

Report

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# REPORT

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# REPORT

## WEST POINT UNDERGRADUATE HISTORICAL REVIEW VOLUME 3, ISSUE 2; SPRING 2013

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### ABOUT THE REVIEW

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## FROM THE EDITOR

It is the cadet editorial staff's pleasure to present the spring issue of *Report*. In an interesting shift of focus from last semester's more liberal subjects, a more military-minded theme pervades the topics of this issue. These articles embody the Mission of United States Military Academy's History Department, "to impart to cadets the historical knowledge, appreciate of history, and critical thinking and communication skills necessary to be successful leaders, able to understand human behavior, ideas, and actions in the global context."

I would like to thank our authors for the unique insight that they provide on their various topics. Matthew Shoen seeks to restore the public memory of two Civil War generals who defied their home states to fight for causes they believed in, while Rebekah Elizabeth Ross analyzes the political impact of comedian Charlie Chaplin. James Paulose, Austen Boroff, and Sean Sutter take us abroad to China, South Africa, and the Iberian Peninsula where they focus on various aspects of warfare. James examines Chinese strategy during the Battle of Shanghai, while Austen evaluates the Boer War as a counterinsurgency. Sean focuses on the intricacies of British cooperation with Spanish and Portuguese forces during the Peninsular War. Finally, in our two theses, James Fromson brings to light the "origins of pervious Shi'i political quiescence," while Peter Mitchell studies the impact of the Hohenzollern family's conversion to Calvinism.

For the past two years, it has truly been a pleasure working with the cadet editorial staff of *Report*, and I look forward to reading their selections in the years to come. After expanding our publication to undergraduates at colleges and universities across the United States, we would like to thank all of those who submitted for their interest in our journal, and encourage them to continue to submit and expand the scope and readership of *Report*. We would also like to express our gratitude to the History Department for its continued leadership and financial support for our publication. Finally, we extend our appreciation to Major Gregory Tomlin for his mentorship and welcome Major Andrew Forney, who joins *Report* as our new faculty advisor.

Tara C. Lacson  
Editor-in-Chief  
West Point, N.Y.



# NORTH AND SOUTH: THE DIVERGING PATHS OF GEORGE THOMAS AND JOHN PEMBERTON

BY  
MATTHEW SHOEN

*Matthew Shoen is pursuing a double major in History and Creative Writing from St. Lawrence University where he is entering his senior year and hoping to pursue an honors project on the interaction between Ancient Rome and 18<sup>th</sup> century Britain. Interested in the American Civil War since reading Shelby Foote's three part narrative on the subject, Matthew wrote this paper for his Civil War and Reconstruction class in the Fall 2012.*

The Civil War divided households as it did a nation. Brother fought brother as the fate of America hung in the balance. In Virginia, General George Thomas joined the Union to defend his country, turning his back on the still forming Confederacy. In Pennsylvania, General John Pemberton left the Union to follow the Confederates, his wife's people. Both generals were received by the Union and Confederate armies with suspicion and treated as traitors in their home states. Following his surrender at Vicksburg, Pemberton was treated as a traitor in the Confederacy as well. Despite how little of their memories resonate in the public domain, these men served in important capacities during the Civil War, working against suspicions which hung like a grey thunderhead over their every action. What is interesting, and ultimately tragic, about both Thomas and Pemberton is the lack of memory provoked by their names. They are both forgotten figures, swallowed up by the scope of the Civil War, despite the important roles they played in determining its outcome. The importance of restoring these two generals to the public memory cannot be underestimated. Without George Thomas and John Pemberton, a number of battles in the Western Theater lose their focus. We remember the victories of Grant and Sherman, but forget the battles they took no part in. The Virginia Theater is well remembered in the South, but the brave defense of Vicksburg is often forgotten. Remembering the commanders who fought these engagements is the first step in restoring our memory of the soldiers who died under their command.

John Pemberton joined a small circle of northern men who followed their southern wives into the Confederacy at the outbreak of the Civil War. The first two years of Pemberton's Civil War service involved coastal defense around Charleston. He was soon promoted to command

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the Department of Mississippi which entailed the defense of Vicksburg and the Mississippi River.<sup>1</sup> Few Mississippians were overjoyed at the idea of Pemberton's appointment to protect Vicksburg. Many complained that, "the curt and crusty Pemberton had compiled no combat record that justified to the Mississippians the assignment of the 'Yankee' to defend their state."<sup>2</sup> There was little love for Pemberton upon his arrival at Vicksburg though he frustrated Grant's efforts to attack the city from Memphis for six months. However, in April 1863 Grant crossed the Mississippi below Vicksburg and attacked the fortress city from the rear and forced Pemberton and Johnston to fight him on Mississippian territory. After a month of fighting, Grant reached Vicksburg where he launched two separate attacks before settling in for a siege which would last from May 18 to July 4.

Surrendering Vicksburg on the eighty-seventh anniversary of the signing of The Declaration of Independence was seen by many in the South as a betrayal. However in surrendering Vicksburg on July 4, Pemberton was using extremely astute logic. He stated, "I am a northern man. I know my people. I know their peculiar weaknesses and their national vanity; I know we can get better terms from them on the Fourth of July than on any other day of the year. We must sacrifice our pride to these considerations."<sup>3</sup> The memory of Grant's "Unconditional Surrender" probably loomed in Pemberton's mind as he offered terms, hoping to get his starved troops paroled rather than marched north to prison camps. Pemberton was successful. After initial bluster from Grant and his demand for unconditional surrender, the Union general backed down and took the city of Vicksburg on July 4, allowing Pemberton's hungry men to march out of the city and return to their homes. One cannot underestimate the benefit of Pemberton's strategic surrender date. On July 2, he asked his division commanders if their soldiers could "make the marches and undergo the fatigues necessary to accomplish a successful evacuation."<sup>4</sup> His men however, had been reduced to quarter rations, there were no animals left alive in the city and starvation was an undeniable reality.<sup>5</sup> It is doubtless that a number of Pemberton's troops would have died in the Union camps without his strategic terms of surrender. Despite

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<sup>1</sup> Shelby Foote, *The Civil War A Narrative: Fort Sumter to Perryville* (New York: Vintage Books, 1958), 776-78.

<sup>2</sup> James McPherson, *Battle Cry of Freedom* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988), 576.

<sup>3</sup> Shelby Foote, *The Civil War A Narrative: Fredericksburg to Meridian* (New York: Vintage Books, 1986), 607-08.

<sup>4</sup> Foote, *Fredericksburg*, 607.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

the hatred Pemberton garnered for his actions, it is impossible to ignore that his decision saved over 30,000 men from a great deal of torment and possibly death. As a commanding general he used the Fourth of July to his advantage and secured the best peace terms possible for his soldiers.

The Vicksburg campaign would be the death knell of Pemberton's career as a commanding general. However, despite the hounding he received from the southern public for what seemed to them a treacherous betrayal of the South, Pemberton retained the respect and trust of one man whose input was most important, Jefferson Davis. Paroled after the surrender, Pemberton requested a new assignment. Pemberton wrote Davis who responded with a very appeasing note, saying that to some men, "it is decreed that their success shall be denied or treaded as necessary result, and their failures imputed to incapacity to crime . . . General Lee and yourself have seemed to me to be examples of the second class, and my confidence has not been diminished."<sup>6</sup> Despite this sentiment, it was eight more months before Pemberton received a command, where he was demoted to a command position in the artillery corps. He took it in stride, however, and according to Shelby Foote, "Pemberton served out the war, often in the thick of battle, thereby demonstrating a greater devotion to the cause he had adopted than did many who had inherited it as a birthright."<sup>7</sup>

John Pemberton was among the few northerners who journeyed south in 1861, and in making the trek north, George Thomas was in an equally small minority, which included men such as David Farragut and Winfield Scott.<sup>8</sup> Like Pemberton, Thomas served in the Western Theater. There is no way to prove Thomas's northern wife influenced his decision as Pemberton's southern belle influenced his; however, it does make for interesting speculation given the comparison to Pemberton. What cannot be compared between Pemberton and Thomas are their military records. Thomas's actions between September and November of 1863 were some of the most important of the Civil War. Likewise, Thomas is barely remembered today. His victories placed him just below Sherman and Grant, insofar as importance to the war, but those successes did not translate into long-term public recognition.<sup>9</sup> Grant and Sherman both gave Thomas faint praise. Reflecting on Thomas's death Grant said,

The news was a shock and a grief to us both . . . The cause was fatty degeneration of the heart, if I remember.

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<sup>6</sup> Ibid., 645.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid., 646.

<sup>8</sup> McPherson, *Battle Cry of Freedom*, 281-82.

<sup>9</sup> Christopher Stowe, review of *George Thomas: Virginian for the Union*, by Christopher Einolf, in *Journal of Southern History* 75, no 3 (2009): 802-04.

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I have often thought that this disease, with him long-seated, may have led to the inertness which affected him as a commander . . . Thomas is one of the great names of our history, one of the great heroes of our war, a rare and noble character in every way worthy of his fame.<sup>10</sup>

Thomas was not a commander of the same style as Grant, Lee, or Sherman. He was a steady general, and his triumphs reflect this fact. His were victories without flash or fame; nonetheless, Thomas was a crucial figure in the eventual victory of the North, a fact that is forgotten much like his valiant service. In examining Thomas's most significant contributions, the most important battles to examine are Chickamauga in 1863 and Nashville in 1864. These two battles earned Thomas the bulk of his fame, and his actions in them led to the eventual collapse of Southern resistance west of the Appalachian Mountains.

The Battle of Chickamauga was fought on September 19 and 20, 1863 between Confederate General Braxton Bragg and U.S. General William Rosecrans (Thomas's superior). Bragg received Virginia reinforcements and attacked Rosecrans hoping to destroy his army and recapture the important rail hub of Chattanooga. The battle was decided on the second day when Rosecrans accidentally opened a gap in his line which the Confederates plunged through, breaking a large portion of the Army of the Cumberland and sent Rosecrans flying to the rear. Despite this collapse, Thomas stood his ground. Repeated attacks smashed into his line, but the Virginian held firm, protecting the army till nightfall came and allowed him to make an ordered withdrawal. In Chickamauga, the bloodiest battle of the Western Theater and with potential to be the most important strategic victory of the Confederate war effort, Thomas limited the gains of Bragg's army. Instead of routing the entirety of the Union forces Bragg only induced a portion to flee, and found himself unable to quickly follow-up the triumph due to Thomas's stubborn defense. After Thomas finally withdrew, Bragg looked over the field. In his official report of the battle Bragg stated, "Any immediate pursuit by our infantry and artillery would have been fruitless . . . it was not deemed practicable with our weak and exhausted force to assail the enemy."<sup>11</sup> A major portion of the Confederate dead had died fighting Thomas and the men who rallied to his command. Had he broken alongside Rosecrans, the battle would have likely ended in the recapture of Chattanooga by the

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<sup>10</sup> William Tecumseh Sherman, "Grant, Thomas, Lee," *The North American Review* 144, no. 336 (1887): 448.

<sup>11</sup> Foote, *Fredericksburg*, 759.

Confederacy and possibly the destruction of the entire Army of the Cumberland. Thomas was successful and the army, though defeated, was not destroyed. Reinforced soon after and put under the command of Thomas, the Army of the Cumberland would recover itself and serve on numerous campaigns before the Civil War ended.

Although Chickamauga was a Union defeat, disaster was averted through Thomas's resolute defense. The Battle of Nashville at the end of 1864, on the other hand, was a triumph which saw the end of major Confederate resistance in the Western Theater.<sup>12</sup> The Battle of Nashville occurred as a direct result of Sherman's capture of Atlanta in September 1864. Rather than fight the Yankee army through Georgia, John Bell Hood decided to take his men and march north into Tennessee, to carry the war into Northern territory.<sup>13</sup> Thomas opposed Hood with 60,000 men whom he concentrated around Nashville which Hood reached on December 1. For two weeks Thomas waited, concentrating his forces and preparing his men for battle. Grant and Lincoln tried to hurry Thomas, but he took his time and did not engage Hood until December 15. For Thomas, Nashville was a simple victory. He outnumbered the Confederates by almost 20,000 men and was far better supplied than Hood. However, the entire Civil War had seen these sorts of advantages where both sides fought battles and achieved victory despite numerical or logistical disadvantages. Thomas was a skilled enough commander to wait and not give into the pressures of Washington and the Northern public. Instead he attacked when he was ready and won a smashing victory which sent Hood's army into a precipitous retreat. Thomas pursued Hood into Alabama before the broken Confederate army finally escaped him. In early January, General P. G. T. Beauregard was sent to inspect Hood's army to attempt to take troops from it to oppose Sherman in the Carolinas. Beauregard described the army as, "if not, in the strictest sense of the words, a disorganized mob . . . it was no longer an army."<sup>14</sup> Where there had been 40,000 troops, now only around 18,000 were effective soldiers. Many of these troops were disbanded or sent east to attempt to stop Sherman's advance through the Carolinas. However, it became undeniable that Confederate resistance in the west had ended and that George Thomas had broken the last army capable of sustaining a war in the region.

In comparing Pemberton to Thomas, one runs into the immediate difficulty of the differences between their two service records. Pemberton's efforts in the war were largely defined by the Vicksburg

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<sup>12</sup> Shelby Foote, *The Civil War A Narrative: Red River to Appomattox* (New York: Vintage Books, 1974), 756-58.

<sup>13</sup> McPherson, *Battle Cry of Freedom*, 809.

<sup>14</sup> P. G. T. Beauregard, quoted in Foote, *Red River*, 758.

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Campaign while Thomas stepped towards the limelight after Chickamauga. Furthermore, the west was the site of the South's great defeats and conversely the North's great triumphs. Yet, what is interesting about both Thomas and Pemberton is the lack of memory provoked by their names. However, despite how poorly these generals are remembered in popular memory, their actions cannot be forgotten. Pemberton served a side which actively distrusted him and following his defeat at Vicksburg would not forgive him. Thomas's battlefield success kept him from suffering the same distrust which dogged Pemberton, a situation that one major defeat would have reversed. Both Pemberton and Thomas, despite how different their experiences of the war were, deserve great respect for their actions. They fought for something they believed in, forsaking ties to home to defend what they considered to be right. After the war Thomas attempted to aid his struggling family who burned his checks because of the disgrace they felt; while after his death several prominent Pennsylvanian citizens attempted to have his body disinterred from the cemetery where it was buried. Regardless of their personalities, the trauma they suffered as traitors to the causes of their birthplaces deserves respect and remembrance.

# THREE MONTHS OF BLOODSHED: STRATEGY AND COMBAT DURING THE BATTLE OF SHANGHAI

BY  
JAMES PAULOSE

*James Paulose is a junior studying Government and History at Georgetown University. He wrote this paper for a course on conflict in Asia to analyze military strategy during the Second Sino-Japanese War. James chose to write about the Battle of Shanghai after studying with Dr. Phillip A. Karber, an Asian military history and national security expert, in the Fall 2012.*

## INTRODUCTION

“It was no longer a war between armies, but between races.”<sup>1</sup>

The Battle of Shanghai was fought from 13 August to 26 November 1937 between the National Revolutionary Army of the Republic of China and the Imperial Japanese Army of the Empire of Japan. The battle was the first major engagement between both sides during the Second Sino-Japanese War. Chinese forces initiated combat in Shanghai to stall the rapid Japanese advance in the mainland, and the conflict extended to outlying towns and the beaches of the Jiangsu coast before the Chinese forces retreated and Japan took control of the city. One of the largest and bloodiest battles of the war, the Battle of Shanghai marked the beginning of full-scale warfare following years of political tension resulting from the Japanese occupation of much of mainland China. Political and military records reveal that Chinese strategic errors and inadequate weaponry ultimately negated its numerical superiority as the gamble to hold out for international support failed. Initiating the battle should not be considered a mistake, however, since it prevented the loss of Central China and symbolized the Chinese will to resist invasion at all costs.

## CONTEXT

A de facto state of war had existed between China and Japan since the Japanese invasion of Manchuria in 1931.<sup>2</sup> General Zhang Zhizhong, a veteran of the First Battle of Shanghai in 1932, had been training men for

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<sup>1</sup> Dick Wilson, *When Tigers Fight: The Story of the Sino-Japanese War, 1937-1945* (New York, NY: The Viking Press, 1982), 37.

<sup>2</sup> Hsu Long-hsuen and Chang Ming-kai, *History of the Sino-Japanese War (1937-1945)*. 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. (Taipei, Taiwan: Chung Wu Publishing Co, 1985), 9.

the defense of the city since the battle under the disguise of police training. Zhizhong and other Chinese leaders gained confidence from this past experience and believed that the Chinese army should use its numerical superiority to take the initiative and push the Japanese to the sea before they had a chance to reinforce the coastline.<sup>3</sup> Chinese air defense and coastal reconnaissance patrols were strengthened between July and August 1937 in the Nanjing-Shanghai-Hangchow area.<sup>4</sup> Several defensive lines were also constructed under German guidance between Shanghai and Nanjing in anticipation of a future battle. The Marco Polo Bridge Incident on July 7 signified the beginning of the Sino-Japanese War, but construction of the defensive lines had just barely been completed by August, and the Chinese troops were not yet experienced in holding the fortifications.<sup>5</sup>

In addition to these developments, the Oyama Incident immediately before the battle indicated that conflict in Shanghai was imminent. On August 9, First Lieutenant Isao Oyama of the Japanese Naval Special Landing Forces attempted to enter the grounds of the Hungchiao Airport in Shanghai, violating the terms of the ceasefire after the 1932 battle.<sup>6</sup> Oyama was subsequently killed by Chinese policemen, which drew an objection from Japanese officials. With Japanese troops already underway for Shanghai, the Chinese regarded the Japanese pursuit of this issue as a deliberate attempt to create a pretext for an already-planned invasion.<sup>7</sup> Chiang Kai-Shek broke the Chinese end of the peace agreement by moving his troops into Shanghai on August 11. Western powers convened on August 12 in an attempt to restore the peace to protect their industrial and commercial interests in Shanghai. At the following meeting of the International Committee for the Enforcement of the Peace Agreement of 1932, both sides charged each other with violations of the agreement, and the Japanese demanded that all Chinese troops and the Chinese police force, the Peace Preservation Corps, disarm.<sup>8</sup> These events created the hostile and uncertain atmosphere that led to the ensuing battle.

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<sup>3</sup> Peter C. Chen, "Second Battle of Shanghai," World War II Database, [http://ww2db.com/battle\\_spec.php?battle\\_id=85](http://ww2db.com/battle_spec.php?battle_id=85) (accessed September 30, 2012).

<sup>4</sup> Hu Pu-yu, *A Brief History of Sino-Japanese War (1937-1945)* (Taipei, Taiwan: Chung Wu Publishing Co, 1974), 145.

<sup>5</sup> Chen, "Second Battle of Shanghai."

<sup>6</sup> Wilson, *When Tigers Fight*, 30.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, 31.

<sup>8</sup> *Critical Readings on Japan, 1906-1948: Countering Japan's Agenda and the Communist Menace in East Asia*, Series 2: Pamphlets and Press, A Collection in Ten Volumes, Volume 5, *We Speak for China, 1938-1948*, Peter O'Connor, ed. (Tokyo, Japan: Global Oriental, 2011), 265.

## OBJECTIVES

## CHINESE OBJECTIVES

Chiang Kai-Shek decided to lead China into total war with Japan for financial, strategic, and political reasons. The Chinese initiated intense resistance at Shanghai to stall the rapid Japanese advance to allow the Chinese government to move vital industries to the interior while bringing sympathetic western powers to China's side: "Chiang's decision to commit the bulk of his modern forces in the battle of Shanghai in 1937 was influenced by the realization that Anglo-American interests were centered in Shanghai."<sup>9</sup> As Shanghai's trade fell from \$31 million in June to eventually just \$6.7 million in October, the desire to involve Britain and the United States, though not the sole reason, became a significant factor in the decision to attack at Shanghai.<sup>10</sup>

The opening of a second front in Shanghai followed a strategy of trading space for time, the goal of which was to keep Japanese troops close to the coast to ensure that, should they continue to advance on Chinese troops, they would be forced to advance in a westward direction which would allow the Chinese to retreat to Nanjing.<sup>11</sup> The Japanese north-to-south advancement prior to the battle had forced the Chinese to defend along a horizontal axis which they were incapable of doing. Japanese qualitative and quantitative troop superiority in North China, the reinforcement of Japanese troops from Korea and Manchukuo, limited Chinese capability to transport troops to North China, and possible entrapment if Japan pushed Chinese forces east toward the seas made such a defense by the Chinese impractical.<sup>12</sup> Furthermore, Japan would have been able to use the Peking-Pukow railway to divide China into two halves longitudinally and easily wipe out isolated Chinese forces to the east and the west.<sup>13</sup> The Chinese wanted to draw the Japanese away from the north and into the lower Yangtze. Shanghai was the best place to launch an attack for this strategy since concentrating Chinese troops in Nanjing or other surrounding cities instead could have allowed the Japanese to concentrate between Nanjing and Shanghai and overtake one more

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<sup>9</sup> John W. Garver, "China's Wartime Diplomacy" in *China's Bitter Victory: The War with Japan 1937-1945*, James C. Hsiung and Steven I. Levine, eds. (Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, Inc, 1992), 124.

<sup>10</sup> Long-hsuen and Ming-kai, *History of the Sino-Japanese War*, 83.

<sup>11</sup> Hsi-Sheng Ch'i, *Nationalist China at War: Military Defeats and Political Collapse, 1937-45* (Ann Arbor, MI: The University of Michigan Press, 1982), 41.

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

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

easily.<sup>14</sup>

Though Chiang Kai-Shek gained unprecedented popularity leading up to the war and was viewed as the only leader who could conduct the war effort, the Nationalist government suffered a major credibility gap by 1937 for not resisting Japanese aggression.<sup>15</sup> Thus, for reasons of political legitimacy, Chiang could not back down and was compelled to take a political gamble by initiating a direct battle against Japan. Since Shanghai was at the core of the Nationalists' administration and the West had political and economic ties to the city, Chiang decided it would be the ideal place to make a stand against the Japanese given his political goals. The government had a vested interest in protecting Kiangsu and Chekiang because they were the Nationalists' base of political and economic power and the provinces that the government could most realistically prepare for a war.<sup>16</sup>

#### JAPANESE OBJECTIVES

Japan had been focused on North China since the start of the war, but there were disagreements among the military on strategy regarding Shanghai. The navy wanted to increase troop presence in Shanghai to protect Japanese factories and citizens, but the army refused to do so until early August, and the army also believed that there was no need to enter Central China.<sup>17</sup> Still, the Japanese military as a whole was well prepared to meet the numerically superior but under-equipped and poorly trained Chinese army. Initial Japanese actions in Shanghai during this period suggested that they wanted to avoid a conflict in the city given their evacuation of nationals and maintenance of only 3,500 to 4,000 troops, a relatively small force.<sup>18</sup> However, Japan's ruling groups eventually became convinced that war was necessary both to consolidate their home front and to break China's growing unity and strength. A campaign restricted to the north might have been prolonged indefinitely without seriously affecting the military strength or economic resources of the Chinese government.<sup>19</sup> Thus, to significantly weaken China, Japan would have to undertake operations in its vital city of Shanghai.<sup>20</sup> The Japanese engaged in military exercises around Shanghai prior to the battle to irritate

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<sup>14</sup> Ibid.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid., 45.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

<sup>17</sup> Wilson, *When Tigers Fight*, 38-39.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid., 33.

<sup>19</sup> T.A. Bisson, *Japan in China* (New York, NY: Octagon Books, 1973), 276.

<sup>20</sup> Frank Dorn, *The Sino-Japanese War, 1937-41: From Marco Polo Bridge to Pearl Harbor* (New York, NY: Macmillan, 1974), 190.

the Chinese.<sup>21</sup> Even so, Japan sent an army of only 200,000 into China which was known to have an army of at least 3,000,000. The best explanation for this is that Japan concluded that China's political, economic, and social structure was so weak that national solidarity was not possible.<sup>22</sup> The bloody three-month campaign that followed demonstrated that this was a major miscalculation of Chinese morale.

#### INITIAL PERIOD OF CAMPAIGN: STAGE ONE

Stage one of the Battle of Shanghai lasted from August 13 to August 22 as the Chinese army attempted to eradicate Japanese troops in downtown Shanghai. It was characterized by urban fighting and resulted in an early stalemate with heavy losses and minimal changes to the front line. Despite extensive Chinese air operations, they were mostly unsuccessful because the Chinese air force was inferior to the Japanese air force.<sup>23</sup> The total number of Chinese forces involved in the entire battle was comprised of 600,000 troops, 250 airplanes, and 16 tanks. Japanese forces were comprised of 300,000 troops, 3,000 airplanes, 300 tanks, and 130 naval ships.<sup>24</sup> The immense casualties during this stage signaled the destruction that would come with the goal of controlling Shanghai at all costs. "More than two thirds of my 15,000 soldiers died within the initial stages of the battle for Shanghai," said Commander Sun Yuanliang of the Chinese 36<sup>th</sup> Division.<sup>25</sup>

On August 13, over 10,000 Japanese troops entered the suburbs of Shanghai, and fighting broke out in Zhabei, Wusong, and Jiangwan districts. On August 14, the Nationalist government issued the Proclamation of Self-Defense and War of Resistance, and Chinese aircraft initiated bombing of Japanese positions while Japanese aircraft from Taiwan simultaneously bombed the city.<sup>26</sup> The Chinese 4<sup>th</sup> Flying Group, led by Captain Gao Zhihang, countered the Japanese bombings by shooting down six Japanese aircraft without suffering any casualties. Nevertheless, Chinese aircraft were few in number and lacked proper replacement parts for repairs. Despite Chinese aircraft shooting down eighty-five Japanese aircraft and sinking fifty-one ships by the end of the battle, the ninety-one losses represented nearly half of China's total

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<sup>21</sup> Ibid., 69.

<sup>22</sup> Evans Fordyce Carlson, "Strategy of the Sino-Japanese War," *Far Eastern Survey*, vol. 10, no. 9 (19 May 1941): 100.

<sup>23</sup> Wilson, *When Tigers Fight*, 31.

<sup>24</sup> Chen, "Second Battle of Shanghai."

<sup>25</sup> Ibid.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid.

available combat aircraft.<sup>27</sup> Furthermore, the civilians who had not left the city prior to the battle began fleeing in waves, creating chaos on the ground. By the end of the battle, over tens of thousands of civilians died as a direct result of the bombings.<sup>28</sup> Chinese troops launched a counterattack on the ground while the air battle was taking place, but they were too lightly-armed to overtake the heavily fortified Japanese troops in the international zone, and the counterattack failed.<sup>29</sup>

Japan declared general mobilization on August 15 and dispatched two corps to Peiping-Tientsin. Two divisions were also moved to Shanghai in an attempt to destroy Chinese forces in Hopei, take Shanghai, and threaten Nanjing, thereby forcing China to surrender.<sup>30</sup> The next day, Zhang ordered his troops to burn down Japanese-held buildings and then gun down fleeing troops with strategically-located machine guns. The Japanese, however, deployed light tanks that halted this strategy.<sup>31</sup> Chiang criticized Zhang for the heavy casualties and inability to penetrate Japanese lines early during the battle despite Chinese numerical superiority, and Chiang would eventually assume the role of overall commander in the battle.<sup>32</sup> On August 18, the Chinese 36<sup>th</sup> Division arrived as reinforcement and attacked the docks at Hueishan. The 87<sup>th</sup> Division simultaneously coordinated a counterattack at Yangshupu to increase the pressure on Japanese troops. Supported by tanks, the 36th Division drove off the Japanese defenders at Hueishan, but the lack of tank-infantry coordination quickly led to the loss of the docks once again. The attack eventually failed with the Chinese losing ninety officers and over 1,000 men.<sup>33</sup>

Although the orders included instructions to destroy the enemy, they contained no tactical plan for doing so.<sup>34</sup> Chiang Kai-shek issued his first set of operational orders on August 20 which contained hedging expressions, such as “attack gradually” and rhetoric such as “assault regardless of sacrifices.”<sup>35</sup> The Japanese reinforced the city on August 22, landing General Iwane Matsui's 3<sup>rd</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup>, and 11<sup>th</sup> Divisions at Chuanshakou, Shizilin, and Baoshan just northeast of Shanghai under the cover of naval guns. The landing drew out some Chinese troops from the

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<sup>27</sup> Ibid.

<sup>28</sup> O'Connor, *Critical Readings on Japan*, 266-67.

<sup>29</sup> Long-hsuen and Ming-kai, *History of the Sino-Japanese War*, 206.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid., 176; and O'Connor, *Critical Readings on Japan*, 207-08.

<sup>31</sup> Chen, “Second Battle of Shanghai.”

<sup>32</sup> Ibid.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid.

<sup>34</sup> Dorn, *The Sino-Japanese War*, 72.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid.

city, but naval bombardment prevented them from disrupting the landing.<sup>36</sup> The Chinese forces instead set up a line of defense at the Lotien-Shuangtsaoten section of a major railroad network by September 11.<sup>37</sup> Though General Li Zongren advised Chiang to only make limited engagements and preserve the army's strength for a future confrontation further inland where the Chinese could fight on more favorable terms, Chiang refused and ordered the outmatched Chinese troops to prevent the assault from the approaching Japanese forces.<sup>38</sup>

## STAGE TWO

Stage two lasted from August 23 to October 26 as the Japanese launched amphibious landings on the Jiangsu coast. This stage of the battle included house-to-house street battles with the Japanese attempting to gain control of the city and the surrounding regions. This was the bloodiest and most intense period of fighting as demonstrated by the loss of entire Chinese units defending against Japanese landings at Baoshan. Fighting during this period extended beyond Shanghai into the surrounding suburbs of Jiangyin, Luodian, and Dachang. The Chinese fought a battle of attrition in these regions, sustaining massive casualties in the face of superior firepower and poorly coordinated counteroffensives until they could no longer hold their defensive positions. The loss of these surrounding towns as well as continued losses in Shanghai itself forced Chinese forces to begin retreating from the city as they became fully surrounded by Japanese forces.

On August 23, Matsui made another large-scale landing at Liuhe, Wusung, and Chuanshakou. The Chinese 18th Division under the command of Chen Cheng attempted to counter the new wave of Japanese landings, but the counterattack failed again under the firepower of Japanese naval gun support.<sup>39</sup> Cheng turned to night attacks which were successful in overtaking several villages, but the Chinese continuously lost these captured villages again during the day.<sup>40</sup> By the end of August, the Chinese 98th Division was practically wiped out in its defense of Baoshan. Chiang Kai-shek's second set of orders were given on September 6, and they directed the cessation of the general offensive, a movement that had not yet been initiated by the Chinese, and ordered a campaign of harassment and containment.<sup>41</sup> These orders still contained no plan of

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<sup>36</sup> Ibid., 72-74.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid., 73.

<sup>38</sup> Chen, "Second Battle of Shanghai."

<sup>39</sup> Ibid.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid.

<sup>41</sup> Dorn, *The Sino-Japanese War*, 72.

battle other than to make a stand to the last man. On September 12, Chinese representatives requested intervention from the League of Nations, but there was no significant intervention. The Chinese then sought American aid and hoped that this would in turn garner further international support.<sup>42</sup> Thus, Chiang continued to order his field commanders to hold Shanghai for as long as possible at all costs, hopeful for a diplomatic resolution.

The Chinese strategic directive called for the encirclement of the Japanese settlement and for the blockade of the coast against Japanese reinforcements in order to drive them into the sea. However, the Japanese gained control of Wusung by September 1, and so the Chinese were forced to switch to positional warfare and hold their positions for as long as possible.<sup>43</sup> Chiang Kai-shek issued his third set of orders on September 21 which made command adjustments and new unit designations.<sup>44</sup> As a result, the Chinese had deployed about seventy-one divisions, five artillery regiments, and garrison units totaling 500,000 troops by October; the Japanese Shanghai Expeditionary Force under the command of General Matsui consisted of six divisions and five to six independent brigades, complete with air and naval support, totaling 200,000 troops.<sup>45</sup> The superior air and naval forces proved to be the difference in Shanghai and the surrounding towns despite China's numerical advantage.

#### THE BATTLE OF JIANGYIN

The Battle of Jiangyin occurred from August 16 to October 30, one-hundred kilometers northwest of Shanghai. Chinese Secretary of the Navy Chen Shaokuan ordered a blockade on August 7 at Jiangyin with a force of five light cruisers and one training cruiser along with several mines to prevent Japanese warships from entering the Yangtze River.<sup>46</sup> This force sunk forty-three military and 185 civilian Japanese ships between August 11 and August 25. Liu Xing was the commanding officer of all Chinese defenses at Jiangyin with direct command over the First Fleet. The Second Fleet, under the command of Ouyang Ge, was dispatched further up the river toward Nanjing. Admiral Kiyoshi Hasegawa of the Japanese 3rd Fleet ordered aerial bombings of the forces at Jiangyin with carrier and ground-based aircraft, which led to the sinking of ten Chinese ships by October 23.<sup>47</sup> Despite these losses, the Chinese

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<sup>42</sup> Chen, "Second Battle of Shanghai."

<sup>43</sup> Ch'i, *Nationalist China at War*, 42.

<sup>44</sup> Dorn, *The Sino-Japanese War*, 73.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*; and *Nationalist China at War*, 42.

<sup>46</sup> Chen, "Second Battle of Shanghai."

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

navy recovered some of the naval guns from the sunken ships and deployed them on land as coastal batteries, thus maintaining a defensive position at Jiangyin.<sup>48</sup>

#### THE BATTLE OF LUODIAN

The Battle of Luodian occurred from September 11 to 15 in the suburban transportation center. Under the advice of Chiang's German advisor, Alexander von Falkenhausen, 300,000 Chinese troops were ordered to defend the town from over 100,000 Japanese troops that attacked with artillery, tanks, naval support, and aerial support. The Chinese troops fought valiantly in the face of immense firepower. "Defending in depth, the frontlines were manned with a minimal number of men while the rest of the forces were held in reserve, charging forward only when the artillery fire and naval bombardment ceased and the Japanese ground troops charged forth."<sup>49</sup> However, the Chinese still suffered an immense casualty rate of 50 percent, and they were forced to retreat when Luodian could no longer be held.

#### THE BATTLE OF DACHANG

The Battle of Dachang occurred from October 1 to 25 in what was the Chinese Army's communications center. Crossing the Yunzaobin River south of Luodian, freshly reinforced with men from Japan and Taiwan, the Japanese troops aimed to take Dachang. If Dachang were to fall, the Chinese troops in eastern Shanghai would become exposed, magnifying the significance of the town. The ensuing battle of attrition depleted the Chinese forces that were forced to use suicide charges against machine gun nests and artillery placements to counter the superior Japanese firepower. The Guanxi Army under Li Zongren and Bai Chongxi arrived on October 17 and allowed the defending forces to orchestrate a counterattack, but it eventually failed.<sup>50</sup> Dachang fell under Japanese control on October 25, forcing Chinese troops to withdraw from parts of Shanghai.

#### END OF CAMPAIGN: STAGE THREE

The third and final stage of the Battle of Shanghai lasted from October 27 to November 26 as the Chinese army retreated in the face of Japanese flanking maneuvers with ensuing combat on the road to Nanjing. Chiang Kai-Shek defiantly held out hope that a skirmish near the

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<sup>48</sup> Ibid.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid.

international settlement would elicit a Western response, and so a small token Chinese force was charged with defending Sihang Warehouse where they heroically held off the numerically superior Japanese forces. Japanese landings south of Shanghai, however, forced the Chinese to retreat while simultaneously fighting landings at Suzhou Creek. The Japanese air force destroyed most of the bridges and greatly impeded the speed of retreat, allowing mechanized Japanese units to massacre the retreating Chinese.<sup>51</sup>

#### THE BATTLE OF SIHANG WAREHOUSE

The Battle of Sihang Warehouse occurred from October 27 to November 1. While troops began to retreat from the areas north of the international settlement, Chiang knew that Westerners were still observing from the international zone immediately across the Suzhou River. To make sure that China remained on the forefront of the world stage, he ordered the Chinese 88th Division to defend an area on the north bank of the Suzhou River which contained the Sihang Warehouse. Chiang hoped that Western observers from across the river would send news and photographs back to their home countries that would trigger international condemnation of Japanese aggression at the upcoming Brussels Conference scheduled to take place on November 6.<sup>52</sup> However, Sun Yuanliang, the commander of the 88<sup>th</sup> Division strongly opposed this plan that would leave his men behind to sustain heavy losses. Instead, Sun decided to leave a single battalion behind as a token defense which would fulfill Chiang's wish for a demonstration for the Western observers. "It would achieve the same purpose no matter how many people we sacrifice," said Sun.<sup>53</sup>

The 3<sup>rd</sup> Japanese Division under Matsui advanced to the warehouse after taking Shanghai North Railway Station, but the first assault was ineffective. To avoid provoking international incidents, the Japanese decided against aerial and mortar bombarding, fearful that stray shells might land in the international zone south of the warehouse.<sup>54</sup> For the next few days, the Japanese tried repeatedly to capture the warehouse to no avail. Chiang Kai-Shek got the community and international support he sought given that some of the intelligence that the Chinese defenders received was provided by local civilians across the river.<sup>55</sup> Chiang allowed the defenders to withdraw from the warehouse on October 31 after hearing

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<sup>51</sup> Ch'i, *Nationalist China at War*, 42.

<sup>52</sup> Chen, "Second Battle of Shanghai."

<sup>53</sup> Ibid.

<sup>54</sup> O'Connor, *Critical Readings on Japan*, 273-75.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid.

petitions from western officials in the international zone who sought to prevent the eventual demise of the defenders despite their proven valor against the overwhelming Japanese forces.<sup>56</sup> Although the combat did not last until the start of the Brussels Conference, Chiang believed that the defense of the Sihang Warehouse had achieved the necessary level of publicity to put the Sino-Japanese conflict on the global stage as he had sought.<sup>57</sup> The defense of Sihang Warehouse provided a boost in morale and nationalism among the Chinese and would be used as propaganda in the years to come.<sup>58</sup>

#### THE FALL OF SHANGHAI AND CONCLUSION OF THE BATTLE

On November 5, General Yanagawa's 19<sup>th</sup> Japanese Corps of 30,000 men successfully landed at Jinshanwei, thirty miles south of Shanghai while Chinese troops were tied up in the northern regions of the city. This massive influx that left Shanghai encircled by Japanese troops, combined with the lack of an adequate international response, forced Chiang to abandon his Shanghai strategy and to issue a general retreat order on November 8.<sup>59</sup> The Chinese retreated along the Nanjing-Shanghai railway and set up defenses around the capital. While Chinese forces were withdrawing from metropolitan Shanghai, there was simultaneous fighting around Suzhou Creek as the Japanese made further landings at Jinshanwei.<sup>60</sup> Japanese troops broke through the Chinese lines of defense at Kunshan on November 10, the Wufu Line on November 19, and the Xicheng Line on November 26, and they captured Jiangyin in early November as the Chinese Army continued to retreat to Nanjing.<sup>61</sup>

By the end of the three-month conflict, the casualties on both sides were severe. Japan suffered 92,640 casualties out of the 300,000 troops engaged, and China suffered over 333,500 casualties out of the 700,000 troops engaged, including casualties among many of the elite German-trained units of the Chinese Army.<sup>62</sup> The loss of these experienced young officers severely set the Chinese resistance back in the following years during the Second Sino-Japanese War. Included among the casualties were eighty-five destroyed Japanese planes, fifty-one destroyed Japanese ships, and ninety-one destroyed Chinese planes.<sup>63</sup> China in particular

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<sup>56</sup> Ibid.

<sup>57</sup> Chen, "Second Battle of Shanghai."

<sup>58</sup> O'Conoor, *Critical Readings on Japan*, 273-75.

<sup>59</sup> Bisson, *Japan in China*, 285.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid., 286.

<sup>62</sup> Dorn, *The Sino-Japanese War*, 90.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid.

reeled from a loss of its central army military strength following the battle.<sup>64</sup>

China failed to elicit sufficient international intervention on its behalf, nor did it inspire significant involvement from foreign residents of Shanghai.<sup>65</sup> Chiang did suffer politically as a result of the loss, but China's stubborn defense in the face of the heavily armed Japanese gave the international community some confidence in China's ability to resist occupation despite the heavy losses.<sup>66</sup> The three-month resistance also enabled China to relocate some of its industrial capability further inland. Though this was only a relatively small amount and China actually had many factories destroyed during the battle, China's persistence once again instilled confidence among foreigners and the Chinese themselves that Japanese occupation could be fought.<sup>67</sup> After the Japanese victory, the Japanese garrison in Shanghai was increased to 300,000 men while British, French, American, and Chinese troops in the International Settlement totaled less than 8,000.<sup>68</sup> Japan controlled the countryside in all directions, the northern and eastern areas of the International Settlement, and Potung which was the industrial center across the Whangpoo River.<sup>69</sup>

#### CRITIQUE OF CAMPAIGN

As historian Dick Wilson observed, "The Battle of Shanghai was eight Chinese divisions, unprotected by planes or tanks, being chewed up piecemeal over three months of costly and heroic resistance within the sight of Japanese naval guns."<sup>70</sup>

The Battle of Shanghai was the first large-scale confrontation between the armies of China and Japan, and it proved to be among the bloodiest. What was expected by Japan to be a mere three day battle turned into three of the most violent and grueling months of the entire war. The Chinese troops were hastily assembled against a smaller but much better equipped Japanese force. The Chinese had inferior weapons compared to the heavily mechanized invading Japanese who used naval gunfire and planes to coordinate the actions of their reinforcements.<sup>71</sup> Chinese forces lacked powerful armor-piercing weapons and could not

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<sup>64</sup> Ibid., 98.

<sup>65</sup> Ibid., 90.

<sup>66</sup> Chen, "Second Battle of Shanghai."

<sup>67</sup> Ibid.

<sup>68</sup> Ibid.

<sup>69</sup> William W. Lockwood Jr, "Shanghai Faces Uncertainty," *Far Eastern Survey*, vol. 6, no. 24, (1 December 1937): 276.

<sup>70</sup> Wilson, *When Tigers Fight*, 46.

<sup>71</sup> Pu-yu, *A Brief History*, 111.

effectively neutralize enemy ships or clear street obstacles. The only cover that Chinese forces had within the city and the suburbs were buildings that were inadequate to protect them. The Japanese, intent upon delivering a knock-out blow, also increased their military strength to 200,000 men to further reduce China's numerical advantage.<sup>72</sup> As a result, sixty percent of China's modern army was lost at Shanghai with particularly high casualties among the junior officers.<sup>73</sup>

Strategic errors combined with inadequate weaponry delivered a devastating blow to China. The Chinese defense could have held out longer if it had not been negligent and had not relaxed its control of the shores of Hangzhou Bay, to the south of Shanghai, where the Japanese landed their Tenth Army under General Yanagawa Heisuke on November 5.<sup>74</sup> Soviet advisers in China also criticized the way that Chinese infantry units attacked in close formation, leaving them more susceptible to the mechanized Japanese units. Finally, many have argued that Chiang Kai-shek's belief in foreign intervention led to the trap of the Battle of Shanghai and the further loss of Nanjing.<sup>75</sup>

China's leaders realized that there was little historical precedent for foreign intervention, especially given the lack of response to earlier Japanese aggression during the first battle in Shanghai in 1932.<sup>76</sup> China recognized that Japan's policy toward north China was governed by geopolitical concerns that could be best taken care of by military means while policy toward central China was marked by willingness to accept the international framework to promote economic interests.<sup>77</sup> If China had deliberately created a new front in Shanghai to provoke foreign intervention, there would have been at best only a cease-fire in Shanghai with conflict in north China still occurring, and the Chinese government realized this.<sup>78</sup> Thus, Chiang Kai-Shek's gamble for foreign intervention should not be viewed as the primary objective of the Chinese initiated battle, but rather as a strategy to attempt to obtain the maximum amount of balance against Japan through military and diplomatic means.

While these results reflected a resounding, albeit hard-fought, tactical victory for Japan, China did achieve minor operational success. Shifting the main battlefield from North China to Shanghai forced Japan to alter its favorable north-south axis of operations to an unfavorable east-

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<sup>72</sup> Ibid.

<sup>73</sup> Ibid., 75.

<sup>74</sup> Wilson, *When Tigers Fight*, 42.

<sup>75</sup> Dorn, *The Sino-Japanese War*, 66.

<sup>76</sup> Ch'i, *Nationalist China at War*, 43.

<sup>77</sup> Ibid., 45.

<sup>78</sup> Ibid.

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west inland and uphill fight. Thus, bringing the fight to Shanghai prevented Japan from cutting right into Central China as the Chinese traded space for time. Finally, Chinese resistance shocked and demoralized the Japanese who had been indoctrinated with notions of cultural and martial superiority. China's willingness to sacrifice its most modern city in order to resist invasion reflected a sense of pride and patriotism that the Japanese did not expect, and it provided a glimmer of hope during China's darkest hour.

# THE SPANISH ULCER: BRITISH COOPERATION DURING THE PENINSULAR WAR

BY  
SEAN D. SUTTER

*Sean D. Sutter is a junior studying Military History at the United States Military Academy. He wrote this paper for a course over the evolution of warfare during the Napoleonic Wars. Sutter found the British military's ability to cooperate in great depth with their Spanish and Portuguese counterparts during the Peninsular War to be unique, compared to other coalitions that faced Napoleon that were notorious for their lack of cooperation with one another.*

During the Napoleonic Wars that raged in Europe from 1803-1814, several nations fought collectively in various attempts to hinder Napoleon's ever-growing empire on the European continent, which at its greatest point stretched from the Lisbon in the west to Moscow in the east. These coalitions, which included at various times Great Britain, Spain, and Portugal, sought to reestablish pre-Napoleonic Europe through cooperation on both a strategic and operational scale. A prime example of this is demonstrated in the Peninsular War that raged from 1807-1814 in which troops from the Fifth Coalition fought together on the Iberian Peninsula. During this protracted war against Napoleonic France, the success of coalition forces on the Iberian Peninsula hinged greatly on Great Britain and her ability to cooperate with the allied militaries of Spain and Portugal.

Prior to the invasions of Portugal and Spain in 1807 and 1808 respectively, British military operations in Europe were limited to small-scale raids which had been made possible by British naval supremacy and the constant blockade of the continent. However, popular uprisings after the fall of the Portuguese and Spanish governments and solicitations from Spanish juntas for British military support allowed the British government to begin planning for a military intervention on the Iberian Peninsula.<sup>1</sup> After the defeat of French forces at Baylen at the hand of Spanish general Francisco Castanos, the British decided to land 30,000 troops in Portugal under then Lieutenant General Arthur Wellesley, who would later become the Duke of Wellington.

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<sup>1</sup> The juntas that attempted to rule Spain after French occupation consisted of several local administrations that were centered on pre-invasion municipalities, and were often disorganized and fragmented. Alexander Shand, *The War In the Peninsula*, (Seeley, 1898), v-vi.

With the introduction of British forces on the Iberian Peninsula also came immediate cooperation with Portuguese, and later Spanish, militias and regular army troops. While Spanish, British, and Portuguese forces often operated independently, it was just as common for the coalition forces to intermingle. In fact, British troops under Wellesley often served alongside their Portuguese counterparts. On the eve of the Salamanca Campaign, Wellesley's force consisted of approximately 52,000 troops, two-fifths of whom were Portuguese.<sup>2</sup> There are other accounts of Wellesley's army consisting of a large force of Portuguese soldiers. A prime example of such intermingling of allied units within the makeup of the British forces occurred during the defense of Portugal from advancing French forces under the command of Marshals Jean de Dieu Soult and Claude Victor-Perrin. Wellesley, who was under strict orders from the British Cabinet to defend Portugal from the advancing French, had a force of approximately 18,000 which was divided among 16,000 British personnel and 2,240 newly-recruited Portuguese, with a Portuguese battalion placed into each of the five brigades under Wellesley's command.<sup>3</sup> However, Wellesley was not the only British commander to take advantage of using local troops, as General William Beresford, who had been tasked with blocking Soult from any advances into northern Portugal, was in charge of a force made up of 1,875 British and 4,200 Portuguese troops.<sup>4</sup>

Portuguese and Spanish troops were not the only allied troops to fight alongside and intermix with their British compatriots. The King's German Legion, a British Army unit made up entirely of German volunteers from the Electorate of Hanover, fought with distinction throughout the entirety of the Peninsular War and played a pivotal role in several campaigns, including the Battle of Salamanca. Second Captain Thomas Dyneley, an artillery officer with 'E' troop of the Royal Horse Artillery, paints a vivid picture of the actions of the Legion in the beginning actions of the Battle of Salamanca as they charged the rear guard of the enemy: "On the morning of July 23<sup>rd</sup>, Anson's light cavalry brigade, and that of the heavy dragons of the King's German Legion, under major-General von Bock, attacked the rear-guard of the French army near the village of Garcia Hernandez . . . breaking a square and taking prisoners

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<sup>2</sup> Shand, *The War In the Peninsula*, 151.

<sup>3</sup> Roger Parkinson, *The Peninsular War* (London: Hart-Davis, MacGibbon, 1973), 78-81.

<sup>4</sup> Parkinson, *The Peninsular War*, 80.

three battalions of the enemy's infantry."<sup>5</sup> Dyneley has several accounts that highlight the cooperation between Great Britain and her Germanic allies. In a letter dated from August 5, 1812, Dyneley wrote that his unit "consists of two regiments of heavy German cavalry, two strong regiments of Portuguese cavalry, a German infantry light battalion and our troop."<sup>6</sup> This "corps of observation and communication," as Dyneley terms it, fought head to head at the Battle of Salamanca in an attempt to reach the Spanish capitol of Madrid.

While the British relationship with their foreign counterparts was largely positive, it was not always the case. Especially at the beginning of the Peninsular War, Portuguese and Spanish troops seemed to hinder British efforts more than they helped. There were several instances during the entirety of the war where poor discipline from Portuguese and Spanish troops led to difficulties for the British. A prime example of this occurred during the Battle of Talavera, July 27-28, 1809. In the late afternoon of the battle, French dragoons appeared opposite of several Spanish divisions and, despite the 1,000 yard range, "enjoyed themselves by popping off their pistols."<sup>7</sup> The Spanish reaction was rather amateur, as the entire front in this southern sector suddenly retreated from the harmless enemy without waiting for orders, creating an "infectious panic" that began to seize all of the Spanish troops in the area: "troops started to break into flight, throwing away their arms and accoutrements on the ground, their officers went with them, and they . . . plundered the baggage of the British army."<sup>9</sup> Another such account of poor discipline from Spanish forces during fighting at Mansilla helps paint a clearer image of how disorganized the Spanish often were: during the fighting at Mansilla the Spanish rearguard was attacked by Soult, which immediately caused the rest of the Spanish army to flee in panic to the town of Astorga, where other Spanish and British forces were also retreating. The chaos that ensued created a traffic-jam of sorts that threatened to entrap the entire allied force by the fast-approaching French forces. Wellesley was largely unimpressed with

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<sup>5</sup> *Letters Written By Lieut.-General Thomas Dyneley C.B., R.A., While on Active Service Between the Years 1806 and 1815*, Thomas Dyneley, ed. (London: Lionel Leventhal Limited, 1896), 33.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, 35.

<sup>7</sup> Parkinson, *The Peninsular War*, 91-92.

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

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

the regular Spanish army throughout the entirety of the war, and often preferred working with Spanish militias instead, as he felt that they were more valuable to the war effort.<sup>10</sup> Wellesley was not the only British commander to have problems with his Spanish counterparts. Lieutenant General Benjamin D'Urban, a quartermaster-general who served in the Iberian Peninsula throughout the war, recalled a particular instance where the Spanish displayed a sense of "warped and mistaken judgment:" "General Carrera has made overtures to Marshal Ney, inviting him to come over to the Spanish Cause and offering him the Rank of Captain-General, he thinks he too he shall succeed. This is too absurd to need any comment."<sup>11</sup> General D'Urban's views were widely shared among several British officers, who viewed their Spanish allies as troublesome.

While the regular Spanish forces had their share of troubles, they were not the only allies that made life hard on their British counterparts. The Portuguese regular forces were at times almost as ineffective as their Spanish cousins. Upon his arrival in Portugal, Wellesley was under the impression that he would be supplied by his native allies. However, he soon found that the Portuguese would be unable to give the maximum assistance that Wellesley needed as many of their own units were under supplied. One of the Portuguese commanders that fought under Wellesley at the beginning of the war expected the British to supply his forces as well as their own, and this logistical misunderstanding led to Wellesley only using a fraction of the Portuguese forces that he had at his disposal.<sup>12</sup> Wellesley would later have the exact same problems with the Spanish, who would pledge logistical support and transport as the British made their way into Spain, only to falter on their promises, leaving the British troops in dire straits.<sup>13</sup>

Despite such setbacks, British training and supply efforts, especially with Portuguese troops, helped develop their allies on the Iberian Peninsula into an effective fighting force. The most drastically improved units were Portuguese, as they had received almost constant support from their British allies since they disembarked on the Peninsula in 1808. Wellesley utilized such troops in his advance on Oporto in 1808, where British warships and the newly-trained Portuguese troops helped ensure victory against their French opponents.<sup>14</sup> The Spanish also found themselves becoming a more formidable force. The Spanish Advanced

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<sup>10</sup> Ibid., 100.

<sup>11</sup> *The Peninsular Journal of Major-General Sir Benjamin D'Urban*, Benjamin D'Urban, ed. (London: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1930), 107-08.

<sup>12</sup> D'Urban, *The Peninsular Journal*, 32.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid., 87.

<sup>14</sup> Parkinson, *The Peninsular War*, 81.

Guard, which had been in charge of securing the Bridge of Almaraz, was a prime exception to the rule when it came to Spanish units. Whereas several conventional Spanish units were largely considered to do more harm than good, the Advanced Guard remained in good order, highly alert, and had proved itself in the field of battle, pushing a French force from Mirabete and capturing several cannons.<sup>15</sup>

Though Wellesley recognized the potential of such units, he was not the only one to notice the benefits of using the newly trained and organized Portuguese troops. Beresford utilized a sizable Portuguese force under the command of a Portuguese general to beat back a large French force east of Lamego, which allowed for Beresford to move east to prevent Soult and his corps from reaching a fellow French force under Victor-Perrin.<sup>16</sup> D'Urban described the Portuguese forces that he encounters near Ciudad Rodrigo as a well disciplined fighting force that would fight better than expected: "I don't at all doubt of their doing their duty."<sup>17</sup> Dyneley recalled an action in the opening moments of the Battle of Salamanca, where his battery supported the advance of British infantry and two regiments of Portuguese infantry up a hillside that was occupied by the enemy. Such cooperation between British and Portuguese formations became more commonplace as the reliability of the Portuguese as an effective fighting force gradually became the norm.

The British support of allied units evolved as the war continued to rage on the Iberian Peninsula. The British, who at the beginning of the war were unable to provide logistical support to its allies, began to fulfill the role as the war went on. In his journal, D'Urban wrote frequently about supply missions that were intended for Portuguese and Spanish troops. One such example included a meeting between Beresford and Wellesley over how to supply the Portuguese troops currently under Wellesley's command. D'Urban recalled that it was necessary that the British Commissariat often step in to supply their Portuguese brethren, or "the troops will often starve, for such is the poverty, imbecility, and total want of arrangement of the Portuguese government, that any regular system of supply is not to be expected."<sup>18</sup> Due to the government's inability to effectively supply its own troops, Portuguese army units often leaned on their British counterparts for much needed supplies. D'Urban argued that, without such support from the British, the Portuguese would only be able "to carry on operations . . . for more than a week or two together, if even

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<sup>15</sup> *The Peninsular Journal*, 33.

<sup>16</sup> Parkinson, *The Peninsular War*, 3..

<sup>17</sup> *The Peninsular Journal*, 101-102.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, 103.

so long.”<sup>19</sup> The Portuguese also took advantage of the medical support that was at the British disposal. When on the march in 1810 Wellesley established a “Hospital of Rest for the Sick of the Advanced Brigades” in Govea, in order to care for British and Portuguese soldiers who had been wounded in battle.<sup>20</sup>

British forces also utilized both Portuguese and Spanish partisan fighters throughout the entirety of the war on the peninsula for various purposes, including reconnaissance missions of French formations, gathering intelligence on enemy locations, and harassing the enemy’s supply lines and marching formations. These partisans, who were fueled by the anger that came with French occupation, often fought alongside regular allied formations. One such example of this is shown by D’Urban in his journal as he recalled fighting that had occurred around Jaraicejo, Spain. In his notes D’Urban describes how the Portuguese Armed Peasantry, which was equipped and supplied by the British, fought alongside their regular army counterparts in support of allied operations in the area.<sup>21</sup> Portuguese partisans were also used heavily by Wellesley to harass the advancing French forces under Soult as he made his way into Portugal.<sup>22</sup> These militias were invaluable to British strategy in Iberia, as they could count on them to slow French troops and keep them occupied, which in turn would free up regular allied troops for major combat operations.

There were additional cases of growing British logistical support for its allies on the peninsula, which had come fairly early on in the Peninsular War. This involved the rescuing of General La Romana and his division from French-held Denmark, where they had occupied several French garrisons when the two nations were once allies. In a daring attempt, La Romana fought his way to Gothenburg on the Danish coast, where he embarked his division upon a squadron of the British Royal Navy that had been waiting for his arrival and would then take him to Santander to join other coalition forces fighting in occupied Spain.<sup>23</sup>

The entrance of British forces onto the Iberian Peninsula helped to create the “Spanish Ulcer” that drained the French of both brilliant commanders and precious supplies. Even though the guerrilla war fought by Portuguese and Spanish militias had done wonders to whittle down French forces in the peninsula, it was in conjunction with the regular

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<sup>19</sup> Ibid.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid., 104.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid., 32.

<sup>22</sup> Parkinson, *The Peninsular War*, 83.

<sup>23</sup> David Chandler, *The Art of Warfare on Land* (London: Hamlyn, 1974),

actions by allied formations that allowed for the allies to become successful on the peninsula. However, the coalition's success was largely due to the support from Great Britain, especially in the form of logistical aid and military support. This included the training and equipping of Spanish and Portuguese regular and militia armies, as well as providing bases of supply in occupied Spain through British fortresses towns, such as Gibraltar. British military officers that served in the Peninsular War were able to cooperate with their allied counterparts, many of whom were severely incompetent, in order to overcome the French threat and finally restore peace to the area in 1813, when the French finally returned north of the Pyrenees. Cooperation between the British and the rest of its allies resonated on several levels, and would set the framework that would help the coalition ultimately defeat Napoleon in 1814.



# THE BOER WAR: A COUNTERINSURGENCY

BY  
AUSTEN BOROFF

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Tiago Mauricio, *South Africa between 1899-1910*, 2009  
<http://unimaps.com/sth-africa1899/>

## I. INTRODUCTION: 2 DISTINCT PHASES AND THE EVOLUTION OF COIN DOCTRINE

The Boer War must be separated into two distinct periods, a conventional and unconventional period, in order to fully understand the operations the British army undertook in response to changing modes of warfare. The British were victorious only after enormous casualties and expenditures which made the Boer War a poetic opening to the grandeur of fighting and the merciless use of non-adaptive tactics that occurred later in the century. The size and significance of the war itself would dwarf all other colonial wars. By late 1900, 240,000 British troops were deployed in the region to combat security issues arising from attempts to finish the war despite Boer commitment to outlast total war.<sup>1</sup> The British response to guerilla warfare can be characterized as a three pronged approach: a scorched earth policy, sweeping drives within a system of blockhouses, and the creation of concentration camps.

Counterinsurgency is a modern term used to describe many protracted engagements since 1945; however, the struggle in fighting insurgents within a population is much older than the term. The U.S. State Department defines the term counterinsurgency as, “the blend of comprehensive civilian and military efforts designed to simultaneously contain insurgency and address its root causes. Unlike conventional warfare, non-military means are often the most effective elements, with military forces playing an enabling role.”<sup>2</sup> Although this definition expands from what the British Army fought in South Africa, especially concerning the civilian sector, the definition still holds merit for this analysis. “Non-military” means were the British troop’s implementation of concentration camps and a scorched earth policy to affect the public sector that accompanied the ‘sweeping drives’ by the more conventional usage of the British Army. In the unconventional phase of the war, the Boers operated in highly mobile and mounted detachments called commandos and utilized raiding tactics. Lord Kitchener’s response was based on population and resource control measures in order to separate commandos from their logistical support.

Published over thirty years after the conclusion of the war, Major-General Sir Charles W. Gwynn expanded more on this topic and the resources needed to combat guerilla tactics. He wrote in, *Imperial Policing*:

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<sup>1</sup> Charles Townshend, *Britain’s Civil Wars: Counterinsurgency in the Twentieth Century* (London: Butler and Tanner, 1986), 172.

<sup>2</sup> U.S. Government Counterinsurgency Guide (Bureau of Political-Military Affairs, 2009), 7.

Revolutionary movements more often imply guerilla warfare, carried on by armed bands acting possibly under the instructions of a centralized organization but with little cohesion. Such bands depend for effectiveness on the capacity of individual leaders . . . Their actions take the form of sabotage, of ambushes in which they inflict loss with a minimum of risk, and attacks on small isolated detachments. The suppression of such movements, unless nipped in the bud, is a slow business, generally necessitating the employment of numbers out of all proportion to actual fighting value of the rebels, owing to the unavoidable dispersion of those and the absence of a definite objective.<sup>3</sup>

By the end of the war, this description was a relatively accurate portrayal of how the war had been conducted: individual Boer leaders were holding the cause together and acted in small bands sabotaging British logistics. The future of guerilla warfare as exemplified by the Boer war would form the basis of twentieth century Counter Insurgency (COIN) doctrine.

## II. PHASE I: A BOER PREEMPTIVE STRIKE: OCTOBER 1899

Before one can analyze the fundamental shift in British tactics, one must first understand the failure of conventional British forces. At the start of the war, Britain had only 14,000 men in Natal, with 47,000 additional men in the process of mobilization.<sup>4</sup> Numerically superior, the Boer army took to the offensive—hoping to achieve a rapid victory (much akin to the idea behind German Blitzkrieg) in Natal and the Cape Colony. The strategic objective of the Boer army centered on control of the railway system—the Boers were to sever railway routes to the coast to prevent the British from moving reinforcements from the ports to an interior theatre of operations.<sup>5</sup> The bulk of Boer forces were organized into ‘commandos’—small units whose strengths varied from a few hundred to several thousand men who usually held a connection to a particular town (living off the land was a life-style for commando forces).<sup>6</sup>

At the outbreak of the war, the Boer Army held a tactical advantage: they had a vast knowledge of terrain, were highly mobile, and acclimatized to the scorching temperatures. Eventually, the numerical

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<sup>3</sup> Major-General Sir Charles W. Gwynn, *Imperial Policing*. (London: Macmillan and Co., 1934), 11.

<sup>4</sup> Gregory Fremont-Barnes, *Essential Histories: The Boer War 1899-1902* (Oxford: Osprey Publishing, 2003), 35.

<sup>5</sup> Bill Nasson, *The Boer War: The Struggle For South Africa* (Brimscombe Port Stroud: Spellmount, 2011), 98.

<sup>6</sup> Fremont-Barnes, *Essential Histories*, 26.

power of the British Empire, supplemented by complete command of the sea, would lead to British victory. However, until the arrival of reinforcements, the Boers not only outnumbered the British, but held a large majority contingent of mounted troops making Boer initial victories unsurprising.<sup>7</sup> The first phase of the war, lasting around six months, is characterized by conventional warfare that highlighted the power of the modern rifle to transform battle into an awful instrument for defensive positions. This allowed the Boer army to besiege three key towns early in the war before British reinforcements arrived: Ladysmith, Kimberley, and Mafeking.<sup>8</sup> Boer failure to capitalize on initial successes and remain idle devastated Boer momentum.

During the first battle of the war, we see the prominence of conventional warfare at Talana Hill. Men under Penn Symons employed traditional tactics—preparatory artillery bombardment followed by a frontal assault, and finished with a cavalry charge to further disperse Boer forces.<sup>9</sup> Although technically a defeat for the Boers as the British took the high ground of Talana, the British loss of life far outnumbered that of the Boers. This unfortunate success of the frontal attack would prove a false and catastrophic command lesson learned. Conventional tactics employed by Britain proved to be outdated in subsequent battles. The success at Talana Hill using traditional tactics, although extremely costly in British lives, may have given the British false hope about the success of these tactics which would be utilized until the second period of the war.

#### THE EMPIRE'S RESPONSE AND BULLER'S INCOMPETENCE

Much of the first phase of the war was marred by horrific British commanders who utilized poor reconnaissance, misjudged Boer strength and disposition, and showed lackluster ability to perform. General Buller arrived in Cape Town on 31 October 1900 with a strategy focused on the need to save Natal.<sup>10</sup> Buller divided his forces, but he himself would be in charge of relieving the situation in Natal taking more than half of his units with him.<sup>11</sup> Arguably the most fatal tactical blunders of the war involved engagements under the command of Buller, such as at Colenso, where an artillery bombardment was used as a preamble to a frontal attack which gave away not only the element of surprise but also the direction from where the attack was to come.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Ibid., 23.

<sup>8</sup> Townshend, *Britain's Civil Wars*, 175

<sup>9</sup> Fremont-Barnes, *Essential Histories*, 36.

<sup>10</sup> Nasson, *The Boer War*, 132.

<sup>11</sup> Nasson, *The Boer War*, 133.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid., 149.

Many British commanders suffered devastating losses through the utilization of the frontal attack. General Lord Methuen lay victim to inaccurate maps, a lack of screening, and bitterly fought initial engagements such as Graspan where Boer engagers withdrew only after high British casualties—the British cavalry was unable to pursue withdrawing Boer detachments.<sup>13</sup> It was the Boers' ability to regroup post battle by abandoning positions that would continue to elude their British counterparts. Another of Methuen's blunders occurred along the Modder River and again at Magersfontein Hill, when he ordered heavy artillery shelling to eliminate Boer defenses. However, deep trenches and pits proved the shelling ineffective. When his forces moved on the offensive after the shelling, the majority of his kilted forces had to cling to the base of the hill where there were badly burned from the sun and short of water—culminating in Meuthen ordering a full retreat.<sup>14</sup> Lieutenant General William Gatacre also stumbled upon a Boer defensive position at the Stomberg disaster.<sup>15</sup> "Buller, Methuen, and Gatacre misunderstood the realities of the new form of fighting, which consistently spelled disaster for any commander who failed to gather adequate intelligence of troop dispositions, and who recklessly sent his men forward straight into the teeth of camouflaged and entrenched positions."<sup>16</sup> Meuthen and Gatacre were both on the verge of defeat while Buller was preparing for his Natal offensive; which he was allowed to continue despite his replacement by Field Marshall Roberts in January 1900.

When multiple attempts to launch an offensive large enough to reach Ladysmith had failed, even General Buller realized that a successful attempt would require other forms of tactics. Moving forward had little to do with formidable battles and sieges; rather, it required better logistics, mobility, and more rehearsed tactics (including better coordination between moving infantry and artillery).<sup>17</sup> Instead of confronting Ladysmith with a frontal attack, the British sweep towards the area took the form of rehearsed assaults against defensive posts east of Colenso.<sup>18</sup> Despite heavy fire on the road to Ladysmith, Buller finally managed to open a passage way and relieved Ladysmith on 28 February 1900.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> Darrell Hall, *The Hall Handbook of the Anglo-Boer War 1899-1902* (Pietermaritzburg: University of Natal Press, 1999), 130.

<sup>14</sup> Nasson, *The Boer War*, 145.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, 141.

<sup>16</sup> Fremont-Barnes, *Essential Histories* 49.

<sup>17</sup> Nasson, *The Boer War*, 163.

<sup>18</sup> Nasson, *The Boer War*, 165.

<sup>19</sup> Darrell Hall, *The Hall Handbook of the Anglo-Boer War 1899-1902*, 135.

## THE ARRIVAL OF ROBERTS AND THE END OF CONVENTIONAL WARFARE

The arrival of Roberts accompanied by his Chief of Staff Major-General Lord Kitchener on 10 January 1900 brought a new spark to the western front.<sup>20</sup> The overall strategy remained similar to the original one; however, the difference was the tactical aspect of the war – namely that encirclement would replace frontal attacks.<sup>21</sup> Accompanying imperial reinforcements now provided for an Army with a strength of 180,000 soldiers (about the size of the combined white population of the republics) and marked a fundamental change in strategy; a shift in the manner of advance away from railway lines which played into Boer hands, to movements through the open countryside.<sup>22</sup> Roberts stressed marksmanship, rapid movement, concealment, and more individual initiatives against the enemy (this also involved the creation of a new cavalry division to improve reconnaissance capabilities and mobility).<sup>23</sup> Roberts had two main objectives: the defeats of Bloemfontein and Pretoria. These methods, along with the sheer manpower of the British army, led to eventual Boer surrender. On 27 February 1900 Cronjé surrendered at Paardeberg (ten percent of the Boer army). After sweeping encirclements, Bloemfontein surrendered on 13 March 1900 and Johannesburg was peacefully handed over on 31 May 1900 as the remainder of the army retreated to Pretoria which would later be evacuated.<sup>24</sup>

## MOVING TOWARDS ADAPTIVE WARFARE

Adaptive warfare refers the dramatic changes that British forces utilized in order to end the war after the conventional phase of warfare was complete. By February 1900 the tides of war had changed—British Forces thwarted Boer offensives in the Cape and Natal.<sup>25</sup> Buller would continue his slow advance into Natal as the Boers appeared to retreat. Boer leaders such as Kruger and Botha had telegraphed their opposites in the Free State Government to point out the futility of further resistance.<sup>26</sup> Other Boer generals, such as General Christian Rudolph de Wet and General Jan Smuts, were convinced that one more option could first be implemented—guerrilla warfare.

The fall of Bloemfontein and Pretoria did not end the war, which continued for two more painful years. The estimated 25,000 remaining

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<sup>20</sup> Fremont-Barnes, *Essential Histories*, 53.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, 54.

<sup>22</sup> Nasson, *The Boer War*, 167-168.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, 168.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, 177-180.

<sup>25</sup> Fremont-Barnes, *Essential Histories*, 58.

<sup>26</sup> Fremont-Barnes, *Essential Histories*, 59.

Boers proved elusive and determined. Initially, Roberts tried to end the Boer resistance through proclamations he made on 31 May and 1 June to persuade those remaining Boers to hand in their weapons. He followed this with his 16 June decree proclaiming that if the Boers struck railway and telegraph lines and stations, homes and farms in the area would be torched.<sup>27</sup> This scorched earth policy continued to be employed by Robert's successor, Lord Kitchener. To some degree, however, Roberts was successful in enlarging the complement of enlisted 'Judas Boer' as he put around 2,300 of these 'joiners' under arms who would vitally help the progression of British intelligence.<sup>28</sup>

### III. PHASE TWO: THE RISE OF GUERILLA WARFARE AND KITCHENER'S THREE PRONGED RESPONSE

The most enduring, although not immediately realized, lessons of the war spawned from the period of irregular warfare which followed.<sup>29</sup> Lord Roberts handed over South African Command (210,000 troops) to Lord Kitchener during November 1900 after announcing that the war was 'practically over' The Boer switch to guerilla tactics, however, would take the British Army by surprise.<sup>30</sup> A downtrodden and diminished Boer army was led by young, determined, and imaginative leaders whose forces were no longer obliged to defend capitals. No longer confined by the defense of major cities or strategic locations (and eventually not even the safety of loved ones), remaining commandos acted as irregular guerillas—with a superior understanding of terrain against an enemy still reliant on railroads. Kitchener's strategy to defeat these guerillas contained three elements: internment, scorched earth, and containment.

#### SCORCHED EARTH

With the loss of major supply centers, the Boers turned dependent on farms for logistical support. These farms and the civilian population that worked them, in a sense, became combatants aiding the enemy. Scorched earth now became a full scale policy to destroy the Boer means of supply, including the wholesale devastation of both republics. Livestock was scattered and slaughtered and grain storages were burned. By the end of the war, this policy destroyed an estimated 30,000 Boer farmhouses and damaged or cleared forty townships.<sup>31</sup> Official targets for

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<sup>27</sup> Fremont-Barnes, *Essential Histories*, 60.

<sup>28</sup> Nasson, *The Boer War*, 237.

<sup>29</sup> Townshend, *Britain's Civil Wars*, 175.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, 62.

<sup>31</sup> Malcolm Archibald, *Aspects of the Boer War: Boers and Horsemen* (Edinburgh: Fledgling Press, 2005), 58.

demolition were farms occupied by families of those on commando duty, but the destruction soon grew indiscriminant; “both proportionately and in total number, rural destruction bore most heavily on non-combatant homesteads which did not necessarily have any direct link to the operational commandos in particular districts.<sup>32</sup> Kitchener’s collective approach hardened the resolve of many of the ‘bitter-enders’ (those Boers who remained on commando) that decided to carry on despite civilian suffering.

#### INTERNMENT

The policy of internment came more from practical and humanitarian reasons than an attempt at genocide. However, the response in Britain to the poor conditions of the camps was drastic. Originally meant as a measure for protection, many Boers were forcibly removed from their homes. The camps were for mainly non-combatants (women, children, and elderly inhabitants) which otherwise would be left to ‘predatory natives’ and the environment after the scorched earth policy destroyed everything. Refugee camps, known as “concentration camps,” were overpopulated, unclean, and short of food—disease and malnutrition became a leading cause of death. Out of an estimated Boer population of 200,000, 26,370 died in the concentration camps; 22,000 of which were under sixteen years of age.<sup>33</sup> Military control of the camps ended in 1901, and Kitchener ordered his column commanders to not bring in any more civilians. Instead civilians remained in the areas where there farms had been burned, livestock slaughtered, and crops destroyed. Meant to be a practical remedy for overcrowded concentration camps, the end of these camps placed an even greater burden on Boer commandos, who now were responsible for taking care of their own families. In the long run, however, there is little doubt that civilian internment contributed to the cessation of hostilities.

#### DRIVING SWEEPS AND BLOCKHOUSES

The last phase of the war showed a constant struggle to combat mobility limitations evident in the wars origins. Difficulties of conveying supplies added to the need to secure railways in May 1900 to protect the Cape Town-Bloemfontein railway which gave rise to the blockhouse system because the countryside surrounding the railways could not be controlled.<sup>34</sup> The blockhouse system, originally intended as protection for

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<sup>32</sup> Nasson, *The Boer War*, 240.

<sup>33</sup> Archibald, *Aspects of the Boer War*, 59.

<sup>34</sup> Fremont-Barnes, *Essential Histories*, 66.

railway lines, became a gigantic network of barbed-wire fences.<sup>35</sup> Blockhouses were built on intervals along the railway lines and garrisoned from as few as seven men, but usually more. This idea was then extended from railways to roads and continued as it became necessary to divide the county into fenced-in and workable areas for driving sweeps.<sup>36</sup> Royal Engineer factories that made the material blockhouses required were established across the country and utilized a system of interchangeable parts for the basic building blocks. The wire extended from the houses at obtuse angles to prevent friendly fire and rifles were clamped down to ensure accurate fire.<sup>37</sup> Alarm systems were used to alert attempted breaches, although it was impossible to completely restrict Boer movement. However, when used in conjunction with the sweeping drives of the regular army, the system proved vital to the eventual defeat of the Boers.

By the end of the war, the blockhouse network extended for 6,000 km.<sup>38</sup> Blockhouses were normally about 900 meters apart: each within sight distance.<sup>39</sup> In the last few months of the war the drives were much quicker and columns, in turn, needed to be more mobile. “When it became apparent that the collapse of the Boer armies, the capture of all the more important points in the Transvaal and Orange Free State, and the appropriation of the railway communications throughout the country, did not mean that the war was over, but that it was going to definitely assume a guerilla character, an elaborate system of flying columns were set on foot.”<sup>40</sup> Originally, these columns were self-contained in terms of supplies—they were slowed by the ox-wagon, a heavy gun, and operated only in a small sphere of operation.<sup>41</sup> The amount of loss these columns inflicted on enemy personnel was minimal.<sup>42</sup> Kitchener’s first large scaled drive started on 28 January 1901: it involved seven columns totaling 14,000 men with fifty-eight guns and moved through the Transvaal between the Delagoa and Natal railway lines.<sup>43</sup> By the time Kitchener’s forces reached the Natal border in mid-April, the area was swept void of civilians, and the landscape was ruined. In terms of an impact on the

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<sup>35</sup> Townshend, *Britain’s Civil Wars*, 182.

<sup>36</sup> Hall, *The Hall Handbook of the Anglo-Boer War 1899-1902*, 214.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, 214.

<sup>38</sup> Fremont-Barnes, *Essential Histories*, 65.

<sup>39</sup> Hall, *The Hall Handbook of the Anglo-Boer War 1899-1902*, 214.

<sup>40</sup> C.E. Callwell, *Small Wars: Their Principles and Practice* (London: Harrison and Sons, 1906), 139.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, 139.

<sup>42</sup> Callwell, *Small Wars*, 140.

<sup>43</sup> Fremont-Barnes, *Essential Histories*, 65.

actual commando forces, the consequences were minor. However, the columns were successful in terms of clearing the area of livestock and supplies. Later mobility advancements to the flying columns greatly benefited the response to the guerilla insurgency. Kitchener instituted his “new model drives,” which were huge sweeps involving multiple columns that sub-divided the theater of war.<sup>44</sup> As Callwell later stated, “The ‘drives’ instituted in the closing days of the South African war may be called the last word in strategy directed against guerilla antagonists.”<sup>45</sup>

Eventually mounted troops formed the entirety of columns, and supply depots were dramatically increased and scattered over the theatre of war to keep up with an increasingly more mobile Army.<sup>46</sup> The supplying of these depots insisted on the need for a system of additional blockhouses to facilitate convoy movement in addition to the original role of securing railways. The effect of this increased mobility was the ability to capture prisoners in an extended theatre (not just the livestock)—a feat that other warring countries had simply never been able to accomplish. Columns worked through the night and relentlessly surprised and scattered Boer detachments.<sup>47</sup> The effectiveness of blockhouses increased dramatically as the size of Boer formations diminished and they abandoned artillery.<sup>48</sup>

#### COIN AT HOME AND POLITICAL RAMIFICATIONS

British pro-Boer and anti-war activism during 1901 focused on the policy of concentration camps (mainly for women and children).<sup>49</sup> Despite conservative control of the government during this time, the work of activists such as Lloyd George hoped to raise awareness of human rights violations that were occurring during the war. The Committee of the South African Women and Children’s Distress Fund sent Miss Emily Hobhouse to the area to conduct an investigation on the conditions of the camps. However, the results of her investigation created no productive measures to improve camp conditions. Perhaps the worst camp she reported on was at Mafeking, where she found in the medical reports that on October 1<sup>st</sup>, 1901, detailed that “there were 2,420 children under 12 years in the camp, and of this number 381 died during the month.”<sup>50</sup> Sir

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<sup>44</sup> Ibid., 69.

<sup>45</sup> Callwell, *Small Wars*, 143.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid., 143.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid., 140.

<sup>48</sup> Townshend, *Britain’s Civil Wars*, 182.

<sup>49</sup> Nasson, *The Boer War*, 243.

<sup>50</sup> Jennifer Hobhouse Balme, *To love one’s enemies : the work and life of Emily Hobhouse, compiled from letters and writings, newspaper cuttings and official documents* (Hobhouse Trust, 1994), 394.

Henry Campell-Bannermon in an address to the National Reform Union in response to the publications of Miss Hobhouse's findings coined the term "methods of barbarism" to describe how the war was waged. He questioned the policy of scorched earth when he cried:

What was the policy? That now that we had got the men we had been fighting against down, we should punish them as severely as possible, devastate their country, burn their homes, break up their very instruments of agriculture, and destroy the machinery by which food was produced.<sup>51</sup>

This activism, however, would not create an environment where the populous was unwilling to support the war effort.

#### IV. FINAL CONCLUSIONS: HOW THE WAR ENDED—AN EVALUATION OF COIN

The finishing of the war was a political rather than a military issue which involved many failed negotiations.<sup>52</sup> Two final battles took place before the conclusion of hostilities, both of which held some degree of Boer success not expected by Kitchener. They both demonstrated however that the sheer weight of numbers and supplies in favor of the British Army made the war's conclusion inevitable.

Kitchener's response to the guerilla problem was counterproductive during the onset of COIN operations—it hardened the resolve of the "bitter-enders" to carry on in spite of civilian suffering.<sup>53</sup> The policy of concentration camps themselves took a burden off the shoulders of Boer commandos as it removed their responsibility to protect their property and family; "The lesson of the South African war was the extraordinary difficulty of adapting regular armies to cope with 'intelligent' guerillas"—"the guerilla concept revolutionized the revolution, creating a new threat to governments everywhere"<sup>54</sup>

Perhaps a pivotal question not answered by Kitchener's COIN policy was how to reintegrate the subversive portion of the population back into the society, and more importantly the British Empire after the war's conclusion. The answer to this question would be fostered by the suppression of black minority rights to reach a Boer compromise in later

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<sup>51</sup>Sir Henry Campell-Bannerman, "Methods of Barbarism" in *The Anatomy of an Antiwar Movement: The Pro-Boers*, Stephen Koss, ed. (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1973), 215.

<sup>52</sup>Townshend, *Britain's Civil Wars*, 183.

<sup>53</sup>Fremont-Barnes, *Essential Histories*, 65.

<sup>54</sup>Townshend, *Britain's Civil Wars*, 13, 183.

42 : *Report*

years. The death toll and brutality displayed by the British Army would have long-term ramifications for the relationship between the Dominion of South Africa and the Empire.

# THE POWER OF THE CLOWN: THE COMEDIAN AS A PRACTICAL POLITICAL MOUTHPIECE

BY  
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*Rebekah is a sophomore studying History at the University of Michigan. She wrote this essay for a course on representations of Nazism in popular culture. Her essay examines comedy's role in political discourse, primarily in the case of Charlie Chaplin's film The Great Dictator. Rebekah decided to focus on comedy in this context to combine two of her interests: classical Hollywood cinema and war history.*

Charlie Chaplin made his first “talkie,” *The Great Dictator*, in 1940, one year before the United States entered into World War II. *The Great Dictator* is famous for Chaplin’s signature slapstick, as well as its obvious parody of Benito Mussolini and Adolf Hitler.<sup>1</sup> However, the film is perhaps most well-known for a speech delivered by Chaplin's character of the Jewish Barber at the end of the film.<sup>2</sup> There are many critics of Chaplin's decision to include the speech in this movie because it openly criticizes real political leaders, and is informed by Chaplin's personal political ideology.<sup>3</sup> These critics include both film reviewers of the time, as well as specialists in the field of film propaganda.<sup>4</sup> Klaus Mann, a contemporary of Chaplin's, declares that the speech is disconnected from the rest of the storyline, and that the film would have been both more entertaining, and a better propaganda device had it been purely satirical rather than including Chaplin's bitter harangue.

This essay addresses Mann’s criticism to assert that the speech is entirely in keeping with Chaplin's role in society as a comedian. Chaplin uses his status as a well-known jokester to bring awareness to a political and moral cause that he sees as being of the utmost importance. It is

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<sup>1</sup> Charles S. Chaplin, dir. *The Great Dictator*. Charles Chaplin Productions, 1940. Film.

<sup>2</sup> In *The Great Dictator*, Charlie Chaplin plays two parts - that of an unnamed Jewish barber and Adenoid Hynkel - the leader of an anti-Semitic regime. These two characters get confused for one another near the end of the film. Hynkel is taken into custody instead of the Barber, and the Barber is forced to give a speech to the regime’s gathered army, having been mistaken as Hynkel.

<sup>3</sup> Lewis Jacobs, “World War II and the American Film,” *Cinema Journal* 7 (1967-8): 8.

<sup>4</sup> Mae Tinée, “Chaplin Talkie Hardly Meets Expectations,” rev. of *The Great Dictator*, *Chicago Daily Tribune*, 1 Nov. 1940: 24.

perfectly acceptable for comedians to project political ideology in their work because of their special status in society. Chaplin uses his identity as a comedian to entice the viewers, who are, for all intents and purposes, “held captive” by the humor in the film, until they have no choice but to sit through the final, jarring speech delivered by Chaplin.

Due to *The Great Dictator* being a comedic social commentary, it makes the audience accept some serious discourse on the issues it raises by “paying” moviegoers with the humor in the film. Charlie Chaplin’s inclusion of the diatribe that closes the movie is not incidental, nor was it naïve of Chaplin to believe that his audience would listen to him. Chaplin may have been a comedic genius, but that does not mean that he could not make an impact on his audience’s opinions on serious matters. It is not despite of, but more because of his status as a well-known comedian, that Charlie Chaplin was able to include his personal philosophy in the form of the four minute denunciation of Fascism and praise of action against oppression.

Klaus Mann argues that *The Great Dictator* is an inadequate attempt at attacking the Nazis in his article “What’s Wrong with Anti-Nazi Films?” Mann thinks the film is neither comedy nor propaganda.<sup>5</sup> Mann believes Chaplin is too light-handed in dealing with the man that was responsible for the Holocaust and World War II.<sup>6</sup> On the other hand, World War II propaganda expert Professor Robert Cole of Utah State University examines *The Great Dictator* in his article “Anglo-American Anti-fascist Film Propaganda in a Time of Neutrality: *The Great Dictator*, 1940” and addresses how Chaplin uses his usual comedic stylings to create the kind of feature film that makes such beautifully engaging propaganda. In his article, Cole asserts that Chaplin chose the correct medium with which to espouse political sentiments to the largest captive audience possible.<sup>7</sup> Professor Jodi Sherman is similarly supportive of Chaplin’s movie in an article in which she argues that comedians have the power to use humor in ways that societal norms would not allow the rest of the population to, and, she asserts, it is because of this ability that “the Clown”

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<sup>5</sup> Klaus Mann, “What’s Wrong with Anti-Nazi Films?” *New German Critique* (2003): 178.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

<sup>7</sup> Robert Cole, “Anglo-American Anti-fascist Film Propaganda in a Time of Neutrality: *The Great Dictator*, 1940,” *Historical Journal of Film, Radio and Television* 21, no. 2 (2001): 137-38.

can be highly influential.<sup>8</sup> She asserts that Charlie Chaplin purposefully uses this power as “the Clown” to reach out to his audience.

Sherman’s article in favor of comedic propaganda becomes very helpful in defending Chaplin’s film against Mann’s accusations that a comedian should not make propaganda. Mann’s criticism can be countered with Sherman’s article: comedians can and should attempt to satirize or otherwise use their humor to a political advantage. This argument is taken a step further to advance the idea that “the power of the clown” means not only that a comedian is able to parody political events and characters for the amusement of others, but that “the Clown” can be somewhat like a megaphone for political ideology, capable of promulgating his beliefs to an audience that has been lulled into complacency by the entertainment he provides them with. If a film employs a mix of comedy and serious discourse, it utilizes the comedian’s special status in society, a status derived from court jesters of the past.<sup>9</sup> “The Clown” is arguably the most broad-reaching projector of political ideology, partially because people look to him as being harmless by his very nature as a jester. Consequently, his audience is obligated to hear what “the Clown” has to say, thereby presenting “the Clown” an unwittingly compliant crowd for his commentary.

Film reviews are some of the best evidence from this period to illustrate how the public received Chaplin’s film and indicate whether or not he was successful in reaching a large audience.<sup>10</sup> This makes it possible to assess public reception of a movie, to a point, with this evidence. One such reviewer from the Washington Post received Chaplin’s

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<sup>8</sup> Jodi Sherman, “Humor, Resistance, and the Abject: Roberto Benigni’s *Life Is Beautiful* and Charlie Chaplin’s *The Great Dictator*,” *Film and History* 32 (2002): 73.

<sup>9</sup> Court jesters were the only ones given a free pass to poke fun at the king and events at court. Currently, comedians enjoy this same protection regarding their ability to voice observations and criticisms. While most democratic societies profess to give all citizens this ability, in the United States, in the time leading up to the beginning of World War II, the kind of vocal anti-Hitler rhetoric Chaplin included in *The Great Dictator* was not welcomed by the Hays Code, as section X on “National Feelings” of *The Motion Picture Production Code* of 1930 states, “the history, institutions, prominent people and citizenry of other nations shall be represented fairly.”

<sup>10</sup> Published reviews are one way to gauge how well a movie was received, and this can be judged based on the number of positive versus negative reviews, or the public visibility and popularity of the movie reviewers or newspapers they were published in. Reviews are used in this analysis, rather than ticket sales, or forms of personal reviews in the form of letters or diary entries from the time, because both of these types of evidence are difficult to find for this period.

film quite well.<sup>11</sup> Nelson Bell of the *Washington Post* points out that the movie had an abundance of the famous Chaplin brand of comedy, and that the film does not disappoint in this respect. Bell also addresses the fact that other reviewers of the film did not find Chaplin's humor to be on par with what was expected of him.<sup>12</sup> Mae Tinée, a reviewer from the *Chicago Daily Tribune*, was unimpressed by Chaplin's first proper attempt at a motion picture with speech.<sup>13</sup> She makes it clear that she did not enjoy *The Great Dictator* because she was “never crazy about Chaplin.”<sup>14</sup> Tinée may very well dislike the film simply because it is Chaplin's, and not because Chaplin was unsuccessful with his approach to the movie. Charlie Chaplin was an influential and beloved star in Hollywood at the time, and because Bell agrees with this sentiment, it can be argued that his review may better reflect how the majority of the public most likely responded to the movie. For example, Bell refers to Chaplin as “Mr. Charles Spencer Chaplin” at the outset of his review. His usage of this title foreshadows the respect shown to Chaplin in the rest of his review, a respect that Tinée does not echo in her review.<sup>15</sup> This illustrates that Tinée's review is fundamentally different than Bell's. She adds her personal dislike of Chaplin's sense of humor to her review, whereas Bell includes in his review the popular opinion of Charlie Chaplin as a comedic giant.

At one point, Bell's review focuses on the speech that Charlie Chaplin makes at the end of the film. Tinée's article acknowledges Chaplin's speech, but she does not give it the attention that Bell thinks it is due. This difference may be rooted in the very basic organization of the two reviewer's styles; Bell is more thorough in his review overall than Tinée is. Regardless, both of these reviewers felt the need to address the speech in one manner or another. Movie critics like Tinée cite the beginning of the speech as a break in the movie because it ruins the comedy and is completely disjointed from the rest of the feeling of the film.<sup>16</sup> On the contrary, the speech can be anticipated by the rest of the film. Throughout his time in the ghetto, the Jewish Barber witnesses the terrible treatment suffered by the Jews under the regime, all while being chased and harassed by Double Cross stormtroopers.<sup>17</sup> It is not surprising

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<sup>11</sup> Nelson B. Bell, “‘The Great Dictator’ Is Chaplin at His Zenith,” rev. of *The Great Dictator*, *The Washington Post*, 7 Nov. 1940: 18.

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

<sup>13</sup> Tinée, “Chaplin Talkie Hardly Meets Expectations”: 24

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

<sup>15</sup> Bell, “‘The Great Dictator’ Is Chaplin at His Zenith”: 18.

<sup>16</sup> Tinée, “Chaplin Talkie Hardly Meets Expectations”: 24.

<sup>17</sup> Chaplin uses “Double Cross” armbands for the soldiers in the service of Hynkel as an obvious parallel to the swastika used by Nazi soldiers under Hitler.

that the Barber will have something to say about what he has been seeing and experiencing by the end of the film. The Great Dictator indeed presents itself as a comedy to the audience, but, near the film's conclusion, the mood becomes profoundly serious. Some critics dislike the speech in that it was a direct political address within what masqueraded at the beginning as a feature film, but there is no problem with these two coexisting in one film. Furthermore, when compared to some other films being produced by Hollywood at the time, it should not have been particularly shocking that a director, especially one as politically vocal as Charlie Chaplin, would create a film that directly attacked one of the most menacing figures in world politics at the time.<sup>18</sup>

Despite the controversy surrounding The Great Dictator before and after its release, it has become a successful model for entertainers since Charlie Chaplin. Though The Great Dictator may have been negatively received by some critics and some of the viewing public, its approach has been duplicated by other comedians that wish to use humor to help frame dark themes. This influence is evidenced in programs such as the popular television series M\*A\*S\*H, which spanned eleven seasons, as well as current programs like Saturday Night Live that also utilize the same kind of satirical comedy to provide a commentary on serious political and social issues. The existence and popularity of these TV shows supports the idea that The Great Dictator's attack on Hitler was successful in its approach and aims, as actors, specifically Alan Alda, who portrays Hawkeye in M\*A\*S\*H, have followed Chaplin's lead.

There is a sure parallel between Chaplin's speech and Hawkeye's diatribe in an episode in season five of M\*A\*S\*H ("The General's Practitioner"), when Hawkeye eloquently establishes why he hates war. Hawkeye begins by disparaging the old adage, "war is Hell," by meeting it with, "War isn't Hell. War is war, and Hell is Hell. And of the two, war is a lot worse." When asked to elaborate on this, he obliges, readily armed with his logic that "there are no innocent bystanders in Hell. War is chalk full of them - little kids, cripples, old ladies. In fact, except for some of the brass, almost everybody involved is an innocent bystander."<sup>19</sup> The viewer

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<sup>18</sup> One particular case of a politically-conscious film being released around this time is that of the Warner Brothers Studio's film, *Confessions of a Nazi Spy*, released in 1939. The Warner brothers were sons of Polish Jews living in America and, because of the Nazi's anti-Semitism, they were some of those in Hollywood actively speaking out against the regime. See "Confessions of a Nazi Spy: Hollywood Strikes a Blow for Democracy," rev. of *Confessions of a Nazi Spy*, *The Scotsman* 20 June 1939: 17.

<sup>19</sup> M\*A\*S\*H. Episode no. 118, first broadcast 15 February 1977 by CBS. Directed by Alan Rafkin and written by Burt Prelutsky.

understands that this piercing commentary is intended to lash out at not just the Korean War that the character of Hawkeye currently finds himself in, or even the Vietnam War that was ongoing when the episode was released, but war's very essence. The speech that the Barber delivers at the end of *The Great Dictator* is an emotional call to the soldiers of the Double Cross regime, and also Chaplin's movie audience - to keep Hitler, and oppressive dictators in general, from taking away the beautiful freedoms of democracy:

Greed has poisoned men's souls, has barricaded the world with hate, has goose-stepped us into misery and bloodshed. We have developed speed, but we have shut ourselves in. Machinery that gives abundance has left us in want. . . . The aeroplane and the radio have brought us closer together. The very nature of these inventions cries out for the goodness in men - cries out for universal brotherhood - for the unity of us all. Even now my voice is reaching millions throughout the world . . . To those who can hear me, I say - do not despair. The misery that is now upon us is but the passing of greed - the bitterness of men who fear the way of human progress. . . . Dictators free themselves but they enslave the people! . . . Let us fight for a world of reason, a world where science and progress will lead to all men's happiness. Soldiers! in the name of democracy, let us all unite!<sup>20</sup>

Hawkeye's speech is included in a humorous television show, just as Chaplin's speech finds itself at the end of a comedic feature film. These two speeches are also similar in that they both address an immediate concern in the film, a real-world concern of the actor, and a system or culture of beliefs.

"The power of the clown" not only indicates that a comedian is able to parody political events and characters for the amusement of others, but that - because of this special status in society that he enjoys as a commentator on political and social issues - a comedian can say what he wants about what he observes. If a film employs a mix of comedy and serious discourse, it utilizes the comedian's special "jester" status in society. "The Clown" is able to disseminate political ideology to a large portion of the public because people view him as being harmless by his very nature as a jester. It is suitable to utilize humor to deal with disturbing subject matter, and it is not despite, but instead more because of, his status as a well-known comedian that Chaplin was able to include the

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<sup>20</sup> Chaplin, "The Great Dictator's Speech."

Barber's speech in a comic film. In *The Great Dictator*, Chaplin uses his "power" as a "clown" to provide his audience with assertions of how things are, and also how he thinks they should be. Moviegoers receive his message because they feel as though they are accomplices in Charlie Chaplin's foray into the political arena - they have been laughing along with him throughout the entirety of the movie, and now they must see it through to the end.



# THE ORIGINS OF OPPRESSION: SHI'Ī MARGINALIZATION UNDER THE TAZIMAT

BY  
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A defining element of Shi'ī Arab history over the past half millennium has been the legacy of Ottoman Sunni domination.<sup>1</sup> Here must begin any understanding of contemporary Arab Shi'ī political development, for it was under the Ottomans that the systemic exclusion and marginalization of the community began. Simply put, if one is to accurately represent the revolutionary nature of the Shi'ī political awakening of the last fifty years, an understanding of the origins of previous Shi'ī political quiescence is essential. Several aspects of this era are particularly important for the overall argument that I advance in this thesis.

First, the Ottoman era highlights the fact that most of Arab Shi'ī history has not been characterized by political militancy. Instead, it reveals a deep strain of quietism brought about by Ottoman oppression and the cooptation of the local Shi'ī elite. This is rarely noted in scholarly analysis but is essential in constructing a complete narrative of Arab Shi'ī political development, since the community's later politicization was only possible in light of their marginalization under the Ottomans. Crucially, the dynamics of repression and cooptation must be understood in detail because they retain currency in the collective memory and political attitudes of contemporary Arab Shi'a. The communal quiescence forged in this era features prominently in the Shi'ī Arab self-understanding and, as such, must be historiographically rehabilitated and given the same attention as later manifestations of Shi'ī militancy.

Second, the period of Ottoman domination reveals that Arab Shi'ī quiescence was a fundamentally local phenomenon; that is, it came about due to political dynamics unique to the Arab Middle East. Ottoman potentates in the region operated as viceroys independent of the Divine Porte in Istanbul and pursued policies mostly of their own choosing. The

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<sup>1</sup> Throughout this paper, I use *Shi'ī* as an adjective and *Shi'a* as a noun, following the system adopted by the *International Journal of Middle East Studies*.

Arab Shi'a reacted to such policy by perceiving their local interests and acting accordingly. That Istanbul sometimes set Ottoman policy does not detract from the argument that the Arab Shi'a related to Ottoman governors - often themselves Arabs - as they would any other local actor.

This period's third major historiographical implication follows directly from the second: Shi'i Iran played a remarkably small role in influencing their Arab coreligionists. Despite being locked in a great power struggle with the Ottoman Empire, there is little evidence that the Qajar Shahs sought, as one might expect, to use the Arab Shi'a as proxies against the Ottomans. Ottoman rhetoric to the contrary, transnational Shi'i clerical and cultural networks had relatively little political importance in this period.

This chapter explores this origin story through the paradigms of the Twelver Shi'a communities of what are now Lebanon and Iraq. These two examples are carefully chosen since, together, they uniquely capture the Shi'i experience under Ottoman domination. In addition to having been roughly commensurate demographic pluralities in each territory, both communities were conquered in the early sixteenth century and buffeted by similar forces of Ottoman imperial administration. Crucially, both Shi'i populations arrived at the dawn of the Mandate Era with the precedent of systematic political exclusion firmly established. This comparison is particularly meaningful given the tendency of historians of the Ottoman Empire to discuss the Arab Shi'a in terms limited to Ottoman policy toward religious and ethnic minorities rather than in terms of how Ottoman rule shaped Shi'i political development. While scholars such as Hanna Batatu have valuably undertaken the former historiographical mission, the existing literature has notably failed to make the crucial connection between the Shi'i experience in the late Ottoman era and the political quiescence that persisted in the community well into the late twentieth century.<sup>2</sup> The following will attempt to fill that gap.

Four hundred years of Ottoman hegemony over the Arab Shi'a produced many of the paradoxical trends - alliances of convenience and contradictory policies - inherent in this period. Here, I will focus on three principal aspects of the Shi'i experience of Ottoman rule - violent repression, cooptation of the feudal elite, and clerical subordination - in order to establish the principal characteristics that remained well past the dissolution of the Ottoman Empire. Synthesized into a coherent narrative, they explain continued Shi'i dispossession in the wake of the Ottoman collapse. All three were intimately related to the Ottoman desire, initiated

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<sup>2</sup> Hanna Batatu, *The Old Social Classes and the Revolutionary Movements of Iraq* (London: Saqi Books, 2004).

in the era of the *Tanzimat* (1839-1871) and extending to the absolute rule of Sultan Abdulhamid II, for more centralized control of the sprawling empire. First, the 'Amili (to avoid anachronistic terminology, this term - referring to the Shi'i heartland of Jabal 'Amil in southern Lebanon - will be used throughout) and Iraqi Shi'i experience of cataclysmic military oppression after a period of increasing local autonomy in the late eighteenth century marked the opening volley of Ottoman imperial reassertion and the beginning of a Shi'i culture of diminishment and quiescence. While this was particularly the case in the 'Amili paradigm, Ottoman reassertion also had significant effects on the Iraqi Shi'a. Foremost among these is this chapter's second area of focus - the radical restructuring of land tenure and the ascendancy of local feudal elites. These developments allowed the rise of a pliable client class through which the Ottomans effectively maintained control. Finally, the changing role of Shi'i clerics in the reshaped provincial environment of both Iraq and Jabal 'Amil had major implications for a community that was primarily defined in opposition to the overwhelmingly Sunni Ottoman realm by its heterodox religious beliefs. In abdicating their role as the ultimate defenders of the Shi'a in the Sunni world, the clerics forfeited an important source of Shi'i power. Taken together, Ottoman actions and Shi'i reactions provide both a communal narrative of origins and the backdrop against which later Shi'i political development must be analyzed.

Albert Hourani's periodization of Ottoman rule is the historiographical starting point that provides context for Ottoman-Shi'a relations in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. The subsequent dynamics of the interaction make little sense unless understood from this perspective. Hourani's temporal division is fourfold; it is his third period - what he termed the era of "the politics of notables" - that serves to illuminate subsequent developments.<sup>3</sup> In this period, he writes, "The control of the central government over Ottoman society weaken[ed] or [was] exercised in a more indirect way."<sup>4</sup> Within the Twelver Shi'a communities of Jabal 'Amil and Iraq, this period - from roughly 1760 to the early nineteenth century - was one of increasing political autonomy. The Ottomans were distracted from the Arab provincial backwater by the trifold effects of a growing Russian military menace, increased European demands for "capitulations" in favor of their preferred Ottoman ethno-religious communities, and racing inflation in the Anatolian heartland.<sup>5</sup> In

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<sup>3</sup> Albert Hourani, "Ottoman Reform and the Politics of Notables," *The Modern Middle East* Hourani, Khoury, and Wilson eds. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), 87.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, 84.

<sup>5</sup> Juan Cole, *Sacred Space and Holy War* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2002), 22.

Shi'i Iraq, this meant that "the writ of the authorities ran precariously outside the main towns, so that the main tribal confederations were...more often than not a power unto themselves."<sup>6</sup> In fact, in a trend replicated around the empire by potentates such as Mehmet Ali Pasha in Egypt, a local dynasty of slave soldiers - Georgian Mamluks - took control in Baghdad and ruled virtually independently until Ottoman reoccupation in 1831. In the absence of centralized power, Shi'i notables - tribal leaders in the countryside and *ulema* (religious scholars) and *Sayyids* (descendants of the Prophet) in the cities - competed for influence on equal footing with the appointed Sunni governors and shrine caretakers. The most extreme case - and one that would ultimately, as detailed below, lead to nemesis and tragedy for the Shi'a community - was the *ulema*-led rebellion of the shrine city of Karbala in the 1820s and 1830s.<sup>7</sup> The following succinct description of the situation in Karbala from contemporaneous British diplomatic documents could just as easily have applied to the entire Shi'i south of Iraq: "[it has become] a self-governing, semi-alien republic."<sup>8</sup> Writing somewhat later in the nineteenth century, renowned colonial administrator Gertrude Bell described Najaf similarly, which assumed primacy of place within Shi'ism after the fall of Karbala: "The inhabitants are exceedingly fanatical; no Sunni is allowed to live within the walls of Najaf, nor may he enter the great mosque where the Khalif Ali is buried."<sup>9</sup> While this was likely an overstatement, the message remains: the Iraqi and 'Amili Shi'a had virtually free reign in the era of the politics of notables.

#### IMPERIAL REASSERTION

The Shi'a of Ottoman Jabal 'Amil (then known as *bilad ash-sham*) also asserted local power in the period of Ottoman retrenchment, although to a lesser extent than their coreligionists in the Iraqi shrine cities. In fact, given Jabal 'Amil's position far from the front lines of Ottoman-Iranian strategic confrontation and closer to the Ottoman seat of power, the degree to which local notables did seize control is a testament to Ottoman weakness throughout the provinces. Traditionally, the 'Amili feudal lords - those holding what was referred to as an *iqta'* (a fief-like, hereditary land holding) - had aligned themselves with the *amirs* of Mount Lebanon. For the early and middle parts of Ottoman rule, this meant subordination to the

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<sup>6</sup> Batatu, *The Old Social Classes*, 42.

<sup>7</sup> Juan Cole and Moojan Momen, "Mafia, Mob and Shiism in Iraq: The Rebellion of Ottoman Karbala 1824-1843," *Past and Present* 112 (1986): 112.

<sup>8</sup> Yitzhak Nakash, *The Shi'is of Iraq* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1994), 22.

<sup>9</sup> Gertrude Bell, *The Letters of Gertrude Bell* (New York: Boni and Liveright, 1927), 289.

Druze Ma'an and the Christian Shihab dynasties, with intermittent interruptions when a particular lord might decide to make a power play against the sitting *amir* and, in turn, was quickly dispatched by the latter. By the late eighteenth century, however, the power of the Ottoman-appointed *walis* had come to resemble that of the feckless governors of Karbala and Najaf, limited to the city walls of their seat of power.<sup>10</sup> As a result, the 'Amili *muqata'jis* (holders of an *iqta'*) seized the opportunity when a Palestinian tribal chief named Dahir al-'Umar proposed the creation of a joint monopoly over the local cotton market combined with the wholesale rejection of tax obligations to the Porte. This partnership was lucrative enough that the Shi'i *zu'ama* (landed lords) sided with Dahir against the *walis* of Sidon and Damascus when they sought to collect the outstanding taxes, defeating Ottoman forces in 1771 and 1772. Predictably, however, Dahir met a bloody end in 1775 against an overwhelming Ottoman expedition, by which time the perils of Shi'i local autonomy had become obvious in Istanbul.

Ottoman imperial reassertion came quickly, but it took on a distinctly local flavor. In the wake of these events, the Ottomans punitively unleashed a "lion let loose against humanity" upon the 'Amili Shi'a in the form of the luridly named Ahmad Pasha al-Jazzar.<sup>11</sup> (Jazzar is usually translated as "butcher.") Two primary factors motivated Al-Jazzar's violent repression of the Shi'a: the emergent proto-*Tanzimat* centralizing impulse of the Ottoman bureaucracy and a fierce religious hatred of Shi'ism, the latter likely induced by the growing power and confidence of the newly ascendant Qajar dynasty in Persia. (Ottoman documents show that al-Jazzar often rallied his troops before battle by reminding them of supposed Shi'a misdeeds against the *rashidun* caliphs of early Islam.) Although it is unlikely that al-Jazzar cared much about the nobler aspirations of the *Tanzimat*, such as phasing out feudal economic relations, creating independent, educated Ottoman citizens, and the granting of additional minority rights, he would certainly have identified with one of its central tenets: increased Ottoman tax revenues by consolidation of provincial control. One scholar noted, "Al-Jazzar was a ruthless man...the thriving cotton trade and its profits were to be his; the regime of Dahir al-Umar and that of the Shi'i clans allied with him had to be broken."<sup>12</sup> This he did with evident relish, burning, pillaging, and rapping his way across Jabal 'Amil until the French orientalist Constantin-

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<sup>10</sup> Rodger Shanahan, *The Shi'a of Lebanon* (New York: I.B. Tauris, 2011), 23.

<sup>11</sup> Fouad Ajami, *The Vanished Imam* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1986), 55.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, 54.

François De Volney, following just behind his armies, noted that, “The country of the Motoualis [a derogative term for the Shi’a]...[has] undergone a revolution, which has reduced [it] almost to nothing.”<sup>13</sup> The level of destruction wrought by al-Jazzar’s armies seems to have qualitatively exceeded even the brutal standards of the day. De Volney, in fact, wondered whether the ‘Amili Shi’a might be exterminated outright, writing, “[al-Jazzar]...has incessantly labored to destroy them...It is probable they will be totally annihilated, and even their name become extinct.”<sup>14</sup> Al-Jazzar went far beyond the exigencies of tax collection, but this was not a concern for Ottoman authorities, who likely recognized that in pursuing his own interest al-Jazzar was enforcing their writ as well.

The immediate effects of al-Jazzar’s campaign devastated the Shi’a. While De Volney’s prediction proved to be an underestimation of ‘Amili Shi’a communal resilience, the memory of al-Jazzar took on a mythic and symbolic role within the community even as it fought to recover from the destruction. The economic implications were twofold: first, the sheer level of destruction of livestock and crops placed impossible pressure on the Shi’a survivors to produce enough taxable goods, since Ottoman tax levels on the *miri* (state owned, sharecropper operated land) were not revised down for decreased production. On top of this, rapacious *zu’ama* (and local *multazims* - Ottoman tax collectors who were often also landowners) continued to collect local taxes, resulting in an unusually extractive scheme of double taxation.<sup>15</sup> Yet, Fouad Ajami’s elegant articulation of the enduring psychological meaning of the Ottoman governor’s oppression cuts to the core of his legacy: “For the Shi’a, the tale of al-Jazzar taught the futility of political action. Power was the attribute of capricious men. Shi’a history had transmitted [a] kind of aversion to the world of power; al-Jazzar was true to the expectation. *What the Shi’a derived from the memory of al-Jazzar was an attitude of political withdrawal and defeat* [emphasis added].”<sup>16</sup> Here, one must be careful not merely to write this quiescence off as a kind of reversion to the Shi’a norm; there exists a mostly ahistorical conception that the Shi’a have, throughout Islamic history, contented themselves with remaining the downtrodden of society. In most cases, this idea is tied to a notion of Shi’ism as inherently quiescent due to its messianic eschatological orientation - the belief that the Mahdi will return from occultation and judge the world’s oppressors. In truth, however, the Shi’a held vast

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<sup>13</sup> Constantin-François Volney, *Travels Through Syria and Egypt in the Years 1783, 1784, and 1785* (G. Robinson, 1805), 340.

<sup>14</sup> Ajami, *The Vanished Imam* 55.

<sup>15</sup> Shanahan, *The Shi’a of Lebanon*, 24.

<sup>16</sup> Ajami, *The Vanished Imam*, 55.

temporal power under several medieval Arab dynasties - the Fatimids most notably - and often were not shy about protecting their interests in the political realm. Thus, the downtrodden orientation described by Ajami becomes even more notable for its relative novelty.

The distinguishing feature of the new political passivity was an all-encompassing Shi'i tendency to view al-Jazzar's rule as the moment when agency passed from Shi'i hands and to reimagine the era before his rule in the warm light of nostalgia as, "some imagined age of bliss and plenty."<sup>17</sup> One local chronicler captured this skewed vision of a halcyon past: "The people of Jabal 'Amil lived in dignity and prosperity even during times of war and catastrophe. No taxes overwhelmed them; no rulers oppressed them and plundered their wealth...If a Shi'a traveled to some other place beyond his land, he traveled proud of his heritage."<sup>18</sup> Such sentiments served only to further construct a culture of lamentation and passivity. By the mid nineteenth century, when Ottoman imperial reassertion reached its apex, the 'Amili Shi'a had become a community that grieved for a lost past more than it tried to rebuild it, anticipating justice in the hereafter rather than striving for it in the present.

The Porte had even greater concerns about the potential threat posed by the relatively Persianized Iraqi Shi'a. While al-Jazzar made the dubious assertion that the 'Amili Shi'a were agents of resurgent Iranian power in order to rally his marauding troops, by the early eighteenth century top Ottoman officials maintained a similar belief that the Shi'a of the Iraqi south were a "potential fifth column" and a strategic thorn in the empire's side.<sup>19</sup> As described above, over the course of Mamluk rule, the Shi'i south had become largely autonomous. Crucially, this permitted thousands of refugees fleeing Iran's Afghan invaders to take up permanent residence in Karbala in what the Ottoman authorities perceived as the infiltration and Persianization of a longstanding Ottoman territory. This perception was hardened by the acceleration of *Tanzimat* centralization policies in the wake of the defeat of Mehmet Ali's forces by European and Ottoman forces in Syria, which encouraged those who sought a centralized Ottoman Empire.

The Ottoman authorities that had, in 1831, reestablished central control in Iraq decided that the situation in the south - Karbala in particular - was strategically untenable. Starting in the 1820s, the city had been ruled by a coalition of local laymen and clerics, both groups intent on Shi'i autonomy from the Ottomans. A contemporaneous British diplomatic

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

<sup>18</sup> Ibid., 53.

<sup>19</sup> Cole and Momen, "Mafia, Mob and Shiism in Iraq," 115.

account captured official Ottoman thinking: “There has been considerable uneasiness on the part of the authorities in this province, as it is generally believed that the Persian government desires to recover its sway over this country, as it contains the Shia shrines of Kerbella and Nejjeff [sic], and it is supposed that a secret Treaty exists between the Russians and the Persians on this head. These shrines are reputed to contain a vast amount of treasure, and the province is filled with Mussalmans of the Shi’a sect.”<sup>20</sup> Inflaming matters, the inhabitants of Karbala did nothing to discourage the Ottoman view of them as Iranian agents. They maintained their Persian mores, dress, and language and openly omitted the Ottoman emperor’s title from Friday prayers. In truth, however, the political links between the Iraqi Shi’a and the Iranian Shahs was tenuous at best. The maintenance of Iranian customs among the Iraqi Shi’a is thus better viewed as part of the creation of a local identity in opposition to the Ottoman rulers than an expression of solidarity with Iran.

By September 1842, after one of his viceroys was prevented from praying at the Shi’i shrine of Imam Hussein, Ottoman Sultan Abdülmecid was resolved to act. He sent his confidant, the severely conservative Najib Pasha, to restore Ottoman hegemony at any cost. By December, a large Ottoman army had besieged Karbala. Much like the ‘Amili Shi’a leaders in the previous century, Karbala’s strongmen and *ulema* failed to understand the magnitude of the change the *Tanzimat* reforms had wrought on Ottoman strategic thinking. The Karbala notables convinced themselves that, having withstood Ottoman Mamluk sieges in the previous two decades, this time would be no different.<sup>21</sup> In addition, the Shi’i clergy fanned the sectarian flames by telling the masses that holding the city constituted a defensive jihad against the Sunnis. Cole illustrates: “The religious official in charge of the shrine of ‘Abbas thwarted one set of [peace] talks by standing up in the assembly, dashing his turban to the ground and excommunicating anyone who spoke of giving up the town and their wives to the “infidel” Turks.”<sup>22</sup> Of course, all the apocalyptic rhetoric amounted to very little when Ottoman artillery mercilessly bombarded the city into submission and the soldiers sauntered in to claim their prize.

The tone of the occupation was set by one officer who, “promised to allow them [his men] to do whatever they pleased once inside and pledged 150 *piasters* for every [Shi’i] head.”<sup>23</sup> Massive slaughter ensued;

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<sup>20</sup> "Lieutenant-Colonel Nixon to the Earl of Derby," Baghdad, April 24 1877, FO 424/53/171.

<sup>21</sup> Cole and Momen, "Mafia, Mob and Shiism in Iraq," 132.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid., 135.

on the first day at least 5,000 Shi'a were killed (estimates range as high as 18,000) with only a few hundred Ottoman casualties. Mullah Yusuf Astarabadi, a local cleric, gave a graphic description: "the dead were lying on top of one another to the extent that I could not cross the street except by walking over the corpses. It was as if I walked about invisibly, so many had perished...At the foundation of the mausoleum of 'Abbas...I descried all about the illumined sepulcher murdered souls clinging to it, beseeching, seeking shelter and refuge."<sup>24</sup> Adding insult, Ottoman troops also embraced the narrative of holy war, desecrating the shrine of 'Abbas by stabling horses in its sanctuary and singing bawdy songs outside. It is important, however, to view such sectarian violence in the context of the local struggle for power rather than the great power contest between Persia and the Ottoman Empire. Religion, for both Sunni and Shi'a, was made to serve both parties' political interests in the struggle over Iraq. This important reality is only possible, however, by understanding that the Iraqi Shi'a did not import their political practices directly from Iran.

The Shi'a of Karbala did not mythologize the massacre in Karbala as their 'Amili coreligionists in the Levant did the terrors of al-Jazzar; instead, they suffered its effects in a more subtle but equally devastating way. In part, the psychological blow was dented by foreign powers such as Britain and Russia that saw the Karbala episode as potentially threatening to the international status quo and intervened to mitigate its effects, whereas Jabal 'Amil had no comparable strategic relevance and received no such attention. The effect of the butchery on the Iraqi Shi'a took several forms, all involving a newfound communal quiescence. The *ulema*, taken aback by the aggressiveness of the new, centralizing Ottoman policy, resorted to the ancient Shi'i doctrine of *taqiyyah*, in which Shi'a were permitted to lie about their religion to avoid oppression. Friday prayers were canceled, and many Shi'a adopted the ritual praxis of Sunni orthodoxy to avoid detection. For clerics who only a few weeks earlier had been literally and metaphorically on the barricades calling for Sunni blood to sublimate themselves to Ottoman orthopraxy was a testament to their fear of future Ottoman brutality. In addition, in a savvy political coup, Najib Pasha coopted the landowners and gang leaders who participated in the uprising by offering them pardons in return for loyalty. This led to a secular version of *taqiyyah* in which the elites claimed to be more content with imperial control than the status quo ante. One wealthy resident reportedly gushed: "no place could have exceeded [pre-massacre] Karbellah in debauchery of every sort," and thus, implicitly, occupation

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<sup>24</sup> Ibid., 137.

had a salutary effect.<sup>25</sup> There is, however, reason to doubt the sincerity of such protestations given that a primary Ottoman priority was to reassert a system of taxation much more onerous than that prevailing under the looseness of gang rule.

A secondary effect of the slaughter was the diminishment of Karbala as the principal seat of Shi'a religious scholarship in favor of Najaf. Many of the fledgling Shi'i scholars chose the *hawza* (seminary) of the still-autonomous Najaf over the wreckage of Karbala.<sup>26</sup> Yet, Najaf's autonomy was short lived; when Najib Pasha's army arrived at the city the residents, unwilling to sacrifice their lives for their autonomy, reluctantly invited the soldiers in. By brutal repression and cataclysmic violence, the Ottomans had successfully demonstrated that, from then on, imperial hegemony was the new norm in Shi'i Iraq, and resistance would be handled as it was when the streets of Karbala ran red.

#### CO-OPTING THE FEUDAL LORDS

Having returned imperial power to the Shi'i provinces of Iraq and the Levant, the Ottomans coopted community leaders through whom they enhanced and enforced their rule at the local level. In both Jabal 'Amil in the Levant and Iraq, this local elite was formed out of large landholders and wealthy merchants in the Shi'a community. In Jabal 'Amil, such a landed elite had been present in the form of the *zu'ama* (landowners) for hundreds of years while, in Iraq, Ottoman *Tanzimat* land reform and detribalization bolstered those landowners who had previously been secondary in power to the *ulema*. In both areas, however, the era of the *Tanzimat* marked the institutionalization of feudal power to a new degree, putting in place the system, later embraced by the mandate powers, that kept the Shi'i masses under the thumb of a collaborationist and corrupt local elite that would rule until the latter half of the twentieth century.

In Jabal 'Amil, as noted above, there was a long history of landowners as the dominant political force in Shi'i society. Before the nineteenth century, however, these lords had occupied a niche somewhere between that of tribal chiefs and feudal masters. Although by no means democratic, their rule, in the absence of strong imperial power, was at least somewhat dependent on clan and tribal approval. The campaigns of al-Jazzar, however, largely eliminated the existing coterie of noble families, replacing them with clans more amenable to Ottoman interests. These new landowners (*zu'ama*) were joined at the hip to Ottoman power, holding both fiefs (*iqta'*) and tax-farming concessions (*iltizams*) that required them

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<sup>25</sup> Ibid.

<sup>26</sup> Nakash, *The Shi'is of Iraq*, 22.

to act simultaneously as Ottoman agents and enforcers.<sup>27</sup> A French Mandate-era report looking back on Ottoman Syria detailed the social effects of the feudal system in the early *Tanzimat* era: “‘Amili society [was] very primitive, [a condition characterized by] a feudal and patriarchal organization that gives it its particular physiognomy.” The author describes the *fellahin* (peasants) as “ignorant masses” because of this rule and thus the, “[Motouali] agricultural population constitutes the most primitive grouping in the Levant.”<sup>28</sup> While French imperial designs on the region may have played some part in such an assessment, the description is in keeping with the recollections of other travelers in the region.

That the *zu'ama* quickly became rapacious and self-serving is unsurprising given the absence of any incentive to advocate on behalf of the peasantry. By the mid-nineteenth century, however, modernizers in Istanbul determined that the feudal system of government was retrograde and unbecoming of an empire that saw itself as part of the democratizing, European fold. The centerpiece of *Tanzimat* reform of Ottoman policy in the Levant was the Land Code of 1858, which privatized land held by the sultan as *miri* (the emperor's personal land). Ottoman belief that this law would break the power of the 'Amili feudal elites revealed either naïveté about the degree to which *zu'ama* control had taken root since the Ottoman revival or profound cynicism. The actual result of the law should have been predictable to anyone familiar with local dynamics: peasants, fearful of increased taxes and military conscription, ceded the deeds of their farms to their landlords in the hope of protection from imagined predatory forces. Ma'oz summarizes the result: “[Thus, the landlords] acquired freehold ownership of lands with full rights of disposal and succession confirmed by the government, whereas the peasants - the actual cultivators - lost their true rights and became sharecroppers or hired laborers at the mercy of their landlords.”<sup>29</sup> With their traditional land-based power intact, the *zu'ama* also benefited from Ottoman bureaucratic reorganization which, combined with the land reform, allowed the *za'im* (singular of *zu'ama*) to maintain the social and political prerogatives of his forebears under the veneer of liberal modernity.

For those few 'Amili landlords who did lose property in the land reorganization, service in the newly created Ottoman governing institutions became an equally compelling means of status preservation.

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<sup>27</sup> Tamara Chalabi, *The Shi'is of Jabal 'Amil and the New Lebanon* (New York: Palgrave Mamillan, 2006), 23.

<sup>28</sup> Max Weiss, *In the Shadow of Sectarianism* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2010), 56.

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

After the horrific sectarian violence of 1860, Ottoman authorities enacted the *Règlement Organique*, which established a more centralized system of local rule known as the *mutasarifiyat* (ruled by a local governor, the *mutasarrif*). Like the Land Code of 1858, the supposed aim and real effect of the law were contradictory. While its sixth article proclaimed that, “all are equal before the law, and all privileges, including those of the *muqata’jis*, are abolished,” the truth lay in its eleventh, which stated, “all members of the...administrative assemblies will be chosen and appointed by the leaders of their sect in agreement with the notables of the sect.”<sup>30</sup> Opportunities for positions on the new Central Administrative Council, local councils, and even in the Ottoman parliament in Istanbul opened to ‘Amili Shi’i elites. The Ottomans recognized the value of maintaining a loyal class of local clients and were not interested in anything more than rhetoric when it came to legislating against *zu’ama* representation in government. For the feudal elites, participation in Ottoman institutions was the latest iteration of a longstanding system of patronage and communal neglect even as it foreshadowed Shi’i sectarian politics in the twentieth century by enshrining religious identity as the determinant of political representation.

In time, the *zu’ama* brought the same avaricious attitude toward government posts as toward land. Mohammad Jabir, a Lebanese observer familiar with the new regime described one particularly powerful *za’im*: “Kamal Bek was of the opinion that representing the Shi’is of Jebel ‘Amil was his prerogative...[a status unavailable] to anybody else whatever his personality and his capacities might have been.”<sup>31</sup> As this attitude became ingrained, so too did the belief that government office was an opportunity for self-aggrandizement and the leveraging of influence (*wasta*) to enrich oneself and one’s family. Bisharah al-Khoury, the first president of post-Mandate Lebanon, recalled growing up in this environment: “The great offices formed nearly without exception a *waqf* (trust) for the great families of the country. This came from the de facto influence of feudalism after feudalism had been officially ended by the provision of the ‘Règlement Organique.’ Office in those days was everything...It became the reason for enmities and for ruinous spending...The competition for office helped many a *mutasarrif* to dominate the Lebanese families and to dispose of Lebanese affairs just as he liked without being blamed by anybody.”<sup>32</sup> As shown in his final point, the *zu’ama*’s abdication of responsibility for ‘Amili Shi’i communal well-being invited uncontested

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<sup>30</sup> Shanahan, *The Shi’a of Lebanon*, 27.

<sup>31</sup> Arnold Hottinger, “Zu’ama In Historical Perspective,” in Binder, Leonard (ed.) *Politics in Lebanon* (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1966), 93.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, 90.

Ottoman power and attendant decades of marginalization and hopelessness for the Shi'i masses. Ironically, in the final appraisal, Ottoman handouts of land and office gave the *zu'ama* themselves more the illusion of power than real influence. Crucially, they spent most of their political energy mired in internecine fighting, unable to consider independent, unified action. This focus on social standing served their immediate interests, given the ephemeral nature of political power as a minority community under the Ottomans. Yet, it also ensured that the Shi'a community had no hope of making broader political progress. In addition, by failing to encourage their peasants to produce products desirable for the burgeoning trade with Europe - silk in particular - the Shi'a ensured that, "the abjectness of their economic niche...[relegated] them to relative unimportance in the eyes of the Ottoman governors."<sup>33</sup>

The similarity of the Iraqi feudal aristocracy by the dawn of the twentieth century to that of Jabal 'Amil reinforces the conclusion that the Ottomans considered the cooption of Shi'i landowners essential to enforcing Shi'i quiescence. In Iraq, however, the Ottoman authorities had a much more difficult task since Iraq had no indigenous political institution comparable to the 'Amili *zu'ama*. Instead, communal power lay in the hands of the nomadic desert tribes (and, at times, the *ulema*). A prominent Iraqi politician described the status of the tribes before the *Tanzimat*-driven Ottoman reassertion of control: "To depend on the tribe is a thousand times safer than depending on the government, for whereas the latter defers or neglects [its duty]...the tribe, no matter how feeble it may be, as soon as it learns that an injustice has been committed against one of its members readies itself to exact vengeance on his behalf."<sup>34</sup> Moreover, the Iraqi tribes did not have as long a Shi'i pedigree as the 'Amili Shi'a. Until the middle of the nineteenth century, most of the tribesmen had been nominal Sunnis, although their true faith lay in an ancient system of tribal law and honor. The existence of such fearsome and autonomous tribes presented an obvious problem to Ottoman centralized control (and, most importantly, taxation), and its proponents set out to vitiate the tribes' independence by coopting their leaders. The authorities' primary means was forced sedentarization, by which the nomads were turned into land-bound agriculturalists. Paradoxically, simultaneous mass tribal conversion to Shi'ism played a major role in facilitating this shift in lifestyle and values. Shi'i clerics from Najaf and Karbala saw an opportunity for proselytization among socially dislocated tribesmen in the midst of a radical process of

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<sup>33</sup> Cole, *Sacred Space and Holy War*, 28.

<sup>34</sup> Batatu, *The Old Social Classes*, 21.

identity construction.<sup>35</sup> Their efforts were highly successful, and, pragmatically, Ottoman authorities did little to prevent them. The rulers saw Shi'ism, despite being anathema to orthodox Sunnis, as preferable to a warrior tribal culture and even, perhaps, as a salutary civilizing influence.

With religion facilitating the cultural shift, the mechanics of Ottoman cultivation of a new feudal elite proceeded similarly in Iraq as it had in Jabal 'Amil. The decisive coup was the enactment in Iraq of the Land Code of 1869, stipulating a program similar to that of the Land Code of 1858 in Lebanon. Under the new system, land ownership in southern Iraq, which previously had been fluid and communal in keeping with the tribes' roving nomadic lifestyle, was privatized. Title deeds (*tapu sanads*) to imperial lands were granted to tribal sheikhs, as was the accompanying responsibility of farming taxes from the inhabitants.<sup>36</sup> This responsibility - identical to that of the *multazims* in Jabal 'Amil - created a bifurcated class system of landowners and tenants out of a formerly egalitarian society. The ease of abuse and perverse economic incentives in this system soon led to over-taxation and corruption in the new feudal elite. Batatu described the moral shock of such an abrupt entrance into the imperial economy: "The ensuing penetration of money and the idea of profit among the tribes, the transformation of their shaikhs from patriarchs into gain-seeking landlords, and the Turkish policy of playing off tribal chief against tribal chief...so changed the conditions of life...as to [render] the old tribal loyalties...by and large ineffectual."<sup>37</sup> In fact, benefitting from the process - outlined in the 'Amili case - by which fearful peasants voluntarily renounced their title deed (*tapu*) claims, the landlords grew so powerful that they began to defy their Ottoman masters by refusing to pay taxes. This led the governor in Baghdad to scale back the volume of title deed grants.<sup>38</sup> The fact that the feudal elites felt powerful enough to attempt this, however, only served to further illustrate Ottoman success in sapping Shi'i tribal resistance to their rule.

The social and economic effects of Shi'i sedentarization were as detrimental to the tribes in the long term as in the near. A British diplomatic observer in the first decade of the twentieth century noted: "The feudal system which exists in the province is nothing short of a calamity for the country. In the villages there are Beys and hereditary Aghas [Shiekh] who have a certain amount of influence, as much with the

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<sup>35</sup> Nakash, *The Shi'is of Iraq*, 28.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, 33.

<sup>37</sup> Batatu, *The Old Social Classes*, 22.

<sup>38</sup> Marion Farouk-Sluglett and Peter Sluglett, "The Transformation of Land Tenure and Rural Social Structure in Central and Southern Iraq 1870-1958," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 15 (1983): 491-505.

authorities as with the villagers. Most of the villages are the property of these Beys and Aghas, and are exploited by them to augment their personal revenues without any regard to the prosperity of their inhabitants. The result is that the peasant is kept in a continual state of poverty, with no hope of ever becoming a proprietor of land himself.”<sup>39</sup> The feudal lords compounded the suffering of the *fellahin* by contentedly allowing the winds of economic change to pass the Iraqi Shi’i community by. Crucially, the 1869 opening of the Suez Canal played to the advantages of Sunni traders in the cities who monopolized the Iraqi trade with Europe. Shi’i landlords did not encourage their tenants to grow the kinds of cash crops desirable in Europe and willingly ceded the new market to others, taxing their peasants even more to make up for lost revenue.<sup>40</sup> Thus, despite the challenges of a relatively horizontal social structure and strong tribal leadership in southern Iraq before the *Tanzimat*, the Ottomans demonstrated that their formula for reducing the Shi’a, even when in the majority, to a quiescent agricultural underclass was replicable and successful across the Arab provinces.

#### CLERICAL QUIESCENCE

By a reasonable reading of history, Ottoman elimination of secular elites as a potential source of Shi’i communal leadership could have seen the *ulema* take up this mantle. In a fundamental sense, the clergy were the keepers of Shi’i identity; they represented the moral and cultural compass of a community defined by its heterodox religious beliefs. The concept of *marji’ al-taqlid* - in which Shi’a look to their clerics as “sources of emulation” for the duration of the Last Imam’s (Imam Mahdi) occultation - seemingly provided the *ulema* a theological justification for a robust political presence. Despite the hesitation of many traditional clerics to wield power through political activism, there were also striking examples (such as that of the Karbala uprising) in which Shi’i clerics did embrace power politics. What is more, the victory of the hierarchical, *Usuli* school of Shi’i jurisprudence over the course of the nineteenth century further ratified clerical activism by enshrining *ijtihad* (the ability to make religious rulings) and the importance of continual textual reinterpretation of past Shi’i practices.<sup>41</sup> Such traditions, one scholar notes, “consolidated the authority of Shi’a jurists by initiating an unprecedented relationship between believers and their religious scholars. This sense of devotion to the religious leaders as the representatives of the Imam made possible the

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<sup>39</sup> David Gillard, *British Documents on Foreign Affairs / the Ottoman Empire in North Africa* (University Publications of America, 1984), 210.

<sup>40</sup> Cole, *Sacred Space*, 27.

<sup>41</sup> Shanahan, *The Shi’a of Lebanon*, 134.

exercise of powerfully influential leadership in the Shi'a community."<sup>42</sup> Why, in practice, the behavior of 'Amili and Iraqi clerics differed so markedly from the above bears scrutiny for what it reveals about the Shi'i experience of Ottoman rule and the primacy of local self-interest as a motivating factor.

The history of the clerics of Jabal 'Amil perfectly illustrates the dynamics of this paradox. In the sixteenth century, Jabal 'Amil was the region's most respected center of Shi'i scholarship. Clerical endeavors were well supported by income from independent charitable endowments (*waqfs*), and the scholars' authority was so highly regarded that the first Safavid shahs invited them to propagate Shi'ism in their newly conquered lands, thereby installing Shi'ism as the state religion for the first time since the Fatimids and Buyids of the tenth century. Yet, by the nineteenth century, the 'Amili clerical establishment was a shade of its former self; any young religious scholar ('*alim*) of ambition did everything possible to study in Najaf or Karbala and, in many cases, never returned home. At the root of this shift were the campaigns of al-Jazzar, which had destroyed clerical property on a massive scale. Most left for the relative security of Iraq, but those who remained had little choice but to bind themselves to the new class of feudal landlords who emerged from the destruction.

The potential for corruption and sycophantism was immediately realized. Fouad Ajami bitingy described the new status quo: "Shi'a Lebanon sustained a clerical community that was on the whole economically depressed and politically quiescent. The clerics accepted the preeminence of the beys. The latter were the ones with the money, with the men with guns, and the land...[the '*alim*] was a man without political ambitions, without glamor...Economically vulnerable, they took the world as it came."<sup>43</sup> Without independent income, the clerics became little more than loyal retainers for feudal families. The *zu'ama* viewed them as charity cases, a worthy and unthreatening way to spend spare change. It was simply not in the *ulema's* interest to threaten even this meager existence by taking up the cause of the repressed masses. Nor, for that matter, was there a tradition of clerical action on behalf of the peasantry. That peasants looked to them for moral and cultural leadership - although, as demonstrated below, even this would come into doubt - did not necessarily translate into the political realm. With time, clerical families formed alliances with feudal clans that spanned generations, with the clerics serving to legitimate each new scion as he took power.<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>42</sup> Ibid., 135.

<sup>43</sup> Ajami, *The Vanished Imam*, 74.

<sup>44</sup> Chalabi, *The Shi'is of Jabal 'Amil*, 22.

Accordingly, little heed was paid to them by either the Ottomans or the Shi'a themselves. A French military officer's 1936 observation of the clerics is equally applicable to the Ottoman period, since little had changed in the intervening years: "There is a strange thing in the Shi'i country, the religious authorities did not enjoy the authority that one expected. The influence of the *sayyids* remains for the most part local. If they have some credit among the peasants, then the more evolved classes were increasingly outside their control and merely represented external symbols of respect."<sup>45</sup>

Such was the depth of Ottoman disregard for the Shi'i men of religion (*ulema*) that the authorities did not even permit them to settle legal disputes within their own community (a traditional prerogative of religious leaders within the *millet* system). Instead, under the 1845 *Règlement Shakib Effend*, a Sunni judge (*qadi*) was appointed to serve Shi'i legal needs.<sup>46</sup> For their part, Shi'a peasants mocked the clerics as "obscurantists" who "told fantastic tales" and wore "religious garb...to hide physical deformities and escape being taunted about them."<sup>47</sup> In light of such invective and humiliation, Shanahan's comment that, "The costs of adopting an [activist] stance would have outweighed the gains," appears dubious. While embracing the theological justification for clerical activism would have posed risks, the 'Amili *ulema*'s silence ensured that both they and their flock suffered marginalization and poverty for decades to come.

The social and political role of the *ulema* in the Iraqi Shi'i community was much more consequential than that of the 'Amilis but still, ultimately, crushed by Ottoman imperial reassertion. While it is not clear that the clerics always had the best interests of Iraqi Shi'a at heart, it is undeniable that they were a force to be reckoned with. Iraqi clerics enjoyed enormous prestige from controlling the holiest shrines in Shi'i Islam, but gained status from their established ability to play power politics, as they had in Karbala in the 1830s. More central than either of these factors, however, was that, unlike their 'Amili counterparts, the Iraqi *ulema* were financially independent. They were the beneficiaries of taxes (*khums*) and donations (*zakat*) from the constant stream of Persian pilgrims to the Iraqi holy sites. In addition, they received massive subsidies from Shi'i potentates across Asia. Most notoriously, the Oudh Bequest, given by the Shi'i king of the Indian state of Awadh, endowed the religious

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<sup>45</sup> Ibid.

<sup>46</sup> Shanahan, *The Shi'a of Lebanon*, 27.

<sup>47</sup> Ajami, *The Vanished Imam*, 74.

institutions of Karbala and Najaf well into the twentieth century.<sup>48</sup> Thus, the Iraqi *mujtahids* posed a potential threat to the centralizing efforts of the *Tanzimat* reformers. One scholar observed, "The Shi'ite [hierarchy] had tenuous and informal ties with a weak central government while it firmly dominated the masses by its exclusive religious authority."<sup>49</sup>

In response to clerical power, the Ottomans pursued a dual policy of simultaneous favors and ideological warfare. The favors - mostly new infrastructure and the maintenance of shrines - were doled out in the hope that the *ulema* might come to see the Ottoman state rather than the Qajar shah as their imperial protector. While this seems unreasonably optimistic in retrospect, at the time Sultan Abdulhamid II fiercely advocated a pan-Islamism encompassing all heterodox sects. With the empire crumbling under European territorial advances, Yusuf Riza Pasha captured the sultan's thinking: "At the present time, it is a religious obligation for Muslim nations to unite and rise up, on the basis of God's unity, against the rule of the Christian states; and, since all of them perceive this point, the capacity for unity and alliance in this direction is becoming apparent among both Sunnis and Shi'a."<sup>50</sup> In addition, with the notable exception of Karbala in the early part of the century, the Shi'i clerics had devoted most of their political attention to pressuring the Iranian state, as in the notorious Tobacco Concession episode in 1890-91. This, of course, did very little for disenfranchised Iraqi peasants struggling under feudal rule and Ottoman taxes. The activism did, however, improve the clerics' image with the Ottomans, who saw them as potential agents against Persian and British encroachment on imperial borders. Again, Ottoman official Yusuf Riza Pasha captured the strategic calculus: "[Riza] stated that the *mujtahids*' influence was a thousand times [more] effective in Iran than that of the Shah. He argued that most of the *mujtahids* lived in the Ottoman Empire, and they were able, without a sign, to make people revolt against the Shah in twenty four hours, and coerce the Iranian state [to do] whatever they wanted."<sup>51</sup> Ironically, the Ottomans came to view Iraqi clerical agitation against the Iranian Shahs as an indication of their political and religious distance from the Iranian regime.

Yet, the sultan realized he was taking a risk by trying to make common cause with the Shi'i clerics. Tellingly, the Ottomans still considered the spread of Shi'ism in Iraq a serious political problem. At a

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<sup>48</sup> Gokhan Çetinsaya, *Ottoman Administration of Iraq, 1890-1908* (New York: Routledge, 2006), 100.

<sup>49</sup> Selim Deringil, "The Struggle Against Shiism in Hamidian Iraq," *Die Welt des Islams*, Vol. XXX (1990), 48.

<sup>50</sup> Çetinsaya, *Ottoman Administration of Iraq*, 104.

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

basic level, the clerics rejected the legitimacy of the Ottoman state, with a caesaropapist emperor at its head. While this was not exclusive to Shi'i views of the Ottoman state - hardline Usuli *ulema* rejected the notion of any temporal power besides that of the jurispudent in the absence of the Twelfth Imam - it hit closer to home since many clerics viewed the Sunnis as apostates. Thus, the emperor initiated a campaign of ideological warfare against Shi'i power. Given political necessity, he exploited the link between theology and sectarianism. He sent hardline Sunni clerics to argue against Shi'i teachings and installed a Sunni guardian at the Shi'i shrine in Samarra. The Ottomans also re-educated a number of elite Shi'i children by bringing them to Istanbul and immersing them in Sunni jurisprudence in the hope that they would have influence among their peers upon returning home. These efforts, however, proved naïve and failed to make significant inroads. Interestingly, the Ottomans never considered bringing the Iraqi clerics to heel by means of military force. This telling fact reveals the unusual dichotomy of the Iraqi *ulema*. On the one hand, they were too powerful and had too much indigenous support to be altogether wiped out like the 'Amili clerics. On the other, the fact that the Ottomans did not feel the need to use coercive force indicates that the clerics did not use their power in ways that threatened the Ottomans, such as encouraging broad-based Shi'i revolt against an oppressive system. The political incentives for political quiescence were simply too powerful, and the Iraqi Shi'a had not yet developed the political awareness that would later lead the clerics into politics. The Ottoman authorities had successfully created a local political landscape that nipped the possibility of clerical activism in the bud. Thus, when it came to a stark calculation of political self-interest, the Iraqi *ulema* behaved similarly to their 'Amili counterparts.

#### INSTITUTIONALIZING THE STATUS QUO

By the eve of the First World War, the interlocking triad of cataclysmic Ottoman repression, a co-opted landowning elite, and a feckless clerical establishment had established the systematic political exclusion of the Levantine 'Amili and Iraqi Shi'a. The results of the war, however, initially seemed to have the potential to shift this paradigm. Pan-Arab sentiment, embodied by Hashemite claims to rule across the Arab lands, was strong. Coupled with Wilsonian ideals of popular sovereignty and self-determination, many Arab Shi'a saw in this an opportunity to redefine their communal political identity. No longer, some believed, was one's sect a defining characteristic; Arabism and socialism each appeared to hold the promise of transcending the sectarian political identities inculcated over centuries through the sectarian *millet* system. Historian

Juan Cole captured this line of thought, noting that, “Many hoped that it would matter little whether the Arabs of Iraq [and Lebanon] were Twelver or Sunni if all were Arabs or all were socialists.”<sup>52</sup>

The French and the British - having received neo-colonial mandates in the newly forged Lebanon and Iraq, respectively - had a different vision. They wished to have the benefits of direct colonialism - access to resources, markets, and political capital - while maintaining a façade of local rule to legitimize their hegemony. With respect to the Shi'a, each mandate followed a remarkably similar trajectory. The mandate authorities in the Levant elevated their Maronite Christian clients to disproportionate heights of political power in order to rule through them. While the British did not maintain as warm a bond with the Iraqi Sunnis, they viewed them as similarly well placed to coopt in the name of British strategic interests. Gertrude Bell, one of the chief British administrators in Iraq in this period, illustrated, “I don't for a moment doubt that the final authority must be in the hands of the Sunnis in spite of their numerical inferiority.”<sup>53</sup> In Iraq, the British held the Shi'a in deep suspicion, continuing the old Ottoman perception of them as Iranian agents. The French in Lebanon did not fear Shi'a power but rather held them in contempt, a community outside the circle of meaningful political players.

The Shi'a in both mandates, however, were loath to let the potential opportunity presented by the collapse of the Ottoman Empire slip away and, ultimately, paid dearly for their attempts to seize it. In Iraq, Shi'i *mujtahids* were principally responsible for fomenting the nationalist revolt of 1920. Although their demands were clothed in nationalist rhetoric calling for the accession of Prince Feisal, the clerics also saw an opportunity to enhance their own power and even to achieve a Shi'i Islamic state. The reality of Feisal's rule eliminated such hopes; under British tutelage, he stacked the organs of government with fellow Sunnis. The revolt served to confirm the worst British fears of Shi'i deviousness. What is more, like the Ottomans throughout the nineteenth century, the king succeeded in further coopting the Shi'i feudal elite and thus eliminating the possibility of a united Shi'i front. By offering the elites significant economic and political incentives to cooperate with his regime, Feisal ensured that they were, “ruled not by virtue of their own power and authority or the acclamation and loyalty of their tribesmen, but by virtue of the powers conferred to them by the British authorities.”<sup>54</sup> With clerical

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<sup>52</sup> Cole, *Sacred Space*, 174.

<sup>53</sup> Gertrude Bell, 3 October 1920, *The Gertrude Bell Papers*,

[http://www.gerty.ncl.ac.uk/letter\\_details.php?letter\\_id=425](http://www.gerty.ncl.ac.uk/letter_details.php?letter_id=425).

<sup>54</sup> Nakash, *The Shi'is of Iraq*, 89.

power shattered, the shaikhly class' inability to act on their community's behalf institutionalized the Ottoman status quo.

A similar process of failed revolt and subsequent cooptation played out in mandate-era Lebanon. Determined to resist being shoehorned into the new Franco-Marionite construct of Greater Lebanon, the 'Amili Shi'a took up arms in April 1920, attacking Christian villages throughout the south.<sup>55</sup> While this revolt was more localized than the Iraqi uprising, it nevertheless captured a fleeting Shi'i sense of political agency. A French expeditionary force was, however, unhesitatingly dispatched, and it ruthlessly crushed the Shi'i opposition. In the wake of this, the old cadre of feudal *zu'ama* reestablished a mutually beneficial agreement with the French and, later, the authorities of independent Lebanon, that maintained the comfortable and corrupt status to which they were accustomed under Ottoman rule.

The post-Ottoman potential for the reorganization of Iraqi and Lebanese society along more equitable lines was thus thwarted almost immediately. A combination of entrenched Sunni power, anti-Shi'a feeling, and a Shi'i failure of leadership rendered any changes from the Ottoman norm purely cosmetic. Such continuity was hardly surprising, given the profound ways in which Ottoman rule had shaped attitudes and practices toward the Shi'a. One British mandatory official described what he thought was Britain's contribution to the future of the Arab world: "Later generations of [Sunni] Iraqi politicians may appreciate the gratitude they owe the British for saving them from [Shi'i] Najaf."<sup>56</sup> The truth, however, reveals how little the mandatory powers understood of the political situation they had inherited. By favoring Sunni hegemony in Iraq and joint Sunni-Marionite power in Lebanon, they merely perpetuated the centuries-long system of Shi'a marginalization inaugurated by the Ottoman Tanzimat reformers.

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<sup>55</sup> Cole, *Sacred Space*, 176.

<sup>56</sup> Nakash, *The Shi'is of Iraq*, 72.



# CALVIN'S CROWN: THE REFORMED FAITH AND THE RISE OF THE HOHENZOLLERNS

BY  
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The conversion of the Hohenzollern family to Calvinism stands as an under-examined yet crucial turning-point in the history of the Prussian state, as it changed the very essence of the Hohenzollerns and the development of absolutism, with the roots of Brandenburg-Prussia's unusual condition being found in the religious conflict between Lutherans and Calvinists throughout the duchy. The Kingdom of Prussia has been held as the example of absolute monarchy *par excellence* by such leading German historians as Fritz Stern and Christopher Clark.<sup>1</sup> There was likely no other state in eighteenth century Europe where the control of the state over the people and the centralization of power was more complete.<sup>2</sup> Yet, despite this realization, German historians have also long recognized that the rise of Prussia was as unlikely as it was sudden. There were few states in seventeenth century Europe where the monarchy was as weak and the central administration so divided.<sup>3</sup> The general literature regarding the unique and rapid rise of Prussia tends to fall into two different schools. The first is a Marxist-materialist thesis that focuses on the relationship between the Hohenzollerns, the *Junker* and the peasantry, and how the three classes competed with each other in the creation of the Prussian state.<sup>4</sup> The second is a bellicist answer that seeks to tie together the military structure and war fighting capabilities as Prussia was formed into

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<sup>1</sup> Stern strongly emphasizes this in his book *Gold and Iron: Bismarck, Bleichröder, and the Building of the German Empire* (New York: Knopf, 1977).

<sup>2</sup> Mary Fulbrook, *Piety and Politics: Religion and the Rise of Absolutism in England, Württemberg, and Prussia* (Cambridge, Cambridgeshire: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 53.

<sup>3</sup> Philip S. Gorski. *The Disciplinary Revolution: Calvinism and the Rise of the State in Early Modern Europe*. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003), 79.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, 80.

a kingdom.<sup>5</sup> The ‘Borussian’<sup>6</sup> interpretation of Prussian history, best seen in the writings of Heinrich von Treitschke, will not be discussed in this paper, as it offers a teleological view of Prussian inevitable hegemony that has been harshly criticized by many other historians to its teleological conclusions that Prussia’s hand in German unification was inevitable.<sup>7</sup>

This work does not acknowledge that either the bellicist or materialist theory provide an adequate explanation of why Prussia developed so differently from the surrounding states of the Holy Roman Empire, which shared with Prussia many of the same political, geographical and economic features. Instead, this thesis will focus on the Calvinist religion of the Hohenzollerns and examine the vital role that it played in developing Prussian absolutism through centralizing power away from the Lutheran nobility.

Francis L. Carsten originally advanced his materialist theory regarding the rise of Prussia absolutism in his work *The Origins of Prussia*. Carsten focuses his argument around the reign of the “Great Elector,” Friedrich Wilhelm, and the negotiations that were made between the Duke and his attending *Junker* nobles.<sup>8</sup> Particular attention is paid to the *Landtags-Rezesse*, a series of agreements made between Friedrich Wilhelm and the *Landtag*, territorial estates of Brandenburg-Prussia and the newly acquired territory of Cleves-Mark in the Rhineland.<sup>9</sup> Carsten presents the relationship between the Duke of Brandenburg-Prussia and the nobility as a sort of symbiotic relationship, built on the backs of the helpless peasantry. An ‘enduring alliance’ was forged between Friedrich Wilhelm and the *Junker*: the nobles would give the Duke greater authority over taxation, which would enable the ducal family to build up an army for proper defense and enforce greater control over the government, while in return, the Hohenzollerns would give the *Junker* free reign over their peasantry.<sup>10</sup> This would allow the nobility to enforce what Carsten calls the ‘second serfdom’ over their subjects and make massive profits in selling grain to the Western markets.<sup>11</sup> After removing the Dutch influence in his Rhenish provinces of Cleves and Mark through an alliance

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<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> Taken from the Latin word for Prussia.

<sup>7</sup> It does not help Treitschke’s reputation that his attacks on German Jews were later enthusiastically adopted by the NSDAP several decades later. G. A. Craig’s edition of Treitschke’s *History of Germany in the Nineteenth Century*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1975) is an excellent resource for those wishing to learn more about this particular theory.

<sup>8</sup> F. L. Carsten, *The Origins of Prussia* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1954), 182.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., 31.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., 182.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

with the House of Orange in 1655, Friedrich Wilhelm used the nobility and standing army to extract 300,000 *reichsthaler* from them.<sup>12</sup> Having the financial capital now to build up his power base, says Carsten, the Elector then proceeded to build up a professional army and centralize authority around Berlin.<sup>13</sup> Friedrich Wilhelm then consolidated his position by striking bargains with the Brandenburg landed nobility in 1653 and integrating them into “princely patronage networks,” which proved a more effective means of securing funding and advancing absolute rule.<sup>14</sup> Hans Rosenberg concurs with Carsten’s thesis, stating that the relationship between the Elector and the noble bureaucracy was one of mutual assistance, in order to better strengthen each other’s position in the state.<sup>15</sup> After an abortive first attempt to separate the bureaucratic nobility from the landowners in what Rosenberg terms a “divide-and-rule technique,” Friedrich Wilhelm instead turned to a more successful policy of cooperation between the Elector and nobles.<sup>16</sup>

As influential as the materialist theory has been in crafting historical perspectives of Brandenburg-Prussia, it runs into trouble when one examines the evidence. Carsten and Rosenberg’s central claim, that Prussian absolutism arose out of a close alliance between the Elector and the nobility, is built upon a foundation that lacks evidence. The use of the words ‘alliance’ and ‘pact’ by Carsten implies a close relationship built upon good will and harmony, where in reality, there were not any sort of ties on that level until the reign of Friedrich the Great nearly a century later.<sup>17</sup> Without any sort of the benevolence exhibited by Friedrich Wilhelm’s great-grandson, the only partnership between the Elector and the *Junker* could have been founded on shared interests. Carsten’s case is just as weak in this instance as well, however, because there is very little evidence of cooperation between Duke Friedrich Wilhelm and the nobility during his reign.<sup>18</sup> The *Junker* landowners would have appreciated assistance from the Elector and his army in putting down troublesome serf rebellions, but Friedrich Wilhelm and his successors were often less than

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<sup>12</sup> F. L. Carsten, “The States General and the Estates of Cleves about the middle of the seventeenth century”, *Essays in German History* (London, 1985), 83.

<sup>13</sup> Carsten, *The Origins of Prussia*, 178-183.

<sup>14</sup> Peter H. Wilson, *German Armies: War and German Politics, 1648-1806* (London: UCL Press, 1998), 32.

<sup>15</sup> Hans Rosenberg, *Bureaucracy, Aristocracy, and Autocracy: The Prussian Experience, 1660-1815* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1966), 44-46.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, 149.

<sup>17</sup> Linda Frey and Marsha Frey, *Frederick I: The Man and His Times* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1984), 166.

<sup>18</sup> Gorski, *The Disciplinary Revolution*, 80, 112.

forthcoming with the regulars.<sup>19</sup> A potential reason for the Great Elector's hesitation in committing his troops was that he was motivated in keeping his valuable and expensive army as unbloodied as possible. This was especially true during the Thirty Years War, where the standing army was the only line of defense between Brandenburg-Prussia and complete devastation. Instead, the Duke and his descendants frequently intervened to protect the serfs from the rapacious actions of their landlords, although Phillip Gorski suggests that this was motivated more by practicality than kindness, as Friedrich Wilhelm understood that a strong state could only stand on the shoulders of a prosperous and hardworking lower class.<sup>20</sup>

In contrast to the materialists, the bellicist theorists start their argument on the foundation that the relation between the Crown and the estates was at its basest nature an antagonistic one.<sup>21</sup> The name of the bellicist theory comes from the link that proponents attempt to draw between the creation of the military and the rise of absolute rule in Brandenburg-Prussia.<sup>22</sup> Gordon A. Craig makes a case for this in *Politics of the Prussian Army*, where he speaks of the central role that the military had in the coalescence of Prussia into a unified kingdom under an absolute monarchy. Craig's theory is that geopolitical pressure rather than the economic transformation of the materialists is to account for the rise of Prussian militarism, that the need for a strong army for defense and expansion was the main driving force behind the initial centralization of Brandenburg-Prussia under the Great Elector and eventually the rest of Germany as well.<sup>23</sup> The *Kriegskommissare*, Friedrich Wilhelm's war commissioners, were appointed to bear the standard of the Elector's authority to the provincial *Oberkriegskommissare* and, through them, the *Generalkriegskommissare* in Berlin.<sup>24</sup> It was due to the natural outgrowth of the increasing costs of the military establishment over the century that led to the high degree of absolute rule and centralization under the Kings of Prussia.<sup>25</sup> Craig's model of Brandenburg-Prussia is that it arose from a typical middling-sized state in the Holy Roman Empire after the Peace of Westphalia, thus making it possible to view it as a representation of Germany as a whole.<sup>26</sup> The trouble with this assumption is that unless

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<sup>19</sup> Fullbrook, *Piety and Politics*, 49.

<sup>20</sup> Gorski, *The Disciplinary Revolution*, 80.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, 83.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, 80.

<sup>23</sup> Gordon A. Craig, *Politics of The Prussian Army 1640-1945*. ([S.l.] Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1955), 33.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, 14.

<sup>25</sup> Craig, *Politics of The Prussian Army*, 14-15.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, 1-2.

there is evidence that Brandenburg-Prussia had a great deal more geopolitical pressure on it than any of the dozen or so other like-sized German principalities, the rise of Prussian absolutism could not have been brought about by the influence of military considerations alone.<sup>27</sup>

Of course, it is important to acknowledge that Brandenburg-Prussia during the early seventeenth century was completely surrounded by states with various degrees of intent to harm the duchy and acquire its territory. The Kingdom of Sweden across the Baltic Sea was salivating at the opportunity to seize the Duchy of Pomerania, with the valuable port of Stettin at the mouth of the Oder River.<sup>28</sup> The Kingdom of Poland to the east was still the sovereign lord of the Duke of Prussia, a fact that Friedrich Wilhelm was reminded of when he had to travel to Warsaw to swear fealty to the King in order to inherit the duchy upon his ascension to the electorate.<sup>29</sup> Brandenburg's western provinces were even more exposed to interference from France and the United Provinces, which required constant political maneuverings by the Great Elector to keep them under Hohenzollern control.<sup>30</sup> "On one hand," wrote Friedrich Wilhelm during the early years of his reign, "I have the King of Sweden, on the other the Kaiser: here I stand between the two awaiting that which they will do unto me – whether they will leave me mine own, or whether they will take it away."<sup>31</sup> It would be correct to say that the administrative actions of the Great Elector were largely in response to these looming threats on Brandenburg-Prussia's borders, but where Craig's bellicist theory falls through is his failure to explain why the Hohenzollerns reacted so differently than the other German princes in very similar predicaments. The peculiar political reasoning and rationality of Friedrich Wilhelm remains unfathomed, because Brandenburg-Prussia has been pigeonholed by the incorrect assumption that it and its dynasty were on the whole, typical of the other principalities of the *Reich*. The only way to fully explore why the Margraviate arose out of the Holy Roman Empire is to take close note of the one thing that set it apart completely from every other principality its size, making it very atypical indeed: its ruling family,

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<sup>27</sup> Gorski, *The Disciplinary Revolution*, 84.

<sup>28</sup> Ferdinand Schevill, *The Great Elector* (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1947), 125.

<sup>29</sup> Leopold Von Ranke, *Memoirs of the House of Brandenburg and History of Prussia during the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries: Volume I*, trans. Sir Alexander D. Gordon and Lady Gordon (London: John Murray, 1849), 46.

<sup>30</sup> Gorski, *The Disciplinary Revolution*, 84.

<sup>31</sup> *Bedenken, ob ich eine Partei jetzt oder ins künftige nehmen soll* (Considerations as to whether I should make a resolve now or at a future date). Original Document in the Elector's own hand in the Royal Archives in Berlin. Ranke, *Memoirs of the House of Brandenburg*, 38.

the Hohenzollerns, was Calvinists.

In reviewing the sources, it can be seen that historians generally come to an agreement that the introduction of Calvinism to Brandenburg-Prussia through the conversion of Johann Sigismund was a political watershed for the duchy. The question lies in whether or not this new particular sect of Protestantism changed the course of Prussian history through the actions of Friedrich Wilhelm.

To start with, the Duchy of Brandenburg was not a principality of any note in the early days of the Holy Roman Empire. Friedrich, an unknown nobleman hailing from the small castle of Hohenzollern in the wilds of Swabia, received the title of Elector of Brandenburg from the hand of Sigismund, Holy Roman Emperor, in 1410.<sup>32</sup> At this time in history, Brandenburg was little more than a small principality with poor arable land and no access to the sea, barely able to defend itself against even the most minor of threats. The subsequent Electors of Brandenburg carefully guided their precariously placed duchy through the turmoil of the Protestant Reformation; Elector Joachim II only cautiously embraced Lutheranism in 1555 to avoid excessively alienating the bellicose Holy Roman Emperor Charles V.<sup>33</sup> Elector Johann Sigismund inherited the Duchy of Prussia and took communion as a Calvinist in 1609, as Reformed values and principles began to flood the ducal court from the Netherlands and Rhineland.<sup>34</sup> His son, Friedrich Wilhelm, popularly known as “The Great Elector,” took control of the duchy in 1640, and through the unusual autonomy of government established by the conflict between the Lutheran estates and the Calvinist Duke and administration, set up the creation of the Kingdom of Prussia, later achieved under his successor, Friedrich I, King in Prussia.<sup>35</sup> The seven different territories of the duchy, ranging from Cleve and Mark in the west to Prussia and Pomerania in the east, had their own sets of governmental institutions and political precepts.<sup>36</sup> In order to bring these disparate duchies together under the centralized rule of the Elector, the Hohenzollerns had to make a considerable shift in their dealings with the noble rulers of the provincial estates. By 1570, the

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<sup>32</sup> Thomas Carlyle, *History of Friedrich II of Prussia, Called Frederick the Great*. (London: Chapman and Hall, 1894), 135-36.

<sup>33</sup> Hajo Holborn, *A History of Modern Germany. The Reformation*. (New York: Knopf, 1970), 223.

<sup>34</sup> Christopher M. Clark, *Iron Kingdom: The Rise and Downfall of Prussia, 1600-1947* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2008), 115.

<sup>35</sup> Holborn, *A History of Modern Germany. The Reformation*, 359.

<sup>36</sup> Otto Hintze, "Calvinism and Raison D'état in Early Seventeenth Century Brandenburg," in *The Historical Essays of Otto Hintze*, ed. Felix Gilbert (New York: Oxford University Press, 1975), 153, 79.

Brandenburg-Prussian landowners had complete control over their land and could withhold financial and military support from Berlin at any time.<sup>37</sup> The tax collection agencies of the Elector were largely in the hands of the corporate nobility, so the authorities would often diplomatically ignore when noble landowners purposefully understated their taxable landholdings and income.<sup>38</sup>

This situation was due in part to the actions of Elector Joachim II at the meeting of the *Landtag*, or diet.<sup>39</sup> Joachim II, burdened by crushing debts as a result of Brandenburg's lack of arable land, came to this meeting of the landed nobility with the request that they relieve him of his debt.<sup>40</sup> After concluding his plea for assistance, and having to listen to some rather cutting criticism of his poor financial management and careless handling of the budget, the estates agreed to take over the Elector's debts on very harsh terms.<sup>41</sup> The nobles insisted on personally collecting the taxes for which they voted and satisfying the debts they assumed, as well as creating a financial administration called the *Creditwerk*, cutting Joachim II and his descendants almost entirely out of the public finances.<sup>42</sup> The consequences of Joachim II's actions converted the former warrior caste of Brandenburger knights into money-minded landlords in absolute control of their land and serfs. This change in the status of the classes was effectively completed by the change of title that came into general use at this time. Formerly known to the law as *Ritter* (knights), these men of the *Landtag* were henceforth known to all as *Junker*, as landed gentlemen, broadly equivalent to noblemen of other European states.<sup>43</sup> In order to drag Brandenburg-Prussia out of this decentralized mess, the Great Elector Friedrich Wilhelm utilized the innate loyalty of fellow Calvinist nobles to undermine the authority held by the largely Lutheran landowners, stripping them of their political power. Brandenburg-Prussia's unusual path to absolute rule, centralization and its subsequent rise to power cannot be understood outside of the context of its religious situation under the Hohenzollerns.

To understand the effect that Calvinism had on House of Hohenzollern, it is necessary to first examine the doctrine of the faith itself. The Reformed Faith, more commonly known as Calvinism after the prominent French reformer John Calvin, began to coalesce in March of

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<sup>37</sup> Clark, *Iron Kingdom*, 90.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, 90.

<sup>39</sup> Reigned 1535-1571; and Schevill, *The Great Elector*, 92.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, 92.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, 93.

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

<sup>43</sup> Schevill, *The Great Elector*, 94.

1536, with the publication of Calvin's first and greatest work, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*.<sup>44</sup> First published in Latin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion* laid out Calvin's foundation of the Christian faith, as well as ferociously attacking the Catholic Church. "There [in Rome], instead of the ministry of the word, prevails a perverted government, compounded of lies, a government which partly extinguishes, partly suppresses, the pure light."<sup>45</sup> The central assertion of Calvin's work is that God is able to save every person on Earth upon whom He has chosen to show mercy, and His efforts towards such salvation are not frustrated by mortal action or inaction.<sup>46</sup>

The Five Points of Calvinism, recorded at the Synod of Dort in 1619, over fifty years after Calvin's death, function as a basic guide to Reformed Doctrine.<sup>47</sup> The first canon, "Total Depravity," is taken from Augustine's writings on the fallen nature of man and states that as a consequence of Original Sin, no man is able to choose to serve God willingly and be saved because his very humanity compels him against it.<sup>48</sup> The second canon, "Unconditional Election," states that God has 'elected' from eternity those who He wishes to extend divine mercy to through the sacrifice of Christ alone. The unfortunates that are not chosen to be among the elect are justly punished under reprobation.<sup>49</sup> "Limited Atonement," the third canon, states that Christ's atonement on the cross, while sufficient for all, is only efficient for the elect. The fourth canon, "Irresistible Grace," states that God's desire to show mercy for the elect is more powerful than the draw of human nature to commit sin, therefore bringing the elect to God with divine certainty. The final point, "Perseverance of the Saints," states that because God's grace and will are not able to be resisted by men, then those called to the elect will never fall away from God. Those that do apparently seem to fall away have done so because they lacked true faith.<sup>50</sup>

Just like Luther before him, Calvin's teaching sent shockwaves rippling through Northern Europe. For centuries, the Roman Catholic Church had promised salvation to those who faithfully submitted to

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<sup>44</sup> John T. McNeill, *The History and Character of Calvinism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1954), 119.

<sup>45</sup> Jean Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, trans. Henry Beveridge (Grand Rapids, MI: Christian Classics Ethereal Library, 2002), 641.

<sup>46</sup> Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, 23.

<sup>47</sup> MacNeill, *The History and Character of Calvinism*, 264.

<sup>48</sup> R. L. Dabney, "The Five Points of Calvinism," The Spurgeon Archive, 2001, <http://www.spurgeon.org/~phil/dabney/5points.htm> (accessed February 02, 2012).

<sup>49</sup> Dabney, "The Five Points of Calvinism."

<sup>50</sup> Ibid.

church-appointed authority and followed the holy sacraments. In one fell swoop, the Protestant Reformation had suddenly removed that comforting guarantee. In the absence of a priest's assurances, the Protestants, particularly the followers of Calvin, began to look for more material signs that they were to be saved.<sup>51</sup> The inability of a Calvinist to control his own fate was solved by simply believing that one has been chosen for salvation, as self-doubt and wavering was a sure sign of the reprobate. As self-confidence became a measure of salvation, worldly success began to be more associated with assurance of membership in the elect. Max Weber theorized that the true fulfillment of the 'Protestant Work Ethic' is found in Calvinism. Lutherans, and to an extent, Pietists, are "too concerned with the reception of divine spirit in the soul" and suffer from a pronounced passivity held over from their strongly Catholic heritage.<sup>52</sup> The lack of paralyzing asceticism that is found in Pietist congregations also galvanizes Calvinists to stir to greater heights of economic and political power.<sup>53</sup> Calvinism serves as a sort of self-fulfilling prophecy, in which the elect seek to demonstrate their membership in the population of the saved by their earthly works and deeds. Hard work and frugality are considered to be key signs of one's membership in the elect.

Ironically, despite many similarities in Calvin's and Luther's theological teachings, the relationship between the two Protestant camps turned contentious. Lutherans differ from Calvinists in their respective interpretations of human will. The Calvinist doctrine of predestination to both salvation and damnation, a canon known as 'double-predestination,' was repugnant to the Lutheran church.<sup>54</sup> Luther's teachings hold that only election to salvation is unconditional and predestined, with there being no foreordination of damnation to sinners. Lutherans also hold that the conversion of a sinner to a Christian is made through the means of grace, and is resistible according to the wills of the individual.<sup>55</sup> This contrasts with the Calvinist teaching that the Holy Spirit irresistibly calls the sinner to Christ. Calvinists also disagree with Lutherans on the preservation of

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<sup>51</sup> Max Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, trans. Talcott Parsons (London: Allen and Unwin, 1950), 98.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, 35-36.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*, 105.

<sup>54</sup> Martin Luther, *Luther's Works*, Jaroslav Pelikan, trans. (Saint Louis: Concordia, 1955), 43-50. "Observe how pleasantly and kindly God delivers you from this horrible trial with which Satan besets people today in strange ways in order to make them doubtful and uncertain, and eventually even to alienate them from the Word. 'For why should you hear the Gospel,' they say, "since everything depends on predestination?" In this way he robs us of the predestination guaranteed through the Son of God and the sacraments."

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*, 54.

the saints and potential apostasy. Calvinists believe that the elect will eternally persevere in Christ in faith and holiness until the end of time, despite all trials. Lutherans hold that falling away from Christ is possible, and can only be prevented through deep introspective and contemplation on one's personal faith.<sup>56</sup>

These differences between Lutheranism and Calvinism also translate into different motivations for those that adhere to each selection of teachings. Where the Calvinist is inspired by his membership in an elect which strives ahead to prove himself, the Lutheran is more passive in his spiritual and temporal nature, and seeks introspection and assurances through the church clergy of his salvation through both faith and works.

The introduction of Calvinism into Prussia began with the Great Elector's grandfather, Johann Sigismund Hohenzollern, Prince-Elector of the Margraviate of Brandenburg and Duke of *Ostpreußen*. Influenced by the Rhenish Calvinist courtiers attending his father, Joachim Friedrich, it is thought, first came to embrace the Reformed Faith on a trip to Heidelberg in 1606, the capital of the Palatinate and a major center of early seventeenth century German Calvinism.<sup>57</sup> His conversion conveniently furthered the dynastic interests of the Hohenzollerns in the Rhineland, where the support of the Calvinist Dutch was vital.<sup>58</sup> The legitimacy of the Hohenzollern dynasty in their newly acquired Rhenish provinces was at stake, and required the security provided by the Dutch United Provinces to prevent other more proximate nobles from scooping them into their own demesne. This greater involvement of the Brandenburg ducal family abroad was largely brought about as a result of Johann Sigismund's marriage to Anna, daughter and heiress of the infirm Duke Albrecht Friedrich of Prussia and Marie Eleanore, sister of the duchess of Jülich-Cleves. This union strengthened the Hohenzollerns' inheritance rights in Prussia and provided the basis for their dynastic claims in the Rhineland, bordering the rapidly growing economic powerhouse of the Dutch Netherlands.<sup>59</sup> Even better for the Hohenzollerns, the current rulers of both the duchies of Prussia and Cleves had no direct descendants, and therefore Johann Sigismund found himself in a well-established position to

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<sup>56</sup> Lyle W. Lange, *God so Loved the World: A Study of Christian Doctrine* (Milwaukee, WI: Northwestern Pub. House, 2005), 448.

<sup>57</sup> Clark, *Iron Kingdom*, 115.

<sup>58</sup> Bodo Nischan, "Calvinism, the Thirty Years' War, and the Beginning of Absolutism in Brandenburg: The Political Thought of John Bergius," *Central European History* 15, no. 03 (1982): 203.

<sup>59</sup> Andrew Pettegree, A. C. Duke, and Gillian Lewis, *Calvinism in Europe, 1540-1620* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 184.

assert his ducal claims to both.<sup>60</sup>

Regardless of his political motivation and geographical desires, on Christmas Day 1613 Sigismund took communion “according to the Calvinist rite” in Berlin, officially converting away from Lutheranism to the Calvinist faith.<sup>61</sup> Despite this action, the vast majority of his subjects remained staunch Lutherans, including his iron-willed wife Anna of Prussia, who would fling dinner plates and glasses at her husband’s head during arguments.<sup>62</sup> When the Elector and his predominately Calvinist court attempted to enact a plan under the Holy Roman Empire’s principle of *cuius regio, eius religio*,<sup>63</sup> the popular, and undoubtedly spousal, resistance was far stronger than he had anticipated.

On the 30<sup>th</sup> of March, 1615, the Margrave of Berlin, Johann Sigismund’s brother, ordered the removal of the altars, baptismal font, crucifixes and sundry artworks from the Berlin Cathedral in the name of removing all ‘idolatrous images’ and liturgical paraphernalia. The virulent rhetoric from the pulpit only caused tensions to rise further. The Calvinist court preacher, Martin Füssel, exacerbated the situation by using his Palm Sunday sermon a few days later to thank God “for cleaning His house of worship of the dirt of popish idolatry.” The nearby Lutheran congregation of St. Peter’s was then roused to a fury by their deacon who shouted from the pulpit that “the Calvinists call our place of worship a whorehouse . . . they strip our churches of pictures and now wish to tear the Lord Jesus Christ from us as well!” That evening, an assembly of over one hundred Berliners met to swear that they would “strangle the Reformed priests and all other Calvinists.”<sup>64</sup> Faced with a full-blown revolt, and the Lutheran landed nobility threatening to withhold their tax revenues from the state, the hapless Johann was forced to permanently suspend all attempts at forcibly bringing Brandenburg-Prussia together under one religion.<sup>65</sup>

Despite this abortive attempt in 1615 which created a definitive divide in Brandenburg between the predominately Calvinist royal family and their Lutheran vassals, the Reformed faith continued to spread throughout the duchy of Brandenburg-Prussia because of its political benefits, especially amongst the nobility more closely aligned with Berlin. The Electors and later, the Kings of Brandenburg-Prussia heavily depended on the support of the Reformed Church in creating political

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<sup>60</sup> Ibid., 184.

<sup>61</sup> Nischan, “Calvinism, the Thirty Years' War,” 203.

<sup>62</sup> Ibid., 76.

<sup>63</sup> “Whose realm, his religion,” a principle agreed to by Charles V, Holy Roman Emperor, in the Peace of Augsburg, 1555.

<sup>64</sup> Clark, *Iron Kingdom*, 117.

<sup>65</sup> Ibid, 118.

legitimacy for their rule.<sup>66</sup> In Johann Sigismund's conversion to Calvinism, he aligned the Hohenzollern line with the politically progressive forces of the Reformed Dutch against the conservative Lutheran estates of the Prussian *Junker* and the reactionary Catholic Habsburgs abroad.<sup>67</sup> Otto Hintze stressed the interaction between the faith of the Hohenzollerns and their subsequent political decisions, saying that Calvinism formed the bridge by which western European styles of governance and centralization made its entry in Brandenburg.<sup>68</sup> Although the bridge to absolute rule may have been created by Johann Sigismund, the duchy of Brandenburg-Prussia was able to cross it into the annals of history under the rule of his grandson, Prince-Elector Friedrich Wilhelm.

Friedrich Wilhelm was born in the ducal castle in Berlin on February 16, 1620.<sup>69</sup> The already precarious political situation of Brandenburg-Prussia had been made significantly more perilous by the recent outbreak of the Thirty Years War, which threatened to ravage Northern Germany and destroy the independence and freedom of religion that the Reformation had created. After Johann Sigismund's conversion to Calvinism, Brandenburg-Prussia had been increasingly isolated from its traditional Lutheran allies, such as Saxony and Mecklenburg, obliging Elector George Wilhelm to seek political and economic support from other Reformed rulers throughout Europe.<sup>70</sup> Of these, the Palatine of the Rhine was the most significant German Calvinist state, an elector of the Holy Roman Empire on an equal level with Brandenburg and Saxony.<sup>71</sup> Friedrich Wilhelm's father, George Wilhelm, was married to the daughter of the Elector Friedrich IV of the Palatine, whose mother in turn was a member of the most vigorous family of the Calvinist faith in Europe, being the daughter of William, Stadtholder of the United Provinces.<sup>72</sup> Thus,

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<sup>66</sup> Angela Strauss, "Pluralism in Heaven: Religion in the Prussian Military of the 18th Century," *Hitotsubashi Journal of Law and Politics* 39 (February 2011): 59.

<sup>67</sup> Johann Gustav Droysen, *Geschichte Der Preussischen Politik*, Bodo Nischan, trans. (Leipzig: Veit & Comp., 1868), 2/2:436.

<sup>68</sup> Hintze, "Calvinism and Raison D'état," 153.

<sup>69</sup> Schevill, *The Great Elector*, 78. Contemporary sources place the date of the Great Elector on February 6<sup>th</sup>. In 1620, Brandenburg and most of Protestant Germany were still employing the Julian calendar, which was ten days behind the reformed Gregorian calendar, sponsored by Pope Gregory XIII (1572-1585).

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid.*, 78.

<sup>71</sup> *Frederick III, Elector Palatine*, Frederic P. Miller, Agnes F. Vandome, and John McBrewster, eds. (Saarbrücken: VDM Publishing House, 2010).

<sup>72</sup> That is, William the Silent, founder of House Orange-Nassau, first Stadtholder of the United Provinces and leader of the Dutch Revolt against the Hapsburgs. See Geoffrey Parker, *The Thirty Years' War* (London: Routledge, 1997), 23.

even before Friedrich had taken his first breath, he was already directly related to the Reformed Powers of Europe through the houses of Brandenburg, Orange and the Palatine.<sup>73</sup>

Before Friedrich Wilhelm had reached his sixth birthday, he was evacuated from Berlin to the castle of Cüstrin on the Oder River to escape the war's surge into the vicinity of Brandenburg. His guardian, from about 1625 to 1635, was a staunchly Calvinist and well-educated nobleman named Leuchtmar, hailing from the Hohenzollern's recently acquired Rhineland provinces.<sup>74</sup> Leuchtmar would be Friedrich Wilhelm's inseparable companion for most of his teenage years, including during a journey made to the Netherlands that made an indelible impression on the young prince. It was the custom in Europe at this time to send young scions of notable families to university upon reaching the age of fourteen, and the Hohenzollerns were no exception to this. Deciding against sending Friedrich to a German house of learning due to the level of tumultuous upheaval gripping the Holy Roman Empire, and probably at the insistence of his son's Rhenish mother and Dutch grandmother, his father George Wilhelm sent Friedrich to the University of Leiden near The Hague.<sup>75</sup>

The influence of the Reformed Dutch can be seen in the changes created in Brandenburg-Prussia. In the decades that followed the battle of Nieuwpoort in 1600, where a combined Anglo-Dutch army under Maurice of Nassau decisively defeated an invading Spanish army, dozens of princes, nobles and military made the journey to Holland to observe the Dutch government and military in action.<sup>76</sup> Friedrich Wilhelm was sent by his father, Elector George Wilhelm to the United Province to learn as much as he could from the Dutch systems of commerce and war.<sup>77</sup> He spent his adolescence in the Netherlands, studying at the University at Leiden while frequenting the military camps of Prince Maurice of Orange and the bustling docks of Rotterdam in his spare time.<sup>78</sup> Friedrich Wilhelm stayed in the Netherlands from fourteen to his eighteenth birthday.<sup>79</sup> When he returned to Potsdam, eventually to assume his father's position, he strongly fortified the Calvinist presence of the Hohenzollerns in Brandenburg by establishing stronger ties with the Dutch

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<sup>73</sup> Ibid.

<sup>74</sup> Schevill, *The Great Elector*, 79.

<sup>75</sup> Ibid., 81.

<sup>76</sup> Hintze, "Calvinism and Raison D'état," 73.

<sup>77</sup> Ibid.

<sup>78</sup> Gerhard Oestreich, *Neostoicism and the Early Modern State*, Brigitta Oestreich and H. G. Koenigsberger, eds., David McLintock, eds. (Cambridge, Cambridgeshire: Cambridge University Press, 1982), 120-21.

<sup>79</sup> Schevill, *The Great Elector*, 82.

Republic through diplomacy and marriage.

When Friedrich Wilhelm ascended to the title of Duke and Elector in 1640 at the age of twenty, the only Calvinist institutions in Brandenburg-Prussia were the ducal court, the cathedral in Berlin, and the University of Frankfurt an der Oder, which had been a stronghold of Reformed thought since 1610.<sup>80</sup> Lutheranism remained the dominant faith of the majority of the Brandenburger population, as it had since Brandenburg's relatively late conversion in 1525.<sup>81</sup> The tension between Reformed Christians and Lutherans in Brandenburg was exacerbated by the large migration of Calvinists fleeing persecution from France and other Western European countries. Atrocities such as the St. Bartholomew's Day Massacre of 1572 and Parma's occupation of Maastricht in 1579 were widely circulated in Northern Germany by Protestant publishers to generate international support for the struggle against the Roman Catholic Church.<sup>82</sup> Pamphlets graphically depicting the crimes committed by the Spanish and the French served as grim reminders to Calvinists that they occupied a very precarious position in Europe.<sup>83</sup> Three weeks after Louis XIV revoked the Edict of Nantes in October 1685, Friedrich Wilhelm issued the Potsdam Decree, offering any French religious refugees safe and free political asylum in Hohenzollern lands.<sup>84</sup> This decree served a double purpose behind an expression of religious tolerance, for Friedrich Wilhelm actively sought to increase the number of his Calvinist subjects by encouraging more immigrants. Since most of the more wealthy Huguenots would have preferred to settle in the more clement climes of the Netherlands or England, the savvy Elector offered numerous inducements to make Brandenburg a more appealing destination, such as tax breaks, limited self-government, and separate judicial systems for Reformed communities, often paying for such benefits out of the ducal treasury. More than one-third of the Brandenburg-Prussian state budget of 1686 was allocated to subsidies designed to attract more Calvinists from Holland, France, Switzerland, Piedmont and the Palatinate to populate the lands still deserted nearly thirty years after the Peace of Westphalia.<sup>85</sup>

The Thirty Years War began as a clash within the Holy Roman Empire between Protestant and Roman Catholic servants of the *Kaiser* and could not be brought entirely to a close without the resolution of the issues

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<sup>80</sup> Richard L. Gawthrop, *Pietism and the Making of Eighteenth-Century Prussia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), 9.

<sup>81</sup> Holborn, *A History of Modern Germany: The Reformation*, 183.

<sup>82</sup> Pettegree, *Calvinism in Europe*, 190.

<sup>83</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>84</sup> Carsten, *The Origins of Prussia*, 268.

<sup>85</sup> *Ibid.*, 269.

that birthed it. Ever since the days of Martin Luther and the Reformation, the leading Protestant prince in the Holy Roman Empire had been the elector of Saxony, whose leadership amongst the other Lutheran and Calvinist states had continued to assert itself throughout the Thirty Years War.<sup>86</sup> This leadership however, was fast crumbling by the Peace of Westphalia under the elector in Leipzig, Johann George, who identified himself solely with Lutheranism and was bitterly antagonistic towards both Calvinists and Catholics alike. Of the Reformed German principalities represented at Westphalia, Friedrich Wilhelm of Brandenburg was the foremost, making it a main facet of his own program to win for himself and his fellow Calvinists in the Holy Roman Empire the full legal recognition and equality on par with Lutheranism to which they considered themselves entitled.<sup>87</sup> Holding that both Calvinist and Lutherans were equally true faiths, Friedrich Wilhelm declared that the Confession of Augsburg<sup>88</sup> contained nothing to which the Reformed Church did not itself believe, and that therefore the religious peace of 1555 that granted tolerance to the Lutherans thus automatically included the Calvinists as well.<sup>89</sup> Due to Friedrich Wilhelm's advocacy and fearless resolution in the face of bitter Lutheran opposition, Article VII of the Treaty of Osnabrück declared the Reformed faith protected under the Augsburg Confession.<sup>90</sup> This victory at the peace table was a smashing success for Brandenburg's prestige on the European stage, as well as a helpful boost for her reputation with the other Calvinist powers of Europe. The foremost amongst these fellow Reformed states was the United Provinces, ruled by the House of Orange, whom the Great Elector strove to become diplomatically aligned with through marriage.

After Friedrich Wilhelm's attempted betrothal to Princess Christina of Sweden went up in smoke due to animosity between the Scandinavian power and Brandenburg over Pomerania, he set his sights on a more attainable bride. Therefore he looked to the leading Calvinist house of Europe, the House of Orange, to whose dynasty's founder Friedrich was himself related to.<sup>91</sup> Friedrich Wilhelm's marriage on December 3<sup>rd</sup>, 1646 to the devoutly Reformed Luise Henriette of Orange, granddaughter of William the Silent and Princess of the Palatinate, in conjunction with his many highly trusted Dutch-educated advisors served

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<sup>86</sup> Schevill, *The Great Elector*, 126.

<sup>87</sup> *Ibid.*, 126-27.

<sup>88</sup> A summary of the Lutheran faith laid before Emperor Charles V and ratified on June 25, 1530.

<sup>89</sup> Schevill, *The Great Elector*, 127.

<sup>90</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>91</sup> *Ibid.*, 118.

to further cement the connection between the Hohenzollerns and the other Calvinists of Europe, especially the Dutch.<sup>92</sup> This connection to the House of Orange brought him many courtiers traveling from Amsterdam and The Hague, the most important of whom were Reformed preachers educated in the United Provinces.

During Friedrich Wilhelm's reign, the institutional strength of the Brandenburg-Prussian Reformed Church was increased through the distribution of Calvinist chaplains, known as *Hofprediger*, to staff local parishes and train teachers of Reformed schools.<sup>93</sup> These preachers tended at first to be mostly from the Rhineland and the Netherlands, although more native-born Brandenburger stock would soon follow.<sup>94</sup> To put a stop to the incendiary and divisive sermons launched from both Calvinist and Lutheran pulpits, Friedrich Wilhelm mandated religious toleration. In 1664, he issued a ducal warning to all ministers, Lutheran and Calvinist, to cease their vitriolic attacks on each other during sermons and other public speeches or else risk losing their appointments and parishes, a religious move with subtle political undertones.<sup>95</sup> Through this decree, Friedrich extended the control that the Elector personally had over the churches of Brandenburg, increasing his legitimacy in the eyes of the nobility. To further control the Lutheran nobility, who at times made no secret of their distaste for the Calvinist Hohenzollern, the Elector strictly limited their political power, centralizing taxation control and replaced them in the administration with handpicked Calvinist courtiers.<sup>96</sup>

Through these actions and acquisition of new territories under Friedrich Wilhelm, Brandenburg-Prussia moved into ever higher levels of the political stage. The Hohenzollern territories were widely dispersed over Northern Europe, and devoid of any unifying ties save those of the dynastic link, which was new, lacking in legitimacy, and thus still fragile.<sup>97</sup> Everywhere the estates under the Lutheran nobility had strong political influence and could easily leave the state defenseless by choosing to withhold their support.<sup>98</sup> The court at Berlin, unable to protect their far-flung lands from invasions from outside or unrest from within, had to be reformed in order to better serve the Elector and establish control over the widely-spread Hohenzollern domain. Friedrich Wilhelm realized that he needed to enforce his will over his renegade estate nobles as quickly as

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<sup>92</sup> Oestreich, *Neostoicism and the Early Modern State*, 122.

<sup>93</sup> Gawthrop, *Pietism and the Making of Eighteenth-Century Prussia*, 45.

<sup>94</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>95</sup> Frey and Frey, *Frederick I*, 21.

<sup>96</sup> Gorski, *The Disciplinary Revolution*, 87-90.

<sup>97</sup> Holburn, *A History of Modern Germany: 1648-1840*, 53.

<sup>98</sup> *Ibid.*

possible through the most efficient means. This conflict which kept the Elector's hands tied was rooted in the religious enmity between Lutheran nobles and the Calvinist court.

Striving to centralize control at the ducal court, and already engaged in diplomatic skirmishes with the Kingdom of Sweden regarding the Duchy of Pomerania on his northern frontier, Friedrich Wilhelm set out for his western provinces of Cleves-Mark to try to shore up his support amongst the nobility there.<sup>99</sup> The vast majority of nobility in Cleves-Mark were Calvinist, a by-product of their close proximity to the Reformed stronghold of the Dutch Netherlands, and Friedrich Wilhelm was able to work out a compromise with them.<sup>100</sup> The Calvinist nobles agreed to contribute some funds to the state coffers, and in return, Friedrich Wilhelm restored their noble privileges of tax exemption and special market rights.<sup>101</sup> To further cement his support in the region, as soon as the deal was concluded the Duke promptly ordered the Catholic nobles in his Rhineland provinces to be arrested while their property was confiscated and redistributed.<sup>102</sup> After this political stroke, the relationship between Elector Friedrich Wilhelm and the Hohenzollern estates in Cleves-Mark became much more financially stable. Between 1655 and 1660, the Cleves-Mark nobility contributed over 1.5 million *Reichsthaler* and 20,000 men to the Elector's military campaign on the Baltic.<sup>103</sup> In exchange, Friedrich gave the estates considerable rights and privileges of their own, including the right to collect and adjust taxes.<sup>104</sup> Interestingly, Friedrich did not attempt to overplay his hand in his outlying provinces by forcibly centralizing them under him by appointing officials from his own court over them, but instead chose to allow them a substantial degree of self-determinacy instead of curtailing them sharply as he did in the east.<sup>105</sup> Absolute control from Berlin would have been very difficult, especially with Hanover and Westphalia separating Cleves-Mark from the central seat of power in Brandenburg-Prussia, and a more *laissez-faire* approach in handling his nobility in this region was much more logical. Friedrich also did not need to place his own court officials in positions of power in Cleves-Mark, as the nobility and their subjects were already loyal to him, and Calvinist.

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<sup>99</sup> Robert M. Citino, *The German Way of War: From the Thirty Years' War to the Third Reich* (Lawrence, Kan.: University Press of Kansas, 2005), 29.

<sup>100</sup> Oestreich, *Neostoicism and the Early Modern State*, 120.

<sup>101</sup> Clark, *Iron Kingdom*, 55.

<sup>102</sup> Gorski, *The Disciplinary Revolution*, 91.

<sup>103</sup> *Ibid.*

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

<sup>105</sup> Clark, *Iron Kingdom*, 94.

A similar treatment can be seen in the actions of Friedrich Wilhelm regarding Halberstadt and Magdeburg, two small bishoprics in modern Saxony-Anhalt that fell under Hohenzollern dominion after the conclusion of the Peace of Westphalia.<sup>106</sup> After the Thirty Years War, Brandenburg had gained over 24,000 km<sup>2</sup> of territory, including the bishopric of Minden in Westphalia and the twin bishoprics of Halberstadt and Magdeburg.<sup>107</sup> Just like Cleves-Mark, the majority of both Magdeburg's and Halberstadt's populations were Calvinist, with a proportionally higher ratio of burghers and bustling centers of commerce.<sup>108</sup> In a strikingly similar turn of events, Friedrich Wilhelm allowed the nobles of the bishoprics to retain their tradition rights and privileges, despite the relatively close proximity of both territories to the ducal court at Berlin, and the ease of centralization which it implied.<sup>109</sup>

The bulk of Brandenburg territorial gains after the Peace of Westphalia fell within the region of the Upper Saxon *Kreis*, or 'Circle' along the Baltic Coast, where Eastern Pomerania was added to the Hohenzollern demesne.<sup>110</sup> Political difficulties with Sweden and disagreements regarding the division of the province led to *Hinterpommern*, the easterly half of the province, coming under the rule of Brandenburg-Prussia while the westerly *Vorpommern*, with the crucial port of Stettin at the mouth of the Oder River, fell to the Swedes.<sup>111</sup> The religious conflict is clearly demonstrated by the situation in the duchies of East Pomerania and East Prussia, where the nobility of the local estates remained staunchly Lutheran.<sup>112</sup> Here, just as the Duke had done in Brandenburg, the nobility was marginalized politically during the 1660s and 1670s through the same process. Although the Luther Junker were permitting to retain their ancestral estates, the power that they once had over the purse strings of state was removed.<sup>113</sup> The religious conflict and growing tension between the Calvinists and Lutherans was soothed by an increased centralization of power in Berlin and appointment of loyal Calvinist officials in the provincial administrations.<sup>114</sup> The relationships between the Elector and the nobility varied significantly from one province

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<sup>106</sup> Holburn, *A History of Modern Germany: 1648-1840*, 14-19.

<sup>107</sup> Wilson, *German Armies*, 21.

<sup>108</sup> Gorski, *The Disciplinary Revolution*, 90.

<sup>109</sup> Berlin is 149 km from Magdeburg & 214 km from Halberstadt along the modern A2. Cleves is 589 km away.

<sup>110</sup> Wilson, *German Armies*, 21.

<sup>111</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>112</sup> Nischan, "Calvinism, the Thirty Years' War," 203-04.

<sup>113</sup> Holborn, *A History of Modern Germany: The Reformation*, 183.

<sup>114</sup> Gorski, *The Disciplinary Revolution*, 90.

of Brandenburg-Prussia to the other, as did the corresponding level of the absolute power of the Duke and the degree of centralization. These variations however, are not due to apparent tension between classes, geopolitical situation or the setup of the local administrations. What is most evident from these examples is that Friedrich Wilhelm tailored his policy towards each particular province by utilizing the religious conflict between Lutherans and Calvinists. By using the loyalty of his Calvinist subjects and spreading his court's influence through the Reformed Faith, the Great Elector was able to undermine the decentralizing influence of the Lutheran nobility across Brandenburg-Prussia, pulling them closer to Berlin and strengthening the absolute power of the central government.

From the first decade of the seventeenth century, the authority of the Elector was centered in the *Geheimer Rat für die Kurmark*, the Privy Council for the Electoral Mark, a chamber of notables close to the Duke. Although the *Rat* was originally meant to only serve the Margraviate of Brandenburg, as the Hohenzollern demesne grew, Prussia and Cleve-Mark slowly fell under its sway as well.<sup>115</sup> With the territorial additions recently added to Brandenburg-Prussia by the Peace of Westphalia, Friedrich Wilhelm felt the need to reorganize the entire *Geheimer Rat* in such a way as to raise it up to the level of a proper central government organization for all of his new territories.<sup>116</sup> The vast majority of the *Geheimer Rat* was made up of Calvinists, and Friedrich Wilhelm used this religious loyalty to its maximum potential.<sup>117</sup> On December 4, 1651, the Elector published an ordinance at Cleve to turn the *Rat* into a full ministry of the government, although not entirely like the ministry that we in the modern world would expect, with individual ministers assigned to defense, diplomatic affairs, agriculture, et cetera. Brandenburg-Prussia in the mid-seventeenth century was far too feudal in nature and the masters of the estates were adamant against being consolidated, willing to resist by any means possible.<sup>118</sup> Friedrich Wilhelm realized this, and cannily allowed each province to retain its local government headed by a *Statthalter*, but a councilor would also be assigned from the *Geheimer Rat* as well; one to Brandenburg, another to Prussia, another to Pomerania, and so on through the Hohenzollern possessions down to the smallest bishopric.<sup>119</sup> This provincial councilor would serve in Berlin, acting as the representative of his assigned region and serving as part of a system that subordinated all the individual diverse territories of Brandenburg as areas subjected by a

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<sup>115</sup> Ranke, *Memoirs of the House of Brandenburg*, 33.

<sup>116</sup> Schevill, *The Great Elector*, 144-45.

<sup>117</sup> Ranke, *Memoirs of the House of Brandenburg*, 33.

<sup>118</sup> Schevill, *The Great Elector*, 144-45.

<sup>119</sup> Ranke, *Memoirs of the House of Brandenburg*, 48-52.

Calvinist council to their Calvinist Ruler.<sup>120</sup> While more effective political fusion of the Hohenzollern demesne in a proper kingdom only came about in the future, it doubtlessly received a powerful start from the act of 1651, by which the *Geheimer Rat* of Brandenburg was appointed to serve as the central governing organization for the dominions of the Elector.

The increasingly centralized power of the Elector in Brandenburg-Prussia through his administrative and diplomatic actions cannot be readily explained from either the purely economic materialist or the solely militaristic bellicist perspectives. As expected, the relationships between Friedrich Wilhelm and his estate nobility varied considerably from province to province as did the degree of relative administration centralization, from the highly restricted provinces of Prussia and Pomerania to the more lax rule over Cleve-Mark and Magdeburg. These variations of rule, however, do not appear to be solely related to either the class structure or geopolitical considerations of the province before the Great Elector began his reforms. Both of these conditions did play a part in the rise of the Prussian monarchy, but the role of religion is one that has often been understated by the majority of historians. The religious tension between Calvinists and Lutherans stemming from the 1609 conversion of Johann Sigismund played a crucial role in the rise of the Hohenzollern dynasty. Without the influence and assistance of other Reformed houses in Europe, his own personal court of Calvinist councilors, and the mindset and upbringing of his religion, Friedrich Wilhelm simply could not have brought the different provinces of his demesne under his control in any sort of adequate way. Without the religious pressure brought about by his careful appointments of church officials and limitation of the political powers of the nobility, the legitimacy of his rule would have been challenged. The influence of the Reformed Houses of the Palatinate and Orange played a larger role in Brandenburger politics than any other state in the Holy Roman Empire, which further bolstered the legitimacy of the Hohenzollern Electors. Brandenburg-Prussia in the seventeenth century was an atypical principality, and with its Calvinist ruling family and the superb leadership of Elector Friedrich Wilhelm, began an unusually autonomous state within the Holy Roman Empire, with a predilection towards absolute monarchy.

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<sup>120</sup> Schevill, *The Great Elector*, 145.



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