





**El socorro de Génova por el II marqués de Santa Cruz. 1634-1635.**  
Antonio de Pereda y Salgado (1611-1678).  
Oil on canvas, 290 cm x 370 cm.

ALPATA is the Seminole word for alligator.

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SPECIAL SECTION

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RELIGION AND EMPIRE



SPECIAL SECTION  
RELIGION AND EMPIRE

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*Mary Lester*

Religion and empire have always had a close association throughout history, as the ruling state must address both the faith of the imperial center and the controlled territories in the formation of their administrative policy. Yet for all of their continuous interconnectedness, the relationship between religion and empire defies simple categorization, and human faith has alternately drawn empires closer to the metropole, calmed the fears or destroyed the native beliefs of subjugated peoples, served as a tool of foreign rule, and even transformed into a vehicle for blossoming nationalism and the eventual end of imperial rule.

The following sections provide brief glimpses into this complex relationship between faith and imperial rule, and explore the workings of various ruling powers in regards to their own faith and the faith of their subjects. Beginning in central America, Mayan city-states and the Aztec empire readily absorbed the religious beliefs of conquered or satellite peoples, and combined religious authority with political power to link inextricably native religion with governmental rule. As European nations spread their claims across the Americas, however, the French, Spanish, and British chose to Christianize Native Americans rather than absorb their belief systems into the official religion of the empire; instead of adopting native faith, these empires instead imposed their own, foreign faith onto their new territories, often using features of Native American faith and society as vehicles for Europeanization.

Although the Americas provide a narrative of aggressive conversion to the official imperial religion, several Old World empires offer alternative examples of imperial interaction with native faith. In French West Africa, the colonial government chose to ally itself with local Muslim leaders in Senegal, Algeria, and Morocco, and ruled indirectly through native religious authority rather than competed with them for influence. The Ottoman Empire, by contrast, directly

interacted with the varying religious beliefs of its demographically diverse population, and developed several effective strategies for incorporating and profiting from the differing faiths of its subject peoples.

Finally, religion played a continuously changing role in British colonial rule in India, as general British toleration of local religious customs in exchange for goodwill transformed into government's deliberate misuse of religion to classify and categorize the native peoples of India, a move that created several Indian identities based on faith and caste and severely hindered any fully unified movement for Indian independence.

From inception to independence, empires across time have variously absorbed, fought, allied with, tolerated, and manipulated local religion to increase their control and maintain their rule. For ruled peoples, however, such a close relationship between empire and religion has often left a legacy of uncertainty and division, a legacy that continues to haunt independent nations to the present day.

SPECIAL SECTION

## CITADELS OF HEAVEN: RELIGION IN PRE-COLONIAL CENTRAL AMERICA

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*Mary Lester*

Long before European nations expanded their influence across the globe, the Mayan and Aztec empires of Central America not only developed powerful centralized forms of government; they also created a complex religious environment that was inextricably bound to the state.<sup>1</sup> Although most references to Mesoamerican religion highlight such dramatic aspects as human sacrifice and awe-inspiring pyramids, Mayan and Aztec faith also possessed a remarkably intricate system of theological thought and required the active participation of all classes of Mesoamericans. Due to the all-encompassing presence of Mesoamerican religion in daily life, the diverse forms of government in Central America embraced a central role in Mayan and Aztec faith and actively participated in religious rituals. From powerful Mayan urban centers to the centralized government of the Aztec empire, rulers took on the responsibility of looking after the religious well-being of the people, and worked closely with priests to ensure the good will of Mesoamerican deities. As Mayan and later Aztec influence expanded in Central America, religion and government came to be linked intrinsically in Mesoamerican religious thought and in daily ritual practice.

Although the Mayan civilization was the predominant culture in Mesoamerica during the late classic era (600–900 CE), the Maya were in fact a collection of several diverse urban centers rather than a unified political empire. These cities, nevertheless, shared several common religious practices, and absorbed the culture of neighboring urban centers. For all of the diversity of Mayan city-states, some urban centers such as Teotihuacan came to share both political and religious significance, as “religion and power continued to unite” in Mesoamerican

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1. Although it would be more accurate to refer to the Aztec peoples as the “Mexico,” the term “Aztec” will be used in this essay for the sake of clarity.

civilization.<sup>2</sup> In general, Mayan religion was very demanding upon its followers, and ritual saturated every aspect of Mayan life.<sup>3</sup> Central features of Mayan faith that the Aztecs later adopted include the importance of time and numerology, and the advanced Mayan calendar represented a cyclical conception of time that attempted to regulate the past and future ages of human existence.<sup>4</sup> Numerology worked in conjunction with calendrical predictions to help the Maya make sense of their existence, and Mayan conceptions of the idea of god could be expressed in numerological terms; in a startling similarity to Christianity, the Maya expressed god as the “alpha and omega, and in that sense [the] one case [in which] 0=1. The mystery of the transition from 0 to 1 is the essence of god.”<sup>5</sup> The concept of sacrifice was also central to Mayan faith, and believers practiced this “dualistic reciprocity” to give and receive, to understand the good through the bad.<sup>6</sup>

The rise of the Aztec empire in the early fifteenth century took the unification of religion and authority a step further as the rhythms of religious ceremony permeated all aspects of Aztec life and rule. Instead of viewing cities as parallel yet separate centers of administrative and ceremonial authority, the Aztecs incorporated their urban centers into their religious beliefs as places where the sacred came together with the profane. For example, the capital city of the Aztec empire, Tenochtitlan, was “transformed from [a military citadel] into the foundation of heaven,” a change that indicates “there existed a profound correspondence between sacred forces of universe and social world of Aztec empire.”<sup>7</sup> In these cities, a system of ceremony and ritual imbued every day of the Aztec calendar with religious significance and regulated the lives of city residents. The empire’s relationship with its gods was one of mutual need, and required active participation of the government and the entire empire to ensure the maintenance of Aztec world order. Drawing upon earlier Mayan notions of sacrifice, the Aztecs believed that their gods had created humans not only to worship them, but also to sustain them through continuous offerings of blood and sacrifice with extensive ruler participation.<sup>8</sup> The religious significance of cities and a highly prominent

2. Alfredo López Austin, “Guidelines for the Study of Mesoamerican Religious Tradition,” in *Beyond Primitivism: Indigenous Religious Traditions and Modernity*, ed. Jacob Olupona (New York: Routledge, 2003), 120.

3. Munro S. Edmonson, “The Mayan Faith,” in *South and Meso-American Spirituality*, ed. Gary H. Gossen (New York: The Crossroad Publishing Company, 1993), 71.

4. Edmonson, 73–75.

5. Edmonson, 67.

6. Edmonson, 84.

7. David Carrasco, “Aztec Religion: Sacred Cities, Sacred Actions,” in *Native Religions and Cultures of Central and South America*, ed. Lawrence E. Sullivan (New York: The Continuum Publishing Company, 2002), 16.

8. For a wonderfully detailed analysis, see Miguel León Portilla, “Those Made Worthy by Divine Sacrifice: The Faith of Ancient Mexico,” in *South and Meso-American Spirituality*, 41–64.

cult of sacrifice are only a few features of the complex Aztec religion, yet they signify an apex of increasingly intertwining Mesoamerican religion and empire when religious life was inseparable from Aztec rule.

After the Spanish conquered the Aztecs in 1521, they began an intensive program of conversion and brought hundreds of Catholic priests to the region. Yet while the Mayan and Aztec peoples might have faced forced conversion, they remained spiritually focused on Indian lords and priests rather than the Spanish.<sup>9</sup> Several Central Americans, in fact, approached Spanish priests and asked for a conversion, turning into what religious scholar David Carrasco calls “Jaguar Christians” and practicing a Mayan translation of Christianity into understandable terms. With the disappearance of great Mesoamerican empires and urban centers, traditional religious systems could not continue to function in the new context of Spanish rule. Like the unending cycle that characterized their religion, the great city states and empires that had once ruled the Mesoamerican landscape transformed into centers of Spanish administration or silently crumbled into ruin in the vast jungles of Central America, and the connections between Mayan and Aztec faith and governmental rule became memories of a past age.

As the Spanish extended their empire throughout the Americas, the later appearance of the British and French Empires made for the intermingling of Catholic, Protestant, and Anglican traditions throughout North America. All three European powers competed to spread their various Christian traditions to the natives and to maintain the religiosity of settlers, goals they accomplished with varied levels of state support and missionary activity.

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9. David Carrasco, “Jaguar Christians in the Contact Zone: Concealed Narratives in the Histories of Religion in the Americas,” in *Beyond Primitivism: Indigenous Religious Traditions and Modernity*, 128.

SPECIAL SECTION

CONVERTING THE HEATHENS TO  
THE WAY OF THE LORD: CATHOLIC  
AND PROTESTANT MISSIONARIES  
IN NEW SPAIN, NEW FRANCE,  
AND BRITISH NORTH AMERICA  
DURING THE COLONIAL PERIOD

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*Benjamin L. Miller*

The mutually reinforcing themes of religion and empire manifested themselves most strongly in Colonial North America through Catholic and Protestant missionary work among Native Americans in the nascent territories of New Spain, New France, and British North America. In these lands, three distinct European nations asserted their hegemony through the establishment of missions and tried to Christianize and Europeanize the natives with varying degrees of success. Not content to be passive recipients of European religious beliefs, Native Americans often resisted this missionary activity and, in some cases, continued to practice their original belief systems underground.

Emulators of Francis of Assisi, Spanish Franciscans came first to North America. Arriving in 1581, they built missions in the Kingdom of New Mexico before the Pueblo Revolt of 1680, which brought the death of many Spaniards and the forced abandonment of their missionary endeavors.<sup>10</sup> Organizing the Pueblo Indians of New Mexico into a theocracy, the *padres* gained status as “mighty Inside Chiefs” and subordinated the gods of the native chiefs to the holy trinity.<sup>11</sup>

10. Historian Ramon Gutierrez authored a significant study of this early Spanish missionary activity in New Mexico. Although the periodization of Gutierrez’s book runs from 1500–1846, I will for the purposes of this paper, focus on the years from first contact in New Mexico in 1540 to the Pueblo Revolt of 1680. (See Ramon A. Gutierrez, *When Jesus Came, the Corn Mothers Went Away: Marriage, Sexuality, and Power in New Mexico, 1500–1846* (Stanford, Cal.: Stanford University Press, 1991).)

11. Gutierrez, *When Jesus Came*, 46, 63–64.

The friars altered the native social structure to wipe out the Indians' core belief in the "nexus between sexuality and the sacred."<sup>12</sup> After destroying all Pueblo religious objects, the missionaries tried to stop their open sexuality. In the end, historian Ramon Gutierrez argues, before the Pueblo Revolt of 1680, the Pueblos who pledged to join the ranks of practicing Christians and thus forsake their native beliefs were not motivated by authentic faith. Rather, a combination of fear and hope guided their decision making: the fear of what the Spaniards might do to them if they resisted and the hope that by joining the religion of the friars they would be able to partake of their technological and cultural innovations as well.<sup>13</sup>

Striving to advance the cause of Christianity, members of the Jesuit order dictated the story of conquest and conversion in New France from the mid-seventeenth to the early-eighteenth century.<sup>14</sup> Braving the danger of death by disease or hostile Indians, these Jesuit missionaries ministered to natives who resisted their Christian advances. Often seeking the ill or diseased for baptism, Jesuits knew from past experiences that after baptism many healthy converts often strayed from Christianity. Yet even if the natives outwardly demonstrated a Christian faith, like European peasants of the period, historian Allan Greer maintains, they turned to their own local religion in times of need.<sup>15</sup> Their traditional Iroquois culture remained intact as the native people, especially women such as Catherine Tekakwitha, sought to harness the missionaries' "ritual potency and supernatural connections."<sup>16</sup>

Around the same time the Jesuits operated in New France, English Protestant missionaries tried to impose English order onto natives in British North America. During the 150-year period before the end of the French and Indian War in 1763, these pioneering clerics employed several new missionary techniques not utilized by their two rival Empires. They first imposed a semblance of Eurocentric order, before introducing natives to "the English art of industry."<sup>17</sup> For example, they introduced the natives to English-style farming. However, when Indians resisted conversion, English missionaries turned to native children, trying

12. Gutierrez, *When Jesus Came*, 74.

13. Gutierrez, *When Jesus Came*, 72, 94.

14. Beginning in 1567, Jesuit missionary activity in La Florida preceded their work in New France. See Jerald T. Milanich, *Laboring in the Fields of the Lord: Spanish Missions and Southeastern Indians* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2006) and Bonnie G. McEwan, ed. *The Spanish Missions of La Florida* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1993).

15. Allan Greer, *Mohawk Saint: Catherine Tekakwitha and the Jesuits* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 6, 106–107.

16. Greer, *Mohawk Saint*, 112.

17. James Axtell, *The Invasion Within: The Contest of Cultures in Colonial North America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985), 148.

to reeducate them in civility through the establishment of Indian schools, such as the one founded in 1693 at the College of William and Mary in Virginia. These English missionaries maintained two interconnected advantages over the Jesuits of New France: a larger population that in turn aided immensely in the political domination of the natives. However, when British missionaries advanced outside of English demographic and political strongholds, their missionary successes fell far short of French efforts, especially along the southern border of New France and New England.<sup>18</sup>

The three colonial powers that actively sought to convert the natives of North America worked within three hegemonic spheres, which in the case of France and England overlapped one another. Inhabitants of borderland regions, the native populations of New Spain and New France numerically outnumbered the European missionaries sent to these areas and consequently the clerics could not effectively quash native belief systems. Surrounded by a larger white population in their strongholds, New England clerics had more resources at their disposal and over time succeeded in their quest to “civilize” the native population according to English religious norms.

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18. Axtell, *The Invasion Within*, 162, 179, 190, 219–220, 242.

SPECIAL SECTION

## ISLAM AND THE OTTOMAN EMPIRE IN PRE-MODERN EUROPE

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*Michelle Dissman*

Located on the fringes of Christian Europe and with lands spread across three continents, the Ottomans were uniquely positioned. The Ottoman Empire's religious policies and interactions further complicated this geographic circumstance and profoundly shaped the imperial structure.

At the height of Ottoman power during the late fifteenth through the seventeenth century, religion occupied a pivotal role in the empire. As Islam served as the primary religion, it served to both direct imperial policy as well as resulted in conflicting views when confronted with a Christian Europe. The latter was internally divided as a result of the religious upheaval that dominated much of the Early Modern period.

Religion played a recurring role throughout this period. At the height of Ottoman power, "the swift conquests of the fourteenth, fifteenth, and sixteenth centuries established an empire that demographically at least was predominantly Christian, which made it imperative that the authorities indulge these non-Muslim subjects as much as doctrinally possible."<sup>19</sup> The official state religion did not reflect that of the population and made necessary accommodations in the form of concessions to religious minorities.

As a result of these conquests and expansions, the Ottomans faced an increasingly diversified population and as the historian Daniel Goffman observes, "heterogeneity thus came to distinguish Ottoman society, especially along its seaboard and borderlands where the exigencies of war and the opportunities of commerce tended to diversify economies and throw together sundry peoples and ideas."<sup>20</sup> The Ottomans dealt with this diversity in a variety of ways that included

19. Daniel Goffman, *The Ottoman Empire and Early Modern Europe* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 170.

20. Goffman, 171.

everything from incorporation taxes to forced enslavement of a percentage of their male children under the system of *ghulam*.<sup>21</sup>

The status of the Sultan within the Ottoman Empire also took on a religious significance over this period. The Sultan was the leader of the Muslim world but often did not follow Islamic law.<sup>22</sup> Some of the more questionable practices included the keeping of a harem, and the tradition of fratricide, by which the Sultan would imprison all his brothers and their sons until he produced a living male heir and then would kill all of them to prevent challenges to his power.<sup>23</sup>

Though many of these domestic policies are oppressive and brutal by modern standards, in comparison to many other Empires and countries in the Early Modern period the Ottoman Empire was relatively progressive in terms of religious tolerance. Furthermore, many of these policies allowed for the preservation of the Empire. For example, the *devshirme* system provided a loyal slave army and fratricide provided a clear chain of inheritance that kept power concentrated and avoided many of the succession problems that plagued much of the rest of Europe.

While the Ottomans were tolerant of internal religious diversity, there was marked animosity toward Christian Europe. The Protestant Reformation that swept across Europe in the sixteenth century is a clear example of this impact. As the reformation took place the Ottomans' situation turned precarious as Europe was divided along religio-political lines. While the Protestants disliked the Ottomans, they found the Catholics more objectionable. This relationship was largely the result of a power struggle between the freshly severed halves of the Christian world. Though the Ottomans were a perceived threat to Christendom, Protestant Europe saw the Catholic Church and the Pope as larger threats. The Ottomans thus acted as a buffer of sorts between Catholic and Protestant power.<sup>24</sup> While the Protestants saw a deep religious conflict with the Ottomans, they "understood that only the Ottoman diversion stood between them and obliteration."<sup>25</sup> This power struggle would help maintain Ottoman rule throughout the Early Modern period.

As the empire expanded, colonial authorities forced the Ottomans to develop policies to contend with an ever more diverse population resulting in a number of

21. John F. Guilmartin, Jr., "Ideology and Conflict the Wars of the Ottoman Empire: 1453–1606," *Journal of Interdisciplinary History*, Vol. 18, The Origin and Prevention of Major Wars (Spring, 1988), 730.

22. Cemal Kafadar, *Between Two Worlds: The Construction of the Ottoman State* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1995), xi.

23. Guilmartin, Jr., 729.

24. Goffman, 110.

25. Goffman, 110.

systems to contend with this change. Ottoman Sultans had to confront their own religion in their actions at court, many of which ran counter to Islamic ideals. Furthermore, the Ottomans found that their religion put them in an unstable position within the power struggles of Europe as the Protestants split with the Catholic Church. Thus throughout the Early Modern period, when the Ottoman Empire was at its zenith, religion played a major role in shaping the empire.

SPECIAL SECTION  
RELIGION AND INDIRECT RULE  
IN FRENCH WEST AFRICA

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*Sara Reynolds*

By the end of the nineteenth century, France had created an empire that spanned four million square miles, contained 60 million people and consisted of land in Asia, the Americas, and Africa.<sup>26</sup> In Africa, France ruled indirectly and avoided alienating the primarily Muslim population, which was essential labor, by maintaining puppet governments with Muslim rulers. The French colonial government also employed religious and racial ideologies to establish hierarchies that emphasized the cultural superiority of Europe and French republican ideals.

In Algeria and Morocco, France used religion as a tool for building social alliances between colonizing Europeans and Africans. In 1830, Algeria became a formal colony and in 1912 Morocco became a protectorate.<sup>27</sup> Berbers, the original inhabitants of North Africa, and Arabs, who had settled in the region later, were the two primary groups in this region.<sup>28</sup> They had coexisted peacefully in North Africa for centuries despite their differing languages and cultures.<sup>29</sup> In an effort to form a link with a portion of their African subjects, the French exacerbated the differences between the two groups. The French, who saw the Berber population as the descendants of the citizens of Ancient Rome, falsely believed that Berbers did not speak Arabic, did not practice Islam, and were unhappy under Muslim majority rule.<sup>30</sup> Colonial authorities portrayed Arabs as violent invaders who had

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26. Donald J. Harvey, "French Colonization," *Discover France!*, <http://www.discoverfrance.net/Colonies/> (accessed December 26, 2009).

27. David Robinson, *Muslim Societies in African History* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 102, 104.

28. "Religion and Racialization in French Colonial Africa," <http://encyclopedia.jrank.org/articles/pages/5925/RELIGION-AND-RACIALIZATION-IN-FRENCH-COLONIAL-AFRICA.html> (accessed December 26, 2009).

29. "Religion and Racialization."

30. Robinson, *Muslim Societies*, 104.

imposed Islam on the noble and honorable Berbers, who were “less Islamic and more civilized.”<sup>31</sup> In Morocco, France attempted to establish separate governments for Berbers and Arabs. This attempt created tension between the two North African communities though it was a failure overall.<sup>32</sup>

In Senegal, France implemented a form of puppet government and allied with the country’s Islamic leaders to maintain power. The French conquest of Senegal began in 1885, marking the end of a line of Islamic aristocracies.<sup>33</sup> As the French established control, they implemented a system of indirect rule and allowed members of the former aristocracy to maintain their previous authoritative positions. The Muslims occupied a key position in Senegalese colonial society because they grew peanuts and paid taxes. The French needed their labor and loyalty to ensure peace and prosperity in their colonial possession, but many Senegalese were unhappy with French colonial rule and turned to the Islamic leaders as beacons of resistance. The French, realizing they needed an alliance with the Islamic leaders to maintain order, brought one of Senegal’s most important religious leaders, Amadu Bamba Mbacke, back from exile in 1902, hoping to bring economic and political order to Senegal.<sup>34</sup> However, the people saw the return of Bamba as victory over imperial authority, and France exiled the leader once more.<sup>35</sup> By returning and re-exiling the most prominent Islamic leader of the time, France demonstrated its grip on power. The French allowed Bamba in 1907 to return once more to Senegal, where he remained for the rest of his life under surveillance. On the eve of the Great War, Bamba released statements supporting French colonial rule. The French capitalized on these statements during the war, when Bamba encouraged Muslims to enlist with the Allied forces.<sup>36</sup>

France used religion as a political tool in several ways in its African colonies. In Algeria and Morocco, the French colonial administration attempted to use religion to create a society involving superior and inferior classifications. In Senegal, France controlled the whereabouts of the most prominent Islamic leader, Amadu Bamba Mbacke, to demonstrate its authority over the Muslim population. France also avoided conflict by allowing former Islamic aristocrats to rule in puppet governments.

Indirect rule and division of the population along religious lines is not unique to France and Africa. South Asia is also illustrative of the ease with which religion became a political tool with significant consequences for the postcolony.

31. “Religion and Racialization.”

32. Robinson, *Muslim Societies*, 104.

33. Robinson, *Muslim Societies*, 184–185.

34. Robinson, *Muslim Societies*, 182, 187–189.

35. Robinson, *Muslim Societies*, 189.

36. Robinson, *Muslim Societies*, 190.

Achievement of the secular nation-state form has become the goal of many societies in the postcolonial period, but the interaction of postcolonial societies with European governmental tactics, such as the use of religion for purposes of social stratification and control, has thrown the viability of the secular nation-state form into question around the world.

SPECIAL SECTION

## ORIENTALISM AND EMPIRE: RELIGION IN THE BRITISH RAJ

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*Anuradha Pandey*

South Asia has an extremely diverse religious landscape that has made for long-standing debates about the relationship between religion and empire in the region. This overview will examine the approaches the British colonial state took for managing religious identities. The contemporary perception of South Asian identity politics as primarily divided along strictly religious (“communal”) lines obscures the multiple identities an individual may have as well as the long history of relatively peaceful relations between Hindus, Muslims, Christians, Buddhists, Zoroastrians, and Jews on the subcontinent. A resurgent Hindu nationalism in the past twenty years that thrives on othering Muslims and Christians also necessitates a historiographic intervention that emphasizes the complexity of religious interaction, nationalism, and communalism in the colonial and post-colonial periods.

The importance of Protestant identity to the logic of empire for the British must be emphasized to understand the approaches of the British colonial state to Hindus and Muslims in India. Protestantism figured centrally in the British perception of their civilization and “race” as superior. British Protestant missionaries went to India and Africa in droves for what they thought to be a divinely ordained mission to impose Euro-centric civilization on those societies.<sup>37</sup>

Anglican missionary activity was especially prevalent post-1858 in India. Before the resurgent imperialism of the mid-nineteenth century, the British had adopted a policy of noninterference in religious matters. In many cases they also financially patronized temples, mosques, and other religious activities to the chagrin of missionaries, who accused the colonial government of favoring

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37. Hugh McLeod, “Protestantism and British National Identity, 1815–1945,” in *Nation and Religion: Perspectives on Europe and Asia*, ed. Peter van der Veer and Harmut Lehmann (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1999), 46.

Hinduism at the expense of spreading Christianity. Their noninterference and patronage policies earned the East India Company's Court of Directors the reputation of the most anti-missionary force in India, as the British commercial interests were dependent on the goodwill of upper-caste Hindus. The renewed alliance between church and state between 1780 and 1830 as a result of losing the fifteen North American colonies saw a resurgence of conservatism centered on the idea of Britain as a Christianized Roman Empire.<sup>38</sup>

The religio-cultural logic of empire and the change in India's status from a commercial to territorial empire changed the focus of the colonial government from patronage and pure commerce to controlling and classifying the population. Within this massive effort, the government emphasized collecting data pertaining to caste and religious community. Orientalist scholars gleaned notions of caste and ideas about Hinduism from ancient texts, and the British conceptualized Indian society based on these texts. This in turn helped reify the caste system, which may not necessarily have been as crucial to the social structure as Orientalist scholars assumed.

Indian civilization was constructed in scholarship and through government policy as synonymous with ancient Hinduism, thus casting the Muslim minority as foreign. To an extent, these colonial classifications served to create social and political divisions along religious, linguistic, caste, and ethnic lines.<sup>39</sup> These definitions of identity served to divide the Indian independence movement along different historical narratives. The classification of the Indian population into religious and caste communities created identities tied to these categories that allowed the British to employ a "divide and rule" strategy. A crucial aspect of the logic of colonial rule was the application of indigenous laws intended to prevent social upheaval against colonial rule, which depended on alliances with Hindu and Muslim rulers and upper-class leaders. Religious and caste leaders influenced the constructions of Hindu and Muslim civil law, which the British then employed, though such systematic applications of religious law in civil matters had never existed.

In tandem with these colonial administrative developments, religious modernization movements provided the cultural capital for political engagement with the British. Orientalist scholarship saw ancient Sanskrit texts rather than everyday practice as the basis of Hinduism, which aided in the construction of a semitized religion. The Hindu elite who wished to reform the religion with an

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38. Rowan Strong, *Anglicanism and the British Empire c. 1700–1850* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), 56.

39. Peter van der Veer, *Religious Nationalism: Hindus and Muslims in India* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994), 19.

infused Victorian morality and wanted to be comparable with Islamic orthodoxy used this semitized conception of Hinduism based on sacred texts, individualism, equality, and rationalism. Movements such as the Brahmo Samaj, Arya Samaj, and Ramakrishna Mission focused on reforming Hinduism to be more aligned with a Western rationalist structure of religion. In nineteenth-century-elite Hindu thought, the Hindu imagination and spirituality were superior to those of the West, while Indian civilization was also imagined as equally masculine to that of the West on the basis of logic and rationality.<sup>40</sup>

The relationship between colonial policy and Orientalist scholarship made for considerable intertwining of Indian nationalism and Hindu reform movements, as ideas informing Indian nationalist sentiment were appropriated from the construction of Indian history as synonymous with ancient Hinduism. Islamic reform movements, by contrast, tended to dissociate from the Indian independence movement. The contemporary communalization of Indian politics is thus to some extent a legacy of British archaeologies of empire.

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40. Thomas Blom Hansen, *The Saffron Wave: Democracy and Hindu Nationalism in Modern India* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1999), 68.



## FEATURED ARTICLES

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# AN UNHAPPY KNIGHT: THE DIFFUSION AND BASTARDIZATION OF MORDRED IN ARTHURIAN LEGENDS FROM SELECT WORKS OF THE SIXTH THROUGH THE FIFTEENTH CENTURIES.

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Every nation has endemic legends, yet some “endemic” legends are paradoxically transnational; one such multinational “endemic” story is the set of legends forming the narrative of King Arthur and his knights. Despite a specific hearth in Wales, Arthurian legend has permeated European literature and culture. To advance the understanding of the evolution of a medieval narrative tradition, specifically Arthurian literature and the significant evolution of the figure of Mordred to this series of legends, scholars must locate the differing concerns, values, and interests of the peoples that created the literature. Identifying what was culturally significant enough to transport the narrative from one society to the next indicates much about the culture itself. The endurance of Mordred as a character, as well as his defining action in Arthurian legend of slaying King Arthur, indicates his social importance across time and geographical space.

From the earliest incarnations of Arthurian legend, the figure of Mordred was a constant. His character has been carried from Wales, where he initially and ambiguously appeared in the *Annales Cambriae*, into the national literatures of Italy, Germany, and France.<sup>1</sup> Thus, despite the frequent characterization of Arthurian legend as particularly English, Arthurian legend is more accurately pan-European. Once Arthurian legend had diffused throughout Europe, authors began to use the legend’s well-known set of figures, such as Lancelot, Guinevere,

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1. Written in 970, documenting the era from 447 to 533.

Mordred, and Arthur, in a propagandistic way. For example, a comparison between the works of contemporaneous fifteenth-century authors Sir Thomas Malory and John of Fordun shows the way in which authors elevated Mordred from a mythic figure to an allegory for Lancastrian and Yorkist politics, highlighting the omnipresent conflict between the English and Scottish. The English Malory's *Le Morte d'Arthur* presents Mordred in a highly vilified way, whereas the Scottish Fordun's *Chronica Gentis Scottorum* suggests that Arthur robbed Mordred and his half-brother Gawain of the throne. A comparison of the use of Mordred as a politically allegorical figure in Malory's *Le Morte d'Arthur* and Fordun's *Chronica gentis scottorum* demonstrates the later importance that the effect of literary diffusion had on the character. These texts, though composed contemporaneously and on the same island, present Mordred in vastly different capacities.

This study, therefore, will consider the transformation of Mordred from the fifth century through the fifteenth century through a comparison of geographically and temporally distinct texts. The main focus will be on two texts, *Le Morte d'Arthur* and *Chronica gentis scottorum*; auxiliary texts in use include Gervase of Tilbury's *Otia imperialia* and Geoffrey of Monmouth's *Historia regum britannie* (heretofore HRB), concluding with a brief consideration of a twentieth-century use of Mordred and Arthurian legend as presented in T. H. White's *The Once and Future King*. Above all, this study seeks to show that the diffusion of Arthurian legend is more than a simple spreading of ideas or books, but rather a transformative process.

Due to the temporal and geographical diffusion of Arthurian literature, there is no one version of the set of events comprising Arthurian legend. Not only did events appear and disappear in the legend over the course of time, but characters also did not always play the same roles. To offer a synopsis of the legend would indubitably neglect a seminal piece of Arthurian literature or betray some cultural bias; instead of a complete overview of the legend, a summation of a series of events usually associated with Mordred (primarily following post-Vulgate interpretations) would be much more useful. Mordred was born as the result of an incestuous liaison between Arthur and his sister. Arthur, upon learning of Mordred's existence, commanded that all male children be sent to sea to drown. Mordred, of course, survived and later came to Arthur's idyllic court of Camelot. Joined by his half-brothers, all from Orkney (an island north of Scotland), Mordred plotted to expose the affair of Lancelot and Guinevere. Thus a civil war began, culminating in the battle at which both Mordred and Arthur fell. Arthur fatally skewered Mordred, and Mordred drew himself upon Arthur's blade and slew the king, his father.

As stated above, the *Annales of Cambriae* are the first historical text to mention Mordred. The passage for the year 537 reads “Gueith Camlann, un qua Arthur et Medraut corruere.”<sup>2</sup> Despite the early dates appearing in the *Annales Cambriae*, the actual date of the document’s composition is almost 300 years later, circa 954. In 1138, Geoffrey of Monmouth’s *Historia regum britanniae* referred to Arthur as King Arthur, and Arthur had a greater presence in HBR than in previous annals.<sup>3</sup> In Geoffrey of Monmouth’s history, the basis for many of the later versions of the Arthurian cycles emerges, including the character of Mordred.

The transformation of Mordred from an ambivalent name on a list to a villain to a nationalistic hero figure exemplifies the directions and evolutions of the Mordred story that are visible in the diffusion of the “matière de Bretagne” from its point of origin in Wales to other parts of Britain.<sup>4</sup> As the Arthurian legend spread throughout Europe, almost all of the knights underwent a metamorphosis throughout time and space in which their characters began to reflect the geographic and temporal location of and the cultures producing the respective narrative. This metamorphic process subsequently bastardized Mordred, a status which came both literarily and physically. The physical process of the disassociation and reassignment of characteristics of Mordred from the cultural diffusion of the Arthurian legend produced the illegitimacy of his birth and the villainy of his character.

For example, the first appearance of incest connected with Mordred’s birth occurred in *Lancelot* and *Mort Artu* of the Vulgate Cycle in the thirteenth century, where the “moral comment is curiously lacking.”<sup>5</sup> This shadow of incest connected with Mordred continued to grow and mutated into having a greater degree of influence in the legend, yet “the English were quite undeterred in their admiration by the incest charge.”<sup>6</sup> In fact, Fanni Bogdanow, author of *The Romance of the Grail*, stated that “the theme of Mordred’s incestuous birth seems to serve mainly to heighten the horror of the final tragedy.”<sup>7</sup> Malory eventually transformed Arthur’s fatal flaw of incest, which the French authors initially presented, into

2. *Annales Cambriae*, ed. The Rev. John Williams Ab Ithel (London: Eyre and Spottiswoode, Her Majesty’s Printers, 1860), 4.

3. The first significant mention of Arthur as a historical figure occurs in *Historia Brittonum* composed in 830 by Nennius, a Welsh priest. According to Nennius’s *Historia Brittonum*, Arthur fought against the Saxon invasion, where he “was twelve times chosen their commander [*dux bellorum*] and was often conqueror” and won twelve battles, including the Battle of Badon Hill.

4. This is a body of Celtic literature pertaining to Arthur that later influenced the French romances.

5. Elizabeth Archibald, *Incest and the Medieval Imagination* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), 203.

6. Archibald, 209.

7. Archibald, 217.

the mechanism that made Arthur the tragic hero. Arthur's knowledge that it is his son whom he has both killed and been killed by and that it is his son who has become the catalyst for the destruction of his kingdom acts in the very same way as Oedipus's realization that his marriage to Jocasta has been incestuous. This realization is the real tragedy of Camelot, not Lancelot and Guinevere's courtly paramour. In fact, Lancelot's dalliance with Guinevere could have been permitted, or at least overlooked if not excused, if Mordred and his faction had not forced Arthur to recognize it.

The transformation of Mordred from a figure in annals to a villain and, though briefly, into a hero, is exemplary of this correlation between geography and the effects on narratives. After the *Annales Cambriae* (written in 970 at St. David's, Wales, documenting the era from 447 to 533) mentioned him ambiguously, the character of Mordred became more defined in later texts. The initial depiction of Mordred merely stated that at "the battle of Camlann...Arthur and Medraut fell [trans.]"<sup>8</sup> The *Annales* did not state whether Medraut and Arthur fell supporting or opposing each other. In Henry of Huntington's *Historia Anglorum*, however, written in 1129 (about 150 years after the Welsh *Annales*), Mordred was a distinctly evil character. He "usurps the [Arthur's] throne and marries Arthur's wife."<sup>9</sup> Although Mordred may have been villainous since his inception, it is not until later narratives that his motivations for such villainy are innumerate. As with all of the figures in Arthurian legend, as time progresses, his character became more complex.

By the twelfth century, Geoffrey of Monmouth's histories subscribed Mordred's place of birth to the Orkney Islands, off the coast of Scotland. To make a man of the North, closer to Scottish than British, a villain, a usurper of thrones and an often incestuous adulterer with Arthur's queen Guinevere, is indicative of the racism towards the Scottish and Pictish tribes from the perspective of the inhabitants of the southern parts of British Island.<sup>10</sup> This tradition of the treachery of Mordred, as typically described in the earlier versions of the Arthur story, continued until the legend diffused to Scotland and Scottish authors re-interpreted the legend in the fourteenth century; Mordred, in the hands of Scottish authors, was transformed from a villainous usurper into a wronged hero. In *Chronica gentis Scotorum*, attributed to John of Fordun in the mid- to late-fourteenth century, "Gawain and Mordred had a right to the throne,"<sup>11</sup> the logic being that "since

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8. Williams Ab Ithel, 4.

9. Alan Lupack, *The Oxford Guide to Arthurian Literature and Legend* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 35.

10. V. H. Galbraith, "Nationality and Language in Medieval England," in *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, Fourth Series, Vol. 23, (1941), 113-128.

11. Lupack, 41.

Arthur was illegitimate, Mordred, as Lot's son, was the rightful heir to the British throne."<sup>12</sup> In fact, Rosemary Morris purposes that "the whole tragedy, from *HRB* onwards, hinges on the succession."<sup>13</sup> While "Mordred's claim [to the throne] is vindicated by the Scots," Morris suggests that this issue of legitimacy became more important in Scottish texts than the interpersonal relationship between Mordred and Arthur and the indeterminate sin of incest.<sup>14</sup> Instead of moral transgressions, Mordred's presence at Camelot became an issue of succession and transcended into international politics. Fordun's statement is perhaps not surprising, given that the author and his audience were likely Scottish.<sup>15</sup> Thus Mordred was no longer portrayed as a traitor, but rather as the party wronged by the usually heroic King Arthur. The Mordred figure and his "rebellion" represented an assertion of Gaelic nationalism during a time of English hegemony towards the North.

In contrast to Rosemary Morris's interpretation of Mordred's birth as a commentary on Scots and rights of succession, Elizabeth Archibald proposes that Arthur's incest with his sister, varyingly Morgause or Morgan, was less a critique of Mordred as it would later become, but more a critique of Arthur. The French Vulgate cycle was the first text to describe the incestuous birth of Mordred, circa the thirteenth century.<sup>16</sup> Despite an argument by Guerin in *The Fall of Kings and Princes*, which states that Geoffrey of Monmouth "deliberately suppressed such a major flaw [as incest] in his hero,"<sup>17</sup> most scholars believe the Vulgate Cycle to be the first work in which Mordred was conceived by an incestuous liaison between Arthur and his sister. Though predating the Hundred Years War, the French Anglophobia (and indeed, the English Francophobia) is apparent throughout the literature. Archibald says that "the writer [of *Agravain*, a section in which Mordred's birth is detailed] seems to have several aims in developing this story, and on the whole they are not favourable to Arthur."<sup>18</sup> The positions of Archibald and Morris on the purpose of Arthur's incest in the Vulgate cycle, though seemingly contradictory to each other, are in fact complimentary. Morris continues the argument that "[t]he incest is not used either to punish Arthur or

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12. Archibald, 203.

13. *Historia regum britaniae*; Rosemary Morris, *The Character of King Arthur in Medieval Literature* (Cambridge, England: D. S. Brewer, 1982), 139.

14. Morris, 139.

15. This assumption is made based on the nationality of the author as well as the subject on which the author is writing, the history of the Scottish people from a very pro-Scottish point of view. *Chronica gentis Scotorum* may have found readership in England and France (due to the later connection through Mary de Guise); however, it is of most interest to the Scottish people.

16. According to Morris, "the Vulgate *Mort*, which apparently invents the incest ... emphasize[s] only the son's treachery." Morris, 139.

17. Archibald, 210.

18. Archibald, 207.

to explain Mordred's wickedness,"<sup>19</sup> and that furthermore, "[the author] does not assume that because Mordred is born of incest he is necessarily wicked. Only Mordred himself can answer for his own character."<sup>20</sup>

While Mordred was still a villainous character in the French Vulgate Cycle, it would appear that the text leaned towards a more equilibrated doling of blame—Arthur's offense was clearly recognized, and it was his "evil" that begot Mordred's evil. In comparison, the later English author Malory redeemed Arthur and condemned Mordred unequivocally in *Le Morte d'Arthur*: upon Merlin's prediction of Mordred's birth, the sin from where he came, and his later role in Arthur's kingdom, Arthur gathered all of the babies born within a certain period (around the time of Mordred's birth) and set them to sea in hope of their drowning. By murdering both his son and the other children, Arthur sacrificed his moral soul for his kingdom's wellbeing. Archibald deems that "Malory is harsher [than previous Arthurian authors] in letting all the other babies drown, which makes Mordred's survival all the more miraculous."<sup>21</sup>

The transition from the medieval to the early modern period in the fifteenth century was, for the entirety of Europe, tumultuous. The bubonic plague had effectively reduced the population of Europe and created a newly emerging form of European economics, ergo a new way of life with an emphasis on the rights of the labor force. At this time, England was also at war with France and wracked with internal strife.<sup>22</sup> Essentially, England was torn, socially and politically, from two fronts, a distressing situation that was reflected in the literature.<sup>23</sup> Malory's *Le Mort d'Arthur* stood on the cusp between the medieval and early modern periods at the time of its publication circa 1470. Malory wrote *Le Morte d'Arthur*

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19. Morris, 107.

20. Morris, 108. King Arthur is, through his classic sin, elevated into mythology. After French authors added the element of Arthur's moral failing resulting in tragedy by the hand of his son, the cycles took on more weight than earlier, folkloric Arthurian tales such as *Culhwch ac Olwen*. A shift into the vernacular occurred from the high Latinate language preceding in the annals through the Vulgate Cycle, and the content of the legend became classical and elevated. In this way, despite his sin, Arthur's canonization finds a genesis. The Vulgate Cycle allows a heightened pathos for the hero-king slain by his own son. Arthur became martyr-like.

21. Archibald, 212.

22. The Hundred Years War, culminating in the Battle of Agincourt, preoccupied England with France. Meanwhile, the War of the Roses culminated in the battle at Bosworth Field, which represented England's domestic turmoil.

23. Sir John Fortescue's writings are an example of Pro-Lancastrian propagandist, polemic literature (though not fictitious) that was appearing. Fortescue also appears to have had anti-French sentiments, as he described why the French language did not remain the primary language of England because "the French did not accept accounts of their revenues, unless in their own idiom, lest they should be deceived thereby. They took no pleasure in hunting, nor in other recreations... So the English contracted the same habit from frequenting such company, so that they to this day speak the French language in such games and accounting." John H. Fisher "A Language Policy for Lancastrian England." *PMLA*. 107.5 (Oct., 1992):1168.

during his interim in jail at the waning of the knightly era.<sup>24</sup> Like many medieval texts, there are several versions, and “[u]ntil 1934, the edition printed by William Caxon in 1485 was considered the earliest text of *Le Morte d’Arthur...*”; however, the Winchester Manuscript “bore a composition date of 1469.”<sup>25</sup>

In Malory’s version of the Mordred narrative, King Lot of Lothian and Orkney married Arthur’s sister, “and King Arthur lay by King Lot’s wife, which was Arthur’s sister, and gat on her Mordred.”<sup>26</sup> Malory highlighted the incest of Mordred’s birth by ensuring that the genealogy of the Pendragon family did not go unnoticed. Merlin’s prophesy “that there should be a great battle beside Salisbury, and Mordred his own son should be against him,” spurred Arthur to issue a decree similar to the biblical Pharaoh’s decree upon determining an influx of Israelites that “charged all his people, saying, Every son that is born ye shall cast into the river, and every daughter ye shall save alive.”<sup>27</sup> Mordred, like Moses, survived this infant annihilation;<sup>28</sup> he eventually became a knight, and was generally disliked at Arthur’s court, but tolerated because of his heritage and familial ties to Gawain. He became aware of the affair of Lancelot and Guinevere and began to plot to destroy not only Sir Lancelot and Guinevere, but also Arthur and, thereby, the entirety of Camelot. In essence, Mordred was, according to Malory, “[an] unhappy knight....”<sup>29</sup>

Throughout the texts discussed above, Mordred’s motivation for his betrayal and subsequent destruction of Camelot is both varied and complex, and the English and Scottish authors of the fifteenth century imbued the legend with historical and political allegory.<sup>30</sup> The historical interpretation is most solidly defined, but a political interpretation of the text lends itself to a very conservative reading, as the king is equated with and reflects the health of land: Arthur is

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24. The jail at which Malory was incarcerated was in London. However, the author himself was born Warwickshire.

25. Malory, vii.

26. Malory, 58.

27. Malory, 60. Exodus 1:22

28. This is an interesting possibility. If Mordred can be equated to Moses, then Arthur’s court becomes comparable to the subjugating Egyptian royalty. Parallels can further be drawn in that Mordred, like Moses, did in fact pose a legitimate threat to the respective kingdoms, which led to destruction. This incident could also reference the Passover, where the Lord “pass[ed] through the land of Egypt this night, and will smite all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both man and beast; and against all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgment” (Exodus 12:12).

29. Malory, 682. “Unhappy”, in this context and in other usages contemporary to Malory, means unfortunate, rather than discontented. Archibald explains the context of this appellation: “[i]n the *Agrainvain* Mordred and Lancelot meet a hermit who tells them that they are the two most unfortunate knights in the world: Mordred is destined to destroy the Round Tale and to kill his father the best man in the world who will also kill him.” Archibald, 204.

30. Malory’s version of the Arthurian legend is essentially the culmination of the French and German traditions. His portrayal of Mordred is standard for a post-Vulgate, English version.

“king, born of all England.”<sup>31</sup> In allowing the perpetuation of incestuous origins of Mordred, coupled with Mordred’s Orkney birth-place, Malory wrote in a very unobvious statement that the Northern people are “bastards.” The bastard son, as a representation of a country and as a political character, will try not only to gain sovereignty but also to usurp the throne. Malory’s writing was both a strangely prophetic and a very astute projection of Anglo-Scottish politics.

In the late sixteenth century, a century after Malory’s era, the tensions between England and Scotland manifested into the struggle for succession to the English throne. Having gained independence from England in 1328, several centuries later in the early sixteenth century, the Scottish king James laid claim to the English throne. Despite Elizabeth the First’s previous attempts to prevent the continuation of Catholicism through the ascension of Mary of Guise, the French Queen of Scotland, Mary’s son James inherited the throne after Elizabeth’s death. Like Mordred and Arthur essentially canceling each other out in battle, the rule of James the First annulled Scottish independence, while also extinguishing the British royal line.<sup>32</sup> The English Tudor line, descended from the House of Lancaster, had ended because of Scottish rule; however, Scotland lost the sovereignty that the Scots desperately continued seek.

Furthermore, the destruction of Camelot in Malory’s text metaphorically parallels and predicts the outcome of the War of the Roses. Arthur and his faction represent the Yorkist House, and Mordred and his faction suggest the House of Lancaster. Like Mordred and Arthur, the houses of Lancaster and York were related by kinship, and at the Battle of Bosworth Field, the Lancastrians killed the Yorkist king Richard the Third and won the right to succession. After Mordred’s warmongering and the smallish scuffles between Arthur and Sir Lancelot, there was a culminating battle in the legend that parallels the battle at Bosworth Field. However, Arthur’s battle ended more bleakly than Bosworth: despite the seeming stalemate resulting from the slaying of father and son, even this battle has a victor. Mordred did achieve his goal, and while it ultimately cost him his life, he brought to political light the affair of Lancelot and Guinevere which resulted in the destruction of Camelot.

In addition to the varying political allegories attached to his character, Mordred also represented a political ideology of progress in Malory’s *Le Morte d’Arthur*. Mordred labored to undermine the pinnacle of the chivalric order, the Knights of the Table Round. Knights were medieval. Knighthood and the methods with which they fought were archaic. Mordred destroyed this old-

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31. Malory, 28.

32. James united the thrones of Scotland and England; a century later, Scotland became part of the Kingdom of Great Britain.

fashioned political form with a very modern weapon, and a very modern method. Therefore Mordred's politics were that of progress, whereas the system that he brought down was one the traditionalist court of King Arthur.

Since the introduction of gun powder into European warfare and other advances in military technology, and certainly since the Bubonic Plague had previously decimated a good portion of men eligible for knighthood, the horse-based culture of the *chevalier* was rapidly becoming obsolete. Therefore, this period of progression away from the medieval period may seem a strange time for Malory to choose to regurgitate the archaic, chivalric tales of King Arthur and his Knights of the Round Table. By the time Malory wrote, the Early Modern period had superseded the Age of Chivalry. However, this Early Modern, or extreme late medieval period, was a time period in which England needed this seemingly nationalistic tale of a brave, native king defending England from an alien force, a vile, incestuous usurper from the North named Mordred. His battle techniques are modern; "in the most unknighly fashion, [Mordred] uses cannon on his enemies, even on Guinevere's fortress."<sup>33</sup> The introduction of gunpowder, both in *Le Morte d'Arthur* and in Malory's reality, primarily rendered the knightly orders antiquated. Mordred's use of gunpowder to destroy the ideal that Camelot represented was mirrored in the society of the late-fifteenth and early-sixteenth centuries as firearms destroyed chivalry. Mounted attacks and steel armor were not sufficient offence or defense against canons and gunfire.

Furthermore, Mordred's political strategies also have an underlying modernity. In *Le Morte d'Arthur*, Mordred was acting as a Machiavellian Prince: instead of relying on his heredity and aristocracy to win him support, as a monarch with divine right would, he used the art of rhetoric "and much people drew unto him. For then he was the common voice among them that King Arthur was never other life but war and strife, and with Sir Mordred was great joy and bliss."<sup>34</sup> For Malory, Mordred was a manifestation of progressive politics, while King Arthur and the court of Camelot remained conservative, archaic remnants of an antiquated ideal of knights in shining armor doing good deeds, saving maidens and going on grail quests. In a way, Malory may have been writing an early version of the modern dystopian novel, showing how progress is destructive. The golden Age of Chivalry and Camelot could not be sustained in the world, neither according to literature nor shown in reality. Camelot fell to modernity, but modernity destroyed itself with its lack of respect for history; yet eventually, even modernity will fall into the past and be destroyed like its forefathers.

33. Erin Ogden-Korus, *The Quest: An Arthurian Resource: Sir Mordred* (Moscow, ID: University of Idaho, 1999), accessed April 2009, [http://www.uiweb.uidaho.edu/student\\_orgs/arthurian\\_legend/knights/orkney/mordred.html](http://www.uiweb.uidaho.edu/student_orgs/arthurian_legend/knights/orkney/mordred.html).

34. Malory, 707.

While it is difficult to establish sweeping statements about any figure in Arthurian legend due to the multiple versions and the differences between the rendering of each individual within space and time, as the previous sections have labored to demonstrate, to simplify Mordred as a merely malevolent villain is uninformed. He is, in many ways, a tragic hero much as Arthur.<sup>35</sup> Mordred's tragedy is that "[a]lthough Mordred starts life with a birth-story so often associated with heroes, he is destined from birth (indeed, from conception) to be the villain."<sup>36</sup> Yet in order to make a modern remark on the "redemption of Mordred," one must move beyond the literature discussed above and consider material composed post-Vulgate in which more of *Mordred's* story was formed and taken beyond chronicle form. While authors made great strides in the composition of Arthurian legend, especially in the twelfth century, and transfigured it from chronicle material into the more "substantial" Romance, few of these Romances mentioned Mordred.

The complexities of Mordred in post-Vulgate literature, however, made him more than a wicked antagonist. With the background that the Vulgate Cycle provides, he is a product of his circumstances. From the time of his birth, due to the nature of his conception, "Mordred is presented as an innocent victim, even though he is destined to destroy the Arthurian world."<sup>37</sup> Yet the representation of Mordred continually changed throughout the texts: he was a villain, a hero, a son, a nephew, an incestuous bastard, and an adulterer. Despite all these mutations of his character, however, Mordred's final, devastating action did not change at all. The French Vulgate Cycle, by allowing fault to be found in Arthur, unknowingly began a process which author T. H. White would complete almost eight centuries later—the redemption of Mordred.

Centuries later, from 1939 to 1958, T. H. White's *The Once and Future King* (which is based loosely on Malory) approached the character of Mordred from a Freudian psychological perspective. White made the analogy that "Desdemona robbed of life, or honor is nothing to a Mordred, robbed of himself – his soul stolen ... while the mother-character lives in triumph."<sup>38</sup> In T.H. White's adaptation, Morgause, Mordred's mother and Arthur's half-sister, was presented as more of

35. In classical literature, the tragic hero is one whose own actions bring about his downfall. Usually the tragedy, and subsequent catharsis, is brought by an epiphany that the hero is in fact responsible for his own "undoing." Arthur's epiphany of his sin and his son is more subtle than that of Oedipus, as Arthur does not pluck his eyes and curse the day he saw his sister. He "identifies Mordred as his son, and swears to kill him." In this case, the tragedy does not come from the moment of epiphany as in the classic myth, but rather it comes because of the moment of epiphany. Nevertheless, Arthur is still allowed the luxury of ascension to the status of tragic hero: despite his transgression, Arthur is still the idolized Arthur, King of the Britons, about whom songs are still sung and poems still composed, even in modern day. Mordred does not get this opportunity. The dual patricide and filicide, coupled with the destruction of the kingdom and Order which he built, is Arthur's tragedy. 36. Archibald, 212.

37. Archibald, 212.

38. T. H. White, *The Once and Future King* (New York: Ace Books, 1987), 611.

a villain than Mordred. Mordred becomes merely “her grave. She existed in like a vampire.”<sup>39</sup> Morgause had instilled in her sons, Mordred, Agravaine, Gareth, Gaheris, and even Gawaine, a sense of necessary revenge against Arthur because of the wrong their father did to his mother Igraine, the grandmother of these knights. As with medieval Arthurian legend, the modern author White enhanced certain aspects of Arthurian legend to mirror contemporary societal concerns. Mordred’s character extenuated the subtle difference between good and evil, a theme that many twentieth-century authors and politicians tried to reconcile. White’s Mordred was very much conscious of his genesis and of Arthur’s attempt to rid himself of the potential embarrassment and bellicose dealings promised by Merlyn.

Like Malory’s reiteration of a seemingly obsolete, “quaint” tale of knights and quests in order to make a political statement, White used Arthur’s Round Table, an anachronism of many centuries, to remark on various political ideologies—chiefly, fascism and communism, which were eminent concerns at the time. In the fourteenth century, Fordun had written on behalf of the Scottish people, a people who much like the Irish had become subjugated to British rule, and made Mordred and the Orkney faction into Scottish heroes. In the twentieth century, White reprised this role, equating the Orkney brothers to a “race, now represented by the Irish Republican Army ... flayed defenders of a broken heritage. They were the race whose barbarous, cunning, valiant defiance had been enslaved ... by the foreign people whom Arthur represented.”<sup>40</sup> In this way, White continued the tradition of reshaping Mordred and the Arthurian myth to exhibit contemporary social anxieties into modernity. The tales of Arthur and Mordred are timeless, and parables can be drawn from them timelessly.

Arthurian legend is more than an antiquated story of Good triumphing over Evil. As in reality, there is no clear line between these two forces; even the Good have committed sins such as adultery (Lancelot and Guinevere), incest (Arthur), and murder (the Orkney brothers). Mordred’s evil, the cause of the destruction of Camelot and the end of King Arthur, is perpetrated by what would have been the moral action had it been done by any other man. With his revelation of the adulterous affair of the protagonists Guinevere and Lancelot, Mordred became the villain. Moreover, in the consideration of what is Good and what is Evil in Arthurian legend, if Arthur is Good and Mordred is Evil, then the fact that Arthur is Mordred’s progenitor throws both of these figures even more into an ambiguous area. Mordred is symbolic of the “father’s sins” coming home to roost. Through the transition from annals to romance to modern novel, Arthur and Mordred become “a discussion of the human condition.”<sup>41</sup>

39. White, 612.

40. White, 519.

41. Morris, 107.

# CHARTERS, THEATERS, AND CHANGE: A HISTORY OF CZECHOSLOVAK REVOLUTIONARY MEDIA, 1968–1989

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*Lorn Hillaker*

In late 1989, the massive popular support for change in Czechoslovakian life forced the overthrow of the communist regime, known as the Velvet Revolution. Raising a new popular awareness, numerous forms of unconventional media stimulated public rallies against the communist government. This new domestic media, defined simply as a means of communication that facilitates the spread of information, did not exist within the government-censored print or broadcast media, but rather found external routes of expression, such as discussion forums at theaters, handbills, songs, and massive public demonstrations. The Velvet Revolution serves as a clear example of the power and transmission of ideas and their mobilizing effect on the public at large. As the noted historian Vladimir Kusin states, “news cannot be stopped from spreading nowadays, and ideas never could.”<sup>1</sup> In other words, people will find a way to communicate regardless of interference, government or otherwise. Consequently, through discussion forums, unsanctioned writings, or other means, Czechoslovaks heard of the alternate worldviews of the dissidents after the failed Prague Spring and many became willing to demonstrate to effect change in their country. The outcome was an unstoppable force for revolution brought about by the catalytic effect of alternative means of communication, a new and revolutionary media.

After the Soviet Union liberated Czechoslovakia in 1945, few knew what kind of government would assume power. President Edvard Beneš had been in exile in London for the war and had been working with agreements between the

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1. Vladimir V. Kusin, *From Dubček to Charter 77: A Study of ‘normalization’ in Czechoslovakia 1968–1978* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1978), 321.

Soviet Union and Czechoslovakia for the post-war era. The “Treaty of Friendship, Mutual Assistance and Post-War Cooperation” of December 1943 was critical in these relations as it established the precedence of friendship for future relations. Beneš looked eastward to the Soviet Union because of the betrayal of Munich before the Second World War, and the failure of the Western powers to honor their defensive agreements with Czechoslovakia against an aggressive Nazi Germany. As a result of his overtures and the overall popularity of the Soviet liberators in 1945, the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia (CPCz) began to try to work together with Soviet power. In effect, Beneš made agreements that ensured the dominant position of the Communist Party in Czechoslovakia. This culminated in the Government Programme of April 5, 1945 at Košice, which created the National Front.<sup>2</sup>

The National Front provided for the coordination of all political parties in Czechoslovakia, and the CPCz dominated the organization. With this position established, the CPCz moved to assert elective control and gained thirty-eight percent of the votes in May 1946. In 1948, increasing pressure by the CPCz forced the democratic members of the cabinet to make a desperate move and resign in an attempt to cripple the government. The tactic failed. Beneš accepted the resignations as well as the candidates put forth by Klement Gottwald, a prominent communist and the then prime minister of Czechoslovakia. This allowed the communists to gain almost complete control over the government.<sup>3</sup>

Prime Minister Gottwald followed the hardline Soviet example put forth by Josef Stalin and attacked dissidence by banning subversive literature in the form of seven million books from libraries, putting approximately 130,000 dissenters in prisons, camps, and uranium mines. Even after the deaths of Stalin and Gottwald in 1953 and the ensuing de-Stalinization campaign conducted by Nikita Khrushchev, First Secretary Antonín Novotný and President Antonín Zápotocký continued the harsh policies of Gottwald. At this time, the intelligentsia, such as writers Jaroslav Seifert and František Hrubín, wrote about abuses under Gottwald and asked for additional freedom. Demonstratively, the Czechoslovak Union of Writers, the Party controlled writers union, expelled them. Consequently, silence continued concerning the violent repressions of the Gottwald regime throughout the attempted liberalization of Khrushchev. Czechoslovakia adopted a new Constitution in 1960 that renamed the nation the Czechoslovakia Socialist Republic and introduced a new article that identified the CPCz as the “leading

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2. Hans Renner, *A History of Czechoslovakia since 1945*, trans. Evelien Hurst-Buist (London: Routledge, 1989), 1–5.

3. Renner, 5–9.

force in society and the state,” further emphasizing the CPCz’s complete control of politics in Czechoslovakia.<sup>4</sup>

By 1967 the policies of Novotný had grown significantly unpopular, as evidenced by an increasing opposition from communist intellectuals and students. This opposition reached a climax when students demonstrated in 1967 and suffered vicious repression. Following this episode, the press and the general population grew more critical of the government’s reaction. While the protests failed, discontent led to opposition to Novotný within the party, and the CPCz voted him out as First Secretary on January 5, 1968, replacing him with Alexander Dubček on January 5, 1968.<sup>5</sup>

Due to his appearance as a moderate in the CPCz camp, the party selected Alexander Dubček as First Secretary. He inherited a confused party unaware of the dealings and power struggles in its own higher circles. Consequently, there was no unified position or direction within the CPCz. Strict communist oversight declined and the nation began to get increasingly progressive. The conflicting viewpoints from the reformer camp (Dubček) and the anti-reform camp (Novotný) confused the populace, and the criticism of these groups towards each other allowed the general public to express its opinion. Novotný had an increasingly weak position, and the reformers were able to capitalize on this.<sup>6</sup>

In March 1968, events outpaced government control. Censorship was essentially ended in March and readership in Prague went from 118,000 newspaper subscribers in January 1968 to 557,000 in March 1968 as the media grew increasingly radicalized and democratic. In a poll conducted in July, seventy-seven percent of the population wanted an opposition party. Though the people of Czechoslovakia were outpacing the government in terms of reform, Dubček and others produced a document of reform known as the Action Programme of the CPCz in April 1968. This document identified the problems of the actions committed by the party in past, called for greater autonomy for social organizations outside the party, and advocated free speech, economic reform, and free assembly. The Action Programme was a tremendous break from the CPCz’s previous Stalinist policies and though many people did not approve of its concessions, it was still largely well received.<sup>7</sup> In the end, however, it reformed too little for the people, and far too much for Moscow.

By 1968 the era of Nikita Khrushchev and his reforms had ended and the Soviet Union was under the control of the more hardline Leonid Brezhnev. Brezhnev strongly disliked the reformist tendencies of the Dubček government

4. Renner, 33.

5. Renner, 37–49.

6. Renner, 49–52.

7. Renner, 55–63.

and attempted to put pressure on the Czechoslovaks throughout the Prague Spring. After much posturing, five Warsaw Pact countries invaded Czechoslovakia on the twentieth of August 1968.<sup>8</sup> With that, the Prague Spring and its reform ended.

The failure of the Prague Spring and the invasion of the Warsaw Pact countries “ended the optimum chance for a fundamental reform of a socialist regime and started the long process of the decay of communism that was to culminate in the Velvet Revolution.”<sup>9</sup> To bring Czechoslovakia back into the fold of the communist bloc, a policy of “normalization” began. It controlled the spread of ideas viciously, seriously restricted the activities of intellectuals, and expelled approximately 70,000 members from the CPCz. The consequence of the isolation of the intellectuals and normalization’s harshness was the emergence of dissidence. Dissidents varied, but intellectuals who had been blacklisted, as well as some nonconformists in the youth counterculture, typically made up the majority.<sup>10</sup>

Dissidents like writers, literary critics, and intellectuals refused to accept the communist party system in their country. Individuals were able to get together and form groups such as Charter 77 and the Committee to Defend the Unjustly Prosecuted (VONS) as alternatives to conformity in the communist system. Though they numbered only about one thousand members in a population of fifteen million, these two groups remained important as a refuge for independent thought and ideas.<sup>11</sup> Dissidents worked “to create a community of people who live in truth,” and thereby prevented the total victory of the communist monolith.<sup>12</sup>

Written in January 1977, Charter 77 outlined the desires of its signatories, including free expression, the right to education, and the preservation of human and civil rights. The authors did not want a solely political document; rather they desired to have a set of ideals that could transcend politics and thereby be more acceptable to the government.<sup>13</sup> To that end, Charter 77 organizers delivered it to the Government, the Federal Assembly, and the Czechoslovak Press Agency to allow for its spread and consideration. Unfortunately for dissidents, police confiscated it prior to delivery, and its 243 signees were subject to government reprisal. Despite the government’s attempt at suppression, Charter 77 gained additional signees, over 800 by the end of 1977 alone.<sup>14</sup> The reach of the charter

8. Renner, 71–2.

9. Bernard Wheaton and Zdenek Kovan, *The Velvet Revolution: Czechoslovakia, 1988–1991* (Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 1992), 3.

10. Wheaton and Kovan, 6–11.

11. Robin H. E. Shepherd, *Czechoslovakia: The Velvet Revolution and Beyond* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, Inc., 2000), 31–33.

12. Aviezer Tucker, *The Philosophy and Politics of Czech Dissidence From Patočka to Havel* (Pittsburgh, Penn.: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2000), 116.

13. Kusin, 306–9.

14. Kusin, 305.

continued to expand throughout the communist era as activists added an additional 340 documents to the original charter by 1987.<sup>15</sup>

Clearly, dissident groups existed and had ideas contrary to the rigid mold of the communist system, but what is less obvious is whether or not the activities of groups such as Charter 77 had an appreciable impact on society. The first aspect that one must consider is the government response to dissident publications such as this one. The communist government reacted strongly against the Charter, and reacted in the press and with the creation of an Anti-Charter that was published in the government-controlled newspaper *Rudé Právo*, stating, “Let us say it loud and clear to friend and foe alike: our press is not a mouth piece of the reactionaries.” The party’s attempt to marginalize the Charter through publicity backfired. In fact, press campaigns actually increased public awareness of the Charter and the subterfuge of the Anti-Charter, which produced far too many signatures to be credible.<sup>16</sup> In the words of one historian concerning Charter 77, “just about everyone knew of its existence and had at least an idea of what it was about.”<sup>17</sup> More importantly, the Charter provided an alternative world view to the Marxist-Leninist views of the state, and existed as “a standing ‘appeal’ to citizens to do something and had created a ‘space’ for developing independent culture,” and a testament to the will of some Czechoslovaks to not compromise their beliefs under communism.<sup>18</sup>

The acts and writings of dissenters such as the signees of Charter 77, with influential members that included playwright Vaclav Havel, were significant to the Velvet Revolution. The Prague Spring had flared up and died, but from 1977 on, the members of Charter 77 and other dissident groups acted as a beacon for the people, an example that they would later emulate en masse. These large groups were not the only dissenters; there existed other, less formal, avenues for disagreement with the communist government, and many other Czechoslovaks took this path.

The majority of the populace remained uninvolved in Charter 77, VONS, or any other widely known dissident group; however, communication and the spread of media through more secretive paths existed, the most famous and prevalent being *Samizdat*. *Samizdat* was “the distribution of uncensored writings on one’s own, without the medium of a publishing house and without the permission of the authorities.”<sup>19</sup> This could take numerous forms, including books, poems,

15. H. Gordon Skilling, *Samizdat and an Independent Society in Central and Eastern Europe* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1989), 47.

16. Kusin, 315.

17. Kusin, 318.

18. Skilling, 54.

19. Skilling, 3.

advertisements, newspapers, and historical essays. Charter 77 even had its own circulating *Samizdat* publication: the *Informace o Charté* or *Infoch*.<sup>20</sup> *Samizdat* was the most common media form of free expression and from 1972 to 1989 produced some 800 to 1,000 books.<sup>21</sup>

Some statistics are helpful in understanding the prevalence of *Samizdat* in Czechoslovak society. These numbers come with a significant caveat; the results are from mostly non-party members living in three cities, Prague, Brno, and Bratislava. However, they remain interesting in that they represent the proportion of society that disagreed with the communist government ideology. At the time of the study, 1986, seventy-seven percent of those polled said they had seen and read *Samizdat*, with thirty-one percent reporting themselves as regular readers. Approximately sixty-four percent of the respondents stated they had participated in some form of independent activity, varying from attending a private film showing to participation in Charter 77.<sup>22</sup> Obviously, this sample is biased, but it speaks to the pervasiveness of dissident media and ideas among non-party members.

Forms of dissident activity and communication existed beyond *Samizdat* as well. For instance, many students rejected from universities for dissident political views learned from scholars like Julius Tomin independently in apartments at gatherings for individuals who desired to learn despite their denial from universities. Others could attend theater in the Living Room Theater of Vlasta Chramostová. And many young people in the counterculture gained exposure to alternative ideas through mediums such as banned and foreign videos and cassettes of music by artists such as the Plastic People of the Universe.<sup>23</sup> Though not in the mass media, independent activity manifested in various media forms and communication was able to establish a state of mind free from the dogmatic principles of the communist government in Czechoslovakia. This limited freedom waited to burst from its restraints at the next opportunity, and in 1989 when students demonstrated, the people were ready to respond.

Several different youth and student organizations were active in the time directly preceding the Velvet Revolution, and their machinations have a clear link to the later, more famous demonstration of November 17, 1989. Youth and student organizations, such as the Independent Peace Association, Czech Children, and the Independent Union of Students (STUHA), were all instrumental in bringing youth demands before the public eye. Though not always widely known, the

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20. Skilling, 47.

21. Skilling, 75.

22. Skilling, 93–97.

23. Skilling, 78–80.

youth formed several dissident groups and provided an open and direct criticism of communist policies. When the Independent Peace Association and the Czech Children demonstrated on August 21, 1988, they represented a move from smaller dissident activity in to a much more serious and open act against the communist regime.<sup>24</sup> In STUHA, the desires of the student dissidents found an outlet in the form of coordination for the future and more prominent actions via networking between different students and faculties.<sup>25</sup> As its founding document, STUHA: The Origin of the Independent Union of Students, stated, STUHA sought “the publication of our own magazine, the organization of demonstration ...and the expression of students’ attitudes on international and domestic affairs.” Perhaps the most important document that the student movement published prior to November 17 was *Several Sentences*. This document told the government that “the time has come for real and substantial changes in the system,” beginning “with a new constitution and ending with economic reform.”<sup>26</sup> These episodes may have been lost without the stunning events that followed soon after them, but they were important in their own right. They laid the groundwork for student organization and communication, and consequently the beginning of the revolution.

On November 17, 1989, approximately 15,000 students started marching towards Wenceslas Square in the heart of Prague to commemorate the death of students who had protested against the Nazi regime during its occupation. Though only planned to include 2,000 to 4,000 students initially, the demonstration grew en route to the square from the initial 15,000 to approximately 55,000 marchers. When the demonstrators learned that police were monitoring them in preparation to end the protest, the crowd’s animosity reached a fever pitch. Chants such as “REAL dialogue” and “Free elections” echoed from the crowd. When riot police confronted the crowd, it stopped and told the police of its non-violent intentions. A standoff ensued until finally the police brutally dispersed the crowd by isolating one group and beating many until they escaped through a narrow gap in the police lines.<sup>27</sup> When interviewed, Jiří Peč, a recent graduate from college in Prague, confirmed that the government used the television to document the demonstration, but only as a small incident that the police stopped. Only later, Mr. Peč heard from actors and students of the size of the demonstration and of its brutal repression.<sup>28</sup> In fact, the official media response seen through the party

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24. Owen V. Johnson, *Mass Media and the Velvet Revolution*, in *Media and Revolution: comparative perspectives*, ed. Jeremy D. Popkin (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1995), 162–172.

25. Wheaton and Kovan, 39–41.

26. Wheaton and Kovan, 196–197.

27. Wheaton and Kovan, 41–44.

28. Jiří Peč, personal interview by author, Prague, March 10, 2009.

paper *Rudé Právo* was that there was a “breach of public order,” with no mention of the police action.<sup>29</sup>

The fallout from this demonstration emerged as too powerful for the government to stop. Though the government-controlled the mass media, word of mouth carried news of the revolution. Then, “from the street, the revolution spread to the theater.”<sup>30</sup> The students started setting up a general strike for November 27 in an attempt to gain widespread attention and expand the scope of their actions. Also, film and drama students started making declarations of “Don’t Wait, Act” and expanded their ideas to the theater.<sup>31</sup> The theater became a place to exchange ideas, issue proclamations, and hold meetings for such powerful organizations as the Civic Forum, run by Vaclav Havel. In them, actors read items written in protest against the government to encourage others to join the cause. Many theaters joined in the revolution, including the National Theater, the Brno Ha Theater, and, most famously, the Magic Lantern Theater.<sup>32</sup>

Though actors had joined the cause, the revolutionaries (by this point no longer demonstrators, dissidents, or even only students) still had a very serious problem: the mass media was government controlled. To combat this and to spread their message they continued to hold mass demonstrations throughout Prague. Some described the remarkable feeling of something happening that they had dreamed about for so long, and how thousands of people would ring their keys to signal the end of communism.<sup>33</sup> Groups would shake their keys and cry, “The Last Bell!” or “Wake up Prague!” in a mass effort to accomplish their goals and motivate themselves.<sup>34</sup> Beyond demonstrations, however, a massive communications campaign was underway, with many of the revolutionaries struggling to get others involved. Their efforts included protest posters, handbills, but also specific recruiting missions of students to go to workers and inform them about the revolution.<sup>35</sup>

As the revolution gained momentum, the revolutionaries gained access to more and better resources. For instance, the socialist paper *Mladá fronta* on November 19 crossed to join the revolution, and began informing the populace on the revolutionaries’ activities. The Communist student union, SUY, joined the anti-communist student activists, and brought access to items such as large caches

29. Wheaton and Kovan, 51.

30. Johnson, 228.

31. Timothy Garton Ash, *The Magic Lantern: the Revolution of ‘89 witnessed in Warsaw, Budapest, Berlin, and Prague* (New York: Vintage Books, 1999), 81.

32. Wheaton and Kovan, 51–3.

33. Jiří Peč, personal interview by author, Prague, March 10, 2009.

34. Vendula Veselá, “In the footsteps of November 17,” *Getting to know Czech Republic*, <http://www.czech.cz/en/current-affairs/getting-to-know-czech-republic/in-the-footsteps-of-november-17>.

35. Wheaton and Kovan, 69–75.

of telephones and a copy machines. Attempts to draw in workers above proved fruitful as workers provided materials that the revolutionaries needed to conduct their media campaign, including paper, ink, and other items needed for things like handbills and posters. Similar to the theaters around the city, revolutionaries turned to Prague's cinemas to serve as forums for dialogue on the revolution.<sup>36</sup>

The communist government was in serious danger of losing all credibility, and despite its control of the mass media, it was clearly losing the communication battle in Prague. As a last ditch effort to maintain their positions, communist leaders attempted a new strategy based on isolating Prague from the rest of Czechoslovakia. They did this by stopping the postal service from leaving Prague and the showing of two different propaganda news programs, one in the city and the other in the country.<sup>37</sup> The tremendous pressure by the demonstrations in Prague had already forced the media there to show broadcasts of what was happening at the demonstrations. For instance, the demonstrators chanted "Live broadcast!" in an attempt to force their word out through strength of numbers.<sup>38</sup> The powerful message of the revolution was even enough to convince the employees of the Central Committee of Czechoslovak Television to force their boss to show the demonstrations and foreign news on their network.<sup>39</sup> The government's attempt to limit the spread of the revolution was an utter failure. On November 23, 1989, television stations broadcast footage of the demonstrations and revolution in Prague to the countryside.<sup>40</sup> The publishing of the Civic Forum's "What We Want" coincided with the spread of the coverage to the countryside, and it outlined the people's desires for change in the law, the political system, the economy, and more.<sup>41</sup> It was a document that marked the end of the haphazard, yet effective spread of the revolution. Political struggles and empowerment of the people through freedom of expression still remained, but the idea and knowledge of revolution had spread far and wide by the end of November 23. The catalyzing and mobilizing effect of the multifarious communication forms had been successful in galvanizing the populace in favor of the revolution. The communist government, including Prime Minister Adamec, tried to hold on for a while, and even tried to compromise, but ultimately, on December 10, 1989, a new and non-communist government took control. Fittingly, it was dissident playwright and organizer Vaclav Havel who led the new government upon his election to the presidency on December 29, 1989.<sup>42</sup>

36. Wheaton and Kovan., 56–69.

37. Wheaton and Kovan., 65–7.

38. Johnson, 229.

39. Wheaton and Kovan., 67.

40. Wheaton and Kovan., 80.

41. Wheaton and Kovan., 206–8.

42. Ash, 114–126.

Media in the Velvet Revolution varied tremendously from handbills to demonstrations, and even “missions.” Though clearly broad, this unconventional media took in a much richer and varied view of the spread of ideas. Media in the conventional sense was reactionary, censored, and under government control. However, the power of the demonstrations, the massive efforts to print posters and handbills, and the “missions” sent to workers all show how ingenuity and need combined to form effective alternate means of communication.

There were many other factors involved in the causes and pervasiveness of the Velvet Revolution beyond the spread of ideas. This paper does not intend to diminish the role of other potent motivations for change, including the rampant frustration concerning a growing gap in the standard of living between East and West. However, it does advocate a certain primacy to the role of ideas and their effects on change. Economic forces, though powerful, would not have caused a revolution if an alternate world view, or knowledge that change was possible, had not penetrated the minds of the people. The Velvet Revolution and the steady dispersion of ideas through unconventional mediums made people aware that others were living in free conditions under a different system, and this led to a recognition that their current system was flawed. Furthermore, ideas promoted by groups such as Charter 77 appealed to the conscience of Czechoslovaks through human rights, and were more unifying than individual economic concerns. Many other historians argue that the policies of Gorbachev led to the fall of communism in satellite states such as Czechoslovakia. While one is unable to deny that the loosening of restrictions was vital to the success of the revolution, the spread of ideas had existed long before the Soviet Union discarded those chains. The diffusion of ideas meant Czechoslovaks were ready to act as the Iron Curtain receded. Underestimating the great trump card of repressive communism, a Warsaw Pact invasion, would be a mistake. However, even this drastic action was no longer possible in 1989 with Mikhail Gorbachev’s new policies. Furthermore, media, in all its forms, spread the revolution in such a way as to make repression impossible. After all, oppressors lose power when the populace will no longer allow themselves to be repressed. The demonstrators and activists of 1989 could not all be thrown in jail like the dissidents from the Prague Spring, they were too many, and the Soviets no longer had the will to utilize their militant responses. Consequently, the communist regimes were doomed to fall when opinion and activities within their nations spun out of their control.

Media was the facilitator, the hope, and the catalyst for change. It brought groups such as dissident playwrights and the youth counterculture together. Though divided by decades and lifestyle these groups and others could recognize

the universal ideals in documents like *Several Sentences*. Czechoslovaks rallied together after reading, seeing, or hearing of their country's young people being brutalized for daring to protest the character of the regime. Communication lessened the fear, showed what unity could accomplish, and illustrated the power of ideas when the people are behind them. As a later addition to *Charter 77* stated so eloquently, "A police truncheon can sustain real authority only speciously."<sup>43</sup> The people needed the communication of hope, and this was accomplished. The truth did not need to be broadcasted through the television or radio for the people to understand. They could hear the chanting of hundreds of thousands and the ringing of the last bell of communism in their ears, and they knew the time had come for revolution.

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43. Kusin, 324.

# ALLIED INTERVENTION IN RUSSIA AND THE CZECHOSLOVAK LEGIONS, FROM BREST-LITOVSK TO CHELIABINSK

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*Janel Fontaine*

On May 14, 1918, several thousand troops of the Czechoslovak Legions took the entire city of Cheliabinsk hostage. They controlled the train station and policed the streets. The uprising came in response to the arrest of several Czechoslovaks by the local Russian Soviet in punishment for a fight that broke out amongst the troops and newly released Austro-Hungarian prisoners of war at the Cheliabinsk train station. When the Soviet released the Czechoslovak soldiers, the troops withdrew from the city and continued on their way.<sup>1</sup> This was the first armed conflict between the Czechoslovak Legions and the Soviet government during the troops' transport across Siberia, and it was not to be their last. The Legions subsequently took over other cities with the intent of ensuring continued train movement towards Vladivostok. Later, the Czechoslovaks became embroiled in the Russian Civil War against the Bolshevik government.

In assessing the tensions that led to this initial conflict at Cheliabinsk, one must take into consideration many factors, the most important of which is Allied motives and intervention. While tensions between the Czechoslovaks and the Soviets certainly contributed to this uprising, historians have overlooked the crucial role of Allied policy on the Czechoslovak legions, which varied from nation to nation; only after analyzing *all* of the influences on the Czechoslovak-Soviet conflict can the importance and significance of the Czechoslovak legions

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1. Military Commissar Sadlucky, "Report on the Cheliabinsk Incident as Telegraphed to Trotsky's Assistant Sadvokin," (May 18 and 20, 1918), quoted in Victor Fic, *The Bolsheviks and the Czechoslovak Legion* (New Delhi, India: Abhinav Publications, 1978), 393–395.

in Allied-Soviet relations and the formulation of Russian policy during the Civil War be understood.

At the outbreak of World War I, Czechs and Slovaks were two of the many culturally diverse groups within the Austro-Hungarian Empire. To gain national sovereignty, the Czechoslovak National Council created the Czechoslovak Legions from Czechs and Slovaks in Allied prisoner-of-war camps. These newly created armies would enter the war on the side of the Allies and, in effect, fight for the creation of Czechoslovakia as an independent nation. The Legions were sent to both the Eastern and Western fronts, and those who were sent east became trapped within Russia upon its withdrawal from the war in 1917, requiring a complicated initiative to transport the Legions from Russia to the Western front in France. Tensions between the Legions and the Bolsheviks mounted, and after the armed uprising at Cheliabinsk, the Legions forced their way to Vladivostok by taking control of the railroads and disarming the Red Guards in the cities through which they traveled. Some portions of the Legions joined with the Socialist Revolutionaries in Samara and overthrew the Bolsheviks to create the Volga Republic.<sup>2</sup> Indeed, Bolshevik fears that the Legions would side completely with the tsarists in Russia and the proximity of the Legions to the imprisoned royal family were important factors in the execution of the Romanovs. The participation of the Czechoslovak Legions in World War I also factored heavily in the creation of the Czechoslovak Republic.<sup>3</sup> The examination of the presence of these troops in Russia at such a politically crucial time allows insight into the establishment of the Soviet government and the Russian Civil War, a time period that came to dictate Western policy towards Russia for the remainder of the twentieth century.

To adequately understand this study of the origins of the Czechoslovak conflict with the Bolsheviks in 1918, scholars must acknowledge the views of the historians who have attempted to analyze the causes that led to it. Early historians of the topic largely ascribe to either a Soviet or a Czechoslovak Communist viewpoint; the former is best expressed by Leon Trotsky who heartily blamed the

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2. Orlando Figes, *A People's Tragedy: The Russian Revolution 1891–1924* (New York: Penguin Books, 1996), 577.

3. Masaryk declared the independence of Czechoslovakia in Philadelphia on October 28, 1918. The efforts of the National Council for Czechoslovak independence and support of the Legions was a powerful contribution in the development of Woodrow Wilson's Fourteen Points, the tenth of which allows for the self-determination of the groups under the rule of the Austro-Hungarian Empire: "The peoples of Austria-Hungary, whose place among the nations we wish to see safeguarded and assured, should be afforded the freest opportunity to autonomous development." Woodrow Wilson, "The Fourteen Points," Speech, joint session of Congress, Washington D.C., January 8, 1918, [http://www.lib.byu.edu/index.php/President\\_Wilson%27s\\_Fourteen\\_Points](http://www.lib.byu.edu/index.php/President_Wilson%27s_Fourteen_Points) (accessed December 1, 2009).

Allied powers for the crisis that arose in Siberia.<sup>4</sup> The latter presents a similar viewpoint, but more to the extent that the West abused the Czechoslovak troops. Western historians began writing on the subject in the second half of the twentieth century during the Cold War in reaction to these earlier views. George F. Kennan in 1957 and 1958 presented the idea that the origins of the issues regarding the Czechoslovak Legions most likely stemmed from Trotsky's appointment to Commissar for War and his reevaluation of the transport agreement made between the provisional government and Tomáš Masaryk.<sup>5</sup> He believed that the issues of disarmament, travel delays, and the increasing Czechoslovak belief of German domination of the Soviets caused enough damage to the Czechoslovak-Soviet relationship prior to any Allied involvement.<sup>6</sup>

Historians writing in the next three decades continued with this line of thought and overlooked the extent of Allied involvement. J. F. N Bradley in 1965 wrote that Allied involvement was directly responsible for the escalation of events *after* Cheliabinsk, and that it played no part in the building dispute. He believed the Czechoslovak uprising was a spontaneous reaction to the events at hand, and in and of itself had little to do with the larger political issues between the Soviet Government and the Allies.<sup>7</sup> In the 1970s Victor Fic asserted that Trotsky invited the Allies to provide extra support, which therefore left the Soviet government at fault.<sup>8</sup> More recently, in 1989 Betty Unterberger included the Allies in the blame for the turn of events, but limited this involvement to the lack of communication between the Allies, the Soviet government, and the Czechoslovak National Council and troops.<sup>9</sup>

None of these perspectives, however, truly takes into account the extent of the various forces and conflicting political schemes that led to the grand confusion of directives that contributed greatly to the Czechoslovak Legions' takeover of Cheliabinsk. The actions of the Czechoslovaks, given their commitment to France and neutrality could hardly have been the result of flashing tempers, and Cheliabinsk cannot be viewed as an insignificant and isolated event. The Allies greatly affected Czechoslovak-Soviet relations both directly and indirectly.

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4. Leon Trotsky, *The Socialist Fatherland in Danger*, ed. David Walters, in the Trotsky Internet Archive, <http://www.marxists.org/archive/trotsky/1918/military/ch32.htm> (accessed December 1, 2009).

5. George F. Kennan, "The Czechoslovak Legion," *The Russian Review* 16, no. 4 (October 1957): 8. Kennan, 11.

7. J. F. N. Bradley, "The Allies and the Czech Revolt against the Bolsheviks in 1918," *The Slavonic and East European Review* 43, no. 101 (June 1965): 292.

8. Victor Fic, *The Bolsheviks and the Czechoslovak Legion*, xvi.

9. Betty Miller Unterberger, *The United States, Revolutionary Russia, and the Rise of Czechoslovakia* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1989), 172.

The Czechoslovak troops were initially created to support the Allies, and were attempting to cross Siberia so that they could be shipped to aid the French army on the Western front. Therefore, the French, the British, and later the Japanese all expressed an interest in the role of these Legions in Russia, in addition to the desires of the Czechoslovak National Council and the new Bolshevik government. These powers all sought to use the Legions for various purposes, which consequently caused enormous amounts of confusion that slowed and halted the trains and delayed the Czechoslovak evacuation from Russia by months. This confusion reflected poorly on the Soviet government, which only helped build the growing belief amongst the Czechoslovaks that the Bolsheviks had sold out to the Germans, a belief partially initiated by the conciliatory measures of the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk. The uprising at Cheliabinsk is therefore a direct consequence of complications created by the involvement of the Allies.

The contention between the Legions and the Soviet government began before events trapped the Czechoslovak troops in Russia. Indeed, it is more than reasonable to say that the problem began with the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk, the document that created the initial feelings of unease between the Czechoslovaks and the Russians.<sup>10</sup> While the treaty certainly engendered suspicion, this alone did not cause the uprising at Cheliabinsk. The greatest stumbling block was the Japanese, whose presence in Vladivostok indirectly dictated the additional actions of Britain and France towards the Legions.<sup>11</sup> Trotsky also remained leery about sending the Czechoslovak army towards the Japanese should the Legions decide

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10. The Bolsheviks, to be fair, had little choice when it came to the terms of a peace with Germany. Lenin had led the Bolsheviks to victory under the slogan “Peace, Land, and Bread,” and could likely only maintain power if his promises were kept regarding a withdrawal from World War I. Demobilization soon began, as did peace talks with Germany. However, Leon Trotsky, then Commissar of Foreign Affairs, refused to sign on humiliating terms, and the Germans attempted to force the Bolshevik’s hand by continuing troop movements towards Petrograd. The Soviet Government therefore signed the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk on March 3, 1918. Russian Delegation at the Brest-Litovsk Peace Conference, “Declaration,” <http://www.soviethistory.org/index.php?page=article&ArticleID=1917nopeace1&SubjectID=1917brest&Year=1917> (accessed December 1, 2009) ; “Treaty of Brest-Litovsk,” March 3, 1918, <http://www.soviethistory.org/index.php?page=article&ArticleID=1917treaty1&SubjectID=1917brest&Year=191717> moments. (accessed December 1, 2009).

11. Leon Trotsky, *The Socialist Fatherland in Danger*, and Kennan, 9. Trotsky places the date for this event as April 4, but Kennan uses the date April 5. While the Allies required all the military support they could get, Japanese desires for territorial claims in Russia were hardly secret. On April 4, 1918, Japanese troops landed at the Pacific port of Vladivostok, the final Russian destination of the Czechoslovak Legions and the termination of the Trans-Siberian Railroad. The Japanese motives are debatable, but certainly they would have no incentive to relinquish their hold on arguably the most important railroad in Russia when World War I and the Russian Civil War ended. Though the Japanese claimed it was in response to the murder of Japanese nationals in Vladivostok the previous day, the United States, Russia, and Britain all had doubts about this. In response, fifty armed British sailors landed at Vladivostok the following day. Unterberger, 155.

to turn against Russia.<sup>12</sup> With the state of the Russian military at the time, little could have been done to stop a combined Czechoslovak and Japanese force from taking control of the railroads or even Siberia.

Given the ambiguity of the true Japanese intention and the unwillingness of the Soviet government and the Allies to trust their presence in Vladivostok, Trotsky deemed it would be best to reroute the Czechoslovak troops (who were by this point halfway across Siberia) to the northern ports of Archangelsk and Murmansk.<sup>13</sup> However, either miscommunication or deliberate French and British stalling created delays, and the trains carrying the Legions east were given the order to halt completely on April 7.<sup>14</sup> According to Trotsky, the Legions were conspiring to seize the Trans-Siberian Railway to facilitate Japanese penetration into Russia.<sup>15</sup> In this respect, the Japanese became the wild card; no person or government could be certain of their intentions or anticipate their actions. The diplomatic confusion that resulted could only have fueled Czechoslovak suspicions that the Russians had become agents of the Germans. Why prevent the movement of trains towards a city occupied by Allied forces? While the order to halt was soon rescinded, the addition of the Japanese to an already muddled mass of various political desires worsened an already tenuous situation.

The British largely exerted their presence in Russia during this period through the unofficial representative of the British government, Robert Lockhart. The government in London had not yet given the Bolshevik government *de jure* (or even *de facto*) recognition and it therefore could not designate Lockhart as a fully fledged ambassador, though his role in Russia was much the same.<sup>16</sup> Lockhart dealt intimately with Trotsky, and events forced him to play a part in the fate of the Czechoslovak Legions. In fact, in many instances it seemed that Lockhart was acting on his own due to the British government's seeming lack of commitment to any policy in Russia. Lockhart's memoirs are full of instances in which the British government refused to reply to his messages or deliberately left him out of its plans. In one instance, a Bolshevik officer informed Lockhart that some unknown British agent had that day demanded audience with Lenin as the representative of David Lloyd George.<sup>17</sup> This disparity demonstrates the extent to which the British were operating as two separate entities: Lockhart and London. This disparity only served to frustrate the Soviet Government.

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12. Kennan, 7.

13. Leon Trotsky, *Answers to Questions put by the Representative of the Czechoslovak Corps Vaclav Neubert*, ed. David Walters.

14. Kennan, 9.

15. Trotsky, *The Socialist Fatherland in Danger*.

16. Lockhart, 199.

17. Lockhart, 273.

With this communication difficulty in mind, it is no wonder that the situation of the Czechoslovak troops degraded to chaos. London, like the Czechoslovaks, required much convincing on the part of Lockhart that the Bolsheviki were not operating as agents of the Germans.<sup>18</sup> This suspicion had become a problem after the signing of Brest-Litovsk; the British government also believed that the Soviet government would not make such concessions without ulterior motivation.<sup>19</sup> London also mistrusted Lockhart to a certain degree as a result of the Bolsheviki's acceptance of his presence. He maintained daily meetings with Trotsky, and was even supplied a pass to the Party offices at the Smolny Institute, written and signed by Trotsky himself.<sup>20</sup>

The British government in London believed it was important that the Czechoslovak troops eventually traveled to France to fight on the Western front for the allies, but it was also very interested in how the Czechoslovak Legions could be used to the British advantage in Russia prior to departure. Some historians have noted interest on the part of London in reopening the Eastern front through the manipulation of Russia;<sup>21</sup> many feared that with the Eastern front completely closed, Germany and Austria-Hungary would be free to focus their efforts on the West.<sup>22</sup> With this added pressure, the French and British, who were already straining against the Central Powers, would soon be overwhelmed. To prevent this, London believed that it could send the Czechoslovak troops back to the Eastern front, or keep them in Siberia to build a basis of anti-German support with the help of the Japanese. London favored any plan involving the Czechoslovak troops in Russia because of the ambiguous outcome should the Japanese be allowed intervention in Russia.<sup>23</sup> In this instance it should be noted that London listened to Lockhart, who sent many telegrams insisting that at the very least they delay any Japanese involvement.<sup>24</sup> The Russia Committee, a group created by the Allies to discuss the possibility of intervention in Russia, nearly succeeded in launching a full-scale intervention in northern Siberia driven largely by the British. The committee was only halted when Wilson withdrew American support at the last minute, and the Japanese subsequently refused to participate.

18. Lockhart, 198.

19. Lockhart, 198.

20. Lockhart, 228–229.

21. David Woodward, "British Intervention in Russia During the First World War," *Military Affairs* 41, no. 4 (December 1977): 171; Bradley 282. Woodward discusses the possibility of inducing Russia to back out of Brest-Litovsk, while Bradley discusses the promotion of anti-German sentiments in Siberia.

22. Woodward, 171. It was expected that Rumania would surrender or withdraw from the war soon after Russia.

23. Victor Fic, *Revolutionary War for Independence and the Russian Question: Czechoslovak Army in Russia 1914–1918* (New Delhi, India: Abhinav Publications, 1977), 96.

24. Bradley, 283.

It also became clear that, as Germany launched a new offensive on the Western front, the Allies could not spare troops to intervene in Russia directly.<sup>25</sup>

The French held what was certainly a more direct sentiment, in that they wanted the Czechoslovaks out of Russia and on their way to France as quickly as possible. While internal political disputes and a strong imperialist interest in the East occupied the British, the French bore the brunt of fighting on the Western front and desperately needed fresh troops. On December 16, 1917, the French had signed an agreement with the Czechoslovak National Council acknowledging the Legions as an official part of the French army under the command of French and White Russian commanders.<sup>26</sup> In this respect, the French had a commitment to the Czechoslovaks that the British lacked, and could only focus on bringing the Legions to the Western front. While their lack of response to Trotsky's call for support at Murmansk and Archangelsk seems counterintuitive, it can be explained as a matter of responsibility. The French were willing enough to allow the Soviet Government to supply and direct the Legions in Russia, so long as they arrived in France as soon as possible. When it became apparent that in order to move these forty thousand troops Allies might have to contribute supplies and ships, the French reached a stumbling point regarding the extent of their commitment.

In the months after the armed uprising at Cheliabinsk, Trotsky convinced himself that the Czechoslovak Legions had plotted with the Allies against the Bolsheviks between the time of the Japanese landing and the events at Cheliabinsk. Repeatedly using the term "diabolical," he pointed to the lack of Allied response to calls for assistance at Murmansk and Archangelsk, where he wished to divert the Czechoslovak Legions for their removal. He also announced that documents seized from the Czechoslovak National Council offices in Russia, as well as the testimony of the former Tsarist officers in command of the Czechoslovak armies supported his accusations.<sup>27</sup> Lenin himself had no doubts that the Allies had purchased the Czechoslovak troops.<sup>28</sup> As J. F. N Bradley points out, any payments made to Masaryk or the Czechoslovak National Council were for negotiating the Czechoslovak movement through Russia in order to get to France—the original goal in the formation of the Czechoslovak armies.<sup>29</sup> While certainly the Allies did not support the Bolshevik government, the need for fresh troops in Western Europe far outweighed the need to overthrow Communism in Eastern Europe. In accordance with this belief, the British and the French maintained ambiguous stances towards the new Bolshevik government. While they did not directly

25. Woodward, 172.

26. Bradley, 277.

27. Trotsky, *The Socialist Fatherland in Danger*.

28. Bradley, 276.

29. Bradley, 278.

support it, they did not directly conspire against it, either. In April, following the landing of the Japanese at Vladivostok, the trains carrying Czechoslovak troops were forced to stop. Trotsky sent messages to France and Britain with the aid and support of the Czechoslovak National Council requesting that the Allies take the troops aboard their ships at Archangelsk and Murmansk to prevent the trains from coming to a complete standstill.<sup>30</sup> The expected responses from the governments never appeared.

As tension mounted over the limited progress of the trains, Trotsky offered a place in Russian society for any Czechoslovak soldier who wished to leave the war, particularly those who wanted to align themselves with the Soviet government.<sup>31</sup> Insisting he had no ulterior motives, Trotsky once again blamed the counterrevolutionaries for convincing the Czechoslovaks that such offers were representative of Soviet attempts to retain the troops. However, with the Civil War building, the presence of forty thousand trained and armed troops within Russian borders would certainly have aided in the construction of the Red Army. While he only mentioned the possibility of the Czechoslovaks joining the Red Army once in his response to the Czechoslovak Legions, he repeated his offer of citizenship and a place in Russian society four times.<sup>32</sup> Clearly he did not wish to overtly recruit the troops to fight for the Soviets; this would only anger the Allies and possibly incite reactionary Czechs to armed revolt against the Bolsheviks. Nonetheless, it is reasonable to assume that Trotsky hoped the Legions would remain in Russia and become a part of the Red Army.

Tomaš Masaryk, the established leader of the Czechoslovak National Council, conducted the original negotiations between the National Council and the then provisional Russian government. He also holds some responsibility for the escalation of events leading to the uprising at Cheliabinsk. Following the creation of the Czechoslovak troops and securing permission for their movement through Russia, Masaryk traveled to Britain and the United States attempting to garner support for an independent Czechoslovakia and promoting the Legions amongst the Allies. This meant that his continued calls for neutrality were heard only from afar, which forced the Czechoslovak National Council to direct the Legions without Masaryk's leadership. Indeed, the British representative in Russia at the time, Robert Lockhart, described in his memoirs the effects of Masaryk's travel away from Russia at a crucial time:

“How I wish today that President Masaryk had remained in Russia during this trying period...he would never have sanctioned the Siberian Revolt. The

30. Trotsky, *Answer to Questions*.

31. Trotsky, *Answer to Questions*.

32. Trotsky, *Answer to Questions*.

Allies would have listened to him, and we would have been spared the crowning folly of an adventure which sent thousands of Russians to their deaths.”<sup>33</sup>

Masaryk left Russia in March 1917, five months before the Bolsheviks gained power, which makes it difficult to say how he would have been able to ameliorate the Soviet government had he stayed. In spite of this, Lockhart was convinced it would have made all the difference.

While at the mercy of the various governments, the Czechoslovak soldiers had their own loyalties and internal issues that must be taken into account. The Czech and Slovak peoples had long wished for independence from the Austro-Hungarian Empire and when Masaryk began to call for men to fight in a separate army *against* the Hapsburgs, it seemed to be a dream come true.<sup>34</sup> They greatly respected the men of the National Council who had made the opportunity possible, particularly Masaryk. Indeed, Tomáš Masaryk had first proposed the idea of the Czechoslovak Legions, and was singlehandedly responsible for garnering the support of the Allies through his diplomatic missions in the United States, Britain, and Russia.<sup>35</sup>

While the Czechoslovak troops remained in Russia, Masaryk held a policy of strict neutrality:

“I issued orders to the effect that our troops were not to intervene in internal Russian affairs (or we’d never get out of Russia)...The reason for neutrality was obvious: the Bolsheviks were providing us with food, or at least not holding us back from foraging.”<sup>36</sup>

However, the outbreak of the Russian Civil War made the delicate balance between the Czechoslovaks and the Bolsheviks even more tenuous. Both the Reds and the Whites wished to recruit the conveniently placed army of forty thousand men for their own cause. It is important to note the lack of Czechoslovak aggression towards the Soviet government, including the restraint they showed at Cheliabinsk itself. At the railroad station in Cheliabinsk, a train of Czechoslovak troops passed a train full of newly released Austro-Hungarian prisoners of war. One of the Austro-Hungarians threw an object at the Czechoslovaks, and a fight broke out that ended in the death of the instigator. An investigation led to the arrest of several Czechoslovak troops. In response, the approximately eight

33. Robert Lockhart, *British Agent* (New York: G. P. Putnam’s Sons, 1933), 270.

34. Jan Triska, *The Great War’s Forgotten Front: A Soldier’s Diary and a Son’s Reflections* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998), 112–113.

35. Čapek, 208–220. Čapek discusses Masaryk in London and Russia. Charles Pergler, *America in the Struggle for Czechoslovak Independence* (Philadelphia, Penn.: Dorrance and Company, 1926), 47–57. Pergler discusses Masaryk in the United States.

36. Čapek, 229.

thousand four hundred Czechoslovak troops seized the government buildings and the railway station, and patrolled the streets.<sup>37</sup> While the Czechoslovak troops held the town, they insisted that their intentions were not aggressive, but only an immediate response to what they saw as an injustice on the part of government officials. Indeed, there were five Czech casualties, but none amongst the Russians because the Czechoslovak troops refused to fire a shot in respect to Masaryk's urgent calls for neutrality.<sup>38</sup> As they withdrew from the city, they left posted signs explaining their lack of animosity towards the Soviet Government; their only desire was to free their fellow soldiers.<sup>39</sup> After this event, the Czechoslovak military command issued procedures by which the soldiers were to confront the Russians at each stopping point for the trains. These plans focused on courtesy (one states that any demands to continue the train movement could not sound like an ultimatum) and stressed the need to avoid any armed conflict.<sup>40</sup> Soldiers were to keep weapons ready only for defense in case the Russians should take an aggressive stance towards the Czechoslovaks.<sup>41</sup>

Years later, Edvard Beneš, a member of the National Council and later the second president of Czechoslovakia, maintained that neutrality had been the utmost concern in the face of Russia's internal political turmoil: "Our Army was solely on the defensive... The only correct attitude of our Army in Russia was one of noninterference in internal Russian affairs."<sup>42</sup> Beneš's declaration of Czechoslovak separation from Russian politics in 1918 was not easily earned; Russian politics put forth a great effort to insinuate itself within the Czechoslovak Legions. With the Civil War brewing, both the Bolshevik Reds and the counterrevolutionary, or Tsarist, Whites wished to win the allegiance of the Czechoslovak soldiers making their way through Siberia. Bolshevik agitators were by far the most active; some were Russians, but a large number were Russian Czechoslovaks, highly organized and maintained with the unifying purpose of Bolshevizing the Czechoslovaks. Funded in part by the Czechoslovak Communist Party in Moscow, they distributed propaganda and portrayed the Czechoslovak independence movement as a class struggle. An editorial published in December of 1917 claimed that "the revolutionary struggle against Austria-Hungary can be victorious only if ... placed

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37. Sadlucky in *The Bolsheviks*, 393.

38. Sadlucky in *The Bolsheviks*, 394.

39. Sadlucky in *The Bolsheviks*, 393.

40. R. Gajda. "Plan of Action" (May 3, 1918), quoted in Victor Fic, *The Bolsheviks and the Czechoslovak Legion*, 387.

41. R. Gajda. "Order No. 38/1", quoted in Victor Fic, *The Bolsheviks and the Czechoslovak Legion*, 390.

42. Edvard Beneš, *In His Own Words: Threescore Years of a Statesman, Builder, and Philosopher*, ed. The Czech-American National Alliance (New York: George Grady Press, 1944), 94.

upon a broad base of social revolution.”<sup>43</sup> These agitators even went so far as to devise a plan to hold all trains at Penza until they could sufficiently propagandize each one.<sup>44</sup> This plan centered in part on the observation noted by Strombach, a prominent Bolshevik Czech working in Russia: “Slow transportation and its continuous interruptions have a disastrous effect upon enthusiasm for France.”<sup>45</sup> The Bolsheviks believed that if they frequently stopped the trains or only allowed them to move sluggishly, the Legions would forget the Allies and remain in Russia to fight for the Soviet Government. Their predictions were a failure, however, given that the exact opposite occurred when the Legions turned towards the Whites. For the most part the agitators irked the Czechoslovak troops rather than instilled them with Communist fervor.<sup>46</sup> This is not to say the Bolshevik Czechoslovaks were entirely unsuccessful: they did cause the desertion of some 150 Czechoslovak soldiers, though this number is far from the amount they hoped for.<sup>47</sup>

There can be no doubts that the Soviet government gave its blessing to these instigators, or possibly even directly supported them. This exemplifies merely a fraction of the extent to which the Soviet government wished to manipulate the Czechoslovak Legions. Particularly important was the role of Leon Trotsky. As Commissar for War, he directed the movements of the Czechoslovak Legions within Russia, serving as an intermediary between the Allies and Legions. Trotsky repeatedly expressed his feelings of friendship towards the Czechoslovaks, especially the workers and peasants who he declared to be “the brothers of the Russian workers and peasants.”<sup>48</sup> Interestingly enough, Trotsky blamed many for the Czechoslovak uprising at Cheliabinsk, but none of those at fault were the Czechoslovaks themselves. To Trotsky, those at the greatest fault were the anti-Bolshevik officers, referred to as counter-revolutionary agitators who convinced the Czechoslovaks that the Soviet government had sided with the Germans and was determined to forestall the Czechoslovak evacuation of Russia at any cost.<sup>49</sup> Given the terms of Brest-Litovsk and the constant change in policy towards the

43. Victor Fic, *Revolutionary War for Independence and the Russian Question: Czechoslovak Army in Russia 1914–1918*, 96.

44. Strombach, “Letter to the Headquarters of the Czechoslovak Communist Party” (April 3, 1918), quoted in Victor Fic, *The Bolsheviks and the Czechoslovak Legion*, 380.

45. Strombach in *The Bolsheviks*, 380.

46. Fic, xvi.

47. Fic, xvi.

48. Trotsky, Leon. *The Czechoslovak Mutiny: Communiqué of the People’s Commissariat for Military Affairs*, ed. David Walters.

49. Trotsky, *Czechoslovak Mutiny and Answers to Questions*; The Czechoslovak Legions were led and trained by former Russian Tsarist officers. The Red Army had yet to be effectively constructed, meaning there were no officers to spare. Also, Allied officers could not be removed from the Western front to direct the troops through Russia, Kennan, 9.

Legions as they moved towards Vladivostok, it is understandable that the troops began to believe that the Soviet Government conspired against them.

The Czechoslovak troops viewed disarmament as a direct insult that diminished their autonomy and left them increasingly at the hands of the Russians. When Masaryk first negotiated transport through Russia, the leader of the Czechoslovak National Council was able to ensure in writing that the Legions would retain their arms as they moved through Siberia.<sup>50</sup> Soon after his departure from Russia, however, the Soviet government began exerting pressure for the Czechoslovaks to disarm and eventually issued a proclamation to that effect. The Czechoslovaks had little to no interest in Russian affairs, and were even under the strict orders of the National Council to stay away from anything involving Russian internal politics. The sole desires of the troops were to reach the Western front where they could prove their worth as an army and fight for the independence of Czechoslovakia.<sup>51</sup> The orders to disarm, which the Soviets issued and repealed several times, greatly angered the Legions, and only further served to convince the soldiers that the Bolsheviks had sold out to the Germans.

In conclusion, while the involvement of the Allies only indirectly effected the direction of events, their presence was imperative to the accruing of distrust that fueled the uprising of the Czechoslovak Legions at Cheliabinsk in May of 1918. While Trotsky himself had divergent plans for the Legions from those established by the provisional government and Masaryk, the addition of British, French, American, and even Japanese desires created a massively confusing situation in which plans were created, changed, and changed again. The attempts of each power to attain its own goals slowed the movement of the Czechoslovak troops to a standstill, which fostered only dissention and mistrust amongst the soldiers, who had their own desires. The separation of the Legions from these political debates which directly impacted the speed and direction of their travel only compounded these problems. Previous historians of the subject overlook these important factors, seeking to place the blame upon the Soviet government rather than the Western powers. Cheliabinsk cannot be viewed as a sudden spark that ignited a dispute between the Czechoslovaks and the Bolsheviks; instead it is the culmination of months of power play between Russia, the Allies, and 50. Čapek, 229.

51. Dorman and Kolomensky. "Resolution of Commanders of the First Hussite Division" (April 13, 1918), quoted in Victor Fic, *The Bolsheviks and the Czechoslovak Legion*, 381. The resolution of the Czechoslovak officers directed towards the Soviet Government expresses concern only over the possible violation of the transportation agreement made between the National Council and the Soviet Government. It makes no mention of internal Russian affairs, or even the events that caused the delays in travel; it only expresses the vehement desire of the Legions to continue the evacuation of Russia as quickly as possible.

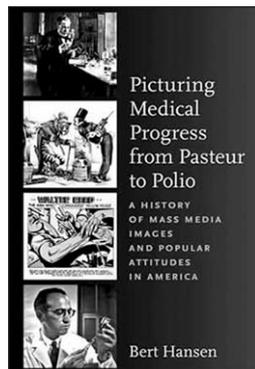
the Czechoslovak Legions. Furthermore, the Czechoslovak Legions in Siberia not only helped shape the Russian Civil War, but they also greatly aided in the establishment of Czechoslovakia as an independent country at the end of World War I. Allied attempts to intervene centered on these troops in Russia, and shaped the way in which the West interacted with the new Bolshevik government in Russia. This initial relationship in turn influenced and dominated Western foreign policy throughout the twentieth century.

## BOOK REVIEWS

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## BOOK REVIEW

BERT HANSEN.  
*PICTURING MEDICAL  
PROGRESS FROM PASTEUR  
TO POLIO: A HISTORY  
OF MASS MEDIA  
IMAGES AND POPULAR  
ATTITUDES IN AMERICA.*



*New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 2009.*

*Reviewed by Matthew White*

In a world of celebrity doctors with their own television shows, it may seem odd that there was a time when people did not think much about, or of, the medical profession or medical breakthroughs. In *Picturing Medical Progress from Pasteur to Polio: A History of Mass Media Images and Popular Attitudes in America*, Bert Hansen traces the evolution of the image of the medical profession and the effect that image has played in American politics and philanthropy. Hansen starts his story in 1860, a time when medical advances were neither expected nor noticed and doctors were portrayed as calm comforters of the sick or negligent quacks. With the 1885 discovery of a vaccine for rabies by Pasteur and Roux, this changed almost overnight, creating the images and descriptions of the lone genius staring expectantly into a test tube or of a fearless hunter conquering diseases and alleviating suffering. After the rabies vaccine and a months-long drama of four Newark boys traveling to Paris for the cure, images of the medical genius staring enigmatically into a syringe or test tube, on the cusp of alleviating the world's pain or curing a dread disease, became common. Subsequent breakthroughs continued and reinforced this image through the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, creating an expectation of continued advancement and routine medical miracles.

According to Hansen, in the early twentieth century, new media outlets, such as radio, motion pictures, weekly news and photography magazines, and even comic books, reinforced this theme. They helped to create a sense of inevitability, even entitlement, to new medical discoveries. This expectation of medical miracles

encouraged unprecedented growth in scientific institutions dedicated to eradicate various diseases along with the philanthropic giving and governmental support needed to keep them running. This trend reached its zenith on April 12, 1955, when Jonas Salk announced that his killed-virus vaccine for polio was effective and safe. As Hansen notes, the image of doctors and medical research suffered mightily after 1955 due to medical disasters such as thalidomide and political debates concerning medicine and science. However, this image is still largely in place and can be seen in the vocabulary associated with various “wars” on diseases and races for cures. Hansen also makes an excellent case that this evolution from indifference to expectation of medical advance was not gradual, but sudden and swift.

*Picturing Medical Progress* joins a modest body of literature analyzing the popular images and narratives of scientists and doctors. In earlier works, authors such as John Burnham, Spencer Weart, and Marcel LaFollette have explored more broadly how science popularization, including health and medicine, evolved into an entertaining narrative driven by images of conquering genius/heroes and a product and fact-based advertising strategy to sell the latest breakthrough. This image came at the expense of a more nuanced and realistic view of scientific work. Previous authors have found this descent into a new superstition in the twentieth century with the first and second World Wars, the Cold War, and the rise of mass communication. By narrowing the scope to medicine and health, Hansen pushes the birth of this new narrative, firmly in place by WWI, to the nineteenth century.

While many books deconstruct and dissect the popular and professional portrayal of scientific and medical professionals, most never step beyond the bounds of the medium under scrutiny to consider how the public consumes these images and how that consumption influences the professions portrayed. Hansen pulls together numerous evidentiary threads to support his contention that current conceptions and expectations of medical advancement were shaped through the construction of a medical drama surrounding the rabies vaccine in 1895. If there is one overarching criticism of *Picturing Medical Progress* it is that Hansen focuses too narrowly on the medical research narrative and rarely considers how this evolving image fit with other media constructions and trends. For example, the media-created sensation of the journey of the Newark boys for treatment is regarded as the beginning of a public’s expectation for breakthroughs; the event is not examined as one of many artificial media sensations endemic to the nineteenth century. When placed in a broader context, the rabies story is less a beginning and more part of a transition from pseudo-scientific stories like the Cardiff Giant to

stories based on actual empirical science and real discoveries. There are similar problems with the post-WWII period. Hansen also gives little attention to the Cold War and scientific and medical achievement as part of a patriotic narrative. Adding this broader social and cultural context would have made this large book unwieldy, but without these connections, *Picturing Medical Progress from Pasteur to Polio* might miss the wider audience it otherwise deserves.

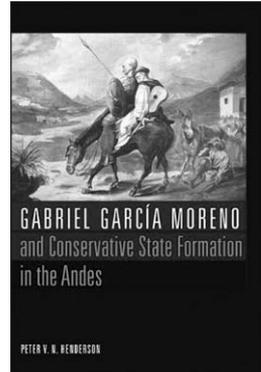
*Matthew White is a Ph.D. candidate in the History of Science.*

## BOOK REVIEW

PETER V. N. HENDERSON.  
*GABRIEL GARCÍA MORENO  
AND CONSERVATIVE STATE  
FORMATION IN THE ANDES.*

*Austin: University of Texas Press, 2008.*

*Reviewed by William Fischer*



More than 130 years after his assassination in 1875, Gabriel García Moreno still remains one of the most controversial presidents in Ecuador's history. Regarded by many historians and Ecuadorians as a conservative dictator, and known for his strong belief that Catholicism should serve as the basis of Ecuadorian national identity, García Moreno has been the subject of dozens of biographies, both hagiographic and condemnatory. Peter V. N. Henderson's recent book intends to offer a more balanced view of the president who ruled Ecuador from 1861–1865 and from 1869–1875. Departing from the many previous biographies of García Moreno and making use of numerous primary sources, including the correspondence of García Moreno and others, newspapers, diplomatic papers, and ministerial records, Henderson analyzes García Moreno and his presidencies within the framework of the “new political history” and state-formation. An introductory chapter about García Moreno's family and youth leads to a discussion of his role in the 1859–1860 civil war that nearly tore Ecuador into four pieces. Henderson then turns to García Moreno's first administration, arguing that the president was not strictly a conservative on economic matters, embracing the notion of “progress” and free markets. Henderson also dispels the notion that García Moreno's state was a “theocracy,” arguing that the president “wanted the Church to serve the state, acting as a cultural ally, rather than be its master” (69). The “foreign entanglements” of García Moreno's first administration are Henderson's next subject, which he uses to help illustrate aspects of García Moreno's character including his hot temper. Henderson argues that the first administration taught García Moreno to loathe federalism and municipal autonomy, which would be reflected in the much more centralist Constitution of 1869.

Henderson describes García Moreno's career between presidential terms, arguing that he became the “indispensable man” in Ecuador along the lines of the

oligarchic, rather than rural, “second generation of caudillos” in Latin America between 1850 and 1930. García Moreno’s reconstruction efforts after the 1868 earthquake in Ibarra bolstered his national reputation and made him the logical candidate for the presidency in 1869, which he assumed under a reformed Constitution with greater presidential power. Henderson details García Moreno’s efforts to institute universal primary education based on Catholic morality and his expansion of secondary education. He also surveys García Moreno’s reform of higher education and other cultural institutions. García Moreno’s decision to dedicate Ecuador to the Sacred Heart of Jesus made clear his anti-liberal stance and his belief that “only the Catholic Church could bind together people as regionally, ethnically, and linguistically divided as Ecuadorians” (176).

García Moreno’s economic and public works projects, according to Henderson, made him the first great nation-builder in Ecuador’s history. His major undertaking was certainly the road network that was built using mostly indigenous labor, but Henderson also details García Moreno’s development of banks, his efforts to attract European immigrants, and his flirtation with railroads. Unlike most conservatives at that time, García Moreno believed he could make Ecuador’s Indians into national citizens, despite the uprisings Henderson describes that were directed against García Moreno’s tax and labor conscription policies.

Henderson’s final chapter, on García Moreno’s assassination and legacy, stands out for its lively and detailed description of the assassination plot and aftermath. Henderson concludes that there probably was no military or Masonic conspiracy involved, as some historians have alleged. *Gabriel García Moreno and Conservative State Formation in the Andes* provides an excellent overview of the controversial president’s two administrations and the challenges he faced. The book is very well written and includes detail that attests to Henderson’s careful and thorough research. Henderson demonstrates that García Moreno was unique among nineteenth-century Latin American leaders for his commitment to a program of Catholic nationhood. He also complicates the view of García Moreno as a doctrinaire conservative, emphasizing that the president pursued some liberal economic policies and generally embraced the notion of progress. As for the framework of the “new political history,” Henderson indicates the value of the president’s familial relations in his governing of Ecuador’s disparate regions. Henderson’s contribution to the general subject of state-formation would have been stronger if he had discussed García Moreno’s projects in the context of other Andean or Latin American cases of state-formation. This would have highlighted what made García Moreno’s efforts distinct from those of other nineteenth-century caudillos or dictators.

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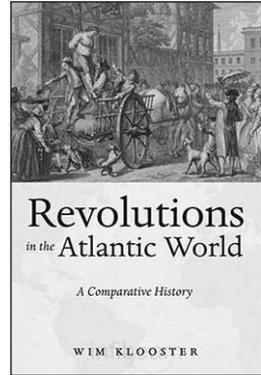
## BOOK REVIEW

### WIM KLOOSTER. REVOLUTIONS IN THE ATLANTIC WORLD: A COMPARATIVE HISTORY.

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*New York: New York*

*University Press, 2009.*



*Reviewed by Joseph Beatty*

The Lisbon earthquake of 1755 seems an odd beginning for an examination of the political revolutions that swept the Western hemisphere between 1774 and 1824. In Wim Klooster's view, however, the earthquake is a useful analogue for the coming imperial crises—just as that event came without warning and brought unforeseen consequences, so too the Atlantic World trembled under a series of political fractures which were at once unexpected, unprecedented, and unimaginable. While the revolutions in British North America, France, Saint-Domingue, and Spanish America each arose out of unique circumstances, Klooster argues that “they all created sovereign states that professed hostility to privilege” (1). Despite examining dramatically different events in four separate regions, *Revolutions* offers a straightforward, though multi-part, thesis. Very simply, Klooster disputes a whiggish interpretation of the revolutions of the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries that imagines a hastening cadence of democracy. In particular, Klooster argues against the kind of Western European focus presented by R. R. Palmer in his 1959–1964 series *The Age of Democratic Revolution*—a focus that favors joining the intellectual and political trajectories of Britain, France, and the United States over those of Haiti and the Iberian Atlantic. As an alternative, Klooster argues that the revolutions must be seen as highly contingent international and inter-imperial political events that often turned into civil wars—none of which set out to create a democratic society. To be sure, democratic reforms certainly numbered among the changes that were ushered in during this revolutionary age. However, for many post-revolutionary societies, Klooster argues, those democratic innovations were either limited, short-lived, or both.

Klooster proposes that “democracy is no appropriate prism through which to see these uprisings,” and offers declining privilege as an alternative (2). With

its roots in medieval traditions of landownership and authority, privilege was the long-established “organizing principle” of European states and their colonies. Prior to the revolutionary era, kingdoms buttressed their own power by extending some forms of privilege—such as limited self-rule—within their domestic and overseas territories. Several decades of near-constant warfare in the mid-1700s, however, drained the coffers of Europe’s largest powers, leading those kingdoms to enact fiscal reforms in hopes of recouping their losses. In attempts to draw wealth back into their treasuries, the metropolises instituted new taxes, which bristled locals and provincials, propelling the two sides down a path toward conflict. The ensuing revolutions created a handful of independent states that “set about dismantling the numerous manifestations of privilege, replacing them with a vast array of individual rights” (170). While these Enlightenment ideals were only slowly and fitfully taking hold in post-revolutionary states, Klooster argues that they successfully replaced the privilege-based hierarchy of the old world.

*Revolutions in the Atlantic World* is divided into six chapters, consisting of a brief introduction, one chapter for each of the four regional conflicts, and a final comparative essay. Klooster’s succinct prose concludes well short of two hundred pages, yet an additional fifty pages of explanatory endnotes easily quell any doubts about his documentary base. The chapters on the United States, France, and Haiti present a clean and coherent narrative of each respective revolution, while the chapter on Spanish America is slightly less so, because it tries to connect events in Argentina, Mexico, Peru, and Venezuela within a single account. Still, Klooster succeeds in covering all the revolutions in sufficient depth and detail, while maintaining sight of both escalating tensions and paths not taken. Klooster’s narrative is rich and informative, but the highlight of *Revolutions* is the final chapter wherein he expands his comparative framework.

*Revolutions* is concise and well argued, although some readers might not fully agree with Klooster’s emphasis on the financial origins of the Atlantic revolutions. Economic and fiscal changes feature prominently in his argument and work to connect a straight line between the Seven Years War and subsequent revolutions. By focusing on imperial-level actions, Klooster is able to link the four events, but such a view can divert attention from the individuals and non-political actors who actually took up arms and toppled regimes. These criticisms are minor, indeed, and are not intended to suggest that the book is somehow deficient. *Revolutions in the Atlantic World* is well conceived and nicely executed and should prove to be an asset in the classroom. Wim Klooster has presented valuable scholarship that is accessible to a broad audience, yet is sufficiently detailed for Atlantic or revolutionary specialists.

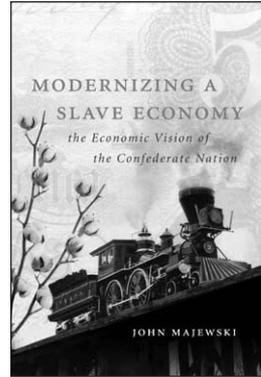
*Joseph Beatty is a doctoral student in American history.*

## BOOK REVIEW

JOHN D. MAJEWSKI.  
*MODERNIZING A  
SLAVE ECONOMY: THE  
ECONOMIC VISION OF THE  
CONFEDERATE NATION.*

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*Chapel Hill: University of North  
Carolina Press, 2009.*



*Reviewed by Scott Huffard*

In a paradox that has long puzzled scholars, the supposedly pro-states' rights Confederacy ended up with a highly centralized economy. In *Modernizing the Confederate Economy*, John Majewski explains the reason for this development. Rather than explaining this historical irony as a result of wartime contingency, Majewski persuasively argues that the antebellum visions about the economy caused it to become centralized in wartime. Southerners, he contends, constantly looked for ways to modernize and improve the antebellum slave economy, and the state often became the vehicle through which such modernization could occur. The wartime political economy of the Confederate state was the direct result of a long-term effort to remake a Southern economy constrained by environmental limitations.

Before examining the ways Southerners tried to modernize their economy, Majewski first looks at the question of why the Southern economy needed to be modernized in the first place. Using statistical regression, Majewski examines how different factors influenced the amount of cultivated land in a county. This analysis adds a new twist to arguments about the exceptionalism of the Southern economy.<sup>1</sup> Instead of simply blaming southern economic backwardness on slavery, Majewski finds that environmental factors, specifically the presence of alfisols,

1. Most of these debates center on the extent to which slavery warped the development of the South or on the question of whether or not the antebellum South held capitalist values. Two important examples of works that pin southern economic distinctiveness almost exclusively on the presence of slavery are Eugene Genovese, *The Political Economy of Slavery: Studies in the Economy and Society of the Slave South* (Middletown, Conn.: Wesleyan University Press, 1965) and David L. Carlton and Peter A. Coclanis, *The South, the Nation, and the World: Perspectives on Southern Economic Development* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2003).

hamstrung the economy. Poor soils meant that Southern farmers had to practice shifting cultivation, which in turn meant a high proportion of unimproved or fallow land. Sparsely settled farms caused problems throughout the economy, making it unprofitable to build railroads and providing the region with the appearance of backwardness.

Majewski skillfully connects the numerical analysis to the actual words of Southern economic policymakers. He utilizes the speeches, writings, and arguments of men such as Edmund Ruffin, an ardent secessionist who also worked to modernize the Southern economy. Some scholars may decry the narrow focus on this small group of elites, but these influential men had visions that were often translated directly into policy and practice. When these men looked around and saw a landscape sparsely settled and underdeveloped, they looked for ways to advance the region. Their solutions invariably involved the state. For example, when it came to railroad construction, only the state could provide the sizeable capital necessary to build railroads. Private investors would not put their funds into railroad projects that went through large swaths of underdeveloped land, so Southern states ended up funding a larger portion of the region's railroad projects than states in the North did. Similarly, only the state could adopt regulations opening trade and eliminating tariffs, two other supposed panaceas.

When war came, and the modernizers held positions of power, their antebellum visions became a reality, and the state became heavily involved in efforts to create a more modern Confederate economy. If there is any weakness to this impressively argued book, it is that it devotes only a brief chapter to the war itself. Historians interested in the intricacies of Confederate wartime policy will have to look elsewhere, as Majewski is more concerned with economic ideology than how that ideology played out in wartime. Leaders' ideology remained the same throughout the war, but it is still somewhat unclear how the contingencies of war shaped the political economy of the Confederate state. Future scholars will certainly use Majewski's framework to probe deeper into the complex interaction of ideology and contingency in the Confederate economy.

*Modernizing the Confederate Economy* may be brief, but it has a significant argument. For one, the book should put to rest Lost Cause notions that the Confederacy's leaders feared innovation and economic modernization. In doing so, the book builds a bridge between the Old South and the New South and adds to the findings of scholars interested in the construction of mythic Souths both Old and New. These scholars have noted how the New South was constructed on the back of a supposedly traditional and agrarian Old South.<sup>2</sup> Majewski finds

2. Two works that explicitly link Lost Cause conceptions of the Confederacy to postwar economic boosterism are Paul Gaston, *The New South Creed: A Study in Southern Mythmaking* (Baton

that Southern economic boosterism, a trait so often associated solely with the New South, was not born out of war's devastation. Rather it formed a persistent strain throughout Southern history. Instead of hewing to antiquated ideas about the Old South, historians need to think more critically about how the pervasive "Old South" label obscures significant developments in the antebellum period. Historians have exposed how the fallacies and myths of the Old South were fabricated to serve the New South elite, and it is about time more historians follow Majewski's lead and uncover what else has been hidden by these romantic notions.

*Scott Huffard is a Ph.D. candidate in American history.*

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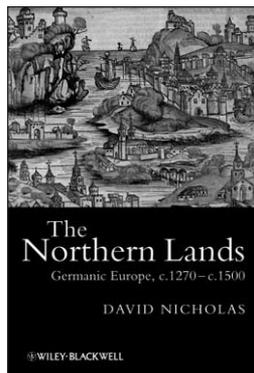
Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1970) and Gaines M. Foster, *Ghosts of the Confederacy: Defeat, the Lost Cause, and the Emergence of the New South 1865-1913* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987).

## BOOK REVIEW

### DAVID NICHOLAS. THE NORTHERN LANDS: GERMANIC EUROPE, c. 1270–c.1500.

*Maldon, Mass.: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009.*

*Reviewed by Reid Weber*



What identifies a geographic region in history? What commonalities connect the states, cultures, and societies of medieval Europe? David Nicholas answers these questions by examining the numerous cultural and economic similarities found in one such area stretching from London to Riga, which he entitles Northern Europe or Germanic Europe. According to Nicholas, Northern Europe developed its culture, law, politics, and trade locally rather than through Italian and French inspiration, which he views as the focus of previous scholars (ix). He argues that the Northern Lands developed a distinct regional association through the common origins of its shared institutions and culture. Nicholas defines this area as Germanic Europe in opposition to the Roman law and culture of Southern Europe. Rather than trying to define shared Germanic qualities and race, a substantial part of regional studies by historians such as Peter Moraw (1985) or Robert Bartlett (1993), he focuses on specific traits such as law, language, government, and the economy of the late medieval period that evolved on similar and sometimes intersecting paths (x). As he pushes the boundaries of the theoretical region to the east and west, Nicholas examines the complex relationships shared between peoples and states.

Nicholas organizes this study by examining the region through four distinct themes. Part one presents the typical dynastic and political narrative of the numerous states within his region. In the second part, Nicholas begins to engage with the intricate details of the “bonds of community,” in particular sovereignty, law, and language (103). He emphasizes the individual components of the region with the goal of highlighting the local intricacies of the region’s identities, often to the level of duchy and city. Part three analyzes the role of the family among the nobility and aristocracy of the Northern Lands (270). The crux and strength of Nicholas’s argument comes in the fourth part as he breaks down the forces of urbanization and the critical role of trade in uniting Northern Europe (271). His conclusion restates

the sophistication of the elements that integrated the various states and peoples of the region (351).

This book is useful, interesting, and manageable. Nicholas provides an analysis of the various regional cultures within the Northern Lands and treads a careful path by limiting the number of examples from the available sources. The evidence he reflects on is convincing, although hardly exhaustive. This theme could be covered much more extensively for example by delving into the complexity of the numerous legal codes, but by not addressing the entire body of evidence he makes the work accessible to non-specialists. This work provides an excellent overview of the late medieval North Atlantic and Baltic World and provides a useful link of communication between the numerous historical fields mingled in the book.

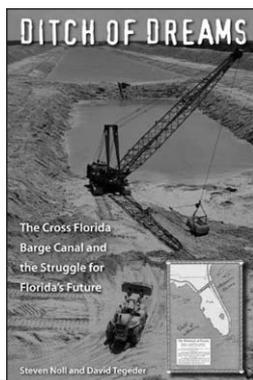
Two major omissions, however, are readily apparent. First, despite his denial of racial factors, he omits the Polish state from his Northern Lands. This is surprising considering its own integration on numerous levels with the Germanic Empire and Baltic region. Poland also contained a considerable number of German settlers who, with their laws and culture, took root in towns while contributing to the Polish state. In fact, it is surprising that Nicholas does not trace “Germanic Europe” throughout Central Europe. German settlement and colonization often spread Germanic culture to the East and South. To ignore the influence of German speakers places an artificial boundary line against the cultural and political integration he suggests defines a “Germanic Europe.” Second, the lack of any analysis of religious links stands out as a glaring omission, especially when one considers how religion would have linked the Northern Lands to a much broader Europe. To ignore such a prominent facet of late medieval life is a significant absence, which cannot be justified by the desire to avoid covering well-worn paths to the South (ix). Religious ideas spread throughout the Northern Lands, especially when addressing the employment of cults of saints and religious debates moving between universities. Addressing these two omissions in a future edition could at least provide the reader with a clearer understanding of Nicholas’s criteria for the exclusion of geographic regions and the role of religion.

Nicholas’s scholarly range in this work is impressive. The majority of his past work has been centered on the Low Countries, and not surprisingly so too is this work. Based on a reading of the title, one might suspect this to be a book centered on the German Empire or focused on broad questions of ethnicity. From the first chapter titled “Late Medieval England,” one recognizes quickly that Nicholas is attempting to rethink the labels applied to this region. The book, even with its omissions, serves as an intriguing model of how the historian may expand his or her geographic focus and think in new ways about medieval Europe.

*Reid Weber is a Ph.D. candidate in Early Modern European history.*

## BOOK REVIEW

STEVEN NOLL AND DAVID  
TEGEDER.  
*DITCH OF DREAMS: THE  
CROSS FLORIDA BARGE  
CANAL AND THE STRUGGLE  
FOR FLORIDA'S FUTURE.*



*Gainesville:*

*University Press of Florida, 2009.*

*Reviewed by Leslie Kemp Poole*

Since the first Europeans stepped foot in Florida there has been an impulse to change this land, to “improve” it to fit a vision of human imposition rather than adapting to its natural balance. Nowhere is this determination more evident than in the story of the Cross Florida Barge Canal, a boondoggle two centuries in the making that would have spanned the northern part of the peninsula, causing irreparable environmental damage.

Presidential edict halted the partially built project in 1971, but not before sections of the beautiful Ocklawaha River were destroyed in the name of “progress.” In their masterful and very readable account, *Ditch of Dreams: The Cross Florida Barge Canal and the Struggle for Florida's Future*, historians Steven Noll and David Tegeder examine the roots of the canal scheme and the mid-twentieth century battle it ignited between commercial, political and environmental interests. Through meticulous archival research and interviews with participants, they show how local, state, and national forces shaped the undertaking and ultimately led to its demise. Indeed, the barge canal story, as the authors note, tells “*the* story of modern Florida” while providing a “cautionary tale over present-day public policy discussions concerning transportation and water use” (7).

The project's inception dates to early Spanish explorers who “imagined a watery shortcut” connecting the Gulf of Mexico to the Atlantic Ocean, avoiding the Florida Straits that were rife with navigational hazards, storms, pirates, and local wreck scavengers (11). This dream—first for a ship canal and then modified to accommodate commercial barge traffic—persisted into early statehood. It was

boosted through a national infrastructure fever in the nineteenth century that featured the successful Erie Canal and the belief that manufacturing and commerce would follow such projects. This rationale, along with the later promotion that the canal would enhance national defense and offer employment during hard economic times, propelled the Florida project through coming decades. That it also would damage the Ocklawaha River, a waterway long heralded for its wild beauty, was not a consideration in the face of anticipated financial benefits.

The project was started and then abandoned in the 1930s, but came roaring to life again three decades later, secured by \$1 million in federal funds toward the estimated final price tag of \$165 million. President Lyndon B. Johnson attended a 1964 groundbreaking, proclaiming that God had given the country many natural resources and waterways but left it to humans to “carve out the channels to make them usable” (143). Boosters hailed the realization of their dreams, and politicians congratulated themselves for creating jobs. Little did they suspect that their hopes would be dashed by a group of savvy and determined environmentalists who used scientific and economic research—and finally the courts and media—to combat the project and sway popular opinion during an era of heightened ecological awareness. Marjorie Harris Carr, an experienced biologist who was dismissed by bureaucrats as a “Micanopy housewife,” was the tireless face of opposition for the project, but as Noll and Tegeder show, the project’s demise was achieved through years of work by a number of experts, river lovers, and conservationists, making the canal battle the first major grassroots environmental uprising in Florida (202).

Although the barge canal conflict has been highlighted in a few histories, this long-overdue book is the first to focus specifically on the issue, navigating the fields of environmental history and, particularly, political history. The depiction of President Richard M. Nixon’s decision to halt the project and the swirl of bureaucratic and political maneuvering that surrounded it makes for fascinating reading while overturning the idea that Nixon made the decision on environmental grounds—it was purely political. At times the book’s intricate details of the political maneuverings overwhelm the stories of the many local individuals whose passion for the river—and the canal—would carry them through decades of conflict. Their stories would add more richness to the saga that continues today as environmentalists carry on a contentious campaign to remove a remaining dam on the Ocklawaha River.

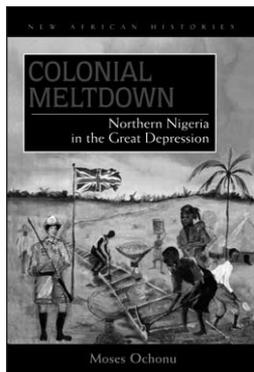
In addition to providing a fine history, *Ditch of Dreams* serves as a timely warning that large public works projects created in the name of “progress” and “jobs” need careful examination by a vigilant public mindful that such promises can often result in unforeseen environmental damage.

*Leslie Kemp Poole is a Ph.D. candidate in American history.*

## BOOK REVIEW

### MOSES E. OCHONU. *COLONIAL MELTDOWN: NORTHERN NIGERIA IN THE GREAT DEPRESSION.*

*Athens: Ohio University Press, 2009.*



*Reviewed by Jessica Morey*

Focused on Northern Nigeria during the Depression decade (1929–1939), Moses Ochonu’s *Colonial Meltdown* puts another chink in the imperial armor of colonialism in African history. The Depression disabled the British colonial regime’s ability to eke out profits from Northern Nigeria as it had in preceding years through export crops such as groundnuts; the mining of tin; and regular taxation. Ochonu documents that during the Depression years in Northern Nigeria, the colonial regime’s attempts to generate revenue and maintain law and order were met by African resistance. The means used by the colonial regime to maintain order revealed the weakness of the colonial state, belying “the notion of the colonial state as an omnipotent, all conquering genius of exploitation,” an assumption held by a number of earlier colonial studies (2).

Ochonu’s first chapter “From Empire to Colony” outlines how Britain’s economic recovery plan during the Depression emphasized using the empire as a “safety cushion” for the metropole (27). As part of the cushioning effort, trade was limited to within the empire, even if this meant uncompetitive prices. Declining prices for export crops hurt Northern Nigerian consumers already affected by the global economic downturn. In response, many Northern Nigerian farmers abandoned the export economy during the Depression in favor of growing food crops. The Britons praised these self-sustaining efforts because it shifted the burden of support away from the colonial regime. Limiting outside trade was part of a larger economic recovery package that also included retrenching colonial staff, deferring public works projects, and increasing revenue through taxation.

These economic recovery efforts were particularly painful to Northern Nigerians in the early 1930s because of contemporaneous events affecting their economy. As Ochonu describes in the first half of the book, declining prices and limited trade in the global economy was felt more acutely in Nigeria because of the accompanying closure of the local tin mines and an infestation of locusts. The latter led to food shortages in a period where means were already stretched.

These harsh conditions were met with a variety of African responses, which may be viewed as resisting the colonial state. Former railway and tin mine workers stole food from local farms and removed valuable copper keys from railway tracks to sustain themselves. Other Northern Nigerians profited from creating counterfeit alloy coins that were used to pay taxes. The British withdrawal of most silver currency from Northern Nigeria between 1931 and 1933 spurred a counterfeit trade in these alloy coins, leaving the colony with a headache that followed for many years. Western-educated Northern Nigerians found an outlet in print. In the 1930s, Sierra Leone-born Samuel Cole-Edwards, a former secretary to Lord Lugard, began the *Nigerian Protectorate Ram*. The *Ram* had a brief life in Northern Nigeria, but it worried the colonial regime because it reminded them of the anti-colonial newspapers of Southern Nigeria.

Ochonu's closing chapters shift from the broader to the more local effects of the Depression in Northern Nigeria to look intimately at what happened within Idoma Division. Ochonu describes Idoma as on the periphery of the Northern Nigerian colony; it was largely neglected by the colonial regime during profitable times and labeled an economic backwater. Even so, during the economic recovery, the regime clamped down on Idoma and demanded tax revenue from the district heads. At the same time, the regime withdrew financial support for missionary education in Idoma. When taxes were not forthcoming, the district colonial leaders swarmed upon the delinquent taxpayers to take chickens, goats, and anything of value they could get their hands on. This led villagers in the area to hide in the woods during tax raids. For Ochonu, the actions taken in Idoma epitomize the moment of weakness for the colonial state. Unable to meet either the economic or colonial uplift goals of the Dual Mandate rhetoric, district leaders also went against the notion of indirect rule in Idoma, pushing aside local leaders to directly demand revenue from impoverished farmers.

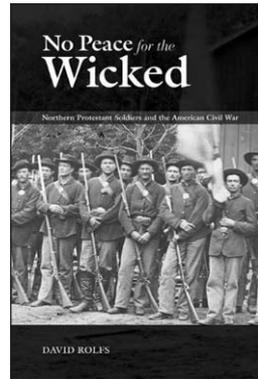
*Colonial Meltdown* effectively lifts the veil on the years of the Depression to show that colonial regimes were not stagnant, but struggled to uphold the ambitions of colonial rule. While previous African historians such as Frederick Cooper have revealed the integral efforts of African workers' resistance during the interwar period as part and parcel of the decline of the colonial era, Ochonu shifts the timeline to argue that scholars may need to look earlier to the Depression years to seek the catalysts of later anti-colonial struggles. If the book possesses a shortcoming, it is that Ochonu often speaks in terms of the general weakness of the colonial state during the Depression but does not give any insight into how other colonies besides Nigeria weathered these same years. This may be remedied by future research on the Depression years in other colonial contexts.

*Jessica Morey is a Ph.D. candidate in African history.*

## BOOK REVIEW

### DAVID ROLFS. *NO PEACE FOR THE WICKED: NORTHERN PROTESTANT SOLDIERS AND THE AMERICAN CIVIL WAR.*

*Knoxville: The University of  
Tennessee Press, 2009.*



*Reviewed by Benjamin L. Miller*

The religious history of the American Civil War has only recently garnered increased attention from Civil War scholars. While Gardiner Shattuck published his seminal *A Shield and Hiding Place: The Religious Life of the Civil War Armies* in 1987, little significant work had been done on the field until the collection *Religion and the American Civil War*, edited by Randall Miller, Harry Stout, and Charles Wilson came out in 1998. Three years later Steven Woodworth published *While God is Marching On: The Religious World of Civil War Soldiers*, the first exposition of the common soldiers' religious experience during the war. In his newly published monograph *No Peace for the Wicked: Northern Protestant Soldiers and the American Civil War*, David Rolfs makes an important contribution to this burgeoning field by exploring the religious worldview of Northern soldiers, mainly those identified as white Reformed Protestants, and situating this worldview within the larger antebellum context from which it emerged.

Rolfs utilizes a part-thematic, part-chronological structure to uncover the wartime motivations and experiences of Northern religious soldiers. He discusses how these men mobilized for war, their sense of duty to country and family, how they came to embrace emancipation, and their belief that they were engaged in a just war for Union and liberty. Depicting the war as a holy crusade against the Confederacy, Rolfs demonstrates how soldiers conceived of God's will and of the war as divine judgment. Some of this terrain is new, but all of these chapters show grounding in antebellum religion, unmatched in previous scholarship.

His most interesting and original chapter (and the most important contribution of the work as a whole) looks at the compromises and conflicts some religious soldiers

experienced during the war. Although the vast majority of Northern religious soldiers reconciled military duties with their religious values, many struggled to find a balance. Some individuals easily compromised certain pre-war spiritual practices, such as observing the Sabbath. Others experienced a degree of cognitive dissonance, as they faced a moral dilemma, having to compromise either their faith or their military duties. As Rolfs demonstrates, “most concluded that one’s duty to country came first and adapted their faith accordingly” (195).

Rolfs’s monograph is grounded in a substantial body of archival material and published primary sources. He seems, however, to rely too heavily on sources from the Midwest, especially those available at the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library in Springfield, Illinois; the Indiana Historical Society in Indianapolis; and the Wisconsin Historical Society in Madison. To his credit, he did consult Emory University’s archives. It is surprising (and a bit disappointing) that Rolfs did not consult the United States army’s archival collection at Carlisle Barracks, an enormous repository of Northern soldiers’ letters and diaries, from which Woodworth heavily drew for his earlier book. Whether examining letters at more geographically diverse archives would lead to different conclusions is uncertain, but nonetheless, it would lead to a more balanced work.

This study raises a couple other questions. First, methodologically, one wonders why Rolfs classified a soldier as religious based merely on him using “significant religious language, ideas, or symbols to define, justify, or interpret some wartime experience on at least two or more occasions” (xviii). Why two? Why not three or five? This methodological framework appears too arbitrary. Second, while Rolfs should be commended for thinking about the Civil War through the lens of just-war theory, he should have more actively engaged with the substantial historiography concerning the Civil War as a total, hard, or limited conflict. Harry Stout’s *A Moral History of the Civil War* (which Rolfs references) enters this discussion at the very tail end of the extant historiography and needs to be contextualized further.

Despite these minor quibbles, Rolfs has written an engaging work that moves beyond Woodworth’s earlier study and begins to uncover the religious worldview of Northern Reformed Protestant soldiers during the Civil War. At the same time, it places their perspective within the antebellum world from which it emerged. It requires a skilled historian to wade through the complexities of writing American religious history and Rolfs should be commended for his acumen. Still even with the publication of Rolfs’s book, much work remains to be completed in this burgeoning field, and future scholars need to examine such topics as the Catholic soldiers’ experience and the experience of chaplains and missionaries during the war years.

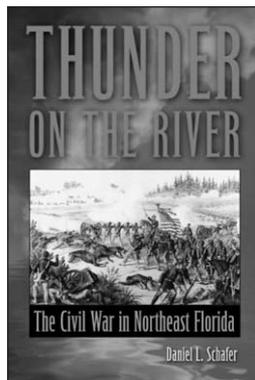
*Benjamin L. Miller is a Ph.D. candidate in American history.*

## BOOK REVIEW

### DANIEL L. SCHAFER. *THUNDER ON THE RIVER: THE CIVIL WAR IN NORTHEAST FLORIDA.*

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*Gainesville: University  
Press of Florida, 2010.*



*Reviewed by Maria Angela Diaz*

When Florida seceded from the Union in the winter of 1861, church bells throughout the state rang joyously with the news. Daniel L. Schafer's *Thunder on the River: The Civil War in Northeast Florida* tells the story of secession and civil war in Jacksonville and the surrounding communities along the St. Johns River. Steeped in primary sources and secondary literature, Schafer's book balances Union and Confederate voices to reveal the region's tortuous experience during the four-year conflict. Schafer crafts a well researched and crisply written narrative that captures the struggles between Northerners and Southerners, unionists and secessionists, slaves, and free black and white residents. Due to Jacksonville's status as the commercial center of northeast Florida, Northern merchants flocked to the city, and these Unionists and their Southern counterparts become one of the major focuses of Schafer's story.

Positioned along a bend in the St. Johns River, the city became the key to the interior of Florida. Thus, Jacksonville was occupied four separate times by Federal soldiers, and abandoned three times from 1862 to 1864. During the first occupation, retreating Rebels torched much of the city. It was again set ablaze in the aftermath of the third Federal occupation, which was largely blamed on the black troops serving there. After the Federal defeat at the battle of Olustee, the Union occupied Jacksonville for the fourth time until the end of the war. Residents shifted loyalties according to the current occupying force. Many of the Northern merchants became exiles, living in the North. Native Southerners fared little better, forced to endure constant evacuations as power shifted back and forth between Confederate and Union forces. Thus, this is largely a story about displaced and refugee populations swarming in and out of Jacksonville and the St. Johns region. The last batch of refugees arrived at the end of the war when Union-

held Jacksonville became a major destination for destitute Southerners and Union prisoners from Andersonville, Georgia.

Schafer aims to capture popular audiences through gripping storytelling, and scholarly readers with his extensive archival research and use of the secondary literature. While he presents many excellent points, Schafer never manages to string them together into a strong argument. He succeeds admirably in reminding the reader of the larger national context, particularly in the second chapter concerning Florida's secession. Of Florida's secession he argues that white residents of Jacksonville became convinced that "Northerners intended to limit the right granted by the U.S. Constitution to carry human property into the western territories, and eventually to abolish the institution of slavery altogether" (x). Scholars such as David Potter, James McPherson, Michael Holt (whom he quotes), Michael Morrison, and many others present similar theses. With the large Northern population living in the area, the reader is left wondering exactly how their presence affected secessionist Southerners, and what such a divided area reveals about the overall nature of loyalty in the Confederacy. Unfortunately, within the following ten chapters, Schafer's initial argument largely disappears, emerging briefly in discussions of the self-emancipation of slaves, treatment of black troops, and the reclamation of white supremacy during Reconstruction.

While Schafer succeeds in his aim to tell the story of this forgotten part of the Civil War South, he does not fully engage the growing body of scholarship on Civil War-era Florida. Northeast Florida presents a far different story than that of Edward Baptist's *Creating an Old South: Middle Florida's Plantation Frontier Before the Civil War* (2002), but Schafer does not discuss or even reference this important work. Studying Leon and Jackson counties, Baptist argues that creating Southern society in frontier regions was a fiercely contested process. The number of Northerners in northeast Florida could possibly reveal additional complexities in the creation of the "Old South."

These issues aside, Daniel Schafer's *Thunder on the River* presents a remarkable story including a myriad of voices and experiences that he deftly weaves together into a fascinating whole. Schafer calls attention to this region's complex story, proving that more work is still needed to understand fully the Old South's frontiers and the experiences of those living there. The book provides an excellent starting point for those interested in learning more about Florida's Civil War past and its part in the Old South's final fight.

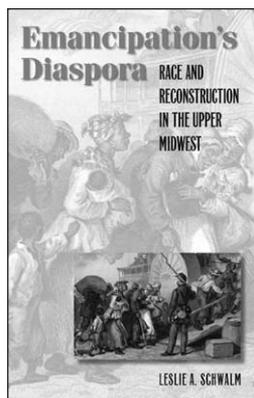
*Maria Angela Diaz is a Ph.D. candidate in American history.*

## BOOK REVIEW

### LESLIE A. SCHWALM. *EMANCIPATION'S DIASPORA: RACE AND RECONSTRUCTION IN THE UPPER MIDWEST.*

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*Chapel Hill: The University of  
North Carolina Press, 2009.*



*Reviewed by James J. Broomall*

Scholars have long recognized the transformative effects of emancipation on the American South's social and cultural landscapes, and its redefinition of the body politic. Only in recent years, however, have historians considered emancipation's wider reach. In *Emancipation's Diaspora*, Leslie Schwalm persuasively argues that emancipation's repercussions extended well beyond the South. Emancipation effectively forced a renegotiation of African Americans' "place" in the North, and, indeed, the nation. The book's title—"emancipation's diaspora"—refers to the Civil War-era migration of freed people outside of the South and the public and private debates that this diaspora engendered. Focusing on Iowa, Wisconsin, and Minnesota, Schwalm follows the experiences of African Americans from slavery through freedom to citizenship, while tracing the construction and deconstruction of racial hierarchies, the shifting meaning of whiteness, the gendered dimensions of blacks' struggles, and the contestation of public and private spheres. The resulting study not only presents fresh new materials on a neglected region of the United States and the peoples therein, but complements the scholarship of Leon Litwack, Nancy Bercau, Steven Hahn, Nell Irvin Painter, and David Blight.

This handsome volume is presented in seven chronological and thematic chapters. An introduction and epilogue nicely contextualize African Americans' transition into citizenship and the book's overarching themes of race and Reconstruction. *Emancipation's Diaspora* begins with an extended discussion of slavery in the Midwest, which, as Schwalm explains, was an extremely fluid institution. Readers well versed in the antebellum era will find much of this

narrative familiar, albeit with regional distinctiveness. The book seamlessly moves into the Civil War era recounting slavery's collapse, which led to African American's northward migration. This movement into the upper Midwest presented unprecedented challenges to the practices that sustained white supremacy and "revealed how deeply white privilege saturated daily life" in the region (105). Blacks' removal to distant locations particularly affected women and children, whose stories add considerable depth to a wartime narrative that typically focuses only on the military life of black soldiers. Indeed, as Schwalm carefully reveals, civil war was a gendered and gendering experience.

The book's final chapters, containing the richest and most revealing research, concentrate on Midwestern black life, the creation of African American communities and public culture, and memory. Although historians Eric Foner and Heather Cox Richardson have made great strides in revealing the politics of Northern Reconstruction, this story remains incomplete. Schwalm's emphasis on Reconstruction in the Midwest adds considerable depth to our understanding of northern political culture. Her portrait illuminates the stories of African American men and women who "shaped and contributed to Reconstruction," which "constitutes part of the poorly chronicled northern account of how black freedom and citizenship were understood, defined, and defended in the postemancipation, postwar United States" (175).

Drawing from an extensive and extremely rich range of source materials—including manuscripts, pension records, public performances, census data, newspapers, and published memoirs, diaries, and letters—Schwalm successfully captures the voices and experiences of black and white Midwesterners. While constructing a broad portrait of black life, Schwalm successfully personalizes this story by injecting the book with individual stories. From the harrowing escape from slavery of Kate Thompson and her family to the midwestern countryside, to Moses Mosely's postbellum published account of African American's transition from slavery to citizenship, Schwalm offers readers an intimate portrayal of blacks' lives contextualized by the broader forces of race and war.

Ultimately, this meticulous study nationalizes the histories of slavery, emancipation, and Reconstruction, and joins a generation of scholarship that has redirected attention to include the lives and experiences of men, women, and children. Nonetheless, despite the book's breadth and depth, questions remain. How did class, for instance, operate and affect postbellum black communities in the Midwest? While Schwalm's portrait of late nineteenth-century black life is rich, the communities she examines are largely devoid of conflict and conflated into a homogenous whole. Furthermore, in discussing the creation of black

memories about slavery and emancipation, how did these broader public discourses operate on the ground-level and to what ends? Perhaps, though, the questions that this book raises signify its overarching importance and great success. Schwalm has written a careful study of a neglected region and offered readers a book that greatly advances our understandings of race and Reconstruction.

*James J. Broomall is a Ph.D. candidate in American history.*

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