the chief way to both

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<sup>98</sup> Young, *Marching on Tanga*, 15-16.

<sup>99</sup> Young, *Marching on Tanga*, 23-24.

<sup>100</sup> Campbell, “Notes on comparative immunity from sleeping sickness,” 318-319.

<sup>101</sup> *Ibid.*, 319.

<sup>102</sup> Manson “Discussion” in Campbell, “Notes on comparative immunity from sleeping sickness,” 319.

treat and prevent malaria; according to Young, it was “a necessity of life.”<sup>103</sup> Its use as a prophylactic was sometimes even emphasized over other measures, such as wearing mosquito nets. According to Young, “A man may carry a mosquito-net in his haversack, but he cannot wear it when he needs it most, on picket duty at night... [So] I took special stock of our quinine, to see if I could deal with the regiment in what I took to be the proper way, giving every man in it a regular prophylactic dose.”<sup>104</sup> In spite of other available treatment methods and sanitary policies, for the British doctors ingesting drugs was the best way to prevent disease.

British emphasis on drugs such as quinine reflected the culture of pure alliance with allopathic biomedicine occurring in England at the time. According to Beck, “As in other European countries in the nineteenth century, the raising of medical standards was a violently debated issue in England...it is understandable that doctors who had fought the battle in their own country would also guard against the lowering of levels in colonial East Africa several decades later.”<sup>105</sup> For British doctors, adhering to scientific standards abroad was a way to further legitimize their profession and prove that the scientific method was the only medically effective method. There was more at stake for these doctors than the health of the troops; they believed that the way they treated soldiers in East Africa would prove the discipline of tropical medicine worthy of being the principal institution for medical research in non-European environments.

The story of tropical medicine during the East African campaign is one of British attempts to mitigate the effects of an environment perceived to be unforgiving. According to Young, “we should have felt that the country had beaten us, even though there was no shame in being beaten by such a country.”<sup>106</sup> The British concluded that no bodies could adapt to this environment: not European, East African, or Indian.<sup>107</sup> As a result, they chose to endure through separation into European enclaves, fortifying themselves with Western science. This separation was ideological, as seen in a strict reliance on biomedical, medical treatment, and physical, through the construction of residential segregation and geographies of disease. Ironically, in order to construct the physical spaces of safety the British doctors often had to ignore the scientific

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<sup>103</sup> Young, *Marching on Tanga*, 3.

<sup>104</sup> *Ibid.*, 71.

<sup>105</sup> Beck, *British Medical Administration in East Africa*, 55.

<sup>106</sup> Young, *Marching on Tanga*, 58.

<sup>107</sup> See *Ibid.*, 55 for information on Indian hardship in East Africa.

discoveries they simultaneously sought to uphold, such as the way tropical diseases were transmitted. In a multi-ethnic campaign in a foreign environment, the British used tropical medicine to strengthen their own identity. Through protecting European ideas about medicine, they sought to isolate and protect the European body.

### **SECTION THREE: IMPROVISING CLEANLINESS: THE BRITISH ARMY AT GALLIPOLI**

What a fiasco! The Dardanelles is not a sanatorium; Sulva is not Southend. With the men we have lost from sickness in the past six weeks we could have beaten the Turks twice over.  
—*Sir Ian Hamilton, 1915*

In the spring of 1915, Sir Ian Hamilton, Commander of the Mediterranean Expeditionary Forces at Gallipoli, quipped “the British General is the product of an improvising nation.”<sup>108</sup> Fighting in the desert environment of Gallipoli, the high ranking officials of the British Army were forced to resort to constructing “sanitary makeshifts”—methods of maintaining sanitation and hygiene with materials available to the troops at the time—to protect the rapidly deteriorating health of their troops.<sup>109</sup> In Gallipoli, the troops succumbed to illness at an alarmingly rapid rate. In a 1915 cable to the War Office, Hamilton wrote:

I think you should know immediately that the numbers of sick evacuated in the IXth Corps during the first three days of October were 500 men on the first instant; 735 men on the second instant and 607 men on the third instant. Were this rate kept up it would come to 45 percent of our strength evacuated in one month.<sup>110</sup>

The environment of Gallipoli was not kind to European bodies. Preserving food, preventing heat exhaustion, gaining access to clean water, and avoiding fly-borne diseases were all major concerns of the British Army. To combat this, commanders hoped that the War Office in London would increase rations and send troop reinforcements.<sup>111</sup> However, when this aid was not forthcoming, the Army Service Corps—a branch of the British

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<sup>108</sup> Hamilton, *Gallipoli Diary, volume 1* (1920), 20.

<sup>109</sup> Numerous examples of these sanitary makeshifts can be seen in: Balfour, “Sanitary and Insanitary Makeshifts,” 19-50.

<sup>110</sup> Hamilton, *Gallipoli Diary, volume 2*, 239.

<sup>111</sup> Field Commanders’ issues with the War Office are extensively covered in: Hamilton, *Gallipoli Diary, volume 1* and *volume 2*.

Army responsible for sanitation and hygiene—had to rely on improvisations drawn from the local environment. To do this, they needed to make accommodations for the non-European troops serving alongside them, yet also draw upon the knowledge that they had to create a blend of sanitary makeshifts that were not strictly European.

This is not to say, though, that the British soldiers did not read the high incidence of disease through a distinctly English cultural lens. In fact, the hardship they faced in this climate served to reinforce ideas about what made a “healthy” man in the modern industrial age, and how this was complicated by the presence of both non-European troops and climates. Therefore, although the Gallipoli campaign came to be characterized as a “medical breakdown” in military reports, the importance of tropical medicine was not diminished here.<sup>112</sup>

The Gallipoli Campaign took place between April 1915 and January 1916. A few months into the war there was already a stalemate on the Western Front. Some members of the British high command believed that focusing on defeating the Ottomans in the Middle East would be the key to winning the war.<sup>113</sup> A victory at Gallipoli was also seen as key to securing Balkan support for the British military. Before the start of the campaign, Hamilton optimistically wrote that there was incredible “strategic value of the Near East, where one clever tactical thrust delivered on the spot might rally the wavering Balkans. Rifle for rifle, at that moment, we could nowhere make as good use of the 29<sup>th</sup> Division as by sending them to the Dardanelles.”<sup>114</sup> For the British, a swift victory at Gallipoli was vital to both securing the Eastern fronts and protecting their colonial holdings from the rival Ottoman Empire.<sup>115</sup>

Despite Gallipoli’s strategic importance, however, the War Office never put the full support of its resources behind the Gallipoli Campaign. Hamilton often complained that the War Office was not responsive to his requests for increased rations and troop reinforcements to replenish his rapidly depleting forces.<sup>116</sup> The War Office’s unresponsiveness may have

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<sup>112</sup> The Mesopotamia Commission Report in August 1917 described what happened in Gallipoli as a “medical breakdown,” quoted in: Dolev, *Allenby’s Military Medicine*, 23.

<sup>113</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>114</sup> Hamilton, *Gallipoli Diary*, volume 1, 4.

<sup>115</sup> For more information on the British campaign at Gallipoli, see: Alan Moorehead, *Gallipoli* (Toronto: MacMillan of Canada, 1989).

<sup>116</sup> Hamilton, *Gallipoli Diary*, volume 2. This volume contains much correspondence between Hamilton and the War Office. His complaints increase as the campaign goes on.

been due to the attitude of some members of the British command towards the Campaign itself. Before the Gallipoli campaign began, Hamilton's commanding officer [who in the journal was only referred to as "K"], warned "The 29<sup>th</sup> Division are only to be a loan...all things earmarked for the East are looked on by powerful interests both at home and in France as having been stolen from the West."<sup>117</sup> Hamilton echoed this complaint later in the campaign, stating in 1915 that "They [the War Office] have forced us to go sick and idle because they have permitted the French offensive to take precedence of ours...there was no violent urgency in France as there is here."<sup>118</sup> While strategically vital, the commanders never intended that the Gallipoli campaign would take as long as it did. The British command in London were frustrated that resources were being diverted towards a failing venture.

In order to protect the health of British troops at Gallipoli, the British Army once again turned to the theme of the European body's ability to adapt to non-European climates. When writing one of his many complaints against a commander in the War Office, Hamilton wrote that "He still believes 'man's a man and a rifle's a rifle'; I still believe that half the value of every human being depends on his environment."<sup>119</sup> There were major concerns about the body's ability to perform in non-European environments; however, this was a concern specifically for white European bodies. Thus, soldiers serving in the Indian Army were highly valued by the British Army on this front of the war because they were perceived as acclimatized. In fact, in September 1915, Hamilton noted in his journal that "latest returns show a daily sick list on ten per battalion of British or Australian troops and of one per battalion of Indian troops."<sup>120</sup> Seeing the difference in disease incidence among European and Indian armies reinforced perceptions that the European body was inherently unsuited for desert conditions.

Due to observed differences between Indian and European disease rates, doctors of tropical medicine working in Gallipoli began to pay close attention to Indian disease prevention measures. Doctor Andrew Balfour, the director of the Wellcome Bureau of Scientific Research in England, traveled to the various non-Western fronts of the War—including Gallipoli, Palestine, and Mesopotamia—documenting, in his words, "the makeshifts of the army hygienist in hot climates."<sup>121</sup> In November 1918

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<sup>117</sup> Hamilton, *Gallipoli Diary*, volume 1, 5.

<sup>118</sup> Hamilton, *Gallipoli Diary*, volume 2, 239.

<sup>119</sup> Hamilton, *Gallipoli Diary*, volume 1, 266.

<sup>120</sup> Hamilton, *Gallipoli Diary*, volume 2, 200.

<sup>121</sup> Balfour, "Sanitary and Insanitary Makeshifts," 19.

he gave an address to the Society of Tropical Medicine and Hygiene in London, where he notes some of the “ingenious” methods of sanitation practiced by the Indian units.<sup>122</sup> For instance, he praised the various water purification techniques of the Indian Medical Service.<sup>123</sup> Water purification and storage were extremely important issues for the British, especially since the water used in Gallipoli was actually, according to Balfour, “Egyptian filtered water, brought in by tank steamers.”<sup>124</sup> This transport was tactically very risky. Heber Maitland Alexander, a member of the Indian Mule Corps serving in Gallipoli, wrote that the Ottoman Turks knew exactly what the British water containers looked like, and would target them.<sup>125</sup> The fact that the Indian Medical Service was trusted to purify this precious supply of water illuminates how much the British valued their knowledge of living in hot climates.

One may wonder why British doctors paid attention to the sanitary makeshifts of the Indian Army, if they viewed non-European bodies as more *naturally* adapted to hot climates. This appears to be a contradiction to British understandings of adaptation and health in tropical environments. Rather than being discouraged by their perceived “inadaptability,” as seen in the last section on East Africa, the high incidence of disease at Gallipoli spurred the British doctors to examine any preventative measure that might curb sickness rates, even if they originated from the practices of non-European troops. At Gallipoli, the British Army was desperate to find any preventative measure that would work; in September 1915 it was reported that 78 percent of the British troops had dysentery or other intestinal diseases, and 64 percent had septic sores.<sup>126</sup> Moreover, Dolev notes that “what was common to all the diseases [at Gallipoli] was the fact that they could all be prevented by simple measures—proper behavior of the troops and support of the commanders in the field.”<sup>127</sup> Through sanitary measures such as water purification, safe food preparation, and efficient waste disposal, diseases such as cholera and dysentery could be avoided. Without adequate resources from the War Office, the British doctors contradicted understandings of intrinsic adaptation and sought to adopt effective sanitary makeshifts from the environment around them, which included borrowing methods from colonial troops.

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<sup>122</sup> Balfour, “Sanitary and Insanitary Makeshifts,” 22.

<sup>123</sup> *Ibid.*, 25.

<sup>124</sup> *Ibid.*, 24.

<sup>125</sup> Alexander, *On Two Fronts*, 210.

<sup>126</sup> Dolev, *Allenby's Military Medicine*, 21.

<sup>127</sup> *Ibid.*, 21.

In adopting these sanitary makeshifts, the British were faced with a dilemma: how could they adapt to the harsh environment of Gallipoli, while still preserving the Western scientific character of their medical service as well as the European nature of their troops' bodies? One of the ways this was done was through co-opting the sanitary makeshifts of the Indian Army, and modifying them with Western technology. For example, Balfour described an Indian method of water purification where a chlorinated lime mixture was added. The "old method" Balfour described, involved Indian orderlies shaking bottles to mix its contents. The "new method," however, was "represented by ingenious hand churns, and worked very well."<sup>128</sup> The process of de-lousing was another example of a simple sanitary makeshift made technological, and thus more European, in nature. While Balfour conceded that picking was "the simplest method for dealing with lice," the captions on photos included in the transcript of his address described the method as "primitive."<sup>129</sup> At one point, it was even said that the practice was "reminiscent of monkeys at the zoo."<sup>130</sup>

Viewing this example of the "primitive" with disdain, Balfour argued that "we can do better than this in the army."<sup>131</sup> He goes on to describe various technological methods of lice removal—such as the Serbian barrel and the railway van disinfectant—that appear to complicate the process.<sup>132</sup>

Although Indian makeshifts were effective, they were modified to suit European values; it would not do to have British soldiers resort to "primitive" methods of hygiene. While the British valued colonial sanitary makeshifts, they viewed it as a foundation upon which they could build their own policies. By doing this, they created a co-opted sanitation as a distinctly European practice, "perfected" by western technology.

In the Gallipoli campaign, non-European, colonial troops were viewed as both naturally suited to the climate, and as able to construct practices to preserve health and hygiene. In reference to the Indian Army, Hamilton himself wrote in his journal that "India could have beaten Turkey single-handed."<sup>133</sup> However, although the two views of non-European troops may seem positive, they are both opinions formed in reference to disease. In fact, non-European troops came to occupy a niche

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<sup>128</sup> Balfour, "Sanitary and Insanitary Makeshifts," 25. Photographs of the two methods are Fig. 32 and Fig. 33 of the transcript.

<sup>129</sup> *Ibid.*, 25; Fig. 39.

<sup>130</sup> *Ibid.*, 25.

<sup>131</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>132</sup> For more about the sanitary makeshifts of lice removal, see Balfour "Sanitary and Insanitary Makeshifts," 25-26, and Fig. 41.

<sup>133</sup> Hamilton, *Gallipoli Diary*, volume 1, 12.

space in the European imagining of disease in desert campaigns, often fulfilling roles that dealt with both medical treatment and sanitary provisions. As the first section of this thesis pointed out, Alexander noted the large presence of Indian doctors and stretcher-bearers on the Gallipoli campaign.<sup>134</sup> On Balfour's visit to Gallipoli, he documented Indian orderlies undertaking tasks such as water purification and latrine construction, even specifically mentioning that a "native sentry" needs to be put on guard over the water supply.<sup>135</sup> Perhaps because the British viewed Indian bodies as able to overcome disease through their "suitability" for the environment, it was deemed safer for colonial troops, rather the European, to operate in spheres that dealt closely with illness and unhygienic conditions.

By placing non-European bodies in the realm of disease, however, British authorities created a situation where, as in East Africa, these troops came to be viewed as carriers of disease itself. Although their illness rates were known to be lower than European troops', the British Army doctors could not help viewing non-European troops as aiding the spread of infection. This is seen in the discussion of cholera at the beginning of this thesis: army doctors feared that this disease would "spread from the East," and special precautions were taken to inoculate Indian soldiers traveling to both the Western and non-Western fronts of the war.<sup>136</sup> Concerns with close contact with non-European bodies were also discussed in an article published by the *British Medical Journal* in 1915, where the authors worried about the efficacy of current sanitary measures: "However good these arrangements may be on our own side," they argue, "they are certainly not likely to be very excellent on that of the Turks; and the trenches are not far apart."<sup>137</sup> Due to the nature of trench warfare, the British Army not only had to be concerned with non-European bodies within their own units, but also the sanitary conditions of enemy combatants. Here, they could not afford to adopt a policy of residential segregation, as was seen in East Africa. Even though these non-European bodies may have been viewed as more suitable for the environment, they were also viewed as potentially corrupting to the European body. For this reason, non-European troops often remained relegated to the "disease

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<sup>134</sup> Maitland, *On Two Fronts*, 19.

<sup>135</sup> Balfour, "Sanitary and Insanitary Makeshifts," 24.

<sup>136</sup> Phrase quoted from: Anonymous, "Flies in France and Gallipoli," *British Medical Journal* 2, no. 2848 (1915): 184.

<sup>137</sup> Anonymous, "Flies in France and Gallipoli," 184.

sphere” in Gallipoli, treating the ill and maintaining sanitary makeshifts, thus guaranteeing their continued association with disease.

Finally, as in both India and East Africa, the British Army coped with the stresses of deployment to a non-European environment by holding more tightly to British cultural values. For instance, Sir J. Crichton-Browne, President of the Sanitary Inspectors’ association, included the following passage in his October 1915 address on sanitary work during the war, summarized in an article by *The Times*:

Resistance to microbial poisons which had entered the human system largely depended on the healthful activity of a large number of internal secretions which were under nervous control and were influenced by mental impressions. He regarded the broadsheet specimens of wholesome and appetizing English literature so appropriately selected by Sir Walter Raleigh as prophylactics against failure in health.<sup>138</sup>

Although army doctors viewed disease as having a quantifiable, biomedical origin, Crichton-Browne viewed the reading of English literature as an effective preventive measure. By bolstering the mind with British values, one could combat the invasion of non-European microbes. The fatigue motif also appeared again in this campaign. For example, Hamilton claimed that “sitting idle,” by adopting a defensive strategy in Gallipoli, was a major reason the men were going ill.<sup>139</sup> Rather than remaining in perpetual motion, the great machine of the British Army had stalled. By combating fatigue and idleness through military action, Hamilton believed, the rate of sickness among his troops would decrease.

In a 1918 column on army sanitation published by *The Times*, a journalist wrote that in the non-Western war areas “the sanitarian had plenty of ingenuity and needed it, because he was often left in the lurch.”<sup>140</sup> The policies of the War Office made it extremely difficult for medical and sanitary supplies to be delivered to the frontlines of the Eastern war areas, causing the British Army’s reliance on the observations of doctors of tropical medicine to create improvised syncretic sanitation policy. Here, tropical medicine was not operating within the realm of military policy but in spite of it, often adopting ideas from the Indian Army

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<sup>138</sup> Anonymous, “Health in the Field. Sir J. Crichton-Browne on Army Sanitation,” *The Times* (October 30, 1915): 5.

<sup>139</sup> Hamilton, *Gallipoli Diary*, volume 2, 239.

<sup>140</sup> Anonymous, “Food and Disease. Colonel Balfour on Army Sanitation,” *The Times*, (November 16, 1918): 3.

and filtering them through a European cultural lens. Through allowing non-European troops to work on sanitary makeshifts, however, a construct was created where the British associated these troops with spaces of disease, both as less susceptible to it and helping its spread. While physical separation was not possible in the Gallipoli campaign, the British again resorted to cultural separation to mask cultural contact, using British technology, literature, and values to set them above the trials of their environment and the people with whom they faced them.

### **CONCLUSION: BODIES IN FOREIGN ENVIRONMENTS: THE NEW PATH FOR TROPICAL MEDICINE**

The doctors tell me that, short as has been their stay, a large number of the men are already infected with the prevalent disease...if fair play existed in these moonlit lands, every white man here should be credited with 25 percent extra kudos for everything that he does with his brains or his body under the shadow of this pestilence.

— *Sir Ian Hamilton, 24 July 1915*

In November 1918, one month before the end of the war, Doctor Andrew Balfour spoke the following words to the Society of Tropical Medicine and Hygiene: “It is a trite saying that prevention is better than cure...but only a minority practice it, and that is why Hygiene is...the Cinderella of the Medical Services.”<sup>141</sup> Although the British had a long history of military operations in foreign environments during periods of colonial expansion, never before had these operations existed on a scale comparable to that of the Great War. The incidence of disease on the non-Western fronts of the war was staggering: in addition to dodging enemy bullets and shrapnel, British troops also had to combat dysentery, malaria, sleeping sickness, and cholera. Oftentimes, the greatest threat to the British Army was not the Central Powers, but the environment in which they were fighting. The British not only had to navigate treatment for their own bodies but also how they viewed themselves, as Europeans, situated in medically hostile environments. Compounding the issue was the fact that British troops were serving alongside armies from the colonial empire. With a history rooted in colonial administration, the discipline of tropical medicine seemed a promising domain of knowledge from which to address the medical conundrum facing the British Army.

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<sup>141</sup> Balfour, “Sanitary and Insanitary Makeshifts,” 19-20.

Although influences of tropical medicine were useful to troops on the ground they were not necessarily adopted or recognized in the overarching policies the War Office developed in London. In fact, it seemed that outside of members of the Society of Tropical Medicine and Hygiene, there was little conversation about bodies in foreign environments among British physicians. Through examination of the three areas explored in this essay—India, East Africa, and Gallipoli—it is clear that the chief concern of doctors of tropical medicine was investigating the effect of foreign climate on European bodies. This meant understanding how bodies adapted to certain “non-native” climates, and how the European could survive in tropical areas without succumbing to “degeneration” or fatigue. Yet even though these were central themes to the discipline of tropical medicine, they were seldom mentioned in other medical literature at the time. In a June 1917 article in the *British Medical Journal* discussing dysentery at Gallipoli, there was no mention of environmental influences on the rate of infection or success of treatment.<sup>142</sup> In fact, the article chose to focus solely on Western biomedical treatments in the form of drugs, rather than improved sanitation. Likewise, in a July 1915 article from the same journal discussing the problem of flies in France and Gallipoli, climate is briefly mentioned in the first paragraph, yet is not a central issue.<sup>143</sup> Neither article mentioned if certain groups of people were more affected by these diseases than others.

The themes of climate and a body’s “suitability” for it seem to be edited out when tropical medicine appeared in public discourse. For example, in Balfour’s 1918 address he emphasized the importance of food in maintaining good health by stating, “Feed a man well- that is, give him plenty of food in sufficient variety adapted to his racial peculiarities, to the climatic conditions under which he is serving, and well cooked, and in the great majority of cases he will defy not only the Boche but the bacillus.”<sup>144</sup> However, when his speech was summarized in *The Times* the following day, a sanitized version of the quote was reprinted: “Feed a man well- that is, give him plenty of food in sufficient variety and well cooked, and in the great majority of cases he will defy not only the Boche but the bacillus.”<sup>145</sup> The entire quote was reproduced verbatim, except for the line about “racial

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<sup>142</sup> Anonymous, “Dysentery at Gallipoli,” *British Medical Journal* 1, no. 2944 (June 2 1917): 738.

<sup>143</sup> Anonymous, “Flies in France and Gallipoli,” 184-5.

<sup>144</sup> Balfour, “Sanitary and Insanitary Makeshifts,” 23.

<sup>145</sup> Anonymous, “Food and Disease,” 3.

peculiarities and climatic conditions”, two central concerns to the discipline of tropical medicine.

In order to establish itself as part of the mainstream army medical discourse in London, tropical medicine needed to be viewed not just as a way to aid the British colonial venture, but as a viable framework in which the military could create policy to protect the health of the troops. One of the ways this was done was through the publication of letters to the editor and speeches by doctors involved in tropical medicine in major newspapers, detailing the ways in which Britain’s medical and sanitation policies were having a tangible impact on the outcome of the war. For example, in October 1915 *The Times* summarized a speech given by J. Crichton- Browne, the president of the Sanitary Inspectors Association in London. The speech had grand lines such as “when the history of the war came to be summed up in grand futurity he would not be surprised if the verdict were that this country [Britain] had been saved by sanitation.”<sup>146</sup> It also included a clear defense of the effectiveness of tropical medicine, stating “with troops operating in regions which had often been ravaged by plague, cholera, and fever...it was reassuring to know that, with a larger army in the field than ever before, the incidence of disease in it had often been lower than in times of peace.”<sup>147</sup> This statement is slightly hyperbolic, based on the extremely high incidence of disease in places like Gallipoli and East Africa.<sup>148</sup> Nevertheless, it was an appeal to the public to support the work of tropical medicine, and such positive messages were necessary to highlight the impact of the army doctors’ efforts.

Tropical medicine played an important role to in the administration of Britain’s colonial territories. World War One was an opportunity for the discipline to apply its theories in the context of a large-scale multi-theater conflict. For instance, tropical medicine used the events at Gallipoli as a platform to argue that sanitation in foreign environments was vital. Without proper sanitary measurers in place, the rate that soldiers were evacuated due to sickness was extremely high. As Alexander described it, “the health of the troops was falling off, something like 150 men a day being evacuated sick, in addition to the normal wastage of killed and wounded. The restricted space, the flies, and the necessarily insanitary conditions of life had brought dysentery and jaundice.”<sup>149</sup>

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<sup>146</sup> Anonymous, “Health in the Field,” 5.

<sup>147</sup> Anonymous, “Health in the Field,” 5.

<sup>148</sup> For first-hand accounts of life on the non-Western fronts of the war, see Hamilton, *Gallipoli Diary, volume 1 and 2*; Maitland, *On Two Fronts*; Young, *Marching on Tanga*.

<sup>149</sup> Maitland, *On Two Fronts*, 212.

Through the work of doctors of tropical medicine, sanitary makeshifts were documented and advocated for, creating preventative measures to protect the health of the troops. This rhetoric and advocacy swayed commanders such as Sir Ian Hamilton to recognize the importance of sanitary provisions for their troops.<sup>150</sup> It was largely through Gallipoli and other desert campaigns that tropical medicine came to be recognized as a crucial field of study outside the colonial venture.

The policies advocated by the Society of Tropical Medicine were not always sponsored by the War Office in London, however. The resources of the Wellcome Bureau of Scientific research were, according to Balfour, “placed wholly at the disposal of the War Office,” yet their recommendations were seldom put into place due either to claims of “impracticality”—such as residential segregation—or expense.<sup>151</sup> Many elements of tropical medicine operated outside the purview of the War Office as makeshifts adopted from foreign troops or adaptations of colonial policies. The actions of the troops in regards to their health were largely dictated by how army doctors viewed the operation of the European body in non-European environments. Often cultural anxieties about fatigue and contamination played a role in shaping medical and hygienic decisions. Overall, the British would strengthen their own cultural practices, retreating further into their ideas about what it meant to be “European” in order to survive in unfamiliar climates.

The story of tropical medicine during World War One is not so much a story of biomedical triumph and advancement in treatments, as the British wanted to believe at the time, but a cultural history of the body. The emphasis that British doctors of tropical medicine placed on the European body, as it was situated in tropical environments and interacted with non-European bodies, greatly influenced attitudes towards medical and sanitary policy. Rather than scientific research and discovery allowing the British to adapt to the tropics, it was the entrenched notion that European bodies *could not* adapt without adverse consequence that became the real legacy of tropical medicine in wartime. For all the concerns about injury and disease, loss of what it meant to be “European”, rather than loss of limb, eye, or any one body part, dominated the discourse of health and hygiene on the non-Western fronts of the war.

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<sup>150</sup> Hamilton, Gallipoli Diary, volume 2, 237.

<sup>151</sup> Balfour, “Sanitary and Insanitary Makeshifts,” 19.

